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**STUDIES IN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IN
THE EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE (1895-1918)**

By

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**“Studies in district administration in the East Africa
Protectorate 1895-1918.”**

“Imagine this state of affairs on board a ship.....The Master is bigger and burlier than any of the crew, but a little deaf and short-sighted and no less deficient in seamanship. The sailors are quarrelling over the control of the helm; each thinks he ought to steer the vessel, though he has never learnt navigation....what is more they assert that navigation is a thing that cannot be taught at all, and are ready to tear to pieces anyone who says it can. Meanwhile, they besiege the master himself, begging him urgently to trust them with the helm....”

(Adeimantus in Plato’s “Republic”)

Foreword

Thanks to Hugh Walker, lately of the Kenya administration, who transcribed the text into an electronic format, the Cambridge African Studies Centre is pleased to be able to offer Dick Cashmore's PhD. dissertation to a new readership—those without access to the Cambridge University Library. Since 1965 the thesis has there been consulted by barely two dozen scholars. It deserves a wider public. Why?

There are four good reasons. Cashmore pulls together instructive conflicts in Kenya's early colonial history that have not received similar connected treatment since. He also tells us more than other authors about the country's first colonial rulers, their social origins, their assumptions, their practical rules of survival, their failures. In Kenya's uneasy birth one may see the source of its later troubles. Further, Cashmore is a pleasure to read. Above all and finally, in this thesis he helped to initiate discussion of important themes in colonial African history that other scholars have developed in the ensuing forty-five years. His own approach was shaped by his experience as a district officer in the last years of British rule. It is striking that his judgments, coloured by his colonial career, have not been questioned since, however much post-colonial scholarly perspectives have inevitably changed since the 1960s.

Later scholars have argued that colonial Kenya was shaped by processes and conflicts, interests and intrigues other than those which preoccupied Cashmore. Their core themes have been the origins of white settlement,¹ with its need of African land, labour and loyalty, and the reactions of the major highland peoples, Luo, Luyia, and Kikuyu. Cashmore noticed such questions only insofar as they affected his own main interest. This, as his title foretells, was in how his predecessors contrived to build 'district administrations', a task sometimes but not always bedevilled by high politics. His study of the Maasai moves certainly tackles a central political issue; he argues nonetheless that the Maasai would have been a British problem even in the absence of white colonists (page 137). By taking only this sidelong glance at what distinguished Kenya from many other British colonies Cashmore was able to illuminate more general themes of imperial rule. His main actors are neither settlers nor African 'resisters', nor yet the Indian traders whose purchase of African produce enabled the British to raise a revenue. His professional ancestors play his leading roles, upcountry administrators and frontier officers, together with the African leaders with whom they fought or reached a working understanding. But only his British ancestors speak.

Since 1965, then, historians have focused on those aspects of Kenya's history that Cashmore took as the troubling background to the local problems faced by early officials. Moreover, these later scholars adopted perspectives contrary to his, post-colonial rather than colonial. They have examined African rather than British actions and reactions, citing sources, often of African origin, other than those officials on whom Cashmore chiefly relied. They have also employed new scholarly languages—Marxist, 'subaltern', 'post-modern' and so on—that in their different ways have claimed to 'deconstruct' official speech, to reveal its self-regarding deceptions.

Despite all this critical and potentially hostile scholarly activity, Cashmore's judgments on official policy and actions have stood the test of time. Perhaps this is because one of his main findings is that the colonial officials of a century ago shared many of the concerns of their scholarly critics today. One might also suggest that

¹ For which the standard account remains M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968).

today's historians see things in much the same way as the colonial servants of the past whose 'protest voice' appears several times in the Index that has been added to the original dissertation. To act as a 'tribal representative', a 'chameleon', could at times be a professional necessity. Yet Cashmore refers to their paternalism once only and on his last page (215)! The term never appears in the sources he quotes. British officials clearly saw as an unquestioned virtue, not worth mentioning, what today is most deplored by colonialism's critics. But then few are given the insight to see how others will see us a century hence.

This Foreword outlines how Cashmore tackled five closely entwined threads of colonial history and then how new readers may, if they wish, test his discussion against the more recent views found in a small selection of the many works on Kenya's early history. Those who do read these later scholars will find themselves asking an intriguing question in historical method: How far do new interpretations necessarily build upon the earlier ones which they aim to revise or destroy?

Cashmore's overriding interest is the character of early British colonial rule, both its policy-making 'mind' and its ground-level practice. The British, he argues, tried to govern according to general notions of 'native trusteeship', modified by the need to encourage the economic activity that would profit investors, generate a government revenue, and benefit, or at least not harm, 'native interests'. There were many, even 'pro-native', officials who thought white settlement could meet all three criteria provided that government regulated African labour conditions and ensured that African tax was spent to African benefit. Such issues invited differences of opinion. Kenya's early administration had a troubled conscience.

Cashmore's second theme takes up this self-criticism over the issue of colonial violence. He examines officials' views on the relation between British force and the African consent without which little could get done. Force was inherent in any imperial rule imposed on peoples who normally ruled themselves under lightweight institutions, embodied in kinship and generation. The British justified their force as the birth-pangs of a new, supposedly more civilised, social order to which Africans would in due course assent. That their force might fail to elicit consent is best seen on Kenya's north-eastern frontier, the subject of chapter VII. But even pacification of an unruly frontier did not solve the problem. How African self-interest could be satisfied under alien rule was always in question. In Cashmore's period this was most painfully true during the First World War, when the consent of Kenya's most populous and productive peoples was tested near to breaking point. But the Great War's demands were merely an extreme example of how colonial necessity could (but not inevitably) damage African wellbeing, principally by expropriating African labour from its productive household tasks.

Cashmore's case studies, all failures (page 85), give him more opportunity than British successes to show how the tensions and flash-points of alien rule could promote or frustrate the fortunes of both Africans and Britons. Few colonial careers flourished, more were blighted—along with the lives of many Africans—in the years in which Kenya was known as the East Africa Protectorate or EAP.

To turn now to the later historiography, Cashmore's main theme, the 'official mind' of 'ground-level imperialism', continues to be of interest. Under Cashmore's hand the official mind, the 'worm's eye view', was twice distilled. It was first articulated when EAP officials dictated to their Goan clerks letters of explanation or excuse to higher authority. It has been further interpreted by Cashmore himself. He

knew in his bones what most concerned his ancestors-in-office, their moral instincts, their racial assumptions, their political subterfuges, their collective spirit, their personal fears, loneliness especially.¹ An official mind from a junior generation has glossed the mind of seniors two generations earlier, made known by past precedents re-told at sundown in the bar or on the veranda. The administration, like the Africans it thought it ruled, had an instructive oral tradition, full of cautionary tales (page 5).

Other historians have been outsiders, without this intuitive heritage. Despite this difference in perspective, they have done little more than re-emphasise the ambiguities of the official predicament, if with more evidence for and greater interest in the African social history with which officials had to come to terms. Officials had to cope, as Cashmore knew but other historians had to analyse, with the contradictions of their dual mandate. They were expected to rule in the interests of both their native subjects and of outside interests to whom African 'progress' was a by-product of their own profit. Colonial government could never break free from these contending forces in order to hold the ring between them. An article in the *Journal of African History*, more than a decade after Cashmore's PhD, confirmed this worm's eye view with high-level abstraction and Marxist political economy.²

The mandarins of Whitehall scarcely helped the men on the spot in their 'inconclusive groping' for a coherent policy (page 66). Indeed, the argument between white settler survival, colonial economy, and strategic British concern on the one hand, and the right of native subjects to improvement on the other, was reproduced at the heart of the empire, as Cashmore knew. It was not until the 1920s that the British government, prompted by Indian nationalists' sensitivity to the slights suffered by Indians living elsewhere in the dependent empire, was forced to make public the hitherto privately acknowledged principle that in Kenya neither white settler nor Indian, but native African, interests must be paramount. Even then the so-called 'Devonshire declaration' was equivocal, hedged about with conditions that left room for settler supremacy in practice.³

What kind of men were put in this ideological quandary, hard enough to face without the added risks of ill-health, loneliness, drink and, not infrequently, early death? Cashmore found them to be of diverse origins. No less than one in five were sons of the vicarage, of modest middle class status and doubtless brought up with a strict sense of moral duty. But many had a military background. On the use of force, then, the administration was inherently divided. All agreed that it was expensive, to be sparingly used. It was permissible, even expected, when first bringing Africans to submission. According to the imported 'Punjab doctrine', harsh initial punishment should prevent its costly repetition (page 36). If troops were needed again, after a decisive first demonstration of force, some official must have blundered, overreacting in a burst of anger, probably because he 'did not know his natives'.

¹ For 'ground-level imperialism' see, D. A. Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms 1890-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

² John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, 'Coping with the contradictions: The development of the colonial state in Kenya 1895-1914', *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 487-505; for a narrative see, John Lonsdale, 'The conquest state of Kenya 1895-1905', chapter 2 in Bruce Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London: James Currey, 1992); and for reflection, Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, knowledge, history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), especially chapter 2.

³ Ronald Hyam, *Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office 1905-1908* (London: Macmillan, 1968), especially chapter 11; Robert M. Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya: The loss and reassertion of imperial initiative 1912-1923* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993).

To avoid such stains on their reputation district officers cultivated ‘prestige’, so much cheaper than force. But prestige could command consent, paradoxically, only through a tacit negotiation, to ensure that one did not demand of Africans what they would not too unwillingly supply. This habit of prudent command was essential if hot impatience, *furor africanus* (page 29), was not to make difficult situations disastrous. Cashmore nonetheless notes many cases of illegal measures (see Index) taken by officers who were sometimes personally exasperated by African obduracy but as often felt obliged to use unauthorised pressure, even violence (such as hut-burning) in order to get done what government expected of them in raising African tax or recruiting African labour.

Cashmore’s findings on the professional character of Kenya’s early colonial officials have been amply supported since, by systematic interviews conducted with Kenya’s last generation of British administrators,¹ by their collected reminiscences, his own included,² and by biographies of some of those who served before the First World War³. This work by later scholars and officials reassures us that when we read Cashmore’s general assessment of his predecessors’ marshy uncertainties we ourselves are standing on firm ground. But later scholarship has also pressed home his comments on the illegal measures to which officers sometimes had recourse. Compulsion was a recurring feature of labour recruitment, so much so that after the First World War the Kenya government even authorised the practice, creating a political uproar that it never forgot until the crisis of the Mau Mau war of the 1950s.⁴ At this point, when central Kenya seemed to revert to a state of frontier lawlessness, the government responded with exceptionally harsh measures, not easily defined as legal even after emergency proclamations had truncated many of the legal rights protective of accused persons and all those who could, in a very broad interpretation, be said to have consorted with them.⁵

Organised, authorised, uniformed, force, wielded by soldiers or police, in any case underlay all colonial relationships at a deeper level than any ‘illegal measures’ and was, to turn to the historiography of Cashmore’s second theme, all too often invoked in Kenya’s early history. It was the obverse side of the coin of consent, whose reverse face was self-interested African cooperation with imperial purposes. It is here that later scholarship has added most depth to Cashmore’s account. It allows us to put his case studies into a comparative framework that considers more fully the relationship between British power and African well-being. But here too Cashmore showed the way. His study of ‘the Giryama problem’ in chapter V, with its close attention to local agriculture and trade, is exemplary in this respect.

¹ Bruce Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The dialectic of domination* (London: James Currey, 1990), chapter 3 and pp. 202-08.

² Charles Chenevix Trench, *Men who Ruled Kenya: The Kenya administration 1892-1963* (London and New York: The Radcliffe Press, 1993); John Johnson (ed.), *Colony to Nation: British administrators in Kenya 1940-1963* (Banham: Erskine Press, 2002). Cashmore’s own reminiscences are published in this volume, pp. 117-18 and pp. 182-5, including a potentially fatal example of overreaching himself, despite knowing the cautionary tales of official tradition.

³ R. M. Maxon, *John Ainsworth and the Making of Kenya* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1980); Elizabeth Watkins, *Oscar from Africa: The biography of O. F. Watkins* (London and New York: The Radcliffe Press, 1995).

⁴ Anthony Clayton and Donald C. Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya 1895-1963* (London: Frank Cass, 1974).

⁵ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s dirty war in Kenya and the end of the Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

Comparison of the Kenya cases suggests what much later research has made clear, namely, that the British had to use most force, to the least productive effect, where their purposes cut across existing African interests. Conversely, less force was needed where the British could ally with the interests of influential elements within local society who would then return the compliment, grateful for British patronage. As Cashmore says (page 12), the ‘ultimate comment’ on policy was that of the ‘native collaborators’. The regional contrast in such African comment, broadly positive in Kenya’s central highlands, negative in other areas, led him to concentrate on the latter, the peripheries that baffled the British. His focus switched to the more central peoples only with the First World War. He even goes so far as to suggest that before 1914 the major highland peoples had lived through ‘the last phase of native government’ rather than ‘the first period of white rule’ (page 12).

But what, first, of those areas where ‘native government’ resisted, at the coast, and among the Giriama and Somali?

British supremacy was a clear threat to the Arab dynasties at the coast. Their political power was all they had, both to attract Indian capital and control African slavery, the twin foundations of their prosperity. Indian bankers and traders were bound to bend to whichever power promised them the greater protection. The most immediate economic effect of British rule was indeed the usurpation of Arab trading caravans by the Indian entrepreneurs who rode upcountry on the new railway.¹ Arabs could foresee the end of slavery too. Later scholarship’s most unexpected revision is the conversion of the story of coastal abolition from what Cashmore saw as a reluctant British initiative into active African history. For Africans, as magistrate’s court records make clear, negotiated a greater freedom than their reluctant British liberators had had in mind. Former slaves had no wish to be wage-workers for white or Arab capitalists. It was better to be a tenant farmer enjoying more congenial but less productive compromises with one’s landlord, a former Arab master. Cashmore thought this ‘decadence’ infected British coastal officials too (page 103).²

The Giriama story is a terrible tale of conflict over contradictory demands for labour between ultimately unproductive colonial plantations and once-profitable African farming and trade, exacerbated by the need for British officials to feel that they were in control. Although Cashmore’s evidence was meagre his account still stands. Later scholarly enquiry, as reliant on Giriama oral tradition as on the British archive, has agreed with his important conclusion that ‘the weakness of the Giriama tribal structure proved to be its strongest weapon’ in resisting British demands; there were no levers for the latter to pull (page 134). Giriama defence of their interests needed no authorised leadership; the civic responsibility of the warrior generation—whom the British wished to convert into workers—was enough. But largely spontaneous resistance meant there was nobody with the authority to sue for peace, a conundrum resolved only by repeated British brutality.³ For a people to lack

¹ Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An economic and social history, 1890-1980* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993)

² Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*; and *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation labor and agriculture in Zanzibar and coastal Kenya 1890-1925* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977 and 1980 respectively).

³ Cynthia Brantley, *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). For another example of coastal decay see, David L. Miller, ‘Social formations in transition: Social and economic change in the lower Tana valley, Kenya, 1850-1939’ (Syracuse University PhD., 1981).

institutional leadership both deprived them of the arguable benefits of collaboration and made the costs of resistance more awful still (a reflection worth pondering in the case of Mau Mau).

The Somali case was similar to the Giriama, once it is divested of frontier romance. Inter-Somali competition revolved round seasonal access to wells and grazing grounds, a system in perpetual motion for which any settled administration was anathema. Moreover the livestock trade with central Kenya and Nairobi that later tied some Somali interests to British rule had yet to be pioneered. Until that time any state was bound to be resisted by those Somali clans that felt excluded from the local alliances by which it was sustained. It was this state-building ambition that caused the Somali to call the mullah Mohammed ‘Abdulle Hassan ‘mad’—an insult the British merely echoed. Colonial rule had little to offer, and at unacceptable cost: Cashmore’s account is easy to recognise even when told from the Somali side.¹

Cashmore found it more difficult to explain British success than failure (pages 77, 82-3). He rejected the possibility that the personality of individual officers could be a decisive factor (page 214). However, a more satisfying understanding of his alternative explanation, which was ‘the politics of collaboration’, had to wait until more research by a number of scholars was synthesised in 1980. It had by then become clear that early British rule had coincided with, and had helped to stimulate, a great increase in African farm and livestock production, as Kenya’s highlanders recovered from the disastrous cattle plagues, drought and famine of the turn of the twentieth century.² While the British conducted many small wars in the highlands, they rarely had to repeat the ‘lesson’, for the simple reason that African recovery marched largely in step with British rule. Even white settlement initially enlarged the opportunities for African peasant production, under ‘squatter’ contracts negotiated between white and African patrons.³

The Maasai had suffered most from the disasters, making their predicament worse through civil war. But the British need for ‘native auxiliaries’, fleet of foot and adept at cattle-rustling, offered Maasai a ready means of recovery at the expense of their neighbours. For many Kenyan highlanders colonial rule swept in as a Maasai cattle raid, reinforced with rifles. The new Maasai leaders whose warrior age came to the fore shared with the British a keen interest in the re-establishment of social order. The recent disasters had become increasingly destructive as social disciplines collapsed in anarchy. Cashmore remarks that the British found that the Maasi

¹ For such reflections see, among others, E. R. Turton, ‘Somali resistance to colonial rule and the development of Somali political activity in Kenya 1893-1960’, *Journal of African History* 13 (1972), 119-43; Cedric Barnes, ‘The Ethiopian state and its Somali periphery c. 1888-1948’, (Cambridge University PhD., 2001); Jon Abbink, ‘Dervishes, *moryaan* and freedom fighters: Cycles of rebellion and the fragmentation of Somali society, 1900-2000’, chapter 13 in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn and Klaas van Walraven (eds), *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and violence in African history* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

² Gavin Kitching, *Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The making of an African petite-bourgeoisie* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980); for the disasters see, Douglas Johnson and David Anderson (eds), *The Ecology of Survival: Case studies from northeast African history* (London: Lester Crook, 1988); and Charles H. Ambler, *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The central region in the late nineteenth century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

³ R. M. Wambaa and Kenneth King, ‘The political economy of the Rift Valley: a squatter perspective’, chapter 9 in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed.), *Hadith 5: Economic and social history of East Africa* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975) is an important African source.

‘presented an extremely untidy appearance to the administrative eye’ (page 146). Some new Maasai leaders, as subsequent research has found, took the same view. Cashmore himself was not unaware of this.¹ Thanks to their desire to recreate social control, enough leading Maasai supported the Maasai moves to make it possible for the British to tidy them up with little difficulty, away from the railway and some of their most desirable grazing lands, now opened up for white settlement. Our much greater knowledge of the Maasai view of this period complements rather than questions Cashmore’s account.²

That was a remarkable success for the politics of collaboration, Cashmore’s third theme of major interest. His account of the search for collaborators shows how difficult that could be. His analysis must have impressed his Cambridge supervisor, Ronald Robinson who, a few years later, famously epitomised the politics of collaboration as the non-European foundation of European imperialism. Domination was ‘only practicable’, he argued, echoing his former student, ‘in so far as alien power [was] translated into terms of indigenous political economy. The substance of [officials’] ruling authority had to a great extent to be extracted from their subjects.’³ In the Kenya highlands, as already remarked, it was helpful to the British that ‘indigenous political economy’ was itself expanding. By 1914 the EAP, as measured by its export trade, was more an Indo-African colony than one of white settlement.

If Cashmore helped to provoke seminal ideas on the question of collaboration his thesis also gives fascinating indications of his original thoughts on what became another, fourth, scholarly interest, still continuing, in the history of African ethnicity or ‘tribal identity’. Before the Great War most, not all, officials saw tribes in much the same way—and just as inaccurately—as they saw their own European nations: Each with its own peculiar culture, with separate histories from time out of mind, within clear linguistic and social boundaries. Cashmore at times questions the validity of such a tidy view of ethnicity (for which see ‘tribe’ in the Index). A whole literature has followed, exploring such doubts. Most historians would now agree that ethnic boundaries have become much sharper in the past century. Not the least stimulus has been internal ethnic argument—about old culture and new religion, about lineage authority and the social and economic mobility of literacy. Such debates made people increasingly self-aware, an insight of which Cashmore also gives us brief glimpses.⁴

¹ See his comment on Ole Gilisho (Legalishu) on page 164.

² R. D. Waller, ‘The Maasai and the British, 1895-1905: The origins of an alliance’, *Journal of African History* 17 (1976), 529-53; idem. ‘Emutai: Crisis and response in Maasailand 1883-1902’, chapter 3 in Johnson and Anderson, *Ecology of Survival*; Lotte Hughes, *Moving the Maasai: A colonial misadventure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

³ Ronald Robinson, ‘Non-European foundations of European imperialism: Sketch for a theory of collaboration’, chapter V in Roger Owen & Bob Sutcliffe (eds), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972), quotations from pp. 119, 133.

⁴ For two surveys see, Carola Lentz, ‘“Tribalism” and ethnicity in Africa: A review of four decades of anglophone research’, *Cahiers des sciences humaines* 31 (1995), 303-28; Thomas Spear, ‘Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British colonial Africa’, *Journal of African History* 44 (2003), 3-27. For Molonket (Cashmore: 161-2) and the previously inconceivable possibility that he and other literates without cattle could be proper Maasai, Richard Waller, ‘They do the dictating and we must submit: The Africa Inland Mission in Maasailand’, chapter 5 in Thomas Spear and Isaria N. Kimambo (eds), *East African Expressions of Christianity* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999); for parallel reflections among Kikuyu see, John Lonsdale, ‘The moral economy of Mau Mau’, chapters 11 & 12 in Berman & Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*; and Derek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping and the work of the imagination in colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2004).

As a fifth and final example of how Cashmore helped to point the way for later scholars one may turn to his discussion the First World War near destruction of the politics of collaboration in central Kenya, so providing conditions for the birth of African nationalism. African substance in blood and treasure, men and livestock, was leeched by war. Service in the Carrier Corps that supplied the campaign in German East Africa (mainland Tanzania) gave some Africans a taste for organisation. But those educated men who remained as district clerks, mission translators or telephone operators and press compositors in Nairobi were still more alarmed by the way in which white settlers benefited from the war. Here was the seed-bed of a new African politics, organised by mission-schooled literates and advertising itself with pamphlets and mass meetings. Nor were their district officers, equally shocked by the effects of the war on 'their people', entirely unsympathetic to these new challengers to their paternalism, these men in trousers. Subsequent scholarship has shown that Cashmore was absolutely right to call the Great War Kenya's 'break with the past'.¹

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¹ Edward Paice, *Tip and Run: The untold tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Orion, 2007) for the campaign; Geoffrey Hodges, *The Carrier Corps: Military labor in the East African campaign 1914-1918* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986). For the new politicians (Cashmore: 205-06) see, Harry Thuku, with Kenneth King, *An Autobiography* (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1970) and, for Koinange wa Mbiyu, Marshall S. Clough, *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan chiefs and politicians, 1918-1940* (Niwot CO: University Press of Colorado, 1990).

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ABBREVIATIONS

In the Text and Notes:

ADC	Assistant District Commissioner
ADO	Assistant District Officer
AIM	Africa Inland Mission
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
GEA	German East Africa
IBEA	Imperial British East Africa Company
KAR	King's African Rifles
NFD	Northern Frontier District
PC	Provincial Commissioner
SC	Sub Commissioner

In the Notes and Bibliography:

AG	Attorney General
AR	Annual Report
CO	Colonial Office
COP	Colonial Office (confidential print)
CS	Chief Secretary
cl.	column
des.	despatch
EAP	East Africa Protectorate
EAS	East African Standard
EPD	Extra Provincial District
Encl.	enclosure
FO	Foreign Office
FOP	Foreign Office (confidential print)
IAI	International African Institute
IG	Inspector General (KAR or Police)
JAS	Journal of the African Society
JAH	Journal of African History
JEAUNHS	Journal of the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society
JIAI	Journal of the International African Institute
JH	The Historical Journal
JRAI	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
HE	His Excellency (the Governor)
HMC	His Majesty's Commissioner
HO	Handing Over (Report)
LEA	Leader of East Africa
NAD	Native Affairs Department
nd	No date
OG	Official Gazette of the East Africa Protectorate

O & R	Ordinances and Regulations
TNR	Tanganyika Notes and Records
Tg	Telegram
UJ	Uganda Journal
Note:	For the abbreviations used in connection with Kenya Records, see the Bibliography Part II B.

Bantu prefixes and Swahili words

For convenience's sake, I have used in most cases merely the stem of a tribal name. Strictly speaking, references to the Giryama as a people should be "WaGiryama" (or, as they prefer, "AGiryama"). Their language would be "Kigiryama" and their country "Ugiryama". I have used the stem "Giryama" throughout.

Certain Swahili phrases have become loan words in the East African version of the English tongue, e.g. Boma (station), safari (journey), baraza (public meeting), fitina (slander, mischief-making), shauri (affair, matter). I have tried to keep "boma argot" to the minimum.

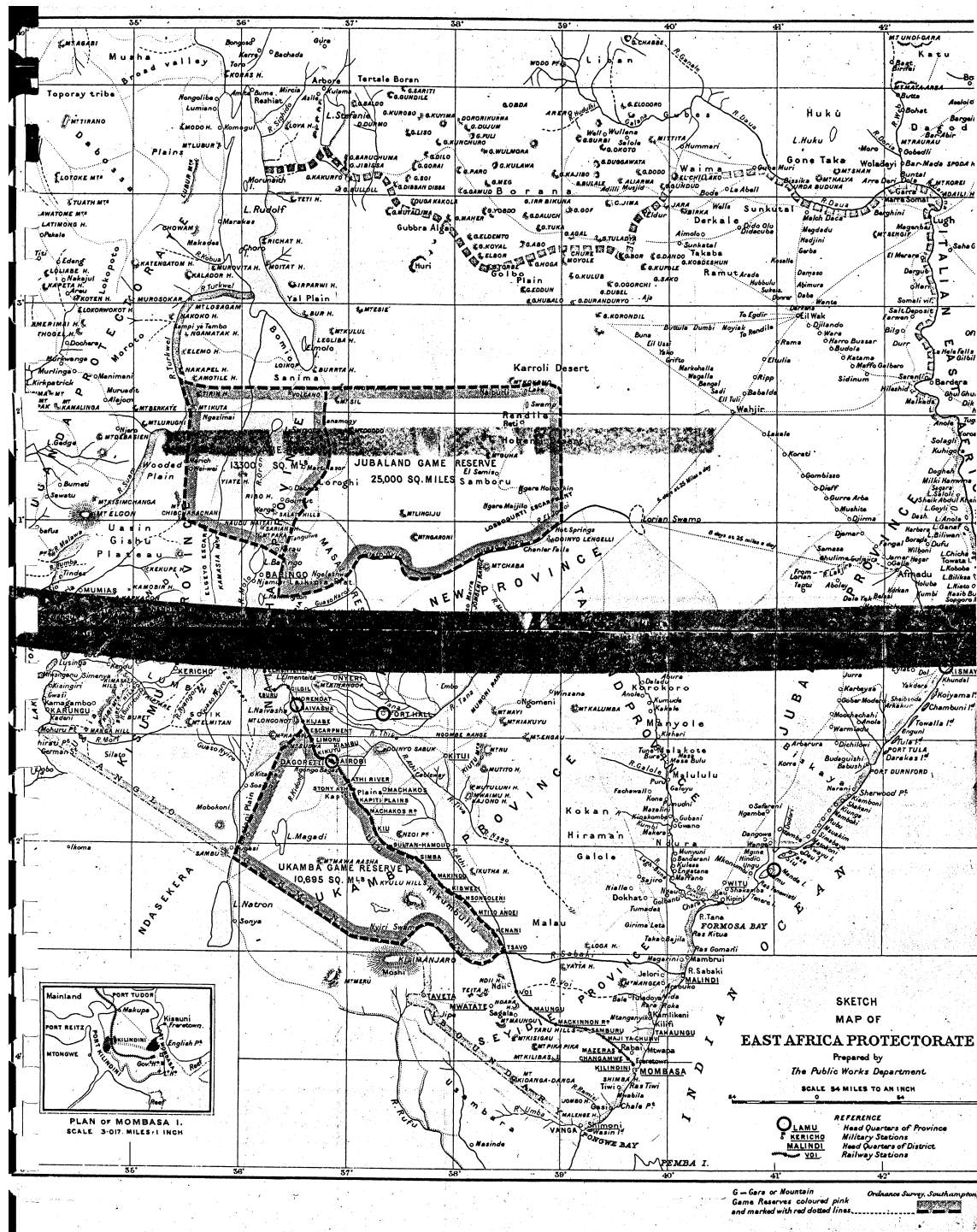
To avoid confusion, the spelling "Kenia" has been used when referring to the province of that name, "Kenya", the name of the territory, came into existence in 1920, the province changing its name to "Kikuyu", and the old title "East Africa Protectorate" going out of use. (For many years it was not uncommon habit to refer to the Protectorate as "British East Africa" or "BEA".)

Maps and Cartoons

- I. East Africa in 1904
- II. East Africa 1910
- III. The Ungazetted Nyika Reserve 1910
- IV. Sketch Map of the Masai Reserves
- V. The Juba River Basin 1897
- VI. Sketch Map of Frontier region in 1918
- VII. Sketch Map, Administrative Divisions, 1918

Cartoons

The cartoons reproduced in Part 1 and Part 2 were the work of H.R.McClure in 1915-16, when D.C. Nyeri.



INTRODUCTION

In a remote district headquarters in Kenya, a significant filing system was in use for some years. Secret mail arriving from on high was placed on a file entitled “God’s eye view”; copies of replies on a file marked “worm’s eye view”¹. History also depends on the point of view, which, however subjective, gives part of the historical reality. This study is not an objective history of the early Administration in the old East Africa Protectorate. Rather it is an attempt to sketch the pioneer district officer, to uncover some of the problems inherent in his role as the local agent of an Imperial power and in his efforts to carry out its policy. Almost all previous studies have been made from the standpoint of Whitehall or of the Colonial Governor. The “worm’s eye view” of the district officer seeks to bring down to earth a fragment of colonial African history that has been too much distorted by its Olympian viewpoint.

During the period 1895 to 1918, the British Empire – still in the process of growth – was impressive both in its size and its problems. Men of affairs, living in the mother country, could be forgiven if their interest in – and knowledge of – a particular region was both superficial and uneven. In such a vast Empire, it was easy to lose sight of the narrow local problems within the comparatively insignificant East Africa Protectorate². Interest was too often aroused by ‘unfortunate’ incidents that disturbed the conscience of a relatively enlightened country, which, however ill-informed on the facts, was eager to pass judgement in terms of moral principles. And since the home Government was answerable to Parliament and to public opinion for the acts of its servants many thousands of miles away, Whitehall was pre-occupied with questions of ethics. Its chief concern was with those matters that were politically embarrassing or financially worrying at the Treasury; its main object was to avoid native wars, rebellions, and other incidents, that might tarnish the imperial image in the public eye.³ Correspondence between Whitehall and Colonial Governors was largely directed to relieving the troubled conscience of England. But the Governor claimed a monopoly of official information and advice for his territory; as the King’s representative he had also a monopoly of executive authority, which succeeding Secretaries of State seldom challenged.⁴ Communications from the Colony, on the other hand, tended to give the minimum of local administrative information, both for the sake of brevity and, perhaps, to deny Whitehall opportunities to interfere with

¹ Mandera District Records. These files were started in about 1942.

² The Protectorate does not earn a single reference in the thousand pages of Halevy’s “Imperialism and the Rise of Labour” and the “Rule of Democracy”. Nor does it appear to have merited much attention from the Cabinet of the Committee of Imperial Defence (Vide “List of Cabinet Papers” (PRO. 1964) and “List of Papers of the Committee of Imperial Defence” (PRO. 1964).

³ For instance the humanitarian and political concern reflected the minute of Churchill, then Under Secretary, regarding punitive measures in Kisii. “It looks like butchery, and if the H. of C. gets hold of it all our plans in EAP will be under a cloud” (3.2.08. CO 533/41/3648).

⁴ “the single and supreme authority responsible to and representative of His Majesty” (Regulations for H.M.’s Colonial Service (1908) Chapter 1, section 4). Cf. also C. Jeffries “The Colonial Office” p.5. The administrators were the Governor’s representatives in their provinces and districts. (C. Jeffries “The Colonial Empire and its Civil Service” p.132). But under the East African Orders in Council (s.4 (1902) and s.3 (1906)) Governors were required to follow the directives of the Secretary of State. In 1904, Eliot resigned rather than comply. In 1911 – over the Cole Deportation – Girouard unwillingly obeyed.

local action. The result is that the records of Whitehall contain little about methods of carrying out policy in the districts or provinces, except when one of those ‘embarrassing’ incidents, that aroused the wrath of the humanitarians, produced more information than usual.¹ Yet it was at the provincial and district level that the meaning and shape of policy in action was decided. Between the idea of policy and exposition in the field stood the human translator of Imperialism, the District Officer and Provincial Commissioner. British Colonial Administration with its emphasis on devolution and scope for individualism allowed policy an extraordinary flexibility in practice. There were weak links in the chain of command and the strain on these links was all the heavier, because the Imperial and Colonial Governments operated within sharply differing systems of politics, government, and society.

Within the Colonial Administrative structure, wide differences of conditions existed between provinces – even between districts – in terms of tribes, languages, and customs. The links joining the Governor, with his Secretariat, to the PC, and beyond the PC to the DC – influenced by contrasting personalities, temperaments, and ideas – were of a highly personal kind, whose efficiency was by no means constant.² Such a situation gave rise to conflicts of opinion and differing local interpretations of policy. Where the Governor lacked a definite policy – by no means a rare occurrence – then the initiative left to the subordinate administrative officers to act, or to avoid action, was large. And where the Governor held firm views of policy, it was still necessary to leave the man on the spot room for manoeuvre to allow for each peculiar situation.

From London to Nairobi, from Nairobi through the Provincial Headquarters to the ‘Bush’, the chain of command reached down to the local executive agent in the district, the DC, with if he was fortunate, one or two white assistants and a few native agents. His role was an isolated and often lonely one; the area under his nominal sway frequently vast and bearing little resemblance to the ordered and tidy existence of distant England. At this level, the administrative problem was not a matter of the ideal but of the possible; ideas had to be translated into action or discarded as impracticable. It is at the point of action locally that the ‘hinge’ of the Colonial system is found. It is here that the real meaning of Colonial policy from the African point of view is decided.

The administrative officer, often ‘on his own’, had to resort to ‘personal’ government. Indeed almost everything depended on his personality. Nevertheless, he lacked the power and the instruments for despotism. His first duty was to keep order in his district as inexpensively as possible, and it usually paid therefore “to let sleeping dogs lie”. On the one hand, to use force was almost a confession of failure. On the other, he was aware that ultimately force was the only basis of his authority. This was the perpetual dilemma of his rule. Originally derived from coercion, his authority normally depended upon native consent. Force was expensive and might be

¹ Contrast the Masai with the Giryama (see *infra*).

² For instance the frequent illnesses of the Lieutenant Governor, F.J. Jackson, or the fact that his successor, Bowring, had no field experience, but was a Treasury Official. Again, note Sir Alan Pim’s comment on the P.C., whose value “depends on his own personal qualities: he may be a stimulating and controlling influence He may on the other hand tend to degenerate into a mere post office”. (1936. Colonial 116. Report). For similar criticisms through the years note Anderson to the CO 19.1.05 (00 533/4/4725), LegCo Minutes 1st Session 1918 p.27, and Witness 252 to the Native Labour Commission (1913).

embarrassing at Westminster; therefore it was rarely available. The administrative officer had to achieve his ends, if at all, by threat and bluff, prestige and the aid of native collaborators, who might win for him the acquiescence – if not the consent – of the tribal societies. In these conditions, much depended upon the native agents of colonial rule; the levers by which alone the administrator might win the co-operation and the control of his subjects with the minimum of force and expense. The field officer was the ‘hinge’ linking the Colonial Office to its subjects; the mediator between two cultures and two worlds; the point at which policy was translated into action or petered out irrelevantly in the African bush.

Hence the ultimate comment on policy was the comment of the native collaborators. In the final analysis, it was their authority over their own people, or lack of it, which determined the practicability of policy in any particular area. The effectiveness of policy turned on the ability of the local administrator to win the consent and support of his native agents, and on their ability to convince their own people. In extreme circumstances the administrator might become the prisoner and tool of his own people, dictated to rather than dictating. It is this element of consent or acquiescence that was the source of much heated argument between the field officers, conscious of local opinion, and the Secretariat, conscious of policy at the centre. And from the Imperial point of view the danger was that the administrative officer, performing a dual role as agent of a white government and representative of local opinion and conditions, might reverse the order of priorities. In the search for consent or acquiescence, he might be forced into the role of a substitute paramount chief. This African aspect of Colonial Administration has too often been over-looked in studies of the larger themes of colonial policy. Perhaps, in the first phase of pacification and government – particularly in the more isolated areas and amongst segmentary societies – the early administration was not so much the first period of white rule as the last phase of native government. This paradox could have schizophrenic effects upon the district officer; the strength of the ‘hinge’ turned on his ability to resolve the personal dilemma of two inescapable but often incompatible roles.

The field officer’s dilemma was complicated by other difficulties. The British Government had occupied East Africa with no firm or clear purpose of Colonial development in mind, but mainly for strategic reasons in Egypt and on the Nile. For this purpose a railway was commenced. After Fashoda, the strategic necessity vanished, but there was now a financial need to find means of covering the cost of administration and making the railway pay. For lack of exportable products¹ white settlement was adopted, not without some backward glances. With settlement came South African ideas of native policy² and settlement brought white demands for security, for African land, and for African labour. The East African administrator, unlike his counterpart in West Africa or Uganda, was faced with the task of achieving cheap government through African acquiescence, and at the same time of meeting the growing demands of white settlers. These demands placed a heavy strain on the native agents and collaborators, no less than on the administrator. And amidst all his dilemmas, central policy offered nought for his comfort, because it remained both ambiguous and inconsistent.

¹ Unlike Uganda, British East Africa’s native exports were slow to develop; cf table of exports; *infra*.

² “We cannot get away from the fact that South African ideas have in great measure become the ideas of East Africa”. (J. Ainsworth to F. J. Jackson. 31.2.04 (FO 2/843)).

A great diversity of pastoral and agricultural, Muslim and animist peoples, native to the Protectorate, communicated with Government – at least in times of peace – through the agency of the field officer. Each community differed in its problems and in its reactions to white settlement. As their spokesman and representative, the administrator was torn between his duty to his Government and his sympathy for ‘his’ people. Again, the Service itself was torn between pro-white and pro-native ideas of developing the country. The field officer was trapped between the devil and the deep blue settler; his response was highly individualistic and often contradictory. In addition to questions of principle, he was moved by a sense of the practical in weighing the merits of threat and bluff, consent and force. But since he needed the acquiescence of his district, his actions were often influenced by local opinion. Indeed they fluctuated with the people he served, varying from district to district. Like the chameleon, the administrator’s policies – perhaps his principles – tended to change according to the character of his district.

This is not to say that effective policy was made by the district officer rather than by Whitehall or by the Secretariat. But owing to the circumstances of the time, there was usually a hiatus between policy and action, between the theory of administration and its practice, that was almost unbridgeable. The executive agent of Government was the plaything of forces that pulled him in opposite directions, and often the “worm’s eye view” was the more important.

Perhaps the peculiarly personal role of the administrator was most marked in those districts beyond the fringes of white settlement. African populations in these areas retained an intense conservatism, either from the absence of the demonstrated advantages of change, or from ignorance, or from deliberate rejection of European methods; so that they adamantly followed the old ways. The administrator, harbinger of the blessing of civilization, found such peoples peculiarly unresponsive to western ideas. Whereas in the years before the First War, the Protectorate Government achieved some success with the large agricultural tribes, among the more conservative pastoralists, or Muslim communities, its progress was slow. These peoples withheld their co-operation, or the levers of traditional Government (or those artificial ones ‘discovered’ by the alien rulers) proved inadequate. It is these areas that are the chief concern of this study. The choice of fringe districts is large; Turkana or Suk, Nandi or Samburu, Duruma or Elgeyo, Teita or Pokomo, to name but a few. Personal predilection has led me to concentrate on only 4 areas, which I believe illustrate that pastoralism and conservatism which did so much to frustrate early administrators and baffle the European search for levers of control.

But the focus of this study is also upon the ‘hinge’ of policy in action. In examining the ideas and actions of the pioneer administrators, I have drawn on the records of all the districts and provinces in Kenya to supplement those of Whitehall. Unfortunately white ants and the indifference of busy men have taken their toll, so that the local records are uneven both in bulk and in value. Still, such as they are, they do give “the worm’s eye view”.

PART ONE

MEN AND IDEAS

“In quiet and untroubled times it seems to every administrator that it is only by his efforts that the whole population under his rule is kept going, and in this consciousness of being indispensable every administrator finds the chief reward of his labour and efforts. While the sea of history remains calm the ruler-administrator in his frail bark, holding on with a boat-hook to the ship of the people, and himself moving, naturally imagines that his efforts move the ship he is holding on to. But as soon as the storm arises and the sea begins to heave and the ship to move, such a delusion is no longer possible. The ship moves independently with its own enormous motion, the boat-hook no longer reaches the moving vessel, and suddenly the administrator, instead of appearing a ruler and source of power, becomes an insignificant, useless, feeble man”.

(Tolstoy: “War and Peace”)

Provincial Commissioners' Meeting. A.D. 1930.
 (At the present rate of promotion)



The last of the District Commrs. gives evidence before a Committee.

From all surrounding official correspondence,
 God has deliv'd us!



CHAPTER I

THE ADMINISTRATORS

It has been suggested that the Colonial Empire provided a vast system of outdoor relief for the English middle classes.¹ If this was true, then the lot of those who served in the East Africa Protectorate was not a happy one; the relief was small and the hazards not inconsiderable. Furthermore, the first administrators hardly represented a unified social class.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the social origins and educational background of the early Kenya administrators, although this probably sheds more light on the society from which they came, than on the character of the Administration which they served. For once in the Service, what was important was not so much their origins as the impress their role as district officers stamped upon them. The power of the African environment to mould its alien rulers was not the least of the factors governing colonial policy in action.

The East Africa Protectorate came into Existence on the 1st July 1895. For its first ten years it remained under the control of the Foreign Office and until 1904, it shared its Commissioner with Zanzibar. In April 1905 control over the Protectorate passed to the Colonial Office, and in 1907 – with the introduction of Legislative and Executive Councils – the Commissioner changed his title to that of Governor. From 1895 to 1918, there were, in all, six Governors (or Commissioners): but of these only two completed full tours of service; two others resigned, one died, and one was transferred.²

At first the territory had no Secretariat; the Commissioner's office remained in Zanzibar. In 1902 Sir Charles Eliot established a Secretariat in Mombasa, and this was transferred to Nairobi in 1907.³ It was controlled by the Secretary to the administration under the direction of the Governor's deputy.⁴

¹ cf. R Heussler. "Yesterday's Rulers" p 35; Note also the comment of a mid-19th century Australian newspaper, "we don't care whether...Russian civil servants replace the British pauper aristocracy in Hindustan offices" (quoted in "Immigration". Melbourne University Press. 1960, p.8).

² Sir Arthur Hardinge 1895-1900; Sir Charles Eliot 1900-04; Sir Donald Stewart 1904-05; Sir James Hayes Sadler 1905-09; Sir Percy Girouard 1909-12; Sir Henry Conway Belfield 1912-17; Hardinge and Eliot were professional diplomats. Sadler, Stewart and Girouard had been regular soldiers. Belfield was a barrister. But most had some administrative service. Stewart in the Gold Coast, Sadler in India, Somaliland and Uganda, Girouard in Nigeria, and Belfield in Malaya. It is curious to note how the age of Governors steadily increased. (Their ages – at the start of their rule – were 36; 38; 44; 54; 42; 56.)

³ But it was usually staffed by junior administrative officials and was "inclined to keep people quiet rather than raise fruitful controversies..... to feel happiest when the days work has been successfully distributed between those two great solaces of official life, the waste paper basket and the pigeon hole." (Sir C. Eliot "East Africa Protectorate", p.204).

⁴ Deputy Commissioner from 1900 to 1907, then Lieutenant Governor till 1911, thereafter Chief Secretary; (when the post of Secretary to the Administration was abolished, as was that of Secretary for Native Affairs).

In the provinces – numbering four at first, but increased to seven after 1902¹ - the Governor's representative and principle executive arm was the Sub Commissioner who after 1907 was called "Provincial Commissioner"². At District level, and under the control of the P.Cs, were Collectors (D.Cs) and Assistant Collectors (A.D.Cs). This organisation remained unchanged until 1921³.

The Provincial Administration – the P.Cs and A.D.Cs – numbered 22 in 1897. By 1918 it had expanded to 141.⁴ These figures represented the authorised establishment; actual strength was much smaller, as a result of sickness leave, secondments or unfilled vacancies. Under the most favourable circumstances, the staff averaged out at 1 administrator for every 10,000 sq miles and 150,000 people in 1897; and 1 for every 2,000 sq miles and 21,000 people in 1918.

These officers were recruited from three sources: home, locally and from other territories. In the early years most of the staff were drawn from local sources, particularly from the ranks of former Imperial British East Africa Company officials. But in later years home recruitment predominated, and with it the proportion of university men greatly increased. In addition, a strong contingent came from South Africa. There were also transfers from Uganda, West Africa, and Somaliland. From these diverse sources a Service was created of men with varied backgrounds, outlook and experience.

The pioneer administrators were curiously mixed. A.C.W. Ainsworth, the son of a Manchester trader, had been brought up and educated in North Wales. A year in the Manchester Home Trade Warehouse was followed by five years' trading in West Africa and the Congo. Contracting fever, he left the Congo to join the I.B.E.A. Company at the age of 25. Francis Hall, the nephew of Lord Goschen and son of a soldier, had been born in India. A former clerk in the Bank of England, he had lived in South Africa for 12 years, before joining the I.B.E.A. Company. D.J. Wilson had come to East Africa from India as a superintendent of telegraphs. Tritton had been a master mariner. Farrant, a Eurasian, came from India as a clerk.⁵ Bagge, J.R.W.

¹ Seyidie, Tanaland, Jubaland, and Ukamba. To these were added Naivasha, Kenia, and Kisumu in 1902. In 1910 an Extra Provincial District for the N.F.D. was added. In 1912 another E.P.D. – Masai – was created. Administrative stations and districts, were first established along the Coast, on the Tana River, and on the L.of C. to Uganda. As pacification proceeded so new out stations were opened: 1897 Kitui and Taveta; 1900 Fort Hall; 1902 Nyeri; 1903 Karungu; 1906 Embu; 1908 Meru. By 1912 an administrative framework existed for the whole territory.

² Hereafter abbreviated to S.C. and P.C.

³ In 1921, "Dual Administration" based on the South African example, was introduced. Native areas came under the C.N.C, and settled areas under the C.S. The system was abandoned in 1929.

⁴ The authorised Establishment 1897-1918:

	S.C.s (P.Cs)	Collectors (D.Cs)	Assistant Collectors (A.D.Cs)
1897	4	7	11
1903	7	19	20
1910	6	30	45
1913	6	33	51
1918	6	44	91

(1897 Report p.28; Confidential Report 25.5.10 p.69); (CO 533/74/18381); Confidential Report 19.2.12 p.186 (CO 533/102/8232); Report Civil Service Commission 1919 p.17)

⁵ Cf. des. 16.4.06. on 533/18/45831.

Piggott, and McClellan were parsons' sons. Piggott, "a strict and zealous churchman",¹ married a lady missionary. Before coming to East Africa, he had been a tea planter in Ceylon and had spent two years exploring Australia. In 1896 he transferred to the Consular Service. Bagge – who served in Uganda till 1902 – was formerly a rancher in America, McClellan, educated at Malvern and the Royal Agricultural College, came to East Africa in 1895. Crawshay – who had served in Nyasaland – and Goldie Taubmann were regular army officers. Rogers, also a former army officer, had served with the Punjab Police. J.J. Anderson, a Norwegian, and an engineer, had resigned from a minor post with the Norwegian Government, because he objected to its Radical ministry.² Hollis the son of a barrister, had been educated in Germany and Switzerland. Charles Wise had come out to East Africa as a Church Missionary Society lay artisan. Hobley – another of the 1902 contingent from Uganda – had been educated at King Edward VI's Grammar School, Nuneaton and Mason College, Birmingham. Joining the I.B.E.A. Company, he had served as a geologist. F.J Jackson – also a Uganda man – had been a gentleman of private means. Educated at Shrewsbury and Jesus College, Cambridge, he had then joined the Company. Hinde, a doctor, born in Canada and the son of an army doctor, had served in the Congo. Craufurd, a Scot from Ayrshire, had been in India and on the Nile Expedition of 1884/85. Like Piggott he was one of the few married officials. Dugmore, and Godfrey – both army officers – were former members of the eccentric Freelanders' Association³. Kenneth MacDougall, a Scot, was the son of a poor farmer. H.R. Tate, educated at Sherborne, had ranched in North Dakota and had been in business in London for two years. G.H.L. Murray, educated at Radley and Oxford, after employment in Somerset House, had twelve years' service with the Natal Mounted Police. Traill, a parson's son, had been privately educated. Isaac, another parson's son, came to the territory from Uganda in 1902. Educated at Wolverhampton and Swansea Grammar School, he had six years farming and surveying in California⁴. In 1896 the uneven quality of recruits caused Sir Lloyd Mathews, then Political Member of the Protectorate Council, to warn against

"Europeans who have no knowledge or experience of natives and cannot keep their temper under control; their one idea of administration being in showing their importance, in frequent use of the lash, and teaching the native that he is an inferior being."⁵

Though the Commissioner, Hardinge, took a more optimistic view, not all the field officers agreed. After troubles with the Collector at Fort Smith, Ainsworth noted in his diary in June 1898:

¹ Sir A Hardinge "Diplomatist in the East" p.195. Note also C.W. Hobley "From Chartered Company to Crown Colony" p.72-73.

² FOP 6761/84. encl. Hardinge to FO 6.7.95.

³ The Freelanders inspired by the ideas of an Austrian economist, Dr Hertzka, sought to establish an ideal community inland of Lamu in the 1890s (cf. Gazette of Zanzibar 9.3.92; 14.2.94; 21.3.94).

⁴ Vide Isaac's application for promotion on CO 533/18/44011. Information on other individuals is drawn from staff volumes FO/2 (138, 165, 206, 303, 467, 578, 427, 720, 721, 843, 844, 918). After 1905 the CO/533 series ("Individuals"); and the Patronage Series (CO 429). The brief biographies in the early "Diaries of East Africa" and the later "Red Books" are more informative than the FO and CO. Staff lists. Useful information can be gleaned from the numerous memorials in Mombasa Cathedral.

⁵ MPA. Foreign Office In. 1896-97. Hardinge to FO, with Mathews' memo. 12.4.96.

“It only goes to prove what I am afraid Sir Arthur Hardinge will never realise, that anyone will not do to administer a district.”¹

Eighteen months later, Broderick in the Foreign Office minuted: “I fear we are much open to attack as to our officials in East Africa”.² Amongst the early administrators there was good deal of ‘dead wood’ for future years; officers who could not be promoted and whose postings always caused difficulties.³

With the expansion of the Service, recruitment increased. At first the intake numbered about two a year, but by 1900 it increased to six. Thereafter it fluctuated between three in 1905 and twenty in 1913, falling off sharply after the outbreak of the Great War.⁴ No formal examination was required for entry, nor was there any preliminary training, though many new officers were first attached to the Mombasa Treasury for three months. They were also expected to pass a language examination; normally Kiswahili. After 1907, a law examination was instituted. And in 1909 the Colonial Office introduced a three months’ course in London in Surveying, Accounts and Law for Cadets but its utility was questionable.⁵

Officers with previous experience in other departments of the local Government were recruited from time to time; the two Hemsted brothers and J.O.W. Hope from the Treasury; Barrett, Aylmer, Levison, Gower and Salkeld from the King’s African Rifles; T. Dickson from the Customs; Francis Elliott from the Police; Lamb from the Survey; Gray from the Governor’s Office; and Stone from the K.A.R. Paymaster’s Office.

Other Recruits – particularly in the days of Foreign Office rule – made their own way out to the territory and were locally engaged: Jackson’s nephew, Archer; Hamilton the Principal Judge’s brother and McClure amongst others. But the Colonial Office objected to this practice and complained of Commissioner Stewart, that “he is much inclined to put in local people without consulting us”.⁶ They also feared the influx of too many recruits from South Africa – “africani escurentes”⁷ – and quickly asserted control of patronage by filling most vacancies with home candidates.

Even so, a number of officers with South African experience entered the Protectorate administration after the Boer War, or after being retrenched from the Transvaal or Orange River civil services. Mansergh and Monckton were regular army officers who had served in the Boer War. Neligan, Osborne, E.F Webster and H.H Horne had served with the Imperial Yeomanry. D.B Pigott, a barrister, had served in the Transvaal Civil Service until 1907. Monier Williams – an Oxford rowing blue – had

¹ Ainsworth Diaries (Rhodes House Mss Afr. 377-378) 3.6.98.

² FO 2/427 Minute on des. 19.1.1900. cf also Meinertzhagen “Kenya Diary”. 12.1.04. “many of them do not pretend to be members of the educated class”.

³ In 1913 the C.S had to warn P.Cs against protesting over the postings of certain unwanted senior D.Cs (Circular 12.6.13 NFD/141.)

⁴ Based on Staff Lists in Annual Blue Books and Notices in the Official Gazettes.

⁵ So in 1918 Hobley wanted a year’s course but “The course should not be a perfunctory matter like the old instructional course”. Civil Service Commission 1919, p.62 cf also H.Seaton “Lion in the Morning” p.3-8.

⁶ Read to Harris. CO 533/2/24216. Harris elsewhere commented “we are too much in danger of abandoning these posts to the men who find their way out to the Protectorates”. (CO 533/18/44002).

⁷ Fiddian’s minute on CO 533/18/44002.

been in the Orange River Colony. Scholefield had 13 years' service with the Bechuanaland Police and then the B.S.A. Police. J.E. Stocker had five years with the Cape Mounted Rifles. H.R. Montgomery – son of a bishop and brother of a later field marshal – went to South Africa with the Yeomanry and then served with the Police until his retrenchment in 1907. Watkins – a parson's son – was with the Transvaal Civil Service for four years. Kittermaster – another parson's son and a rowing blue – served in the Transvaal Education Department for five years.

For some the Boer War acted as a catalyst; for example J.H. Osborne. The son of a Sheffield clergyman, he had been educated at Leatherhead and Cambridge. Failing the Indian Civil Service examination, he entered the Sheffield Atlas Steel and Iron works as a clerk. Two years later, he left to join the Imperial Yeomanry and fought in South Africa. The wanderlust spoilt him for the steel mills. After the Boer War, he went farming in Canada and then tried his hand as a preparatory school master before coming to the Protectorate aged 29 and still a bachelor.¹

Of those who came to the territory on transfer from other colonies, the most important group were those who came from Uganda in 1902, some of them former I.B.E.A. officials.² In addition there was Walter Mayes, a seaman who had been beached after the loss of his ship, and Hyde Baker, a nephew of Baker of the Nile. Granville came from Nigeria after ten years' service as a Resident there. Le Poer Power was from Somaliland. C.E. Spencer had fifteen years' service in Cyprus. P.L. Deacon transferred after two years with the Egyptian Education department. Mervyn Beech, a Suffolk parson's son, had been a D.O. in North Borneo.

There was always a strong military element. To those already mentioned must be added Cooke, Luckman, Champion, Bell V.C, J.A.G. Eliot, Mure, Athill, Hazzlerigg, and Orde Brown; all regular army officers. In addition McClure, Lawford, Hewitt, and A.D.C. Gibson were Royal Naval Officers.

Earlier careers provided no standard for recruitment. Wade, a later Chief Secretary, was classics master for five years. Silberad had qualified as a gold assayer. J.A.R. Eliot had worked for nine years in an English bank. H.H. Horne had been a rancher in the U.S.A. and a planter in Mexico. He had also acted as Vice Consul in Mexico City. After the Boer War he had been on an expedition to Brazil financed by J.P. Morgan, the millionaire.

His brother, E.B. Horne, had been a lumberjack in Canada. Castle Smith, leaving Westminster School, went to sea for a year and then to Mexico. Welby, a product of Eton and Oxford, also spent some years working in Mexico. W.F.G. Campbell was a tea planter in Ceylon before the Boer War brought him to Africa. Crisford had worked with the Bombay Burmah Trading Company.

England – and the office desk – produced a sense of claustrophobia. A young auditor after tasting the excitement of the 'bush', applied for an administrative post, and gave his reasons.

¹ CO 533/9/43739.

² Jackson, Hobley, Bagge, Reddie, Foaker, Hyde Baker, Isaac, Mayes, all saw service in Uganda.

“But can you conceive what it will be for me with my peculiar instinct for life with nature, and the glimpse – the vista which my enthusiasm is now opening up to me, and my indifference to town delights - to return to the old life living in the heart of London.... wrapt in the luxuries and safety of civilization? The intolerable, the appalling monotony of it, and the regrets for the free and strong life I have missed.”¹ It was his zest for adventure that led Winston Churchill, then Colonial Under-Secretary, to minute on one applicant’s file:

“I think the desire for an open air life, instead of an office stool at £160 a year in a French firm is natural in spite of the hardships and dangers”.²

But sometimes men fled for political reasons as was the case with one Dublin Barrister. “I am a Protestant and not the believer in Home Rule for Ireland.”³

As more recruits were required, so the Colonial Office deliberately sought out university man. In 1907 it had stated its desiderata as either a degree, a regular commission, qualifications as a barrister or solicitor, or a Civil service examination candidate who had scored not less than 1500 marks.⁴ By 1910 the Governor could stress that “the time has passed when we should recruit our staff from so-called pioneers and cowpunchers”.⁵ Whilst a settler peer felt the need for “less masterful but more intellectual and refined officials”.⁶

Accurate figures to mark the change in the social structure of the service are not available. But in 1903 the “Diary of East Africa” listed forty officers with brief biographical details. Of these five had been to Oxford, four to Cambridge, and three to other universities. Six were educated on the Continent, and fifteen listed their public schools. A similar publication in 1909 – again information is uneven – listed seven men from Oxford, eight from Cambridge, six from other universities, eight educated on the continent, and twenty seven at public schools, out of an establishment of just over eighty men.⁷ Increasingly the university recruits predominated. Between November 1911 and March 1912 eight cadets came out to the Protectorate. Three had been to Oxford and three to Cambridge; the youngest twenty two, the oldest thirty one. All were bachelors. Of the five officers who came out between April and May 1913, all had been to Oxford or to Cambridge.⁸

Amongst the men who joined the Administration between 1895 and 1914, ten became Colonial Governors. Only one of these was a former I.B.E.A. official. Of the Cadets recruited between 1895-1907, three became governors; of those between 1908-1914, six were so promoted. Amongst these ten men, five had been to Oxford and two to

¹ Bromley to Bromley senior. CO 533/19/20360. 16.5.06.

² CO 429/27/16636. 24.1.07.

³ C.M Barton to CO 12.1.13. CO 429/63/1491.

⁴ Memo of Meeting E.A. and W.A. departments 22.11.07. CO 429/26/1491.

⁵ Girouard to Seely. 14.6.10. CO 533/74/22078. p.16

⁶ Lord Cranworth. “Colony in the Making” p.78. Of the pioneers, he complained that they were “somewhat swollen headed”.

⁷ Based on “Red Book” 1909 (published by E.A.S.) which contains a brief “Who’s Who”.

⁸ Vide CO 533/97/8629 and 27176; CO 533/107/3352a; CO 533/113/39522.

Cambridge, one was the son of a peer (who was also a Consular official), two were lawyers' sons, and four were sons of parsons.¹

Steadily the colourful variety of the pioneers gave way to the sobriety of the sons of the professional classes. The public school boy was well to the fore. Much was made of the virtues of the English gentleman. So Delamere, in supporting an applicant for an administrative appointment, stressed:

"We want gentlemen badly for a Black and White Community like ours as they are the only people who seem to be able to even approximately hold the balance even".²

Again much emphasis was placed on athletic prowess. If the Protectorate did not imitate the Sudan – where the blues beat the blacks – still by 1914 it had recruited its quota.³ One future governor noted, "It is certainly a great asset to be an athlete".⁴ In 1907 The Colonial Office had insisted that:

"All candidates should state whether they can swim, ride, or shoot, and mention other athletic qualifications."⁵

But also the Office laid stress on appearance and character:

"the personality of the candidate is a factor of very great importance and a candidate however brilliant intellectually, who is not possessed of the type of character, address, and appearance, which are likely to win the respect of the men with who he comes in contact will not be suitable".⁶

The emphasis was on the extrovert, the healthy outdoor type with more common sense than brain. From their schools, many brought ideas of 'honour', 'fair play', the prefect system with its belief in seniority, and respect for one's elders, perhaps also a sense of snobbishness, superiority, and class. Those from professional families might bring with them a belief in their duty to society; though it was not unknown for sons to rebel. To this add more personal factors. Some came to Africa as the last frontier – the new Eldorado – and the myth ensnared them: the dream of the biggest lion, or the primitive life, or the escape from Europe. Perhaps there they might find the chance for sport or service, with room for the individualist and the eccentric dedication to duty. The motives, no doubt, were mixed, but intangible attractions existed unrelated to poor pay and a high death rate.

¹ Future governors were F.J Jackson, C. Hollis, G. Archer, G. Northcote, J. Waddington, T. Shenton Thomas, H.B Kittermaster, V.G. Glenday, C. Dundas, W.M. Logan.

² Delamere's recommendation for C. Dundas CO 429/27/15536. In 1910, Girouard commented of the P.Cs only two "have the social qualifications necessary" (CO 533/74/18382). Note Lugard's belief that a gentleman knew instinctively how to handle native authorities (Dual Mandate. Pp. 212-213). But cf Sir Ernest Barker (Character of England, pp. 566-567) who believed that the gentleman was a product of character not of class; also a memorial in Winchester Cathedral to Captain Nicholls killed in the Ashanti Wars, whilst leading his men "with the devotion of an English gentleman". Note Cranworth ("Profit and Sport" p. 184). "For three hundred years ... the whole aim of a public school education has been to fit a boy, not to work, but for the overseeing of work".

³ Up to 1914 there was 7 Oxford and 2 Cambridge Blues (of whom two were also internationals).

⁴ Sir G. Archer, "Personal and Political Memoirs of an East African Administrator". p.25. For a different view see the comments of 'Winslow' in C.P. Snow's "The Masters" (Penguin edition, p. 28).

⁵ Memo of meeting E.A. and W.A. Departments 22.11.07. (CO 429/26/1491).

⁶ Furse to University of Wales Appointments Board 16.4.14 (CO 429/62/5063).

To sum up, it is possible to sketch a notional impression of the recruiting patterns. Between 1895 and 1914, approximately two hundred men joined the Administration. For many of these – perhaps three eighths – there is little or no information available is uneven and inconsistent. But taking the figure of two hundred, at least a third had been to a university and a half to a public school.¹ Slightly over one in every twenty had been educated outside England. A minimum of one in five had served in one of the armed services. About one in ten had previously been to South Africa as soldiers, settlers or civil servants. One in twenty became a colonial governor; but one in nine died in the Service.² More remarkable was the number of parson's sons; there were at least forty one of them: roughly one in every five officers.³ No other social group provided so many recruits. Amongst the others whose family backgrounds are known, there were four sons of civil servants, twelve sons of regular officers (army or navy), five doctors' sons, five lawyers' sons, three school masters' sons, nine businessmen's sons, seven gentlemen's sons, one son of a Colonial Secretary, two relatives of a Colonial Under-Secretary, and three sons of peers.⁴

The precise significance behind the social backgrounds is hard to analyse. The Peers were poor (and Scottish). The Parsons were notorious for their small stipends and large families; their sons, however well educated, must win their way in the world. Again the middle classes often bred a strong sense of service, but some sons sought escape from narrow convention and the sound of bells.

Pay and conditions of service were not attractive. A Sub Commissioner (P.C.) earned £500 a year; a Collector £400; an Assistant Collector £250. There were certain allowances for 'safari', frontier service, and language qualifications, but officers were not permitted to invest in local business or property. Home leave was granted after a tour of twenty to thirty months, but leave in excess of three months brought a reduction in salary. Shortage of staff often led to delays in leave and some did not take all the leave due. John Ainsworth in 25 years' service went on home leave on only four occasions.

¹ For Universities the numbers are: 43 from Oxford, 21 from Cambridge; 3 from Dublin; 5 from Others. For schools the main contributors were Bedford 4; Blundells 2; Charterhouse 4, Denstone 2; Eton 5; Harrow 2; Haileybury 2; King's Canterbury 2; Leatherhead 3; Marlborough 3; Repton 2; Radley 4; Shrewsbury (Jackson's school) 7; St. Paul's 4; Wellington 2; Winchester 4.

² The estimates are based on information from the FO/2 staff Volumes, CO/533 "individuals" Volumes; CO 429 (vols. 23-75); East African Diaries; East African Red Books; "Who was Who"; "Who's Who". Obituaries appeared in the Zanzibar Gazette, and, after 1899, the East African Gazette (OG).

³ J.W. Pigott, McClellan, Bagge, Neligan, Lawson, Kittermaster, Shenton Thomas, H.R. Montgomery, Watkins, C.T.J. Barton, Northcote, W. M. Logan, Plowman, Hodge, J. H. Osborne, Isaac, J.A.R. Eliot, the Evans brothers, S.V. Cooke, Gegg, Bamber, C. Lane, Traill, Doorly, Filleul, J.O. Hughes, W.G. Edwards, A.D.C. Gibson, C.G. Pitt, W.C. Allen, R.W. Lambert, F. Elliott, T.D. Butler, M. Beech, P.L. Deacon, F. Athill, and Pagden. Other possibilities were Silvester, Weeks, D.B. Pigott, H.R. McClure, H.R. Tate and Monson. The effects on the Parsonage on Africa might provide a study in itself since Rhodes, Lugard, Sir Charles Eliot, Sir Edward Northey, Sir Clement Hill, and Lord Olivier, were also parsons' sons.

⁴ Bruce was the Earl of Elgin's son; the Dundas Brothers were sons of Lord Melville (Northcote was the grandson of the Earl of Iddesleigh). J.M. Pearson and J.A.G. Eliot were the cousin and nephew, respectively, of Col. Seely. But the eccentric survived. eg. Roderigo Pedraza, a product of Blundell's and Cambridge and an engineer, who's father was a Spaniard on the Board of Examiners at the University of Bombay. (CO 429/72/35484).

At first no passages were provided for wives or families. Generally officers were discouraged from marrying, whilst young. The proportion of bachelors remained high. For many years Government's consent was required, prior to an officer contracting marriage. In 1919 Hobley, himself a married man, informed the Civil Service Commission that:

“the married Assistant District Commissioners are not infrequently an unmitigated nuisance. Their mobility is impaired”.¹

As late as 1927, a recruiting pamphlet warned candidates that “cadets are strongly advised not to marry during their first two tours.”² Until 1921, there were no pensions for widows, although occasionally small gratuities were paid. As a result officers often married late or not at all.

Conditions improved after 1912, largely as the consequence of the work done by the Tropical African Services Committee in London, which sought to systematise scales of pay and terms of service. The salary of P.Cs was placed on a sliding scale rising from £500 to £700; for D.Cs the scale was £400 to £500 and for A.D.Cs from £250 to £400. Leave conditions were improved and assistance given towards sea passages for officers' wives.³

The T.A.S. Committee showed that the East African rates of pay were the lowest among the seven territories reviewed. And in 1911 the Governor had to warn the Colonial Office that:

“there is a certain feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the service at the prospects offered in East Africa”.⁴

It was a view supported by the Secretary of the Oxford Appointments Committee, who commented on the Colonial Service generally:

“Even now some of the longer headed men who would make good administrators, shy deliberately at the Colonial Service because prospects are not sufficiently attractive.”

Even so, many candidates – or their families – preferred the East Coast to the fever-ridden West Coast. The Colonial Office writing to the Oxford Appointments Committee in 1908 noted that

“The competition is keenest for East Africa and Uganda”.⁵ Yet the attraction – even after 1912 – was hardly a monetary one.

Nor could the recruits look forward to rapid promotion. One of the peculiarities of the Service was the promotion blockage of the early years. Though promotion was meant to be “upon merit and not on mere seniority”⁶ and officers were desired to have a proficiency in law and language, seniority was, in fact, all important. The pioneer administrators who filled the promotion posts were relatively young men. Ainsworth became a S.C. at the age of 31; Bagge at 25; Craufurd at 35; Jenner at 31; and Tritton

¹ 1919 Civil Service Commission Hobley Memorandum, p.62. For a similar view cf N.A.D. Report 1926, p.6

² “Life and Duties of a District Officer” (1927), p.2. N.B: By then a tour was at least three years.

³ For the Proceedings of the T.A.S. Committee cf. COP 972, 958, 978.

⁴ Girouard to CO. 13.10.11 in COP 972 item 10.

⁵ CO 429/31/6081. 28.2.08. This rather contradicts the view expressed by Sir C. Jeffries (“The Colonial Empire and its Civil Service” p.20) and Heussler op.cit., p.15.

⁶ MPA. HMC In. 1901-03. des. 31.8.01.

at 33. The I.B.E.A.C. officials – at least those who survived – were remarkably long lived. Promotion became a matter of waiting to step into dead men’s shoes. The I.B.E.A.C. officials tended to monopolise the senior appointments. In 1897, 15 out of 20 administrative officers were former I.B.E.A.C. officials. Their number was increased in 1902 by the transfer – together with the Eastern Province – of a number of Uganda men. In March 1907, five out of six P.Cs were old I.B.E.A.C. Officials. In 1915, there were still four I.B.E.A.C. men amongst the P.Cs. The last of them – C.R.W. Lane – did not retire until 1923. Between 1902 and 1920, the senior P.C. was C.W. Hobley. J.W.T. McClellan, who had joined the Administration in late 1895, had to act as P.C. for five years, before his promotion was confirmed. As for the A.D.Cs, promotion to D.Cs took from five to eight years, for the territory had a lower ratio of D.C. posts than other African territories.¹

Working conditions were seldom ideal, even in the towns, and added to the strain on men’s tempers. The Rabai Office was described as “not fit for a native to live in”;² the A.D.C. kept the district cash and stamps in his bedroom. Girouard writing of the Government offices in Nairobi in 1909, declared them “the most disgraceful, dilapidated, and unsuitable buildings for their purpose in any British colony”.³ In Kitui in 1909, two A.D.Cs shared a two roomed shack, “devoid of ceiling and floor and riddled with white ants”.⁴ Dr Mann’s house in Kisumu, in which he died in 1904, was termed, “a broken down shanty not fit for a pig”.⁵

The work facing an officer was, however, very varied:- Magistrate, policeman, amateur doctor, road builder, tax collector and substitute paramount chief, the administrator in the field seldom had a dull moment. In Taveta the A.D.C. was faced by a homicidal settler inspired by the works of Maxim Gorky. In Voi, when unserviceable rifles had to be destroyed by fire, one was found – too late – to be still loaded. Writing from Wales, David Thomas’s mother enquired of the whereabouts of her runaway son. A Mr Jeffer Dwji asked permission to use a crest similar to that of Queen Victoria. The Political Agent in Aden wanted one Adam Moosa traced, for he had left his wife destitute. The Emperor of Austria desired some wild game. Samples of tsetse fly were needed in London. Two vultures had to be despatched to an Egyptian zoo. Officers on transfer wanted their personal effects and their servants. Mr Bradbury of Ipswich forwarded money to purchase local stamps. In Ukamba – in – 1899 – John Ainsworth spent 1000 rupees of his own money on famine relief. A Commissioner on ‘safari’ called urgently for 3 crates of beer and two of whisky. H.M.S. Tarter having lost a torpedo, officers on the coast were instructed to keep a look out for it.⁶ And if there was a steady stream of circulars from headquarters, they were not always gravely received. Of one, a diarist at Ravine light-heartedly noted “I

¹ Cf the Evidence to the Civil Service Commission 1919. On the promotion blockage, the T.A.S. Committee in 1910 had drawn attention to the imbalance in the ratio of P.Cs, D.Cs, A.D.Cs in East Africa. Ideally (eg. Nigeria) it should be 1:2:4. In EAP it was ½:2 ¾:4. The DC:ADC ratio after 1910, with additional ADCs, became more uneven.

² MPA HMC Out. 1906. 5.6.06

³ COP /944/7 Estimates 1910-11. 9.12.09. When Harcourt was later shown a photo of the building he minuted “I am shocked” (CO 533/99/428. Minute of 15.1.11).

⁴ C. Dundas “African Crossroads”. P. 15-16.

⁵ Meinertzhagen “Kenya Diary”. 14.5.04. cf also Seaton op.cit. passim. For unsatisfactory conditions after the War cf Report into the Organisation of Administrative Offices (1930).

⁶ These examples are drawn at random from Mombasa Provincial Records (MPA).

fancy it is all rot though so it doesn't matter.”¹ Perhaps the greatest compensation for poor pay and bad conditions was the variety and excitement of the work; life was full and had a purpose.

As a group, the administrators had varied interests: hunters, amateur anthropologists, ornithologists, map makers, rhymesters, naturalists, cartoonists, fishermen, and generally enthusiastic in the pursuit of outdoor sport. But then activity was essential, for the great enemies were death, sickness, drink and loneliness.

The death rate was alarming. Out of the 20 administrators listed in the 1897 Report, seven were dead by 1907. In the first five years of the Protectorate, ten administrative officers had died. In the decade 1901-10, further eleven died and in the following decade another sixteen. In addition during the Great War, four were killed on active service.²

Most deaths were the result of blackwater fever; repeated bouts of malaria combined with breakdown of the red blood cells caused by uneven doses of quinine. There were also a number of murders and suicides. Between 1895 and 1918, five officers were murdered; three of these were in frontier affrays.³ A fourth was murder of the A.D.C. Maraquet by an insane Asian sub-assistant surgeon. The fifth was the shooting of the Canadian, Capt Cooke, by a demented brother officer.⁴

Suicides are more difficult to trace; the obituaries maintained a discreet silence.⁵ Certainly a number did occur, though legend has much embellished the truth. Kisumu and Kipini were two stations with the worst reputations. In 1915 – the officer who wrote of Kipini:

“Ship me somewhere East of Suez,
The man who could write such rot
Should come and live
And the best years give
Of his life in this God-damned spot.”⁶ - died.

Of Kisumu in 1907 John Ainsworth prosaically wrote

“I was forced to the conclusion that most officers stationed there had developed... a ‘fear complex’ due to an obsession about the climate influenced no doubt by the general atmosphere of apathetic indifference. Certainly there was a good deal of sickness and some deaths. A few days before our arrival an Assistant District Commissioner had committed suicide in the Residency...Kisumu was not, at this time, a place for a melancholy man. It wanted waking up.....”⁷

¹ Rift Valley Province Records (RVP). Ravine Diary. 15.6.99.

² Obituaries: Zanzibar Gazettes; OGs 1899-1918 and Diary of East Africa (1903 edition).

³ Jenner, Aylmer and F. Elliott

⁴ By Dugmore. Machakos Records MKS/107. (Papers concerning the murder of Capt Cooke, 1898).

⁵ Eg. OG 1915 p.142. “sunstroke”; OG 1917. p.1088 “gunshot accident”; in other cases, silence.

⁶ Tana River Records/9 also “Coast Guardian” 9.10.37; and in J. Rowlands “Nosegay of Cacti”. There were many other verses. One commenced “I loathe your doddering palm trees”.

⁷ Goldsmith “John Ainsworth” p.66 quoting from Ainsworth’s Autobiographical Notes (cf. Rhodes House Mss.Afr. 380).

And some months earlier, the A.D.C. at Karungu had been invalided home with a pistol bullet still lodged in his chin.¹

Sickness heavily taxed the resources of a staff already frequently under strength. In lonely stations, when officers were ill, the red tape of headquarters was bitterly resented. A young A.D.C. in Turkana complained that when he had fever, a doctor from Uganda had treated him and certified the illness:

“but when I sent it to Nairobi to be entered on my sick sheet the entry was refused. So also was another entry made by myself when I got fever on safari with no doctor available”.²

Sickness was frequent and so too was invaliding. A young A.D.C. who spent two years in Giriyama, had two pages of his sick sheet filled with records of attacks of fever.³

Heavy drinking was a natural hazard of pioneer society, the antidote to loneliness. A Handbook for officers, written in 1909 advised that:

“Heavy drinkers should not go to East Africa... moderate drinkers should be very moderate there and total abstainers should remain so.”⁴

It was a counsel of perfection. More than one officer had to be retired on grounds of ill health due to immoderate use of alcohol. In Lamu, a young A.D.C. who was “an inveterate drunkard” with “a queer look in his eyes”,⁵ was compelled to resign. In Machakos, another A.D.C. took heavily to drinking and attempted suicide.⁶ In 1910, Girouard complained of one P.C., that he had been “drunk in a public bar and making use of disloyal utterances.”⁷

Loneliness and lonely stations were problems appreciated from the start. Sir Charles Eliot had warned the Foreign Office in 1901:

“One man cannot properly administer these large districts where the natives have no machinery of Government which can be utilised and every village requires individual attention. Also a solitary existence, sometimes five to six days journey from every other white man, is not conducive to the well being of Europeans or the vigorous performance of their duties.”⁸

¹ CO 533/40/7924 et Sequa. (H Seaton op.cit. p.20-21 illustrates the high causality rate; not all accidental.)

² Civil Service Commission 1919. p.68. Evidence S.Fazan.

³ MPA (28/347). File. “New Station Kilifi”. 1.2.17. P.S.O.’s report (the officer concerned was Champion). See also Rev. C.A. Wiggins “Early Days in British East Africa and Uganda” p.15, 20 and 35, and the frequent applications for extended leave in F.O.2 (individuals) files. NB: wild game also took its toll. Hall was mauled by leopard, D.B. Pigott was drowned when his raft was overturned by hippo, and one A.D.C. in Tanaland had 3 ribs, an arm and collar bone broken by a charging elephant.

⁴ “Notes for Officers” 1909, p.38 (copy attached to CO 533/48/27684). For heavy drinking cf senior officers of Rev. C.A. Wiggins, op.cit., p.14.

⁵ FO2/834. Comments of MacDougall and Eliot in des 3.2.04.

⁶ CO 533/46132420.

⁷ CO 533/74118382.

⁸ Cmd. 769/1901. EAP Report. P.9.

The solution was more money to provide more men, but this depended on an increased local revenue.

Perhaps one of the results of loneliness, or the pioneer existence, was the problem of native concubines. Officers were not encouraged to marry early and certain stations positively forbade the presence of white women. Inevitably there occurred incidents involving native women, such as marked the early stages of many other colonies.¹ One D.C in Nandi had a harem. Another in North Nyanza combined tax collection with rape. In 1907, two A.D.Cs in Nyeri purchased native concubines by paying bride price. The revelation of this practice, by a visiting anthropologist, led to a storm in Parliament.² Reaction in the Secretariat and in Whitehall was a mixture of disapproval and unofficial tolerance. It was seen as “a very nasty incident” and a “Delicate matter”, but such offences should “be leniently dealt with.... for a good many years to come”.³

“the practice of cohabitation with native women has been extremely common throughout the Colonies and Protectorates of West and East Africa; indeed I am informed that of the unmarried white officials there is only a small percentage who have abstained entirely”.⁴

In January 1909, a confidential circular went out to all officers from the Secretary of State.

“These illicit connections have at times been a cause of trouble with native populations; another objection....lies in the fact that it is not possible for any member of the Administration to countenance such practices without lowering himself in the eyes of the natives and diminishing his authority over them.”⁵

Undoubtedly, with the increase in the numbers of white women in the territory, morality – at least on racial lines – improved. But paradoxically, it was not infrequently accompanied by a decline in good race relations: for some of the new wives could be very distant, not to say Royal.⁶

One of the most marked effects of work in outstations was an enhanced sense of self-importance; officers resented directions from headquarters and quarrelled all too easily with fellow officials: there was also a tendency to cut corners and to take the law into their own hands. As one frontier officer later commented:

¹ Eg. L. Gann’s “History of Northern Rhodesia” p.151. B.Oliver “Sir Harry Johnston”, p.316. W.MacMillan “Africa Emergent” p.199-200; S.Runciman “The White Rajahs” p.163.

² Hansard 4th S. Vol. 198 cl.68-73. also 5th S. Vol. VIII cls 1027-1136. (There were also a number of Parliamentary questions). For the other incidents cf Meinertzhagen op.cit. p.192 (and p.10). For the Nyanza Tax Case, correspondence in CN/42.

³ Minutes on CO 533/44/21793. (Cox. Hopwood, Harris).

⁴ Ibid., Harris. 26.6.08.

⁵ Baringo Records. (BAR/11). Confidential Circular of 11.1.09. An earlier Protectorate Circular declared “such proceedings tend to lower the British name, they are incompatible with the position and prestige that officers of the Administration should maintain in the eyes of subject races” (copy in CO 533/46/33656).

⁶ Cf. M. Perham “The Colonial Reckoning” p.128; also P. Spear “The Nabobs” p. 140.

“there is often a temptation to inflict irregular punishments. It isn’t a case of sadism...it arises from anger and exasperation.”¹

Illness and loneliness went far to create the ‘furor africanus’, the sudden red rage that drove men into hasty and unwise acts; the situations in which unintended slights became magnified into deliberate insults. A sense of power, or frustration over lack of official support, led to incidents of savage brutality; the misuse of police, illegal floggings, and the burning of huts of tax defaulters.² But then it was not possible to observe the standards of Bloomsbury in Baringo.³ And too often, the isolated officer was expected to obtain results though lacking the legal means.⁴

Their quarrelsomeness reflected both the pioneer environment and a capacity for jealousy based on a resentment of rival ‘paramount chiefs’. The Administration quarrelled with other departments; the Railway, the Military, the Courts, and in later years the Police. In 1896, a bitter dispute at Ngong took place between Hall, the Collector and the Military officer. John Ainsworth intervened to soothe ruffled feelings. He shrewdly commented of Hall that he “does not like having any blacks in his district over whom he has not absolute personal control....”⁵ A Colonial Office minute of 1908 noted that relations with the Police were unsatisfactory.

“Provincial Commissioners and District Officers like to have the Police at their beck and call. To the majority this appeals to their sense of importance and in many cases has been abused.”⁶

But it was with the Judiciary that the Administration fought their bitterest battles; for High Court intervention was resented as a diminution of their prestige. The Courts Ordinance of 1907 reduced the powers of D.Cs in Native cases. A High Court Circular of 1907 had to take the Collectors to task for illegal fines and floggings recorded in “Shauri books”, which were not submitted for inspection.⁷ In the same year, when the High Court upset a judgement of the A.D.C Kiambu, the D.C protested.

¹ Earl of Lytton. “The Desert and the Green”, p.242

² Cf Embu Political Records (EBU/41). Circular No. 21 of 1911, concerning an officer who “occasionally had raiding expeditions where people had refused to pay tax and burnt them out”. There were other incidents.

³ Cf F.J. Turner “The Frontier in American History” p. 4, “at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man”.

⁴ Note the comment of Sir Eldon Gorst, “that his prestige in Egypt would be immeasurably enhanced if only he could commit once a year, one act of glaring illegality, the bazaars arguing, “If the Ruler must obey the Law like me, how is he my superior?”” (Sir R. Storrs “Orientations” p. 386)

⁵ MPA (75/48). Ukamba in 1896-1900. Ainsworth to Crawford 5.12.96. cf also Northcote’s diary for 3.5.07 concerning Kisumu, “Whole place alive with quarrels”. Also Lytton op.cit. p. 220, “in isolated areas... white men quarrel over those to whom they have practically dedicated their lives”. For Missionary/official quarrels in Mombasa see Rev. C.A. Wiggins, op.cit. p.11.

⁶ Pencilled Note in Margin of Police Report. CO 533/44/25104.

⁷ East Africa Law Reports. Vol. II. P.152-153. Circular 25.5.07. For other cases illustrating the clash between Administration and Judiciary cf ibid. Cr. R. 55/1907; Cr. C. 14/1908; Cr. C. 43/1908; Cr.C. 51/1908; also Circular 4 of 1907; and Vol. V.Cr. C. 29/1913; 88/1913. One of objects of the Collective Punishments Ordinance of 1909 was to remove the excuse for ‘administrative’ fines. (“shauri” = advice. Discussion).

“I would respectfully point out that their Honours have not had much experience of natives in outstations, and I feel sure - have no idea of the harm that may be done in reversing Mr. McClure’s sentence. The evidence may not be sufficient perhaps but in areas like this the Collector...is bound to know lots of facts which affect the case and cannot be produced as evidence, and his knowledge ought to be allowed to be taken into account.”¹

The difficulty was that not only did the Administration resent interference, but Government demanded results from officers that could only be obtained by unlawful methods. In 1909, the Principal Judge had to complain of the labour recruiting methods in Kiambu.

“The Government has brought pressure to bear on the District Commissioner; he in turn has brought pressure to bear on the Government headman, who has instituted a system of kidnapping, flogging and fining to find labour”.²

Being a law unto themselves, field officers tended to evade regulations. They were perpetually at loggerheads with the Government auditors for this very reason. If some of their excuses were inspired, others were not. Ainsworth had to be taken to task for using his ‘Presents to Chiefs’ vote for financial irregularities. It was commonplace for districts to operate a “goat bag”, by means of which central Government funds were diverted for unauthorised expenditure on local improvements.³

The sense of self-importance – the superiority of the ‘Heaven born’ – was most marked. Girouard was to accuse senior officers of being “hopelessly self-satisfied and supine”⁴ and lacking an esprit de corps. There was a spirit of factious rivalry and officials often approached Whitehall behind the Governor’s back.⁵ But the most marked aspect of self-importance was revealed in the concern for precedence and uniforms. As one Official in the Colonial Office noted in 1907: “the rage for uniform and precedence appears to characterise the E.A.P. officials”.⁶ This concern for uniform – a matter often stressed by headquarters – may have been an attempt to check any tendency to go native.⁷ On the other hand more than one mediocre official found comfort in his sword and helmet.⁸ A settler complained in 1905:

“It is almost ridiculous to see all kinds and conditions of officials holding all kinds and conditions of positions parading the streets attired in court swords and helmets.”⁹

¹ Kiambu Records. (KBU/75), p. 219. 6.3.07.

² Ibid. KBU/74, p.205-206. PJ’s minute of 10.3.09.

³ Cf Farrant Case CO 533/47/36090; 48/46444; and Mayes’ troubles CO 533/2/30674.

⁴ Secret des. 26.5.10, Girouard to DO. CO 533/74/18382.

⁵ Eg. Circular 2.9.09. in EBU/41 (also Circular 19.9.10). Girouard protested to the CO about this on more than one occasion. It was a habit that had grown up in FO days (eg. Hill’s correspondence with Jackson and Bagge).

⁶ Minute on CO 533/33/43757 (des. 22.11.07).

⁷ Eg. H.E.’s instructions in “Confidential Memoranda” May 1910. p.15. “officers are expected to dress properly on all occasions” for the eccentricities of pioneer dress cf T. Ternan “Experiences of an Old Broomsgrovian”. P.120

⁸ Vide E. Huxley “The Flame Trees of Thika”, p.124.

⁹ A.G. Anderson to CO 19.1.05. CO 533/9/4725.

Given the loneliness and the pioneer environment, the Administrators were intensely individualistic. Years later one of them, commenting on the characteristics of the pioneer Europeans, noted a tendency to “increased individuality”, a “lack of sense of proportion”, “self-assertiveness”, “independence”, and “intolerance of constituted authority”.¹ In extreme cases, the ‘organisation eccentric’ made his appearance.² A D.C. Kisii wore chief’s robes and dancing pumps in the office. Another D.C. wore a yachting cap on safari. He was once found in camp attired in a morning suit, which put him in the proper frame of mind for answering Christmas mail. Another went round with tame cheetahs, and took a portable harmonium on safari.³ But then the Administrator was the dispenser of an essentially ‘personal’ rule; which gave scope for eccentric individualism and was reflected in their identification with their favourite tribes. Sir Charles Eliot complained that Administration,

“hangs too much on the personality of officers. A tactful Collector by long residence will gain great personal influence among a tribe, and when he is moved his successor will have to begin afresh”.⁴

The peculiarly personal nature of administration is well illustrated in the native names given to officers; names that reflected wryly on their personalities. The following is a random selection from Central Nyanza.

Obilo (after an elder, for Hobley), the orphan, the arm swinger, long neck, hard hitter, the thin one, the ladies’ man, bull neck, fiery eyes, athletic, the tall hen, omniscient, the leopard’s son, the woman, the son of Obilo, quick decisions, keeps to himself, stammers, slow speaking, the supplanter, bald, one armed, red eyes, can a leopard ask questions?, he jumps (at me), catch him with your hand, doesn’t waste words, bent shoulders, the dove in the crocodile’s house.⁵

In establishing administrative traditions, the example given to the new A.D.C. in his first months of innocence and ignorance by his seniors might be all important. If he was fortunate and had a good training D.C. he learnt much of tactics and native psychology. If he was unfortunate he might only learn bad habits.⁶ For in dealing with a tribal area, an officer had to rely on instinct rather than logic. A situation was ‘played by ear’, watching and responding to the reactions of the local populace. Good ideas had to overcome local prejudice. The Kamba women in Kitui opposed iron hoes, for iron in the soil drove away the rains.⁷ In later years a campaign to eradicate

¹ F. Traill to Carter Land Commission. Vol. III. Evidence p. 3435, but cf Thorton’s “The Imperial Idea and its enemies” p.91. “The great things were the team, the code, the honour of the side, and playing the game. The game could not be played by individualists. The Empire had indeed been built by individuals, but their loyalties had come from the same source”. Cf. also J.R. MacDonald “Labour and the Empire” p. 26-27.

² Vide Heussler op.cit. p. 104-105.

³ Hardinge op.cit. p. 145; Ainsworth Diaries 3.2.98; and personal recollections of K.M. Cowley, H.E Lambert, J.S.S. Rowlands. Cf also R. Gethin’s reminiscences (Kisii District Records).

⁴ Cmd 2331/1905. EAP Report. P. 8 (The Report had been drafted by Eliot and finished by Hobley).

⁵ Central Nyanza Records (CN/43). List compiled by H. Elphinstone shortly after the Great War. There were also “Inservice” nicknames, eg. Kombo Kichwa Campell, Hobley Bobbley, Kongoni Tate, Skipper Deck, and the brothers Long and Short Horne.

⁶ Perhaps the best training D.Cs were Tate, Hope, and the younger Ainsworth. Both Hobley and John Ainsworth also exercised a considerable influence. In Turkana, the most influential man had been a K.A.R. officer, the Swedish Baron Von Otter.

⁷ Dundas op.cit. p.47-48

hookworm led to the construction of thousands of pit latrines; the problem was to get them used.¹

Administration was a game of wits. Honours went to the side with the soundest wind. Simulated anger was one thing, but genuine rage spelt defeat. Each officer had to evolve his own methods: bluff, anger, pretended idiocy (Allah showed mercy to the witless), humour, familiarity, aloofness, or good-natured enthusiasm. There was no single technique; the aim was to be en rapport. But the danger was that an officer might be too 'sympathetic', and become a mere 'chameleon'. Yet without a personal impact, he could achieve little. For as Hobley noted, the African had "an intuitive insight" into the European character.

They seem to know at once who they can trifle with and whom they can trust".²

In seeking to gain contact with the subject tribes there were two important aspects of Administration: 'safari' (travelling) and a capacity for languages. In both these, administrators gave an uneven performance.

It was an article of faith that an officer could maintain contact and close personal relations only by travelling amongst his people. The good officer begrudged the time spent in dealing with routine office matters. Yet it is a commentary on the power of routine that, even in the early days, officers had to be cajoled or castigated into spending more time on 'safari'. In 1910, the Governor reiterated the oft-repeated orders that D.Cs and A.D.Cs must spend at least 3 months in a year on tour. As for P.Cs they "should avoid becoming engrossed in office work".³ But then 'safari' must have a purpose; the officer should

"show himself to both settlers and natives and hear their complaints at first hand. It must be remembered however, that travelling costs money for transport and is not undertaken for pleasure".

Standards varied from district to district. On the Coast and in busy settled areas, officers became either slack or chair bound.⁴ In contrast, Tate in 1902 covered a thousand miles in three months – and wore out two pairs of boots – pursuing European dacoits.⁵

Over language, the Administration generally showed itself unable or unwilling to master local vernaculars. There were exceptions: Hollis in Nandi, Masai and Kigiriyama; Bagge, Collyer and McClure in Masai; Tate, Haywood, Silberad in Kikuyu and Beech in Suk. But for the most part Sir Charles Eliot's criticism was just:

¹ This drew from H.E. Lambert the wry comment, "the present monuments to an earlier creed serve merely to give new meaning to the expression 'the bottomless pit'". (Meru Annual Report. 1939, p.40-41)

² C.W Hobley, J.A.S 1922 p.190-191 (Some Native Problems in Eastern Africa).

³ Girouard. "Confidential Memoranda". 1910. p.3.

⁴ Eg. Safari returns for the Coast (MPA HMC Out 1905 & 1906) show that from Nov. 1904 – August 1906, all officers averaged only five days a month out on safari.

⁵ Nairobi Secretariat Library (CGL). NAD Files. Vol. IV Pt. II H.R. Tate "Report on Tour to Rendile" 16.11.02. p31.

“disastrous and costly misunderstandings have occurred because no one was capable of giving or receiving explanations when trouble was brewing. Hitherto few of our officers have any knowledge but a little Swahili.”¹

Part of the trouble was the immense variety of tribes and tongues in the Protectorate. Vernaculars were

“Mostly spoken in comparatively small districts, and it is impossible to restrict an officer’s service to one linguistic area, or to require him to learn Masai when he may any day be removed to a Somali-speaking area.”²

Despite the language bonuses offered, the administrators remained linguistically inarticulate. In 1910, out of 81 officers only 42 had passed the language examination.³ The problem was made insoluble when an officer became subject to frequent transfers; for sickness and incompatibility led to games of musical chairs over postings. In Malindi district for instance, there had been 10 D.Cs in a period of 8 years. In another station, there had been 6 D.Cs in a period of six months.⁴

An element of continuity was vital to any study of a vernacular. But Administration was essentially personal and continuity was also vital if personal influence was to be maintained. Fortunately the P.Cs were less subject to frequent postings, and so gave some stability to the Administration.⁵

A more insidious effect of the language problem was the power it gave to the native interpreter. Much turned on his impartiality and loyalty as the link between an official and his people. When in 1920, Ainsworth investigated the Kikuyu ‘gethaka’ land system, he had to use missionaries as interpreters, for:

“the interpretation of our various conversations through the medium of Akikuyu Interpreters has apparently not been properly understood nor have we obtained a correct interpretation of the natives’ views”.⁶

The first aim of the Administration was security for lines of communications and the establishment of a modicum of law and order. Later came the need for tax and native labour. If tax collection was important – as a test of tribal obedience – it was not the sole purpose of Government. “The idea that promotion will depend on the amount of revenue collected is to be deprecated.”⁷ The real test of the Administrators – and the ground for promotion – was less materialistic; it lay

¹ C. Hollis “The Masai” preface p. xxviii.

² Ibid. cf also L. Leakey “Kenya, land of Contrasts”, p. 64-65 also Hailey “African Survey”, p.91.

³ Girourd to CO. 26.5.10. CO 533/74/18381.

⁴ LEA 29.06.12 p.2. Note Leakey (op.cit appendix) shows that in a period of 7 years after the Great War 16 officers had 94 postings. On the lack of continuity cf Sir R. Furse “Aucuparius” p. 305. Some postings were in the form of ‘punishments’ eg. K. Dundas to Kismayu in 1913, and possibly Bagge to Kisumu in 1904.

⁵ E.g. Ainsworth served in only three provinces during his entire career; Hobley in four between 1902-1920.

⁶ Central Province Archives (CPA). CPA/30. File 22©22. Ainsworth Memo of 25.7.20. cf also evidence of Lioi, Carter Commission Vol. I. p.125.

⁷ Girouard Confidential Memoranda. p.13.

“in the ability they have displayed in procuring contentment and satisfaction in their Districts. Such a state of affairs can only be realised by the combination on the officer’s part of.... guiding sympathy, tact, imagination and patience.”¹

But such talent demanded an almost instinctive flair for sensing the possible as opposed to the ideal.

It was in this that Partington proved himself an able native administrator. Educated at Marlborough and Cambridge, he had come to the Protectorate in 1901. He was to die of blackwater in 1914, having resigned from the Service a year earlier. He was at his best with the Nandi and the Kipsigi. Whilst D.C. Nandi in 1907 he devised a novel means of getting the proud Nandi ‘Moran’ to undertake despised porters’ work. Partington put his loads into mail bags and covered these with official seals. Whilst the Moran refused to carry porters’ loads, they eagerly volunteered to carry mail bags; the first was slaves’ work, the second was a task reflecting trust and prestige.²

James Bond Ainsworth,³ provides another example of ‘personal’ administration. Appointed in 1901, he died in 1910, also of blackwater. Whilst D.C. Kitui – a lonely and unhealthy station – he established a school and obtained Government funds to pay the teacher.⁴ To obtain porters from a sullen people, he appealed to the Kamba love of dancing. At each of his camps, he would hold a dancing competition; joining in himself dressed in pyjamas and gum boots. The Kamba, encourage by promises of more dances, followed him from camp to camp, incidentally carrying his loads.⁵

Many a young officer found African reactions puzzling – but all had to study them carefully. Geoffrey Northcote, then aged 26, was posted to a new station in Kisii. In his diary he noted his frustration and bewilderment. The natives “do not seem to be able to understand that we are going to stay”.⁶ Again, a month later, “Natives do not seem to understand that one means what one says.”⁷ On the flyleaf of his diary he jotted down,

“Can’t get at what they think...Often they go too deep...preconceived notions...African moral philosophy negative. No ideals. No morals ie. conscience exception national(?) – and thus right is no criteria. Right is might. Weakest to wall. Lex Taliones. No religion except fear, willing to learn. Happy minded.”⁸

Another officer, Kenneth Dundas, was marked as “pro native”.⁹ Educated in Germany and Norway, he came to East Africa in 1904 at the age of 22, (he was later

¹ Ibid. cf also Protectorate Report 1911-12 p. 51, (on the objectives of native administration).

² Nyanza Provincial Records (NPA). Nyanza Report. 1906/07. p.56-58.

³ The younger brother of John Ainsworth, nicknamed ‘the clay pigeon’, because he once expressed the view that it was a cruel sport. Vide Rev. C. A. Wiggins, op.cit. p.7.

⁴ CPA, Ukamba Report 1909/10. ‘Kitui’. p. 4 cf also Cranworth “Colony in the Making” p. 31.

⁵ C. Dundas op.cit. pp. 17,20,27. Note also JRAI 1913 Vol. 43 p. 506 (C. Dundas) “I have often seen young men and girls follow my caravan for days”. Previously porters had been recruited by force.

⁶ Kisii Records. Northcote Diary. 5.5.07.

⁷ Ibid. 27.6.07.

⁸ Ibid, on fly leaf of Vol I (KSI/47) For his pains Northcote was wounded by a hostile spear thrust.

⁹ Girouard to CO 27.6.11. CO 533/88/27210. This was meant as a criticism since Dundas was in trouble over the Langridge case. Cf also the unkind minutes of Read e.g. 16.8.12 CO 533/114/25834.

to be killed in the Gallipol landings). In Mumias and again in Machakos he took a strong stand on behalf of native rights. But he opposed excessive individualism and lip service to the rights of man. Experience also taught him that native cases were seldom finally settled. These were regularly brought up before each

“new and inexperienced administrative officer, for whose benefit all the worn out old civil cases, feuds and bickerings are served up.”¹

Dundas’s younger brother Charles, another Kamba administrator, warned of the dangers of bluff.

“It is a great mistake to reckon on outwitting him [the MKamba], for he is not easily duped although he may appear so. Nor can he easily be frightened, for he will obstinately sit down and await what may come...nothing makes one more helpless...than his discovery that your threat was an empty one.”²

It was out of such personal experiences that a subjective and ad hoc set of rules on African reactions was built up; often be passed on to the newcomer over an evening drink.³

Among the senior officers, probably the most competent was John Ainsworth. A man of great energy, strong character and common sense, he was blessed with excellent health and few transfers. In the absence of any general policy, he developed roads, experimented with plants, protected the forests, and encouraged native agriculture and education in his provinces. He was noted for “his great power for developing districts.”⁴ Full of practical ideas, he nevertheless put pen to paper rather too often. He could also be stubborn and overtax his subordinates with too much supervision. Married to the daughter of an American missionary, he had firm ideas on fair play and propriety. He was severe on those who did not meet his standards: “a low howling cad”; “that awful thing made like a woman”; “not a very pleasing lesson for natives”,⁵ were some of the entries in his diaries concerning fellow Europeans. Essentially an extrovert, he had little sympathy for the less fortunate; “he appears to be living in fear of catching fever”,⁶ he wrote of one officer. Of a sick superior he added, “he wants to run everything himself while he pretends he does not”.⁷ With Africans he was patient and sympathetic, but firm; a great believer in setting an example. Above all he liked them.

Some Administrators became the complete ‘Chameleon’ and went native. Beech – possessing a gift for languages – was to be converted to Islam and was later buried in

¹ Machakos Records. MKS/56. Chapter II.

² C. Dundas, “History of Kitui”. J.R.A.I. 1913. Vol. 43, p.491.

³ E.g. Some later examples, “when in doubt create a crisis”, “In each new district; one has to have a show down. Choose your battlefield and win. After that bluff will last to the end of a tour”. “No officer is any use till he has served at least six months in a district”. “Remember, one only finds the true reason for any African action, months afterwards”.

⁴ Read minute CO 533/31/33327. cf also CO 533/14/21793 and 119/24945. McDermott “I.B.E.A.” p. 427; Sir C. Eliot “East Africa Protectorate”. P. 73.

⁵ Ainsworth Diaries, 0.7.97; 25.9.98.

⁶ Ibid. 30.7.98.

⁷ Ibid. 11.8.99 (and again of the same officer, “He does not like giving up the temporary powers he has “. 18.6.99).

the Arab cemetery in Lamu.¹ MacDougall who had great influence with the Somali, Giryama, Bajun and Arabs was described in 1912 as a man “who speaks, lives, and to a certain extent thinks like a native”.²

The paucity of numbers and the lack of effective force combined with ‘personal’ administration to make ‘prestige’³ the cornerstone of their rule. Again and again the word appears in their despatches and reports. It was a concept that meant moral ascendancy; their word must be believed and obeyed. And, where force was lacking, prestige also meant bluff. Prestige in turn was based on obedience. As Hardinge had noted in the early days of the Protectorate,

“Our Prestige by which we alone keep them [“savage tribes”] in check, depends on their believing that our orders once given cannot be disregarded with impunity”.⁴

For this reason, administrators were sensitive to any sign of disobedience. It was always necessary to act swiftly and severely, lest little troubles left unchecked led to terrible endings. All subscribed to that second of the Punjab principles that a shot in time saved nine.⁵ So one officer pressed for “a hammering”⁶ for the Giryama; and another regretted that the Masai had never received “a good sharp knock”.⁷ Hardinge looked on punitive expeditions in terms of the school room; they were justified if followed by kindness and understanding; for they had the same good effects as the birchings he had received at Eton.⁸ A Junior Official in the Colonial Office complained that field officers in dealing with tribes followed the principle of “smash them first and let them down lightly afterwards”.⁹

The effectiveness of prestige, in the end, depended on the reaction of the tribesmen. It assumed that – like schoolboys – they could understand and quail before the moral ascendancy of the Guardians. Experience was to show that African mentality was far more complex; the mere flexing of muscles might have the opposite effect to that

¹ cf C. Dundas *African Crossroads*, p.84. Seaton op.cit. p.68, and Lamu District Records (under “cemeteries”).

² Read Minute on CO 533/103/10409. cf Hardinge “Diplomatist” p. 165 also Sadler’s comments in 1906 “of middle class society and education. Has ability and tact “... “an official of the old type”....“thoroughly understands natives” (7.10.06. CO 533/17/29708). For MacDougall’s career see *infra*.

³ cf Shorter Oxford Dictionary – a delusion, illusion, to bind fast, to dazzle, a deception, are commonly glamour, influence, blinding or dazzling influence, influence or reputation derived from previous character.

⁴ Hardinge to FO FOP 7090/185. 19.8.98. By the same token, it made good sense to avoid giving orders that were likely to be disobeyed.

⁵ cf P. Woodruff. “The Guardians”, p. 239. Note Sadler’s comment after the Embu Expedition in 1906 “all the trouble.... Has been entirely due to the fact that we have never retaliated for all the outrages they have committed” (CO 533/16/26172).

⁶ cf *infra* p. 222.

⁷ McClure “Land Travel and seafaring”, p.78

⁸ vide Hardinge op.cit. p. 227. cf also Hardinge “A Diplomatist in Europe”, p. 22.

⁹ Memo by Lobb in CO 533/43/15165. para. 56. Lobb also criticised the soldiers’ enthusiasm for expeditions (para 41). This last was a common criticism *vide* Eliot op.cit. p. 200 “if there were no decorations there would be few of these little wars”. cf also Meinertzhagen p. 210; and Ainsworth *Diaries* 9.6.98.

desired.¹ Prestige also required that an officer, to be effective, must study tribal reactions. But in seeking to influence and control his people, the people might also attempt to control him.

The sharpest critics of the administrators and their methods were the settlers, whose views found expression in the local press. Signs of Pomp angered them. Of one A.D.C. a settler wrote, “a typical official, most of his brains were in his boots.”² The Standard had an early editorial on the “Heaven of Officialdom”,³ full of pomp and uniforms. New officers were sarcastically referred to as the “esquires”.⁴ In 1906 the Administration was accused of “gross jealousy and strife....against other services”.⁵ The Colonist’s Association expressed itself as “antagonistic in a marked degree to the personnel of our provincial administration”.⁶ Incidents, such as the Grogan trial, or the Langridge case,⁷ fanned the smouldering flames. In Girouard’s day, the East African Standard complained,

“We have been badly administered in the past, and, in spite of our present Governor’s proper, untiring and able efforts, we are still badly administered”.⁸

Its rival, the Leader of East Africa criticised the evil influence of India:

“the strict ‘caste’ which is maintained by officialdom is a direct grafting of the British Raj pride of the Anglo-Indian, ruling a polyglot community of teeming millions of asiatics”.⁹

This antagonism stemmed from two causes. The heightened individualism of a pioneer society led men into disputes: “when Tin God meets Tin God, there is bound to be trouble”.¹⁰ But at deeper level the collision was between settlers, who saw only the needs of white settlement, and officers, who – often too parochially – spoke for the tribes. Here lay the fundamental dilemma; the needs of western civilisation and the interests of the native.

For the settler, the ideal Administrator was one who kept the African quiet and made him work. Yet the demands the Governor made of officers were rather different. P.Cs were to “Carry out loyally the policy of the Governor, and not inaugurate policies of their own”.¹¹ D.Cs must “obey implicitly the orders of their Provincial

¹ For farcical misunderstandings cf R. Gethin “Early Days in Kisii” p.22-23. Seaton op.cit. p.75. For a case of unexpected ‘prestige’ cf Meinertzhagen op.cit. p.61.

² Matson Papers. R. Gethin Ms. p.31

³ African Standard. 19.2.03. (cf also E.A. & Uganda Mail 6.7.01. “a headless Administration”).

⁴ African Standard. 9.6.03. p.2.

⁵ E.A.S. 10.11.06. p.6.

⁶ E.A.S. 2.2.07. p.8. (cf also comment 29.6.07) that P.Cs were “entirely superfluous”).

⁷ The Grogan case occurred in 1907 after the illegal flogging of rickshaw boys outside the Town Magistrate’s Court by Grogan and others. The Langridge Case occurred in 1911 and involved the prosecution (unsuccessful) of a Machakos settler who was given to bad boundaries, religious mania, and fierce dogs. One A.D.C. had later to resign and K. Dundas was censured.

⁸ E.A.S. 16.9.11 p. 14. (comment on Langridge Case).

⁹ LEA 16.7.10. p.6. (for a selection of post war criticism cf M. Ross “Kenya from within” ch. XVI.)

¹⁰ Cranworth “Colony in the Making” p. 76. Note also his remark “The Englishman to his credit instinctively dislikes an official” (Sport and Profit. P.101). But N.B: personal friendships between officials and settlers were frequent.

¹¹ Girouard. Confidential Memoranda. 1910. p.1-2.

Commissioners”.¹ The essence of good administration was sympathy; P.Cs “will endeavour by a system of sympathetic treatment to get into touch with the natives of their Provinces”.² Similarly D.Cs must “at all times be sympathetic in their treatment and dealings with indigenous populations”.³ The aim was “the contentment and satisfaction”⁴ of the subjects.

In short, the Administrators were asked to reconcile opposites; white settlement and native interests. If they did not always see the problem in these terms, they too were products of the west; the agents of a white government who were the representatives of native society in its dealings with the Central Government. They were often inconsistent since they ignored or lost sight of the dilemma, convinced, as they were, of the efficacy of fair play and just dealing. Again the demands of the day were all engrossing. The official did not make policy; his role was to implement it. Yet where there was a hiatus in policy, he was forced to take decisions on his own. In this, by function parochial, he reflected the parochial point of view.

In opposition to the settler point of view and in response – often unconscious – to parochial problems, there developed a ‘protest voice’ amongst the administrators. Kenneth Dundas wrote of his duty to speak for “my people”.⁵ Collyer expressed similar views on behalf of the Northern Masai.⁶ Mervyn Beech sought to warn Government of Kikuyu problems, by writing a paper on “The Kikuyu point of view”.⁷ These men were chameleons changing their colour to suit the needs of the people they served; for their first loyalty was to their district. Indeed to some, the district became a projection of their inner selves.

“They regard themselves”, wrote Winston Churchill in 1908, “as the guardians of native interests and native rights against those who only care about exploiting the country and its people”.⁸

So Beech told the Native Labour Commission that:

“it was the first duty of a Protectorate Officer to protect the interests of the natives, and to prevent them from being damaged simply in order to benefit the Europeans”.⁹

Yet the basic inconsistency of the Administration, torn between its role as agent of Government and its function to speak for the native, was illustrated in Beech’s next words:

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid. p.1.

³ Ibid. p.2.

⁴ Ibid. p. 13

⁵ CN/42. K. Dundas to Ainsworth 8.8.09. “I cannot expect to gain the confidence of my people except I am prepared to listen to their complaints”.

⁶ vide undated Memo. “The Masai question “CO 533/116/7789. As their D.C. he presumed it was his duty to “look after their interests”.

⁷ KBU/76. Dagoretti Records Book. P.120-128. 12.12.12. “an attempt to draw attention only to the native point of view in this District and I trust that it will attract the attention that I am convinced it deserves.”

⁸ W.S. Churchill, “My African Journey”, p.36.

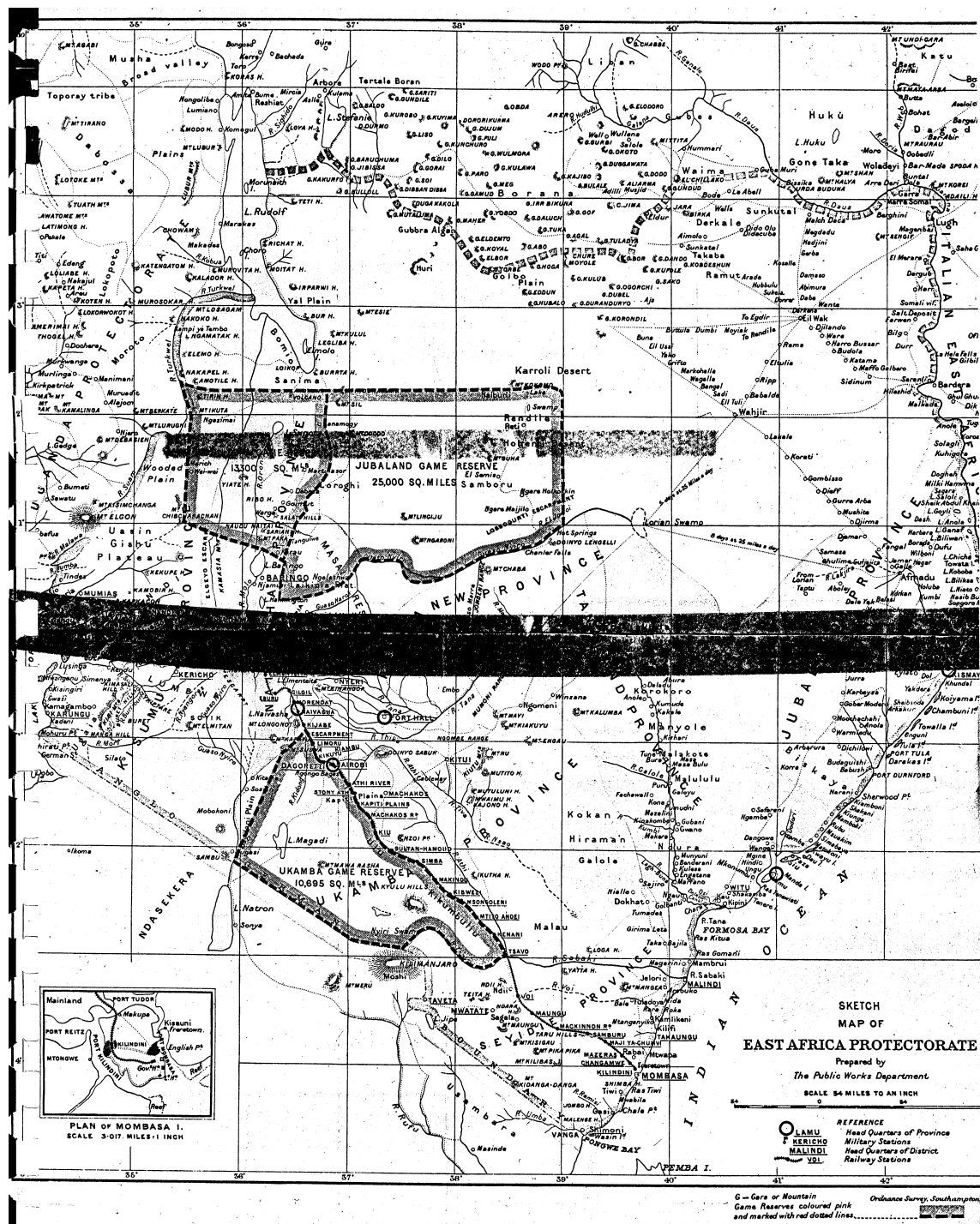
⁹ Native Labour Commission. Evidence. Witness 51. cf. also the view of the D.C. Fort Hall (Witness 231).

“officers should attempt to make the two interests coincide and not favour the one side at the expense of the other”.¹

Up to the outbreak of the Great War, ‘personal’ rule based on prestige, bluff, and sympathy, was relatively successful. The Administrator sought to get into contact with and to understand the “man in the blanket”.² But the problem of later years was to be whether they could make contact with the new African, ‘the man in trousers’.

¹ *ibid.*

² Sir R. Furse, *op.cit.* p. 263 “the natural African, ‘the man in the blanket’, whom the men we sent out and we who sent them chiefly lived to serve”.



CHAPTER II

IN QUEST OF A NATIVE POLICY

It is the boast of the British that they are not a logical nation: that policies are improvised from precedent rather than principle. Common sense and experience rank above ideas, and the gifted amateur above the professional and the expert. Nevertheless certain underlying themes emerged in Colonial policy during years of trial and error.¹

There was a powerful humanitarian element in British politics linked to an evangelical fervour and to a secular liberalism. Arising out of opposition to slavery in the early 19th Century, it found continued purpose in protecting subject peoples against exploitation. This tradition of sentiment achieved its eventual expression in the concept of Trusteeship. In East Africa its first concern was slavery. But after 1904, the protest of Dilke and Pease gave way to the demands of Wason, Ashley, Harvey, Wedgwood, and others for the protection of native lands. This in turn was followed by protests against specific injustices, as with MacDonald over the Masai. Conscience was a parliamentary pressure group.

In Colonial policy there was also a Treasury tradition which “like Care behind the horseman, paralyses every effort and casts a shadow on any enthusiasm”.² Gladstonian budgets did not deal in terms of generous subsidies for new colonies. If Chamberlain on the West Coast, or Salisbury on the East, raised railway loans for the development of Imperial estates, or for the purposes of Imperial strategy, the tradition was still that of self-sufficiency. The Treasury purse strings snapped open only to retrieve disaster.

A third factor in policy was the precedent revealed by experience in other parts of the world. Three areas – West Africa, South Africa, and India – had particular relevance for the new Protectorate. Curiously, it was to India that men looked in the early days. As a settler petition of 1906 complained, “The East Africa Protectorate is governed as if it were a province of India”.³

British experience in these three areas underlined certain contrasts: policies of direct vs indirect taxation, direct vs indirect rule, and a peasant vs a planter or settler economy. The experience of South Africa pointed to direct rule, direct tax, and a settler economy. The West Coast experience, after experiments in westernization, tended towards a peasant economy, indirect taxation, and indirect rule based on native

¹ Cf. S. Stebbings “Thinking to some purpose” (Chp I). Also E. W. Evans “Principles and Methods of British Colonial Empire” (Colston Papers. 1950).

² Salisbury. 14.2.95. Hansard 4th S. Vol. 30. cl.700. Note Lugard’s view “generally hampering and exasperating the responsible Administrator” (Dual Mandate, p.163). But Bagehot (“The English Constitution” p.10. Oxford edition) is nearer the mark – “The Treasury is the spring of business”.

³ On CO 533/24/26382. Note also the Times Leader of 26.12.08. Hobley regarded India as an example to be copied. (Memo 20.10.05 CO 533/5/43423). The Protectorate derived much of its law, specialist staff, trading community, and currency from India.

rulers, with their native treasuries and native courts.¹ Between the two extremes lay the example of India.² But if the Colonial Office, paid heed to the West Coast, South African ideas came to the Protectorate in the baggage of the early settlers, and some local officials.

There was a fourth factor in British Colonial rule, that of delegation of authority: 'trusting the man on the spot'.³ This limited the control exercised by British public opinion or by Whitehall. D.C's obedience to local circumstances of necessity, could not, or did not, do what they were ordered to do by London or Nairobi, because it seemed to have no correspondence with local realities. In practice, the executive tail, in each district, often wagged the policy making dog.⁴

The quest for a native policy for the Protectorate was greatly stimulated by white settlement, which gave to native questions an additional sharpness, a third dimension, absent in India or in West Africa. Settlers required land and labour; in meeting these new, and, as it transpired, insoluble problems were created.

The settler community was never large. By 1919, there were barely 1200 farmers and the total of adult, male, Europeans was under 2500.⁵ But what it lacked in numbers, it made up in vociferous political influence. There were a number of peers and scions of the nobility settled in the territory. Their spokesmen in the House of Lords provided the nucleus of a lobby in London.⁶

All Colonists under the British Empire possessed a pioneer spirit, which taught self-reliance and a dislike of Whitehall. England's sole virtue was to provide the shield of defence. The political effectiveness of the local settlers was marked by their progress

¹ Hailey. "An African Survey" (1956) taxation pp.651-668, 712-723; indirect rule pp.200-202, 251, 315, Economic development 1300-1306. cf also W.K. Hancock Survey of Commonwealth Affairs Vol. II "Problems of Economic Development"; H.L. Hall "The Colonial Office" (ch. V11), A.P. Newton "A Hundred years of the British Empire". D.A. Low and P.C. Pratt "Buganda and the British Overrule" (ch. 7 & 12), NB: Lugard "Dual Mandate" p.397. "In West Africa, where European settlement is out of the question, it is recognised that the native must be the producer of all agricultural exports".

² For the Indian Administrative debate in the early 19th Century see E. Stokes "The English Utilitarians and India". (Oxford 1959)

³ Eg. J.R. MacDonald "Labour and the Empire" (1907) p. 39. "The Imperialist has not thought about his Empire. He has not got beyond the stage of wanting an Empire –that is his principle, and of trusting the man on the spot – that is his method". Cf also M. Perham "Lugard" Vol. II, p.238. But note Lord Palmerston in earlier days had a cynical distrust of the man on the spot. (A.P. Thorton "The Imperial idea and its enemies" p.41).

⁴ Note also Jeffries' comment that the CO tended to exercise a "negative supervision" ("The Colonial Office") p. 108). For the uneven leadership of Secretaries of State cf. Furse "Aucaparius" p.13. Lord Olivier "Selected letters and writings" p.31-33. But in contrast note the views of Sir George Fiddes "The Dominions and Colonial Office" p.10. For the vagaries of FO rule of Protectorates see Z. Steiner H.J. Vol. 6 no.1. "The last years of the Old Foreign Office".

⁵ EAP Report. 1918-19. p.25. There were only 1523 women to 2,493 men. (Many of the early settlers had come from S. Africa including a number of Boers).

⁶ The three Kenya barons were Delamere, Cranworth and Hindlip, (Clubs, Carlton, Brooks and Travellers). Peers' sons included Carnegie (Southesk), the Coles, (Enniskillen), Finch Hatton (Nottingham). There were also a number of foreign nobility. Peers with EA interests included: Lord Cardross, Lord Cobham, the Duke of Westminster, Lord Armstrong, Lord Waleran, the Earl of Warwick, and Lord Howard de Walden. For a similar lobby in N. Rhodesia" cf L.H. Gann "A History of Northern Rhodesia" p. 131, 155.

towards self-government: a Legislative Council by 1907,¹ generous representation on local Commissions and Boards² (providing opportunities to influence policy) and, with the First War, the winning of the political initiative. But the presence of settlers created difficulties for the local Administration; it was easier to rule subject people than one's own pioneering kith and kin.

Native policy prior to white settlement was a problem of contact; the seeking out of suitable native rulers to co-operate with the small white Administration. The most promising material – the Arab feudatories and the officials of the Sultan of Zanzibar – were on the Coast. Even after Hardinge had destroyed the feudatories,³ he still believed:

“that a native administrative element, should, if possible, be formed and trained out of the Arabs and Higher Swahili.”⁴

Hardinge's hopes for the Swahili were unfulfilled. A number of interpreters, tax collectors, kathis, and one Arab in charge of Ngong Masai, make up the sum total inland. This was in contrast to German East Africa, where, despite the Bushiri revolt of 1888, the 'akida' and the Swahili played a large part in German administration.⁵ But then the old Arab trade routes – and the Muslim converts amongst the inland tribes⁶ – lay mainly in German Territory. Again, the Germans were tolerant of slavery and thus encouraged the drift of Arabs and Swahili into their territory. Finally – unlike the British Protectorate – the political links with Zanzibar were broken: there was no clash between the rule of the Sultan's officials and that of the local Swahili.

Inland, it was only amongst the Muslim peoples, such as the Somali, that the chiefs had much power; with the pagan tribes their polity was “very loose and primitive”.⁷ As Hardinge had explained in 1896:

“One of the difficulties which our officers in Ukamba had to contend with was the absence (except among the Masai) of any native Chief possessing either the power to enforce obedience...or the education or intelligence requisite”.⁸

No doubt, railway construction tied the hands of the administrators during Hardinge's rule. It was vital to avoid trouble near the line of communications with Uganda. Nevertheless a spirit of caution permeated Hardinge's administration. He opposed the early abolition of slavery. He blocked proposals for direct native taxation, desiring

¹ An Executive Council was also created. The two Councils were constituted by the EA Order in Council 1906. An earlier Protectorate Council had been created in 1895 (consisting of Zanzibar officials) on the Indian pattern but was of little use and went into oblivion (cf. Hardinge to FO 13.10.86 FO 107/70).

² The Land Commission 1905, Labour Enquiry Board 1908, Labour Commission 1912-13, Economic Commission 1917, Land Settlement Commission 1917. During the War there was a War Council and also District Committees. Pre-War there had existed a Land Board, and Provincial Labour, and Roads, Boards. There had also been an Education Committee.

³ Cf *infra* “The Problem of the Coastal Communities”.

⁴ EAP Report 1897 p.20 (cmd 8683/1897).

⁵ Oxford History of East Africa Vol. I. p. 203; K. Ingham “A History of East Africa” p.203; R Meinertzhagen “Intelligence Notes” (1916) p. 143-144.

⁶ Cf J.S. Trimingham “Islam in East Africa”. (Edinburgh House, 1962).

⁷ EAP Report 1897. p.3

⁸ MPA FO In 1895-97. des 11.6.96. Hardinge to FO.

first to win the confidence of the natives so that “they respect our authority and trust our justice.”¹ Caution was also exercised in extending the administration, influenced by a parsimonious Treasury. In matter of native custom, native courts were recognised, and officers were advised to

“leave offences committed by natives against one another to be dealt with according to native custom by their own Headmen or Chiefs”.²

But the stresses on the tribal structure brought about by the presence of Europeans were already apparent. During a visit to the Pokomo in 1895, Hardinge read the signs:

“In numerous villages the old men complained to us that the younger generation disregarded ancestral traditions and customs: thus to wear their hair cropped instead of falling in long plaits over the eyes was a privilege enjoyed only by Elders, or by men of mature years and granted to them as a favour in return for a large payment.; but notwithstanding this, those of the youth who had been down to the coast region trimmed their heads in this fashion without either permission or payment, and, when reproved....said that the country now belonged to the white man, and that they recognised no authority but his”.³

Again, the idea of native Reserves was mooted in Hardinge’s time in connection with Government claim to control the waste lands of the territory. In 1896, the Colonial Office had advised the Foreign Office to establish a land Commission to define native lands, leaving the balance free as Crown land.⁴ This was not unimportant in view of the native practices of shifting cultivation but nothing came of it. As late as 1900, the Reserves policy was still in its infancy. There was a greater concern for the preservation of game; an attitude labelled by Eliot as the “game-keeper” policy.⁵

When Hardinge left the Protectorate in 1900, he had little positive to show for his five years’ administration. However he had had many distractions. Rebellion on the Coast, the Bombardment of Zanzibar, the Sudanese Mutiny, the 1898 Ogaden Expedition, and the overriding demands of the railway, left him with little time to evolve tidy policies. His officers, working in strange conditions, still found that the tribal structures did not meet their needs. Ainsworth in 1905, reviewing the past ten years in Ukamba, noted:

“For years the Administration has made every endeavour to find natives of position to assist in administrative work. So far however, except in the case of the Masai, we have had very little success. One difficulty is to find a really strong man, another is to get the natives as a whole to recognise any one individual as a person of authority over them.”⁶

¹ MPA FO. In. 1895-97. Memo attached to des 27.10.96 cf. also EAP Report 1897. p.42.

² FOP. 6849/64. encl. Hardinge to Ainsworth. 20.3.96. (The exceptions were Murder, or Slavery cases, or offences close to Government stations).

³ FOP/6693/223. Hardinge to FO. 6.2.95.

⁴ FO 107/67. 21.4.96. Crown Agents to FO. But cf FO 107/70 Minute, Davidson to Hill 10.11.96.

⁵ Vide Eliot 15.5.01. (FO 2/447) on settlement “if indeed Sir Clement Hill’s fanatical zeal for preserving wild beasts will permit of human beings residing in these districts”. Again Eliot des. 5.4.04. (217) “What I may call the gamekeeper theory”.

⁶ Cmd. 2740/1905. (Reports relating to the Administration of the East Africa Protectorate) p.7.

Perhaps the Administrator, conditioned by Zulu Wars and Haggard and Henty – or later still by Sanders of the River – had too rigorous a view of what constituted an indigenous political authority. Certainly he had preconceptions over the need for Chiefs. His view of the tribe may have been too static, regarding it as an unchanging artefact rather than a dynamic organism. The bewildering patterns of interlocking kinship groups and clan heads were enough to confuse practical men, immersed in the problems of the day.

The arrival of Sir Charles Eliot in December 1900 heralded the policy of white settlement, which gathered momentum after 1902. So Pandora's box was gently opened, none doubting that ample land was available for all. And settlement brought with it a clash of opinions over the form that colonization should take. On the one hand, Eliot advocated a chequerboard policy, the interspersal of native locations with areas of white settlement. This he successfully implemented in Kiambu amongst the Kikuyu.¹ But Eliot disliked Reserves. Pacific by nature and hating punitive measures,² he had a militant abhorrence of tribalism, and, to his mind, Reserves merely fostered tribalism.³ In contrast, his subordinates advocated Reserves as a safeguard for the native lands.

The Foreign Office seemed at first indifferent, though it opposed the idea of Reserves on the Southern African pattern.⁴ Yet it swiftly changed its mind, stimulated by a desire to find grounds for picking a quarrel with Eliot on the distantly related question of leases of land in the Rift Valley.⁵ Eliot's quarrel with the Foreign Office, and his resignation, led to the acceptance of a Reserve policy; the basis of which the Foreign Office recognised as the natives' enjoyment of the "undisturbed and exclusive possession of the areas set aside for their use."⁶ This policy of large reserves – as opposed to scattered locations – was again endorsed by the local Land Commission in 1905, though its views were influenced by a desire to obtain labour.⁷ But having established Reserves, there remained doubts as to the form of Government to be exercised within them; a matter that was not resolved for a number of years.⁸

¹ Cmd 2099/1904/25 des. 9.4.04. So Eliot wanted settlers interspersed amongst the Masai "as they do among the people of Kikuyu" (cf also EAP Report 1903/04. p.20).

² Eliot to FO 18.6.01. (FO 2/449). "What is wanted is not the alternation of license and punishment but a continuous and steady pressure".

³ Vide Eliot's letter to the "Westminster Gazette". 31.8.04. cf also his "East Africa Protectorate" p. 310 and his comment on the Masai organisation. "It is a beastly bloody system". (Cmd 2099/1904/25. 9.4.04).

⁴ Cmd 2099/1904. /8. FO to HMC. 27.11.03).

⁵ Cf infra. "The Masai Problem".

⁶ FO 2/833. des 583. 21.10.04.

⁷ House of Lords papers 158/1907. Report pp.15-16, but Stewart was less certain. Ibid. item 2. des. 21.7.05.

⁸ There was also the unresolved question of economic development within the Reserves. NB: Delamere's attacks on Ainsworth's development policies in Ukamba and Nyanza (1913 Labour Commission Evidence p. 109). But Hayes Sadler had had a great faith in Manchester cottons and free trade – "Nor do I agree with the opinion that little can be expected of the native population except as labourers...in Kenya and Kavirondo there is an immense agricultural population which will come to represent a large export trade" (CO 533/17/39472). 19.6.06). But note Major Leggett's comment in 1931 that "the effort to develop the Native was started...but was dropped in 1910" (Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Closer Union. Vol. II. Evidence. Question 3485).

The question of Reserves arose directly out of the problem of controlling pastoralists. Nomadic tendencies taxed the imagination of officials. The nomads were ultra-conservative and a threat to law and order. One possible solution was to isolate them. Ainsworth had advocated such a solution for the Masai in 1899.

“After a time, when our military forces are more organised and our Administration more extended, we shall be more able to edge in these nomad tribes, and by degrees make it impossible for them to wander about without permission. We could then clearly define the Masai lands and see that the limits were kept.”¹

With all the pastoral peoples, the Administrators used the weapon of the Reserve; but it was not the final answer. The ideal, pessimistically discarded by Hardinge in the case of the Masai, was rather:

“that this wild people will as a whole be weaned from their predatory mode of life and induced to become peaceful cultivators.”²

With the Masai, the main disadvantage of the Reserve policy was “the isolation of the tribe and the adherence to the conditions of a nomadic life”.³ Yet the need was not merely to control the nomad, but to convert the idle warrior, increasingly at variance with his elders, into an agriculturalist or a labourer.

In the early years, the Protectorate needed forceful and intelligent leadership from its Governors if it was to solve its teething troubles. This leadership was lacking. A Colonial Office minute of December 1909 complained:

“we have had a succession of Governors who, if not actually unsatisfactory, have been ineffective for various reasons”.⁴

Ainsworth, writing from Kisumu early in 1908, spoke of “an almost absolute lack of any policy...matters generally were subject to a process of drift”.⁵ “The natives”, Ainsworth added “have... a right to expect from a Government that professes to be here as their protectors, sympathetic treatment as regards their interests. Generally speaking such treatment can only be accorded by the constant adoption of definite principles which should be laid down by the Governor”.⁶

¹ FOP 7402/23. enc. Ainsworth to HMC 13.6.99.

² EAP Report 1897. p.23. The idea of transforming the pastoralist into an agriculturalist was mooted on several occasions eg. Eliot op.cit. p.143-144. The policy was applied to the Nandi and Kipsigi cf des. 7.4.13. (CO 533/11/15074) also evidence of C.M. Dobbs (Carter Land Commission Vol. III. P. 3439 et s.).

³ FO 2/833. des. 583. 21.10.04.

⁴ CO 533/63/39400. Minute of Butler 14.12.09. For comments on Stewart cf Hobley “From Chartered Company to Crown Colony” p. 127. E. Huxley “Whiteman’s Country”. Vol. I. p. 156. For Sadler (“not a strong man”) cf minutes on CO 533/48/47937 and 43/15172. NB: W.M. Ross “Kenya from within” p. 257 on the Governors generally.

⁵ NPA Provincial Report 1907/08. p.1. cf also Ainsworth to Jackson 18.5.07, “no definite native policy has ever been laid down” (CO 533/28/13999).

⁶ NPA. Report 1907/08. p.2.

But increasingly after 1902 settler opinion made itself felt though officials were antagonistic to settler demands. A settler petition of 1905 drew angry comments from Jackson.

“These persons who are the leaders of the Colonists’ Association are for the most part either South Africans by birth or men who have resided for a considerable time in South Africa. Their strong prejudice against all black men is obvious to an unbiased person”.¹

Hobley and Ainsworth were even more outspoken on the need to guard native interests against the settler. As Hobley saw it:

“it would be of no avail to have freed the native races from the slaver to let them become a prey to the land hunger of the white colonist. I trust the executive officials will never forget that they hold a brief for the natives”.²

Such views did not increase the popularity of the Administration with the settlers. And by 1907, settler political activity was mounting. The shortage of native labour had become a major grievance. To placate irate settlers, and to deal with native problems, a new post of Secretary for Native Affairs was established in June 1907. But then Labour was closely related to condition in the Reserves.

Meantime, in London, humanitarian pressure in Parliament had compelled the Colonial Secretary to enunciate certain principles of native policy. In June 1907, Lord Elgin informed the Lords that:

“we must bear in mind and exercise the greatest caution in order not to overlook the interests of the great populations which the course of events has entrusted to our keeping”.³

His Under Secretary, Winston Churchill, was more precise in endorsing

“the principle that a native reserve, once established shall be inalienable except with the consent of the natives themselves...The Government will act as Trustees.”⁴

Principles were as effective as the men on the spot made them. In Claud Hollis, the new Secretary for Native Affairs, the Colonial Office had an ally. Hollis had come to Africa at the age of twenty. After two years as a trader in German East Africa, he had joined the Protectorate Administration in 1897. Three years in the field as an A.D.C., were followed by a spell as Vice Consul Dar es Salaam, and then as Eliot’s private secretary. In 1902, aged 28, as Secretary to the Administration, he took charge of the newly formed Secretariat. Studious and an excellent linguist, he wrote learned

¹ CO 533/5/43423. des 610. 11.11.05. Jackson to CO (with Memoranda by himself, Hobley and Ainsworth). Note Bowker’s remark at his trial “it has always been a first principle with me to flog a nigger on sight who insults a white woman” (OG. 1907. p. 264).

² Ibid. Hobley’s memo attached to Jackson’s despatch 20.10.05. Ainsworth held that “we owe a great duty to the natives”, and that the Administration must guide them without settler interference.

³ Hansard 4th S, Vol. 177. cl. 28 (27.6.07).

⁴ Ibid. Vol. 178. cls. 1165-1166. (22.7.07). Note also CO draft des. of May 1907 stating that whilst natives predominate, Government must be “in accordance with the views of His Majesty’s Government which is in the position of a trustee for the protection of native interests” (CO 533/40/9129).

articles and books on the local tribes. A hard worker, who saw the Secretariat as the fount of promotion, he was tenacious in his opinions – some thought narrow-minded – and impatient of opposition. The local press, blaming him for “impertinently framed correspondence”,¹ welcomed his ‘relegation’ to the new post. The duties of the S.N.A. were anomalous; his staff were seconded from the Administration, but he exercised no control over that body. If the Colonial Office and Governors regarded him with favour,² he was damned by the settlers as pro-native.

“As an old official Mr. Hollis has been trained in early official methods and the policy they led to were those of a native or Asiatic Protectorate and not supposed to apply to a European colony. In the official eye it was for the coloured population the British Protectorate was established”.³

In fact, Hollis took immediate steps to investigate questions of native policy. In September 1907, he raised the question of Reserves with the P.Cs. A number of Reserves had been gazetted in 1906 under the inappropriate provisions of the Outlying Districts Ordinance.⁴ Hollis proposed that Reserves should continue to be established initially as ‘Outlying Districts’. When sufficient information was available, definite Reserves could then be set aside,

“Smaller in extent but sufficient for all requirements. Title deeds should then be executed conveying the land to the tribes in perpetuity, and trustees should be appointed.”⁵

With his proposals, he enclosed a memorandum by Scholefield, an official with considerable South African experience. Scholefield pressed for a firm policy to check the idleness of Africans and to keep land open for settlement. The Reserves must not be too large. Hollis agreed to this last point, but suggested areas three times that of actual cultivation, with greater areas for the pastoralists:

“as the population expands the people will have to adopt better ways of agriculture and the surplus will have to seek for a livelihood by labour outside the Reserve. It is our duty to elevate the natives, but any rise in the social and economic scale is impossible if we allow them to live exactly as they have done before.”⁶

Hobley added his views. The needs of the natives must be safeguarded but “unoccupied land cannot be locked up indefinitely” and so hinder settlement.

¹ EAS 22.6.07. p.10 (“Verbum sat sapienti”). For Hollis of Hayes Sadler 7.10.06 (CO 533/17/39708), Ashley to Seely 21.5.08 (CO 533/43/15172), Girouard 26.5.10 (CO 533/74/18382). The S.N.A. was originally intended as a “Superintendent of Labour”. For the post’s anomalies – Girouard called it a 5th wheel on the coach – cf papers on CO 533/33/44976.

² Vide CO 533/43/15172. also Ellis’ minute of 1.5.08 (ibid) and on CO 533/43/16451 (Minute of 9.7.08).

³ EAS 14.9.12. p.10.

⁴ No legal provision existed for Reserves until the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 (section 54). The Outlying Districts Ordinance closed districts to travellers. In the OG 1906 (p. 205, 233), some Reserves were called “outlying districts”, others “reserves”.

⁵ MPA. Malindi Out 1907 (97/185). PC to DC 25.9.07 forwarding Hollis (28.8.07).

⁶ Ibid. Hollis para 5. (Scholefield’s memo of 3.8.07) was attached).

“The closer occupation of the Native Reserves will automatically increase the severity of the struggle for existence and force Native tribes to develop more rapidly in the direction of civilisation, than they otherwise would if left alone.”¹

Administrators did not live in a vacuum, nor were they left alone to evolve theories concerning native policy. Labour and Labour shortage was the burning issue. In December 1907, in an attempt to improve the situation, Government introduced labour rules, which stated the terms under which officials would recruit labour for private employers.² The conditions proved unpopular with employers and led to a stormy labour meeting in March 1908, followed by Settler demonstrations outside Government House and the suspension of the unofficial Members, Delamere and Baillie, from the Legislative Council.³

Native Policy was becoming befuddled in a confusion of issues. To some, Reserves were now reservoirs of labour.⁴ For them, the main purpose of taxation, native authorities, and Administration was to squeeze labour from the Reserves like toothpaste from a tube. To others, the Reserves were to preserve native lands against the speculator, providing a refuge in which the tribesman could adjust gradually to the pressures of civilization.

Settler opinion turned from specific grievances to an attack on general issues. In August 1908, the Leader of East Africa challenged the idea of Reserves. Settlers had come to make the railway pay, but development was impossible so long as the native could do as he wished. The native occupied too much land near the railway.⁵ A week later the same paper declared.

“The territory is large enough for Black and White men. Yet without doubt many thousands of acres of desirable land... are closed to the European employers in order to indulge the native gratuitously in perpetuating his tribal existence”.⁶

A few months later, the Leader was protesting at “the fatuous Exeter Hall-ridden policy of Government”.⁷

Not only the settlers were discontented. The P.Cs were angered at their loss of influence; the 1907 Courts Ordinance and the new Native Affairs Department were but two instances of restrictions placed on their powers. Early in 1908, they

¹ Ibid. Hobley . 7.9.07. compare this with Hobley’s later views in JAS. 1922 p. 195 (“Some Native Problems in Eastern Africa”).

² Vide OG 1907 p.478 (rules dated 18.11.07).

³ Cf cmd 4122/1908. (Correspondence relating to Affairs in East Africa).

⁴ Native labour was originally controlled by the Native Porters and Labour Regulations 1902. But in May 1906, the Commissioner promulgated additional labour legislation (6/1906, the Masters and Servants Ordinance) without the sanction of the CO, who disapproved of it (vide CO 533/16/34203). Nevertheless it remained on the statute book till repealed by Ordinance 4/1910. Ellis considered the 1906 legislation “really not defensible at all on grounds of abstract justice... But the settlers in the E.A.P. are not fond of abstract justice... and I am doubtful whether we are strong enough to compel them to follow its dictates”. (minute of 21.8.1908 on CO 533/42/13729).

⁵ LEA. 1.8.08. p. 4.

⁶ LEA 8.8.08. p. 4.

⁷ LEA 20.2.09. p. 5.

persuaded the Governor to convene a P.C's conference,¹ to allow them to air their complaints in the presence of Heads of Departments. In agreeing to the meeting, Hayes Sadler sought to pacify the Provincial Administration.

“With the principle that the Provincial Commissioner is the responsible head of, and chief authority in, his province I am... in thorough accord... at the same time we must remember that the old days have changed, responsible Heads of Departments must manage their departments... consulting with the Provincial Commissioner where the interests of his province are affected.”²

The P.Cs met in March 1908, under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, F.J. Jackson. They interviewed separately, after a day's private session, the Principle Judge, the Commissioner of Police and of Lands, the Director of Agriculture, and others. But their liveliest confrontation was with Hollis. The Secretary for Native Affairs opened the meeting by referring to correspondence with Winston Churchill, where his duties had been defined as being “to represent the natives in all questions arising between them and the white settlers or Government”.³ Hollis added that he was opposed to a dual administration and had no desire to control the chiefs. But it was his duty to act as the natives' advocate. In the past, this had been the duty of the D.Cs, but

“a gradual change had taken place in the attitude of administrative officers, and the natives had come to look on the Government and the officers in charge of the district more as an enemy than a father as they did formerly”.⁴

He noted that some officers now tended to side with the European settlers (shades of the ‘white’ chameleon!).

The P.Cs responded sharply. Ainsworth wanted Hollis' functions clearly defined. Hopley stressed that a P.C. must be the sole authority in his province (the administrators resented the rivals). Ainsworth “strongly objected”⁵ to any suggestion that errors had occurred over land alienation, but Hollis reiterated that “mistakes had been made in the past”.⁶ Jackson intervened to sooth ruffled feelings and to add that Hollis had unearthed “many things previously unknown, concerning private ownership”.⁷ The meeting then quietly accepted Hollis's role as “an advocate to represent the views of the natives”.⁸ They turned to points of more general agreement. All opposed the Land Board – with its settler element – exercising any control over Reserves. Reserves needed sufficient land for future expansion, and this could be secured by a treaty, which surrendered surplus land. The possibilities of individual tenure were touched upon. Both Ainsworth and Hollis wanted mineral

¹ MPA HMC In 1907 (87/129). Circular 21.1.08. cf also Hinde to Jackson *ibid* 17.2.08. and circular 24.2.08. (These meetings continued at irregular intervals till stopped by Belfield in 1913).

² *Ibid* HE's minute 17.1.08.

³ *Ibid*. Minutes attached to circular of 13.4.08 (“Native Affairs” (a)).

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid*. For Hollis as the natives' advocate cf Legco Minutes December 1908 (Questions to Director of Agriculture also his protests against the Collective Punishments Ordinance (21.7.09 and 15.6.09) on CO 533/61/28266).

royalties in the reserve to remain with native owners or the Trustees. All the P.Cs wanted a portion of the Poll Tax set aside for improvement of the Reserves, in a fund controlled by the local Administration.¹

A month after the meeting, Ainsworth used his annual report to complain of over-centralisation:

“There is too much inclination to centre administrative control in the Secretariat and Departments at Headquarters. I feel that if more scope and initiative were allowed to the Heads of Provinces, under of course a definite policy, a more intelligent interest would be taken in affairs”.²

He then tilted with the High Court. European codes were ill suited to backward areas, “all savages respond only to force at the start”.³ He was concerned at the absence of native levers of control in Nyanza:

“we have in actual reality no reliable native Administration to assist us in this province”.⁴

In the same month as the P.C’s meeting, a Labour Enquiry Board met to investigate the shortage of labour. Four of the P.Cs and the Secretary for Native Affairs attended together with a number of unofficials. But on this occasion, the officials were subdued. The Board supported proposals for a poll tax; only Hollis opposing it on the grounds of native conservatism. They also suggested tax rebates for natives going out to work. Over Reserves, a resolution was passed “that land set aside for native reserves should be limited to the present requirement.”⁵ A rider was then added – at the suggestion of Bowring and Delamere – that “the existence of unnecessarily extensive reserves is directly antagonistic to an adequate labour supply”.⁶ Hollis supported by the Commissioner of Lands, even agreed to this resolution provided “present requirement” was liberally interpreted.⁷ Shortly afterwards Government withdrew from the recruitment of labour, but officers were directed to see that the tribes were made aware of Government’s desire that the natives should go out to work.⁸ Proposals for a poll tax were approved by the Colonial Office.

In mid-1908, Hollis departed on home leave and was replaced as acting Secretary, by J.W.T McClellan. Now McClellan had been impressed by the report on unrest in Zululand.⁹ He circulated a lengthy memorandum to P.Cs concerning native

¹ MPA HMC in 1907. Minutes “Native Affairs” (d) (e)(f), defining reserves and releasing the balance of land for settlement. (cf CO 533/43/19557 31/36259, 32/40063, and 41/5801). Only two treaties were signed: one with the Sultan of Witu and one with the Mazrui.

² NPA Nyanza Report 1907-08 p. vi.

³ Ibid. p. viii. Note also the vigorous correspondence over native law between Ainsworth and the Crown Advocate after the P.C’s meeting of September 1908 (NPA “Nandi Confidential File”. 2.2.09, 19.2.09).

⁴ NPA. Report 1907-08. p. iv.

⁵ Advertiser of East Africa. 22.5.08. p.5 (cf also ibid. 15.5.08 p. 5-6; 22.5.08 p. 5-8, 29.5.08. p. 3. and CO 533/43/21093).

⁶ Advertiser. 22.5.08. p.8.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Vide Circular 30.3.08. (MPA. HMC in 1907). Revised Labour Rules were published 2.4.08. (O. & R. 1908).

⁹ Cmd. 3889/1908.

administration, stressing the lessons to be learnt from South Africa. There was a need for sympathy in native affairs, separate courts, Trustees for land, an advisory committee on education, and an avoidance of jail sentences. He quoted with approval the South African Commission's observation that, "In the early days reliance was placed more on interested rivalry than any absolute loyalty."¹ McClellan felt that a policy of divide and rule must face the possibility of formerly hostile tribes uniting. He protested against the curtailing of the powers of D.Cs in native affairs, and opposed suggestions for the reduction of native reserves as "not only a selfish but a wholly wrong policy".² South Africa had revealed the dangers of Kaffir farming; the gospel of work would have meaning only after natives had learnt to work for themselves. Above all the attitude of the natives was vital,

"have we thought that our system be too impersonal to the masses, and that they might as a whole long for the days when the European was unknown to them?"³

The year 1908 had provoked controversy over native affairs. 1909 was not eventful. The local press noted with pleasure the repercussions of the native concubines' incident – involving two A.D.Cs - in the United Kingdom. The Advertiser of East Africa, quoted fully from the Times on the official attitude.

"There seems to be a feeling that the welfare of the white settlers induced by Government to invest their energies and their capital in East Africa is now no longer a leading consideration in the official mind. It is even to be doubted whether the extension of white settlement is honestly desired."⁴

The local papers also attacked the existing administrative organisation as cumbersome, and advocated placing D.Cs under the Native Affairs Department.⁵

The view that there might be official doubts over the wisdom of white settlement was well founded. The Colonial Office had had misgivings for some time.⁶ In April 1908, Jackson sounded out senior officials in the Protectorate as to the causes of the settler discontent.⁷ Ainsworth responded by blaming settlers for bad labour relations. "The Wakikuyu and WaKamba...prefer to work for a Sab [Sahib]".⁸ He questioned the whole policy of white settlement. The Protectorate might be a planter's country,

¹ Mombasa District Records (MSA/18). Memo. 25.7.08. p.2.

² MSA/18. p.13. (NB. No replies to McClellan's Memo have survived).

³ Ibid. p.4. Note the Courts Ordinance 13/1907 had abolished the existing provisions for native courts (under the 1897 Native Courts Regulations and the Village Headmen's Ordinance). The new law required each court to be gazetted. As a result between 1907-10 there were very few legal native courts (cf. OG 1907, 1908; especially 1908 p.220-221).

⁴ Advertiser. 29.1.09 (quoting the Times leader of 26.12.08).

⁵ EAS 20.3.09 p.10 (cf also LEA. 6.2.09, and Advertiser 19.2.09).

⁶ Eg. Ellis on a traveller's report questioning white settlement, "His remarks... coincide with the opinion to which we have long been tending in this department" (CO 533/38/17311). Again Ellis on Boer Migration (CO 533/45/24476 and 30104). Cf also Seely's view on CO 533/44/22385 and Crewe's secret des. Of 15.7.08. (CO 533/44/22385).

⁷ There had been settler petitions for increased self-government in 1905 and 1906, the Grogan flogging incident in 1907, Labour troubles and the Government House demonstration in 1908.

⁸ NPA. File III/14. 1908. Ainsworth 5.6.08. also Jackson's minute (ibid) of 17.4.08. "We are naturally anxious to promote European Settlement". But cf Jackson to Hill 25.5.03 (FO 2/720) "this is not a country for small settlers".

but it was not “a poor white man’s country”.¹ He preferred Asian immigration. In May 1908, the Governor questioned Northrup MacMillan, a wealthy American settler. MacMillan felt that the original mistake had been to permit small farmers to settle, they might have to be repatriated.² The Colonial Office took this seriously and called for estimates. But the crisis passed and the Governor did not press for action.³

In March 1909, Sir James Hayes Sadler was transferred to the Windward Isles, to be replaced as Governor by Sir Percy Girouard. A Royal Engineer and a railway expert, Girouard had served with distinction in the Sudan and South Africa. By birth a French Canadian, he had been High Commissioner in Northern Nigeria, and was a disciple of Lugard.⁴ Married to a South African, he was a ‘policy’ man with clear views of his own, but a great delegator of authority. Commanding the respect of his subordinates and the liking of settlers, he combined humour with his “cold storage look”⁵ for the wayward. He was no respecter of authority. Thrice he was to resign from public office, for, “his temperament made it difficult for him to brook control, especially political control”.⁶ But whilst he ruled, the Governor was not a passive figurehead.

In November 1909, Girouard presented the Colonial Office with his preliminary views. There existed “an utter absence of any defined policy whereby I could take up the work of my predecessor”.⁷ He contrasted the Protectorate unfavourably with Northern Nigeria. He criticised the Courts for interference in Administrative affairs⁸ and the military for their lack of co-operation. The one positive piece of policy was the existence of the Reserves:

“the natural corollary is to rule these native tribes according to their own laws as far as possible and not to hurry by forced marches into ideals totally foreign to the communal tribal interests and desires”.⁹

One point requires emphasis. In forwarding his first report, Girouard threatened to resign if his reforms, “are to be indefinitely delayed, or latitude in their application

¹ NPA File. III/14. Ainsworth Memo.

² CO 533/44/22385. des. 31.8.08.

³ Ibid. CO to HE. 15.7.08. (Sadler’s reply of 24.2.09 is on CO 533/58/9702).

⁴ Girouard made repeated reference to N.Nigeria and to Lugard in his reports. Cf also M. Perham “Lugard” Vol. II. p. 471-473.

⁵ McClure “Land Travel and Seafaring”, p.118. For Girouard’s delegation of authority cf LEA 3.7.09, p.4,6.

⁶ Times Obituary Notice. 27.9.32. p.9. This added “His policy was one of preserving East Africa for White Settlement combined with absolute justice to the coloured race”. Cf also Sir P. Magnus “Portrait of an Imperialist”, pp. 108-109, 170. Lugard wrote of Girouard that “few have shown a greater insight into problems of native Administration” (Dual Mandate, p. 216). But see also Lloyd George’s opinion of Girouard’s personality. (War Memoirs of David Lloyd George. 1938 edition. Vol. I p. 152).

⁷ CO 533/63/39400. Interim Report. 13.11.09. p.1. Both Hobley and Ainsworth supported Girouard’s views on native policy.

⁸ In contrast the powers of the High Court in N. Nigeria were limited. Cf. Perham, “Lugard” Vol. II p.40, 158, 160, 426-431.

⁹ Interim Report. P.4. cf also his report of 25.5.10. p. 123. “All our experience in South and West Africa and Uganda points to a successful native administration... based upon the use of native administrators” cf also J.R MacDonald op.cit. p.102. Note Hobley’s warnings of the terrible alternatives to indirect rule (Bantu Beliefs and Magic” p. 289).

denied”.¹ The Colonial Office chose deliberately to ignore the threat and omitted either censure or comment. It was to be the cause of future troubles.

Girouard’s policy was comprehensive and called for action on all fronts. The Colonial Office could be excused for missing some of the finer points. By bombarding them with a stream of lengthy reports and despatches, supported by private letters to home officials, Girouard overtaxed their patience and their charity.

In retrospect, Girouard’s failures in native policy stem from the attempt to join irreconcilables. He found in existence a Reserve policy based on the South African model. Within the Reserves he adopted a policy of indirect rule based on West Coast practice (though he also looked to South Africa). But outside the Reserves he followed a White Colony policy. Here were all the paradoxes of a modern Bantustan.

In May 1910, Girouard issued detailed Confidential Memoranda to the Provincial Administration. For the Reserves, the policy was:

“To rule through the Chiefs and Elders and to educate them in the duties of rulers according to a civilized standard: to convince them that oppression of the people is not a sound policy, or to the eventual benefit of the rulers: to bring home to their intelligence, as far as may be, any evils which destroy individual responsibility, ambition and development among their people: and to inculcate the unspeakable benefit of justice, free from bribery and open to all”.²

The principle was development on African lines.

“Miss Kingsley has well said that no African race can, as a race, advance except on its own lines of development, and it is the duty of England, if she really intends to advance the African in the plane of culture and make him a citizen of the world, to preserve the African nationalism and not to destroy it”.³

The twin needs were progress and gradualness. But the effectiveness of the existing tribal Government varied and some tribes did not possess chiefly systems:

“where this is the case the tribal or family authority is vested in an elected Council of Elders, and it is the duty of Provincial Commissioners to uphold their authority and to induce the Elders by degrees to appoint one of their number, who should be a man of influence, as spokesman with a view to his becoming in due course their Chief”.⁴

¹ CO 533/63/39400. Covering des. 13.11.09. The CO thought the threat unworthy of Girouard and Seely put it down to “the unaccustomed altitude”. Note also Girouard to Read (ibid. 16.11.09). “Do not fear about the natives. I have them always with me in my mind”.

² Printed Memoranda for Provincial and District Commissioners. 18.5.10. p.1. Note Girouard had warned the CO that the alternative to Indirect rule was expensive direct administration. (vide Report 25.5.10. p. 124).

³ Printed Memoranda p.4.

⁴ Ibid. p.5.

Here lay the weakness of the theory of indirect rule, for it sought to create chiefs where they had never existed. But Girouard did stress caution,

“the main object of administering the people through their Chiefs is to prevent disintegration amongst the tribe; but active interest supervision and guidance ... are all necessary for the prevention of abuses.

I warn those who favour direct rule that if we allow the tribal authority to be ignored or broken it will mean that we, who numerically form a small minority in the country, shall be obliged to deal with a rabble...all acting on their own and making themselves a danger to society....”¹

Outside the Reserves, Girouard admitted that “the elaborate structure of native customs and belief is apt to fall when we touch it” and the African mind “rudely awakened”.² The native in the settled area was worse housed than in the reserve, but he was the more his own master. It was in the employer’s interest to treat him well, for

“the future social condition of the natives in this country will determine our life as much as our life determines theirs”.³

But how the detribalised in the settled area were to be reconciled with tribal rule in the reserves was a paradox that Girouard never resolved.

Again in 1910, Girouard presented the Colonial Office with a monumental report. In native affairs, he based his conception of African development on ideas from South Africa.⁴ The African was to progress from a tribal state to a labouring condition, and thence to the educated native: the parson, journalist, skilled artisan. Girouard did not oppose change. Though he wanted Trustees for Reserves, he did not wish to perpetuate tribal land tenure, but looked to the emergence of individual right holders. In some instances, the forces at work were such that gradualness was impossible. With prescience he commented

“The Kikuyu have civilizing influences working upon them which are bound to change the whole character of the people in a comparatively short time. The period... will be to my mind, most regrettably short, but it cannot be obviated”.⁵

One solution Girouard firmly opposed was any suggestion of a dual administration, on the South African pattern. These ideas were sweeping and contradictory. It was not

¹ Ibid. p.5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The South African Native Affairs Report 1905 (cmd 2399/1905), and also the views of Lord Selborne. Extracts from both were quoted in the report of 25.5.10. Girouard tended to repeat his arguments in thinly disguised forms eg. November 1909 Report, May 1910 Report, EAP Reports 1909/10, 1910/11, and February 1912 Confidential Report.

⁵ Confidential Report 25.5.10. (CO 533/74/18381) (page references refer to COP 954) p.134. Girouard thought this point so important he made it twice in the report. Cf also letter to Hopwood on the need for gradual change. “I fear this is not the ideal of the missionary bodies, and nolens volens we will be pushed into the individualisation of certain tribes” (CO 533/73/13567. 21.4.10).

possible to keep settled areas and Reserves in watertight compartments. As early as 1907, Isaac, in Ukamba, noted this difficulty.

“A considerable portion of Kikuyu country has been allocated among European settlers and large numbers of natives still are resident in this area. In theory this is very excellent as the natives resident on a settler’s farm will provide his labour supply. In practice, however, the native residents use the protection of the landowner to partially defy their chiefs; thus the tribal organisation and discipline is broken down without anything to replace it.”¹

In implementing Girouard’s schemes, Councils of Elders were set up in 1910 and tribal retainers reorganised to act as their agents thus reducing the need for regular police in the reserves. In 1911 the Native Tribunal Rules were promulgated to give a legal basis to the judicial activities of the Councils.² In November 1912, a Native Authorities Ordinance – based on Girouard’s proposals – replaced the Village Headman’s Ordinance. Councils of Elders became “Collective Headmen”;³ both Chiefs and Headmen were empowered to issue administrative orders enforceable in native courts.

The effects of the new policy were soon apparent. In July 1910, Hobley in Ukamba warned his D.Cs that they must avoid “any interference with the course of native law and procedure unless it is repugnant to justice and morality”.⁴ Again in 1912, he reminded them that,

“when his Excellency approved the Native Tribunal Rules it was a decision that the reserves were to be governed by what may be termed indirect rule, that is to say a measure of local self government was to be encouraged and recognised”.⁵

Early reports concerning the councils were encouraging. But the main difficulty was to reconcile the councils with the existing organisation of official chiefs and headmen – often the artificial creations of British Administration – upon whom they were now superimposed.

In Kenia Province in 1910,

“Kiamas were established under Presidents selected by the District Elders, with their own tribal retainers. As is so often the case, the weakness of the system was revealed before its strength. In former times the authority of the Elders had been paramount.... Following the advent of young chiefs with authority to construct roads, arrest criminals, etc., the elders found themselves

¹ CPA Ukamba Report 1906/07. p.27.

² OG 1911 p. 140-141. Rules under s.10 of the Courts Ordinance (revoking the 1908 Rules). Various councils were immediately proclaimed vide OG 1911 p. 142 et Sequa. 7 councils in Malindi, 14 in Rabai, 3 in Taveta, 19 in Kikuyu district, 27 in Machakos, 24 in Kitui, 22 in Nyeri, 14 in N.Kavirondo, 17 in Kisumu, 53 in S. Kavirondo, 15 in Lumbwa, 25 in Nandi and 30 in Fort Hall.

³ OG 1912. Ordinance 22/1912. s.6,7,8,10.

⁴ MPA (103/15). Circulars to DCs Ukamba. 5.7.10.

⁵ Ibid. 24.2.12.

reduced to a relic of the past, and without authority or influence. Tradition once broken was found to have lost its significance”.¹

In Nyanza there was a similar problem. The D.C. Kisii reported,

“One can quite understand a progressive Chief deciding to ignore the Elders, who are the reverse of progressive, but at the same time the system had its drawbacks and in the end...must make for the disruption of Tribal control.”²

In Ukamba the same stresses existed. Hobley had welcomed the restoration of the elders, but added:

“The only difficulty, so far, has been in the clashing of the authority of the headmen with that of the Councils – the headmen who are often young men unqualified by their not having paid fees to sit on the Councils, see in the revival of the latter a diminution of their own hitherto arbitrary powers and lessened opportunity for extorting fees. It is hoped that in time they may be brought to understand their duties are executive only, judicial functions devolving on the Councils, and that the idea of a dual authority...which at present is a discordant factor, may die out.”³

Press reactions to Girouard’s policy varied. The ‘Standard’ thought the Tribunal Rules would revolutionize the Reserves. It invited settlers to co-operate with Government in reporting cases of injustice.⁴ The ‘Leader’ was more critical and more perceptive:

“We regard with some misgiving any departure in native policy which strengthens tribal bonds and tribal customs. If British East Africa is to be colonised by the Europeans, there must be no walls and floodgates of native barbarism erected to preserve the native peril in pristine savagery and idleness.”⁵

Two years later the ‘Leader’ again attacked the policy of indirect rule.

We are disposed to the contrary principle of gradually displacing the authority of headmen and Chiefs by establishing direct European control.”⁶

Girouard had moved fast, thereby breaking his own rule of gradualness. Again practice differed from theory. Girouard had regarded the Councils as alternatives to

¹ CPA Provincial Record Book, (Provincial History written 1911-12). P.21-22. cf also Fort Hall Records FH/43 p.11. “Kiama” means a court or a council. For its clashes with the Protectorate Courts cf Law Reports Vol. V. Cr. C. 83/1913, where a Kiama burnt suspected witches.

² NPA. Nyanza Report 1910-11. Kisii Report attached p. 1.

³ CPA Ukamba Report 1910-11. p.1-2. For the Clashes between the Kiamas and mission converts of Kiambu Records (KBU/76 p.83-88. Baraza of 25-26/4/12). Again 26.11.12 (ibid p. 112-116). Also Beech “The Kikuyu Point of View” (ibid p.120-128). Until 1913 detribalised – and mission – natives were exempt from Kiama control.

⁴ EAS 22.4.11. p.14 (but after the Cole deportation the EAS was less charitable).

⁵ LEA 22.4.11. p.8 of also 26.11.10 p. 8 on “the soft hearted “we were about to say soft headed” policy.

⁶ LEA 31.8.12. p.8. cf also 10.2.12. p.8 and 4.11.11. p. 8 (“Native Rule”). The LEA opposed transplanting N. Nigerian or Indian principles to a white colony. Earlier it had pressed for a Canadian or South African style administration (LEA 6.3.09 p.4).

Chiefs; but the old and new systems operated side by side. In the long run it was the Chiefs and Headmen who survived, and the traditional Tribal Councils that went into oblivion.¹

In discussions on native policy, taxation was a prominent issue throughout the period. A Hut Tax had been introduced in 1901 at a rate finally fixed at 3 rupees.² In 1910 a Hut and Poll Tax was substituted, extending taxation to unmarried males over the age of 16. Taxation was important per se in a poor country. But it was also a potent administrative weapon: as a form of discipline, as a test of obedience, or as a means of forcing labour from the Reserves.

The systems of collection had varied. Some tribes paid block tribute rather than individual tax. Payment in kind first was common. On the Coast, Arab officials were responsible for collection. In Nyanza, Swahili collectors had been used. It was common for chiefs and headmen to bring in the tax, for which they were paid a 5% commission, their only salary.³ All these systems were open to abuse. Under Girouard, the new Nyanza system- collection by A.D.Cs on safari after a hut count – was generally adopted.⁴

But however the tax was levied, its use as an instrument of policy and labour recruiting was subject to argument and dispute. In 1906, Lane in Seyidie advocated higher taxation:

“In order that the natives might be induced to help the material prosperity of their country”.⁵

Hayes Sadler proposed the poll tax in 1908 as a means of disciplining the young and as an incentive to work.⁶ But Isaac, in Ukamba, opposed such thinking:

“I do not myself see how we can justly tax the native on account of labour difficulties, and if we do, I fear some of our contemporaries who take extreme views on these subjects, may accuse us of introducing a system which amounts to an inversion of slavery.”⁷

Isaac suggested a more positive approach.

“If we can prove to the native that he is deriving certain benefits from the State, such as Technical education, Irrigation of the reserves, Individual Land Tenure, etc, then a Poll Tax would be readily paid...”⁸

¹ The Councils were replaced by smaller appointed Tribunals and by advisory councils (later L.N.Cs) cf. Phillips “Report on Native Tribunals” pp. 91-95.

² The tax was first collected in early 1902 at 1 rupee, the following year it was raised to 2 rupees, and later to 3 rupees.

³ Lenana, Kinanjui, the Nandi Laibon, and certain Somali ‘sultans’ were the only paid chiefs. Girouard abolished the tax commission and introduced salaries for chiefs, headmen, and tribal retainers.

⁴ Cf Confidential Memoranda 1910. p.6-8. Confidential Report 25.5.10. p.107-108.

⁵ MPA HMC Out (94/166). 23.5.06.

⁶ CO 533/43/21093. des. 19.5.08.

⁷ CPA Ukamba Report. 1907-08. p.10.

⁸ Ibid.

But a system of compulsion would:

“simply drive the labour from the estates and leave in the mind of the Native a feeling of injustice which would take years to eradicate.”¹

It was one thing for the A.D.C. Marakwet to write:

“to cause the Marakwet to go out to work and become a useful tribe to the country, the strict enforcement of Hut and Poll Tax and the Native Authority Ordinance, is absolutely necessary.”²

The problem was to find staff to maintain the pressure and influence of Government. And, as Dundas remarked of the Giriyama, some tribes paid tax to make the officers go away.³ In March 1910, the D.C Ravine noted that the Kamasia and Elgeyo were behind in their taxes:

“It is the fault of intermittent visiting: they think the District Commissioner has gone away and won’t come back for two to three years, and consequently do not pay much attention to what he says”.⁴

The same officer put his finger on the weakness of the poll tax as a means of getting out labour. “If they can be got to realise that an Individual Hut Tax is really intended, they may be got to go out in gangs”.⁵ But so long as the tax was paid communally, the family would pay for the young men; if this made tax collection easier it removed the economic pressure on the individual.⁶

John Ainsworth of course had his views. In May 1910 he opposed the imposition of Poll Tax in Nyanza pointing out that his province produced one-fifth of the total Protectorate revenue.

“Notwithstanding the facts that these figures reveal, there exists the desire...particularly amongst those quarters which are peculiarly susceptible to the European Settler interests, to increase the taxes on the natives by imposing a Poll Tax... we take their spare land and call it Crown land; we tax their huts and now we want to tax their heads....”

¹ Ibid. p.11

² Elgeyo Records. ELGM/1. 1912/13 Report, “taxation”.

³ C. Dundas. “African Crossroads”. p. 34.

⁴ NSA ARC (DC NKU) 2/9/41. Ravine Report 1909/10, para 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For difficulties in tax collection when the individual became responsible cf M. Beech “The Kikuyu Point of View”. The Kikuyu elders complained that Poll Tax made the youths too independent. But often it was the women, who by cultivating the fields, raised the money for tax (cf Nyeri Records. Report 1915-16, p. 6) Note Sir A. Pim’s remark (Report 1936, p.35). “So long as the family remains united it matters little whether the tax is called a Hut or a Poll Tax. When the family breaks up, part of the obligation is transferred to that exceedingly elusive person the payer of Poll Tax.” Note also the special problem of taxing the pastoralist, which led to inconclusive discussions (Sandford, “An Administrative & Political History of the Masai Reserve”).

...by all means let us have a European Colony, if such a thing is possible, but why we should expect the native to pay the cost appears at least strange.”¹

He added angrily, “Only a very small percentage of the revenue is spent on the native reserves”.² Repeatedly Ainsworth pressed for some form of Native Trust Fund, so that the native might enjoy direct benefit from taxation.

But often opinions were equivocal. In 1913 the D.C. Machakos held that

“to increase taxation in order to drive natives out to work is forced labour under a subterfuge and it is impossible to get away from the fact”.

Yet with a resigned shrug of the shoulders he added, “No labour, white or black, is purely voluntary”.³

Perhaps the best statement of the field officer’s dilemma over labour and taxation was made by McClure in Nyeri. Despite official instructions, “we connived, at the risk of losing our positions, in an elaborate system of pressed labour”.⁴ McClure spelt out the results.

“I can see no great improvement in the spontaneous desire of the native to work outside his home...

And we must bear in mind that the present system is deliberately responsible for this. If the entire machinery connected with the supply of labour from a native area is to rest on compulsion, as it most certainly does, then the native blissfully oblivious of any dignity whatsoever to be obtained by the sweat of his brow and general discomfort, very sensibly trusts to luck and awaits with lively dislike the dread day when he is compelled to work.”

McClure saw no harm in compulsion when fairly applied; nevertheless

“if at some future time we are going to rely...on some more satisfactory system, then we are doing the worst possible thing in fostering the present system. But one must admit the immense difficulty of striking a happy mean. Compulsion is understood (sic) of the African and comparatively it produces quite excellent results. But any thing in the form of an expressed desire...not accompanied by an actual order...falls on extremely barren ground. Similarly exhortations on the ground of the benefit accruing to the individual from his labour produce little result.

And if a complete revulsion to the above means takes place the total paralysis of the labour supply inevitably follows.”⁵

¹ NPA. Ainsworth’s Duplicate Book. Memo attached to letter of 30.4.10.

² Ibid. cf also in the same volume, Ainsworth’ letter to Dr. Leys of 5.2.10. “These poor devils of natives who come out of their reserves to work will in too many cases [be] looked upon as only so many animals..”

³ CPA. Ukamba Report. 1912-13. D.C. Machakos’ Report attached. p. 69.

⁴ Nyeri District Records. Annual Report 1915-16. p.31.

⁵ Ibid. Report 1914-15. p.5-6 (labour). Cf also McClure op.cit. p. 125-127.

Amongst the Administrators, there was always the ‘protest voice’. It did not object to discipline, to taxation, or to labour, when used positively. But taxation as an instrument of labour recruiting, with an uneven sharing of the public revenues, was bitterly criticised. McClure spoke with irony of forced labour and forced stock sales as “valuable education in the matter of Labour and Commerce”.¹ He then invited Government to prove, in a more tangible manner, its concern for native welfare.

“This might even take the form of the expenditure of some of the public funds on the public”.²

The tragedy was that in such debates, the Administration was busily engaged in talking to itself.

As a result of a fresh labour shortage in 1912, the whole labour question was investigated by a Native Labour Commission. The Commission reviewed native policy as it impinged on the labour question: from reserves to the control of drinking, from methods of taxation to the re-organisation of the Administration.

In their evidence before the Commission, administrative officers opposed any diminution in the Reserves.³ Once again Ainsworth expressed strong views; any suggestion of reduction was “a highly immoral one and also one that would create a tremendous amount of discontent”.⁴ Repeatedly, officers asked that a fair share of taxation be spent on native education and development. But the Administration itself was under attack. Perhaps the most telling evidence was that of Captain Edwards, the Inspector General of Police.⁵ He criticised efforts to impose western ideas instead of using native custom. There was a lack of co-operation between provinces and the absence of a general policy. Government pampered the natives and the High Court interfered too often in administrative matters. Though he also criticised the unjust employer, his main attack was directed against the administrative machine. His solution was a dual administration, which placed settled areas under magistrates and left the Reserves under a Chief Native Commissioner. The P.Cs could then be abolished.⁶

The Commission’s recommendations followed in part, Edwards’ views. Over Reserves, they recommended the demarcation of boundaries to prevent encroachments on to non-native lands. They also proposed the revision of existing Reserves on the basis of one and a half times the actual areas of cultivation. There

¹ Nyeri Records. 1915-16 Report p.3.

² Ibid. p.4.

³ Many administrators gave evidence to the Commission. Hollis (witness no. 1), G.H. Osborne (no. 10), C.S. Hemsted (no. 9), S. L. Hinde (32), C. Dundas (42), M. Beech (51), Hobley (62), MacDougall (71), A. J. Maclean (75), J.M Pearson (80), McClellan (102), Crewe Read (110), J. Ainsworth (129), Partington (138), O.F. Watkins (139), Corbett (195), H. H. Horne (196), Traill (213), Lane (214), Northcote (216), R. G. Stone (231), Others submitted Memoranda. (Note Watkins’ references to Olivier’s “White Capital and Coloured Labour”).

⁴ Witness 129. Native Labour Commission.

⁵ Witness 252 (also memo VIII).

⁶ Both Ainsworth and Belfield were pressing for a system of Dual Administration by 1913. The Labour Commission supported the idea (paras. 21 & 103 (e) Report). A CNC was appointed in 1918 and Dual Administration tried out between 1921-29.

were proposals for grazing areas, land for detribalised natives, the development of individual land tenure, native locations in towns, the opening up of native districts, and the introduction of an identity card system on the Rhodesian model. They recommended that administrative officers be direct in “unequivocal language”¹ to encourage labour to come out of the Reserves. They also advocated a ‘dual administration’.

Little progress in evolving a native policy was achieved in the period between Girouard’s departure in February 1912 and the outbreak of the War. The resignation of Girouard and the transfer of Hollis, in October 1912, left the central executive short on native affairs experts. The new Chief Secretary, Bowring, came from the Treasury and had no Administrative experience. The new Governor, Belfield, was a barrister with experience of the Malayan administration. His knowledge of Africa was limited to a visit to the Gold Coast for an inquiry into land tenure, in which he demonstrated a preference for a plantation economy on the Malayan model.² He was to show some interest in the control of semi-nomadic tribes, squatter labour, and the development of individual tenure, and a marked lack of sympathy for Kikuyu land claims.³

It fell to Ainsworth to continue the administrative debate by means of numerous and lengthy memoranda. In October 1912, he produced a proposal for Provincial Councils. These were to consist of nominated settlers and missionaries, with 2 to 4 Africans, preferably chiefs, and the P.C. as Chairman. The councils would discuss native taxation, proposed native legislation, and undertake special enquiries. The object was to bring “to the Administration the support of public opinion”.⁴ Settlers opposed native policy as the work of individual officials, whom they damned as “bigoted and egotistical.”⁵ The mixed councils would create a climate of informed opinion. Too few understood the native mind. Self proclaimed experts believed that

“Black shall work for White at profit and advantage to White. Seldom indeed do we hear of any proposals likely to be of material advantage to each.”⁶

What was needed was an industrious, progressive, and contented native, a mutual policy of good will between the races, and an informed white public. Though Ainsworth’s proposals were circulated to P.Cs, Government rejected them out of hand.⁷

Nothing daunted, Ainsworth, in June 1913, raised the question of the detribalised native, and the development of the Reserves. The African must realise that “his affairs must at all times be dictated and influenced by white men”.⁸ Ainsworth then dealt in detail with a dual system of law: native law in the Reserves and European law for the detribalised. He pressed for the agricultural development of the Reserves, a

¹ Native Labour Commission Report. Para 82.

² Cf cmd 6278/1912. para 46.

³ CO 533/117/15074; CO 533/116/6361 memo of Belfield; 119/24080 des. 13.6.13.

⁴ MPA. Secretariat Circulars (86/125). Circular 30 of 12.3.13 forwarding Ainsworth’s memorandum of 9.10.12.

⁵ Ibid. Memo. 9.10.12

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. Circular 12.3.13.

⁸ MPA. File 9/300. “Institution of General Policy”. Ainsworth Memo. 4.6.13. By late July 1913, Ainsworth was in England and in contact with the CO.

Native Trust Fund, Title deeds for the reserves, and the exemption of the same detribalised natives from customary law. And earlier he had pressed for a policy of native education.¹ But Ainsworth stressed the duty of the Guardians:

“any policy which aims at making the Blackman simply a hewer of wood and drawer of water will ultimately result in the demoralisation of the native and the deterioration of the white, and prove without doubt the ruin of the country.

We must in the interest of posterity resist such a policy even though by doing so we raise furious opposition in certain quarters... Government must have the courage to pursue a policy that is considered to be best for the future interest of both Black and White”.²

Hobley at Mombasa supported Ainsworth’s views and stressed the need to reassure the native over his land. The Natives “are...very apprehensive of the encroachment of the European farmers.”³ “I believe”, Hobley added, “their fears are real and this way trouble lies”.⁴ He noted the existence of a school of thought that opposed development in the Reserves for fear of a labour shortage, and also because undeveloped Reserves could be the more easily encroached upon. Hobley commented on the need for tribal discipline and the evils of native liquor amongst the young.

These discussions proved inconclusive. But in March 1914, the Chief Secretary issued a Labour Circular which emphasised that the tribes:

“Should not only be told that it is His Excellency’s desire that they should supply as large and regular a labour force as possible, but the advantages accruing therefrom should also be pointed out.”⁵

The circular invited comment on details.

Ainsworth responded with a lengthy memorandum on labour and native policy:

“My officers and myself are in daily fear that something will happen that will place us all in a very awkward and undesirable position... we are in danger of losing the confidence of the tribes. If that happens disaster will follow”.⁶

He stressed the lack of general policy:

“Any scheme of native development has, however, been left to local initiative instead of its being put forward as the policy of the Protectorate and universally applied.”¹

¹ Cf CO 533/130/27588. Memo of Ainsworth, Hobley, and Directors of Education and Agriculture (30.4.13) proposals for the development of Nyanza and for dealing with native converts. (ibid). and Ainsworth to Read 8.8.13. “Contented, industrious, and progressive native populations...means all the difference between the success and failure in our administration.”

² MPA (File 9/300 “Institution of General Native Policy” Ainsworth Memo. 4.6.13. p.2.

³ Ibid. Hobley’s comments. 12.9.13.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ MPA (86/125). Secretariat Circulars. 16.3.14. (No. 23).

⁶ NPA. Nandi Confidential File. Ainsworth Memo. 30.3.14. p. 4.

Real progress could only come through the tribes developing their own lands.

Shortly after the outbreak of the War, Ainsworth and his fellow P.Cs embarked on one more debate on native policy. It was originated by Ainsworth, who produced a new set of instructions for his D.Cs. Copies were circulated, and the Governor called for similar orders from other provinces. Some did little more than copy Ainsworth,² but Hobley set out his own instructions, thereby providing an interesting commentary on official thought at the close of the pioneer period of administration: for both reflected views expressed earlier by many administrators in evidence before the Labour Commission.

To Ainsworth, the main point to stress was the power of change affecting the young men of Nyanza making them “impatient of tribal authority”.³ The aim of native administration must be to turn the tribesmen into good citizens and an asset to the State. Native authorities must be supported. “Government must be firm and insistent and the native must obey”.⁴ There was need for supervision and development in custom, agriculture, and education. The energy and drive of D.Cs was the basis of all progress. Ainsworth paid much attention to details; cash checks, safari camps, safari diaries, headmen’s character sheets, relations with missions, and mission outschools. The sense of drive was best reflected in his comment on ‘safaris’.

“The object of local travelling normally is to keep in touch with the District, waken up the people, instruct them and see that development and progress is taking place.”⁵

Ainsworth’s emphasis on development had its justification in the remarkable achievements of Nyanza since 1907, in large measure due to his energy. Export of produce – almost entirely native – had risen from 3583 tons in 1908/09 to 18,023 tons in 1913/14.⁶

The tone of Hobley’s instructions differed subtly, being both more pessimistic and less materialistic. The aim of Native Policy was, “to train the native to govern himself by obedience to his recognised local authority.”⁷ He must also contribute to the development of the country as a whole “by labour either inside or outside his reserve”.⁸ But in supporting native authority, “any tendency by the young men to undermine it must be steadfastly resisted”.⁹ Officers must not be depressed by native

¹ Ibid. p. 2.

² JPA Bundle I/37. File 561/15. Ainsworth’s Instructions 16.8.15; also HE’s orders 9.9.15, and PC Jubaland’s draft Instructions 12.10.15.

³ Ibid. Ainsworth para 2.

⁴ Ibid. Ainsworth para 4.

⁵ Ibid. para. 23.

⁶ NPA Nyanza Reports 1910-11 p. 392; 1912-13 p.61b, 1914-15 p. 34. Note also Girouard’s Confidential Report 25.5.10. p.121. The results are remarkable when it is remembered that there were no technical officers (Education, Veterinary, Forestry, or Agricultural) in the native areas of the province before the 1920’s. Administrative officers acted alone. Cf also H. Fearn “An African Economy” (a study of Nyanza 1903-1953) (London, 1961).

⁷ MPA (20/103). File. “Administration of Native Reserves” Hobley (undated) Instructions (approved by HE 30.10.15) p. 1.

⁸ Ibid. p.2.

⁹ Ibid. p. 2.

apathy. Results turned on “the confidence the personality of the District Officer is able to inspire”.¹ Personal influence was all important. The people must know their D.C., “that he is their friend and is accessible to both the rich and the poor.”² Hobley then sniped at Nyanza values.

“there is a materialistic school of Administration – the type of man, for instance who quotes with great pride the number of bicycles or gramophones his pet tribe purchases per annum and considers this a gauge for measuring advancement”.³

Hobley offered other standards.

“The only true standard of progress is an ethical one. Improvement in the public sense of justice is a real test, the growth of public spirit, the feeling that anti-social acts are taboo... the necessity for observing a contract, the growth of truthfulness, the growth of the belief in the sanctity of human life, and a decrease in intemperance.”⁴

Such aims were not merely “the business of a missionary”,⁵ for the native also possessed moral standards.

He touched on more mundane matters. Labour was important. European sisal estates produced exports equal in value to those of Nyanza. Experience in settled areas might influence natives to use more advanced methods of cultivation. He warned against enthusiasm that quickly turned to disinterest. He repeatedly stressed the personal factor. “Success is.... Impossible without the deepest interest being taken in the District by the District Commissioner”;⁶ “he will achieve little if he is not en rapport with his people and his staff”.⁷

It was a strange mixture of idealism and a pessimism based on experience and is a fitting point to close the debate on native policy. The impact of the War made these discussions academic: the Administration was increasingly on the defensive as the settlers gained the political initiative.

There had been few conscious theories on policy in Nairobi or Whitehall. If Whitehall accepted a policy of indirect rule (“the policy of governing natives in Reserves through their chiefs is the right one”)⁸ it had exercised a light control in its

¹ Ibid. p. 3.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p.5. But Hobley also noted that “the promptness of the collection of taxes... is a very fair test of the condition of the location” (p.4).

⁴ Ibid. p.6.

⁵ Ibid p. 7.

⁶ Ibid. p.11

⁷ Ibid. p.11

⁸ Minute of Bottomley on CO 533/104/52291 on the NAO. Cf also Lobb’s minute in 1907 (CO 533/31/38692), “the only way to raise the level of native administration is through chiefs”. Again Butler on Girouard’s report of November 1909, noting the Governor’s complaint of the deliberate breakdown of tribal rule, added that it was a policy “against which the CO... sternly sets its face” (CO 533/63/39400). Even under the FO, Hill could state “that natives should be allowed to govern themselves with certain limitations” (Minute 26.7.01. on des. 18.6.01. FO 2/449).

development. Praising the new Native Authority Ordinance of 1912, an official in the Colonial Office admitted that, “the policy followed by previous governors must soon have led to the general break-up of the tribal system”.¹ More significant had been the Colonial Office’s reaction to Ainsworth’s demands for a general native policy on those occasions that his views reached them. In 1907,² a junior official, Ellis, had found it difficult to formulate any general principle save for equality before the law. Noting Ainsworth’s fears for the future under settler rule, Ellis added,

“it will, as experience has shown over and over again, be impossible to ensure justice for the natives”, still “the change is a long way off”.³

Again, in 1913, Ainsworth tackled the Colonial Office, but the question of policy was referred back to the Governor.⁴ Fiddes, reflecting the Office’s pragmatic approach, noted that Ainsworth desired:

“to provide before hand for the situation that might (and probably would) arise when the settlers got a majority in the Leg. Ccill. We needn’t worry about that at present”.⁵

The whole debate on native policy, with its glimpses of the workings of the official mind, had an air of inconclusive groping. Between the idea and action lay confusion and frustration. And this unsureness of touch is not wholly explicable in terms of practical men lacking both the time and the expertise for articulate ideological disputation.

There existed no general plan or principles laid down by the Colonial Office or the Governors.⁶ Where Girouard provided the leadership and the ideas, he produced theories rather than techniques and his policy lacked consistency. The scheme of indirect rule glossed over the difficulties of converting the weak rule of traditional elders into a strong chiefly administration – emulating North Nigeria – in a territory given to white settlement. And when Girouard resigned, the personal drive and leadership were lost. Once again lamentations were heard in the land; the way was not straight and there was no guide. But the Administrators, in their cries for a general policy, failed to make clear that they desired principles that were practicable and policies that were locally palatable.

Settler demands for land and labour provoked the administrative ‘protest voice’ in defence of African interests. Here, administrators performed a professional function; for if their response derived in part from their social background and sense of fair play, their role as substitute paramount chiefs – enmeshed in their African societies – made them not only identify themselves with their districts but also aware of the limits of tribal tolerance. The ‘protest voice’ was a part of their vocation. It was another, and more mundane, aspect of that Trusteeship, which was more commonly thought of in terms of the ideals and aspirations of society in Britain. Trusteeship at

¹ Bottomley. Minute on CO 533/104/52291.

² Cf Ainsworth Memo. Attached to des. 27.3.07 on CO 533/38/13999.

³ Minute, Ellis 22.4.07. CO 533/28/13999.

⁴ Vide CO 533/130/27588 CO to HE 9.9.13. For Ainsworth’s visit to the CO see also CO 533/119/24080 and 124/43938.

⁵ Fiddes minute. 6.10.13. CO 533/119/24080.

⁶ Cf M. Perham “The Colonial Reckoning”. p.128

the level of the chameleon was not a matter of right against wrong, but a functional trait. Professionally, the administrator had a vested interest in the Trusteeship: it got results, it enhanced his prestige locally, and on it depended his personal rule, his career, even his life.

But it is necessary to retain a sense of proportion. The administrators, as men of their own generation, did not question the civilizing mission of the West; it was their duty to extend the blessings of all things English. This included white settlement, which had the backing of Whitehall and the eager support of the Governors. The confusion in native policy stemmed from a conflict of convictions; the rights of the African and the rights of the Settler. With confident optimism, many administrators hoped to reconcile opposites. But it is this dichotomy that created the ambiguity and inconclusiveness in the debate on native policy.

There existed no 'schools of thought' sharply divided in support of a West African or South African policy. The lines of argument and action were not precise. In later years, and in the more detached world of London, the division might become one of principle; the issue of White or Black Paramountcy.¹ But in the years before 1918, confusion, not principle, reigned. In terms of a practicable policy, none could decide which interest was paramount or, in the event of compromise, where the just balance lay. And where administrators expressed their deeply felt views, much of the vigour of their argument derived from their environment. As district representatives, they represented local views. Finally, they were practical men dealing in facts: the fact of white settlement, which needed both land and labour; the fact of African rights, the foundation of cheap rule. In such circumstances, there could be no pure South African or West African solution.

An ambiguity shrouded the role of the district administrators and confused all ideas on native policy. It heightened the chameleon's eccentricities. It aroused the furious criticisms of the settler. It parted practice from policy.

¹ Even the J.S.C. on Closer Union in 1931 had difficulty in solving the dilemma vide Report p.23-24 (156 of 1931). For conflicting viewpoints of Declen "Three years in Savage Africa" p. 505, L. Amery "Union and Strength" p.229, 280-281, Sir C. Eliot "East Africa Protectorate" p. 104, Sir G. Fiddes, "The Dominions and Colonial Office" p. 92. NB: W.K. Hancock 'Survey of Commonwealth Affairs' Vol. II p.223.

(Note, year ending 31st March).

(1) Until 1991-92, the Hides and Skins exports included the Uganda exports. Up to 1997-98, guns trophies, game skins, etc., were included under this head.

(2) The 1917-18 figure is that of East Africa Protectorate and Uganda combined. (By 1919-20, this had reached 85,000-780). Uganda exports for earlier years were as follows: 1905-06 8,724; 1906-07 8,133; 1907-08 8,121; 1908-09 8,190; 1909-10 8,374; 1910-11 8,384; 1911-12 8,553; 1912-13 8,570; 1913-14 8,573; 1914-15 8,573; 1915-16 8,573; 1916-17 8,573; 1917-18 8,573; 1918-19 8,573; 1919-20 8,573; 1920-21 8,573; 1921-22 8,573; 1922-23 8,573; 1923-24 8,573; 1924-25 8,573; 1925-26 8,573; 1926-27 8,573; 1927-28 8,573; 1928-29 8,573; 1929-30 8,573; 1930-31 8,573; 1931-32 8,573; 1932-33 8,573; 1933-34 8,573; 1934-35 8,573; 1935-36 8,573; 1936-37 8,573; 1937-38 8,573; 1938-39 8,573; 1939-40 8,573; 1940-41 8,573; 1941-42 8,573; 1942-43 8,573; 1943-44 8,573; 1944-45 8,573; 1945-46 8,573; 1946-47 8,573; 1947-48 8,573; 1948-49 8,573; 1949-50 8,573; 1950-51 8,573; 1951-52 8,573; 1952-53 8,573; 1953-54 8,573; 1954-55 8,573; 1955-56 8,573; 1956-57 8,573; 1957-58 8,573; 1958-59 8,573; 1959-60 8,573; 1960-61 8,573; 1961-62 8,573; 1962-63 8,573; 1963-64 8,573; 1964-65 8,573; 1965-66 8,573; 1966-67 8,573; 1967-68 8,573; 1968-69 8,573; 1969-70 8,573; 1970-71 8,573; 1971-72 8,573; 1972-73 8,573; 1973-74 8,573; 1974-75 8,573; 1975-76 8,573; 1976-77 8,573; 1977-78 8,573; 1978-79 8,573; 1979-80 8,573; 1980-81 8,573; 1981-82 8,573; 1982-83 8,573; 1983-84 8,573; 1984-85 8,573; 1985-86 8,573; 1986-87 8,573; 1987-88 8,573; 1988-89 8,573; 1989-90 8,573; 1990-91 8,573; 1991-92 8,573; 1992-93 8,573; 1993-94 8,573; 1994-95 8,573; 1995-96 8,573; 1996-97 8,573; 1997-98 8,573; 1998-99 8,573; 1999-00 8,573; 2000-01 8,573; 2001-02 8,573; 2002-03 8,573; 2003-04 8,573; 2004-05 8,573; 2005-06 8,573; 2006-07 8,573; 2007-08 8,573; 2008-09 8,573; 2009-10 8,573; 2010-11 8,573; 2011-12 8,573; 2012-13 8,573; 2013-14 8,573; 2014-15 8,573; 2015-16 8,573; 2016-17 8,573; 2017-18 8,573; 2018-19 8,573; 2019-20 8,573; 2020-21 8,573; 2021-22 8,573; 2022-23 8,573; 2023-24 8,573; 2024-25 8,573; 2025-26 8,573; 2026-27 8,573; 2027-28 8,573; 2028-29 8,573; 2029-30 8,573; 2030-31 8,573; 2031-32 8,573; 2032-33 8,573; 2033-34 8,573; 2034-35 8,573; 2035-36 8,573; 2036-37 8,573; 2037-38 8,573; 2038-39 8,573; 2039-40 8,573; 2040-41 8,573; 2041-42 8,573; 2042-43 8,573; 2043-44 8,573; 2044-45 8,573; 2045-46 8,573; 2046-47 8,573; 2047-48 8,573; 2048-49 8,573; 2049-50 8,573; 2050-51 8,573; 2051-52 8,573; 2052-53 8,573; 2053-54 8,573; 2054-55 8,573; 2055-56 8,573; 2056-57 8,573; 2057-58 8,573; 2058-59 8,573; 2059-60 8,573; 2060-61 8,573; 2061-62 8,573; 2062-63 8,573; 2063-64 8,573; 2064-65 8,573; 2065-66 8,573; 2066-67 8,573; 2067-68 8,573; 2068-69 8,573; 2069-70 8,573; 2070-71 8,573; 2071-72 8,573; 2072-73 8,573; 2073-74 8,573; 2074-75 8,573; 2075-76 8,573; 2076-77 8,573; 2077-78 8,573; 2078-79 8,573; 2079-80 8,573; 2080-81 8,573; 2081-82 8,573; 2082-83 8,573; 2083-84 8,573; 2084-85 8,573; 2085-86 8,573; 2086-87 8,573; 2087-88 8,573; 2088-89 8,573; 2089-90 8,573; 2090-91 8,573; 2091-92 8,573; 2092-93 8,573; 2093-94 8,573; 2094-95 8,573; 2095-96 8,573; 2096-97 8,573; 2097-98 8,573; 2098-99 8,573; 2099-00 8,573; 2100-01 8,573; 2101-02 8,573; 2102-03 8,573; 2103-04 8,573; 2104-05 8,573; 2105-06 8,573; 2106-07 8,573; 2107-08 8,573; 2108-09 8,573; 2109-10 8,573; 2110-11 8,573; 2111-12 8,573; 2112-13 8,573; 2113-14 8,573; 2114-15 8,573; 2115-16 8,573; 2116-17 8,573; 2117-18 8,573; 2118-19 8,573; 2119-20 8,573; 2120-21 8,573; 2121-22 8,573; 2122-23 8,573; 2123-24 8,573; 2124-25 8,573; 2125-26 8,573; 2126-27 8,573; 2127-28 8,573; 2128-29 8,573; 2129-30 8,573; 2130-31 8,573; 2131-32 8,573; 2132-33 8,573; 2133-34 8,573; 2134-35 8,573; 2135-36 8,573; 2136-37 8,573; 2137-38 8,573; 2138-39 8,573; 2139-40 8,573; 2140-41 8,573; 2141-42 8,573; 2142-43 8,573; 2143-44 8,573; 2144-45 8,573; 2145-46 8,573; 2146-47 8,573; 2147-48 8,573; 2148-49 8,573; 2149-50 8,573; 2150-51 8,573; 2151-52 8,573; 2152-53 8,573; 2153-54 8,573; 2154-55 8,573; 2155-56 8,573; 2156-57 8,573; 2157-58 8,573; 2158-59 8,573; 2159-60 8,573; 2160-61 8,573; 2161-62 8,573; 2162-63 8,573; 2163-64 8,573; 2164-65 8,573; 2165-66 8,573; 2166-67 8,573; 2167-68 8,573; 2168-69 8,573; 2169-70 8,573; 2170-71

Sources: Statistical Abstract for the Several British Self-governing Colonies (Dominions), Crown Colonies, Possessions, and Protectorates, and 5/20/1916, and 6/6/1920, and 16/50/1922. Taxation figures, and grants-in-aid, are drawn from the HAP Annual Reports.

- (5) Until 1897-98, the Uganda and Kar. figures are: 1900-01 52,385; 1901-02 49,479; 1902-03 54,752; 1904-05 51,546; 1905-06 42,661; 1907-08 61,486; 1908-09 69,736.
- (6) Uganda rubber exports for the period were as follows: 1905-06 225,123; 1906-07 425,791; 1907-08 433,939; 1908-09 415,529; 1909-10 429,154; 1910-11 565,740; 1911-12 624,779; 1912-13 610,960; 1913-14 516,320; 1914-15 65,264; 1915-16 65,717.
- (7) In addition, special grants in aid were given for the abolition of slavery (1907-08 £40,000) and for the extension of railways (1911-13 £59,500).
- (8) Railway expenditures were credited to the general revenue of the R.P.
- (9) Until 1905-10, duty on all Uganda imports collected at Mombasa were credited to the R.P.

APPENDIX II

The Chain of Command

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE

Commissioners (1907 onwards, Governors)

Sir Arthur Hardinge 1895-1900
(acting 1896, 1899, C.H. Craufurd)

Acting, Col. T. Ternan, October-December 1900

Sir Charles Eliot December 1900-June 1904
(acting July-October 1902 F.J. Jackson)

Acting, C.W. Hobley June-August 1904

Sir James Hayes Sadler 1905-1909
(acting December 1906-May 1907 F.J. Jackson)

Acting, F.J. Jackson April-September 1909

Sir Percy Girouard 1909-12
(acting, F.J. Jackson November 1910-February 1911)

Acting, C.C. Bowring February-October 1912

Sir Edward Northey 1919-22

Deputy Commissioners (1907-11 Lieutenant Governor; 1911-20 Chief Secretary)

1900-01 Col. T. Ternan
1902-11 F.J. Jackson
1911-24 C.C. Bowring

Secretary to the Administration (abolished 1911)

1902-07 A.C. Hollis
1907-11 W.J. Monson

Secretary for Native Affairs (1907-12)

A.C. Hollis

Chief Native Commissioner (created 1918)

1918-20 J. Ainsworth

Provincial Commissioners (prior to 1907, Sub Commissioners)

- - Former IBEA officials

Seyidie (after 1921 combined with Tanaland to form Coast)

* J.R.W. Pigott 1895-96

* C.H. Craufurd 1896-99
(acting 1896, 1898, 1899 *A.S. Rogers)

* J.W. Tritton 1900-04

* C.R.W. Lane 1904-06
• T.T. Gilkison, acting 1907

S.L. Hinde 1907-11
(acting 1911-12 H.R. Tate)

C.W. Hobley 1912-19
(acting 1914 C.S. Hemsted)

Tanaland (abolished 1921)

*A.S. Rogers 1895-1902
(acting * K. MacDougall 1896, 1899)

* K. MacDougall 1902-07
(acting F.W. Isaac, * J.J. Anderssen)
(acting * T.T. Gilkison 1903; J.W.T. McClellan 1906)

* C.S. Reddie 1907-13
(*T.T. Gilkison 1908-09; F.W. Isaac 1910-12)

F.W. Isaac 1913-19
(acting R. Skene 1915)

Jubaland (handed to Italy 1925)

* C.H. Craufurd 1895

*A.C.W. Jenner 1895-1900
(acting * K. MacDougall, * R.G. Farrant)

*K. MacDougall 1900-02

Military Administration 1902-05

Major Harrison
Major Ward
Captain Hannington
Major Pope Henessy
Captain Salkeld
Captain Kirkpatrick

Civil Administration 1906-

R.E. Salkeld (acting) 1906-14
(1909-10 J.O.W. Hope)

* C.R.W. Lane 1914-16
(E. Le P.P. Power acting 1915-16 and 1917)
J.O.W. Hope 1918-

Ukamba

* J. Ainsworth 1895-1906
(acting 1900 * T.T. Gilkison)

* C.W. Hobley 1906-12
(acting F.W. Isaac 1906-1907; R.W. Humphrey 1911)

S.L. Hinde 1912-15
(acting H.R. Tate 1914)

C.R.W. Lane 1907-09
(acting F.S. Traill 1916; G. NORTHCOTE 1918)

F.S. Traill 1919-

Kenia (established 1902: renamed Kikuyu 1920)

S.L. Hinde 1902-06

* C.R.W. Lane 1907-09

* C.S. Reddie 1909

J.W.T. McClellan 1910-12

* C.R.W. Lane 1912-14

(N.A. Kenyon Slaney acting 1914)

J.O.W. Hope 1914

H.R. Tate 1915-20
(1918, acting H. McClure)

Naivasha (transferred to EAP 1902)

* S.S. Bagge 1902-03

* C.W. Hobley 1903-04
(* T.T. Gilkison, acting 1904)
(J.W.T. McClellan 1904-05)

* J. Ainsworth 1906-07

* S.S. Bagge 1907-10

* C.R.W. Lane 1910-11
(acting 1911, W. Pickford)

* J. Ainsworth September-October 1911

J.W.T. McClellan 1911-20
(Acting 1913 F.S. Traill)

Nyanza (transferred to EAP 1902)

* C.W. Hobley –1903
(Acting, J.W.T. McClellan 1903-04)

* S.S. Bagge 1904-06
(acting G.L. Murray, H.R. Tate, J.W.T. McClellan 1906-07)

* J. Ainsworth 1907-17
(acting , 1910 R.W. Hemsted; 1913 H.H. Horne; 1917 W. Pickford)

* C.R.W. Lane 1918-

NFD (established 1910)

J.O.W. Hope 1910-13
(G. Archer, acting 1911-13)

G. Archer 1913

W.E.H. Barrett 1913-14

S.F. Deck 1914-15

H.B. Kittermaster 1915-19

Masai Extra Provincial District (established 1912)

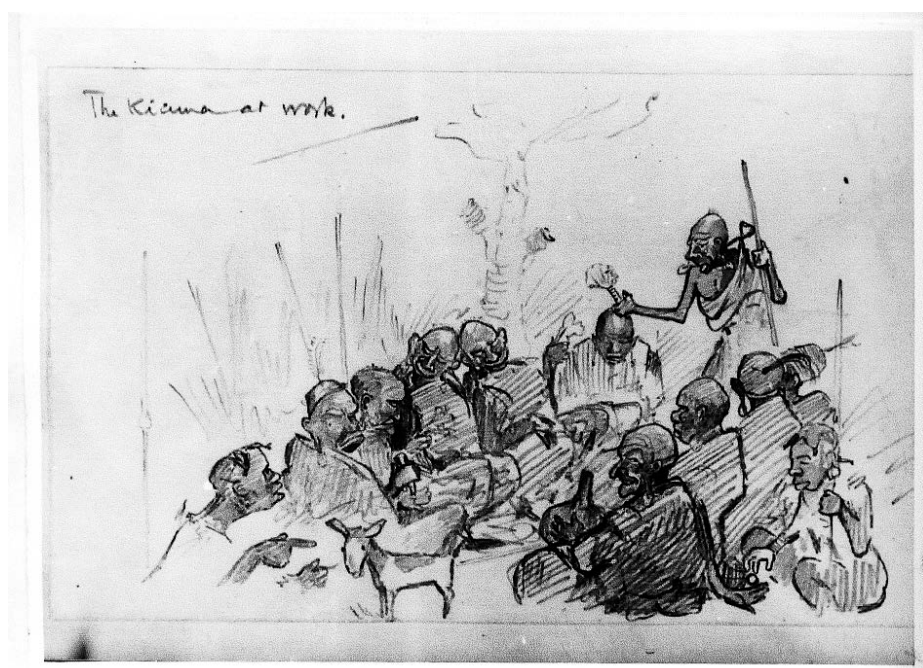
R.W. Hemsted 1912-23
(acting 1918 R. Weeks)

PART TWO

POLICY IN ACTION

“As force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion only that government is founded: and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The Soldan of Egypt, or the Emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination; but he must, at least, have led his mamelukes, or praetorian bands, like men, by their opinion.”

(A.V. Dicey “Law and Public Opinion in England” quoting D. Hume.)



Information should be immediately sent if the locusts are found to be laying eggs.

Agricultural Dept. Telegram ...



Funny picture of the staff waiting for the only locust to cackle.
N.B. For the benefit of Natural History students locust is drawn 1/6 life size.
N.B.B. It is a cock locust and therefore doesn't lay eggs.

Truce
Nov 1955

Nyeri August 10th, 1955

W.C.

Please Sir

Send a doctor to come here, and see me
so have a leave: Now I have filled a sick bed
I can't walk any inch Please do not be sorry
your service

Cosmas Oth

(H.C. Nyeri)



Funny picture of Cosmas
"filling a sick bed" !!

Chapter III

THE SEARCH FOR COLLABORATORS

This study seeks to suggest that, with policy in action, a major factor was the influence of the district upon the administrator. That is to say, his functional role as a representative, as well as a Government agent, greatly influenced the form that policy actually took; certainly it coloured the administrator's vision of what was practicable. In terms of relationship, it was the pressures of the local communities upon the administrator that played a considerable part in shaping both the character and the actions of the European Administration.

For reasons that are far from clear, certain major tribes were easily pacified and then co-operated, or at least passively acquiesced in European rule. Others were less malleable and maintained an overt – or passive – resistance to Government despite threats or punitive measures. And if force and consent were the twin pillars on which the Administration based its authority,¹ then opposition – the withholding of consent, the refusal to collaborate – was bad for prestige; for disobedience might breed disobedience, thus necessitating the use of force.

But the element of force available was always modest. The local military corps, the East African Rifles (after 1898, 3rd Battalion, King's African Rifles), numbered a thousand men. Recruited from WaSwahili and Sudanese, it had also, for a few years, a detachment of three hundred Indians.² This battalion was the sole military force in the territory.³ In an emergency, reinforcements might be drawn from India, or, in later years, from Uganda and Nyasaland. But, then, local troops were called upon to fight in other dependencies: against the Uganda mutineers or the 'Mad Mullah' in Somaliland. Unlike India, there was no European garrison in reserve.⁴

There was also a force of Protectorate Police. This started as a confusion of private armies until reorganised into a single unit in 1901.⁵ Its links with the Royal Irish Constabulary gave it a para-military tradition.⁶ By 1904, it totalled 1600 men armed with ancient rifles. By 1910, the numbers stood at 2000, but thereafter decreased as law and order in the Reserves was left to the Administration, supported by the local chiefs and tribal retainers.⁷ The police garrisons in the Reserves – normally

¹ An officer should rule "by his superiority in brains not in brute force". (Minute by Lobb 6.3.09. CO 533/43/15165).

² Cf H. Moyse Bartlett "King's African Rifles" passim. For the difficulty of recruiting local tribes for the KAR cf Moyse Bartlett, pp.150-155. In 1904 the 3rd KAR was recruited from the following tribes: 56 Wanyama (Congo), 73 Wanyamwezi (GEA), 24 Baganda, 3 Nandi, 4 Kikuyu, 7 Arabs, 51 Kamba, 15 Somali, 146 Masai (disbanded shortly afterwards) 245 WaSwahili, and 385 Sudanese. (vide FO 2/836. Memo. On des. 351 of 20.5.04).

³ The main garrisons were at Mombasa, Machakos, Kismayu, Yonte, and later Nairobi (for a while, also, Mazaras and Witu). Up to 1911, elements of the 2nd KAR were stationed in the Protectorate.

⁴ The Indian army of 225,000 men had a ratio of one British soldier to two Indians. For East Africa, only the Royal Navy was available. (There was also a small local Volunteer Reserve – mainly European – but this was not used until the Great War).

⁵ Cf W. R Foran "The Kenya Police" passim. Also cmd 1626/1903. p.24

⁶ Vide C.Jeffries "The Colonial Office" p.180.

⁷ A policy that was not reversed until after the Second World War.

concentrated at district headquarters – steadily shrank in size. In North Kavirondo for instance, the total police force stood at 73 men in 1907, falling to 65 men in 1908, and 33 men in September 1910.¹ Increasingly, after 1908 the Protectorate Police were concentrated in the settled areas and the towns.²

The Police were predominantly African, though there was a small Asian contingent and – after 1907 – an even smaller European contingent to deal with the settlers. Unlike the K.A.R, the Police were quick to recruit men from the local tribes. By 1912 the bulk of the African police were Kamba and ‘Kavirondo’ (mainly Luo) tribesmen.³

In addition, during the period of pacification, large numbers of ‘friendlies’, or tribal levies, were used in punitive expeditions. They were attracted by hopes of revenge or the lust for loot. After 1910, these irregulars were discouraged though government chiefs retained a ‘tail’ of young spearmen. In 1910, the spearmen were reorganized – and paid by Government – as tribal retainers. Their numbers, however, were not large.

These, then, were the forces available to control a native population estimated at between three to four millions, but differing widely in custom, language, and habitat.⁴

The Protectorate was an arena where Europeans, Arabs, Indians,⁵ and Africans came into collision. But the great bulk of the population was African, drawn from four different ethnic groups. In the North East were Hamitic tribes, the Galla (Boran and Oromo) and the Somali. South of the Tana, but stretching into the Highlands, were Bantu peoples: the Wanyika, the Teita – Taveta, the Kamba, Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru. North again, in a great wedge across the Rift valley, lived the Nilo-Hamites: Turkana, Suk, Nandi, Kipsigi and Masai. Around Lake Victoria, were the Bantu Kavirondo (Abaluya), the Kisii, and the Nilotic Luo. Most of these tribes were acephalous. Many – if not all – had some form of age grade organization, and with it an underlying tension between the young warriors and the ruling elders. The Hamitic and Nilo-Hamitic tribes were essentially pastoralists. The Bantu were both stock owners – like the Kamba – and agriculturalists, like the Kikuyu. The Luo were predominantly agriculturalists. Between the tribes, raids and barter trade were common. So also was a process of conquest and migration. Few peoples had long inhabited their locations. The Kikuyu had drifted into Kiambu from the North East since the early 19th Century. The Kamba moved from one block of hills to another under the pressure of famine or the Masai. The Nyika migration North across the Sabaki river was still in progress at the turn of the century. The Somali migration

¹ North Nyanza District Records. NN/22 (Summary, District Diary).

² Eg, Ukamba Province 1916, which had a Police force of 21 Whites, 32 Asians, and 416 Africans. Of these, 17 Whites, 32 Asians, and 216 Africans were concentrated in Nairobi. (CPA. Ukamba Report 1915/16. p.24).

³ Cf cmd 6007-51, 1912/13. (EAP Report 1911/12) p. 37. As early as 1908 the Police had 8 Comoro Islanders, 62 Somali, 36 Arabs, 251 Swahili, 189 Sudanese, 177 Wanyemwezi (GEA), 107 from other GEA tribes, 3 Kisii, 35 Kipsigi, 83 Baganda, 130 Kamba, 265 Kavirondo, 119 Masai, 83 Kikuyu, 63 Nandi, and 134 ‘other tribes’ (CO 533/44/25104. Col. Gough’s Report). A feature of later years was the very small Kikuyu element in the force.

⁴ For the immense variety of climatic conditions see the Royal Commission Report (Cmd 9475/1955) ch. I and IV. Also the Oxford History of East Africa. Vol. I ch. I.

⁵ Though the Indians numbered nearly 15,000 by 1916 they have been deliberately ignored in this study. Politically, they came to the fore after the First War.

south of the Juba was to continue for years to come.¹ This was no static society with fixed tribal boundaries.

The first task of the early administrators had been to secure the line of communication to Uganda. But with this safe, the process of pacification and expansion developed outwards from the thin backbone of the advancing railway. It was a haphazard conquest fashioned by local initiative and financial stringency. There were a few major military operations: the Mazrui rebellion, the Nandi Wars, or the Ogaden expeditions. More common were the cattle forays mounted with the support of swarms of 'friendlies', never a charge on the home Treasury. By such means Ainsworth in Machakos, and Hall at Fort Smith, extended their control. The pattern was repeated in Nyanza.² In Kenia province, severe punitive measures preceded pacification between 1900 and 1906.

Some found the resultant bloodshed distasteful:

"The enemy was poorly armed and the necessity for this slaughter is no doubt as much regretted by our brave and humane officers as it can be to any one in this country".³

But such was the price of Empire:

"Unless we are going to abrogate our civilizing mission in Africa such expeditions with their attendant slaughter are necessary".⁴

Force, however, was not always essential. Meru was occupied in 1908 without fighting; the tribes sought protection. Against the hostile Tharaka, J. B. Ainsworth used organized dances.⁵ Less successfully, Hayes Sadler preached pacification by gramophone.⁶

Nevertheless, permanent pacification was only possible with the aid of collaborators and allies. Mumia in North Nyanza was co-operative; his Uasin Gishu mercenaries were useful on more than one punitive expedition. With the Masai, the support of Lenana – the 'gentle one' – obviated the need for conquest, whilst the Masai Moran aided in the pacification of other tribes.⁷ At a local level, Kinanjui, at Fort Smith, proved an invaluable lever in dealing with the Southern Kikuyu.

Nearly always, the punitive measures that accompanied pacification were a direct response to external stimuli: the murder of a trader, a policeman, a mail runner, an

¹ Cf Bell and Huntingford "East African Background"; H.E. Lambert "The System of land tenure in the Kikuyu land Unit"; Chapter III the Oxford History of East Africa, (Vol. I).

² Vide J. Lonsdale "A Political History of Nyanza" Chapter III. Cf also A. T Matson "The Pacification of Kenya" (Kenya Weekly News 14/9/62; 28/9/62).

³ Minute of Ellis (in the CO) on the Embu Patrol 4.9.06. CO 533/16/32253. For an eye witness account cf Meinertzhagen "Kenya Diary" passim.

⁴ Ellis *ibid.* For a parallel comment cf M. Perham "Lugard" Vol. II. p. 261.

⁵ C. Dundas "African Crossroads". p. 27.

⁶ E. Huxley "White man's Country". Vol. I. p.226.

⁷ For the numbers of Masai used cf G.R. Sandford "An Administrative and Political History of the Masai" fn. P. 4. cf also Meinertzhagen *op.cit.* passim.

attack on an officer, or the disruption of communications.¹ Government as it advanced became involved in tribal feuds, but it had no clear plan of conquest.

With pacification came the need for local agents to control native society. These were not often readily available. The lack of cohesion within the tribes might aid conquest but it hindered administration.

“The inability to combine”, wrote Eliot in 1901, “and the want of warlike training are certain guarantees for the preservation of peace. On the other hand, the absence of any Chief of recognised authority, and the necessity of dealing separately with each village community...is a severe tax on the time and energy of the District Officers...”²

Such tribes showed an

“Utter ignorance of everything a mile or two beyond their own village caus[ing] them to neglect any general order which may be issued... They do not for some time understand what it means, however plainly it is worded; they suspect it as something probably to their disadvantage, they do not understand....penalties unless the punishment is immediate and inflicted before their eyes...”³

By 1908, the major concentrations of population – the Kikuyu, Kamba, and Kavirondo – were pacified and under routine administration. Thereafter, security measures might involve police action against crime and stock theft; communal fines where individual offenders went untraced; the occasional ‘flag’ march – as in Machakos in 1911 following an outbreak of hysteria⁴ - or a patrol to overawe the Chuka. But despite rumours of risings, there was no major unrest. The pacified areas grew crops⁵ for export and found labour for settlers. Ukamba, and then Nyanza, under John Ainsworth, developed rapidly. In Kenia, a progressive chief such as Karuri, in Fort Hall, was soon constructing roads and employing an Indian artisan to build bridges, or partnering another Indian in operating a sugar mill.²⁴

It is significant that the agricultural Luo and Kikuyu, and the more cattle conscious Kamba, who together formed the bulk of the population, submitted so quickly. With them, pacification was swift and cheap. So much so, that McClellan in July 1908, thought it wise to warn against overconfidence.

¹ Eg. Meinertzhagen op.cit. pp.39, 50, 60. CPA Provincial Record Book pp. 7-15. Note Ainsworth’s comment on Ukamba “These natives are extraordinary people, here have we given them every possible opportunity of settling up this business in a quiet way, and yet they delay and delay and otherwise play the fool” (Diaries 3.7.96). cf also McClure “Land Travel and Sea faring” p.78. For the inefficiency of the Punitive Expedition, see Stigand “Administration in Tropical Africa” p.277.

² Cmd 769/1901. EAP Report. P.4-5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For an account of this see des. 2.1.12. CO 533.101/2788.

⁵ Vide CPA. Provincial Record Book. p. 96. When Karuri died in 1916, he was the first Chief to earn an obituary “an enlightened and progressive native, a capable and zealous chief, and a faithful Government servant for more than twenty years”. (OG 1916. p.497).

“We look at the present time with complacency on the timidity of the WaKikuyu, but it must be born in mind that formerly the most timid of tribes in South Africa gave the most trouble eventually”.¹

A military appreciation of the same year reviewing the internal threats to security reflected this confidence. Though the Kikuyu were capable of raising 25,000 spears, they were unlikely to unite. The Kamba, with 10,000 spears, had a greater cohesion. The Kavirondo, with another 25,000 spears, were unlikely to cause any trouble. The Nandi, Kipsigi, and Sotik, had been thoroughly subdued. It seemed to the administrators that the major threat was from the Somali, Masai, or Giriyama. Whereas four companies of troops could deal with all the tribes north east of Mount Kenya, it was estimated that fifteen hundred men would be needed in the event of a Somali rising, and a further thousand to deal with either the Masai or the Giriyama. But the great tribes were no longer regarded as a danger to Government.²

By the administrative standards of those days, such confidence was justified. The test of effective control was an obedience to orders. This was reflected in three practical matters. Tribes must keep the peace, pay taxes quickly, and supply labour when required. Once pacified, the major tribes did not challenge with arms the authority of Government. Tax revenue in Kenia, Nyanza, and to a lesser extent Ukamba, expanded strikingly. The Nyanza figures were the most impressive: tax collection trebled between 1902/03 and 1905/06, then doubled by 1907/08, and doubled again by 1909/10, and yet again by 1916/17.³ To most administrators good tax collection was the “outward and visible sign”⁴ of submission; its swift payment indicating a healthy political atmosphere.

With labour, the results were also impressive, appealing to the innate puritan spirit of the English. When labour crisis occurred in 1912 – after a period of railway expansion – the Labour Commission noted that the ‘Kavirondo’ and Kikuyu “practically alone bear the burden of supplying labour throughout the Protectorate”.⁵ These tribes provided the bulk of native tax and native produce for export. As for the

¹ Mombasa District Records. MSA/18. Memo 25.7.08. p.2.

² Annexure C. ‘Military Appreciation January 1908’ attached to Committee Report on KAR COP 954/13. (NB: the First Native Census (1948) shows that over 70% of the native population lived in what was formally the Ukamba, Kenia, and Nyanza Provinces. In 1948 the tribal percentage worked out at Kikuyu 19.5%, Luo 14.4%, Abaluya 12.5%, Kamba 11.5%, Kisii 4.9%, Meru 6.2%, Embu 3.9%).

³ Comparative Tax figures are as follows:

Province	Years Tax in £'s.				
	1903/04	1907/08	1911/12	1913/14	1917/18
Syedie	5,300	9,726	11,472	13,392	13,970
Tanaland	1,804	2,486	2,913	3,340	2,954
Jubaland	154	568	1,453	1,501	573
NFD	-	-	242	706	735
Naivasha	343	1,429	4,229	7,159	11,336
Ukamba	5,171	13,617	22,772	26,172	44,708
Kenia	4,155	26,220	45,454	52,450	77,707
Nyanza	7,250	23,965	57,680	67,014	122,935

⁴ C.W Hobley “From Chartered Company to Crown Colony”. P.123. Note also Hobley’s Instructions to his D.Cs in 1915. (vide Ch. II supra).

⁵ Native Labour Commission 1913. Report para. 15.

Kikuyu, the Commission noted that they produced all the labour they could, since they had “a natural inclination to acquire wealth and... the absence of a distaste for any kind of manual labour”.¹ The Wakamba, with their increasing herds of cattle, caused greater concern. Though they had provided labour for the settlers in the early days, and still produced recruits for the K.A.R. or the Police, they were no longer coming forward in large numbers for the labour market. Their “increased wealth and higher intelligence” had developed in them “a distaste for ordinary manual labour”.² It was a curious trend, since the Kamba were not pastoralists, though more dependent on stock than the Kikuyu or Luo.

The great test of prestige and obedience amongst these tribes came with the demands for increased taxation and labour during the Great War; demands that fell chiefly on the provinces of Nyanza, Kenia, and Ukamba. There were no revolts; labour was produced and taxes were paid. The overconfidence of Central Government stands revealed in the remarks of Sandford writing at the end of the Great War;

“policies established and maintained for the most part by the senior administrative officers in each province have undoubtedly not been uniform, but they have to a large extent achieved the result which is noticed in the majority of the native administered areas today, of developing the native inhabitants....into useful agricultural labourers fit for residential work on European farms, and available for duty on works of public utility, and they have also by maintaining the system of self-government recognised by each tribe, produced within the reserves, a type of native *so well under control* that the demands of the military authorities, large though they were, were met...without disturbances of any kind.”³

By contrast,

“The Masai were among the first tribes which came into contact with the administration, but their conservatism is so great, and their subservience to antiquated custom and tradition has been so powerful that it has proved impossible as yet materially to alter and renovate their ideas.”⁴

This success with the agricultural tribes, however short-lived, was a curious phenomenon and hard to explain. It cannot be ascribed to the skilful selection of the right agents of tribal Government.⁵ These were seldom the natural leaders of the tribe. Mumia, it is true, belonged to the ruling family of the Wanga, albeit a junior branch. But not all chiefs were so well chosen. More than one had been the personal

¹ Ibid. para. 13. The Commission, however, glossed over the very effective system of levying forced labour.

² Ibid. para. 13. For the alleged ill effects of Ainsworth’s policy on the Ukamba labour market – ill effects that would spread to Nyanza – cf Lord Delamere’s evidence to the Labour Commission (particularly p.109).

³ Sandford, op.cit. p.1. Sandford was, at the time, Private Secretary to the Governor. Field officers were less confident (vide infra, “The Impact of the First War”). E.g. Ainsworth in 1914, “If compulsion on coercive lines is continued as the main plank of Government then the ultimate result must be demoralisation amongst the tribes and the consequent failure of our administration” (NPA. Nandi Confidential File. 30.3.14. para. 17).

⁴ Sandford. Op.cit. p.1.

⁵ Cf. Girouard’s Confidential Report of May 1910 pp.91-103.

servant of a European and others were taken from the ranks of the tribal retainers. In Kenia and Ukamba, the choice of agents was equally haphazard. Kinanjui had been a donkey boy and then interpreter at Fort Smith.¹ It was not unknown for Swahili porters to become headmen. One Kamba rose to power on the strength of a chit saying that he was a good tracker.² In northern Kikuyu, two chiefs first came to prominence as a result of alliances with European dacoits.³ In Fort Hall one headman – a Masai and a Muslim – had been the office boy; his other duties included leading the ‘friendlies’.⁴ Yet another chief won promotion by revealing the hiding place of stock to a punitive patrol. His popularity appears to have been maintained by organising dances.⁵ This standard compares unfavourably with the selection of the Kipsigi, Nandi, or Masai Laibons, or some of the Somali chiefs. Yet whatever its failings, the system worked.

One factor had some bearing on the problem; the chance selection of the right officer, who remained in one area long enough to establish – through continuity – his ‘personal’ rule. Ainsworth in Ukamba and Nyanza was an outstanding example. Hobley (an adopted Kikuyu elder)⁶ served for long periods in Nyanza and then Ukamba. Hall in Fort Smith built up, over a number of years, a unique relationship with the southern Kikuyu. Partington had a marked success with the Kipsigi and the Nandi, as did J.B Ainsworth in Kitui. Yet in contrast, there were others – equally devoted, knowledgeable and sympathetic – who failed to get results: Collyer with the Masai, Jenner and Elliott with the Somali, MacDougall in Lamu, Champion and Hobley with the Giriama.

Seemingly, the early administrators were more successful with agriculturalists than with pastoralists; with the progressive cultivator rather than the conservative and Muslim. If the pastoral tribes were numerically small, they were both warlike and aggressive. Their mobility and their predatory habits created – especially in the minds of local Europeans – a security problem. When it came to a punitive expedition, a herd of cattle or camels was more elusive than a field of maize or a permanent village. Where communications were poor and transport expensive, their mobility made administration costly. For this reason Belfield was to stress the need to keep Kipsigi and Nandi concentrated, since he feared the revival of nomadism.

“It is far better for the natives themselves and for the country as a whole that they should remain agriculturalists. Pastoral tribes, as you are aware, are a great problem in the Protectorate.”⁷

¹ Vide Ainsworth Memo. 29.5.13. in CO 533/119/24080.

² C. Dundas op.cit. p.133.

³ CPA Provincial Record Book pp. 96 and 102. Note one of them was Karuri, who also had a reputation as a witch doctor. Yet by 1906 these chiefs turned out 14,000 – 20,000 people for Sadler’s barazas. (vide CO/533/16/36172 des. 31.8.06).

⁴ CPA Provincial Record Book. ‘Kibarabara’. P.98. But in contrast note Chief Wangombe (p. 12).

⁵ Ibid. p.99 (cf also Ainsworth’s difficulties in 1896 over Mwatu, whom he thought “a sort of King of the Wakamba”. Diaries. 11.2.96-13.2.96).

⁶ C.W. Hobley. “Bantu Beliefs and Magic”. p.5.

⁷ Des. 7.4.13. CO 533/117/15074. A view Ainsworth endorsed. Even Sir John Anderson had to admit that pastoralists had “flocks and herds in too great abundance”. But then he disapproved of too strict a control of the agriculturalists on the view that “Any increase in the native population must go and find work with the white men” (CO 533/134/12092).

But linked to pastoralism was the element of stubbornness and intense conservatism; a refusal to accept change and a withholding of consent. The Masai did not number a tenth of the Kikuyu population. No one protested when Kikuyu land was alienated for settlement; the question of Masai land was the subject of 10 years' acrimonious debate. The problem of administering this tribe taxed Government for many years more. Again the military effort required to suppress the Nandi far exceeded that used against much larger tribes. The Giriama, a conservative agricultural tribe, refused to labour or be efficient after the manner of the Luo. The Arabs of the Coast – a slave and land owning Muslim community – set their face against change and, in their decline, took with them the wasted efforts and broken careers of several officers. West of Lake Rudolf, the Turkana seemed impervious to change. In later years, the Samburu were to provide yet another example of the stubbornness of the pastoralist.¹ East of Lake Rudolf, the whole frontier region proved a barren mirage luring administrators on to attempt to control the nomads and secure the borders.²

The causes underlying the differing reactions of native communities to the European invasion are obscure. Undoubtedly the settled agriculturalists were more vulnerable to punishment and coercion. It is possible that European innovations – the strangers' magic³ – had attractions; the more so in those districts where European power and influence was most easily demonstrated.⁴ But there is no simple division between agricultural collaborators and pastoral obscurantists. European civilization had limited attraction for the Muslims, proud of their own superiority, be they nomads or planters. In the more remote districts – some of them agricultural – demonstrations of European power were less impressive and the virtues of collaboration less apparent. Too often the strangers' gifts were demands for tax, obedience, and labour. Certain agricultural tribes could be obstinate and unco-operative out of ignorance or a sense of isolation.. As for the pastoralists, their mobility made them less vulnerable to coercion and less easy of contact. For the pastoral economy, European administration had little to offer. Stock had a supreme traditional value, which was not tied to a cash economy. Perhaps they had good cause to reject, or ignore, or, if need be, resist the strangers' embrace.⁵

Whatever the reasons, the Administration's major problems, up to the War, lay not with the great agricultural tribes, but with the conservative and the pastoralist, on whom they lavished both staff and attention.⁶ The examples, that follow, are

¹ Vide the Powys Case and the fate of C.A. Cornell, (D.C Isiolo) in the 1930's.

² It is curious that Mission successes and failures followed a not dissimilar pattern. E.g. On the Coast and in Tanaland, much effort and little result. With the Masai "missionaries have made little impression" (Girouard 21.5.10. CO 533/73/13567). By 1910 there were some 70 mission stations in Kenya with 72 white clergy and 169 lay workers. But their main effort – and success – lay in Nyanza, Kenia and Ukamba. By this date they had about 5000 converts. (cf CO 533/71/5136. des. 24.1.10).

³ This was sometimes 'bluff'. For the psychology of colonialism cf P. Mason "Prospero's Magic" (1962) and O. Mannoni "Prospero and Caliban" (1956).

⁴ The main concentrations of European population were in Ukamba and in Naivasha (with a growing population in Kenia and Nyanza). Ukamba had 54 Europeans in 1897; 986 in 1908, 2712 in 1914. Naivasha's European population stood at 160 in 1906, rising to 1521 in 1914. (Blue Books 1906/1907 1908/09; EAP Reports 1897 p. 28 and 1913/14 pp. 54, 57).

⁵ Perhaps the interest in the pastoralists also derived from the platonic concept that "good rulers.... Are patriarchal shepherds of men, and... the true political art, the art of ruling is a kind of herdsmanship" (K. Popper "The Open Society and its Enemies" Vol. I. p.51).

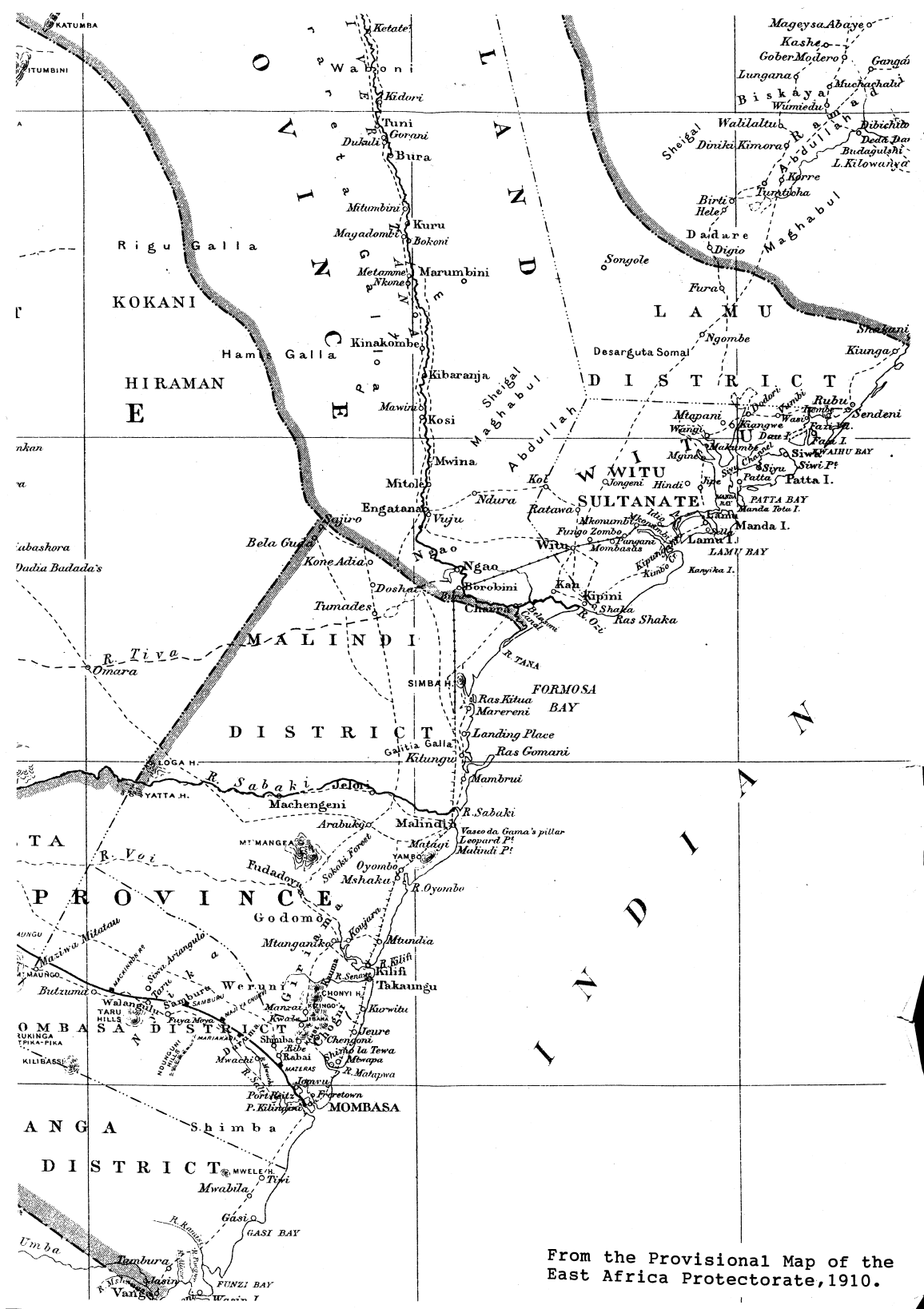
⁶ For an example of the imbalance of effort note the proposed staff distribution of 1913 (CO 533/118/20362). The figures in brackets are the ratio of officers to tax for 1912/13).

concerned with failures, since these reveal more than success.¹ They illustrate the dilemma that underlies the search for collaborators. Again, isolated areas, often vast in size, placed ‘personal’ rule at a premium; the resources of force were stretched too thin. In not a few cases, local resistance, or the absence of collaborators, were factors that dictated the European reactions.

Ukamba 15	(1:£1006)	Jubaland 10	(1:£150)
Kenia 15	(1:£3260)	Seyidie 14	(1:£822)
Nyanza 19	(1:£3334)	Naivasha 16	(1:£278)
Tanaland 4	(1:£ 674)	NFD 6	(1:£278).

I.e. over 70% of the population had under 50% of the staff. This imbalance is underlined by the fact that the only official handbooks for Administrators printed up to 1919 concerned (a) the Masai (Sandford) and (b) the NFD and Jubaland (T.S Thomas).

¹ Note M. Perham “Lugard”, Vol. II p.138. “No part of history is more difficult to record intelligibly than Administration. This is especially true of good administration....the bad is generally advertised by the protests of the administered, and sometimes defined by the resulting investigation”.



A. CONSERVATISM ON THE COAST.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Islam and Kiswahili, a shared faith and a common tongue, were the bonds that held together the diverse communities of the Coast, living within the 10 mile strip, on the Lamu archipelago, and in Witu.¹ For much of its history the Coast had been a region of petty trading states isolated from the interior, bound to the Indian Ocean by the sea trade, and engaged in perpetual feuds. Political unity had been imposed by the intervention of an outside power, Zanzibar. After the expulsion of the Mazrui from Mombasa in 1837, the Zanzibar Sultan had overthrown the Nabahan rulers at Pate, and aided in their destruction at Witu. The Ports of Lamu and Malindi were loyal, but in Faza and Siyu, the Sindi and Mataka rulers bitterly resisted Zanzibar overrule until their overthrow in the early 1890's. If Zanzibar had established its hegemony during the 19th Century, the memory of its conquests was still fresh. Whilst the Sultan's officials – the Liwalis, Kathis, Mudirs, and Akidas – enforced his authority, elements of the indigenous polities still survived, as did the disinherited heirs of old ruling families. In Mombasa itself, the 'three tribes' and the 'nine tribes' acknowledged the authority of their traditional sheikhs. At Vanga dwelt the last Diwani of Vumba Kuu. At Mtwapa, the aged and fanatical Hamis bin Kombo, descendant of the ancient princes of Malindi, was a petty feudatory with 300 fighting slaves. At Gasi and Takaungu there were two powerful Mazrui chiefs.²

The social structure of this whole society was complex. The upper class consisted of some 6000 Arabs, 4000 of them in Seyidie. Many were newcomers from Zanzibar and Southern Arabia, who had settled on the Coast after the establishment of Zanzibar rule.³ Others were ancient families such as the Mazrui. Merging into this Arab element was the ill-defined Swahili community,⁴ a mixture of Arab, Persian, and indigenous peoples, some 50,000 strong. Below them, but not sharply divided from them, was a slave population numbering, in 1895, between 25,000 and 30,000.⁵ The whole population was Muslim, though not all were of one sect.⁶

¹ The extent of the Zanzibar domains – the 10 mile strip and the Lamu islands – was defined under the Anglo-German Agreement of 1886. But it was an arbitrary division. Arab influence extended into the interior. eg. Arab hereditary agents with the Nyika tribes (1897 Report. (Cmd 8683/1897 p.11).

² Cf A.J Prins. "The Swahili Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast" passim. 1897 Report (Cmd 8683/1897 p.11)

³ Malindi and Mambui were resettled by Zanzibar Arabs in the 1850's. They had been previously abandoned in the 17th Century.

⁴ For the difficulties of definition cf O. and R. 1910, Ordinance 15/1910; Prins op.cit. p.11, NAD Report 1933 p.14. The terms used in self identification varied; some insisting on calling themselves Arabs.

⁵ 1897 Report. Pp.26-28, 60. MPA.HMC Out 1901-02, 16.12.01; HMC Out 1905, 2.6.05.

⁶ The Zanzibar were mainly Ibadhi; most of the coastal Muslims, Shafei. (vide 1897 Report p.39).

Trade had been a major factor in the original Arab settlements. But by the late 19th Century, the economic prosperity of the region rested on the large plantations producing fruit, coconuts, copra, grain, some wild rubber, and a little cotton; all cultivated, or gathered by slave labour.¹ This development had reached a peak in the 1870's when a land trade in slaves replaced the banned sea trade.² With the termination of the land slave trade plantation owners were dependent upon a dwindling slave population, occasionally reinforced by cargoes of slaves smuggled past the Royal Navy's patrols. By the 1890's, there were signs that the plantations were decreasing in size for want of labour. It was the direct result of the strong humanitarian anti-slavery sentiment in England, but it was bitterly resented by the local community.

Such was the position in July 1895, when the new Protectorate was proclaimed and Hardinge undertook the administration in place of the I.B.E.A Company. On the one hand, he was bound by international treaties. Much of the Coastal region was to be administered by the Protectorate Government for the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose territory it remained.³ As regards Witu, a treaty with Germany, in 1890,⁴ transferred it as a Protectorate to Britain. Though the Sultan of Zanzibar had administered Witu since 1893, Germany now insisted that the territory must be separated from Zanzibar and its own Sultan restored.⁵ So Hardinge had to deal with a disgruntled Zanzibar Government with whom he had much sympathy.⁶ He had also to build on the basis of the Company's administration. The Company had used the Sultan's officials on the Coast and had not opposed the overthrow of the local ruling families in Siyu and Faza. But the Company had used to the full the Mazrui chiefs – particularly Mbaruk bin Rashid of Gasi – who were traditional enemies of the Sultan of Zanzibar. Hardinge, then was faced with a twofold problem. Anti-slavery sentiment in England compelled him to take steps that were bound to be unpopular, creating hostility and bitterness rather than consent. And anti-slavery measures further undermined the declining coastal economy based on plantations and slave labour. Secondly, there existed on the Coastal strip two alternative forms of native authority: the Arab officials of Zanzibar and the indigenous feudatory chiefs. Shortage of European staff forced Hardinge to make use of the one or the other as the levers of Government. Yet the two systems were mutually antagonistic.

¹ Cf. W.W.A Fitzgerald "Travels in the Coastlands of East Africa" passim.

² cf R. Coupland "The Exploitation of East Africa" passim. After 1873 there was a marked increase both in the land trade in slaves up the coast and the expansion of plantations particularly round Malindi. The Sea Trade had been banned by the Sultan in 1873; the land trade in 1876.

³ The Sultan had leased the strip to the I.B.E.A Company. By a Treaty of 14.12.95, the Sultan leased the strip to Great Britain for £11,000 a year (plus £6,000 being the interest on £200,000 paid by him as compensation to the Company).

⁴ Cf Cmd 6046/1890. Correspondence respecting the Anglo-German Agreement relative to Africa and Heligoland. Article 2 of Treaty of 1.8.90.

⁵ See *infra*. p.157.

⁶ The Sultan – with Hardinge's approval – had hoped to acquire the greater part of the new Protectorate. Financial considerations – particularly compensation for slavery – prevented this. As it was, Hardinge had to speak to the Sultan in "Somewhat plain and emphatic terms" before he agreed to sign the December treaty. For the discussions on future administration cf FOP 6489, 18.4.94 Committee Report. FO 83/1375. Hardinge's proposals 25.2.95; FO83/1377. Anderson's proposals 12.4.95. cf also Hansard 4th S. vol. xxxi cls. 664-683 (8.3.95), and Hardinge "Diplomatist in the East", p.132.

Hardinge was Consul General in Zanzibar as well as Commissioner for the new Protectorate. Both Treaty obligations and a natural sympathy for Zanzibar interests – stemming in part from his function as Consul General – inclined him towards the Zanzibar officials. At least it offered some compensation for the disappointments he had to inflict on the Sultan, and the unpleasant demands necessitated by the anti-slavery policy of the British Government. Events on the Coast, however, forced Hardinge's hand. A rebellion amongst the Mazrui compelled him to take sides before he had an opportunity to establish his administration.

The Mazrui were an ancient Arab family, who had established themselves as Governors of Mombasa in the 18th Century. For many years, the leading power on the Coast, they had wasted their strength in internal feuds till overwhelmed by Seyyid Said in 1837. The remnants of the clan re-established themselves at Gasi and at Takaungu, to the south and north of Mombasa. The Chiefs of Takaungu – Zaherite Mazrui – prospered and maintained relatively amicable relations with Zanzibar. But the Gasi Chiefs – Hemedite Mazrui – were bitterly hostile. In 1860's, Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Salim, the son of the last Mazrui ruler of Mombasa, became Chief of Gasi. On his mother's side he was a Zaherite and had pretensions to the Chieftainship of Takaungu. This, combined with a hatred for Zanzibar, led him into repeated rebellions in the next twenty years and into disastrous flirtations with the Germans in the 1880's.¹ But in 1888, the I.B.E.A Company sought his aid. Through its influence he re-established himself at Gasi with a subsidy of 1940 rupees a month.² By 1895 he was a powerful if aging chief commanding 1100 fighting slaves.

In February 1895, four months before the Company surrendered its administration to Hardinge, Salim bin Hamis, the Mazrui Chief of Takaungu, died leaving his heirs debts totalling 40,000 rupees and 1200 fighting slaves. By custom, the heir was the eldest surviving male relative;³ in this instance Mbaruk bin Rashid bin Hamis, the son of a former Chief.⁴ But Mbaruk of Takaungu – and his younger brother Aziz – were distrusted by the Company. The local Company official, Kenneth MacDougall, influenced by the Liwali of Malindi (a Zanzibar official), intervened.⁵ Rejecting Mbaruk of Takaungu, he chose the late Chief's young son, Rashid, as Liwali of Takaungu, since Rashid had "a good character and [was] said to be well disposed to English rule".⁶ A baraza was held at Takaungu at which the local community, and the rival kinsmen, accepted the Company's decision. Rashid sought to pacify his kinsmen by handing over to them his father's fighting slaves. But family quarrels soon disturbed the superficial calm. Mbaruk of Takaungu established his armed

¹ Cf. Coupland op.cit. passim. Also Swahili 31 "Maisha ya Sheikh Mbaruk bin Rashid al-Mazrui". For European views of this remarkable man cf W.Salter Price "My third Campaign in East Africa" p. 230; C.W Hobley "From Chartered Company to Crown Colony", p. 64. R.N Lyne "An Apostle of Empire". Passim, Dawson "James Hannington" passim.

² Zanzibar Archives. Des. Euan Smith to FO. No 353 8.9.90, with copy of G. MacKenzie to I.B.E.A Directors 1.12.88. The Company had offered to give Mbaruk the administration of the whole coast of Kilifi.

³ A custom more honoured in the breach and causing endless strife. Cf Sir J. Grey "The British in Mombasa" for an account of the Mazrui disputes of the 1820's and 1830's.

⁴ Rashid the 'Eight headed' (so called on account of a physical deformity). Cf. Mbaruk Ali Hinaway "Al Akida and Fort Jesus". p.20).

⁵ It is not clear whether the initiative came from MacDougall or the Liwali of Malindi. Cf Cmd 8274 (Correspondence respecting the recent Rebellion in East Africa). 1896. item 1. Hardinge to FO 13.2.95. also Hardinge op.cit. p. 165.

⁶ Cmd 8274/1. Hardinge to DO. 13.2.95.

slaves at the head of Kilifi creek, a short march from Takaungu itself. During the Id el Fitr feast that marked the end of Ramadan, he moved down 400 men to threaten the town, only to be foiled by the arrival of Company troops from Malindi. By late April 1895 a civil war between the rivals seemed inevitable.¹ At the end of May the Company appealed to Hardinge for the support of a gunboat. Hardinge sought a settlement between the factions, but negotiations failed. On 15th June, Hardinge proclaimed Mbaruk of Takaungu and Aziz rebels against the Sultan of Zanzibar. He then marched against them with Zanzibari troops and a naval landing party. After suffering a series of reverses, the rebels fled for shelter to their kinsmen, The Chief of Gasi, a week before the Protectorate was proclaimed.

“Friendly communication”² was opened with Mbaruk of Gasi to secure the surrender of the rebels. On the 5th July 1895 Hardinge, accompanied by Sir Lloyd Mathews, met the Gasi Chief. Mbaruk succeeded in persuading Mathews³ to leave him to deal with the rebels in his own time. But Hardinge vetoed this proposal and demanded their immediate arrest. He privately admitted to the Foreign Office that the setting aside of Mbaruk and Aziz in favour of a younger kinsman, might not have been “an altogether politic act”,⁴ but prestige demanded that the Company’s decision be upheld. Hardinge suspected that Mbaruk of Gasi desired “the recovery for himself of the Hereditary Chieftainship of Takaungu”.⁵ If the Chief played a double game then he would “lay waste his country and hunt him like his rebellious nephew into the bush”;⁶

“The absolute supremacy of Government must be established beyond doubt and the tribal Chiefs taught to respect and implicitly obey it”.⁷

It was an example of administration based on obedience and established by an early trial of strength.

Mbaruk of Gasi, sweetened by a parting gift of gun powder, agreed to arrest his nephews, so soon as Hardinge moved against Gasi with troops. But after Hardinge had set out for Gasi overland, Mbaruk begged him to come by sea.⁸ And when the column entered Gasi, it was found hastily abandoned. Mbaruk had fled with his kinsmen to his forest stronghold at Mwele.

In August 1895 Mwele was stormed and the rebels driven into the bush, but still negotiations continued. It was a situation that the more energetic Administrators found frustrating and they clamoured for the destruction of Mazrui. MacDougall campaigning north of Mombasa opposed compromise.

¹ For the account of the rebellion cf Cmd 8274/1896 also L. W Hollingsworth. “Zanzibar under the Foreign Office” and R.N Lyne “Zanzibar in Contemporary Times”.

² Cmd 8274/12. Hardinge to FO. 19.7.95. cf also ibid/13. des. 25.6.95.

³ Mathews was an old acquaintance. Vide Lyne. “An Apostle of Empire” passim. (NB. P. 134).

⁴ Cmd 8274/16 encl. 1. Memo of Hardinge 26.8.95.

⁵ Cmd 8274/14. Hardinge to FO 6.7.95.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. cf also 1897 Report p. 66.

⁸ Cmd 8274 item 25. Correspondence of Mbaruk 26.8.95. Note also the correspondence between Hardinge and Mbaruk attached to des. 31.7.95 (Cmd 8274/14).

“I am tired of this sort of warfare, they won’t even give us the satisfaction of standing up to it...I guess Sheik Mbaruk’s game is to kill and plunder as many as he is able...with a view to his being called down by his brother the General and put in a still higher position than George McKenzie had put him before! But I hope that he will be treated as he deserves, viz transportation for life...”¹

But such measures required the defeat and capture of the elusive Mazrui. And in October 1895 Hamis bin Kombo joined the rebels. For a while it seemed that the WaGiryama, a Bantu tribe of the interior, might also rebel. At the end of 1895, 300 Indian troops had to be brought in. In March 1896, further reinforcements, consisting of an Indian regiment, were landed. The Rising finally collapsed in April 1896, when Mbaruk with 600 armed followers fled into German East Africa, where he was disarmed by the German authorities. Though a general amnesty was declared, from which only ten leaders were excluded and none of Mbaruk of Gasi’s property was confiscated² - many of the Mazrui, with their supporters, chose to settle in German territory. Mbaruk was well treated by the German authorities and given a small pension. He remained there until his death in 1910.³

One result of the Rising was the destruction of the power of the leading feudatory Chiefs in Seyidie. The flight of many Mazrui and the loss of many slaves further weakened the Arab plantation economy. The one remaining Mazrui ruler, Rashid of Takaungu, was young, sickly and bankrupt. And for all his hereditary position he was paid and treated as one of the Arab officials.⁴

In Tanaland, the situation in 1895 was rather different. Prior to the proclamation of the Protectorate, Zanzibari officials had replaced all the indigenous rulers there so that Hardinge’s choice of native authorities seemed simple. But Imperial interests compelled him to reverse this tidy pattern in Witu.

Witu had come into existence in the 1860’s as the refuge of the Nabahan fleeing from Pate. From 1886 to 1890, it was a German Protectorate. It had then been transferred to Britain and had been administered at first by the Company and then by Zanzibar, for internal troubles had led to a series of punitive expeditions in which the last Nabahan Sultan had been overthrown.⁵ After 1893, Zanzibar had administered Witu as part of its own territory. But in 1895, the German Government demanded the restoration of the Witu Sultanate and its severance from Zanzibar. Hardinge strove to retain the tiny state as part of Zanzibar. Forced to restore a Sultan, he proposed Bwana Shehe, a Nabahan who was also a harmless idiot given to wandering around in a state of nudity and uttering, amidst bursts of childish laughter, a few words of

¹ MPA Malindi in 1895-98. MacDougall to Pigott. The “General” was Lloyd Mathews. Cf also MPA Vanga in 1895-97 Macquarie 7.7.95. In London, Sir John Kirk advised the FO to destroy Mbaruk to avoid future trouble (cf memo 29.9.95 on FO 83/1383 also Minute of 1.8.95 on Admiralty des. 30.7.95 in FO 83/1381).

² Amnesty terms in MPA. Zanzibar in 1895-96. 27.4.96.

³ The pension was 100 rupees a month. Cf MPA “Mazrui Rebels” HE to CO. 2.12.1907.

⁴ Vide 1897 Report p.29. NB: “Liwali of Takaungu” was a new title for the Chief of the Mazrui. None of Rashid’s predecessors had used it.

⁵ The trouble was caused by the murder of a number of Germans in Witu. Cf P. L McDermott “British East Africa”. Also Cmd. 6213/1891. Cmd 7111/1893 and Cmd 7248/1894. (Papers relating to Witu).

English.¹ Hardinge hoped that such a man might be persuaded to bequeath his state to the Sultan of Zanzibar. But Shehe proved unsuitable. The final choice was one Omar Mahdi, a Siyu man and not a Nabahan, who had been commander of the former Sultan of Witu's forces. He was known to be co-operative and was in possession of his senses, though he had once appeared before the German traveller Carl Peters dressed in the uniform of a Prussian artillery officer.² On the 10th July 1895 somewhat to his surprise, he was proclaimed Sultan. Rogers, the Sub-Commissioner in Tanaland, was appointed Resident to his Court.

Since Witu had been restored against the wishes of the local administration, it existed as a comic opera state. Omar Mahdi was a puppet sultan³ paid as a Liwali and treated as one of the Arab officials. The Protectorate Laws were applied to the State by the Sultan proclaiming each new Protectorate law valid in Witu.⁴ Even this legal device was soon forgotten and Protectorate laws were enforced without due proclamation. By 1903, Witu was being administered as an integral part of Tanaland.⁵ With a population of 16,000, it was noted chiefly for the size of its pineapples and its mosquitoes. Much of its revenue derived from the vegetables grown in the Sultan's garden. As for the Sultan himself, he was "an inoffensive old man, entirely without ambition, or even any sense of dignity of his office".⁶

There was a brief revival of interest in Witu in 1907. The Principal Judge drew attention to its sovereignty and its control of Public lands, which might be required for white settlement.⁷ It was then realised that Protectorate laws were illegally enforced since the Sultan had not been asked to apply them. In explaining the position to the Colonial Office, the Governor (Hayes Sadler) suggested that Germany might agree to the eventual abolition of the state:

"it would be well on the Sultan's death for Great Britain quietly to annex the Sultanate."⁸

To this proposal, the Foreign Office, when consulted, was opposed.

"It would not be advisable to apply to the German Government unless absolutely necessary as they would certainly expect to receive some concession in return".⁹

¹ For Bwana Shehe cf McDermott op.cit. p. 213; also Minute Paper 27/1907 (Lamu District Records). For Shehe's intrigues with the Germans cf FO 107/36. des. 96. Hardinge to FO 2.6.95 and FO reply des. 124 25.6.95 (FO 107/32).

² Vide C. Peters "New Light on Dark Africa" p. 68 cf. also W.A.A. FitzGerald op.cit p.350.

³ FO to Hardinge (Tg. 46.14.6.95 FO 83/1380) "to act nominally as Sultan". Omar Mahdi was paid 2400 rupees a year as compared with 4800 rupees for the Mazrui Liwali of Takaungu and 3000 rupees for the Liwali of Lamu.

⁴ MPA. Proclamations and Public Notices 1895-96. eg. Notice 61/1896 applying Firearms Regulations to Witu.

⁵ Cmd 1626/1903 EAP Report. P. 3-4.

⁶ Eliot to FO des 127. 9.4.02. (FO2/570). Cf also Eliot "East Africa Protectorate" p. 45-46.

⁷ Cf Lamu District Records (Lamu/7). Secretariat Minute Paper 27/1907 (Powers and Position of the Sultan of Witu). P. J to H.E 2.4.07.

⁸ Ibid. HE to CO 22.11.07

⁹ Ibid. FO to CO 17.1.08. NB: by article 2 of the 1890 Treaty Britain recognised the sovereignty of the Sultan of Witu.

When the need arose the Administration must appoint another “puppet as sultan”.¹

The legal difficulties were overcome with the Sultan issuing a general proclamation applying all Protectorate laws to his State.² Over the question of public land, the Governor ordered that none be leased without prior sanction. The Sultan

“is a most loyal and obedient man, and I do not think he is likely to break faith with us, but were he to do so, we should.....have no remedy but to depose him”.³

The Sultan proved co-operative. In April 1908 he signed a treaty surrendering his rights to public land in exchange for an increase of £60 a year in his salary.⁴

The rule of the amiable Omar Mahdi lasted for a further 16 years. He did little to disturb the even tenor of nominal rule. Indeed he did little to attract notice. An intrigue that brought one officer close to ruin,⁵ a rare visit to the dentist, an occasional 21 gun salute, or a kindness from the Military in repairing his rifle;⁶ in such small ways he drew attention to his continued existence. His undistinguished career was marked by an honorary C.B.E in 1919⁷ and an obituary in the Official Gazette in 1923.⁸ In June 1920, his sultanate was annexed by Britain in a fit of apparent forgetfulness.⁹ And when he died, aged 83 and somewhat feeble minded, no successor was appointed.

The indigenous native authorities of the Coast had been cast aside. The Mazrui and Hamis of Mtwapa had been destroyed by rebellion. Witu having been revived against the wishes of the local Administration, their response was to convert the Sultanate into a farce. In Vanga, the last Diwani of Vumba Kuu died in 1898 and his title lapsed.¹⁰ The arbitrary rejection of the indigenous rulers was complete when, in 1896, the former Mataka Chief was deported for quarrelling with an Arab Liwali, and his property confiscated.¹¹

But there were available to the Administration the alternative means of exercising control through the agency of paid Arab officials, representing the rule of Zanzibar. These, Hardinge used as administrative officers beyond the narrow confines of the Coastal strip, for he believed that from them – and from the Swahili – would emerge a native administration, capable of governing the interior.¹² These hopes proved short lived. European staff and tribal headmen removed the need for coastal officials

¹ Hollis' phrase. Minute Paper 27/1907. Memo 31.7.07.

² Vide OG 1907. p.477 (17.10.07).

³ Minute Paper 27/1907. HE to CO 22.11.07 (cf also CO 533/33/43707).

⁴ Lamu Records Vol. I p. 197. Treaty (original) 24.4.08.

⁵ See *infra*, the case of K. MacDougall.

⁶ MPA File 47/1152. “Sultan of Witu” 1915-23 *passim*.

⁷ OG 1919 p.376.

⁸ OG 1923 p.121.

⁹ Cf correspondence between DC Lamu, PC Coast, and the AG on MPA. “Sultan of Witu” 21.1.21. et seq. The effects of annexation took these officers by surprise as regards the loss of Witu sovereignty.

¹⁰ Cf MPA. Vanga in 1895-97. 4.8.98. (his death without heirs freed 145 slaves). Cf also JRAI. Vol. 30. AC. Hollis “Notes on the history of Vumba, East Africa”.

¹¹ Cf FO 2/427 des. 42 of 1.3.96 (Rogers to Hardinge), 11 of 14. 3.96. (Hardinge to FO) and Rogers to Craufurd 4.5.99; also correspondence in Cmd 9502/1899 (Correspondence respecting slavery).

¹² Cf 1897 Report p. 26-27; also Precise of Information 1901 (War Office) p. 73.

inland. On the Coast itself, the power and prestige of the Arab officials steadily declined. After Hardinge, Governors and European administrators, ignored, or slighted, the Arab officials. Their privileges were curtailed and they were relegated to the status of subordinate staff.¹ This decline followed closely the decay of the native coast communities. Perhaps a virile native authority was impossible without a satisfactory economic foundation. In this event any form of native authority was bound to fail. Yet the Arab officials, despite neglect, continued to function on the Coast for many years to come. Their long tenure in office² provided continuity – and gave them a personal influence – sadly lacking in the European Administration.

The administrators were often inconsistent in their attitude towards the Arab officials. Girouard, who had acquired a great respect for Muslims in Nigeria, sought to restore the power of the Arabs.³ His policy was abandoned by his successor Belfield.⁴ Again, whereas Hardinge had used the Arabs to control the Wankiya, Hobley, in 1912, opposed the extension of Muslim rule and influence because of its detribalising effects.⁵ When the closer administration of the WaGiryama was undertaken in 1912, it was a European and not a Muslim administrator, who was selected.⁶ Other factors undoubtedly influenced the strange convolutions of administrative practice. The political power of the Arabs stemmed from the power of Zanzibar, and this was on the wane.⁷ Again the Arabs were few in number, their strength reduced by migrations following rebellion and economic decay. In Malindi District in 1897 – “the most productive on the coast”⁸ – the population of its four main ports had stood at about 14,000. By 1906 this figure had fallen to 5200, and continued to decline.⁹ Behind the pardon and pension offered to Sheikh Mbaruk of Gasi, in 1908, by the Protectorate

¹ MPA. Minute Paper 14/1907 (94/168). ‘Regulations for Arab officials’. Cf especially the comments of Ali bin Salim. In the early days Liwalis enjoyed a 7 gun salute (which S.Cs did not at first receive). This, and other privileges, disappeared. Hardinge had stressed the need to respect Muslim susceptibilities, quoting the case of the Bushiri rising (the German Governor of Tanga had followed his dog into a local mosque). Some British officials in later years were careless over the finer points of Muslim etiquette.

² The Liwali of Mombasa held office from 1887 to 1920 and was succeeded by his son Sir Ali bin Salim. The Chief Kathi, Abdurrahman held office from 1898 to 1922. One Liwali of Faza held his post from 1895 to 1909, as did Rashid bin Salim in Takaungu. NB: Salim bin Khalfan held one post under 8 separate Governors and 11 different PCs. Note also in matters of Muslim law the High Court supported the Muslim judges vs the Administration (cf. MPA File 322/1915, “Regulations of freed slaves”).

³ Cf Girouard’s Confidential Report of May 1910 p. 98. also his Interim Report 13.11.09 (CO 533/63/39400). “too early and unconsidered a transition from the conditions inseparable from the legal status of slavery, has more or less broken the power and usefulness of our most highly civilized rulers, the Arabs of the Coast”. Cf also Minute of Girouard on 533/103/10330 (10.5.12).

⁴ Vide des. 29.10.12. on CO 533/108/26712.

⁵ Eg. Kilifi Records. KFI/11 (1913) Memo. On the Sheria and the aboriginal tribes.

⁶ See *infra* p.200 on the posting of Arthur Champion. But the Kilifi Records show that in 1913, an Arab official was called in to arbitrate between the Wakambe and WaRibe over a boundary dispute.

⁷ Note R.C Pratt’s view (“Buganda and British Overrule” pp. 293-296) that the native administration in Zanzibar was weakened by a slavish imitation of Egypt. It is possible however that the contrast he draws between Buganda and Zanzibar was not unrelated to economic factors. Uganda was fortunate in combining a strong native administration with successful cash crops. Despite cloves, Zanzibar economy was less expansive.

⁸ 1897 Report. p.9.

⁹ *Ibid*; also MPA Malindi in 1906, 4.4.06. Malindi town had 4 to 5,000 people in 1897, 2500 in 1906, and 1700 in 1919 (cf MPA File (1869) Report of PMO 8.10.19). By the 1920’s the thriving port of Mtanganyiko was deserted cf also Protectorate Report 1913-14 p. 58 on the decline of the Malindi Arabs.

Government lay the hope that his return might bring back some of his supporters to the depopulated coast.¹ In Tanaland, in 1897, there were signs of decay in the port of Lamu, which were ascribed to the competition of Mombasa. The population of Lamu District (including Witu) numbered 47,000 in 1897. By 1918, it had fallen to 27,000.² A Tanaland Commission of Inquiry in 1909 noted that

“the population in the Coast areas has gradually decreased to such an extent that want of population is one of the main causes of deterioration”.³

With this depopulation went economic decay. In 1897 the Arab plantations were shrinking and the price of land falling.⁴ In 1901, Sir Charles Eliot expressed the opinion that the Arab community faced “economic ruin”.⁵ The case of the Mazrui of Takaungu, reduced to barely 200 souls by 1914⁶ was not untypical. In 1908, in exchange for the surrender of their claims to waste land gone out of cultivation (perhaps 160,000 acres), they secured a ‘reserve’ of 44,420 acres.⁷ They immediately took steps to sell this. By 1931, they possessed only 4,319 acres, and this remnant survived only because it was a “Wakf” trust.⁸ Their leader, Rashid bin Salim, despite the receipt of considerable sums of money, died a bankrupt.⁹

Behind the economic decay lay the problem of labour and this hinged on the anti-slavery policies of the British Government. To consider this question it is necessary to retrace our steps.

When the Protectorate had been proclaimed in July 1895, a public ‘baraza’ in Mombasa had been assured that “all ancient customs will be allowed to continue”.¹⁰ For many years thereafter this promise was held to preclude the abolition of the status

¹ Vide MPA. File “Mazrui Rebels” (63/76). Des. 2.12.07.

² 1897 Report p. 26; and Lamu Records. J. Clive “A brief History of Lamu” (1933). By 1931, the population had fallen to 19,000.

³ Lamu Records. Lamu 6. pp.144. By 1916 the Arab population in the whole Protectorate stood at 5,200; only 115 of these were upcountry. (Lord Cranworth “Profit and Sport in British East Africa”. Appendix VI).

⁴ EAP Report 1897. p.63.

⁵ Vide Cmd 769/1901. Protectorate Report. p. 4 cf Sir C. Eliot “East Africa Protectorate” pp. 41-42, 57. Witnesses before the “Coconut Commission” (1914 stressed the effects of the anti-slavery policy on the Arab economy. Vide W.E.F de Lacey (p.33), K. MacDougall (p.36-37). This view was shared by the 1909 Committee enquiring into the decline of copra production (Appendix II to the 1914 Commission Report).

⁶ Des. 15.5.14. CO 533/136/20669.

⁷ Cf MPA (64/62). Mazrui Land. Deed of Exchange 3.3.08; EAP Report 1911-12 p. 58. Carter Land Commission Vol. III Evidence. pp.2692-2696.

⁸ Carter Land Commission Vo. III. pp.2692-2696. cf also MPA File 8/128 Mazrui Arbitration Board; MPA (61/-). Mazrui Lands; Legco Debates 1931 Vol. I p.37-39 (Mazrui Land Trust Ordinance). The CO in 1913 viewed the sales with alarm as creating “a landless and impecunious class” (vide CO 533/108/40709, 108/36755; 115/34244’ 121/32129). One sale of 30,000 acres brought the clan £30,000. Note also Sir Ali bin Salim’s speech on Vol. 2 LegCo 1935 p. 602 onwards.

⁹ His salary was 4800 rupees a year. When he retired he received a pension of £254 per annum. He also received £1000 in a compensation for his runaway slaves. But by 1931 he had mortgaged his remaining lands for £1228, and these were sold by Court order. Cf Mombasa District Records (Minute Paper 2064/1908 Liwali’s Slaves) and MSA/11 Petition of Rashid bin Salim 6.11.31, also Kilifi Records. (Takaungu Record book p. 96).

¹⁰ Sir E. Hertslet “Map of Africa by Treaty” (1896). Vol. II p.1069-71 for the Mombasa Baraza.

of slavery.¹ Nevertheless the legal basis of slavery within the Coastal strip was governed by the decrees of the Sultan of Zanzibar. In 1889 and 1890, two decrees had freed all slave children born after 1st January 1890, and also slaves whose masters died without direct heirs. In point of fact the 1889 decree was never published² nor was it enforced on the mainland until 1898.³ Yet a year earlier, the Sultan of Zanzibar had been persuaded to abolish the status of slavery in his island domains,⁴ a decree that was not applied to the mainland. Since the Zanzibar Government had to bear the cost of this in terms of compensation, a cynic might well accuse the British Government of imposing a policy it was unwilling to enforce on the mainland, on the grounds of expense. Certainly the cost of Abolition was often stressed. But experience had also taught the British to have a considerable regard for the Muslim world and to fear a Muslim 'jihad'.⁵ Local officials were staunch opponents of too swift a change, for fear of rebellion and – with a shrewd eye on the Treasury – expense. Hardinge stressed that given time, "slavery will disappear as completely as villeinage in England".⁶ Nor were officials in the Foreign Office in a mood to be hurried. In 1896 Curzon, the Parliamentary Under Secretary, advised delay;

"we want the country quieted in order to consolidate the administration of the Protectorate and to commence the Uganda railway, and we need not proceed to manufacture difficulties for ourselves. We are under no pledge to the House of Commons. The fanatics have always concentrated upon the islands. I venture to think, therefore, that the mainland can afford to wait."⁷

Again in 1902, when considering the possibility of annexing the Protectorate, one cogent reason for delay was that annexation would mean abolition, and "abolition means compensation".⁸ Sir Clement Hill estimated the cost at £150,000. Lord Lansdowne minuted, "For the present we must sit still."⁹

Such¹⁰ views fitted well with the ideas of local officials, who had to implement anti-slavery policies against the wishes of local native opinion and at the risk of rebellion. Indeed the Mazrui Rising had gained much local support on account of the ill will aroused by the anti-slavery zeal of the European Missions.⁸¹ Officials serving on the

¹ Since Lord Kimberley had approved this promise, it was held to be binding on Government. Vide Hansard 4thS. Vol. 69 (22.3.99 cls 15-18); Vol. 144 (3.4.05) cl. 98; cf also HMC to CO 27.5.05. (CO 533/28/14704).

² Indeed The Sultan's successors were unaware of its existence. Cf MPA HMC in (1898 and 1898-99) des. 10.9.98 (Hardinge to Rogers); cf also 122 17.10.98; and 36, 1.4.98; Cmd 9502/1899 item 1, 13.6.98 (Hardinge to FO).

³ Cf correspondence in Cmd 9502/1899 (Correspondence respecting the status of slavery).

⁴ Cmd 8433/1897/1. Hardinge to FO 9.4.97 enclosing the Decrees.

⁵ A holy war. The example of the Mahdi was still fresh in men's minds. The Mad Mullah (Mohamed bin Abdullah) in Somaliland provided another reminder of Muslim fanaticism. Cf also the Bushiri Revolt in GEA.

⁶ 1897 Report. p.60 cf also *ibid.* p.127.

⁷ Memorandum 5.2.96, FOP 6755; cf also FOP 6762; 6800; 6756.

⁸ FO print on CO 533/14/19308. Memo Sir C. Hill. 7.4.02. Hill was all for "tact and a little judicious closing of the official eye".

⁹ *Ibid.* Lord Lansdowne (undated).

¹⁰ Cf Cmd 8274/1896. 72 des. 12.4.96. also Hansard 4ths. Vol. 50 cls 515-537: MPA Malindi In (1902) 9.8.01 where the Rev. Griffiths "practically told me (ADC Rabai) to go to hell". Cf also Bishop Tucker's efforts at the time of the Chinese labour controversy to draw attention to E.A. slavery (CO 533/26/14491). There were many other instances.

Coast were torn between their duty to Imperial ideals and an uncomfortable awareness of Muslim opinion. Some officials, after long service with the Arabs, had greater sympathy for the slave owners than for Exeter Hall. Lloyd Mathews, First Minister in Zanzibar and Political member on the East Africa Protectorate Council, showed all the marks of an early chameleon.

“During his long residence at Zanzibar he had lived in such close intimacy with the natives, that he unconsciously reflected some of their peculiar views and modes of thought”.¹

But Hardinge himself also fell under the influence of Muslim opinion as his critics in Parliament were quick to complain. Dilke, in 1895, suggested that, over slavery, Hardinge was “a little afraid and...needed a great deal of pressure”.² In 1897, McKenna felt that the Commissioner was “in sympathy with Arab masters”.³ In 1900, Bayley protested at Hardinge’s public attack on the “sentimentality of Exeter Hall” and its “unctious righteousness”.⁴

The pressures on the local European administration were considerable. Not only did they have to answer – albeit indirectly – to humanitarian sentiment in Parliament, but they had to face the criticisms of the local Missions, who had close links with the Parliamentary pressure groups. Missions protests in 1898 found expression in Parliament⁵ and led to the enforcement of the 1889 Decree, and to a prohibition against local courts aiding slave owners to recover their slaves. But the Missions were not content with this. Despite warnings and pleas they sheltered runaway slaves, thereby aggravating Muslim discontent. The conflicts placed the local administrators in an invidious position.⁶ On the one hand, they were expected to respect local law and custom and to rule with the minimum of expense. On the other, they were agents of Imperialism and the servants of Metropolitan humanitarian sentiment. Much of their inconsistency in the use or abuse of the Muslim native authorities stemmed from this.

The effects of the anti-slavery policy might be softened but they could not be wholly deflected. By legal and illegal means, the slave population was steadily reduced. During the first three years of the Protectorate over 1300 slaves were freed by the Courts. But more important were the numbers of runaway slaves. In February 1897, MacDougall, the Collector at Malindi, reported that 153 slaves had recently run away from Takaungu.⁷ In March of the same year he listed 71 from Malindi and Mambrui who had sought refuge at the Ribe and Rabai Mission stations.⁸ Many runaways

¹ Hardinge op.cit. p.96

² Hansard 4thS XXXVI cl. 466 note also Kirk and Lugard’s views (M. Perham ‘Lugard’ Vol. I, p. 611).

³ Hansard 4thS. Vol. 50. cls 523-524.

⁴ Ibid. vol. LXXXIV cl. 227.

⁵ Hansard Vol. 67 cls 289-290 and vol. 66 cl. 513; Hansard vol. 50 cls. 515-537. cf also Cmd 8433/1897, Cmd 9502/1899 (correspondence concerning slavery).

⁶ The conflict between administrators and missionaries – which did not preclude personal friendships – was a conflict of functions, in addition to any personal rivalry. (In later years a DC was to write of the problems of soul erosion as well as soil erosion, and criticise the missions for the former.)

⁷ MPA. Malindi in 1895-98 26.2.97. Collector to SC.

⁸ Ibid. 25.3.97.

sought shelter in the refugee villages north of the Sabaki, which held, in 1895, over 3000 fugitives. As late as 1901, their masters were still attempting their recapture.¹

The slave population on the Coast had numbered perhaps 40,000 in 1890. By 1897 it had fallen to less than 26,000. In Seyidie the numbers fell from 12,000 in 1897 to 8,000 in 1901. In 1905, it was estimated that in the whole Protectorate there were only 10,000 or 12,000 slaves.² When in 1907, under pressure from a Liberal Government,³ the Protectorate Government abolished the status of slavery and paid compensation to the owners, only 8,000 claims – each representing a single slave – were registered. The cost of compensation was met from a Parliamentary grant, and by 1914 £30,313 – about £5 for each slave – had been paid to the owners.⁴

If humanitarian sentiment had exercised a powerful influence in the development of an anti-slavery policy, the administrators had been the opponents of change and of the Missions. In response to local opinion they had delayed the implementation of the policy for 10 years. In matters of Trusteeship, there were obviously differences of opinion as to which sections of native society were the wards for whom the Trust operated.

The effect of Abolition was to complete the economic ruin of the native plantation economy. The plantation owners were unwilling, or unable, to find alternative supplies of labour. The majority of freed slaves ceased to work on the plantations. The capital acquired by compensation was soon spent and the abandoned land sold off to Europeans. The decline was most marked in Tanaland, where 80,000 rupees had been paid out in the first year after abolition.

“much of the compensation money was frittered away, but little attempt was made to find fresh labour, or keep in cultivation those areas which had been getting gradually smaller and smaller, since the seventies of the last century.”⁵

Perhaps the Administrators were not at first unduly concerned; they had an irrepressible optimism and believed European plantations would prove a paying proposition.⁶ So far as Tanaland and the Malindi district were concerned, these hopes were not realised.

¹ Map Malindi in 1902 (71-75). 8.4.01.

² 1897 Report pp. 26-28; MPA HMC Out 1901-02. 16.12.01; HMC Out 1905 2.6.05.

³ Cf Minutes on CO 533/28/14704 (eg. W. S. Churchill 2.7.07). Note also Elgin's comment that the officers on the spot had “an objection to our moving”.

⁴ Cf Protectorate Reports 1908-09 pp.28-29; 1910-11 p.51; 1911-12 p.55; 1912-1913 p.60; 1913-14 p.60. Some of the compensation money was expended on the maintenance of aged slaves.

⁵ Vide Lamu Records. J. Clive “A brief History of Tanaland” (1933). Note also PC's Coast's Report 1926 p.7 concerning the Arabs: those “who had land have mostly sold it and young and old seem to do no work worthy of name”. cf also JAS 1915/16 pp. 145-149. M.Beech “Slavery on the East Coast of Africa” concerning the utter ruin of those plantation owners following the “ijara” (a rentier) system.

⁶ E.g. the report of the PC Lamu 17.12.08 on turning the Tana into a second Nile (CO 533/49/19558). On which Butler (in the CO) minuted “for the present we seem condemned to run the country on the principle that no scheme of development will be looked at that does not bring in an immediate return of something like its own cost”.

Yet in a curious way despite political and economic decline, the coastal communities clung to their leisured ways and culture, stubbornly resisting the pressures of change, borne up by faith, by fatalism, and by a bare sufficiency.¹

It is against this background that we must turn to consider the case of the Tanaland Administration which fell on evil days, partly because successful administration needs a modicum of economic stability, but also, because of its capacity to absorb something of the local atmosphere of decay.

The first Sub Commissioner Lamu, A.S. Rogers, had served for several years in Tanaland. A former army officer and Punjab policeman, he followed a policy of supporting the Liwalis against the deposed indigenous rulers. In 1896 he had deported the Mataka Chief after the latter had quarrelled with one of the Liwalis over the disarmament of his people.² In 1898, Rogers had been absent at Mombasa; his place had been temporarily filled by Kenneth MacDougall. On returning to Lamu, Rogers was faced with a Commission of Enquiry into his arbitrary rule, the result of local complaints reaching Mombasa. Beneath a fantastic tissue of lies a number of genuine charges emerged. Amongst them was the deportation of the Mataka on the false information of the Liwali;³ a case in which a notorious criminal received a hundred lashes, from which he died; the illegal detention of a young Arab girl, rightly suspected of theft; and the committal of an Arab prisoner – suffering from elephantiasis – to the chain gang, who died shortly after his release.⁴ The Commission sharply criticised Rogers:

“The natural result of the possession of absolute authority is to make the wielder resent any sort of opposition to his will and authority”.⁵

But equally remarkable was the manner in which interested parties indulged in a web of intrigue to destroy him. The elders of Lamu and the Mataka of Siyu combined to attack his rule. On the other hand, the Sultan of Witu and the Liwalis of Lamu, Siyu, and Faza supported him. Rogers' career was in jeopardy and he was only saved by chance. Certain papers came to light on the death of a German trader, Hassler, a convert to Islam and a bitter enemy of Rogers. From these it became apparent that Government officials had leagued against Rogers, including his Arab clerk, a Goan dispenser, two A.D.Cs, the Principal Medical Officer, and MacDougall.⁶

MacDougall and Rogers were men of different temperament. Rogers, the more formal, “never allowed any familiarity such as appears to have been permitted by Mr.

¹ Cf Mombasa Survey (1957. Nairobi. CGL). H. E Lambert “The Arab Community of Mombasa” p.11. “It is to be noticed that this comparatively rapid decline in fortune...is not reflected in a similar decline in culture”. But NB: the town of Faza gave the early Administrators little trouble despite the overthrow of the Sindi, for the Liwali there was of the ruling clan. He was retired in 1909 on the grounds of “old age and senility” (1897 Report p.15; and CO 533/62/35508).

² Cmd 9502/1899. item 22. Hardinge to FO 6.2.99. The Liwali had alleged that the Chief had refused to bring in guns and threatened to use them against Government. Whereas he had said that as he was no longer chief of Siyu “collect my people's guns yourself”.

³ The papers on the Rogers case are collected together in a single volume FO 2/427. cf. *ibid.* Hardinge to Hill (private) 8.4.99.

⁴ *Ibid.* Collinson's Enquiry. 3.3.99-24.3.99.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* Rogers to Hardinge 12.12.99 with enclosures.

MacDougall”.¹ The latter had a flair for handling natives, but his sympathy and understanding made him jealous of rivals and willing to listen to “native gup”.² Misled by native informers, he was convinced that Rogers had belittled him, “leading the one to believe any native tale about the other and to encourage his Arab and German enemies”.³ MacDougall had taken the native complaints to the Commissioner and had encouraged native witnesses to give evidence to the Commission of Enquiry.

As a result of the discovery of this intrigue, Rogers survived. Hardinge chose to support him, since, as a pioneer administrator, he had earned the enmity of the pro-slavery party in his province. Rogers’ administrative experience had not been with “pacified populations”⁴ nor could his methods follow “the light of the Gospel according to Gray”.⁵

But the case also revealed the intensity of native intrigue and the capacity of the local population to involve their rulers in mutually destructive conflict. Of the Lamu population, Hardinge wrote that they were “a community of such villains” with “a disposition to intrigue against officials and against one another”.⁶ But it was not this that surprised one Zanzibar Judge. Intrigue and “fetina” were characteristics of the Coast. But “I was astonished to see European gentlemen such proficient”.⁷ Hardinge found it necessary to enlighten a startled Foreign Office.

“In Africa,” he explained, “there is a much greater tendency to feuds among Europeans than at home. It may be liver, it may be want of healthy occupation, but the fact exists. Little quarrels and offences become big things, and the native auxiliaries on either side add fuel to the fire.”⁸

But here the “native auxiliaries” had used MacDougall and others to fight Rogers, by playing on their personal vanity, by ‘leaking’ information, and by appealing to their sense of justice. Though Rogers survived, the prestige of the Tanaland Administration had suffered; not least because the Mataka returned to Siyu and their property was restored.

The situation in Tanaland did not improve. By 1905, Sir Charles Eliot regarded it as one of the most neglected provinces. European settlement proved a chimera and there was no return of prosperity. Staff were inadequate in numbers and often unsatisfactory in character. Worse was to come. In 1907, another Judicial Enquiry was held into the arbitrary actions of the P.C, the experienced native administrator, Kenneth MacDougall.⁹

¹ Ibid. Rogers to Hardinge. 12.12.99.

² Ibid. Hardinge to Hill. 10.1.1900.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. (Gray was a Legal Advisor to the FO).

⁶ Ibid. Lloyd Mathews was even more severe – “the greatest liars and intriguers living” and he quoted with relish the comment of Sultan Barghash “remember out of every hundred, ninety-nine are liars” (Memo. 30.3.99).

⁷ Ibid. Judge Cracknell’s Memo (undated).

⁸ Ibid. Hardinge to Hill 10.1.1900.

⁹ The incident is covered in CO 533/29/21715; 30/25269, 25270; 59/16600. It was the more embarrassing to Government in view of the Grogan flogging incident in Nairobi.

The incident arose out of the opposition of the people of Siyu towards their young, and new, Liwali, Maka bin Mote. He was accused of levying forced labour and demanding free transport on the dhows. But his gravest offence in their eyes was to remove to his court all the cases previously tried by the local elders. As a result, his office was boycotted and an empty coffin was paraded through the town in the pious expectation of his early decease. Complaints poured into Lamu. Four separate investigations were held by MacDougall and by his relief McClellan. In each case, the conclusion reached was that the Siyu malcontents were stirring up trouble and that the Liwali must be supported by Government. (McClellan did suggest as an alternative, direct administration by a European A.D.C.) Early in 1907, MacDougall, refreshed by home leave, returned to find Siyu simmering. He sent the Sultan of Witu to restore harmony. The amiable Omar Madhi, himself a Siyu man, returned to assure MacDougall that all was well, though MacDougall later concluded that “the Sultan only told me what he thought would please me”.¹ When, therefore, three men from Siyu came with more complaints against the Liwali, MacDougall had them flogged and imprisoned without trial. Now chance had brought a European lawyer, de Lacey, to Lamu. Visiting the local jail on an unrelated matter he was engaged by the injured parties.² A Judicial Enquiry resulted, which brought the downfall of MacDougall. The Judge, holding the enquiry, strongly recommended direct administration by A.D.Cs. MacDougall himself admitted his error (though founded on the Punjab principle of supporting subordinates). “I backed him up in ignorance of the real state of affairs”³ for the people of Siyu disliked the rule of Zanzibari officials. But the effect of MacDougall’s removal further undermined the prestige of the Administration.⁴

Two years later, the Tanaland Administration having shown little signs of improvement, a watchful Government despatched yet another Commission to investigate conditions. The Commission’s recommendations were somewhat ironic. It pressed for the restoration of a healthy native administration through the agency of the Liwalis, acting as administrative officers.

“Unless the native officials are used as they should be they become almost worse than useless, besides being an unnecessary expense.....To us it is surprising that the Provincial Commissioner has not realised this long ago. The Tanaland administrative authorities have for some time been intent on breaking down the system of native administration. This procedure has in part been due to indifference and in part due to deliberate intention and in the same way [there] seems to have been some idea of setting up in its place European control...The form of administration that formerly existed entirely and which

¹ CO 533/29/21714. MacDougall 29.5.07. The Sultan told a different story at the Enquiry to Judge Bonham Carter. Jackson was to comment on the Sultan’s “non-retentive memory”.

² De Lacey was a lawyer newly arrived from Australia. In addition to his correspondence with Government he took the precaution to write direct to certain members of Parliament. NB he later joined Government as an Assistant Recorder of Titles and appears again (infra) in connection with the Giriyama.

³ CO 533/29/21714. MacDougall 29.5.07.

⁴ MacDougall was demoted and transferred to act as Registrar of Slaves (later Chairman of the Coast Arbitration Board). He had to pay £850 in settlement out of court (£150 of which was de Lacey’s fee).

exists in part today...is admirably suited to the place and the people: our efforts should have been directed to its continuance”.¹

The Commission criticised the failure of the European administrators to show proper courtesy to the Liwalis and other native officials,

“We cannot help but record our opinion that the Province has been administratively starved as regards money and good men to guide it. The country is rich in possibilities, by constant neglect we have smothered it”.²

The 1909 Commission may have achieved something for the Governor was to report in 1910 that the Arab administration was working well.³ But in the long run, the decay in Administration, undermined as it had been by repeated Commissions, was not to be checked. Reviewing the years that had elapsed since the 1909 Commission, the D.C. Lamu sadly commented in 1921,

“Little has been done to carry into effect any of the recommendations of this report. An attempt to re-instate the Arab Administration was made and in practice...worked out in a decrease in European supervision and an increase in oriental duplicity. The unsavoury reputation of the District has frightened the individual officer who, generally speaking, has pursued a policy of ‘laissez faire’ and prayed that he would get away without personal damage.”⁴

It may be argued that “laissez faire” admirably suited the local population. Given the economic condition, obstinacy and intrigue dictated the collapse of any other policy when translated into action.⁵

If Tanaland revealed the most marked stagnation, this decay – save for the thriving port of Mombasa – was also reflected in Seyidie. One report spoke of a town on the south coast as a place “of ruins both of building and people”.⁶ The European Coast planters complained in 1913, that,

“the existing administration of the country appears to...be mainly absorbed in the development of the highlands to the neglect of the coastal interests”.⁷

Expectation on the Coast had exceeded performance. The region was littered with good intentions; a sense of defeat was in the air. A P.C. could write some years after the War,

¹ Lamu Records Lamu/6. pp.142-146 for extracts of the Commission of Enquiry. The full record of the Commission has not survived; it was not sent to the UK. (Another portion of it is quoted in NFD/142). The Commission consisted of J. Ainsworth, Hollis and Dr Milne.

² Ibid.

³ 1909/10 Report p.45. But in the same year, Girouard was thinking of setting up yet another Enquiry (vide CO 533/72/13831. des. 4.4.10).

⁴ Lamu Records. Lamu/6. Comment of T.A Dickson. DC Lamu 1921 (p.146).

⁵ Note Dickson’s comment (ibid) “the extraordinary love of intrigue and immorality which predominate in the character of the Swahili population”. Cf also contemporary reports re: Tanaland, “a rising standard of comfort...and a falling standard of morality” (Lamu/11 Report 1911-12 p.2) and “the proportion of inhabitants of weak intellect is high” (EAP Report. 1911-12 p.53).

⁶ MPA. Coast Province Report 1925, p.45.

⁷ Memo of Major Guest. Chairman Coast Planters’ Association. 13.8.13. (CO 533/130/28309).

“to one who like the writer returns to the Coastal Administration after 14 years, the position of the Provincial Commissioner is revealed as woefully decadent and an officer who holds it might well ask himself whether the Coast has not been abandoned and whether he has not been sent down to pasture in his official dotage.”¹

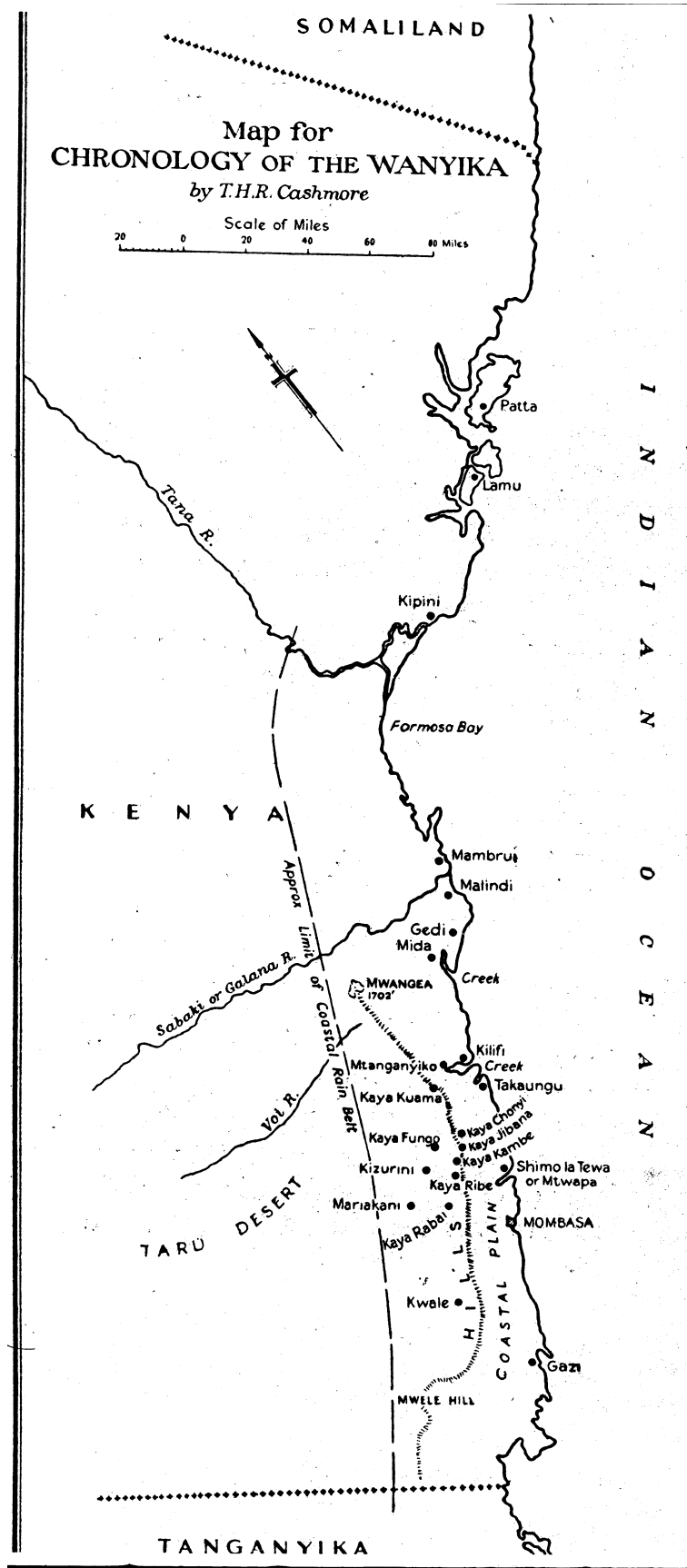
Yet in a curious fashion the Arabs and the Arab administration survived despite economic decline, neglect, and paucity of numbers. The Coastal strip was still the domain of the Sultan of Zanzibar, and at least in Mombasa, the family of the Liwali, Hamis bin Khalfun, proved, contrary to experience elsewhere, effective administrators.²

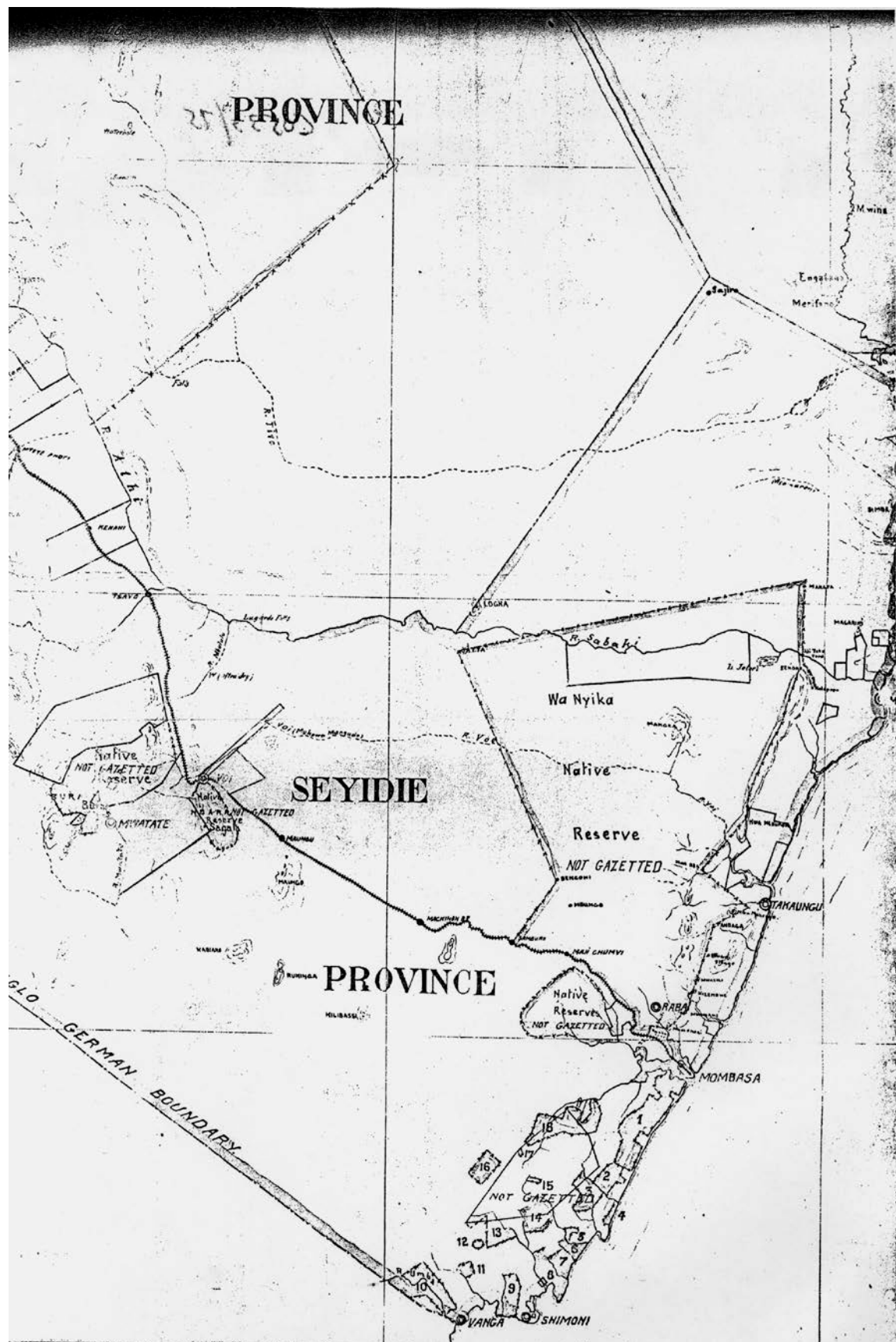
It is open to debate whether the failure of the native administration on the coast was the result of the choice of the wrong levers of native authority, or to the after effects of an economic decline, which in turn was the consequence of the anti-slavery policy of Britain. The Nabahan and the Mazrui were noted for their fratricide “only agreeing among themselves when disagreeing with a stranger”.³ It is doubtful whether they, or the Sindi, or Mataka, would have proved more reliable instruments of native rule. But at least the European administrators revealed a capacity to imitate and reflect the failings of the decadent society they served. Like masters, like men.

¹ Coast Province Report. 1927. p.4.

² Two of Liwali Salim’s sons were also Liwalis. Salim was an Albusiad and distantly related to the Sultan of Zanzibar. One son, Sir Ali bin Salim, had studied for a while at Balliol.

³ Comment on DC Lamu 16.2.23 on MPA (47/1152) File. “Sultan of Witu”.





CHAPTER V

THE GIRYAMA PROBLEM

South of the Sabaki River and inland, beyond the decaying plantations of the Arabs and the Swahili, lay ranges of hills that merged into the Taru desert. Near the coast there was lush vegetation that changed to desert scrub on approaching the Taru, as the rainfall declined from 40 to 15 inches a year. Here lived the nine tribes of the Wanyika, of whom the most numerous were the Giriyama.¹

Driven from Shungwaya in the 16th or 17th Centuries by Galla migration, the Giriyama had slowly retreated south to their present habitations with the other Nyika tribes. But the Galla were not the only enemy. During the 19th Century the WaNyika were subjected to Masai and Kwavi raids, which, in the 1850's, deprived them of most of their cattle. Their cultivation of maize and millet, however, increased. But, with the decline of Galla power after the 1860's, the Giriyama and other Nyika tribes were able to expand north once more. By 1890, they were again crossing the Sabaki River and settling beyond it.²

The Giriyama were not a closely knit tribe. The basis of their government was age grades and age grade clubs: the 'nyere' (warriors), the 'Kambi' (governing elders), the 'vaya' (an inner circle of elders), whose select club was the 'fisi'.³ The 'Kambi' were summoned together by the three 'enyetsi' (Lords of the soil), who were selected in rotation from the heads of the clans. But the rule of the elders was weak, the whole system resembling a form of freemasonry. Under the pressure of external threats in the 19th Century, a powerful warleader and chief had emerged in Fungo wa Mbore, after whom the principal 'kaya'⁴ was renamed 'Kaya Fungo'. But when he died (late in the 19th Century), there was no successor. The cessation of Galla and then Masai raids permitted the Giriyama to emerge from their fortified villages, and to disperse in renewed migrations.

¹ The Giriyama slightly outnumber all the other Nyika tribes put together. (NB the alternative name for WaNyika is 'Miji Kenda' lit. 'nine towns'). The other main tribes are the Digo and Duruma. (The Tibe, Rabai, Kambe, Kauma, Chonyi, and Jibana are relatively small). Most Wanyika are pagan, with some Christian converts and a fair number of Muslims (particularly with the Digo after Mazrui proselytizing). NB: I have used the spelling "Giriyama" throughout, though the more common spelling is "Giriama".

² W.E Taylor. "Giriyama Vocabulary and Collections" (1891) pp.v-vii. Kilifi Records (KFI/11) A.M Champion, "History of the WaGiriyama"; K. MacDougall "notes on the History of the WaNyika". Protectorate Report 1897. p.10. Champion records that the Giriyama reoccupied Mwangea in 1884 and reached the Sabaki in 1890.

³ Fisi. Lit. "hyena". A Giriyama totem. For the social organisation of the tribe cf. W.E Taylor op.cit. ("Free-masonry"); Harding des. 17/2/96 (Cmd 8274 (1896)/59); Protectorate Report 1897 pp. 9-12; A.J.H Prins "The Coastal Tribes of the north-eastern Bantu" (1952) passim.

⁴ Kaya – a fortress, sacred place, meeting place of the elders. (vide. L. Krapf "Dictionary of Swahili" (1882). p.133).

One special characteristic of the Giriama was their love of palm wine, the fermented juice tapped from the coconut palm to the detriment of its nuts.¹ As early as the 1820's Lieutenant Emery R.N had observed this craving for 'tembo'.

"they partake most freely of it, which causes drunkenness, a vice the Whaneekas are much addicted to".²

This habit was frequently noted by both missionaries and travellers in the years that followed. The Methodist, Charles New could write in the 1870's.

"Toddy tapping is a favourite pursuit, because it involves but little labour, pays pretty well, and affords abundant opportunity for gossip and guzzle."³

Missionaries made an early appearance in Nyika country. Rabai station was opened in 1846 and other mission stations followed. The early missionary influence was centred in the southern Nyika, but in 1890 a C.M.S station was opened at Jilore near the Sabaki. Nevertheless, up to the Proclamation of the Protectorate and despite nearly 50 years of effort, the missions had made but little impression on the local people.⁴

When the Mazrui rebellion broke out in 1895, the WaGiryama, who then numbered about 73,000 gave passive support and shelter to the rebels. A sharp clash with the young warriors, and a fire power display, sufficed to pacify them, and the elders swore a 'fisi' oath of loyalty to Government. In this episode, a principal ally of Government was one of the leading Giriama elders, Ngonyo.⁵ As a reward for his services, he was invited to cross the Sabaki and settle in the north at Marafa.

The official attitude towards the Trans-Sabaki migrations was one of encouragement that turned gradually to indifference.⁶ The area became a backwater. The administrative centres were either on the coast, at Malindi and Takaungu, or to the south, at Rabai. The trend of the migration was away from Government stations. Contact between Government and the tribesmen was maintained by Arab intermediaries and through irregular safaris. Tax was paid to get rid of unwelcome officials. By 1908 the Giriama were "less in touch with us than in the days of the British East Africa Company."⁷ By 1913, there were some 14,000 Giriama settled north of the Sabaki.

¹ Vide Report of the Coconut Commission (1914) p.4-5. But Tembo was more profitable than copra.

² JRGS. 1833. vol. iii. Lt. Emery "A Short Account of Mombasa" p.282 (Emery was Governor of Mombasa 1824-26.)

³ C.New "Life, Wanderings and Labours in Eastern Africa" p.115. cf also L.Krapf "Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours", p.140.

⁴ The Majority of the early mission converts were freed slaves, not Nyika. By 1921, 3 mission societies had 12 stations in Nyika district, owned 2500 acres of land, and educated 639 children. (vide KFI/1. Kilifi Report 1920/21. p.4).

⁵ Ngonyo, though a Giriama chief was in fact a Mdigo (vide des. 17.2.96 in Cmd 8274 (1896)/59). His ancestors appear to have been slave dealers. Hobley later ascribed to him considerable powers as a witchdoctor.

⁶ MPA. Malindi in 1895-98. Weaver to S.C. 21.9.96; MacDougall's Report 10.9.07 (CO 533/31/36259). Control of the tribe was hampered by its division between Rabai (Mombasa) and Malindi. (cf. CO 533/62/36529).

⁷ COP/954/13. Military Intelligence Appreciation Jan. 1908. (annexure to appendix C).

The whole area was relatively fertile and a grain trade flourished. From Malindi and from Takaungu the export of maize averaged about 2,500 tons a year,¹ much of it from Giriyama. It was in Government's interest to encourage the trade. In 1903, Monson, in the Secretariat, proposed that since,

“Grain is exported from Giriyama district...this might be greatly developed if a European firm with capital would take it up as the harvests have been very abundant and the crop is consequently very cheap.”²

Shortly afterwards a pier was built at Mtanganiko at the head of Kilifi creek to facilitate the grain export, “which is considerable”.³

The Giriyama economy was not dependent on a single crop. In the dryer areas away from the coast they had herds of cattle. In most areas, there were sheep and goats. Where rainfall was abundant maize, millet, sim-sim and a little rice were cultivated. In the south, fruit trees grew. In many areas there were coconut palms. But all crops depended on uncertain rainfall. There was also a well established barter trade between the Nyika and other tribes. They had acted as middlemen for Usambara tobacco, Kamba ivory and cattle, or game trophies from the Alungulo, Waa, and WaSanye hunters. In exchange they offered iron chain work, arrow poison, food and rupees. For manufactured articles they relied on the Arab and Indian traders of the Coast, bartering in fruit, copra, poultry, grain, ivory and occasionally slaves. But the great trade with the coast was grain, or even labour, in exchange for palm wine. The palms of the interior were insufficient to meet their thirst, and Arab and Swahili coconut plantations supplied their wants.⁴ The cultivation of grain was the work of the women, its transport and trade, that of the men. Lugard, describing the Giriyama in 1889, noted that,

“the men are tall and wiry...They are much addicted to drunkenness...one constantly meets long strings of them carrying fowls or calabashes full of corn, to exchange for the fiery tembo of the coast made by the slaves from the sap of the palm”.⁵

Certain features of the economy were distasteful to an alien government; ivory was under strict control and poaching was discouraged. The idleness of the men did not appeal to the protestant spirit. They refused to work on the railway even in famine

¹ MPA. Malindi in 1906. 19.6.06. But the figures fluctuated with the rain. cf MacDougall's report 10.9.07. The Malindi Maize Export for 1909/10 was 1650 tons, for 1910/11 2473 tons. (Kilifi. MAL/1. Report. 1910/11 (unpaged).

² Cmd. 1631/1903. p.7.

³ Sir C. Eliot “East Africa Protectorate”, p.52.

⁴ For the descriptions of trade cf. Emery op.cit. Krapf “Travels...” pp.144, 172, 268, 302, 252, 354; Capt. Boteler “Narrative of Voyages..” (1835) Vol. II, pp.17, 205, 206; Taylor, op.cit. (“Work); W. W.A FitzGerald “Travels in the Coastlands...”(1898) pp.97-98, 136; JRAI 1911 W.E.H Barrett “Notes on the Customs and Beliefs of the WaGiriyama” pp.20-39; Cmd 1534 (1903) Report of A. Whyte p.2-7; Mombasa Records MSA/9 (Malindi Annual Report 1908/09, p.6).

⁵ Capt. F Lugard. “The Rise of Our East African Empire” (1893). Vol. I, p.229. Note also his comment in “Dual Mandate”, concerning the Giriyama, “among whom I have seen more drunkenness than elsewhere in Africa” (1922 edn. p.603).

time,¹ though they worked for the Arabs for palm wine. The love of wine reduced copra production and made for drunkenness and fighting.

From 1906 onwards, European planters began to settle on the Coast raising great, if transitory, hopes of profit in rubber and cotton.² Experience later proved that considerable capital concentrated south of Kilifi, in sisal, sugar or copra, alone gave a return. But at the first, this fact was hidden. By 1907, there were 7 plantations around Malindi and 2 or 3 more around Kilifi. Though the white population was not large the plantations required both land and labour.

Land was not a major problem, but confusion existed over land rights. In 1908, the Governor had to seek permission to spend 5000 rupees to buy out native rights on land already leased to Europeans.³ As for the area north of the Sabaki, Hollis advised that,

“The Giryama who inhabit this area in large numbers have no rights to the land as they have only squattered there during the last twenty years.”⁴

A few months earlier, MacDougall had toured the area to investigate the labour problem and the question of reserves. He proposed three separate reserves, which would allow ample room for expansion. The Colonial Office, more cautious, stressed,

“the desirability of taking every precaution in order to avoid giving the natives concerned any grounds for believing that they are being dispossessed of their lands by Government for the purpose of compelling them to work for Europeans”.⁵

Labour, or course, was scarce. MacDougall during his tour had tried to find labour for the Malindi planters. He had a friendly reception from the elders, but their efforts to get young men out to work met with resistance. MacDougall then approached Ngonyo of Marafa, “the most intelligent Chief”.⁶ Ngonyo’s reaction was

“We are an industrious people who really do not need to work outside our own country except in case of prolonged drought”.⁷

¹ 1897 Protectorate Report pp.19-20. In famine times, they sold their women and children into slavery (cf. Cmd 9125 (1899) Report. p.22). Over the Nyika unwillingness to work cf MPA. Malindi in 1895-98. DC to SC. 2.6.98. Sir Charles Eliot took the view that progress could only be achieved in famine time. (cf Eliot op.cit. p.226; and Protectorate Report Cmd 769/1901 p.12).

² For attempts to grow cotton on the coast cf. W. Fitzgerald op.cit. pp.97-98 & Cmd 2406/1905 (Report on Cotton growing). Despite subsidies and the co-operation of the British Cotton Growers’ Association, cotton was a failure. Vide Protectorate Report 1912-13 p. 24 (but NB: a planter’s suggestions for the Giryama, attached to des. 27.1.10. in CO 533/71/5141). Rubber also proved a failure as a plantation crop, but its decline was more gradual. Girouard in 1910 still looked on the Coast as “one of the most promising parts of the whole Protectorate” (Confidential Report. May 1910. p.61).

³ Des. 20.1.08. CO 533/41/5801.

⁴ Ibid. Memo of Hollis. 23.10.07. But Hollis insisted on the preservation of native rights south of the Sabaki and round Mwangea, cf also Hollis. 30.9.07. (CO 533/31/36259).

⁵ Des. CO to HE. 23.10.07. CO 533/31/36259.

⁶ Ibid. MacDougall’s report. 10.9.07. Note no reserve was established for the Nyika, despite efforts to mark out boundaries, until 1916. (cf. MPA (2/154) File. E. Boundary. Nyika Reserve).

⁷ Ibid. MacDougall Report.

But he was persuaded to co-operate. His efforts met with no success. By September 1907, Hollis was blaming the shortage of labour on the ill effects of the wine trade in which 1,000 men were engaged.¹ He suggested a heavy tax on 'tembo'; the additional revenue would justify an officer residing with the Giriyama and "he would...enable the Malindi planters to obtain a permanent supply of labour."² But Hollis overlooked the fact that the Giriyama economy was self-sufficient; the tribe did not need – nor did it want – to go out to work for European planters.

Hollis' concern with the labour shortage on the coast led him to appoint W.E.H. Barrett to handle the Giriyama. Barrett's task was to overcome that habitual lethargy, which New had noted amongst all the Nyika in the 1870's.

"the leading feature of the WaNyika is the indolence of the men. A young man will work till he gets a wife or two, but thence forward he thinks himself above toil, and gives himself up to roaming from hut to hut, attending maneno (palavers), toddy drinkings, feasting (when he can) and sleep. His requirements small, he is content to live upon what the labours of the women procure for him".³

In 1907, there were hopes that Barrett's appointment might achieve something. Gilkison, the P.C Seyidie, wrote privately to Hollis

"Am very glad to hear that you are going to send Barrett down here. The Giriyama labour question is going to be very 'tough nut to crack' and you want a man with 'tactful teeth' to do it".⁴

But Barrett laboured in vain. When Hayes Sadler met a group of Malindi planters in April 1908, Barrett had to warn them that he could

"hold out no hope of the Giriyama at present coming in to seek work, but the Arabs say that a few are working for them. Their own fertile soil and rich crops enable them to sell produce sufficient to raise any rupees they may want. The Giriyama cannot be reckoned as a factor in the labour problem for the next three years at least."⁵

The Governor was more optimistic.

"The best way to make the Giriyama seek work was to create amongst them a want and [he] hoped that would take the form of a liking for the Manchester goods as had been the case with the Baganda. This would give a general stimulus to trade and when the want had been created the Giriyama would have

¹ Hollis. 28.9.07. on MPA. Malindi Out 1907 (97/185). "the amount of palm wine which is consumed by the Giriyama is much in excess of what it was 10 years ago....I understand that the Arabs of Malindi and Roka and the Swahilis of Changamwe refuse to sell palm-wine to the Giriyama until they have performed a certain amount of work on their shambas."

² Ibid.

³ C. New. Op.cit. p.99. In contrast cf Hardinge 1897 Report p.10.

⁴ MPA. Demi-official Correspondence Book. 1899-1907 (99/205) Gilkison to Hollis. 5.8.07.

⁵ CO 533/43. des. 244. 19.5.08.

to work to satisfy it. Therefore no opportunity should be lost of encouraging the natives to take to cotton apparel”.¹

The Government had to face the economic decline of the Arab plantations on the Coast. There were being steadily replaced by European plantations. But these needed labour. Close at hand lay the Giriyama with a peasant economy producing grain for export and engaged in an anti-social wine trade. The interests of the peasant and the planter were in conflict. Barrett’s attempts to encourage labour met with no success. After 18 months he was posted away, his ‘tactful teeth’ somewhat blunted.

Part of the trouble stemmed from the internal weaknesses of the tribe. The concentration and discipline imposed by Masai and Galla raids had been replaced by dispersion and a growing individualism. The elders’ control of the young men declined. As early as 1896, MacDougall had noted that “the Wazee are too weak for the Giriyama youths”.² On more than one occasion the young men attacked and tortured their elders.³ The absence of external threats permitted tribal government to deteriorate into a dog fight between young and old. The young men ceased to pay their initiation fees or join the age grade clubs. Slowly the local administrators realised that the lack of discipline might be caused by tribal dispersion and the absence of European supervision. Watkins, the A.D.C Takaungu, who had seen service in South Africa, gave his views in 1909.

“The more I see of the WaGiriyama the more strongly do I feel that a white officer should be resident amongst them. Their old traditions are passing away, the authority of the Wazee is a shadow rather than a reality, with no penal sanction behind it, and the removal of the terror of the Masai has a centrifugal effect, substituting for the large fenced community a succession of small hamlets housing...perhaps one or two men and their wives. If a young man quarrels with his father he migrates, builds (sic) his own town and becomes himself a Mzee, a law unto himself. For effective control over such scattered and unstable units a tangible authority must be raised”.⁴

For the administrators, the Giriyama revealed all the vices of a segmentary society. The levers of control were weak and unreliable. There existed no strategic target, which once brought into collaboration – or smashed in defeat – rendered the tribe submissive and obedient. Lacking a strong military organisation, it was unlikely to stand in open fight. Riddled with witchcraft and suffering from the fissiparous tendencies of an expanding frontier, it was both economically self sufficient and self satisfied in its conservatism. It was not ideal material for collaboration in the supply of labour for white planters.

Increasingly Government was made aware of the need for closer administration of the WaGiriyama; a need that was not unconnected with the planters’ demands for labour. But in this matter, the views and opinions of individual officers towards the tribe, and its headmen, varied greatly. If some thought them a fine tribe and an asset, others

¹ Ibid.

² MPA Malindi in 1895-98. 18.2.98. MacDougall to the SC.

³ E.g. Protectorate Report 1897 p.11. MPA. Malindi in 1895-98, 30.6.98; MPA Secretariat Out 1909, 8.7.09. Such incidents occurred when the young men thought the elders were stopping the rains.

⁴ Mombasa District Records. MSA/S. (Takaungu Report. 1908/09. ‘Native Affairs’ xxiv).

damned them as “proud, indolent, apathetic”.¹ It was characteristic of administrators that they frequently disagreed with each other over native personalities or methods of control. (Too often, ‘the new broom’ ignored the work of his predecessors).

The arrival of Girouard in 1909 gave direction to a more active policy. He commented adversely on the decline of the ‘kambi’, the natural native authority.² Early in 1911, the P.C. Seyidie, Hinde, produced proposals for closer administration.

“The WaGiryama will, I confidentially hope, under careful administration prove a valuable asset to the Protectorate...Of fine physique they are intelligent and very prolific. At present their timidity and uncivilized state render them difficult of approach though they are the only natives of this province who cultivate for export...I am afraid spasmodic interference will only increase their timidity and want of confidence; the remedy is when...an Assistant District Commissioner can be spared, to...put him in the Giryama country to live...”³

Girouard endorsed the proposals in August 1911, “Provide in next year’s estimates”.⁴ Early in 1912, the Colonial Office was approached for additional staff. It was pointed out that the wine trade degraded the Giryama and they would not work. It was

“our duty to remedy it by stationing officers amongst these degraded people with a view to a general amelioration of their conditions”.⁵

The Colonial Office showed limited sympathy for the local labour problems.

“I trust it is not implied, “ran the reply, “that it is proposed that one of the main duties of the new officer should be to act as a labour recruiting agent.”⁶

But then, Whitehall’s reaction to planters’ protests, in December 1912, over labour shortage, were even less sympathetic. Sir John Anderson minuted with the approval of the Colonial Secretary,

“After all the country belonged to the natives and the doctrine that they must be compelled to furnish labour to enable the whiteman to develop the country is not one to which we can subscribe.”⁷

¹ Nairobi. CGL. Ms. A. Champion “The AGiryama”. (“General Characteristics” quoting J.M Pearson).

² Girouard, Confidential Report 26.5.1910. p.99. The Headman had been recruited from the Kambi, but as this grew weaker and older, so did they. Note two Giryama Proverbs on the function of elders; “an elder is a rubbish heap to carry everything to, good and evil”; and “the big cow covers her excrement with her tail” (Hollis Nyika Proverbs. JAS 1917). Under the 1897 Native Courts Regulations, unspecified Giryama chiefs and elders were given jurisdiction. In 1908, individual headmen were gazetted under the Village Headman’s Ordinance, numbering 32 for Malindi and 22 for Rabai (OG 1908 p. 303). In 1911, under the Native Tribunal Rules, 7 councils for Malindi and 7 in Rabai, were introduced (OG 1911, p.142). Thereafter both councils and headmen were frequently reorganised.

³ KFI/13. Quarterly Report. 31.3.11 (cf also MAL/1).

⁴ Ibid. HE’s minute 11.8.11.

⁵ CO 533/105/30601. HE’s des. Para 7.

⁶ Ibid. CO. to HE. 15.10.12

⁷ CO 533/114/35193. Anderson minute 6.12.12 on Memo by Guest and Leggett.

If the native wished to be idle, “until we get the ideal socialist state, he has as much right to do so as the whiteman”.¹

The Governor, subject to local pressures, was much concerned with the labour shortage. The Native Labour Commission after hearing evidence that the Giriama were administratively neglected, drew Government’s attention to the tribe.² Belfield told the Colonial Office that they were “very backward” and “disinclined to make an effort for their advancement”.³ In November 1912, he assured Legislative Council that this disinclination to work, “might be dispelled by the appointment of additional officers to administer such tribes”.⁴

Efforts to bring out Giriama labour in 1912 proved of no avail. Hollis heard rumours that they were now willing to work for the WaDuruma. “Extraordinary” he wrote, “that they will not work for a European for a fair wage”.⁵ To which Brett, the A.D.C Rabai, replied,

“it is their love of independence and aversion to any kind of discipline when performing a task....I do not believe that the WaGiriama will work under any conditions except when he and his family are compelled by hunger”.⁶

It was against a background of labour troubles, that Government finally implemented its policy of closer administration. In October 1912, A. M Champion was posted to reside with the tribe. A bachelor aged 27, Champion had been educated at Clifton and Sandhurst, and was commissioned into the army. In 1905 he went to India, but was later invalided out, and joined the Protectorate administration in 1909. He had served in Kitui under J. B Ainsworth and was a fine map maker, an amateur anthropologist, and a keen naturalist.⁷

A month after Champion’s arrival, C.W. Hobley was transferred from Ukamba to take charge of Seyidie. Now 45 years old, he had 22 years service in Africa and had been married for the past 7 years. Since 1902, he was the senior of the Provincial Commissioners, having acted both as Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner. A trained geologist, he was the territory’s Commissioner of Mines and also had a seat on Legislative Council.⁸ Girouard criticised him for his eagerness to assume additional functions and thought him more suited to a native area than the settled areas, where he was “disliked and mistrusted”.⁹ An anthropologist of considerable ability, Hobley was a keen advocate of indirect rule and the preservation of tribal authority. Soon after his arrival at Mombasa, he told the Native Labour Commission that he was opposed to any reduction in the size of reserves, since “various tribes have very

¹ Ibid.

² Native Labour Commission Report. para 22.

³ Des. 5.12.12. CO 533/109/306.

⁴ 4th Session Legislative Council. 1912. p.2.

⁵ MPA File. “Giriama Labour” (4/108). Hollis to Tate 8.9.12. (cf also Hollis’s evidence to Labour Commission p.2).

⁶ Ibid. Brett’s Memo. With Tate’s letter 16.9.12.

⁷ CO 533/32/44192. also “who was who” 1941-50; and C. Dundas “African Cross roads” passim.

⁸ Cf C.Hobley “From Chartered Company to Crown Colony” passim; also “Who was Who”.

⁹ Girouard. Secret. Des. 26.5.10 (CO 533/74/18382) pp. 8,11,12. But the LEA “13.7.12. p.42” regretted Hobley’s departure. Note also Hayes Sadler’s view of Hobley in 1906; though able and energetic he ought not to have uncontrolled responsibility (CO 533/17/39708; 7.10.06).

definite rights to certain areas”.¹ As for the Giriama, the tribe was enormously wealthy. Its great problem was the decline in tribal authority. The elders had complained to him of the disobedience of the young men.

Now Hobley took charge of Seyidie a few weeks after the arrival of the new Governor, Belfield. Mombasa was a far cry from Nairobi, and as the senior administrative officer, Hobley had reason to expect a free hand in the province, of which he was to remain in charge for the next 7 years.² Though a taste for deep sea fishing brought Belfield frequently to the Coast, he appears to have allowed Hobley ample initiative.

Champion in Giriama had the task of introducing closer administration, but this was made more difficult by Government’s labour policy and his own ill health. He had to undertake the collection of tax and preach the gospel of labour before he had won the confidence of the tribe.³ Hostility against him began to build up, especially as he did not leave after tax was paid. A doctor who visited him in September 1913 noted the effect of hostility and illness.

“The natives for the most part are unfriendly to Government and do their utmost to refuse to carry out any order. Living quite alone under such conditions is a severe strain on a man so energetic and sensitive as this officer.”⁴

But Champion, when fit, was extremely active. Most of his time was spent on safari operating from two permanent camps at Vitengeni and Mwangea. He studied the local customs and language, collected tax, stimulated labour, reorganised the native authorities and the boundaries of locations,⁵ and checked ivory smuggling. During his first year in Giriama he had to support him a force of one police corporal and four constables. Too much depended on bluff.⁶ In the long run this weakness proved fatal, for it was insufficient to compel early acquiescence. By October 1913, Belfield

¹ Native Labour Commission. Witness 62. On the question of Giriama administration and the labour issue, cf also evidence of Hollis, Jones, Maclean, MacDougall, and Ali bin Salim. In fact the coast demands for labour were not very great. The estimate for all plantations, and Government, were 7365 in 1913 rising to a forecast of 11,795 in 1917. (Native Labour Commission p.311).

² The CO in 1914 considered Hobley and Ainsworth as the two outstanding administrators in the Protectorate. But had Belfield – and Ainsworth’s – scheme for dual administration come into operation, Hobley was to have been transferred to another colony, on promotion. (vide CO 533/132/3964 (minutes) and CO 533/140/40352).

³ Vide MPA “Giriama Labour” 10.12.12. The labour inspection Officer (J.M. Pearson to PC) urging care and caution with the Giriama. NB. Champion was “encouraging” labour by “bluff”, having only one constable with him (vide p.1. Report 28.10.13. in KFI/13).

⁴ MPA “Health of Mr. Champion” (9/351) 5.9.13. Dr. Chavallier.

⁵ Champion found on his arrival 28 ill defined locations. He reduced these (and the numbers of headmen) to 15. Each location then acquired a Native Council and Champion tried, not always successfully, to avoid having headmen as Presidents of Councils. (vide Report October 1912- May 1913 in KFI/13). But cf EAP Report 1911-12. Nyika Council’s presidents, “are invariably headmen of tribal standing recognised by their own people as their representatives”. (p.51).

⁶ Cf Hobley 29.7.13 p.5 (KFI/11). “I am not generally in favour of civil officers travelling with large escorts but when a new administration is being confirmed we ought to show our strength more”. Cf also Lobb’s memo on a “parade of strength” (CO 533/43/15165. 6.3.09).

could still report that the Giriama were, “so little in touch with the administration and so adverse to taking up any form of work.”¹

There was a fundamental conflict in the twin aims of restoring tribal authority and turning out labour for plantations. West Coast experience suggested that indirect rule functioned best with a peasant economy. Unpopular demands for labour would overtax a weak authority; labour outside the reserve was a detribalising force. But energetic officials did not see the conflict in these terms.

In December 1912, Hobley called for suggestions for a future policy for the Giriama. He wished to establish a reserve with properly constituted councils and legislation. Champion submitted his views in early 1913. Hobley’s immediate concern was whether the proposed councils would meet “with the support of the people themselves”.² Tate, D.C. Malindi, and Champion’s immediate superior, replied.

“Mr Champion assures me that the recognition of the Presidents and their Councils...will meet with the support of the people of these locations, the Councils, of course, being already in existence and merely requiring recognition to give them the necessary powers under the Native Tribunal Rules.”³

In May 1913, Champion submitted a comprehensive report on the Giriama. He again discussed the councils and the headmen (some 20 had been recognised). He hoped to increase the amount of tax collected and crush the illegal ivory trade. The elders were well disposed but the tribe was dominated by an overwhelming fear of witchcraft. There was a need to win their confidence by some practical measure. The issue of cheap maize seed and free cotton seed had proved a failure in the past. Tax in kind (either in rubber or cotton) would be more popular than cash payments. He drew attention to the possibilities of irrigation from the Sabaki and the need for good roads. Aware of local hostility, he also recommended,

“that at present Government drop their labour policy with regards to the WaGiriama. The MGiriama will never be of much use as a labourer; he is too conservative and too independent. Increased taxation would only throw more work onto the already heavily laden shoulders of the women”.⁴

Shortly afterwards, Hobley toured Giriama with Champion and observed signs of discontent.

“I regret to say that at the present there is evidence that all sections resent to a considerable extent the advent of active administration.”⁵

¹ Des. 31.10.13. CO 533/123/28309. (H.E. rejected any hopes of using Giriama labour for Jubaland development).

² MPA “Giriama District. Administration cf (6/425). Hobley 23.4.13. (cf also *ibid.* 13.12.12. onwards for discussions concerning native authorities).

³ *Ibid.* Tate to Hobley. 11.6.13.

⁴ Champion. Oct 1912-May 1913 Report. p.4. KFI/13. cf also his comments to the 1914 “Coconut Commission”. 7.4.14. (p.93-95 Appendix VII to the Report).

⁵ KFL/13. Hobley (July 1913). P.2. The trouble was Champion would not go away after collecting the tax; “rumours that many natives had bound themselves to refuse to pay tax to me personally as...no European has ever had it for two years”. (1912-13. Report. p.5). cf also remarks of Belfield at Nakuru reported in LEA. 14.2.14. p.9.

Opposition was coming into the open: refusals to sell food for safaris, or clear roads, or assemble for barazas. There had been an attempt to poison one interpreter.¹ Tribal retainers and hut counters met with antagonism or were assaulted. The tribe seemed ignorant of the power of Government. When tax was due they scrambled to escape, leaving only women behind.

“The simplest way would be to authorise the Assistant District Commissioner to burn a village found deserted”.²

Hobley felt the need for sterner measures, if labour was to be forthcoming. He now advocated a policy- not of increased taxation – but of concentration; restricting access north of the Sabaki. Improved water supplies in the south would help. But the whole district lagged seven years behind an up country reserve and its progress was tied to the development of the coast.

Matters did not mend. By mid-August 1913, Champion was faced with open disobedience; a refusal to pay tax or send young men to work. When he seized 9 men for work on camp buildings, a group of warriors rushed his camp and released some of them. In the resulting scuffle one man – a relative of Chief Ngonyo – was killed. Skene, the D.C Malindi, came out but reported the situation was well in hand. The people were not hostile and the elders attended his baraza. Champion, so they said, had upset the equanimity of the young men. Naturally, work was distasteful. Tax was being collected irrespective of the harvest. Champion interfered with the ivory trade. The elders stated that they would fine the young men and hand over the ringleaders. Skene felt this a worthwhile test for native authority, though Hobley feared prevarication. But the elders kept their word, handing over 60 goats and two ringleaders. The tax was also promptly paid.³

There was a short pause whilst both sides took stock. Early in October 1913, Skene wrote to advocate a tougher policy. The Giriama did not believe Government really wanted them to work, else why had it abolished slavery. “At present their maize crops supply them with all the money they want”.⁴ Government’s bluff had been called.

“It is an open boast among the young men that, although the force of arms has been felt in Kikuyu and Ukamba yet Giriama has always been exempt and will remain so”.⁵

The answer was simple.

¹ After ivory had been confiscated from a council. (KFL/13). Champion’s report 28.10.13. p.4. Note also the comment of the Coconut Commission (1914) p.4-5, that illicit ivory trading flourished during droughts, since maize was not available for tembo trading.

² KFL/13. Hobley (July 1913) p.3.

³ MPA (5/336 Vol I). “Giriama Rising” correspondence 17.8.13. cf also File 5/336 (1913). 16.8.13. et. seq.

⁴ MPA. PC’s Library. Vol. 317. Ms. “The WaGiriama”. Copy of letter, Skene to PC. 1.10.13.

⁵ Ibid.

“If the Government insists on their working, circumstances must be created which will necessitate their working. Such circumstances, can, in my humble opinion, be brought about by concentrating the tribe in a smaller area.”¹

This could be achieved by removal of the Giriama from the north of the Sabaki.

“Not only would such a measure facilitate administration to an extraordinary degree and bring about the rapid prosperity of the tribe, but it would render available large areas of the Sabaki valley...which could be made to return a rich harvest”.²

Later in the same month, Champion put in another report. The native authority was functioning after a fashion, but labour was not forthcoming. The Giriama were indifferent to Government, tolerating an officer so long as he moved on. They organised no tribal dances for him, as was the fashion in Ukamba or Kikuyu. The fear of magic was the great curse. On occasions there was open insolence. The ‘kambi’, nearing the end of its life was weak. There was still opposition to clearing tracks and reorganising locations. Indifference was turning to defiance. The tribal capital, Kaya Fungo, was a “hotbed of sedition and dilapidated refuse heap”.³ The huts built for the new councils were falling into decay. Natives avoided the Government camp at Mwangea.

Behind this growing unrest were two persons: a leading Kambi elder, Wanji wa Ngoro, and a witchdoctress Nakatilili wa Menza. They had bound the elders and the women by the ‘Fisi’ and the ‘sheshushe’ oaths to oppose Government and cursed all who went to Government for aid. Champion moved swiftly to arrest the two ringleaders and then asked for their deportation. He also wanted the elders disciplined and Kaya Fungo destroyed. The tribe, having too much land, must be concentrated south of the Sabaki as a punishment. Their land north of the Sabaki should be handed over for white settlement. He wanted authority to destroy the huts of tax defaulters. People still ran away when he tried to distribute free cotton or maize seed. It was now necessary for Government to assert its authority.⁴

The truth was that Champion had failed to find the right levers of control in tribal Government. He himself later admitted this. Most of the paid headmen had little standing in the tribe. Worse still, they lacked the strong personality, such as Kinanjui of the Kikuyu had possessed, which provided effective leadership. Yet had Champion’s choice been wiser, it is doubtful if he would have been more successful. The Tribal authorities were by nature weak and had become the more ineffective through migration and neglect. The ‘Kambi’ weakened by old age and decreasing numbers, was nearing the end of its period of rule.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ KFI/13. Champion Report. 28.10.13. p.8.

⁴ MPA. “Giriama Rising”. Vol I. Champion. 1.12.13, with statements of elders. For similar instances of women playing an active role in demonstrations of the hysteria outbreak in Machakos in 1911 (vide CO 533/101/2788). Note also Miss Perham’s account of the Aba troubles in Nigeria in the 1920’s (“Native Administration in Nigeria”. Chp 13 and 14).

Hobley had received reports from several sources of impending trouble,¹ and decided to investigate. Taking with him a police escort, he toured Giriyama between the 6th and 16th November. He reported that he had found the elders perturbed, and one senior elder of Kaya Fungo, Pembe, openly hostile. They admitted taking the oath and explained that its purpose was to compel the new councils to pay over their fees to the traditional elders. The women were upset that the young men must work. All agreed to remove the oaths; this was done in Hobley's presence. The elders also consented to remove the 'kaya' to another site, after the blessing of certain elders had been obtained. Once cleansed of their oaths, they blamed Pembe, Wanji, and Makatilili, for stirring up trouble. Hobley in reporting these events made specific proposals. The tribe were to pay a fine of 1500 rupees (the cost of his patrol). 25 additional Police must be stationed in the area and Wanji and Makatilili must be deported. Finally, the Giriyama must be restricted to an area south of the Sabaki.

“Full value can only be got out of the Sabaki valley by irrigation works carried out by European capital and...I propose to submit a district boundary restricting native occupation of the north bank of the river”.²

Belfield was in Mombasa. Hobley brought some of the Giriyama elders before him. On the 22nd November, the Governor minuted his decision, endorsing all of Hobley's proposals; the only sign of any initiative on his part in Giriyama affairs since his Legislative Council speech, a year earlier.³

On the 4th December 1913, the D.C. Malindi, after reading Hobley's report, commented that it was the first indication that his own earlier suggestions “with regard to removing the Giriyama from the North of the Sabaki” had “received your assent”.⁴ He proposed that the move take place in July or August, adding that he had warned the people of Government's intentions and that some were already moving. When he had taxed Chief Ngonyo with disloyalty, the old man had stressed his past services to Government. Skene estimated that north of the Sabaki there were 5423 huts and 14,778 people.

In forwarding the Governor's instructions on the 14th January, Hobley informed the D.C. Malindi that the move was to commence after the harvest. Over the question of a new site for the Kaya, he revealed his abiding faith in native institutions.

“It will be necessary to obtain the acquiescence of the leading representatives of each of the Giriyama clans”.⁵

¹ MPA. “Giriyama Rising” Vol. I. Hobley to DC Malindi 29.10.13. cf also Memo of information from Rev. Harris of CMS. 29.10.13. Information from the ADC Takaungu's clerk, Price (Logan to PC 31.10.13, 4.11.13). also undated letter from the Mudir of Mtwapa.

² Ibid. Report to HE. 19.11.13. p.14. No doubt the righteousness of his cause led Hobley to add, “the progress of 60,000 souls hinges on our efforts”.

³ Ibid. HE's Minute of 22.11.13. (forwarded by CS. 2.1.14). No report of this was made to the CO, save indirectly through intelligence Reports.

⁴ MPA. File. “E. Boundaries. Nyika Reserve”. (2/154). 4.12.13. DC Malindi to PC.

⁵ MPA. “Giriyama Rising”. Vol. I. PC to DC. 14.1.14. Hobley's confidence in the effectiveness of the Kambi is reflected in the comments of the Coconut Commission Report (p.4-5), (1914) of which he was the chairman.

But at the same time he drew up plans for a punitive expedition in case of future trouble.

Champion had been transferred temporarily to Rabai, his place in Giriyama being taken by J.M Pearson.¹ Pearson asked whether the move was intended as a punitive measure, for he doubted whether the tribe would connect it with their recent misconduct. But he was more concerned with the underlying unrest and asked for money to employ a good Arab informer.

“In my own mind there is considerable doubt as to whether the Giriyama elders ventured to tell you all the causes of the recent disquiet.”²

Pearson wished to assuage the animosity that remained. This merely angered Hobley who felt that the use of an Arab informer was an admission of weakness. It was the duty of A.D.Cs to influence the elders and win the confidence of the people, as they did in Ukamba.

By February 1914, Skene in Malindi reported that the Giriyama knew of the impending move and that a part of the fine of 1500 rupees had been paid. The coconut tress north of the Sabaki were being counted, and if compensation were paid for these, it should not exceed 20,000 rupees. He made a special plea for Ngonyo, who was entitled to compensation for anything he could not move from Marafa. The new Kaya site was to be discussed at a meeting of clan heads. As for the oath of loyalty, by custom it could not be taken until after the harvest.

On the 21st February, Hobley again visited Malindi to remind the elders that the balance of the fine was still outstanding. To add point to his remarks, a police patrol toured the area north of the Sabaki, with the new D.C. H. R. Montgomery. The fine was quickly paid. In March, in the presence of Montgomery and his A.D.C. the elders swore an oath of loyalty to Government.³

A number of problems connected with the move were still unsolved. Ngonyo bitterly complained that the WaSanye near Marafa owed him 50 ‘rialles’ and one cow, and that he had purchased land round Marafa from them.⁴ All the elders were anxious over compensation for the coconut trees. The D.C. Malindi recommended a payment of 14,432 rupees, which Hobley reduced to 8,780 rupees, when reporting to the Chief Secretary.⁵ There was also the proposal for a new and separate Nyika district. This

¹ Pearson joined the administration in 1909 and was invalided out in 1920. Educated at Harrow and Oxford, he had tried for the ICS, but failed. He then went into a Solicitor’s Office for a while. He suffered from a slight stammer and general ill health. He was Colonel Seely’s cousin. During 1911-12, he had been a Labour Inspection Officer in Ukamba and Mombasa. (MPA Secretariat Out 1910, 27.7.10; OG 1911-12; CO 429/35/38183).

² MPA “Giriyama Rising” Vol. I. 9.12.13.

³ Ibid. Report 27.2.14; 19.3.14; also Library Vol. 317. pp. 160.162 (Report 9.6.14). NB: No one seems to have bothered to report the Fine to the CO. (under the provisions of the Collective Punishments Ordinance).

⁴ “Rialle” – Maria Theresa dollar, still used by the WaNyika for bride price payments. Cf also Girouard’s Confidential Report 1910, p. 105; when discussing Kikuyu land claims, noted Giriyama payments to WaSanye, “but they do not claim to have purchased the land, they have purchased peace”.

⁵ MPA “Giriyama Rising” Vol. I. 25.3.14. Vol. II. 1.4.14. (PC to CS).

was to be formed from parts of Mombasa and Malindi districts; but it did not come into existence until August 1914.

In April 1914, Hobley reported to the Chief Secretary that all was in hand for the move. The clans north of the Sabaki would move individually to their old 'lalo'¹, in the south. Though he did not support suggestions for tax exemption, he pressed for improved water supplies. The expenditure "cannot fail to be amply repaid"² since in the north there were "some 100,000 acres of good land for eventual alienation to planters".³

At this point, the Protectorate Government consulted the Colonial Office. On the 4th May 1914, the Governor wrote to explain the necessity for closer control of the tribe. In the past they had evaded effective administration, "they have consistently countered all efforts to induce them to work".⁴ He estimated that 5000 people were living in areas outside their "traditional tribal locations, and of which they must not be permitted to remain in occupation".⁵ It was "an extensive area of land which must be rendered available for white cultivation".⁶ The land in the south was ample for the tribe's needs; the only problem was the payment of compensation for the coconut trees. He anticipated that once administration gained control "the tribe will become an asset of much potential value to Coast development".⁷ On the 4th June 1914, without hesitation, the Colonial Office telegraphed its approval and followed this with a despatch agreeing to the expenditure of £620 on compensation. These papers were passed on to the P.C. Seyidie in mid-July.⁸

The question of the Kaya remained unsettled. In April, the elders informed the A.D.C. Giryama that only certain elders could sanctify the new site and they were not available. Despite an extensive search, they could not be traced. By May 1914, the Mambrui traders were petitioning Government against the move, as it would ruin their grain trade. And once again Champion, who was touring in Malindi district, reported opposition to labour.

The new A.D.C. Giryama, Hazzlerigg, was a newly arrived cadet,⁹ and a former army officer. Despite his reminders, the elders did nothing towards moving the Kaya, save prevaricate. On the 3rd July, Hazzlerigg warned them that the old Kaya must be closed within a month, or it would be destroyed. He then reported his action and asked for official backing to stop any evasion (and preserve his prestige). C.S.

¹ 'lalo'. The smallest area of Giryama tribal administration – a sublocation with its own group of elders, meeting place, and sacred "Mwanza" drum (cf 1897 Protectorate Report p.10).

² MPA "Giryama Rising" Vol. II. 1.4.14. PC to CS.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. copy des. 420. 4.5.14. HE to CO. (forwarded by C.S. 7.5.14). NB: this was the first direct information the CO had received concerning the plans for the Giryama.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. 5.6.14. CS to Hobley (CO telegram of 4.6.14. enclosed). Also C.S. to Hobley 1.7.14 forwarding des. 545 of 5.6.14. from the CO. The CO had no difficulty in reaching their decision (vide minutes on CO 533/136/19711).

⁹ Cf Patronage. CO 429/56/39681.

Hemsted – acting as P.C in Hobley's absence¹ - consulted the Chief Secretary and then approved. Demolition day was fixed for the 4th August 1914.

Early in July, Champion warned Montgomery, the D.C. Malindi, that the Giriyama north of the Sabaki were banding together to resist the move. Montgomery did not take the threat seriously since he expected no trouble before August or September. Two years earlier, he had himself raised the false alarm of a Sotik rising, for which he had been reprimanded.² He was unlikely to make a similar mistake with the Giriyama. But Champion repeated his warning. By early August, Montgomery had to admit that north of the river there was chaos, though he did not regard the building of new huts there as significant. Given a free hand, he was convinced he could turn the Giriyama out of the area with the police at his disposal. On the 3rd August, Montgomery moved out against Kaya Fungo, which was thoroughly slighted, the great baobab trees that stood there being smashed with guncotton charges.³

The situation was now tense, but there were no open hostilities. Trouble, when it came, was the result of an unfortunate error. The outbreak of War brought with it an urgent demand for a thousand porters. Hemsted telegraphed the D.C. Malindi informing him of the need. Now the new Nyika District had just come into existence, but its first D.C. did not reach his headquarters at Rabai until the 15th August. Montgomery, at Malindi, forwarded Hemsted's telegram by mistake to Champion, who had again taken charge of Giriyama.⁴ Champion received the telegram on the 15th August and on the 16th, wrote to his new D.C., Charles Dundas, at Rabai. He explained his intentions of recruiting some porters from one headman, who had promised labour in the past. But his immediate need was porters for his own safari. Police were sent out to round up some men, only to be fired upon. Champion added a hasty footnote that the natives were taking to the bush.

“This may be said to settle the matter of voluntary labour from the WaGiriyama; please instruct me how to proceed.”⁵

Dundas was some forty miles to the south and did not get Champion's note until the 19th August. He replied at once to

“Request that you use no such force as in your opinion may be calculated to provoke open resistance. The attitude of the natives being such as you describe, your ineffectual orders for labour only tend to diminish your authority, and the standing of the Government, and under no circumstances is it desirable that your orders should be defied by armed resistance.”⁶

¹ Hobley departed on leave on 1st June 1914 (O.G. 1914. p.630 & 656). For destruction of the Kaya. MPA “Giriyama Rising” Vol II; 4.7.14. (ADC Giriyama); 11.7.14 (Ag. PC to CS) 16.7.14. (CS to PC).

² Vide CO 533/116/6355. des. 23.1.13. cf also MPA Giriyama Rising Vol. III. HRM to PC. Ms. 5.8.14.

³ KFI/12. Rabai Political Record book. p.46-48. cf also MPA Library Vol 317. It was embarrassing that both Wanji and Makatilili managed to escape from Kisii and return to Giriyama, where they were in early August, till re-arrested (cf Montgomery to PC. 5.8.14. Giriyama Rising Vol. III).

⁴ Hemsted to C.S 20.8.14. (MP. Giriyama Rising Vol. III). “it was never intended to recruit labour in the Giriyama District”.

⁵ MPA “Giriyama Rising”. Vol. III. 16.8.14.

⁶ Ibid. Dundas. 19.8.14.

Such advice was too late. Champion, desperate for lack of porters, “was forced to obtain the few required by means I have never resorted to before”,¹ and then marched on Vitengeni. But he could recruit no men and the elders kept out of the way. On the 17th, he sent out police to round up men, but they were attacked. Champion – whose total force numbered 19 police – went to their support. On his return, the party was again attacked and one constable killed. A short pause ensued until the 19th August, when three headmen sought refuge at his camp. Soon afterwards, the camp was surrounded by a crowd of hostile WaGiryama. Champion, with some ten elders, went out to try to pacify the mob. But they only shouted that they wanted no Government headmen. On the following day, Champion and his party retired to Mwangea hill. No sooner had he left Vitengeni than his old camp was set on fire, as was the C.M.S. Mission station nearby. On the 22nd August the Mwangea camp was attacked and three huts burnt, though the attack itself was beaten off. The following day Hazzlerigg broke through with ten police from Malindi.²

Dundas at Rabai was not idle. On the 19th August, he warned Hemsted that it was hopeless to try to raise a thousand porters, and that he for one was unwilling to recommend that “a general disturbance should be risked”.³ Hemsted now decided that Champion must withdraw from Giryama, but Dundas appealed against such a step as fatal to prestige. Without waiting for a reply, he left, on the 23rd August, with 35 Police to relieve Mwangea. On the following day he joined Champion.

Operations were hampered by a divergence of policies. The split lay between the ‘hawks’ and the ‘doves’. Dundas, an ardent ‘hawk’, demanded the punishment of the tribe. The Military had also organised an expedition and were ready to commence hostilities on the 24th with one company of K.A.R. Their objective was to crush all resistance, to burn huts (but not crops), drive the Giryama south of the Sabaki, and to try to capture the leading elders and a thousand porters.⁴

The ‘doves’ were not silent. On the 28th August, Hemsted sent Kenneth MacDougall, now chairman of the Coast Arbitration Board, to contact the Giryama and negotiate peace. He also informed Dundas that he was not superseding him. To Dundas, such an arrangement was objectionable. Either he, or another, put pressure on Hemsted, for no sooner had MacDougall sent out his Arab emissaries than Hemsted stopped the negotiations. MacDougall was upset.

“Now 9.30 pm you tell me hostilities are to be continued – well needless to say, it is impossible to make a peaceful settlement of the troubles so long as troops are kept in the country – the situation is extremely embarrassing to Government....surely there must be a misunderstanding somewhere”.⁵

The failure of the ‘doves’ delighted Charles Dundas. In a personal note to Hemsted he made his own views quite clear. MacDougall might have great influence over the Giryama, but MacDougall did not have to administer the District.

¹ Ibid. Champion. 17.8.14.

² Ibid. undated. Summary of Incidents. 15.8.14 -24.8.14. (A.M Champion).

³ Ibid. Dundas to PC. 19.8.14.

⁴ Ibid. correspondence 21.8.14-31.8.14. (The local Military commander, acting without authority, cancelled Hemsted’s order for evacuation much to the latter’s annoyance).

⁵ Ibid. MacDougall 28.8.14. (Montgomery also protested).

“I am convinced that had there been less talking earlier the rising would not have happened...all we have gained by extreme leniency is that the WaGiryama have come to think we are afraid....I feel therefore that the only possible policy lies in their suffering a severe hammering which will silence them once and for all”.¹

Dundas was an administrative officer with six years’ of service. Aged 30, he had been educated, like his elder brother, in Norway and Germany. He had then worked as a clerk in the Elder Dempster Shipping Company Office in Hamburg.² Dundas had previously served in Ukamba under Hobley, whom he thought “a most knowledgeable and versatile man, and deeply interested in the natives”.³ Encouraged by Hobley, he had become a keen anthropologist. He was also a disciple of J.B. Ainsworth whom he admired for his “profound understanding of natives, but more by instinct than by knowledge”.⁴ Dundas was essentially a native administrator.⁵ His attitude was that of the old fashioned schoolmaster, who spared not the rod. The first principle must be obedience; a lesson taught, if needs be, by a “severe hammering”.

The military campaign against the Giryama was brief owing to the threat from German East Africa. Two columns of K.A.R. moved through the district burning villages and killing 42 Giryama. There was only one major clash when a thousand warriors attacked a column near Jilore, but were brushed aside. Rumours, however, continued to circulate. Fathili bin Omar, a former Mudir of Arabuko,⁶ reported that the Giryama had sworn to kill Champion and all Government headmen. The rising was credited to the intrigues of German agents, especially slaves of the late Sheikh Mbaruk of Gasi. Fears were expressed that the WaKamba, or Galla or Somali, might join the rebels.⁷ Incidents and murders continued to occur and military operations had to be resumed. Montgomery and Dundas undertook a joint patrol in mid-September, in which 32 villages were destroyed and 11 Giryama killed. By September, a number of ‘friendlies’ began to come forward. Two days later, Fathili bin Omar reported the tribe were tired of war. Five days later, there were reports of Ngonyo suing for peace. On the 18th September, Hemsted asked Dundas and Montgomery to suggest peace terms. They recommended the evacuation of the Trans-Sabaki area, a fine of £9,000, the surrender of all headmen, and the production of a thousand porters. With minor amendments Hemsted supported these proposals, which were accepted by Government, on the 6th October. But the Governor insisted, against the advice of the field officers, that no compensation would now be paid for the coconut trees.⁸

¹ Ibid. Dundas to Hemsted. 4.9.14.

² Cf. C. Dundas “African Crossroads” passim. Also Patronage file CO 429/27/16636.

³ Dundas op.cit., p.16.

⁴ Ibid. p.17-18.

⁵ Dundas later transferred to Tanganika to avoid settler politics. Vide Dundas, op.cit. p.115.

⁶ Vide MPA “Giryama Rising” Vol. III. DC Malindi 28.8.14. Fathili enjoyed being ‘with it’ – cf his later offer to negotiate peace with the Auliham rebels (vide MPA 46/1073. “Fathili bin Omar”). Also his activities in connection with the Malindi Commission of Inquiry.

⁷ Ibid. Dundas 29.8.14. For German influence cf ADC Rabai 15.10.14 (“File “Giryama Rising”).

NB. Two of Mbaruk’s sons fought with the Germans (MPA file 13/1/1). So far as the CO was concerned, the Rising was merely one aspect of the German campaign (CO 533/140/40269).

⁸ MPA. “Giryama Rising”. Vol III. CS to PC. 6.10.14. NB: No one thought to inform the CO of the fine for months.

Meantime, the K.A.R. were still in the field. Between the 24th and 17th September, patrols burnt another hundred villages and killed more Giryama. By the end of September, the commanding officer reported that the north bank was clear of inhabitants and that 1000 sheep and goats had been seized and 22 Giryama killed.

On the 4th October, the peace terms were announced and the tribe was given ten days to comply with them. But the K.A.R. continued their operations. Another 10 Giryama were killed. On the 14th October, the K.A.R. paused for three days. Signs were not wanting that the tribe had had enough. By the 19th October, 471 bows had been surrendered; at the end of the month the total had reached 900. By mid-October 3000 sheep and goats had been handed in towards the payment of the fine.¹ But the Giryama stubbornly refused to produce any porters. Dundas felt sufficiently encouraged to recommend a cessation of hostilities. Shortly afterwards he was transferred and his place taken by Francis Traill. At the same time Champion was seconded to a column operating from Lamu.

Before these two officers left, they placed on record their views on the causes of the uprising. Dundas had no doubts.

“the evacuation of the north bank of the Sabaki river and the destruction of the Kaya were contributory to the dissatisfaction of the tribe, no less a cause for contention was the Labour question, but as a matter of fact, the Government itself was in their eyes the root of evil”.²

He felt some sympathy for the Giryama.

“In fairness to the tribe I cannot refrain from adding that, as with other tribes, the possibility of a rising would have been very much lessened were the methods of Government different. By over-careful championing of the rights and liberties of each one and taking no trouble to keep before their eyes the strength of Government, we deliberately delude the tribe into fallacious ideas which they have to pay dearly for and by limiting the power of the Chiefs we fail to make use of the aid the tribe can give us”.³

But Champion’s views reflected a realisation that all was not well with the native administration,

“the most important [point] in my opinion is the fact that many, in fact most of the Government headmen are not the traditional heads of the people...their appointment never met with the approval of the real heads except as far as the collection of taxes was concerned”.⁴

For this reason, it was wrong to punish the headmen, even Ngonyo, whom Champion considered had neither encouraged nor consented to the rebellion. In every location, there was an anti-government party, but many of the tribe were not involved in the

¹ The goats were taken at a fixed valuation of 3 rupees a head.

² MPA “Giryama Rising”. Vol. III. Dundas 31.10.14. (p.2).

³ Ibid. p.3.

⁴ Ibid. Champion’s report (attached to Dundas. 31.10.14). p.1.

revolt and were now in hiding in the bush. Government had tried to rush through changes before the tribe was ready; to demand labour before the ground work of administration was laid. The tribe was ignorant of the power of Government.

“We have been trying to administer the tribe as if it were in a proclaimed reserve with all the accompanying legislation”.¹

The new D.C. Nyika, Francis Traill, was a bachelor with 16 years’ administrative service, and he had been a D.C. for the past 11 years.² When he had earlier served at Malindi in 1909, he had thought highly of the Giryama: “no administrative officer could wish for a more amenable or better behaved tribe”.³ Times had changed. Traill found the military problem no nearer solution. The tribe refused to observe the peace terms. The operations of the past months had so dispersed the tribe, that organised contact with them, for peace or for war, was impossible. So operations continued. In the north a column captured Chief Ngonyo. Another column worked along the banks of the Sabaki for 10 days and destroyed 120 deserted villages. But during this whole period it saw only ten Giryama, of whom 3 were shot and 4 captured.

At the end of November, Hobley returned from home leave to take charge of the province. Traill wrote to warn him that he could not collect tax as well as the fine. As for labour, the tribe had an absolute prejudice against it. By early December, it seemed that an impasse had been reached. Government now despatched Hemsted with a military staff officer to tour the area and make new proposals. Traill could only advocate a blockade on all trade goods and the prohibition of native liquor. As for labour, it was pointless to press the issue for the time being; famine might force the Giryama out to work.⁴

Champion, the officer with the greatest experience of the Giryama, added his views.

“After two years’ trial it must be admitted that we have failed by peaceful means to induce the WaGiryama to enter the labour market.”⁵

Labour had never been part of the young men’s tribal duties: Champion came to the conclusion that with the Giryama, indirect rule hindered progress.

“whatever the case with other tribes...these civilizing methods are not best fostered by a careful preservation of native law and custom and rule through existing or supposed native institutions.”⁶

The answer must be direct administration with headmen recruited, if necessary, from other tribes. For

“the preservation of native laws and customs operates directly against the production of natural (i.e. not forced) labour supply”.¹

¹ Ibid. p. 4.

² Cf. CO 533/70/13196. for his background.

³ Kilifi Records. MAL/1. Report 1910/11 (unpaged).

⁴ MPA Giryama Rising. Vo. III. Traill to PC; 19.11.14; 24.11.14.

⁵ Ibid. Champion Memo. (undated but with December correspondence) p.1.

⁶ Ibid. p.9.

Champion now appreciated that indirect rule was proving a poor bedfellow for European plantation economy.

By mid-December 1914, barely a third of the fine had been paid. Of the thousand porters, 141 had been produced, but of these 100 had deserted. On the 21st December Hemsted submitted his report.² He recommended that the first need was to concentrate the tribe without too much concern for the observation of the peace terms. Both K.A.R. and Police were available for the task; the K.A.R. could be replaced, after a fortnight, by additional police. Until the tribe was concentrated, the payment of the fine would fall almost entirely on the peaceful sections. No crops had been planted since October and famine seemed certain. The staff officer's report, which was attached, estimated that the Giryama had lost 150 killed and 5,000 huts destroyed during the operations. Hobley forwarded the reports with his own comments on Christmas Day 1914. Until the internal organisation of the tribe again functioned, there was no hope of labour. "We have," he lamented, "no machinery for reaching the individual".³ The one achievement had been the evacuation of the north bank, which, might be rendered permanent by the destruction of all palm trees.

Events, however, took an unexpected course. Operations in the latter half of December proved more successful. Another 23 Giryama were killed and some 3000 sheep and goats captured. The elders came in to sue for peace, and the back of the revolt was broken. During the first three months of 1915, the bulk of the fine and half the labour required were produced. By early 1915 the rising was over. Mopping up operations had to be undertaken from time to time. In August 1915, Traill again visited the north bank and destroyed another 20 villages, removing 67 Giryama, who had re-settled on the north bank. But the rising had turned the tribe, never noted for cohesion, into a leaderless swarm of ants. Perhaps two thirds of the huts in the District had been destroyed. Food was scarce, and much of the area was in a "state of chaos".⁴

Traill's strong rule was effective. The fine was paid off and labour came in without much trouble. By September 1915, some 1383 men had been recruited for the Carrier Corps, of whom 515 were unfit or deserted. But these were quickly replaced by fresh recruits.⁵

The native administration remained unsatisfactory. In May 1915, Ngonyo and other elders declared themselves willing to collaborate with Government. Traill hoped that they would help to find labour. But Ngonyo proved a broken reed, and was re-arrested and placed once more under restriction.⁶ Worse still, the elders of the former Kaya Fungo, elected a totally useless headman. Traill protested that so long as the

¹ Ibid. p.9. Note Champion went on home leave early in 1915, and there rejoined the army, seeing service on the Western front.

² MPA "Giryama Rising". Vol. IV. 21.12.14.

³ Ibid. Hobley 25.12.14.

⁴ Ibid. Traill to PC. 16.3.15.

⁵ Map "Giryama Affairs" (16/38). Traill 21.9.15. (cf also Traill's reports on "Giryama Rising" Vol. IV. 14.1.15-3.4.15). For Traill's tough methods cf. MPA (19/97) "Deportation of Makaziro". Military demands for Giryama labour were met in later year; 1163 porters in 1916/17; 2300 in 1917/18 (vide Provincial Annual Reports).

⁶ Ibid. "Giryama Affairs". 4.5.15. cf also Traill's H/O Report 13.11.15 on MPA 20/136.

tribe were allowed to elect their headmen, little could be expected of such men.¹ Hobley, deeply committed to indirect rule, warned against officers trying to dictate in such matters.

“We want the best man but at the same time must have men who are acceptable to the people by reason of their position in the tribe, their means, and so forth”.²

Too often, past choices had been haphazard; occasionally aliens had been appointed on the advice of an interpreter. Officers must check the backgrounds of all candidates; consult the elders, hold barazas to hear objections, and make recommendations to the P.C., who would then made the final choice.

“I consider it is essential to co-operate with the people and influence their choice in the right direction.”³

Both the Governor and the Colonial Office were satisfied with the progress made. In a minute of August 1915, Belfield commented that operations appeared to have borne fruit, whilst the Colonial Office expressed its satisfaction at their success, and agreed to the fine being used for the improvements in the reserve.⁴

By October 1915, Traill could report that the peace terms were being observed. The one black spot was that hut tax was badly in arrears. With many huts destroyed and a total decline in cultivation, this was hardly surprising. There was still some passive resistance, but the labour situation was now satisfactory. Traill went on to advocate a policy that was at sharp variance to that of Hobley and the Secretariat.

“The main work in the District now seems to me to be found in encouraging the natives to settle down again; to build their huts in closer proximity and – if possible – in more open positions....to clear large areas of bush for the cultivation of additional shambas, and to endeavour generally to regain some of their prosperity which they lost in the Rising. Beyond question I think the best feature of the Giryama is their ability to grow surplus crops for sale at the coast and I feel sure our best interests lie in trying to increase the trade by any means in our power.”⁵

Soon afterwards, Traill was transferred to Ukamba on promotion.

Hobley took the opportunity of Traill’s transfer to lay down a policy for the District. The immediate task was to get the Giryama to settle in permanent and definite locations. The native councils must be reconstituted and properly supervised. Belfield, on seeing the papers, in December 1915, minuted.

¹ MPA “Giryama Affairs”. Traill. 15.5.15.

² Ibid. 25.5.15. PC’s Circular.

³ Ibid. Covering letter PC to DC Nyika. 25.5.15.

⁴ Ibid. CS to PC 4.8.15; 10.9.15. The use of fines for the improvement of the reserves had occurred before. Eg. the Kisii in 1908. The practice was an old one; sequestrated estates in Scotland after the ’45 had been used for public improvements.

⁵ Ibid. Traill. 25.10.15. p.6-7.

“It is too much to expect any sudden change of native views and ideas – but the progress which has been made is not inconsiderable.”¹

And the policy of concentration received formal approval by the proclamation of a Nyika reserve under section 54 of the new Crown Lands Ordinance, in March 1916.²

The Protectorate, in 1916 was engaged in a major campaign against German East Africa. It had also to deal with trouble in Turkana and a Rising amongst the Aulihan. The Giryama problem was a parochial one, important only as regards labour. No mention of the Rising was made in the Protectorate Report of 1914-15, and only the briefest mention in that of 1915-16.³ Similarly the local press gave little attention to the Giryama troubles.⁴ World events were too absorbing. But whether interest in Nairobi waned or not, the day-to-day administration had to be continued. The war heightened the demand for labour. So, in January 1916, Hobley stressed that Giryama must now do more to help the coast plantations.

“The policy of greater concentration...will, it is believed, eventually make the Giryama more ready to take up the role of workers.”⁵

The Kikuyu and the Kavirondo bore the burden of the War. The Giryama must take their share. The cultivation of maize need not be discouraged, but this was women’s work and not for the young men. “Matters have now reached a stage in this country that the assistance of native labour is essential”.⁶ Hobley called for comments on a proposal to increase tax from 3 to 5 rupees (in line with Kenia and Nyanza). The D. C. Nyika forwarded Hobley’s letter to J.M Pearson, now A.D.C. at Kakoneni.

“The principle point in this policy appears to me to be the gradual influence of the tribe to accustom themselves to take their share in the progress of the country, and that in a manner in which they can benefit both themselves and the country best is by offering themselves as labourers to the Coast plantations”.⁷

Pearson was happy with neither the tax proposals nor conditions in Northern Giryama. He complained of the lack of roads. Revenue came in satisfactorily, but he opposed any tax increase; “the tribe requires a rest...economically.”⁸ He wanted expert agricultural advice and seed distribution. The District needed better communications for development. He wished to keep the reserve closed to prevent the migration of those

“who evade tribal authority and the jurisdiction of the native tribunals by drifting into coast areas”.⁹

¹ MPA. “Handing Over Reports, Giryama” (20/136). HE’s minute, fwded by CS. 6.12.15.

² O & R. 1915. Ordinance 12/1915. OG 1916 p.197. 4.3.16.

³ Vide Protectorate Report. 1915-16. p.20.

⁴ The only newspaper reference to the Giryama Rising was a brief paragraph in the EAS. 10.10.14 headed “A Sharp Lesson”. (p.8) Hobley after his retirement suggested that the Governor may have lost interest in Giryama Affairs. (Chartered Company...” p.168).

⁵ MPA. H/O. Reports. Giryama (20/136). 17.1.16. Hobley to DC Nyika.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. DC to ADC Kakoneni. 24.1.16.

⁸ MPA. “Giryama General Report”. (21/163). J.M. Pearson 1.2.16.

⁹ Ibid.

He agreed that natives must do more to meet Imperial needs, but this could hardly apply to the WaGiryama in 1916. No doubt loneliness and ill health added venom to his pen. Of the tribe he wrote,

“It is conceivable that even now an optimist might call their apathy shyness, their obstinacy latent strength, and attribute their drunken sloth to climatic and historical causes. But I confess I do not.”¹

The native authorities were ineffective.

“Government Headman are negligible factors even in the weak unreliable local councils. The councils are the only local machinery to hand, however, and somehow orders are carried out, if tardily.”²

But Pearson was sufficient of a chameleon to defend the interests of his tribe, even though this contradicted provincial policy.

“The future of this tribe, if it has one, is agricultural and our part in it, to wed the native production to European trade.

It is only in the latter sense that I am in any way opposed to drafting labour to the Coast plantations....I hesitate to agree that this is either necessary for the establishment of authority under Martial Law or for the economic progress...of the province as a productive unit.”³

The District was producing all the labour it could afford, and no coast plantation was a sound economic proposition that “cannot attract its own labour.”⁴

However critical, or unsympathetic, local officers might be towards the recalcitrant Giryama, again and again, events forced them to protest against those policies of Government, that they found impracticable. Traill, Champion, Dundas, and Pearson had opposed Government’s policy towards labour and the native economy. On the other hand they, and Hobley, were often inconsistent. Hobley sought to combine a strong native administration with a planter economy, and plantation labour with policies of native development. Champion became convinced that Direct rule was the one solution. All combined a desire for native progress with faith in the rightness of white settlement, north of the Sabaki. But their ideas were frustrated by the failure of the chameleon to become the ‘paramount chief’ of the tribe, or, as Hobley insisted, to be “en rapport”⁵ with them.

In June 1916, after repeated bouts of illness, Pearson was invalided out to Malindi. His own illness led him to advocate the amalgamation of the Reserve and the Coastal districts, with stations on the seashore. His parting advice was full of gloom. Of the subordinate staff at Kakoneni, there was:

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Vide Hobley’s Instructions to his D’C’s 1915. See supra p.115.

“no one whom the officer can trust. The interpreter is a drunken braggart...The second interpreter is honest but immoral; while the inferior clerks and tribal retainers are almost openly immoral in their quest for drink and women.”¹

Intelligence came in as a result of complaints. The Presidents of the Councils were useless, fearing any who could pay the witchdoctors to poison them. “They shun praise and distinction and only do their duty (if at all) by stealth”.² The district required good roads, but the labour needed was conscripted for military service. Conscription was openly practised. Pearson angrily condemned attempts at subterfuge.

“I do not approve of methods employed elsewhere of kidnapping natives summoned by a trick. Recruits are called for and supplied by the Council... Were we to start kidnapping recruits, the Labour supply would cease.”³

A major problem for the district, as with other coast districts, was one of ill health. The new station at Kakoneni was charitably described by a medical officer in 1915 as tolerable. “No station in the district is fit for Europeans but Kakoneni is the least dangerous.”⁴ In the next 2½ years four A.D.Cs were invalided out. During the year 1917-18, the assistant surgeon fell ill and left, later to die. He was replaced by a hospital compounder who also fell ill. On his departure, there was no replacement. Between February 1918 and May 1919 a procession of 8 district clerks followed one another into the station and out again; all seriously ill.⁵ The condition of Rabai, the district headquarters, was almost as bad. With a heavy casualty rate there was little hope of creating an element of continuity or personal influence, yet continuity was vital to ‘personal’ administration.

Trouble was brewing in other directions. As control within the reserve grew more effective, so there was a steady drift of natives escaping into Malindi district and the coastal belt. Efforts were made from time to time to repatriate these people to the reserve. During a visit to Malindi in July 1916, Hobley mentioned the problem to Belfield, who agreed to repatriation but left the matter in Hobley’s hands. “My knowledge”, he later explained to the Colonial Office, “ends there”.⁶

Hobley, and his policy, were now in trouble: he had made an enemy of W.E.F.de Lacey,⁷ the deputy Recorder of Titles at Malindi. Early in 1915, de Lacey protested to Nairobi that the eviction of certain ex-slaves, who had registered land claims with him, delayed the work of his court. His complaints were investigated in April 1915,

¹ MPA. H/O Reports. (20/136). 8.6.16. Pearson to H.G Evans.

² Ibid. Note the Native Authority was not proving popular with the local missions of MPA “Native Tribunals” (16/42). 13.12.16. PC to DC Nyika. (But see also the comments in the C.M.S Station Diary (Kaloleni) (1914-40).

³ Ibid. Pearson Report. 8.6.16.

⁴ MPA. File. “New Station Kilifi” (28/347). PSO’s Report 1.12.17 quoting report of 23.11.15.

⁵ MPA “File. Kakoneni. New Station” (18/69). Vol.II. 30.4.19. DC to PC; also P.S.O’s report. 8.10.19; also KFI/I Nyika Annual Report. 1917-18.

⁶ AG’s File. 25/17. “Report of Malindi Commission of Inquiry”. Draft des. 23.4.17. HE to CO para 12 (draft approved by Belfield 10.4.17).

⁷ See supra “Chapter IV” for de Lacey’s part in the MacDougall Incident.

but no action was taken. In May 1916, he wrote personally to Hobley, copying the letter to the Chief Secretary and the Attorney General, and alleging cases of injustice and hardship. The Governor interviewed de Lacey and invited him to submit evidence, though he formed the opinion that

“his attitude was disingenuous and that rather than remedy evils he believed to exist he was actuated by personal animosity against Mr. Hobley.”¹

By September 1916 de Lacey had forwarded copies of correspondence to the Secretary of State. Belfield now decided – at Hobley’s request – to hold a Commission of Inquiry. Invited to lay his complaints before it, de Lacey stated that he considered it a legally incompetent tribunal. Nevertheless the Commission was established on the 27th October 1916, under the Chairmanship of the Chief Justice, to inquire into the various moves that had taken place up to 1916.² It reported its findings on the 22nd December 1916.³

The Commission held that de Lacey’s allegations of maladministration and of terrorism were not established, but it was sharply critical of the manner in which the various moves had been carried out. It remarked that the land vacated by the Giriama had remained empty for two years whilst they suffered from bad harvests. Over the main 1914 move, the Governor was prepared to defend the administration. The outbreak of War and the rising of the tribe, “possibly spurred on by secret enemy influence”⁴ had turned it into a military operation. After the withdrawal of the military, Traill had successfully encouraged the Giriama to settle south of the Sabaki.

The Commission had commented on the discrepancy in the numbers of persons moved. It estimated that in fact some 20,000 people had been shifted. Belfield stressed the lack of accurate figures, but admitted that the number of families had been quoted in error for the number of individuals. His estimate was that less than 14,000 people lived north of the Sabaki, many of whom were not Giriama. The only authorised Giriama settlement north of the Sabaki had been that of Ngonyo, a former rebel, an ivory smuggler, and a bitter opponent of closer administration.

Concerning the repatriations of 1916, Belfield was not prepared to support the Administration. Innocent persons had been removed. In reporting the matter to the Secretary of State, he blamed Hobley, whom he censured. He stressed that the Commission’s investigations had revealed the need to re-organise the Provincial

¹ AG’s File. 25/17. des. 23.4.17. para. 5.

² OG 1916. p.981. also HE’s des. 23.4.17. para. 4.

³ I have been unable to trace the Commission’s full report in any of the Record depositories in Kenya. The Report was laid before Legislative Council in 1917, but of this there is now no trace. (The A.G returned his copy to the CS). The proceedings earned the briefest of references in the local press. Extracts from the report are quoted in N. Leys “Kenya” pp. 128, 130-132. Inferences can also be drawn from material on the AG’s file. cf also MPA files “Giryama Location, Malindi” (18/67); “WaNyika Trans-Sabaki” (18/68); “Boundary of Native Cultivation N. of Sabaki” (20/139); “Nyika Native Reserve” (18/70); MPA “Eastern Boundary Nyika Reserve” (2/154) and File. “Compensation to Ex-Slaves” (20/128), and evidence of Sir Ali bin Salim, Carter Land Commission Vol. III p. 2664 et seq; Carter Commission Report para. 1199. (For various views on the Malindi Commission and the Giriama moves cf Ormsby Gore Commission Report p.159; R.L Buell “The Native Problem in Africa” Vol. I pp.373-374; C Dundas Evidence. Carter Commission Vol. I p. 417. See also CO 533/180/30914 des. 17.4.1917.

⁴ AG’s 25/17. des 23.4.17. para. 7. But Hobley had no doubts (vide Bantu Beliefs and Magic p.286).

Administration and to abolish Provincial Commissioners, who were the weak links in the chain of command.

“The evidence shows that the interposing of a Provincial Commissioner between the Central Administration and the District Administration opens the door to a variety of abuses.”¹

Having approved the draft despatch, Belfield proceeded on leave and retirement. De Lacey did not accept the Commission’s findings with good grace and as late as August 1917 continued to challenge its impartiality.²

The effect of the Commission on the Giriyama was to undermine the prestige of the local administrators and shatter the policy so painfully developed over past years. Hobley’s account was both graphic and bitter.

“In November 1916, the Malindi Commission sat at Gaji Hill, and a considerable gathering of natives of no account, irreconcilables headed by Ngonyo, were inveigled into appearing by the insidious representations of agents from Malindi, who saw an opportunity for stirring up strife. None of the more important headmen were summoned or had an opportunity of attending. The effect of the appearance of these people before the Commission had a most disastrous effect on the Northern part of the district, it being distorted into a belief that the orders of their District Commissioner could be ignored, and shortly after the Commission left, Ngonyo actively instigated the people to move over to the North bank and re-commence cutting down large areas of forest, the District Commissioner’s hands being tied until the definite future policy of Government was re-announced”.³

Hobley struggled on. The successful recruiting of 1500 men for the Carrier Corps in April 1917, surely indicated an improved attitude among the Giriyama. In February and August 1917, he toured the district. He again stressed the need for water supplies to assist in the settlement of the population, and also the need for roads and improved transport. But still the gospel of labour was preached.

“At every meeting I held with the Councils I urged the elders to insist on their young men going out to work in order to minimise the numbers of people to be fed in the Reserve. They promised to follow this advice.”⁴

Hobley had hopes of saving the situation by conceding a small extension of the reserve north of the Sabaki. But agitation continued, abetted by Fathili bin Omar, whom he now regarded as de Lacey’s agent, and that “old blind rascal”⁵ Ngonyo. The Giriyama drifted north in defiance of Government.⁶ A number of Giriyama from

¹ Ibid. des. 23.4.17. para. 14 cf also 1st Session LegCo. 1917 pp.1-5, Opening Address.

² Cf AG’s 25/17. Draft reply AG to de Lacey. At 8.9.17. “you have impugned the integrity of both the members of the Commission and His Excellency with equally little ground for your allegations”.

³ MPA. PC’s Library Vo. 317. Hobley’s “History of the Giriyama” 17.12.17. p.8. cf also Kilifi Records MAL/1. Malindi Report 1916/17 p.2.

⁴ MPA (24/215). “Report on Tour. S. Giriyama”. 8.2.17. Hobley to CS. Para 8.

⁵ Hobley. “Chartered Company...” p.165.

⁶ KFI/13. Hobley Report (September 1917) and MAL/1/ Malindi Report 1917/18. p.1.

Marafa engaged Morrison,¹ the lawyer formerly employed in the Masai case, to challenge Hobley's orders that they must move. Hobley found himself powerless against them. He sought to keep the matter out of the courts, as that would ruin all progress made since 1914.

“certain persons are anxious for reasons of personal animus to drag this matter into the courts. In the interests of the people however, I would most strongly urge that this be avoided if possible”.²

In January 1918, Government reversed its policy. Bowring, the acting Governor, wrote to the Colonial Office that, “If an injustice has been done it is our duty to repair it”³ and to propose the restoration of land north of the Sabaki. And food shortage led the Government, in February 1918, to actively encourage cultivation north of the river.

“The Food Production Committee arrived in the District armed with authority to allow any one who was willing to plant food crops to go and do so on the North bank. On the same evening of the day on which this was made known in the Nyika Reserve, the Giriama began to cross the river and continued to do so all through the night and the following days, whole locations crossing in a body including their elders and native council and their women and children. Instructions have not yet been received how this people are to be administered. This has increased the population by at least 5000 souls.”⁴

Despite a partial failure of the rains, grain production far exceeded any year since the rebellion. For the first time since 1916, maize was exported from Malindi port.⁵ The Giriama title to a portion of the Trans-Sabaki was legalised early in 1919 by a gazetted extension of the reserve boundaries.⁶

Hobley made the best of his defeat. In his report for 1918-19, he noted the general satisfaction at Government's decision. The two deportees Wanji and Makatilili, were allowed to return.⁷ The old Kaya was re-opened. But the ending of wartime conscription soon proved that the labour problem was still unsolved. By July 1919, there were new labour difficulties. IN 1920 the D.C. Nyika noted that all the Nyika tribes “cling obstinately to idleness.”⁸

What were the causes for this failure to impose Government's will after four years of sustained effort? As with the Masai, Kipsigi, and Nandi,⁹ a policy of concentration

¹ Cf infra “The Masai Problem”.

² AG's File. 140/105/18 “Concerning Jeffa wa Gikuzu and Manbogo wa Tuva and other Giriama of Marafa”. 11.10.17 Hobley to AG (through CS). Cf also *ibid.* Report of Baraza, Kakoneni. 30.9.17.

³ KFI/13. copy des. 3.1.18. HE to CO.

⁴ Kilifi Records. MAL/1. Malindi Report. 1917/18. p.1.

⁵ *Ibid.* Malindi Annual Report 1818-19 p.2. Malindi Port exported 1800 tons of maize; the first maize export for three years.

⁶ Vol. XXI O. & R. Notice 169 of 20.5.19.

⁷ MPA Provincial Report. 1918-19. p.4.

⁸ KFI/1. Nyika Report 1919-20 p.3. also MPA “Circulars to DCS” (103/15). DC Malindi to PC. 18.7.19.

⁹ Cf C.M Dobbs, Evidence Carter Commission. Vol III. 3439 et s. on Belfield's policy for the Kipsigi and Nandi.

was adopted to check migration and to make land available to white settlement. But the Giriama were not a pastoral tribe and their furious opposition was aroused by the labour policy of Government. Again the timing was unfortunate; Government was distracted by the War.¹ Ill health and frequent postings blunted the administrative weapon. Nor did the Administration speak with one voice. Miss Perham has shrewdly commented that

“In public enterprises there are often two accounts of the proceedings, a smooth official story of progress, studded with compliments and congratulations to all concerned, and the true unpublished story of the bitter struggles and personal conflicts...”²

But these conflicts arose out of the local circumstance; policies, as well as individuals, could go native.

Again the weakness of the Giriama tribal structure proved to be its strongest weapon; the least suited to indirect rule, it was the best able to resist Government and to withhold its consent.³ Undoubtedly it was assisted by the political weakness of the planter community, which was less vociferous than the upcountry settlers. Economically the Malindi plantations proved a failure. By 1919, the D.C. Malindi reported

“The European plantations at Malindi, such as have not been sold to Indians, are almost entirely neglected.”⁴

In such circumstances the thirst for Giriama land, and the demand for its labour were much abated.

Government gave up its attempt at a closer administration of the hinterland. In 1919 Kakoneni was abandoned, and in 1921, Rabai station was closed.⁵ The Administration was back, where it started, on the seashore. In 1924 the P.C. Coast could write of the results of 12 years administrative effort.

“The only thing that has hitherto held the Giriama together is the fear of the wizard. That fear is still strong... All the WaNyika are, admittedly intensely conservative, the young only a degree less than the old. They have more reason, however, for clinging to things of the past than most tribes. In the past 12 years they have seen six Government stations and two mission stations started and abandoned, and new crops which have been introduced ...turn out a failure. The District is white with the bones of European experiments of the past. It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that suggested innovations are regarded with distrust”.⁶

¹ Vide Hobley. “Charter Company...” p.165.

² M. Perham. Lugard. Vol II p.341.

³ Indirect rule was unlikely to succeed with certain tribes cf. M. Perham, Lugard Vol. II. Chapters XXIII and XXIV.

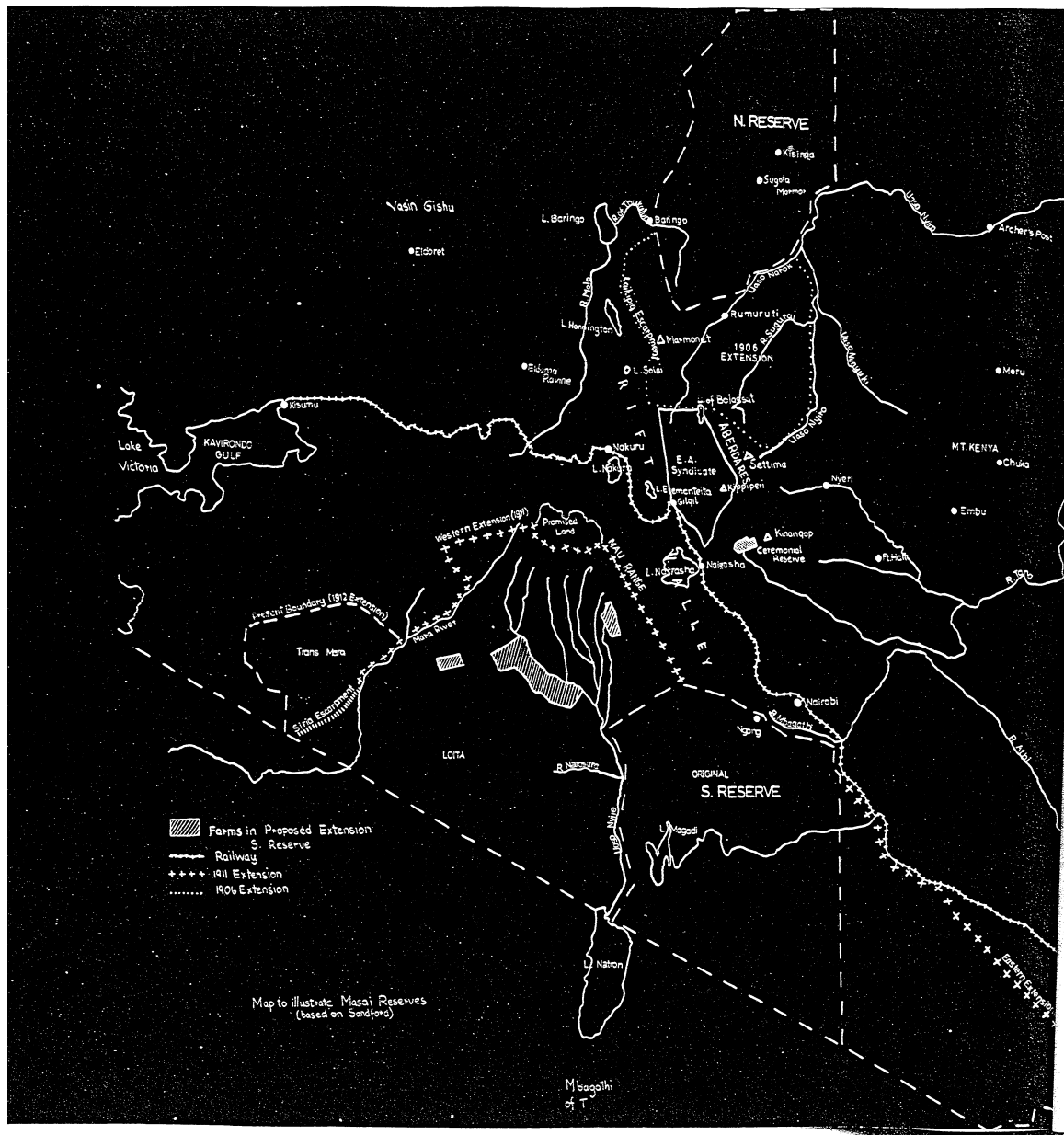
⁴ Kilifi Records. MAL/1. Malindi Report. 1918-19 (Section F).

⁵ Vide MPA. “Kakoneni New Station” (18/69) Vol. III. correspondence to 1921.

⁶ MPA. Coast Annual Report. 1924. p.20.

So ended the early attempt to bring the Giryama under closer administration. Lawyers and mosquitos played their part. But perhaps the crucial factor was the sheer obstinacy and conservatism of the tribe;¹ and the confusion that existed within Government over the aims and means of policy.

¹ Note Hobley's opinion of the Giryama. ("Chartered Company..." p.165). "Their psychology is perhaps the most complex of all the tribes; they knew the power of adoption of a persistent attitude of non possumus they could wear us down so that we should become tired, thus relaxing our efforts... Their reasoning was more or less sound..."



B. CONSERVATISM AND THE PASTORALIST

CHAPTER VI

THE MASAI PROBLEM

In their dealings with the Giryama, the Administration had failed to progress because the tribal authority was weak and unco-operative. With the Masai the case was different. In the great Laibon, Lenana, exercising an immense if ill-defined influence over his people, Government found an ideal collaborator. Yet the tribe remained a major administrative problem. Warlike, devoted to cattle, and disinterested in a money economy, they lived on the borders of the future area of white settlement. The nature of much of their country combined with their natural prejudices to preclude their becoming an agricultural people. Their fighting qualities, their nomadic habits, and their strategic position, created a major threat to security. Growing herds needed fresh pasture. Cattle diseases and an unwillingness to sell stock made the tribe a menace to their neighbours and a headache to Government. One school of thought – that associated with Dr. Norman Leys and Ramsay MacDonald¹ – were to believe that the Masai problem stemmed from the settlers' hunger for their lands. But this is too simple an explanation. The Masai presented an economic and security problem, whether white settlers bordered upon them or not. If their social system provided levers of control, these levers pulled in different directions. Different groups of the tribe wanted different things from Government. In the squabble that punctuated their administrative history – accentuated by early attempts at 'divide and rule' – the local administrators, often representing differing Masai interests, helped to confuse Government's policy. As representatives of native views, their vacillations reflected the doubts and divisions of the tribe.

The Masai were a Nilo-Hamitic people, who had migrated into the Rift Valley from regions north of Lake Rudolf, perhaps four hundred years ago. Before the end of the 17th century they were as far south as the Ngong hills. By the 19th century, they had established themselves in an area running diagonally across the Rift Valley.²

They were a people of nomadic habits: great warriors, cattle raiders, and stock thieves. The predominant feature of their social system was division of the males into age grades and the organisation of the warriors into age grade regiments. The Masai male progressed from youth (laioni) to warriorhood (moran) and thence to the rank of elder (moru); each step being marked by customary ceremonies. The role of the elders was as guardians of the younger men; the junior elders for the layok and the Senior (il Piron) for the Moran. But the Moran were a republic of young men; proud, vain, excitable, and unresponsive to control, though subject to their own commanders, the 'laigwanak'.³

¹ Note also Lord Olivier "The Anatomy of African Misery" p.60 & p.64, and L. Woolf "Empire and Commerce in Africa" pp. 338-343.

² Oxford History of East Africa Vol. I. pp.74; 200-202; 296.

³ Cf A.C Hollis "The Masai"; H.A Fosbrooke "An Administrative Survey of the Masai System" (TNR 26/1948).

Of great importance to the Masai were the 'laibon', the medicine men who provided cures and war charms, studied the omens for tribal ceremonies, and exercised a pervasive influence over the Elders and the 'laigwanak'. The great laibons were the spiritual leaders of the tribe. Always drawn from the Engidong clan, their office was hereditary after an inexact fashion. If the Masai Laibon was a priest rather than chief, the line between the two was ill defined:

“any order he cared to give, suitably disguised as a prophecy would therefore be obeyed; the laibon is thus a great potential political leader”.¹

Though enjoying a common language, customs, clan organisation and spiritual leaders, the Masai were not a united people. Between the Masai proper and their kin, the Akwavi, genocidal struggles had led to the destruction of the Laikipia and Uasin Gishu sub-tribes of the Kwavi during the 19th century. Amongst the Masai, feuding sub-tribes jostled one another. But when not occupied in civil strife, they raided and terrorised large areas of the interior of East Africa. After the 1880s their power had suffered a setback when outbreaks of small pox and rinderpest decimating the population and the herds of cattle. By the last decade of the 19th century, they were in considerable disarray. Their circumstances were not improved by renewed civil war.²

This war was a struggle for power between the laibons Sendeyo and Lenana, sons of the late Mbatian. Contemporary accounts conflict as to which of the brothers was the senior, or which the successor named by Mbatian.³ It is sufficient that their rivalry prolonged the civil war until 1902. Sendeyo drew his support from the Loita, Kissongo, and Il Damat, based for the most part in German territory. Lenana had the backing of the Purko, the single largest Masai sub-tribe.⁴

The brothers offered a marked contrast in personality. Lenana, gentle in appearance, reserved and thoughtful, was also intelligent and diplomatic. Sendeyo, easy going, popular, frequently drunk, was the better warrior, loved by many for his openhandedness.⁵

In 1895, the Masai, lying across the main line of communications to Uganda, seemed to menace the new Protectorate. Tribal scuffles around Mt Kenya were of little account, but unrest near the caravan route was a more serious matter. Early events re-enforced foreboding. In November 1895, Purko Moran attacked and destroyed a

¹ Fosbrooke, op.cit p.23. But the power of the laibon depended on his charismatic qualities. Different sections might choose different, and rival members of the Engidong clan. Though the Elders consulted their laibon over the appointment of Age Grade leaders they did not always accept advice. Again much of the power of the Laibons stemmed from war charms, pax Britannica was bound to diminish their influence. (Though only the Engidong could exercise the tribal functions of laibons, in personal matters, alien – often Kikuyu – practitioners were also consulted.) (cf Fosbrooke, pp.13-23).

² Protectorate Report. 1897. pp.22-23;67

³ Some thought Lenana the younger brother, others Sendeyo. There was an Esau-Jacob account of Mbatian's naming his successor. cf. Hollis op.cit. p.327 (fn)-328. S.L. Hinde "The last of the Masai" p.24; C.H. Stigand "Land of Zinj" p.227; Meinertzhagen "Kenya Diary" p.30; Eliot "East Africa Protectorate" p.135. Ainsworth to Col. Ternan 26.11.1900 (FOP 7690/25 encl.2).

⁴ In 1917, the Purko moran numbered 2,200 vs 2335 for all other Masai sub-tribes in the Protectorate (vide G.R Sandford "An Administrative and Political History of the Masai Reserve" appendix 4). It was the Purko who had destroyed the Laikipiak in the 19th century.

⁵ For the contrasting characters of the two brothers cf Stigand op.cit. pp.209,228; Meinertzhagen op.cit. p.30; F.J Jackson "Early days in East Africa" p.295 (for Lenana)

caravan near Kedong, killing 650 porters and a passing European trader.¹ Though the incident occurred just inside Uganda² John Ainsworth, the S.C. Ukamba, dealt with the affair. Both Ainsworth and Jackson³ who joined him, agreed that the Masai had acted under provocation. The tribe were treated leniently. Lenana, who had been visiting Fort Smith at the time of the massacre, was allowed to go free. This moderation appears to have impressed Lenana and went far to gain his co-operation. In truth Government had little choice. As Ainsworth noted in his diary

“I think we can fairly let the Masai alone and make peace, and more so is this necessary from the fact that if we wished we could not take action against them”.⁴

But Lenana’s co-operation proved invaluable to the new administration as the only “Paramount Chief”⁵ amidst a welter of acephalous tribes.

Policy towards the Masai was dominated by a need for caution. In 1896 the Foreign Office had laid down that

“In a country inhabited by wild tribes it is no doubt necessary to employ force to punish aggression or maintain order; it is nevertheless very desirable that steps of this nature should be confined within the narrowest possible limits. Warlike operations, the extent of which it might be a difficult to control should not be undertaken without reference home”.⁶ So Hardinge in 1898 refused to be drawn into the Masai Civil War since he was

“convinced your Lordship would deprecate a Masai War which would paralyse the railway as well as the Uganda transport”.⁷

The aim was to avoid “premature hostilities”.⁸ When Ainsworth advocated a policy of concentration to “edge in”⁹ the Masai, he stressed that it must await improved communications and larger forces. Meantime, the Masai were left alone to fight out their civil war, provided they did not harm Europeans or the line of communication, and Lenana saw to this. The Moran were also used in punitive expeditions against other tribes, providing a useful instrument of conquest.

In such a situation there were not wanting advocates of ‘divide and rule’. Unwilling to invite disobedience to orders they could not enforce, neither the British nor the German authorities regretted:

¹ FOP 6827/232 (encl). Ainsworth 14.1.96. cf. also Protectorate Report 1897 p.67.

² Till 1902, the Uganda border lay at the foot of the Kijabe escarpment.

³ He represented the Uganda Administration.

⁴ Ainsworth Diaries, 28.12.95; cf also Goldsmith “John Ainsworth” p.31.

⁵ Ainsworth. 10.7.02. (FOP 7953/84 (encl.)). Hardinge called Lenana “the hereditary chief and principle medicine man” (des. 18.11.97) and “King or Chief” (Report 1897 p.21).

⁶ MPA. Zanzibar in 1895-96 (83/99). Cave to Pigott 13.2.96.

⁷ FOP. 7090/185. 19.8.98. Hardinge to FO. – “more harm than good is done in our dealings with savage tribes like the Masai by prohibiting raids unless we are prepared to enforce the prohibition”.

⁸ FOP. 7024/29. 18.11.97. Hardinge to FO.

⁹ FO 2/197 Ainsworth to HMC 13.6.99 (with des. 67 of 24.6.99).

“that these savages should employ their energies in mutual destruction”.¹

And Hall, the Collector at Fort Smith, stressed this to Sir Clement Hill.

“Lenana and Sendeyo combined would be more than we could conveniently deal with so it has been my constant endeavour to keep them from joining forces...in my opinion the more friction there is between them the less trouble we shall have with the Masai”.²

‘Divide and Rule’ was also fostered by an accident of administrative boundaries, which placed half Lenana’s people in Uganda. Whereas Lenana preferred to live at Ngong, in Ukamba Province, most of the Purko were at Naivasha in Uganda. Now Ainsworth, the S.C. Ukamba, admired Lenana, whom he considered a “Strong man” and “A great friend of the European”.³ His “friendship is undoubtedly a great factor in the peaceful conditions of this part of the territory”.⁴ The Uganda Administration, on the other hand resented the absent Chief, and thought him “Dangerous”, “thoroughly mischievous”⁵ and worthy of deportation. They sought to undermine Lenana’s influence in their territory by discouraging his visits and setting up the moran leader, Legalishu, as an independent headman.⁶ Though the territorial division ceased after the transfer of Naivasha to the East Africa Protectorate in 1902, the legacy of administrative hostility towards Lenana remained.

As communications improved and administration became more established, Masai raids could no longer be tolerated. Civil war was one thing, but attacks on friendly tribes undermined the prestige of the Government. In the early years, Lenana had kept his moran in check; but when blood was aroused there was “no alternative but to let the youngsters depart”,⁷ for Lenana “finds it difficult at times to know what to do with his young men”.⁸ War was their whole existence; it was not easy to turn their spears into hoes. As late as 1901, Sir Charles Eliot still considered the Masai “that most important and dangerous of the tribes”⁹ though they did not number fifty thousand.

The situation was eased by the ending of the civil war. In July 1902, Sendeyo, defeated by Lenana and harassed by the Germans, made peace by recognising Lenana “as Paramount Chief of the Masai”¹⁰ and settling in the Protectorate with some two

¹ Ibid. encl. 2. Craufurd to Governor G.E.A 24.6.99. To which the latter replied “a mutual destruction of these incorrigible robbers is an issue to be wished” (MPA Foreign and Miscellaneous 1899. 17.7.99).

² FO 2/165. Hall to Hill. 22.8.98. On which Hill minuted “Divide et impera” is Mr Hall’s policy; he has great Masai experience and confirms that it will be a serious matter to attempt to coerce them”.

³ FOP 6849/144 (encl). Ainsworth. 20.3.96.

⁴ FOP 7401/145 (encl). Ainsworth. 18.5.99.

⁵ FOP 7690/25 (encl). Johnston to Hardinge 14.10.1900.

⁶ Entebbe Secretariat Archives. A 8/1. Jackson 20.12.1900. McAllister, the Collector Naivasha, did all that was possible to keep Lenana out of his district (vide Laikipia Records. Lka/1. “Historical Resume” Collyer; *ibid.* Laikipia Annual Report 1910/11 p.4).

⁷ FO 2/197. Ainsworth to HMC 24.6.99 (with des. 67, 24.6.99).

⁸ FO 2/337. Ainsworth 21.5.01. (with des. 141, 3.6.01)

⁹ Cmd 769/1901. p.5. (Protectorate Report).

¹⁰ FOP 7953/84 (encl). Ainsworth. 10.7.02.

thousand followers.¹ By 1903, Eliot could write, “I agree with those who do not think the Masai are a formidable element in East Africa”.²

But their warlike and nomadic habits did not fit easily into neat patterns of administration. When Ainsworth told Lenana that the Masai “must settle down”,³ he had replied, that

“there will be great difficulty in getting his people to take to agriculture and to prevent them from raiding”.⁴

And on another occasion he laid bare the pastoral problem, when he protested,

“We Masai cannot live in one place all the time like other people, we must go where the grass is green.”⁵

Undoubtedly Lenana’s control over his people was uneven, fluctuating both in time and place.⁶ Yet it was sufficiently effective for Government to pay him in 1901 a regular salary:

“in return for his performing the duties of a Liwali, and on the understanding that he keeps order and prevents raiding among his people”.⁷

It was a curious and remarkable achievement. Lenana, whose tribal function was to give supernatural aid to the warriors, had become the effective agent of law and order for a colonial administration.⁸

The coming of European settlement, after 1902, presented new and complex problems. The Masai occupied desirable land near the railway. Nomadic, they were without boundaries. Though the first settlers were absorbed into Kikuyu country, the hunger for Masai land grew. Thus a land problem was superimposed upon the basic problem of security.

In 1903, the security problem predominated. The Senior warrior grade held its “Eunoto” ceremony⁹ and this was accompanied by raids and threats of trouble with German East Africa. Pressure was put on Lenana to control the young men. The expedience of a Reserve on the South African pattern, as a means of control, was

¹ But many of Sendeyo’s followers remained in G.E.A.

² Cmd 1626/1903 p.8 (Protectorate Report).

³ Ainsworth Diaries. 23.7.96.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. 25.4.98.

⁶ Note H.R. Tate found Purko on the Laikipia escarpment in 1902 who acknowledged Lenana as chief but never consulted him (Nairobi. CGL. Report on Safari to Rendile 16.11.02). But Lenana also claimed authority over the Samburu (vide Tate evidence Carter Land Commission. Vol. III. p.3425).

⁷ FO 2/442. des 22. 30.1.01. FO to HMC.

⁸ Vide McClellan Memorandum 25.7.08. (Mombasa District Records MSA/18). “For the last six years...no arrests have been made by the police in the Ukamba Province of Masai...When criminals were wanted they were demanded for (from) Chief Lenana who almost invariably brought them in” (p.24). cf also McClure Report. 4.4.10. p.2 (NSA. ARC (DC NKU) 2/9/41).

⁹ The Eunoto marked the termination of a moran age; some consider that it originally marked an intermediate stage, where the senior moran went into the military ‘reserve’, cf Fosbroke op.cit. pp.29-30. Hollis, op.cit. p.299.

rejected by both Eliot and the Foreign Office.¹ But the need for land for white settlement revived interest in a Reserve. Early in 1904, Eliot and the Foreign Office were independently making grants of land in the Rift Valley, over which the Masai grazed.² Whitehall and the Commissioner fell out on a question of procedure. Eliot resented Whitehall's consultation of his subordinates, Jackson and Bagge, behind his back. He resigned after complaining that Sir Clement Hill had always been unsympathetic, and that Jackson and Bagge were "worthy but not intelligent gentlemen".³ Perhaps the tropic sun was responsible for his shrill protest to Lord Lansdowne.

"Really my Lord, some semblance of impartiality is not unbecoming in His Majesty's Ministers."⁴

The whole dispute became a policy debate over the question of the Masai and Reserves. In official circles, three alternatives were canvassed between July 1903 and September 1904. The first – Eliot's policy – advocated the salvation of the savage by civilizing him, by interspersing settlement with native locations, and by getting the Masai to labour for the settler. Reserves perpetuated abominable practices; if reserves there must be, the Masai should be shifted from the Rift to more distant parts. For Reserves made for isolation, and "such isolation can only tend to confirm the Masai in their peculiar ways and customs..."⁵ With zeal he declared

"to protect a tribal organisation which lives by raiding seems to be equally contrary to religion, philanthropy, and common sense. One might as well protect cannibalism."⁶

The second policy was that of Jackson and Bagge, both former I.B.E.A.C. and Uganda officials, whose experience of the Masai was limited to Naivasha. They had an affection for the Masai. Jackson, with the instincts of a gentleman, held that, "If a man has all he requires, why should he work, if he is not inclined to?"⁷ Both desired to protect Masai rights in the Rift Valley. By September 1903 they agreed that,

"As a matter of expediency it is in this case not only advisable but almost imperative, that a reserve should be formed".⁸

But this Reserve must protect existing rights. Bagge, the P.C. Naivasha, was openly obstructive, and Eliot complained that Bagge assumed all Africa belonged to the natives.

¹ Vide Cmd 2099/1904. "Correspondence relating to the resignation of Sir Charles Eliot". Item 6. Eliot to FO 10.10.03; item 7. Director of Military Intelligence 18. 11.03; item 8. FO to HMC 27.11.03.

² The FO were negotiating a grant of 500 sq miles to the East African Syndicate, whilst objecting to Eliot's grant of smaller areas to two South Africans, Chamberlain and Flemmer.

³ FO 2/835. Personal. Eliot to Lansdowne 11.4.04.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cmd 2099 (1904)/6. Eliot to FO. 10.10.03.

⁶ FO 2/911. Letter to Westminster Gazette 31.8.04. But note Jackson's view "The further they are away from us the more trouble they will give us" (22.2.04 FO 2/843).

⁷ FO 2/847. Jackson Memo. 15.8.03.

⁸ FO 2/847. Jackson Memo undated (Cmd 2099 item 17/6).

Now Jackson had been invalided home in 1903. Bagge followed him there on leave, in November. If their absence gave Eliot a freer hand, their advocacy in Whitehall provided the Foreign Office with the means to destroy Eliot and his policy.¹

The third policy was that of John Ainsworth in Ukamba, who had no experience of Naivasha. His solution was to remove the Masai from the Rift to Laikipia, leaving the balance of the tribe in a Reserve south of Nairobi. It would remove those elements likely to cause friction with German East Africa without disturbing the Masai under Ainsworth's immediate control, or inconveniencing Lenana, whose position was "practically unique".² And whose friendship was so invaluable. Ainsworth had the support of Colonel Harrison of the K.A.R. and later gained a valuable ally in Hobley, a former Uganda official, who had succeeded Bagge at Naivasha. Hobley acted for two crucial months as Commissioner after Eliot's resignation.

At first advocating the policy of small scattered reserves in the Rift, Hobley came round to Ainsworth's point of view, which he submitted to the Foreign Office as his own.³ The importance of the Laikipia proposals lay in the sub-tribes that were meant to occupy it. Sendeyo's people – the Loita and the Il Damat – were to be balanced by the Purko and Kekonyukie, then occupying land around Naivasha. Years later it was stated that the motive behind the Laikipia Reserve was one of military necessity.⁴

To Ainsworth, the issue was simple:

"as we desire to do what is possible to preserve the Masai, this system of reserves, at least for another twenty years, is the one and only way to achieve our object".⁵

He was aware of the tensions created by white settlement. Writing to Jackson in March 1904, he was brutally frank.

"When it comes to a question between whites and blacks, we must allow that it is purely a matter of the survival of the fittest; and we may as well make Rules and Regulations to prevent the ebb and flow of the tides... With all this I do not, of course, lose sight of the natives whose interests we are here to safeguard...(but) I am forced to conclusions which I feel are in a certain degree adverse to some of my old convictions".⁶

And Ainsworth had the support of Lenana, since his solution reduced the chances of conflict with the settlers.

It was this policy that finally triumphed. If it failed in its objectives after a few years, it must be remembered that it was never fully implemented. The Loita and most of

¹ Cf Jackson/Bagge Papers in Cmd 2099 (1904)/17. Jackson had been writing privately to Hill criticising Eliot (vide letters 25.5.03, 4.8.03 on FO 2/720).

² Cmd 2740 (1906). P.6. Ainsworth Report on ten years administration in Ukamba.

³ Vide FO 2/838. des 495. of 22.7.04. with encl. Cf also Memo Ainsworth and Harrison, 28.9.03 (with des. 351. 20.5.04 FO 2/835).

⁴ Vide Girouard des. To CO 30.9.11 (CO 533/90/34782).

⁵ Cmd 2740 (1906). p.32.

⁶ FO 2/843. 31.3.04. Ainsworth to Jackson.

the Kekonyukie refused to move. Many of the Purko migrated south rather than north.

On the 31st July 1904, Sir Donald Stewart, the new Commissioner, landed at Mombasa. A shrewd but hard-drinking bachelor, he had a taste for horses and late nights. On the 5th August, accompanied by Hobley, he proceeded to Nairobi and then to Naivasha, where he remained for the next fortnight.¹ Between the 9th and 15th August, a Treaty was negotiated with the Masai, by which they agreed to vacate the Rift Valley and occupy two Reserves, to be linked by a road.

Before leaving England, Stewart had received written instructions from the Foreign Office. The Masai question was the great issue.

“How best to harmonise their indisputable rights with the requirements of white settlers is a problem which will require your closest attention.”²

The Foreign Office wanted “an arrangement of a lasting nature which may work to the advantage of both parties”,³ yet stressed the “most careful insistence on the protection of native rights”.⁴ Beneath the rolling periods of official prose lay either an element of hypocrisy, or a belief that conflicting interests could be reconciled. One paragraph, later revoked to avoid publication, suggested that Whitehall had accepted the views of Hobley and Ainsworth.

“A satisfactory solution...would probably be that the Masai should be induced to leave their present grazing grounds and settle...in the district lying round Laikipia escarpment or in some other suitable tract of territory accessible to the Protectorate forces.”⁵

Stewart, having obtained his treaty, sought for telegraphic approval. The Foreign Office, feeling that the Commissioner “has rather rushed us”,⁶ held a conference to consult both the Colonial Office and Jackson,⁷ but withheld formal approval until it had received both the treaty and Stewart’s covering despatch. Stewart stressed that the treaty must be final against the time when settlers again cast envious eyes on the Masai lands; the tribe had asked that the treaty endure as long as they survived. He had hopes that there would be no further ‘Eunoto’ ceremonies; his officers would try to “get them to give up their customs”.⁸ On the 15th October, the Foreign Office telegraphed its approval, following this with a despatch which set a formal seal to the policy:

¹ Ainsworth left Nairobi for Mombasa on the 30th July, and returned to Nairobi ahead of Stewart on the 3rd August. (African Standard 6.8.04. p.7). Though Bagge had been posted to Kisumu, he was called down for the signing of the treaty.

² FO 2/833. des. 388. 8.7.04.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. For the reasons for its cancellation cf Hill’s minute on Tg. 141, 2.8.04 (FO 2/842).

⁶ FO 2/842. Hill’s minute on 146A. 16.8.04.

⁷ FO 2/842. Minutes of Meeting of 19.8.04 (cf. also Hill’s earlier minute on des. 495, 22.7.04. FO 2/842).

⁸ Stewart to FO. FO 2/839. des. 574. 5.9.04. with the treaty. NB: Minute of Eyre Crowe 6.10.04. setting out alternative policies.

“the definite acceptance of the policy of native reserves implies of course an absolute guarantee that the natives will, so long as they desire it, remain in undisputed and exclusive possession of the areas set aside for their use.”¹

There now occurred an example of the hiatus in the Official chain of command, possibly aggravated by the transfer of the Protectorate from the Foreign Office to Colonial Office in April 1905. Stewart had discovered that the Northern Reserve was inadequate for the Masai. Without reference to London, or recording his decision, he extended the southern boundary of Laikipia to the equator.² He then died and was replaced by Sadler. Now some Masai had remained on East African Syndicate land in the Rift. The Syndicate protested to the Colonial Office, who referred the matter to the Commissioner in November 1905 and asked for a report on the Masai move.³ In February 1906, Sadler replied that, on the recommendation of Hobley, he had again extended the area of the northern Reserve. This involved the removal of a few European settlers (the most prominent being Lord Delamere and his brother in law),⁴ and he trusted that his action would be approved, “to settle one of the greatest native questions we are likely to have to confront in the Protectorate”.⁵

The Colonial Office accepting the *fait accompli*, also endorsed Hobley’s proposals for the future administration of the tribe. These stressed the need to abandon the use of Masai levies, the encouragement of labour and agriculture, and the discouragement of movement between the two reserves. Hobley hoped that, in time, two separate tribes would emerge.⁶

There were not wanting pessimists in Whitehall to doubt the permanency of any settlement. In 1904, Eyre Crowe in reviewing the alternatives, added – though he discounted – a forth possibility, extermination.⁷ He warned that,

“The history of the Indian reservations in the United States forbid a too ready confidence in the sense of justice of a future generation of white colonists in East Africa.”⁸

Similarly the 1906 Extension, caused Ellis in the Colonial Office to remark,

“I am afraid the settlement will not last very long, as the Southern Reserve is so near the Railway, that if European Settlement proceeds as we hope, greedy eyes will soon be cast upon it.”⁹

The Laikipia Reserve, even after the 1906 Extension, proved inadequate. Movement of stock from the Southern Reserve was stopped after the spread of East Cost Fever

¹ FO 2/833. des. 583. 21.10.04.

² CO 533/11/7432. des. 6.2.06. cf also Sandford op.cit. pp. 26-27.

³ CO 533/9/38025. des. 3.11.05.

⁴ Compensation was offered at 1½ times the area surrendered. Delamere and others chose to wait, and were eventually offered land on Laikipia. (cf. CO 533/11/7432 and CO 533/108/36945).

⁵ CO 533/11/7432. des. 6.2.06.

⁶ Ibid. Hobley. 4.1.06.

⁷ FO 2/839. Minute 6.10.04. on des. 574 of 5.9.04.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Minute, Ellis. 8.2.06. CO 533/11/7432.

from German East Africa.¹ After 1907, temporary grazing concessions were regularly granted outside the Northern Reserve. Attempts were made to increase the Reserve round Lake Ol Bolssat.² In 1908 Bagge proposed a land exchange to increase the water supplies in the north but, though the Government informed the Colonial Office, the proposal was allowed to lapse.³

Equally serious was the presence of numerous Masai outside any Reserve. Many Kekonyukie had remained at Naivasha station, where they accumulated 10,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep. Not till 1910 did they move into the Southern Reserve. Masai from the south had spilt over⁴ the Narosura river and into the Kedong valley. The Loita remained outside the Reserves in the Loita hills near the German frontier; some 2,000 people with 20,000 cattle. North of the Mara river, and unadministered, were the Siria. Numbers of Purko roamed between the Mau and the German frontier. At Nyeri was another settlement of Masai. For a tribe allegedly concentrated in Reserves, the Masai presented an extremely untidy appearance to the administrative eye.

Again, the move not only split the tribe physically – particularly the Purko – but undermined the authority of Lenana in the Northern Reserve. The tribal leadership was under strain. Lenana suffered from ill health and in his last years was almost an invalid.⁵ He seldom travelled abroad and never visited the northern Reserve. His power over the Naivasha Masai had been damaged by the Uganda administration. There were other factors. In 1903, after the Eunoto ceremony it became necessary to choose a ‘laigwanan’ for the new warrior age. The ‘Il Piron’ elders disregarded Lenana’s advice and chose Ole Kotikosh their own candidate. When the Purko moved from Naivasha, Ole Kotikosh and his moran moved north. But Lenana’s candidate, Ole Goinyo moved south with his supporters.⁶

In the South, Lenana maintained firm control. He preserved law and order and kept stock theft and raiding in check without assistance from the police. He won the golden opinions of all who served with him. One Southern administrator wrote that Lenana’s “loyalty is above suspicion and his efforts to assist Government beyond praise”,⁷

“the only possible method...of effectively administering the Masai is by acting through and with Lenana in everything”.⁸

¹ Cf Sandford op.cit. pp.27-28. W.S Churchill “My African Journey” p.58, and Veterinary Report 1906-1907 (Cmd 3917/1908).

² Lengthy negotiations were entered into with the East African Syndicate involving arguments over boundaries, but came to nothing.

³ Sandford, op.cit. p.27 implies this was an extension but cf CO 533/47/37846 (des. 23.9.08 and encl). The exchange envisaged leaving free an area “desired by the settlers in the Rift Valley for their use in times of drought”.

⁴ Cf Sandford. Also Kajiado Records Kaj/30 (unsigned typescript History (? R. Hemsted), similar in parts to Sandford and Hollis Memo). Pp.13-16. cf also Nyeri District History (NYI/9). p.29.

⁵ Kajiado Record Kaj/29. “notes on Headmen” pp.52-54 (2.11.11).

⁶ Laikipia Records. Lka/1. Historical Resume. Collyer (under ‘October 1909’).

⁷ Nairobi CGL. NAD Clip File. Vol. III. 1910 Report, p.5 (by H.R. McClure, A.D.C. Ngong).

⁸ Ibid. p.6.

The Laibon was,

“beloved of his people and it would be the height of folly for any officer to consider himself above taking his advice”.¹

If some noted a decline in his power, Lenana was still very influential. McClellan, writing in 1908, commented,

“I do not believe that Lenana has the same control as formerly though he still has force enough for good to keep the dissatisfied in order... and he certainly has prestige enough still to call every Masai both in the Colony and in German East Africa, if trouble were ever forced on the tribe by reckless action”.²

But Lenana’s power suffered in the North. An intelligence report written in about 1906 spoke of his

“making an effort to regain his influence...many Laikipia Moruak have of late been to see him at Ngong”.³

But in 1911, the D.C. Rumuruti remarked on Lenana’s failure to visit Laikipia, after being urged many times to go up and visit it, but this he has never consented to”.⁴

Again,

“It is a great pity that Lenana will not come to Laikipia, for it is hardly to be expected that he can maintain his influence here with the people he never sees”.⁵

But generally, officers in the Northern Reserve were not overfond of Lenana, whom they could not directly control. Even Collyer regarded him with suspicion.⁶

Collyer had served with the Northern Masai since 1904, and was D.C. Rumuruti from 1906 until 1912.⁷ During his service with the Masai, “of whom he was undoubtedly very fond”,⁸ he learnt to speak their language. Devoted to his people he perhaps grew to resent a rival and absentee paramount chief.

In the absence of Lenana, the leading chiefs in Laikipia were Masikonde and Legalishu. Masikonde, though an elder, was a progressive man who sent two sons to school,

¹ Ibid.

² MacClellan Memo. 25.7.08. (MSA/18) p.6. McClellan was then acting S.N.A. but cf also W. Lloyd Jones “Havash” p. 185.

³ Marsabit Records. MBT/1. Capt. Bois Report (undated ? 1908). Appendix B. Masai Intelligence (based on Collyer and K. Dundas).

⁴ Laikipia Records. Lka/1. Annual Report 1910/11. pp.4-5.

⁵ Ibid. Historical Resume. P.10.

⁶ Vide MacAllister’s behaviour. K. Dundas thought Lenana’s influence in the North “harmful” (Bois Report). Collyer was critical of Lenana’s motives.

⁷ Collyer had been educated at King William’s, Isle of Man and Oxford. He came to the Protectorate in 1902 aged 22. A bachelor and consumptive, he died aged 32 in 1912.

⁸ Anderson Minute 29.1.13 on CO 533/129/3511 (NB. Collyer in 1911 had travelled back to EA on the same boat as Read of the CO). cf also Jackson op.cit. p.330.

“he has seen enough of the whiteman to realise that the Masai must move with the times”.¹

Legalishu was very different. The ‘laigwanan’ of the senior warrior age, Collyer believed that he “takes his cue from Lenana”,² and he was “intensely conservative”.³ In build, he was a spare and short man; noted for his strength of character and his obstinacy. By birth he was a Laikipiak, who had been captured as a child by the Purko in a raid.⁴ By sheer personality he became a moran leader, seemingly obedient to Lenana, even after efforts to set him up as a rival in Naivasha. But Laikipia was his home, though it was a new country to the Purko. Some thought him a menace. Kenneth Dundas recorded that,

“He is a most bitter enemy of Government and of the white man... he bitterly resents the state of affairs which has robbed him of all his power.”⁵

Possibly he and the moran longed for days of plunder and raids.

Administratively, the policy of two Reserves was a failure. Administrators began to cast round for alternative solutions. Sometime after 1906, the Southern Reserve had been transferred from the control of Ukamba to Naivasha Province. In 1908, at the request of Lenana, an administrative officer was posted to Ngong in the Southern Reserve. The officer selected was H.R. McClure, a former midshipman, a cartoonist, and a linguist. He learnt to speak Masai and admired Lenana. In September 1908, after touring the area between the Southern Reserve and the Mara, he wrote privately to Bagge (P.C. Naivasha), suggesting that it might be advantageous to move all the Masai into one Reserve.⁶ Bagge, though pressing for extensions to the northern reserve, called for further investigations. About the same time, certain settlers had raised the question of settlement in Laikipia. On the 3rd January 1909, Hayes Sadler visited Ngong to sound out Lenana on the possibility of moving the Masai from the North. “Somewhat to his surprise”,⁷ he found that Lenana was “Strongly in favour of the scheme”.⁸ Lenana had his reasons. The 1904 treaty had undermined his power; reunion of the tribe would restore it. He blamed Government for “not keeping their promises”,⁹ particularly their failure to provide a road linking the reserves. Collyer believed that Lenana’s motive was

“purely a political one, as he wishes naturally to have all his people under his own eye, and he himself would not be moved, nor would his stock suffer”.¹⁰

¹ Laikipia Records. Lka/1. Resume p.10.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Vide Carter Land Commission Vol. II p.1201-1202, evidence of Legalishu. Cf also MBT/1. Bois Report.

⁵ Marsabit Records. MBT/1. Bois Report appendix B. NB. Dundas was a Northerner. Jackson op.cit. p.294 and 329-330. cf also Hobley “Akamba and other East Africa Tribes”. p.120.

⁶ Kajiado Records. Kaj/29. Undated note H.R. McClure (circa 1910).

⁷ Sandford op.cit. p.27. Kaj/30 p.17.

⁸ Kajiado Records. Kaj/29. McClure’s Note.

⁹ Ibid. Kaj/30. p.17. Sandford (op.cit. p.27-28) has it that Legalishu was consulted but would give no opinion.

¹⁰ Collyer “The Masai Question” (CO 533/116/7789).

But it is possible that Lenana, increasingly embittered with his brother Sendeyo, wished to secure himself by bringing his 'big battalions' – the Purko – to the South.

It was later assumed that Sadler's proposal was the result of settler pressure – particularly Delamere – to free the Laikipia for settlement.¹ Settler opinion, however, was not united. In May 1909, the Advertiser of East Africa, commenting on the deteriorating situation round the Southern Uaso Nyiro, accused Government of "a policy of forcing the Europeans to relinquish their holdings".² If the settlers in the south were few, they were by no means glad to surrender their land.

Certainly, the Protectorate Government regarded the situation as serious. Officers were sent to inspect a possible extension between the Southern Reserve and the Mara. In April 1909, Hollis and Bagge toured the area. Though Bagge was opposed to any move,³ both he and Hollis agreed that the area would suffice, provided there were improved water supplies. In June 1909, an engineer was despatched to investigate the possibilities of irrigation. He submitted proposals for improvements costing £5,280. In the same month, settlers along the southern Uaso Nyiro were tentatively approached as to their willingness to surrender their lands

"receiving in compensation....an area equivalent to the land surrendered, plus half as much again, within the present Northern Masai Reserve or its vicinity."⁴

Information concerning the new proposals trickled back to the Colonial Office. A memorandum by Hollis, forwarded by the Governor, briefly touched on the question of an enlarged single reserve. Hollis supported the scheme, provided the move was voluntary and the Masai received land of equivalent value. Otherwise, "it will be a breach of faith and an injustice to make them vacate their present reserve."⁵ The Colonial Office merely took note, since no action was called for.

When in September 1909, Girouard took charge of the territory, the question of moving the Masai had been under discussion by the local Government for over 18 months. His contribution was not to evolve a new policy, but to seek a quick decision and definite action. Early in December 1909, he submitted his draft estimates for 1910-11, one item being a first instalment of £2,000 for irrigation works in the Southern Reserve. In a covering despatch, Girouard gave his reasons. The existence of the two Reserves, which divided a large tract of settled area, was unsatisfactory.

¹ Cf fn. P. 268 supra. Officials expected settlers to cast envious eyes on native lands: vide Stewart's despatch with the treaty in 1904. cf also Hollis Memo. 5.7.10. stated that the proposals for the move arose "solely in the interests of the settlers" (Cmd 5584 (1911) p.17), but he supported the scheme to avoid a native war (ibid. p.20). Accusations against Delamere were made by Gilbert Murray's correspondent (see infra). But Delamere was also a staunch sympathiser of the Masai (vide Huxley "Whiteman's country" passim). Cf also Cranworth "Colony in the Making" for settler viewpoint.

² Advertiser of East Africa. 14.5.09. (editor's notes). Cf also criticism of treatment of the Masai by Government, ibid. 6.11.08.

³ Hollis to Ainsworth. 11.9.11 (NSA. ARC (PCRVP)2/20/3).

⁴ CO 533/108/40536. Secretariat File 2571 Folio 40/1.

⁵ CO 533/58/10726. Hollis Memo. 28.12.08. cf also Commissioner of Lands memo. 8.5.09. (COP 929/140). NB: Hollis' memo. Was directed chiefly to the question of Kamba Reserves.

The Paramount Chief “is not easily able to assert his authority over his tribesmen in the north”.¹ Quarantine control upset both settlers and Masai.

“The location of the whole Masai in one reserve would, besides facilitating administrative control, liberate a large tract of country suitable for European Settlement”.²

Sufficient land was available in the south, provided water supplies could be improved. The Colonial Office dealt with the matter at their leisure, submitting the estimates in late February to the Treasury, with the comment that “The proposal is attractive” but “considerable further information” was needed.

“It seems to raise the whole question of the sanctity of native reserves on which so much stress has been laid in Parliament.”³

On the 11th March 1910, the Colonial Office raised these points with the Governor in a despatch. But local events had outrun the stately pace of Whitehall. In December 1909, Girouard, visiting the southern Uaso Nyiro with McClure, had interviewed the settlers to gain their support. Events in Masai now hastened a decision. In August 1909 the feud between Lenana and Sendeyo broke out afresh, with Lenana accusing Sendeyo of trying to bewitch him. In that same month Collyer in the north started his preparations for the new Eunoto ceremonies, which were to take place near Kinangop in the settled area. At least 10,000 cattle would move from the north and stock routes had to be organised. The Northern moran, however, were not ready to move before the end of 1909. In January 1910, Lenana approached McClure, at Ngong, to complain that the Purko had commenced the ceremonies without his sanction. Worse still, the cattle quarantine prevented the movement of stock from the Southern Reserve; the Southern moran could bring no cattle to the ‘Eunoto’. On the 14th January 1910, Lenana, acting on his own initiative, forbade any movement of the Southern moran and ordered the Northern moran to shift to the Southern Reserve. He then appealed to Government to support him.⁴ On the 2nd February, Lenana saw Girouard. He protested that the division of the tribe was destroying his authority and pressed for reunification of the tribe. Girouard instructed the elders to obey their Paramount Chief. The Laikipia moran moved into the Southern Reserve.⁵ Thus Lenana’s intervention had cut across all discussions on future policy.

On the 23rd February 1910, Girouard held a second meeting with the Masai, which the Northern Chiefs attended as did Lord Delamere and Collyer. The question of a single Reserve was discussed and all declared themselves in favour of it. Collyer, at Girouard’s request, assured the Masai as their friend, that the move was in their best interests. Certain concessions were made and it was agreed that the Nyeri Masai would also move south.⁶ Lenana then raised the question of Sendeyo, saying he was

¹ CO 533/64/160. des. 9.12.09. para 22.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. des. 21.1.10. Memo B. Head 30.

⁴ Sandford op.cit. pp.27-29. Hollis Memo (Cmd 5583/1911) pp.17-21. Laikipia/1. Historical Resume pp.7-8; for the Sendeyo-Lenana Feud cf Kajiado/29 p.7 (Note by H.R McClure).

⁵ Kajiado Records. Kaj/30. pp.19-20. Kaj/29 pp.10-12. (McClure (undated) “Removal of N. Masai from Laikipia”). NB: Lenana first contacted Jackson.

⁶ CO 533/116/7789. Memo of Meeting 24.2.10. (Collyer). Cf also ibid. Hollis/Collyer Note 4.2.10. Also Girouard minute 26.2.10. on AG’s file 115/2/A.

“an enemy”¹ and asking for his return to German territory. Girouard pacified him with a promise that Sendeyo would be shifted far away. The Governor then returned to Nairobi.

In the following month, a Lands Department officer visited the farms in the proposed extension (The Western extension) to discuss details. In April 1910, with the Governor’s approval, the Commissioner of Lands made an offer to the Uaso farmers of land in or near the Northern Reserve in the event of a Masai move.²

Girouard was intensely busy and the Colonial Office was not informed of his proposals until they received his despatch of the 7th March. He wrote of the “enthusiasm”³ that had greeted the decision and of his desire to support the Paramount Chief. The move would solve many difficult questions of white settlement, but this had not been his main consideration. Indeed, “the solution has come rather more quickly than anticipated”.⁴ Girouard, with his views on indirect rule, was bound to support Lenana, the only chief who seemed to fit the North Nigerian pattern. But he was not entirely frank in his protestations of disinterest in white settlement in Laikipia. By April 1910, surveyors had moved into the Northern Reserve and by June that year, a wagon road had been commenced from Gilgil to Rumuruti, “for the use of settlers when it is opened up for white settlement”.⁵ Yet there could be no Masai reunion without moving the Southern farmers, and no Masai move without white settlement in Laikipia. The two issues were so intertwined that even the motives behind the move became confused.

The Colonial Office, though it did not get Girouard’s despatch until the 28th March had received advanced warning. Apart from the 1910-11 Estimates, there was a letter from Professor Gilbert Murray, passing on information from an unnamed correspondent in East Africa. This alleged that the Masai move was being railroaded through and that Lenana had no authority in the north.⁶ The Colonial Office appreciated the explosive nature of the situation: “a case of Naboth’s vineyard”⁷ and one that might “easily give rise to a tornado in the H. of Commons”.⁸ The Governor was informed on the 19th April 1910 that the move must be suspended. Despite Girouard’s appeals for support for the Paramount Chief, assurances of good faith, proposals for placing the reserve under Trustees, the approval of Missionaries and pro-native administrators, the Colonial Office refused to sanction any move until a new treaty had been negotiated.⁹

The crisis revealed the curious nature of the ‘protest voice’ amongst officials reflecting a predominantly northern point of view. Bagge in Naivasha was opposed to

¹ “an enemy had bewitched him”. Ibid. Collyer memo. 24.2.10.

² CO 533/108/40536. folio 4,37,41. (Secretariat File 2571).

³ CO 533/72/9074. des. 7.3.10. (signed by Jackson in HE’s absence) received by CO. 28.3.10.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Laikipia Records (Rumuruti Sub Station). RUM/3. Quarterly Report 30.6.10. p.28. cf also RUM/6 Quarterly Report 31.3.10. and bid. Report 1909/10. p.5.

⁶ CO 533/72/9075. copy of letter to Gilbert Murray 3.2.10. “Lenana is an expert (?) of the nauseous practice of making native agents into Government instruments and still pretending they represent the people”. The CO were in possession of this letter by mid-March.

⁷ CO 533/72/9075. Read Minute 7.4.10.

⁸ Ibid. Fiddes minute.

⁹ Ibid. Tg. CO to HE 19.4.10 and des. 22.4.10. (cf also Cmd 5584 (1911)).

any move but resigned on grounds of ill health in March 1910¹ and took no further part in the dispute. Murray's correspondent claimed that Collyer and others opposed the move, which was devised in the interest of Delamere and the settlers. But in reporting the results of the February meeting to the P.C. Naivasha, Collyer wrote, "as you will see, the Chiefs of the District voluntarily agreed to the move".² And he himself spoke in favour of it at the request of the Governor. Ainsworth, an old friend of Lenana, and at heart a Southerner, at first opposed to the move thinking that Lenana was under pressure.³ Writing to Norman Leys, the Medical Officer at Naivasha, on the 5th February 1910, he observed that the northern chiefs had gone to Nairobi, adding,

"If they agree to go South well and good, if not I agree with you that if they are forced to move it will be a scandalous matter. I am afraid however that I have lived too long in Government service not to hope that any official protest will be of any use."⁴

The Lieutenant Governor, Jackson, a former Naivasha official, was also at first, "strongly opposed"⁵ to the move, still convinced that trouble might otherwise arise.

The only official to take active steps was Dr. N. Leys, who, as Medical Officer Naivasha, had contact with the Northern Masai. Almost certainly he wrote to Professor Murray on the 2nd February.⁶ Three months later, he wrote direct to Girouard about the fears of the natives, the need for Government to keep its promises, and the avidity of the settlers for Laikipia land. Girouard, like a Dutch uncle, saw Leys "and was so good as to give me an account of his purposes and motives."⁷ Settler hopes of tampering with the Reserves were vain and that he would publically say so,

"the breach in principle shown in his Masai policy was due to circumstances so exceptional – the division of the tribe and the difficulties arising out of stock disease – that he made up his mind they would have to move whenever he first investigated the subject."⁸

Unlike Leys, the Masai administrators kept their 'protest voice' for private debate within the Service.

There now occurred – in May 1910 – a curious and somewhat neglected incident. On the 6th May, Girouard telegraphed the Colonial Office that there were "formal

¹ EAS 12.3.10. cf also fn p.277 supra. But Girouard later invited the CO to consult Bagge.

² CO 533/116/7789. Collyer to PC Naivasha 9.3.10.

³ Vide Goldsmith "John Ainsworth" pp.82-83.

⁴ NPA. Ainsworth Duplicate Book. Ainsworth to Leys 5.2.10 (Leys' letter was not preserved). NB: Ainsworth was P.C. Nyanza at the time.

⁵ Jackson, op.cit. 330, also 331.

⁶ N. Leys "Kenya". P.13 (Gilbert Murray wrote the preface to the book). Leys was the son of an English barrister. Born in Cheshire he was educated in New England and at Glasgow and Liverpool universities. He joined the African Lakes Corporation in 1901 as a medical officer and transferred to the Nyasaland Government in 1904. In September 1905, he transferred to East Africa. In 1910 he was 35 years old.

⁷ CO 533/107/35538. Leys to CS 24.9.12. cf also Leys to Girouard 23.5.10. in CO 533/106/31429.

⁸ Ibid.

documents in the presence of witnesses as to my present agreement with the signatories of 1904”.¹ On the 30th May all the leading Masai chiefs, including Legalishu, signed a formal treaty surrendering the Northern Reserve and their Nyeri settlement in exchange for a Western extension to the Southern Reserve. The one signature missing was that of Girouard himself.² Six months later, he explained to the Secretary of State that he had refrained

“from signing it until the Northern Chiefs had seen the land which it was proposed to add to the Southern Reserve. These Chiefs after seeing the land expressed themselves as not being satisfied with it and the agreement has, therefore, not been proceeded with”.³

According to Hollis who witnessed the signing of the Treaty, Legalishu’s was the one dissenting voice raised before the signature. Legalishu declared that the area offered was insufficient. Girouard then assured the Masai that they need not move; but if they did so and the extension was too small, an area of the Trans Mara would be added.⁴

By June 1910 Girouard had reason to feel angry and frustrated. He had warned the Colonial Office in December 1909, that he would resign if not given a free hand, and they had chosen to keep silent. He complained to Colonel Seely. “In Northern Nigeria I was left pretty well to my own devices...”⁵

As for the Masai, administratively the policy of two reserves was impossible.

“The separation of this tribe of cattle owners into two distinct sections is a menace to the whole country. They will not or cannot understand the necessity for quarantine in the face of disease...The consequence is that a surreptitious movement between the two sections takes place, thus providing a very serious factor in the spread of disease. In addition to this, they keep up the ‘warrior’ class who are real loafers...This class of people must disappear before we either improve the morality of the tribe or begin any civilizing influences.”⁶

“I had no intention,” he added sharply, “of moving these people, unless at their own wish but it was the Chief himself on his own who came to me and advised it, and he said that their native national customs and the whole cohesion of the tribe was being broken down.”⁷

¹ CO 533/73/13567. Tg. 7.5.10.

² The signed treaty was kept in the Treaty Book (Secretary to the Cabinet’s Office, Government House). Cf also Hollis Memo 5.7.10. and Sandford op.cit. p.30. For original draft cf AG’s File 140/15/2/2A dated 27.5.10. Lenana, Legalishu, and Masikonde were amongst the signatories. Dr. H Scott of the C.S.M. Mission was one of the witnesses.

³ Minutes of meeting 26.1.11 CO 533/97/3492. (cf also Butler’s memo. 31.5.11.on CO 533/88/19738 and Dr Scott’s letter of 1.5.10. on CO 533.88.22361).

⁴ Hollis Memo. 5.7.10. (Cmd 5584. p.19). Hollis was still Secretary for Native Affairs.

⁵ Girouard to Seely. 14.6.10 CO 533/74/22078 p.6.

⁶ Ibid. p.10.

⁷ Ibid. p.11.

Government policy was “to observe the sanctity of native reserves and to keep the power of the native chiefs and councils”.¹ With this Girouard fully concurred. But in making treaties with African tribes, it could only be done “through Chiefs and Elders”.² A referendum to sound tribal opinion was neither desirable nor practicable in Africa. The Colonial Office reaction was puzzled but full of good intention. “We must try to get Sir P.Girouard into a more cheerful frame of mind”.³ But Girouard remained convinced that with two Masai reserves, “there will be serious trouble within the next 5 years”;⁴ a view shared by others.

Events in Masai were discouraging. After visiting the western extension, the Laikipia Masai thought it too small and ill watered. Collyer after trying to coax them into a better frame of mind, noted that the “Masai certainly have agreed to go but with very bad grace....they agreed to move if Government ordered it”, but, “they would rather not move.”

“I honestly believe,” Collyer added, “that they would be surprised and possibly disappointed, if they were not called on to move.”⁵

Collyer also met with opposition in the Southern Reserve. In July 1910, he visited Sendeyo to compel the latter to move out of Lenana’s way on the Governor’s orders. Sendeyo refused point blank and the order was never enforced. By January 1911, Lenana was bitterly complaining to the A.D.C. Ngong, of Sendeyo’s efforts to bewitch him.⁶

At the end of 1910, Girouard returned to England to discuss matters of policy with Harcourt, the new Secretary of State. On the 26th January, the Masai question was discussed. Girouard read out extracts from local reports and added

“while the Chiefs would have moved at the beginning without demur and while they would now go if ordered by the Governor to do so, it was not likely that they would go voluntarily”.⁷

Harcourt took the line that he “could not defend the proposed move and the solution must, therefore remain as at present”.⁸ On the 4th February, at Girouard’s request, the Colonial Office telegraphed Nairobi that the Masai were not to be moved.

Early in February 1911, Lenana contracted dysentery. On 6th March, or the morning of the 7th, the A.D.C. Ngong, Crewe Read, visited him and discussed minor matters. There seemed no serious danger. But on the afternoon of the 7th, Lenana died. On the following day, Crewe Read returned and was informed that Lenana

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. Minute Read. 21.7.10.

⁴ CO 533/97/3492. Minutes of meeting 26.1.11 (item iii).

⁵ Collyer to PC Naivasha. 29.8.10. CO 533/116/7789.

⁶ Kajiado Records. Kaj/29 p.8. (Lenana-Sendeyo Feud) Note by Crewe Read. 15.1.11.

⁷ See f.n. p288 supra.

⁸ Ibid. cf Seely’s comment, “to move them in the face of the opposition which would be raised here would be impossible”.

“had failed to name his successor...but partiality for Seggi well known and no dispute as to leadership.”¹

The elders asked that Marmorai, Lenana’s half brother, be appointed Seggi’s advisor during his minority. Marmorai then told Crewe Read of Lenana’s dying wish. On the same day Crewe Read wrote to Lane, the P.C. Naivasha, reporting the whole affair.² News of Lenana’s death reached Nairobi by the 8th for on that day, the Colonial Office was told that no trouble was anticipated. Presumably this referred to Lenana’s great rival, Sendeyo. Many then and afterwards, believed that he had killed Lenana by his witchcraft.³

Girouard was away at Nakuru opening an agricultural show. If he knew of Lenana’s death, he made no mention of it in his speech of the 9th, though he did dwell at some length on the Masai problem. Of the deferred move he said that

“The delay was unfortunate for at a later period several of the Chiefs of the Northern Masai, who had previously expressed their willingness, withdrew from that position and it became impossible to honourably modify the treaty so formally entered into by one of my predecessors. I do not think there is a man in the country who does not regret this turn of affairs...or does not hope that a reasonable solution may yet be found.”⁴ Girouard, certainly did not yet know of Lenana’s dying wish. But by the 14th March he had sufficient information to telegraph a version of it to the Colonial Office. And on the 18th April his despatch gave the full version.

“Tell Government to look after my children and to give them the money which I should have earned if I had been alive. Tell my people to obey the Government as they have done during my life. Tell the Laikipia Masai to move with their cattle to the Loita plains.”⁵

Girouard seized on this as a golden opportunity to reopen the Masai question.

The dying wish was soon suspect. Within three months Ramsay MacDonald was to speak of it as “very nice” and “much more like a Sunday School story”.⁶ Its accuracy rested on the word of Lenana’s half brother. If it was a falsehood, Girouard might fool the Colonial Office, but not the tribe. And on its face value, the wish was not incredible; in January 1909, twice in February 1910, and against in May 1910, Lenana

¹ Kajiado Records. Kaj/29 pp.15-16. (undated note Crewe Read). Lenana’s failure to name his successor may have been deliberate since this had been done formally years before. (cf Ainsworth Diary 15.5.99. also Ainsworth 21.5.01 in FOP 7823/88 encl). cf also Stigand op.cit. p.288.

² Kajiado Records. Kaj/29 p.16. “Marmorai’s statement containing Lenana’s dying wishes will be found attached to my despatch No. 98/2 dated 8th March 1911 addressed to the Provincial Commissioner Naivasha”. (Note by Crewe Read. The despatch has not survived).

³ A Laibon only dies as the result of the curses of another Laibon who must not succeed him as spiritual head of the tribe. Cf Fosbrooke p.15. Note reports in the EAS 11.3.11. p.15; 18.3.11, pp. 8 & 13. Crewe Read (Kaj/29 p.9) noted in May 1911 Sendeyo’s wish to be reconciled with dead Laibon’s family. The DC Kajiado in 1924 states bluntly “His death was attributed to his brother Sendeyo’s witchcraft” (Kaj/30 Bell. Memo. June 1924. p.1).

⁴ LEA 11.3.11. p.8a.

⁵ Quoted in des. 18.4.11. (CO 533/86/15879).

⁶ Hansard 5th S.vol. XXVII cl. 1328. Harcourt’s minute “Lenana’s dying speech” is merely facetious. (CO 533/85/8416). But neither Hollis (Memo 9.9.12). nor Ainsworth (Goldsmith op.cit. p.83) pay much attention to the wish cf also M. Ross “Kenya from within” p.137.

had made plain his support for the move. The real test was whether the Northern Masai would pay the slightest attention.

On the 2nd April 1911, a meeting took place at Ngong attended by the Southern Chiefs together with the Northern Chiefs headed by Legalishu. (Masikonde was absent, ill). Before the meeting Lane, the P.C. Naivasha, saw Legalishu separately, in the presence of Crewe Read and the interpreter, Ole Tinka. Legalishu later asserted that Lane threatened him with deportation, if he did not agree to the move.¹ Lane, for his part, denied this. He had invited Legalishu to become Regent in the North for Seggi, and warned him that if the Masai did not move, they would be strictly confined to their old Reserve. Here was the last opportunity for obtaining the extended Reserve.

“He replied he would do anything I advised...I declined to influence him in any way and informed him that he must decide for himself.”²

Legalishu, after being reassured of additional water supplies, then agreed to support the move. Hollis was informed, and at the baraza all the chiefs present agreed. Two days later a formal treaty was signed by them in Nairobi. The signatures of other Northern Chiefs were obtained by Collyer between the 13th and 19th April. The Governor signed the treaty on the 26th April, adding a further extension to the Reserve (the Eastern extension).³ The Colonial Office telegraphed its approval of the Treaty on the 29th May.

It is impossible to say whether Legalishu or Lane lied. Lane was short tempered and by repute a poor Swahili speaker.⁴ It may be that the interpreter, put more into the translation than was in fact said.

The signing of the Treaty was the high-water mark of Girouard’s Governorship. It was hailed in the local press.⁵ But Girouard was soon to suffer a reversal of fortune. The acquittal of Galbraith Cole on a charge of homicide by a European jury, was followed by his deportation on the order of the Secretary of State. This action earned Girouard unpopularity locally, whilst his attempt to delay Harcourt’s decision drew upon him the anger of the Secretary of State.⁶

As for the Masai, warnings of storms ahead came to the Colonial Secretary in the form of a private letter from Ramsay MacDonald based on information from an

¹ CO 533/116/7789. Collyer. 20.11.11. Legalishu repeated this story to Hemsted in 1913 (vide Hemsted to AG 21.3.13. AG’s file 5520 “Masai Move”). The CO never believed Legalishu’s story cf CO 533/116/7789. Minute by Read 8.3.13. et s.

² AG’s 5520. Lane to AG. 18.3.13.

³ Vide the Treaty (Cmd 5584 (1911). Item 17/1).

⁴ AG’s 5520. Lane’s nickname was Maji Moto (hot water) vide Legalishu’s statement to Hemsted. (Also information from C. Tomkinson C.M.G.).

⁵ Cf EAS 10.6.11 and Lea. 3.6.11.

⁶ Cf Correspondence CO 533 Vols. 88,89,90,91,98,99,100,101. Girouard had doubts as to the legality of the deportation. Even Sir John Anderson warned the Secretary of State that if the matter came to court he must refuse to produce the papers. (minute 14.9.11. on Vol. 88/24472). Crewe also told Harcourt that similar action in India would have been impossible (Vol. 113/22113. 20.3.13). cf Huxley op.cit. vol. I, 281-286. Cranworth “Kenya Chronicles” p.64. “Colony in the Making” Cranworth “Kenya Chronicles” p.64. “Colony in the Making” pp.55-56 of LEA 16.9.11 p.8 for a wild rumour that the deportation was due to Cole’s intriguing with the Masai.

unnamed correspondent in Mombasa.¹ Dated the 18th May, MacDonald's letter suggested that "the chances are that this dying wish like so many other dying wishes, was manufactured by the living".² He pressed the Colonial Secretary to see Collyer, who was on home leave, adding that his informant was convinced that the settlers desired to goad the Masai into rebellion.

The Colonial Office was in a quandary. If MacDonald was correct, "the Governor and eight of his principal officers are in a conspiracy to deceive".³ But to go behind the Governor's back and to ignore his views was dishonourable. They invited MacDonald to substantiate his charges, and delayed approval of the treaty. When MacDonald gave no additional information, the Colonial Office approved the treaty and prepared for storms by drafting a white paper.

Questions in the House of Commons soon commenced and continued into July; but a white paper was laid to prove the purity of the Liberal Government's actions. Despite criticism, there was every likelihood that interest would die down, for there were major domestic issues to occupy all.⁴

Unfortunately for Girouard there were further troubles. The move of Masai from the North proceeded without difficulty until mid August, when excessive rain and dearth of grazing on the Mau caused many to break back in a panic. Exaggerated rumours circulated concerning heavy losses and Ainsworth was called to take charge.⁵ The Masai in the Rift Valley, were returned to their Northern Reserve. The two leading Northern Chiefs – their herds were the last to leave Laikipia – now opposed the move;

"they say that when they agreed to go South they made a mistake and that the country will not support them".⁶

They would move only if Government ordered it, and "it will be absolutely against their will".⁷ Collyer, returning from home leave in November 1911, sought to get the Northern leaders to inspect the Trans Mara extension, but his suggestions were coldly received. Whereupon he read a little lecture: the present impasse was largely,

"their own fault; they had refused to take heed of repeated warnings, they refused all help towards progress, they just sat still."⁸

Girouard had the unpleasant task of reporting failure to the Colonial Office. Though some 3,000 Masai and 60,000 cattle had been moved from the Northern Reserve, the

¹ CO 533/86/15879. MacDonald to Harcourt 18.5.11. The correspondent was almost certainly Leys, who had been posted to Mombasa on April 7th 1911. On 25.4.11, Collyer passed through Mombasa on his way home. NB. Delamere was also absent in England for most of 1911 (vide Huxley. Op.cit. Vol. I. p.280).

² CO 533/86/15879. MacDonald to Harcourt. 18.5.11.

³ Ibid. Minute. Fiddes 22.5.11.

⁴ The Parliament Bill was not passed by the Lords till the 10th August (Halevy – "The Rule of Democracy" p.346).

⁵ NSA. ARC(PCRPV) 2/20/3 "Masai Move". Reports of officers. Cf also ARC(PCRPV) 2/20/6; and ARC(PCRPV) 2/10/4. Ainsworth took charge of Naivasha on 1.9.11. (OG 1911. p.427).

⁶ NSA. ARC(PCRPV) 2/20/3/ Popplewell to Ainsworth. 18.10.11.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ CO 533/116/7789. Collyer. 20.11.11.

bulk of the Purko were still there. His excuse that the Masai had been pressed forward too quickly angered Harcourt, who found the explanation “a monstrous piece of impertinence coming from him”.¹ But reports that Legalishu wished to return to the north caused alarm; for there was no wish in the Colonial Office to allow any retraction of the 1911 agreement.² It was decided in October 1911, that until the Masai question was finally settled, no promises were to be made to Europeans over land in the Northern Reserve. The Governor was asked to report if any promises had been given. But when Girouard replied in the negative, Harcourt minuted his doubts.³

Girouard reported that the Masai now claimed they had only agreed to move from fear of Lenana’s dying wish; “if they did not move his spirit might haunt them”.⁴ It was clear that the numbers of stock involved had been gravely underestimated. Girouard stressed the total lack of Government policy in the past. (There was a curious tendency among administrators to assume that their predecessors did nothing!) Girouard now propounded – officially – the need to concentrate the Masai in one Reserve for the purpose of destroying the moran system and compelling the tribe to engage in cattle trading. A “sincere well wisher of the Masai”, he felt that stricter measures “will be kinder in the end”.⁵ His audience in the Colonial Office was no longer sympathetic. They were unwilling to be hustled into a new policy by a Governor “in a hurry to cover up what looks like a disastrous experiment”.⁶ A strongly worded telegram on the 3rd November informed him that the whole move was suspended pending a thorough inspection of the Trans Mara extension and its approval by the elders.

“You have a special responsibility and you will understand that my confidence in the future handling of the matter has been greatly shaken”.⁷

Reports emanating from East Africa were now greeted with suspicion or facetious comment.⁸

Repeated meetings were held with the Masai to persuade them to move. On the 5th February 1912, Girouard saw the southern regent, Ngaroya, and warned him that if the move broke down, they must revert to the 1904 agreement and to strict enforcement of the old boundaries.⁹ On this “The Masai from the Southern Reserve approached Government with the request that the Masai still in Laikipia should be ordered to move”.¹⁰ A meeting was held at Naivasha on the 10th February with the

¹ CO 533/90/29589. Harcourt, Minute 10.9.11.

² Butler, minute. 2.10.11 (CO 533/90/31623). Sandford pp.29-30. Hollis Memo 9.9.12 (on AG’s 5520). Cf also Laikipia Reports. Some suspected that Legalishu having relieved the grazing pressure in the North, desired to remain.

³ Minute, Harcourt, 11.10.11. CO 533/91/32728 after interviewing Lane who thought promises had been made.

⁴ Des. 30.9.11. CO 533/90/34828.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. Minute. Butler 30.10.11.

⁷ Ibid. Tg. 3.11.11.

⁸ Eg. “This is all very glowing but...”; “rosy account”; “The Garden of Eden” – “Mr Hill seems to have inadvertently dropped into Paradise”. I give it up: ‘I can’t waste the remnants of my brain on his riddles’ (minutes CO 533; Vols 90/38730; 102/8006; 92/40369; 92/38730).

⁹ Kajiado Records. Kaj/30 p.32-34.

¹⁰ AG’s 5520. Hollis Memo 9.9.12. cf also Sandford op.cit p.34. Kajiado/30 p.34-35 gives a slightly different account.

Laikipia representatives present. The majority refused to move, but the laigwanan, Ole Kotikosh, decided to transfer the balance of his moran south. This move was under way in March.¹ Such defections were not encouraged by the Northern leaders. Legalishu was reported as threatening to curse any who moved. Undoubtedly the Masai leaders in the South were tired of Legalishu, who was the heart of the resistance in the North. In April 1912, Collyer, now in the Southern Reserve angrily complained that he was powerless.

“What is the good when I can’t enforce my orders; it is only making a fool of myself and doing no good; if I was allowed to break kraals or something of that sort I might do some good. It is a curious situation, for as far as I can hear, some of the Laikipia people want to come South and some of them who have come South want to go back.”²

To a frustrated field officer, Government was to blame. The principle against giving orders likely to be disobeyed had been broken.

“Government have got themselves into a position when they can give no orders”³

Shortly afterwards, Collyer was transferred to Nyeri, where he died in September 1912.⁴

Girouard had returned to England in February 1912 for further discussions with the Colonial Office. On the 8th May, he satisfied the Secretary of State that the TransMara extension was adequate and permission was given for the move to recommence. On that same day Girouard admitted that displaced farmers had been promised consideration in the Northern Reserve. But when taxed ⁵with his telegram of October 1911, he saw no inconsistency. Two months later he resigned for personal reasons.⁶ The Colonial Office, particularly, the Colonial Secretary, became increasingly unpleasant at Girouard’s expense, suggesting that he was guilty of duplicity and dishonesty.⁷ In fact this seems to have been a case of genuine misunderstanding. Everyone in the Protectorate understood that land in the Northern Reserve would be available for the displaced farmers. In August 1910, Girouard had written to the Colonial Office in connection with another problem,

¹ Kajiado Records. Kaj/30 p.35. 2,000 cattle and 24,000 sheep and goats were removed.

² CO 533/116/7789. Collyer to McClellan 12.4.12.

³ Ibid.

⁴ OG 1912 p.755. Obituary “particularly successful in his administration of natives”.

⁵ CO 533/103/11782. Fiddes minute 8.5.12. et.s. cf also Girouard’s letter 6.12.12. (CO 533/115/38986), where he made the same defence.

⁶ Cf LEA 20.7.12. p.10 also letter in OG 1912 p.597 of 26.7.12. Girouard’s marriage was breaking up (vide Divorce proceedings Lea 1.8.14. p.7). For other views Huxley op.cit. Vol. I. 264-267; Cranworth “Kenya Chronicles” p.267 and Cambridge History of the British Empire Vol. III, p. 388.

⁷ Note the tone of the minutes. May “a most surprising misconception”. October “I am unwilling to believe that Sir P.G.’s proceedings were as outrageous as they appear.” December “I shall mercilessly show up Sir P. Girouard whenever it becomes necessary”. February 1913. “Sir P. Girouard shall pay in public reputation” (Harcourt Minutes. CO 533 Vols. 103/11782; 107/33583; 115/38986; 116/6364). But the Colonial Office had also been disingenuous eg. Buying out Aggett on the Southern Uaso (CO 533/76/28313). Their answer to MacDonald’s request for more papers (CO 533/95/22108). The suppression of a Game report (CO 533/103/8261).

“no difficulty would have occurred as the dispossessed [Uaso] farmers could have been compensated out of lands vacated on Laikipia.”¹

But Girouard had made no promise to individuals for any specific area in Laikipia.² He had approved the Land Office circular making a general offer on the 13th April 1910. This had gone out on the 18th April 1910, and offered land in the vicinity of Laikipia, in the event of the Masai moving. On the 19th April 1910, the Colonial Office telegram suspending the move had been despatched. The April 1910 Circular had never been cancelled. The situation was complicated by the transfer of officers from the Secretariat and the retention of the vital papers in the Land Office. Girouard though accused of deception, had provided the Colonial Office with a scapegoat.³

In May 1912, action was swiftly taken to get the Masai move under way. On the 21st May Hollis and McClellan, now P.C. Naivasha, met the Masai elders to inform them of the Secretary of State's decision. They were warned that it would be enforced. The move, properly organised and supervised, was soon under way, none too soon since grazing was scarce on Laikipia. Between the 7th June 1912 and 26th March 1913, 8064 people (400 moran), nearly 200,000 cattle, 6,000 donkeys and 844,000 sheep were moved to the Southern Reserve over four different routes.⁴

Local officials had, by now, no doubts as to the need to concentrate the tribe. Hollis, who in 1909 opposed any injustice to the Masai, supported Girouard's policy. Though Hollis, stressed that the action had only followed the voluntary agreement of the Masai he agreed that without the move “serious conflict if not bloodshed would have arisen within a short time”.⁵ A single reserve was necessary for the enforcement of a strong policy;

“the abolition of the warrior class, the necessity for their trading in cattle, and the general if slow advance towards civilization”.⁶

Even Ainsworth had come to a similar conclusion. Writing in 1912 to Lord Delamere, with whom he was not on the best of terms, he confessed

“I have been ever since the time last year when I had temporary charge of the Naivasha Province, convinced that it is in the best interests of the Masai that they should be all together....I further realise that the Masai as a tribe must be subjected to the most strict discipline and made to come into line with the times.”⁷

¹ CO 533/76/28313. des. 19.8.10.

² Vide Folios 26.29.41(8), 63 etc. on Secretariat File 2571 (CO 533/108/40536) especially Girouard's interview with the Aggetts (20.1.12) and Carnegie (13.10.11). but cf also the claim of Dr Forbes (CO 533/108/37711). If Girouard had not made specific promises, he had involved Government in obligations.

³ Cf Secretariat File 2571 (CO 533.108/40536) and Hollis letters. Ibid. 16.1.13 & 17.1.13. Jackson left for Uganda in March 1911, Monson and Bowring were away on leave. Hollis was unfamiliar with the papers.

⁴ CO 533/118/18533. McClellan's report. 21.4.13.

⁵ AG's 5520. Hollis Memo. 9.9.12. (cf also similar argument in his memo. Of 7.7.10 in Cmd 5584 (1911) p.20).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Cf Goldsmith op.cit. p.88. Delamere had alleged that Ainsworth had encouraged the Masai to sue (for the full account Ainsworth Papers (Rhodes House MSS.Afr.s.380) pp.43-45, Autobiographical Notes).

As for Collyer, he did not disagree with the policy; “I have always said that the policy of putting the Masai into one area was right, but I cannot uphold the methods.”¹

It was these that “sickened and embittered” him.²

No sooner had the move started than the battle moved into the courts. In June 1912 a lawyer, Alexander Morrison³ (a Scot and a parson’s son), informed the Colonial Office that he was acting for Legalishu and three other Masai in challenging the move. The legal struggle lasted until early 1914, proving vexatious for the local administrators. But, as Ainsworth remarked,

“If they really thought that they were being unjustly treated it was a much more civilized way of doing things than going into rebellion”.⁴

How the whole affair started is obscure. Though Leys never had “any communications with any Masai Chief”⁵ the injustice of the new move so angered him that “I arranged Mr Morrison’s visit to Legalishu”.⁶ Leys was so unwise as to flaunt this information before Government. To his hurt surprise, he was removed to Nyasaland.⁷ Legalishu, when questioned by Hollis, denied either that he had sent for Morrison or even seen him before. “Is it possible for a black man to call a white man?”⁸ Now Legalishu had volunteered to move with the advance party from Laikipia and Morrison had contacted him on the 16th June, in the settled area. For 40 bullocks (a first instalment on a fee set at £5,000)⁹ Morrison agreed to attempt to recover Laikipia.

Morrison’s contacts with the Masai were somewhat unusual. He had borrowed from a Mombasa Missionary, a Masai youth named Stephano, as a personal servant and interpreter. It was this man who acted as his contact with Legalishu. Through Stephano, Morrison got in touch with another mission Masai, one Mulungit, just returned from three years in America. Morrison sought to get Mulungit into the Southern Reserve to recruit supporters (and fees) for his case. Now Mulungit was a member of the A.I.M. at Kijabe, and as soon as his activities became known to them, the Kijabe missionaries persuaded him to withdraw,

“as a mission we cannot approve of one of our boys proceeding against the administration, and he now sees the folly of such a course.”¹⁰

¹ N. Leys. Op.cit. P.135.

² Ibid.

³ Morrison had been an R.M in the Protectorate for a number of years prior to 1910.

⁴ Goldsmith op.cit. p.87.

⁵ Leys op.cit. p.113.

⁶ Leys to HE 22.7.12. (CO 533/105/26524).

⁷ The Colonial Office seriously considered his dismissal. “such disloyalty”, “a man with such views is impossible”, “his ideas of loyalty are strange and wonderful”, “Dr Leys the self appointed champion of the Masai against the iniquitous Government” (minutes CO 533; 105/27733; 106/31429; 106/32134; 131/5895’ 131/5384). Cf also Leys letter 15.9.12 (CO 533/106/32252).

⁸ Legalishu’s statement. CO 533/105/27733. 21.6.12.

⁹ Ibid. The figure of £5,000 was given in Stephano’s affidavit (25.6.12 CO 533/107.34681). As late as 1918 Morrison was unsuccessfully suing the Masai for 30,000 rupees outstanding fees.

¹⁰ CO 533/107/34681. Dr Downing to Home 13.9.12. For the Mulungit incident cf also AG’s 5520, especially Mulungit’s statement of 25.9.12. NB: the AIM Kijabe were an American Mission.

The first months of the legal battle were a skirmish between the local administration determined to keep Morrison and his associates out of the Reserve, and Morrison equally determined to gain access. Morrison from the start fed papers and correspondence direct to the Colonial Office, ignoring repeated requests to correspond only through the Governor. The Protectorate authorities argued that since the Masai had not approached Morrison and since he had only four clients, he could not be said to represent the whole tribe.¹ They, therefore, insisted that he meet his clients outside the Reserve and not within it. After some months of successful obstruction the Protectorate Government was ordered by the Colonial Office to cease these tactics and let Morrison enter.² Once in, support was soon sufficient for him to justify his claim to represent the Laikipia Masai.

During these manoeuvres, both sides indulged in sharp exchanges; administrators distrusted lawyers who undermined their prestige. "No one", wrote Ainsworth, "deprecates more strongly than I do the idea of lawyers dealing with natives in Reserves."³ Morrison for his part commented; "It is usual for a defendant in a bad case to abuse the Plaintiff's Attorney."⁴ Similarly when the AIM Mission persuaded Mulungit to withdraw, Morrison wrote that their interference was "directly in support of the oppressive action of the local authorities".⁵ But when he suggested that new Quarantine regulations were a deliberate attempt to prevent his obtaining fees, Government's retort was sharp.

"Morrison's own methods are such as to make him unduly suspicious of the motives of others".⁶

Morrison invited the Colonial Secretary to settle out of Court; "by an act of the King's grace rather than a successful legal action".⁷ Though the Colonial Office took the Protectorate authorities to task for obstructive tactics, its views were scarcely more charitable. Sir John Anderson thought him "a hungry lawyer".⁸ Read in November 1912 considered that his Masai clients "cannot in any sense be said to represent the Masai tribe".⁹ When in January 1913, Morrison sought an interview with the Colonial Secretary, Read noted

"He...said he was willing to treat with the S.of S.! We said as little as we civilly could and got rid of him as soon as possible."¹⁰

To which Anderson added

"in any case to go back on the policy of concentration now would be fatal to our authority amongst the natives of East Africa."¹

¹ Papers on AG's 5520 cf. AG to Morrison 28.8.12, and CS to Home 30.9.12.

² Tg. CO to HE Private and Personal 7.11.12. (CO/533/107/34681).

³ Ainsworth to Delamere (Goldsmith op.cit. p.88).

⁴ Morrison to CS. 4.9.12. (CO 533/107/34681).

⁵ Morrison to Downing. 16.9.12. (CO 533/115/33190).

⁶ HE to CO. 12.11.12. (CO 533/108/38412).

⁷ Morrison to CO 28.6.12. CO 533/ 115/22854.

⁸ Ibid. Minute, Anderson 23.7.12.

⁹ Minute, Read. 4.11.12. CO 533/107/34681.

¹⁰ Minute, Read. 20.1.13. CO 533/ 109/2063.

Prestige required that an order once given must be enforced.

In December 1912, the Attorney General obtained the Governor's fiat for the joinder of parties in the case. Morrison on his side shrewdly adjusted the conflicting claims of two groups of Masai clients – the Kekonyukie who challenged the 1904 treaty and the Purko who disliked the 1911 Treaty – by combining their complaints into a single action against the 1911 agreement.² In February 1913 the plaintiffs applied for an injunction to stop the move 'pendante lite', which the High Court granted on the 12th April. The hearing of preliminary arguments in the case were set down for the 9th May 1913.

The final complaint was a curious document. The Plaintiffs were now 3 Purko and 5 Kekonyukie moran headed by Ole Njogo. The defendants were the Attorney General, certain Government officers and all the Masai signatories to the 1911 Treaty, including Legalishu. The complaint claimed that the 1911 Treaty was invalid since the Moran had not been consulted and

“according to ancient tribal custom of the Masai elders such as the defendants...can give advice only but the actual decision in any particular case rests with a council of the Moran...”³

The Complaint claimed that most of the Masai had only signed the treaty under duress, and were in sympathy with the plaintiffs. (Significantly, this claim omitted all the southern Masai and Masikonde with three other Northern signatories.) The complaint asked for the return of Laikipia – valued at £1 million – and £300,000 compensation for losses, or depreciation of livestock. For failing to construct the link road between the Reserves – a breach of contract – the plaintiffs asked for £5,000 and also for the costs of the action.

The Attorney General fought the case on a single issue. The Treaty was an act of State, and as such was not subject to municipal courts. In this contention he was successful both in the High Court and again in the Court of Appeal.⁴ By May 1914, the Masai case was dead. Surprisingly, the Colonial Office did not at all like this decision. Sir John Anderson protested,

“It amounts to this that for the protection of their Reserves these natives whom we have deprived of the power of protecting themselves are also deprived of the protection of the Courts”.⁵

He doubted whether the Privy Council would uphold such a judgement. But the matter was not put to the test; there was no further appeal.

¹ Ibid. Anderson 20.1.13. (Harcourt later saw Morrison in the presence of Anderson).

² Vide Complaint (Sandford op.cit. p.186 et s.) For the Kekonyukie claim cf CO 533/ 116/6415.

³ Sandford op.cit. pp.190-191.

⁴ High Court Judgement printed as Cmd 6939 (1913). Court of Appeal Judgement EAP Law Reports Vol. V pp.70-114.

⁵ Minute, Sir John Anderson. 22.7.13. on High Court Judgement (CO 533/119/24828).

The result of this long, drawn out, tangled, legal battle within the Reserve was damaging to administrative prestige. In November 1912, McClellan, at Naivasha complained,

“The fact of Mr Morrison being allowed to interfere with the internal working of the administration of the tribe is leading the Masai to be discontented and hopeful that they may thwart the officers in charge of them at every turn.”¹

The Southern leaders were exasperated with Legalishu. In December 1912, Ngaroya, the southern regent, told Belfield that “he always agreed and still agreed to the arrangement”.² Seggi, the young Paramount Chief felt the move must go forward. Marmoroi added, somewhat cynically, that future discussions had better be conducted with Legalishu alone, since everyone else was satisfied. These views were reiterated in June 1913. In July 1913, when the Governor toured the extended Reserve to study the conditions, he met the Northern representatives and invited them to air their grievances. All remained uneasily silent, save for Legalishu,

“who burst into a rather intemperate tirade, insisting that my opinion was of no value, that it was a bad country”³ and

“that he intended to get Laikipia back and would never cease his agitation until that had been accomplished.”⁴

But despite Legalishu’s efforts, Government had achieved its first objective. The Masai were at last concentrated in a single Reserve.

A brief postscript is necessary to recount the fate of some of the actors in this farce. Seggi, the Paramount Chief, fell from grace and was discharged in 1918, when the Paramountcy was abandoned and replaced by a Masai Council. Masikonde, who had not joined in the law suit, became, together with Legalishu, the leading Purko Chief. Both were highly regarded by Government in later years. Sendeyo, after a feud with Seggi’s supporters (each side using charms) was deported in 1919 for his evil influence over the Moran. Returning in 1928 he became, once more, the strong Chief of the Loita, whose services were valued by Government. Ole Njogo, the main plaintiff in the Masai case, was by 1914, a Government headman and “of great assistance.”⁵

After 1914 Government made repeated efforts to destroy the Moran system. Legalishu became an ardent and determined supporter of this policy.⁶ But even this failed. The moran system survived and the attempt to destroy it merely weakened the control exercised by the elders.

¹ McClellan to Cs 23.11.12. (CO 533/116/36515).

² Minutes of Nakuru Meeting 5.12.12. CO 533/109/2063.

³ HE to CO 30.10.13. para 34. CO 533/ 123/39666.

⁴ Ibid. (Legalishu raised the matter again with the Carter Commission).

⁵ Southern Province Records. SP/1. (Bound Vol. Reports by subjects, 1914/39). ‘Headmen’ 1914/15 p.17. cf also SP/2 and /3.

⁶ Native Affairs Department Report 1928, p.22; *ibid.* 1936,p.23.

The Masai problem existed before white settlement, but white settlement made the problem ten times more difficult. To the problem of security it added grievances over land. And yet the Masai came out of it all surprisingly well. By taxing the conscience of Government, they won further concessions in additions to the wide acres secured by treaty. Indeed part of their protest was by way of hard bargaining.

The Colonial Office, in seeking to avoid criticism at Westminster by an insistence on a general agreement, heightened the suspicions of a conservative people. In a period of a year, the Masai were asked to sign three separate agreements. Repeatedly their views were consulted. Yet, as Girouard had insisted, the basis of indirect rule was that the Chief spoke for his people. Throughout the period, the Colonial Office kept themselves unevenly informed of the situation. Interference alternated with indifference, creating a hiatus in policy making and in the chain of command. And interference created the very situation administrators dreaded, where orders could be challenged.

Too slavish a concern for conflicting tribal opinion reduced policy to near chaos; it was not possible to please all the people all the time. And when 'thorough' administrators hoped to use the concentration of the tribe to bring progress, they too were doomed to fail. The conservative pastoralist had the ability to resist; without co-operation there could be no change. In the final analysis, the Masai problem was not a question of Reserves but of a way of life; the defiant pastoralist paralysed progress. The best of collaborators could not alter this.¹

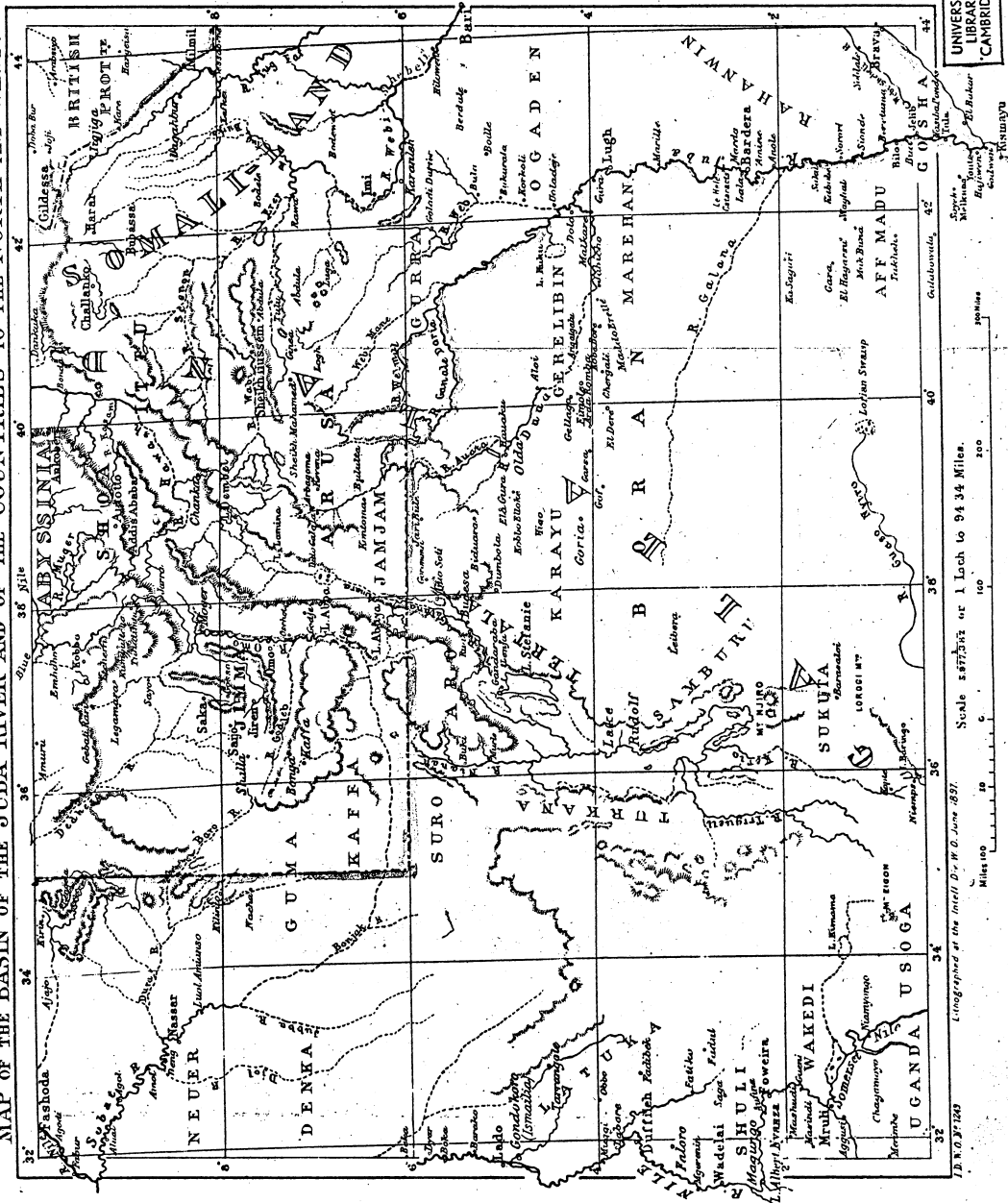
Finally, there was the strange facility with which the Masai won sympathy for their conflicting views and threw the councils of Government into confusion. When the Northerners, Jackson and Bagge opposed Eliot, the policy of Lenana's friend Ainsworth triumphed. When Lenana changed his mind, so did Ainsworth. If the Northern D.Cs distrusted Lenana, he had the respect of the Southerners, McClure and Crewe Read. His proximity to Nairobi won him the support of Hollis and McClellan. Where Jackson admired Legalishu, or Bagge opposed reunification, or Leys conspired, their common bond was Naivasha. Had McClure and Collyer changed places rather earlier, they might well have altered their attitudes as well as their districts.² With such a covey of chameleons, perhaps there was method in the Masai madness.

¹ Lenana's successes and failures might well be compared with those of Lobengula for the Matabele, Lewanika for the Barotse, the Zulu Kings, Moshesh for the Basuto, or Khama for the Bamangwato.

² Collyer had gone to the Southern Reserve early in 1912. McClure moved from Nyeri to Rumuruti in late 1912.

With. 3100. 8.144

MAP OF THE BASIN OF THE JUBA RIVER AND OF THE COUNTRIES TO THE NORTH AND WEST.



CHAPTER VII

A FORWARD POLICY FOR THE FRONTIER

A curious feature of British Imperialism was the manner in which frontier regions mesmerized local officials. Often expensive and unproductive, these areas possessed all those defects most dreaded by the British Treasury. In Somaliland, South Africa, India and the East Africa Protectorate, the Imperial authorities repeatedly attempted to disengage themselves from profitless frontier ventures.¹ But there seemed no compromise between total abandonment or effective occupation. The vacuum, once broken, must be filled. In this process, a major part was played by the 'man on the spot', who, enmeshed in parochial problems, refused to accept the passive role allotted to him by a cautious Government. Stirred by a sense of duty, a desire to bring, peace, or ambition for promotion, and deceived by those myths that little known territories create, the local official was a supreme optimist. His escapades and involvement dragged a most unwilling Government after him in the illusive hope that somewhere, somehow, there was a final frontier solution just around the corner.

Beyond the foothills of Mount Kenya, stretching in an arc from north to east, lies a great area of scrub bush and lava desert. Flanked by the Abyssinian Highlands and Lake Rudolf, it tilts gently down to the Indian Ocean four hundred miles to the south. Arid and barren, it has a poor rainfall and little permanent water away from the Tana, Juba, Daua Parma, and Uaso Nyiro rivers, or the isolated Mt Marsabit and the well centres at Afmadu, Wajir, El Wak, Buna, and Gaddaduma (in Abyssinia). It was a country of bad communications. The two river routes to the interior were navigable with difficulty during the rains only. The land routes were dominated by lack of water, fierce tribes and, in places, tsetse fly.

The inhabitants of the frontier region were drawn from two streams of migrants. From the north and east, came the Galla (Boran), the Gurreh, and elements of the predominantly Somali Adjuran. The second and more recent migration from the Horn of Africa was Somali, intermingling along the cutting edge of an ethnic frontier with earlier peoples. Starting in the middle of the 19th Century, they had spilt over the Webi Shebelle and the Juba, and had reached the eastern bank of the Tana by the first decade of the 20th century. In their march they absorbed or scattered the southern Galla peoples. But the whole process had left the region full of fragments of tribes, whose kinsfolk were still dwelling in the Horn. The Northern stream of migrants was mainly pagan, the Eastern fanatically Muslim.²

The Somali migrants were drawn from two of the major tribal divisions of the Somali race; the Hawiya and the Darod. From Kismayu to Wajir, the Ogaden (Darod) tribes moved in. In the North, from Bardera to Dolo, lay another Darod tribe, the Marahan.

¹ Cf J.G Alder "British India's Northern 1865-1895" (1963). A. Lamb "Britain and Chinese Asia 1767-1905" (1960); J.S Galbraith "Reluctant Empire. British Policy on the South African Frontier 1834-54" (California University 1963). D. Jardine "The Mad Mullah of Somaliland" (1923).

² I. M Lewis JAH. 1960. I. "The Somali conquest of the Horn of Africa".

Between the Daua and Wajir there settled the Hawiya. All were pastoralists but whilst the cattle people predominated in the south, the camel people were found in greater numbers in the north.

The essence of the Somali was his independent spirit, his religion, his quarrelsome courage, his ability to move light, and the itch to find new and better pastures.¹ His social bonds were the blood ties of kith and kin; his first loyalty was to his clan, and then to the tribe. The unity of clan and tribe was determined by lineage descent rather than territorial propinquity. In a society where lineage was important, family heads provided the clan and tribal elders. Again, war was part of the struggle for existence, the clash over grazing and water, or the thrust and counter-thrust of the tribal blood feud. In the game of tribal politics, a system of clientage operated as a means of increasing the fighting strength of the tribe. But the 'political' tribe was an ephemeral thing, a union of related clans and clients under the influence of a strong personality, or the pressure of war, ready and liable to fragment. The Chiefs – grandiloquently called Sultans – were often hereditary or chosen from the dominant clan; but the hereditary principle was less important than a strong personality, wealth, religious prestige, or prowess in war.² Such were the people moving across the Juba and into the new Protectorate.

The eastern boundary of the Protectorate was flanked by the Italian colony of Somaliland. Boundary disputes had been reduced to a minimum by a Protocol in 1891, which laid down the limits of British and Italian spheres of influence along the Juba River and in the north, along the 6th Parallel of Latitude, thus placing most of Abyssinia in the Italian sphere. But such arrangements ignored two most important players in the game; the 'Mad Mullah',³ in Somaliland and the Emperor Menelik in Ethiopia. They symbolized the two major frontier problems to face European administrators: the Somali westward march and the Abyssinian encroachments into the south. And in European terms there were no solutions to such challenges; only a fluctuation between the alternatives of abandonment of the interior, or a perpetual extension of administration in a search for peaceful frontiers. The events of the next twenty five years were to provide a monotonous variation on this theme.⁴

In 1895, the new Protectorate had inherited from the I.B.E.A.C. its base at Kismayu on the Somali coast with the road to the interior lying along the Juba, or overland past the wells of Afmadu. The Company's attempts to extend into the interior had met with a bloody repulse.⁵ The new administration found itself poised precariously on the coast; any move into the interior faced the problem of difficult communications.

¹ For contemporary views of the Somali character cf Drake Brockman "British Somaliland" ch. VII. The Jubaland and Northern Frontier District Handbook pp. 17-18; also an intelligence Report of 1901 ("proud, revengeful, treacherous") in FO 2/446 attached to des. 56.28.3.01.

² I. M Lewis, "Peoples of the Horn of Africa"; pp.1748, 88, 90,118,130,140. In the South, the clients were called "shegats".

³ Mohamed bin Abdulla, a Somali religious leader whose fanatical hatred for all things European (save guns) brought perpetual war to the Horn of Africa between 1900 and 1920. cf Jardine op.cit., also JAS. Vol. V. no. 3. 1964. R.L. Hess "the 'Mad Mullah' and Northern Somaliland".

⁴ In later years, the Turkana frontier provided a similar problem for the Protectorate authorities.

⁵ Cf McDermott "British East Africa" (1895 ed.) p.232. The Company policy was to "subsidise rather than subdue". Cf also Protectorate Report 1897 p.17 and NFD Handbook p.23-24.

The opening move was made by Clifford Craufurd, a Scot and a former Company employee, who had charge of Jubaland. In October 1895 he reached Afmadu and obtained the submission of the Ogaden Sultan, Margan Yusuf, without fighting. The Herti near Kismayu were also brought under control. Craufurd was shortly afterwards replaced by Jenner as Sub Commissioner. But the peace in the interior was short lived. The elderly Margan Yusuf died in 1896, and though his son Ahmed was recognised by Government, he was young, and rash, lacking the personal influence of his father.¹ The Ogaden tribes – the Mohamed Zubeir, Aulihan, Abdulla, Abd Wak and Magabul – were soon out of hand. A series of murders and slave raids took place, directed chiefly against the Boran. Local officials pressed for immediate punitive measures; “a delay in vindicating the authority of Government is almost invariably misinterpreted as weakness.”² But the Foreign Office would permit no active operations. Delay brought increased lawlessness. In mid-1898 a major expedition, with Indian troops was mounted. It suffered several reverses at the hands of the Somalis. Not until September 1898, after a blockade of vital watering places during the dry season, were the Ogaden brought to terms.³

Peace left the Kismayu authorities free to resume their quest for the almost legendary kingdom of the Boran in the north, and to counter the steady advance of the Abyssinians, rumours of which trickled into Kismayu. From the first, overtures had been made to Afolata, King of the Boran.⁴ Jenner had urged the need for an advanced post near Bardera, on the river, to protect the ‘Boran Galla’ from destruction by the Abyssinians. Throughout 1898, tales of Abyssinian raids circulated. By the end of that year even Afmadu was thought to be threatened. Afolata and Geido, another Boran Chief, appealed for help. In January 1899, he made a protracted journey up the river as far as Lugh, but failed to reach Afolata. He then despatched an agent, Muhamed Ajil, with an escort of 40 Police, to contact the Boran King, to offer him the British flag, and “to try and draw the Boran Gallas to us... but give no promise of our taking over.”⁵ The party failed to contact Afolata, but came into conflict with some “Amharas”. Both the Foreign Office and Craufurd (now acting as Commissioner), feared that the Boran might seek to force their hands and involve the British in a conflict with Abyssinia. Firm orders were issued to avoid extending the limits of territory “actually administered”.⁶ Nevertheless, by June 1900, Jenner was writing enthusiastically of the absolute peace that reigned in the interior; the murder of Boran had ceased, trading was taking the place of raiding.⁷

¹ JPA. Bundle IV. Des. 20.11.95 and 29.12.95. Protectorate Report 1897. p.18. Ahmed Margan’s career illustrates the fissiparous tendencies of Somali tribes. He had difficulty in controlling his own Mohamed Zubeir, let alone the Ogaden. (cf Afmadu Baraza. 1904. in des. 7.1.05. CO 533/8/7788).

² FOP 7032/32. Hardinge to FO. 17.9.97.

³ Northern Frontier Records. NFD/66 (Papers. 2nd Mohamed Zubeir Expedition). Also MPA, HMC in 1898. 1.4.98 and FOP 7024, 7032, 7077, 7090, *passim*.

⁴ Protectorate Report 1897. p.18. cf also Hardinge “Diplomatist in the East” p.217. The Boran, and Afolata, were thought to possess anti-slavery sentiments and won the sympathy of local officers. E.g. Jenner in MPA Juba in 2.1.96, also Ainsworth’s diary 22.8.97. For the progress of the Abyssinian advance see the maps with MacDonald’s report (20.9.97 on FOP 7032/23) and Eliot’s des. (17.3.03. FOP 8192/105).

⁵ FO 2/206. Jenner’s report of 6.7.99. Agil’s report is with des. 10.7.99 on FO 2/197. NB: Craufurd’s comment that the Galla (Boran) “may try to force the Sub Commissioner’s hands”.

⁶ FOP 7402/89. FO to HMC 1.9.99.

⁷ FO 2/303. Memo of Jenner. 20.6.1900.

The whole situation was drastically altered by the death of Jenner, in November 1900, murdered near the Lorian swamp by Ogaden. Jenner had been in charge of Jubaland since 1895. By training a barrister, and a former Judicial Officer of the Company, he was a vigorous man, with a contempt for the Military, and an admiration for the Somali, "whom he unfortunately credited with high qualities foreign to their real character."¹ But his flogging of some young Ogaden, at the Afmadu wells, aroused the hostility that led to his death.²

The inevitable and costly punitive expedition followed. Again Indian troops were brought in and an ineffective campaign was waged with 1400 troops supported by 1300 porters and camp followers, at a cost of £140,000. Afmadu was occupied, but a check at Samasa, where Somali spearmen broke into a British square, was followed by the abandonment of Afmadu. A misunderstanding between the Foreign Office and the local commander, Colonel Ternan, led to the premature cessation of operations; Ternan advocating, on the one hand the occupation of the Gosha river belt, and on the other, the total abandonment of the interior.

"Half measures are of no use: it is not the intention of the Government to spend sufficient money to thoroughly finish the job, and I admit that if they did so, it would be simply a waste of money".³ The new Commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot, opposed military adventures, and supported a policy of abandoning all posts, not held before the operation. "I very much doubt," he wrote, "whether this province is worth the money which is spent on it".⁴

The Foreign Office was appalled to discover that it was asked to occupy a desert. After reading a detailed and depressing intelligence report, Cranborne, the Under Secretary, minuted, "what most strikes me is the absolute worthlessness of this part of the Protectorate". The Foreign Secretary, Lansdowne, added,

"We cannot 'scuttle' from this unattractive region, particularly after the reverse sustained here, but we should certainly satisfy ourselves.. that it is necessary to hold an advanced post on the Juba".⁵

The situation was saved by an effective blockade on the Somali of the interior, and by the initiative of two local administrators, MacDougall at Kismayu, and Rogers at Lamu. These two led forays against the Ogaden around Port Durnford and Afmadu, which brought the Somali to terms. But they had taken risks and, on more than one occasion, acted without authority. Though Eliot might commend "the somewhat irregular expeditions" which proved "far more efficacious than costly and

¹ Cmd 7823/1901 (Papers relating to the murder of Mr. Jenner) item 23. Col. Ternan to FO. 25.11.00. cf also NFD/66 for the statement of Sgt. Mohamed Agil; and MPA (26/71) "Intelligence Summary 1900-01". Also Hansard. 4th S.XCVII. 19.7.01.

² The trouble started with a quarrel between Jenner's police and some Mohamed Zubeir over the use of the wells.

³ FOP 7823/117. 18.5.01. Ternan. For the misunderstanding leading to the close of operations cf FO 2/455 telegrams 41,55,118 and Memo by Ternan and Cranborne (FO 2/444 21.9.01 and 4.11.01).

⁴ FOP 7823/77. Tg. 29.4.01. Again des. 282. 1.10.01 (FO 2/450). "I am penetrated with the conviction that it is useless to spend lives and money on subduing the barbarous inhabitants of barren deserts". Cf also his report 9.4.02. (FO 2/570) and his "East African Protectorate" p.121 ("if only our officers will avoid getting killed").

⁵ Minutes on FO 2/445 des. 19.3.01.

cumbersome methods of regular warfare”,¹ Whitehall was alarmed. The policy was now one of “masterly inactivity”,² MacDougall’s raid on Afmadu was “a very provocative measure”.³ Rogers’ expedition was little better:

“The position of British officers in the Protectorate is undoubtedly a difficult one. From time to time it may be necessary for them – however unremunerative the task may be – to risk lives and incur expenditure in asserting our authority, which must of course, never be allowed to fall into contempt.”

Nevertheless, they must seek

“to spread their influence gradually over the natives, and to teach them by degrees the advantages of civilization by attracting them to European centres, but only to push on outposts where there is a fair prospect of commerce, or where their establishment will be well received by the inhabitants. It is not the wish of His Majesty’s Government to force their way among tribes who are hostile.”⁴

Early in 1902, civil administration was withdrawn from Jubaland. The Military were left to administer this province, with a garrison of 350 troops, and a small Camel Corps, based on the river at Yonte under strict instructions not to become involved in the interior. When the Military Sub Commissioner asked permission to send out a patrol, in 1904, to capture Jenner’s murderers, Eliot replied that Government “opposed...any action which could cause a general disturbance”. Sir Clement Hill, in the Foreign Office, minuted his approval, adding, “But the less publicity given to the point the better”.⁵

¹ FO 2/570. Eliot Report. 9.4.02.

² Cranborne Minute on des. 5.5.01. FO 2/447.

³ Lansdowne, minute on des. 25.2.02. FO 2/570. NB: MacDougall’s personal ascendancy. He knew “more about natives than any other officer”. (Harrison, with des. 19.4.02. FO 2/571). Ahmed Margan called him “my best friend”. (FO 2/569. encl. des. 21.2.02).

⁴ FO 2/443 des. 5.7.01. FO to HMC. Cf also Cranborne’s minute on des. 20.6.01 (FO 2/450) “I hope our officers will be moderate in undertaking punitive expeditions... I am inclined to think it degenerates into a bad habit”. Eliot had a particular dislike of such operations (vide des. 1.10.01. FO 2/450).

⁵ FO 2/835. des. 24.2.04.

As a result Afmadu remained unoccupied, though as a symbol of the Forward Policy, its occupation was often mooted. Each rumour of Abyssinian raids to the south, or threatened incursions by the 'Mad Mullah', gave to its wells a new significance. In time officers became hypnotised by it. So for instance in November 1904 Stewart, the Commissioner, pressed for its occupation. The Foreign Office, whilst permitting him to visit the wells, reminded him that they were,

“Strongly opposed to the pursuance of a forward policy in Jubaland and to the occupation of Afmadu”.¹

When Stewart, in January 1905, reported that the Somali chiefs themselves were eager for British occupation, the Foreign Office passed the matter over to the Colonial Office, merely noting that their policy had been “one of abstention”. The Colonial Office, for their part, agreed to occupation provided the greatest caution was observed.² Rumours that the Abyssinians had occupied El Wak and might threaten Afmadu, seemed to justify the decision. At the same time the Aulihan appealed for protection against the Mullah. But the crisis passed. In May 1905, the Inspector General of the KAR, Brigadier Manning, advised against occupation. There were,

“Other regions where a forward policy undertaken by military force has greater prospects of immediate profit”.³

The Protectorate Government abandoned its schemes for the time being.

The reversion to civil administration, in November 1905, did not alter the situation. The acting military Sub Commissioner, Captain R.E Salkeld, became the Acting Civil Sub Commissioner, but the policy remained unchanged. It was “one of subsidising the Chiefs and interfering as little as possible with inter-tribal matters”.⁴ The Somali were left to fight each other; nor were they taxed. Such policy as there was stemmed from Salkeld, who remained in charge from 1905 until 1914. It was described as maintaining control by, “a happy combination of humour, bluff, and playing one tribe off against another”.⁵

The major positive consideration in those years was to suppress any religious fanatic, for fear of another Mullah. In 1906 a would-be holy man was shot by Salkeld in an affray. The incident won the approval of the Colonial Office. One official minuted: “This method of dealing with Mullahs must save a great deal of bloodshed in the long

¹ FO 2/841. Tg. 180. 18.11.04; 182, 21.11.04; Stewart's telegram 16th and 19th November 1904 (FO 2/842). NB: Stewart's original instructions of 8.7.04. (CO 519/1/26334) to restrict operations to the narrowest limits.

² CO 533/ 9/7788. des. 7.1.05; FO to CO 10.3.05; CO to HMC 18.4.05.

³ Memo by Manning, Inspector General KAR with des. 23.8.05. (CO 533/ 3/33241. But by 1907 Manning accepted the need for a final expedition: “they will never settle down peacefully until they recognise our ability to compel them to listen to our orders” (CO 533/ 39/26193. 28.3.07).

⁴ Memo. Colonel Thesiger IG. 17.4.12. COP 954/21.

⁵ C. Heywood. “To the Mysterious Lorian Swamp” p.18. But by 1914 Salkeld had fallen from favour with the CO. vide Parkinson's minute, “by no means to be the man we thought” (CO 533/132/3964).

run”, and Winston Churchill, then Under Secretary, added, “Some Cromwell guiltless of his country’s blood”.¹

As time passed, however, Salkeld became the advocate of a moderate forward policy. The possibilities of European settlement on the Juba led him to consider an advance into the interior, for which the occupation of Afmadu was the first step. By May 1909, he was pressing for the re-occupation of Serenli and Afmadu.² In 1910, under Sir Percy Girouard, his proposals were finally implemented. But the move into the interior brought the administration once more into collision with the migrating Somali. By 1912 Salkeld was thinking in terms of a Somali Reserve, which would require, as he told the Native Labour Commission, improved water supplies.³ And by 1914, he had reached the conclusion that such a Reserve was vital to check the westward drift; though internally he wished to leave the Somali tribes to run their own affairs.⁴

The whole Jubaland technique for dealing with the aggressive Somalis was later criticised for its weakness by advocates of a more aggressive forward policy. It was a policy of “glaxo”, whereas what was needed was some “hell-fire”.⁵ Writing in 1919, the officer in charge of the NFD complained that,

“We are suffering from the inheritance of a vicious administrative legend. Never until the last 18 months has an order given to the Somali really been enforced. We have been afraid to call the Somali’s bluff. I consider that Capt. Salkeld’s policy is largely responsible for this.”⁶

But the real fault of the ‘glaxo’ policy in Jubaland was that it was not geared to check the steady drift of the Somali to the west.

In 1909, a large number of Abdulla watered on the Upper Tana during the dry season. This Somali ‘invasion’, though a passing incident, brought home to the authorities the danger of the migration. Read, in The Colonial Office minuted in April 1909 that,

“If 10,000 starving Somalis can suddenly make their appearance in the administered portion of the EAP, what would happen if all the turbulent Somali tribes on the Juba were set in motion. I have always looked upon this as one of the most serious sides of the Somali question. One cannot draw a hard and fast line between neighbouring possns in Africa, and a wrong policy in one may lead to disastrous results for the other.”⁷

¹ CO 533/ 11/5072. Minutes on des. 18.1.06. On the deportation of a potential trouble maker in 1910, Read noted, “we cannot afford to run any risks in Jubaland, which is the chief danger spot in the EAP” (CO 533/72/9069).

² Salkeld Memo CO 533/ 59/20759. On Afmadu “with that in our hands the Somali question may be considered settled”. But, “the longer the Somali is left alone, the better the chance of some bellicose Mullah appearing and the more certainty there is of the Somali arming”.

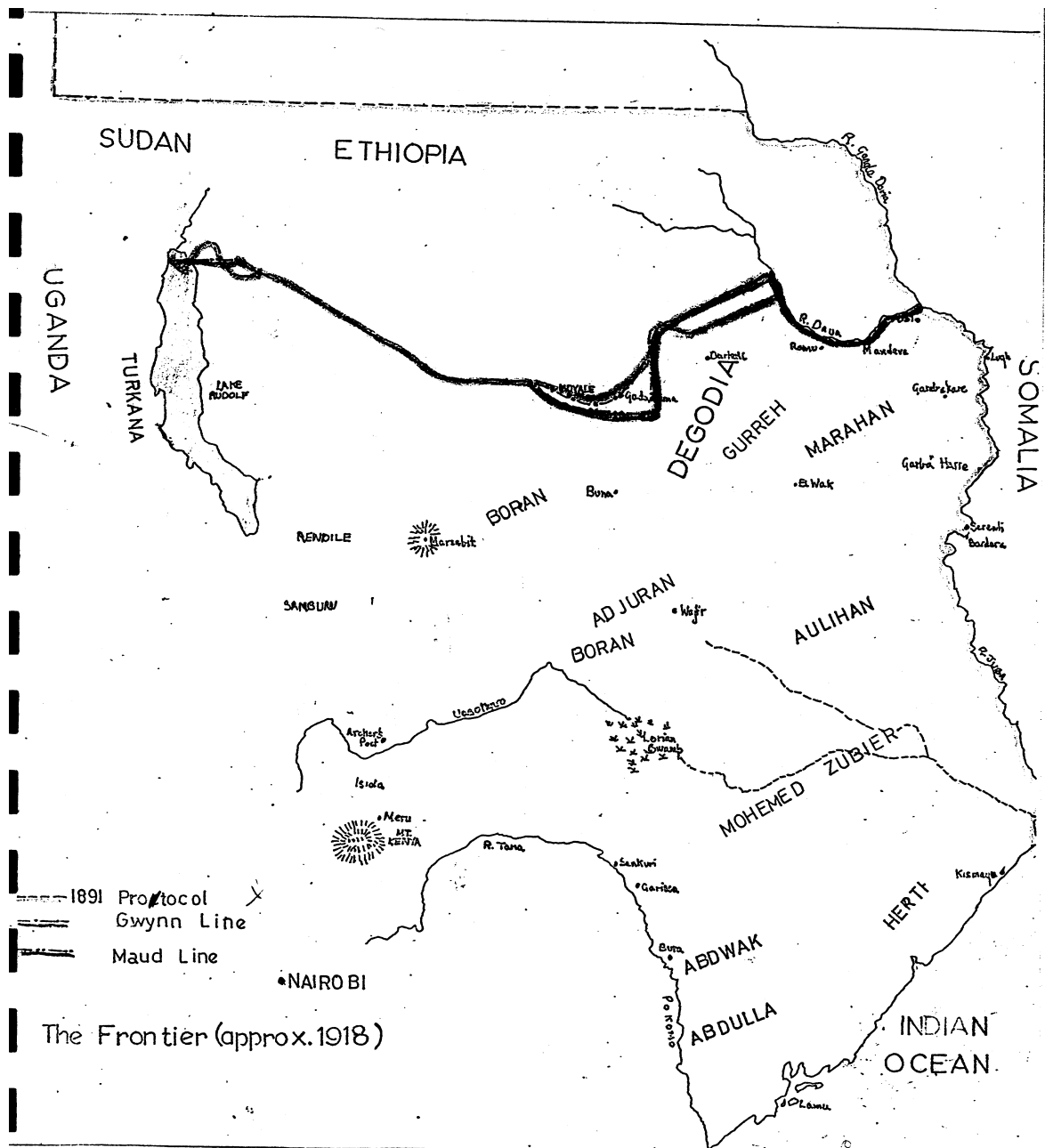
³ Native Labour Reports 1913. p.310.

⁴ NFD Handbook. P.55.

⁵ Cf Lloyd Jones “K.A.R” p.123.

⁶ NFD/142. Kittermaster to PC Lamu 13.5.19. also NFD/61 Kittermaster to CS 14.1.19.

⁷ Read minute 20.4.09. CO 533/ 58/3011.



The only answer was to persuade or compel the Somali to cease their wanderings. In the long run, this was the policy adopted. But when the problem was discussed in Legislative Council in 1911, the Chief Secretary could only suggest that,

“If the Somali could be persuaded to settle...it was intended to insist on their building stone mosques, which would be likely to induce them to remain permanently at one place instead of roaming around”.¹

The Forward Policy in Jubaland, the advance from the South, the control of the Somali migration, had become bogged down in the years between 1902 and 1909. But events on the northern frontier gave to the whole region a new impetus, linked to the problem of securing a border against Abyssinia. To understand the situation it is necessary to digress a little.

Menelik, secure by his triumph over the Italians at Adowa in 1896, steadily extended his control over the territories lying on the fringes of his kingdom. His moves were closely watched by Britain, France and Italy. British Imperial interests were at stake, particularly the head-waters of the Nile² and the borders of the Sudan. The first discussions between British representatives and Menelik took place in 1897, when Rennell Rodd visited the Emperor and was made aware of the latter's extensive territorial claims, originally enunciated in a declaration of 1891. In the following year, a British mission went to Addis Ababa under the command of Harrington,³ who remained there as British representative for the next 10 years.

In May 1898, Harrington reported “Menelek is thoroughly aware of the fact that effective occupation is the card to play in Africa”.⁴ Menelik laid great stress on his claims to the various sub tribes of the Galla, and under this guise extended his territorial claims as far south as the 2nd parallel. Hardinge regarded such claims as “rather audacious”.⁵ But Harrington, in Addis Ababa, was primarily concerned with negotiating a satisfactory Sudan boundary; the East African Protectorate boundary was of secondary importance. By June 1900, Menelik had made definite proposals for a southern frontier, which gave him control of the Boran. Attempts to reserve the Boran for British protection, or suggestions that Boran territory might be divided, put the Emperor in “an extremely bad temper”.⁶ The Boran were necessary for feeding the Abyssinian troops.⁷ Eventually a tentative line was defined on an inadequate map and in writing. Harrington recommended that this should be accepted, since,

¹ Legco. 3rd Session 1911. p.6.

² Note Bertie's comment “What we have to guard against is that France should attempt to get at the headwaters of the Nile, either by territorial contiguity or obtaining such a position in Abyssinia to enable her to control the policy of that country” (FOP 8235/175. 19.12.03).

³ Sir John Harrington 1865-1927. Indian Army. Vice Consul Zeila 1895-1898. Consul 1898. Agent, Consul General, Minister Plenipotentiary Addis Ababa 1898-1909. retired 1910.

⁴ H.G Mareus JAH IV.1. p.86 cf also JAH V.1. G.N Sanderson “The Foreign Policy of Menelik 1896-98”. Cf also R. Rodd's ‘Memoirs’, and Welby “Twixt Sirdar and Menelek”. *Passim*.

⁵ Hardinge Memo. 20.10.99. FOP 7382-164. Note Cranborne's minute “So long as it is only Abyssinian authority that is concerned, we should not I imagine, respect any pleas of effective occupation” (on des. 13.4.02. FO 2/571).

⁶ FOP 7547/40 Harrington to FO 19.6.00.

⁷ The Boran tenants or serfs, were allocated to troops in lieu of pay cf FOP 7547/40 (Harrington to FO 29.6.00). also FOP 7547/6 17.5.00. The Boran region was of value because of ivory. At the same time Hardinge reported Afolata's appeal; “the Abyssinians have placed a rope around his neck and.. he begs the English Government to remove it” (FOP 7423/61. 6.5.00).

“The longer we delay a settlement the more likely we are to find an extension of the Abyssinian influence thus rendering a satisfactory settlement more difficult”.¹

In October 1900, the Foreign Office authorized Harrington to negotiate an agreement. An attempt to make an immediate survey of the frontier region proved a failure. A new survey party was sent out in 1902 under Mr. Butter and Capt. Maud and a line was drawn on a more accurate map on the basis of Menelik’s proposals of 1900. The Maud line was a considerable concession on the original 1891 Protocol boundary, but in Maud’s opinion the country surrendered was worthless.² But then Sir Charles Eliot was not interested in the territorial acquisitions. “I have no land hunger in the northern parts”,³ he wrote. He doubted if the area was worth the expense, but since the Abyssinians were pressing south, the sooner a limit was set the better, and the area must be administered.⁴ As for the Boran,

“To give up the Boran sounds to me, and will sound even more to the native, as a concession and loss of prestige.”⁵

But it was a fait accompli. To spur on the laggards, there were new reports of Abyssinians at El Wak and in the region of Wajir.

In Addis Ababa, complications arose with the Italians. Harrington sourly commented;

“Italian support is.. confined to helping us when we seem likely to advance the realisation of this hope, [i.e. Italian ambitions in Ethiopia] and thwarting us in everything else. In fact we are pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for Italy but not keeping any for ourselves”.⁶

Whilst negotiations continued, so did Abyssinian raids on their Boran tenants, who were moving south. By 1900, Jenner reported that the Boran had again taken up residence in the Wajir area.⁷ The Boran repeatedly appealed for aid. As late as February 1904, the Sub Commissioner at Kismayu received a letter from the Boran Chiefs asking for help against the Abyssinians. Eighty Boran came down to Kismayu to reinforce that plea. Messages also came in from the Aulihan, the Gurreh, and the Degodia, requesting protection.⁸

The only solution was effective occupation. In 1904, Harrington warned the Foreign Office,

¹ FOP 7547/39. Harrington to FO 16.6.1900.

² Cmd 2312/1903 item 1/4 28.9.03. Maud Report.

³ FOP 8192/105. Eliot to FO 17.7.03.

⁴ Note Curzon’s views over India. “If you agree upon a boundary with a great Power, one party cannot run away from its side; both parties must occupy, or must at any rate exert their influence up to the limit of the boundary” (quoted in Alder. Op.cit. p.297).

⁵ FO 8192/105. Eliot to FO. 17.7.03.

⁶ COP 771/1. Harrington to FO 24.9.04.

⁷ FOP 7457/200. Jenner to HMC 24.10.00.

⁸ FOP 8349/83 SC to HMC 6.2.04. FOP 8349/138 Intelligence Report, Jan-March 1904.

“If you wish a frontier north of 2°, I fear you may have to spend something on establishing posts.”¹

The matter was passed on to the Colonial Office, who showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm.

“If an undertaking on our part to garrison posts on this remote frontier of what I understand to be an arid desert, is a condition of the settlement it is of course out of the question.”²

A compromise solution was adopted, the cheapest possible. A frontier agent was appointed in November 1905.³ Though paid from East African (and Uganda) funds, his instructions came from the British Minister in Addis Ababa, from whom he received both men and supplies. The man chosen for the post was Photius Philip Constantine Zaphiro, a Greek born in Constantinople, and educated in Cairo. Aged 28, he had been a medical dispenser at Harar. A keen ornithologist, he was employed by Harrington as a taxidermist.⁴ To hold a frontier of over 500 miles, he had a force of between 15 and 35 Abyssinian irregulars. His total expenditure on the frontier was not to exceed £900 annually. As well as watching the frontier, Zaphiro was expected to encourage trade, investigate the origins of the various tribes (ascertaining which were Galla and which Somali), and supply the Embassy with early information regarding Abyssinians raids.⁵

Zaphiro found himself drawn into local problems. The whole area was a happy hunting ground for rifle-armed elephant hunters from Abyssinia. The tribes, themselves under pressure from the north and the east, and driven increasingly to intertribal feuds, looked to him for protection. There was a growing trade in rifles, mainly from Abyssinia and Jibuti. Yet Zaphiro, despite frequent bouts of illness, held the frontier until October 1909. It was a remarkable feat based on bluff.⁶

There were hopes that trade would follow the flag. Within two years of Zaphiro's appointment, a British concern, the Boma Trading Company, moved into the Northern Frontier and established posts at Marsabit, Moyale, and Dolo. It engaged in a trans-frontier trade in cattle, ponies, horses, mules, and illicit ivory. But Zaphiro proved both excitable and suspicious of the Company, and they were on the worst of terms. Nor did the Company achieve much commercially, since its activities were hampered by the competition of Italian traders from Lugh, despite Zaphiro's efforts to divert trade to East Africa.⁷ When the Frontier was finally occupied in 1909, the Company moved out as the Government moved in, taking its last load of smuggled ivory.⁸

At diplomatic level, the frontier question had reached stalemate. The whole issue of a frontier settlement was delayed by the tripartite negotiations between Britain, Italy

¹ CO 533/ 8/11391. Harrington to FO 2.4.04.

² Ibid. Ommaney to FO 19.4.05.

³ COP 782/24. FO to CO 12.1.05; /26 CO to FO 16.10.05; /32 CO to HMC 2.11.05.

⁴ COP 782/54. Harrington to FO 30.11.05 (cf also 'Who was Who' 1929-40).

⁵ COP 782/54. Harrington's instructions.

⁶ Moyale Records. MLE/1. p.2. Barrett's Notes.

⁷ For efforts to divert trade from Italians cf CO 533/ 27/6467; 28/11826; 28/6574.

⁸ Archer "Personal and Political Memoirs" p.38. cf also J. Boyes "Company of Adventurers" passim; (for the official view of Boyes cf NFD Handbook p.112).

and France, over their conflicting interests in Abyssinia which were not settled until December 1906.¹ A year later in December 1907, the Emperor finally signed a treaty defining his southern frontier on the basis of the Maud survey.² The treaty made provision for Commissioners to visit the frontier and define the boundary, including the tribal limits of the Gurreh (British) and the Boran or Galla (Abyssinian).

British Boundary Commissioners went to Abyssinia in 1908 to demarcate the treaty line. But Menelik had been laid low by a severe stroke. No decision of any moment could be made. His ministers were powerless, delays were endless; for the Emperor was a total invalid.³ Gwynn, the British Commissioner, therefore proceeded alone to the frontier to survey the boundary, on the instructions of the British Government.⁴

He found that the frontier enforced by Zaphiro encroached into Abyssinian territory. Worse still, the Maud line was impracticable, since many of the vital waterholes lay in Abyssinia. Gwynn made a unilateral adjustment of the frontier line, securing Moyale itself, and Gaddaduma, for the Protectorate in exchange for concessions east of Moyale.⁵ The boundary west of Moyale was so impossible that he refrained from marking it out on the ground. His concern for a neat and tidy frontier reflected the European outlook.⁶ But both frontier lines and officials had to come to terms with the frustrating realities of Africa.

Gwynn was also critical of the lack of administration in the frontier area. Though Zaphiro had done wonders, the need was for a proper frontier force; three hundred men under British officers should suffice. Gwynn also stressed the danger of the Marahan, who roamed the area of the Northern Juba above Lugh. Their possession of numerous firearms made them a menace to neighbouring 'friendly' tribes. He warned that no frontier settlement could last for more than six months under the existing conditions owing to the number of rifles being imported.⁷ The bogey of another Mullah was raised in the person of one Sira Jama, a Marahan and a former follower of the 'Mad Mullah', causing Read in the Colonial Office to lament,

"We have no Capt. Salkeld on the frontier to go out and make an end of this man."⁸

¹ For the negotiations cf FOP 8235, 8385, 8659, 8971, *passim* The Tripartite agreement was signed 13.12.06.

² Cmd/4318/1908. Treaty 6.12.07. NB: Hohler was in charge of the Embassy (cf also C. Halle "To Menelik in a motor car". *Passim*).

³ FOP 9505/225 and /229.

⁴ CO 533/ 54/37648 tg. 14.10.08; CO 533/ 54/41255 Memo. 16.10.08; Menelik refused to allow Maud to do the new Survey (Minute. Read 15.1.10. CO 533/ 69/36634).

⁵ FOP 9546/62 Gwynn to Lord H Hervey 27.1.09. also Gwynn Memo (CO 533/ 69/24365) and Report (CO 533/59/36635). The Abyssinian reaction was hostile. Vide Thesiger "the proposed alterations are all in our favour" (FOP 9725/20). Eventually Abyssinian commissioners visited the Frontier but did nothing.

⁶ Note the earlier warning of Lord Salisbury; "drawing lines upon maps where no human foot had ever trod... giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other...only...hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where those mountains and rivers and lakes were" (quoted by Alder *op.cit.* p.183).

⁷ Gwynn 11.12.08. CO 533/ 54/2875. cf. also JAH III. 3. R. Beachey "The Arms Trade in East Africa".

⁸ Read minute 30.1.09. CO 533/ 54/2875.

Now, in 1908, discussions had taken place between the Colonial Office and the Governor concerning the use of Marsabit as a base for controlling the frontier. The scheme had been dropped. But reports, late in 1908 and early in 1909, of Abyssinian raids on the Rendile and the Samburu – and their appeals for protection – allowed Hayes Sadler to resurrect the Marsabit proposals to safeguard ‘friendly’ tribes. To these plans the Colonial Office agreed. In May 1909, Geoffrey Archer,¹ 27 years old and 6ft 7 inches tall, was chosen to command the advance. Setting out from Naivasha with a caravan of 600 porters he established himself on Marsabit Mountain in October 1909.²

Unconnected with this move, in October 1909, Zaphiro fell ill and had to be relieved. Capt W.E.H. Barrett, an A.D.C. was sent up from Kismayu with an escort of K.A.R. Barrett found that few of Zaphiro’s Abyssinians would remain. It therefore became necessary to retain the K.A.R. at Moyale.

It was at this stage that the two frontier problems – the Somali migration and the Abyssinian boundary question – coalesced at the very time that the idea of a forward policy was again being canvassed. A number of factors favoured a more active frontier policy. By 1908, Salkeld was reporting that the Somali had been quiet for 7 years and that the dangers of intertribal feuds should not retard the development of the province. So far as Jubaland was concerned the key was still Afmadu. In Salkeld’s opinion

“If we effectively occupy Afmadu the Somali question will be settled”.³

But what gave point to such views was the hope that the Juba River might prove a source of agricultural development and trade. Whilst the Colonial Office in 1908 would not agree to the occupation of Afmadu, they felt that on the Juba, at least, “the is clearly a country with great possibilities”.⁴ The “great possibilities” were underlined by the interest shown in both the Northern Frontier and Jubaland by British commercial concerns and the Kenya Barons. Sadler, when Governor, was eager to encourage trade, “as a powerful factor towards the settlement of the province”.⁵ It was to prove one of the many frontier myths.

There was also a nagging moral pressure on local officials, and to a lesser extent on Whitehall, the result of the repeated appeals for the protection by the frontier tribes against the Abyssinians, or the Mullah, or better armed Somali tribes. Government’s

¹ The nephew of Jackson. Joining the Administration in 1902 he transferred to Somaliland in 1913, later becoming Governor of Somaliland, then Uganda, and finally Governor General of the Sudan.

² NFD 9666/66. Hervey to FO 19.11.09. also NFD Handbook p.102. Girouard was not eager for Zaphiro’s return (des. 15.11.09. CO 533/ 63/3741).

³ CO 533/ 48/4436. Col. Montgomery’s Report; Salkeld’s report attached.

⁴ Ibid. Antrobus Minute. On the Juba river, the Emperor Navigation Company had 3 small steamers. Cotton plantations were being opened up. Even Eliot had recognised “that the banks [of the Juba] have a considerable solid value” (FOP 8192/105. 17.7.03). Manning thought parts “undoubtedly rich” (CO 533/ 39/26193 28.3.07).

⁵ Sadler’s Minute CO 533/42/13498. All the Kenya Barons showed an interest in the frontier. Vide Hindlip’s “British East Africa”; Cranworth’s visit to Abyssinia in 1910; Delamere’s speech to Churchill in 1907 (Huxley. Whiteman’s Country. Vol. I pp.241-242). Cf also Debate in House of Lords 30.4.14. (Hansard 5th S. Vol. XV).

unwillingness to undertake protection was bitterly resented. The S.C. Jubaland angrily protested in 1904;

“Am I to tell them that Government disclaims protection and that they must make the best terms they can with the Abyssinians? I hope not after eight years of claimed protection”.¹

These appeals taxed the consciences of men on the spot. Zaphiro and others constantly stressed the duty of Government towards friendly tribes.² In this, administrators were functioning as tribal representatives.³

But the Forward Policy received its greatest stimulus from the arrival of Sir Percy Girouard as Governor in September 1909. By March 1910, he had agreed to the reoccupation of Serenli and Port Durnford. In August 1910, he persuaded the Colonial Office to agree to the occupation of Afmadu. The grounds given were twofold: the Somali chiefs had asked for it, and Jubaland had great agricultural potential. Jubaland's curse was its past history.

“There has...been far too much readiness to exaggerate the military position along the Juba and in the north. The murder of one officer....a few years ago seems to have affected this very largely”.

Pacification and trade were the answer

“By opening up Jubaland and its trade to the perfectly willing Somalis...we shall find absolute peace and witness their advancement and civilization”.⁴

As for the Northern border with Abyssinia, Girouard moved even more swiftly. By November 1909 he was proposing to take the frontier in hand. The policy was to be one of “observation”.⁵ In March 1910 the Northern Frontier District was established with J.O.W. Hope as officer in charge, wielding wide discretionary powers. To an active administrator like Girouard, it was a scandal to shirk the duties of Government; territorial vacuums existed to be filled. Undoubtedly he was led on by Zaphiro's success to assume that a more active policy could be cheaply undertaken.

¹ FO 2/835. des. 233 9.4.04. encl.

² Eg. Zaphiro, “The natives asked me to protect them...there are many thousand...waiting now for 8 years to have peace” (FOP 9505/248. 23.8.08). cf. also Hervey FOP 9666/50 24.9.09. Ineffective protection worried many. Note Rayne's view of the similar problem in Turkana “the best way to protect the peaceful law abiding peoples against the savage nomads of the north is to hold the latter's territory” (Rayne “Ivory Raiders”. p.48). cf also Delamere “The Abyssinian boundary question is one which should appeal to England's conscience” (Huxley, op.cit. Vol. I p.242).

³ ‘Prestige’ on the frontier had a heightened importance. Vide Alder's comment on India's northern frontier (op.cit. p.293) “prestige was a factor nearly as important as bayonets and subsidies...it was, in fact, simply “military credit” written another way.” In East Africa, the problem was the smallness of the fiduciary element.

⁴ CO 533/ 76/26412. Des. 6.8.10. cf also Fiddes Minute on CO 533/ 76/29964 “If the men on the spot are right – the policy of doing nothing might gradually land us in a position of hardly less difficulty”.

⁵ “Observation” was a term repeatedly used by Girouard. Eg. Legco 3rd Session 1911 p.6. It meant “slow occupation and leaving the tribes to themselves in their internal affairs” (19.2.12. CO 533/ 102/8232). But for a worm's eye view of the policy cf. C. Dundas “African Crossroads” p.70.

“If Mr. Zaphiro, a foreigner, with a few irregulars and badly armed police was able to keep nominal peace on the frontier, I have no fear about the future with reference to our own administration”.¹

There was a tendency to underrate the ‘personal’ rule of “a Greek ornithologist”.²

Girouard’s forward policy, though he insisted that it was one of ‘observation’, caused some doubts in Whitehall. Colonel Thesiger, the new Inspector General of the K.A.R. in a minute of May 1910, dismissed the policy as impossible. Once officers and troops were stationed on the Frontier, it was inconceivable that they could isolate themselves from tribal feuds and frontier problems. And Zaphiro, visiting London in June 1910, expressed the view that there was no half way house between his system of bluff backed by irregulars and full occupation.³ The wisdom of these criticisms was borne out by events. Early in 1910 Barrett was forced to visit Wajir Wells to check the influx of Somalis, who were terrorising the Boran and Adjuran. He drove off the newcomers, but no sooner did he depart than the Somalis returned. Before Barrett had moved on Wajir, he had reported his plans and was informed that the Governor would take no action to support him until, “the people refused to obey my orders”.⁴ Again in December 1910, Hope warned Government that whilst the Boran, Gurreh, and Adjuran had always been friendly to Government, they were tiring of ineffectual protection, “when they see we are not able to help them”.⁵ Unless Government was prepared to increase its posts and patrols, the tribes would arm themselves against Somali encroachment. Hope pressed for the early disarmament of the Marahan. He too had warned the Somali around Wajir that they had no rights there and that they must leave. But, as Barrett had commented of the earlier action, the Somalis “have such a hearty contempt of Government”,⁶ they would take no notice of mere threats. Officers working in such conditions found the situation frustrating and damaging to their prestige.

By 1910, the unadministered vacuum that lay between Kismayu and the Northern Frontier had been filled. But the problem was how to maintain control. Externally there was an unratified frontier in the north. Internally there was the problem of Somali migration. For effective administration, it was necessary to have secure lines of communications and an efficient system of transport. The last was both expensive and inefficient. When in December 1911, the Inspector General visited the frontier, he found that at Marsabit, 190 out of 200 transport camels had died in the past month, the third such incident since October 1909. The troops at Moyale had been on half or quarter rations for the whole of 1910.⁷

The policy of observation was becoming involved in local crisis and transforming itself into a policy of active intervention. Once embarked on, the Forward Policy like

¹ CO 533/ 76/26412 des. 6.8.10.

² Hohler. 3.6.07. FOP 9269/77A. Delamere disapproved of a foreigner; “a Greek upholds the prestige of the Empire on the frontier. Why a Greek?” (Huxley, op.cit. Vol. I p.242).

³ CO 533/ 72/13834. Memo Colonel Thesiger 23.5.10. Butler’s Minute, interview with Zaphiro 24.6.10.

⁴ NFD/154. Barrett, Record of Moyale Station, p.4. 26.2.10.

⁵ NFD/71. 10.10.10. Hope to CS.

⁶ NFD/71. Barrett to Hope 3.4.10. cf also Hope’s Report. 10.12.10. in CO 533/ 85/4556.

⁷ CO 533/ 113/5640. Thesiger’s letters to Butler Nov-Dec. 1911.

a greedy quick sands, swallowed up both men and money. It was soon a far cry from the days when Zaphiro held the Frontier for £900 a year.

But for the very reason that different authorities, each staunchly parochial, were involved in the region, different policies emerged. The NFD, at the start controlling non Somali tribes, imposed taxation on the Samburu, Rendile, and Boran, attempting a policy of active administration. Jubaland, the older province, followed a policy of observation, taxing no one but the WaGosha, and interfering as little as possible in tribal matters. Tanaland did not even administer the Upper Tana, where the Somalis were encroaching.¹ Since so much depended on individual officials and personal rule, Government found itself repeatedly involved in difficult situations because, whilst it desired caution, the man on the spot was for hellfire!²

Good fortune, however, favoured the early days of the NFD. The frontier with Abyssinia remained quiet, leaving officers free to tackle internal problems. Friction between Somali and Boran continued in 1911, over the Wajir wells. But Girouard still refused to approve proposals to drive out the Somalis as contrary to his policy of 'observation'. The compromise adopted was to occupy Wajir in 1912.³ But by the end of 1911, Hope was reporting that the Gurreh, still unprotected against Marahan raids, were buying guns to defend themselves.

Early in 1912, a conference met at Nairobi to discuss the NFD and its problems. Hope, Archer and Colonel Thesiger, attended. Girouard accepted their advice that the Marahan must be brought under control.⁴ The meeting also agreed that the NFD Administration must command its own police force. Thesiger accepted this proposal, since it would relieve the K.A.R. of escort duties, and he was concerned over the dispersal of troops along poor lines of communications. Hope and Archer desired their own police for, under existing arrangements, they could not command the K.A.R. detachments; a fact they resented. Archer claimed that

“With nearly eleven years East African and Uganda experience.....I submit, with all humility, that I am more competent to decide these points than a newly joined subaltern of the King's African Rifles”.

The existing system led to “the complete subordination of the civil power”,⁵ and administrators disliked rivals.

The NFD Administration now undertook to pacify the Marahan, who harried the friendly Gurreh. The preliminaries were the occupation of Wajir and the posting of Capt Aylmer to the Gurreh in 1912. In October 1912, a patrol under Hope moved into the Marahan country, returning in January 1913. Hope reported that his 'safari' had been a quiet one, though the young tribesmen were restless and by no means

¹ Thesiger. Memo. COP 954/21. 17.4.12. Also the Tanaland Commission of Enquiry 1909 (Extract on NFD/142 attached to CNC's 5.11.22).

² Eg. Jenner with the Boran, MacDougall and the Ogaden, Hope, Barrett and Deck over Wajir, Mure and the Marahan. For a similar problem in India cf Alder, op.cit. p.141.

³ Protectorate Report 1912-13. p.59.

⁴ CO 533/ 102/8198. 21.11.12. But Girouard always opposed premature disarmament vide correspondence at CO 533/ 88/23404 (24.6.11) and Thesiger's memo of 23.8.11 at CO 533/ 89/30303.

⁵ CO 533/ 102/9198. Archer's Report. 29.1.12.

convinced that Government had come to stay. More serious they were still buying guns from Abyssinia. He estimated that the Marahan had 1500 fighting men with 300 rifles.¹ But the tribe was divided by internal blood feuds and was also under attack from other Somali tribes.

Shortly after Hope's return, control of the Marahan was transferred to Jubaland,² the District Officer at Serenli taking charge of the tribe. Events moved swiftly. The Farah Ugas (a section of the Marahan) made prisoners of some Rer Ali Aulihan, fleeing from Italian Somaliland. Mure,³ the local administrator, ordered their release. When the Farah Ugas refused, he obtained permission to undertake punitive measures against them. By the end of April 1913, the Farah Ugas were reduced to obedience and partially disarmed. Success made the local officers overconfident. Mure advocated the disarmament of all Marahan. Nairobi approved without consulting the Colonial Office.⁴ The new operations were not successful. Mure's ultimatum was ignored and he found himself powerless to enforce orders. Prestige demanded that disarmament must be carried out so soon as troops were available. Mure was recalled and the District handed over to Military Administration. But the Marahan continued to ignore orders to disarm.⁵

The Secretary of State was made aware of the deteriorating situation as a result of private information.⁶ Though willing to send reinforcements, he refused to sanction major operations against the Marahan. If they could be disarmed by peaceful methods, well and good, but not otherwise. He was more curious to know why an ultimatum had been issued. Valuable time passed in recrimination and censure.⁷ The Marahan intervened to silence the argument. By December 1913 troops in advanced positions, north of Serenli, were subject to pinprick attacks. Belfield stressed the dangers of delay and the "loss of prestige".⁸ The Colonial Office reluctantly agreed to operations, four months after the expiration of the last ultimatum.⁹

The military situation in the Marahan was verging on chaotic. In the north at Garba Harre, a force of K.A.R, 200 rifles strong, had no transport and was under a loose Marahan blockade.

In February 1914, a convoy of supplies, under a strong covering force, set out from Serenli to their relief, but was checked for the loss of 1 officer and 3 other ranks wounded. The relief force withdrew leaving Garba Harre blockaded. The news of

¹ CO 533/ 116/7878. Hope's Report. 14.1.13. But Barrett estimated that the Marahan had a thousand rifles (4.5.10. CO 533/ 74/22052).

² The object being to keep the Somali under one administration. (Conference on Jubaland administration CO 533/119/24816).

³ Aged 33, he had had 5 years' service with the Protectorate administration. Educated at Winchester and Oxford, Mure had originally joined the army, but had left owing to a bad stammer. He was to serve again in the NFD in 1913-14, and then to rejoin the army and be killed on active service in G.E.A.

⁴ CO 533/ 120/24787 and /27872.

⁵ CO 5/120/27872 (with Mure's explanation of 11.6.13).

⁶ By military officers writing privately to the IG's office. (CO 533/ 129/22788).

⁷ Harcourt was not amused. "I think we have been badly treated by our local representatives" (CO 533/ 121/36885) "If I had been told of the intentions to disarm I should certainly have protested" (CO 533/ 129/2788). It was another example of hiatus.

⁸ CO 533/ 125/43449. Tg. 17.12.13.

⁹ CO 533/ 125/43449 tg. 17.12.13. reply 18.12.13, also telegram 22.12.13 on CO 533/ 125/43953.

this small reverse created a panic out of all proportion to its size. But in small wars, where prestige was all important, loss of face meant more than loss of blood.

Colonel Graham, arriving at Serenli to take charge of the operations, was in time to welcome back the defeated column. Concluding that the Marahan fighting strength had been greatly underestimated, he called for large reinforcements.¹ These were moved in as swiftly as possible. Graham, in the meantime, had reconsidered his situation, and decided to march at once to the relief of Garba Harre. He got through with ease. By the end of March 1914, the initiative lay wholly with the K.A.R. The Marahan were severely punished in operations that continued into April.² The reinforcements brought up with such haste were not required and were returned to Uganda in May 1914. But the bulk of the Protectorate forces remained concentrated in Jubaland until the outbreak of the War brought them hurrying back.

The fear of prolonged operations impelled Belfield and the new Inspector General, Colonel Hoskins, to advocate the restoration of civil control, a quick truce, and the abandonment of total disarmament.³ Salkeld was brought from Kismayu to negotiate a peace with the chiefs although, by early June, the Marahan had already sued for peace and had surrendered many of their weapons. The attitude of the Governor and the Inspector General was an admission of defeat; total disarmament would overtax the resources of the Protectorate and tie down large forces in defence of the disarmed tribes.

Colonel Hoskins had done much to influence the return to a policy of observation. He was concerned at the imbalance of forces, bad communications, the dangers of Somalis uniting, and the possible intervention of the Mullah. He also stressed that frequent transfers meant that officers knew very little about the tribes.

“The touch which political officers have with the Ogaden Somali is so intangible that it would be wrong to rely on their judgement”.⁴

The problem was that the visible power of Government was spread so thinly. Here, in an extreme form, were revealed all the defects of ‘personal’ administration. The well tried machine of Government might sustain the weak official, or curb the strong, once it was established. But in isolated regions, away from the ‘boma’, it was not easy to simulate a world of order and routine. As one officer commented of his first safari in the bush, “nominally, I supposed, I was the leader...but in fact, I was the led”.⁵ Amongst warring tribes, the early administrators were meant to ‘observe’. Lacking sufficient force they must influence events by bluff. But administrators by profession

¹ CO 533/ 133/6060. Tg. 16.2.14. CO 533/ 133/8252 des. 13.2.14. Graham estimated that the Marahan had 540 rifles and 2050 spearmen.

² COP 1021/174. 30.3.14. Report of Col. Graham. Sir John Anderson in the CO was critical of the punitive measures used against the Marahan and the Turkana. “It seems to be a cattle lifting expedition”. “I wish some other means than cattle stealing could be found of bringing these tribes in the fold” (CO 533/134/8620; 132/4526).

³ COP 1021/169 HE to CO. 9.4.14. forwarding Col. Hoskins Memo (No. I) 24.3.14.

⁴ Ibid. Hoskins Memo (No. II) 14.3.14. By May 1914, Belfield had persuaded the CO to adopt a policy of uniting the whole frontier region under a Chief Administrator with enlarged staff. The cost was estimated at £63,017 capital and £45,261 additional recurrent expenditure. The War put paid to these plans. (CO 533/ 142/45078, 143/175).

⁵ C. Dundas. “African Crossroads” p.11. cf. also p.21.

were not observers; nor could they willingly restrict themselves to such a role. Communications, security, intelligence, the demands of friendly tribes, all compelled a more active part. If tribes collaborated or were disarmed, they in turn invited the hostility of their neighbours. European intervention upset the fluctuating balance of tribal power. In the search for pax Britannica, the administrator was drawn inexorably forward. Personal prestige and loyalty to his agents impelled him to take sides;¹ to collaborate with the collaborators. In this very personal world, where chiefs were at best paid allies – and at worst ambassadors of an unfriendly power – the ‘chameleon’ was often under the influence of his local agent. On occasions there was cause to wonder who was the ruler and who the ruled.²

But at least the Marahan operations had reminded the Protectorate Government of the problem of Somali migration. In August 1913, Graham drew attention to their southerly and westward movement. In April 1914 he was faced with a renewed influx of Aulihan Rer Ali, who were given refuge in return for surrendering 70 rifles.³ The pressure of the migration had been felt around Wajir in 1910. This continued in the years 1911-14, and intertribal fighting became more bitter.⁴ Deck administering Wajir in 1914, pressed for the removal of the Somali newcomers from the Wajir wells and the Lorian, to safeguard the established tribes. The Governor faced with major operations against the Marahan, refused, on the optimistic ground that

“Intertribal warfare is bound to take place and will not do much harm provided it does not assume big proportions”.⁵

Deck, acting on his own initiative, quietly moved the Aulihan from Wajir to put an end to their bickering with the Mohamed Zubeir. His success, because it created no crisis, went unnoticed.⁶

The situation at the heart of the frontier was not promising. Early in 1914 the estimate of firearms in Southern Jubaland and Wajir totalled 1400 rifles.⁷ If the Marahan were now subdued, there were signs of unrest amongst the Aulihan. Each new pacification upset still further the balance of power, thus widening Government’s responsibilities.

In addition, there was renewed trouble in the North. After the relative peace of 1911 and 1912, a crisis arose on the Abyssinian border. The cause of the trouble was twofold. Abyssinian elephant hunters were raiding south of the line. There was also a renewed flight of Boran tenants seeking refuge across the border and pursued by

¹ Note the bitter complaint of Kenneth Dundas on the effect of observation in the NFD; “a region in which the District Commissioners hoisted the flag at dawn, lowered it at sunset and in between did little but watch the ‘friendlies’ outside being murdered by raiders from across the border” (quoted in C. Dundas, op.cit. p.70).

² Note Girouard’s warning to the PCs Tanaland and Jubaland that both must attend joint barazas of chiefs “thus avoiding any possibilities of playing off one officer against the other” (des. 19.2.12. CO 533/ 102/8077). Note also the importance of district staff such as clerks, Police Sergeants and Intelligence agents.

³ CO 533/ 121/325437. Graham 25.8.13. and CO 533/ 135/18876. Report of 30.3.14.

⁴ Up to 200 fighting men and Chief Ahmed Margan died in the Mohamed Zubeir-Abd Wak feud of 1913-14. Vide reports of Deck, Salkeld, Mure on CO 533/ 134/11533 and 135/18878.

⁵ CO 533/ 134/11533. des. 5.3.14.

⁶ NFD/141 file 25/15. 6.7.15. Kittermaster to CS.

⁷ Salkeld’s estimate (CO 533/ 134/11533). For all Jubaland, the estimate was 1800 rifles. (NFD Handbook, p.150).

Abyssinian troops. A series of incidents occurred ending in a clash with Tigre near Gadeir in May 1913, in which the A.D.C. Gurreh, Capt Aylmer, was killed.¹ Four months later another action led to the wounding of Lieutenant Lloyd Jones of the K.A.R. Diplomatic activity in Addis Ababa was intensified. After four years of stalemate, during which the Ethiopian Government refused to accept the Gwynn line, a new opportunity for negotiations had arisen; the incidents were used to bring pressure to bear on the Abyssinian Government to rectify the frontier.

But Mr. Wilfred Thesiger,² the British Minister in Addis Ababa, found himself struggling against a cautious Imperial policy on the one hand, and a local Government powerless, whilst the Emperor lived, save only in its ability to procrastinate. Thesiger pressed for an ultimatum.

“I am afraid that there is no chance of their being willing to make the proposed alteration [i.e. to the frontier] unless they feel forced to the wall....I believe the time has come to make a definite stand.”³

The Foreign Office reaction was swift and discouraging.

“We desire for our own sakes to prevent the loss of Abyssinian independence or the disintegration of the country, and consequently we cannot entertain any idea of a military expedition. This being the case, it would be quite useless, as the Abyssinians well know, for us to make threats to which we could not give effect”.⁴

The threat of aggression was cast aside and negotiations with a most evasive set of ministers continued. In desperation, the proposal to break off diplomatic relations was canvassed,⁵ as was the suggestion to seek international arbitration;⁶ but these ideas were quickly discarded. The possibility of using the Boran tenants as a pawn was also considered and rejected.⁷ By November 1913, Thesiger in Addis Ababa, was reduced to suggesting reinforcements for the frontier, in the event of more Boran fleeing south. The administration would then be in a position to protect them

“That will mean a severe loss in revenue to the Abyssinians...In this way we shall alter the whole complexion of affairs and escape from the somewhat undignified position we hold at present”.⁸

¹ It took a month for the news to reach Nairobi from Moyale.

² Capt. Wilfred Thesiger, Minister at Addis Ababa 1909-1919. Not to be confused with Col. Thesiger, the Inspector General of the KAR.

³ CO 533/ 127/25643. Thesiger to FO. 19.6.13.

⁴ Ibid. reply 18.7.13. On this, Harcourt minuted “A sensible telegram from the FO”. But by 1914, Harcourt was advocating the partition of Abyssinia (cf. CO 533/ 145/36940 and 10731).

⁵ CO 533/ 127/26082.

⁶ CO 533/ 127/30457. cf also NFD/63, Thesiger to DC Moyale 18.9.13. “It is difficult to see how a final crash can be long delayed”. From time to time, the idea of occupying Gaddaduma was considered (CO 533/ 121/31585; 127/13855; 127/30457).

⁷ Cf CO 533/ 118/17179 20.5.13. The return of the Boran (or concessions in British Somaliland) were considered as early as 1910...(CO 533/ 78/39316 des. 29.11.10).

⁸ CO 533/ 127/2(13/14). Thesiger to FO 29.11.13.

Late in December 1913, the Emperor Menelik died. By then the Northern Frontier was again quiet. But the death of the Emperor brought no rectification of the frontier.¹

Plans for the Frontier were thrown into confusion by the outbreak of the War. The troops operating in Jubaland were withdrawn and the garrisons reduced. At first all was quiet; the Chiefs sending messages of loyalty to the Governor.² But trouble with the Somalis and trouble on the Northern Frontier was not long absent. The situation on the Northern border became uneasy as the War progressed. There were renewed incursions of Abyssinians against refugee. Internally Abyssinia was increasingly restless. There were reports of Turkish and German intrigues with the pro-Muslim Emperor, Lij Yasu. Civil War broke out in 1916, and the aftermath of the struggle reduced even further the weak control of the Abyssinian Government over the border areas.³

But graver troubles occurred in Jubaland, where the Aulihan chief Abdurrahman Mursal grew discontented. Formerly employed by the Italian Benadir Company, Abdurrahman had proved persona ingratis to the Italians and moved to Jubaland. During the Ogaden Rising of 1898, he had led the attack which destroyed a police post at Yonte. But he soon acquired merit with the Administration and became an intelligence agent and then Aulihan Chief. A much travelled man, he had visited Aden and been on the 'haj' to Mecca. With the Somalis he was, by repute, a holy man.⁴ With Government his reputation was less certain; some thought him invaluable, others considered him a treacherous schemer.⁵ Early in 1915, he had visited Nairobi, interviewed the Governor, and returned to Serenli with an enhanced self-esteem. He claimed that the Governor had given him all the territory between Serenli and Wajir for the Aulihan.⁶ The Aulihan started to move back to the Wajir wells to the consternation of the Mohamed Zubeir. Kittermaster, the D.C. Wajir, appealed to the Chief Secretary for instructions only to be told that Government,

“Has every confidence in your ability to deal with it. The main principle as you are aware, is to avoid forcible methods as far as possible, and to *refrain from issuing orders obedience to which cannot be ensured.*”⁷

¹ The problem of a buffer state beyond the Imperial frontier taxed all Empires. Eg. Sir M Seton's comment (“The India Office” p.167). “A weak ‘buffer’ State may be a positive source of danger, for the policy of a State too weak to be really independent towards powerful neighbours must be capricious”.

² NFD Handbook p.56. cf also CO 533/ 142/48398.

³ NFD Handbook p.128-129. cf also A. Hodson “Seven years in Southern Abyssinia” passim; and NFD/61 and NFD/63. Thesiger in Addis advised administrative officers, “better shut your eyes to their doings” (NFD/71. 11.9.15). cf also L. Moseley “Haille Selassie”. Passim.

⁴ Heywood. “To the Mysterious Lorian Swamp”, p. 58. MAP. (117/-) “Administration of Jubaland. P.26. NFD Handbook p.27.

⁵ E.g. “a clever and strong man”; “a very crafty and intriguing man”; “he intends to break away from Government”. Cf. FOP 8192/130 encl. 1.9.03; Heywood op.cit. p. 58; CO 533/ 97/3419. Memo by Thesiger; MPA (117/-) “Administration of Jubaland” p.55; CO 533/ 74/19360 10.5.10. Intelligence Report; CO 533/ 120/27872; CO 533/ 137/22644. Graham Report 7.4.14; NFD Handbook p.58.

⁶ MPA (117). “Administration of Jubaland” p.52. NFD Handbook p.57.

⁷ NFD 141/file 25/15. CS to Kittermaster 13.8.15. (cf also ibid. Kittermaster to CS 6.7.15. “we were not to interfere in any way between two hostile sections of Somali”).

Trouble was inevitable. The Aulihan, in addition to their quarrel with the Mohamed Zubeir, raided the Samburu, the Marahan, and the Adjuran. Despite the protests of the Adjuran Chief, Ido Robleh, Government refused to allow the Adjuran to retaliate; Ido Robleh was summoned to Nairobi, where he was reassured that Government's inaction was due not to indifference but to lack of troops.¹

The D.C. at Serenli was F.E. Elliott. A parson's son, he had fought in South Africa, and then joined the Protectorate Police. In 1914, he transferred to the Administration to take charge of the newly formed Jubaland Constabulary.² He was considered a Somali expert; he spoke their language and admired them as a people but

“He had a great, and misplaced trust in the Somalis and neglected to take proper precautions in guarding against treachery and attack”³

Now on the advice of the Aulihan Chief, Elliott disarmed his police with the exception of the quarter-guard.⁴

The Marahan-Aulihan feud reached a high pitch by the end of 1915. Raids and counter-raids, claims and counter-claims, became so complex that Elliott refused to arbitrate but suggested a truce. The Marahan agreed; the Aulihan refused. In late January 1916 a further raid by the Aulihan brought a direct order from Elliott to Abdurrahman to return the stolen stock or suffer the consequences.⁵ On the night of the 2nd February 1916, the Aulihan stormed into Serenli aided by treachery amongst the quarter guard. Elliott and 65 constables were murdered and the station was looted.⁶ The station cash box, a maxim gun, rifles, and ammunition, were seized by the Aulihan who then made off, led by their chief wearing the dead D.C's sun helmet.⁷

The real cause of the rising remains obscure. Shortly before his death Elliott, in a private letter, reported

“All is well at present, but trouble is looming large among the Aulihan on both sides of the river. The Abyssinians have promised help to the Aulihan and I have looted a letter signed and stamped by an Abyssinian chief to that effect”.⁸

¹ NFD Handbook, p.134.

² Cf. CO 429/23/43159. also MPA “Administration of Jubaland”. p.49.

³ Heywood, op.cit. p.19. Elliott's own view of the Somali was “Treat him with confidence and consideration, he is cheerful intelligent, willing to learn, and true to his code of honesty. Treat him harshly or unjustly, he becomes sulky, obstinate, mutinous, and dangerous. He is an excellent scout, wonderful marcher, and very proud if confidence is shown in him. It would be fatal to the peace of the country if the Somali should be treated with that contempt which is often shown to the black races by Europeans”. JG. Vol. XLI. 1913. p.561. cf also NFD/66 5.9.11. F. Elliott “An Answer to the Critics of the Somali”.

⁴ This was to avoid affrays between askaris and tribesmen in the market. NFD Handbook p.60.

⁵ NFD Handbook, p.58.

⁶ For Serenli cf NFD Handbook p.59-60; Heywood, op.cit. p.124-126. MPA (105/1). “Jubaland Records” letter of 29.2.16. (Le Poer Power acting PC to CS). MPA (46/1061). “Intelligence Reports. Somali Unrest”. Cf also JPA. Bundle I. files (44-46) Serenli compensation claims.

⁷ MPA. “Jubaland Records”. PC to CS. 29.2.16.

⁸ F. Elliott to Graham. MPA “Intelligence Reports”. Quoted in report 4.3.16. (for Abyssinian intrigue cf Moseley op.cit).

Intelligence reports after the fall of Serenli, credited the rising to Turkish and German agents in Abyssinia. But Thesiger, at Addis Ababa, discounted such reports. On the other hand, in early June, a letter addressed to King George V by Abdurrahman Mursaal, complained of Elliott's partiality for the Marahan.¹

Jubaland had no other administrative station within 200 miles of Serenli. The sack of Serenli had more immediate effect on the N.F.D, whose posts were closer to the disaffected area. Panic seemed to have seized the Protectorate Government.² With a major campaign about to commence in German East Africa, it was decided to abandon the area of 150 miles around Serenli. Wajir and Gurreh were evacuated. Rayne of the KAR was recalled from an expedition to the Lorian swamp. The whole region was left a prey to intertribal fighting.³

A sense of proportion soon returned. In April 1916, Rayne who was an experienced officer, pressed for the immediate reoccupation of Serenli.⁴ At first this proposal was vetoed. By September 1916, however, Government was willing to sanction the move, but was forced to delay.⁵ In July 1916, Wajir was reoccupied and Gurreh also, later in the same year. But there the situation remained out of hand; raids and fighting were endemic along the border. Finally in September 1917, Serenli was retaken. Operations against the Aulihan – who were being raided by other Somali tribes – continued until early 1918. The punitive measures were severe. One K.A.R. column alone killed 250 tribesmen in the last months of hostilities. In all some 28,000 camels, 400 rifles and 18,000 rounds of ammunition were seized.⁶

With the close of the Aulihan operations and the end of the Great War, the administrators resumed their debate on the methods of controlling the Somali.⁷ All agreed that it was necessary to impose tax⁸ and to contain the tribes within a reserve. There was some dispute as to boundaries and the practicability of placing all Somalis under one administration in view of bad communications and inadequate water supplies. But the first necessity, all agreed, was to complete the disarmament of all Somali tribes and the troops were available to undertake operations. Since the Abyssinian border was in a disturbed state, Northern tribes were left untouched; Government was in no position to defend them. Attention was concentrated on the area round Wajir, the Lorian and Southern Jubaland. Early in 1919, a month's amnesty was given during which weapons could be surrendered; thereafter patrols went out. Watering points were picketed and stock could only water after weapons had been handed in. The anger aroused by Serenli combined with the determination

¹ Ibid. report 13.5.16; cf also reports 26.2.16; 20.5.16; 3.6.16.

² Moran were issued with rifles in Meru; in Lamu the PC asked for troops and was given rifles instead. Cf. also correspondence Deck, Glenday, Kittermaster (NFD/19).

³ Wajir Records. Waj/1. District History p.15. MPA "Intelligence Reports" passim; also Mandera Records (Mandera/41) for contemporary accounts by Butler and Glenday of fighting along the Daua. For post war raids cf Cmd 2553/1925 and 3217/1928.

⁴ MPA "Intelligence Reports". Report 6.5.16. Rayne had advocated immediate occupation to Power in February; Power was "very much opposed to it" (MPA 105/1. Power to CS 29.2.16).

⁵ MPA. "Intelligence Reports"; 2.9.16; 9.9.16. cf also NFD Handbook p.63.

⁶ Legco. 3rd Session 1917. p.4; 3rd Session 1919 p.3-4. LEA 15.3.18 p.10. Moyse Bartlett "KAR" pp.432-437. Baringo Records (BAR/14) "Intelligence Reports Jan-June 1918".

⁷ NFD/142 (file 19/1918). Minutes of meeting, PC Tanaland, Jubaland and O.C. NFD, 11.11.18, and attached memo by them. Cf also ibid. file P22/19.

⁸ But the N.F.D Somalis were not taxed until 1931.

of 'hellfire' administrators to call the Somali's bluff. A laconic note warned one D.C. that shooting on sight was not permitted, but where men were killed resisting, "I do not intend to hold judicial enquiries into such episodes".¹ Stern measures brought results. 763 rifles were surrendered in Jubaland and 493 in Wajir.²

With the close of these operations, the major internal threat to the security of the Frontier had been removed. The administration had also imposed an ad hoc system of grazing boundaries – in essence a reserve policy – to check the Somali drift to the west.³ This migration was now reduced to a trickle of individuals infiltrating into East Africa. Aided by the presence of a European colonial administration on the far bank of the Juba, the Eastern Frontier was at last relatively secure.

The situation on the Northern Frontier was very different. Border raids across an uncertain frontier line were to continue throughout the Colonial period.⁴ Here the frontier itself was the perennial and insoluble problem.

The Frontier had presented a series of challenges to the Administrators for which their down country experience was an inadequate training. The So-called Forward Policy was as much a reaction to diplomatic problems and external stimuli as a desire to assert British rule. The Frontier was an expensive luxury, a fact better appreciated by officials in London than in East Africa. But if London was concerned with prohibitive costs, the local administrator was aware of the impossibility of maintaining the status quo. A tug of war resulted between the centre and the field with "sporadic bursts of energetic policy and intervals of laissez faire".⁵ Hawks and doves, glaxoites and the hell fire club, diplomats and Mullahs, ivory raiders and migrating tribes, combined to play a weird game of musical chairs, with economy following extravagance and scuttle succeeding the prestigious punitive patrol. In such a world, there was an element of myth and make-believe; the myth of Afolata, the lure of Afmadu, the eldorado of the Juba river, the mirage of a frontier secured by treaty.

In the north, Diplomacy was dominated by the mutual suspicions of the European powers stemming from "the earth hunger so prevalent nowadays".⁶ If it suited Britain to keep Abyssinia independent, Imperial interests put local policy in shackles. Yet there had to be a limit set to Abyssinian expansion as Abyssinian raiders moved steadily south. "If no effective barrier is erected we may hear of them any day at Fort Hall or Mumias."⁷ To check the advance, efforts were directed to securing a frontier guaranteed by treaty with British

¹ NFD/141. File 13/19. "Disarmament". 12.1.19. Kittermaster to DC Garba Tulla. Cf also JPA.

Bundle II no. 27 Most successful operations against Somalis were undertaken during the dry season.

² NFD/141. file L.&O 17/10. 6.8.32. PC to CS, quotes figures.

³ NFD/55. H/O Report 1919, Kittermaster to Plowman. P. 1-2. Somali limits were "rigidly fixed".

⁴ Cf fn. 2 p.363 supra; also the massacre of Hara Daa in 1943, or the Gelubba raids into Marsabit, or the Murille raids vs the Turkana.

⁵ Hobley "Chartered Company to Crown Colony" p.178.

⁶ FOP 8385/180 12.11.04. Cromer's comment. Note also his remarks (ibid/140 25.6.04) "we do not wish to annex any part of Abyssinia ourselves and we do not want any part of it to be annexed by France or Italy". Cf also Read's comment (CO 533/ 145/10731) in 1914; "The partition of Abyssinia seems to obsess the Italians". Compare this with Sir Alfred Lyall's remarks on Indian Foreign Policy – "a kind of unwritten Monroe doctrine"; allowing no intervention by other European nations, and the predominance of no influence except our own" (quoted in Seton. "India Office" p.166).

⁷ Sir Charles Eliot quoted in FOP 9505/5 (the CO to the Treasury 10.1.08). cf also Eliot "East Africa Protectorate" p. 183-184.

claims receding steadily south.¹ Time and experience showed that the frontier established by treaty was a bad one for the Protectorate. But attempts to rectify this aroused the natural suspicions of Abyssinians, who divined the very land hunger that Britain attributed to others.²

Whilst the British turned their eyes to the north, they were taken in the flank by the migration of the Somali. If this migration went unchecked not only could it disturb the lines of communications, but the agricultural areas at the heart of the Protectorate might be harried. Unable to expel the invaders, the policy adopted, after 25 years of warfare, was one of containment. Where the pastoralist could not become a settled agriculturalist, at least his peregrinations might be restricted through grazing boundaries and ad hoc reserves, thus freezing the nomad into immobility.³

The Frontier presented an extreme example of the problem of controlling hostile pastoralists, never numbering more than a hundred thousand, with effort and expenditure out of all proportion to achievement. Perhaps prestige was the chief – if costly – motivating force. Certainly British trade and Imperial strategy derived little benefit. Yet the vacuum had to be filled; the demands and the feuds of the local tribes dictated the necessity for eventual occupation. In this sense, the true makers of policy were the native peoples themselves, and their unconscious instrument was the administrator, lured on by optimism, and his functional duty to administer and not ‘to observe’. A later generation of administrators voiced their doubts in the anonymous lines,

“Somali! Somali! We’re here for your sake,
But what the hell difference does the N.F.D. make?”⁴

¹ Even so Harrington could regard the Maud line with favour; “we have been a great deal luckier than I ever thought we should be” (FOP 9269/8 Memo. 18.1.07). Under the Maud line, the Abyssinians had lost their southern raiding grounds.

² Reflected in the perennial Abyssinian suspicion of all maps and all strange documents (originating with the Treaty of Uchialli).

³ To check migration, funds were needed to increase water supplies. Some money was made available in the late twenties, but the real work had to wait until after 1945.

⁴ NFD Rhymes (administrative ballads, in the main unprintable, in circulation in the frontier in the 1940’s and 1950’s).

C: THE BREAK WITH THE PAST

CHAPTER VIII

THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

This account of policy in action has concentrated so far on the relatively thinly populated regions where conservatism and pastoralism frustrated the administrators' quest for security and obedience. In contrast, the main tribes – the Kikuyu, Kamba and the 'Kavirondo' – around Mount Kenya, the Aberdares and the fringes of Lake Victoria - had proved relatively amenable prior to the War. Despite inadequacies in the selection of native agents, tribal pacification had been more easily obtained and sustained, than was the case with the more conservative peoples, in terms of law and order, taxation, and the supply of labour. But with the outbreak of the War, the emphasis shifted from administrative to military needs, the greatest being the demand for native labour. Administrative concern over the disobedience of the more distant tribes took second place to recruiting labour for the War, and this burden fell chiefly on the provinces of Ukamba, Kenia and Nyanza, where over 70% of the population lived. These three provinces felt the chief impact of the War, as well as absorbing much of the administrative attention. Obedience was stretched to the limit, taxing that reserve of good will and consent built up over the past years. The military needs strained the administrative machine. Out of the War years came the administrative problems of the post War decade and the new nationalism, which drew much of its force from war-time bitterness and grievances. Here, rather than in the early stages of pacification, lay the true break with the past. And it refocused administrative effort on to the centres of population and away from the peripheries.

On the outbreak of War there were doubts as to the necessity for fighting in East Africa. Both the German Governor and the East African Standard agreed that it was desirable to avoid a local conflict. The War could be settled only in Europe. Though the Protectorate might take defensive measures, it was more important that Europeans, whatever their nationality, should stand together in Africa against the 'native menace'.¹ In keeping with such views, and despite the activities of the German cruiser "Königsberg", the Royal Navy entered into an informal truce with the German East African ports.² As late as January 1915, Sir Henry Belfield could say publicly,

"This colony has no interest in the present war except in so far as its unfortunate geographical position places it in such close proximity to German East Africa".³

¹ Cf L. Moseley "Duel for Kilimanjaro" pp. 17-18. EAS 18.8.14. p.14; 22.8.14. p.14 (editorials). Cf. also cartoon in LEA 18.7.14. "Which?" (on the native menace).

² RE. Meinertzhagen. "Army Diary". 2.11.14. cf. also German proposals for the neutrality of the Congo Basin (CO 533/ 145/45952). Also Read's angry minute of 7.11.14. on CO 533/146/41169.

³ Meinertzhagen "Army Diary". 11.1.15. (also his comment on Belfield 17.3.15).

But others were pressing for action. The Leader of East Africa saw, in the War, pickings for the victors and new areas for settlement.¹ The German commander, Von Lettow-Vorbeck, felt it his duty to tie down as many enemy troops as possible, and took steps to make fighting inevitable.² There ensued a long and inconclusive campaign against German East Africa involving British, Indian, South African, West African, East African and Rhodesian troops, in addition to Belgian, and Portuguese forces. Inevitably the 'hate' spread from Europe to Africa with all the nuances of propaganda.³

From 1914 to early 1916, British military operations were mainly defensive. Late in February 1916, Smuts arrived from South Africa to take command and began offensive operations for the conquest of German East Africa. Conquest of territory proved relatively easy, but the capture of the elusive Vorbeck, and the destruction of all his force, was impossible. The underlying problems were poor communications and disease. Porters were the only feasible form of transport, where all others failed. Motor transport was inadequate and roads lacking. Animal transport was decimated by tsetse fly. In the 3 months up to the advance on Kondoa Irangi in late 1916, 53,400 transport animals died.⁴ From 1916 onwards, the demand was for more and more porters. It was this that imposed the greatest strain on the civil administration, increasingly geared to meet military needs.

The impact of the War on the Administration was cumulative. Recruitment of new officers dwindled.⁵ Younger officers were called to the colours, or volunteered, without permission for service overseas.⁶ Five officers died during the War years and 4 others were killed in action.⁷ Staff was overstretched and leave irregular. By early 1918 in an establishment of 141 officers, there were 22 vacancies, and, in addition, 24 officers were away on active service and 3 officers were on secondment. This left 93 officers, of whom 15 were on long leave and further 59 were overdue for leave.⁸ In effect, 78 officers were available for administrative duties; nearly 50% below strength. The stresses of the War and shortages of staff, left the Administration in no condition to fight off the growing political challenge of the settlers.

Over native affairs, there was little support from successive Governors, subjected as they were to settler pressure. In 1912 Belfield had advocated an imprecise version of what was later to be called the "dual policy".⁹

¹ LEA 15.8.14. "The position"; and "The War"; also 5.9.14. p.12. "German East Africa".

² General Von Lettow-Vorbeck. "My Reminiscences...". Ch II. cf also Moseley op.cit. Ch I.

³ Eg. "Prussian culture" (EAS 21.11.14. p.15) and the cartoon "Love me love my pig" (EAS. 27.5.16).

⁴ Moseley op.cit. p.153.

⁵ 1913, 20 ADCs; 1914, 13; 1915, 10; 1916, nil; 1917, 4; 1918, nil; (Blue Books to 1916; OGs 1914-18).

⁶ Cf OG 1915 pp. 694-695, a circular from the Secretary of State threatening the dismissal of officers who resign without permission, to join the forces.

⁷ Pitt; Farrant, Bruce, Elliott, Deacon. In action, K. Dundas, Mure, MacIntosh, Popplewell. (OG's 1914-18).

⁸ Legco. 1st session 1918. p.6.

⁹ The Dual policy came into existence after Cmd 1922 of 1923 had declared the paramountcy of native interests. Its aim was the complimentary development of non-native and native production. Cf G. Bennett, "Kenya" Ch. 6.

“The proper place for the native population should be within the Reserves, where they should be engaged in improving the same by agricultural labour and only be outside for the purpose of seeking employmentIt would be necessary to bring home to the Native population generally that.....it is their duty to contribute something either by means of labour or pecuniary equivalent towards the development of the Protectorate.”¹

By 1917, his views were more precise.

“I am prepared to state definitely that we desire to make of the native a useful citizen, and that we consider the best means of doing so is to induce him to work for a period of his life for the European, and that in order to arrive at this condition we propose to control the residence of natives outside their reserves...to insure that they are not idling. We further desire by humane and properly regulated pressure within the reserves, to induce natives to go out to work”.²

Belfield's successor, Sir Edward Northey took a similar line.

“Is it our duty to allow these natives to remain in uneducated and unproductive idleness in their so-called reserves? I think not”.³

Such was the language of the policy makers on the spot. If it differed from the language of Whitehall, so did the audience. It was one thing for Steel Maitland, as Under Secretary of the Colonies, to formulate in August 1917, ideas in keeping with a ‘dual mandate’:

“We are really trustees for the black races and perhaps the Committee would also agree that we are trustees for the needs of the rest of the world...”⁴

His audience did not consist of settlers struggling to make settlement pay. An editorial in *The Leader of East Africa* expressed the local view more accurately, when refuting Asian claims for representation.

“If counted by mere numbers, this country is a native country; but no one seriously considers that the native interest is the paramount interest.”⁵

For the settlers, the War brought the political initiative. Though migration was checked, settler politics were stimulated. In fighting the battles of the Empire, they staked out a claim for special treatment. In 1915 they gained a voice in the control of the local military effort by the establishment of a War Council, to which they sent elected representatives. In 1916, they were promised popular representation in Legislative Council, after the cessation of hostilities. Consideration was given to post-war European Settlement, and here again settler views were consulted. In 1917, the Land Settlement Commission, and the Economic Commission, were established

¹ Legco. 4th Session 1912. p.2-3.

² Legco. 1st Session 1917. p.3.

³ Ibid. 1st Session 1919. p.2.

⁴ Hansard. 5th X Vol. XDVII. 14.8.17. cls. 1053-54. for similar views cf. R. MacDonald's in “Labour and the Empire” p.98 and Stigand “Administration in Tropical Africa” (1914) p.2.

⁵ LEA 9.12.16. p.3.

with strong settler representation.¹ But such concessions were insufficient to satisfy local opinion, restive at the slow pace of political change. From early 1917, for the next 19 months, the territory was without a Governor. This, and the lack of Government policy, led to a series of “mass” meetings at which demands were made for the return of Sir Percy Girouard.² The Colonial Office reacted with a statement that it had other plans; eventually Sir Edward Northey was appointed Governor.

The War also revealed an undiminished hostility towards Native Reserves. In October 1916, an editorial in the *Standard* commenting on the Resident Natives Ordinance, complained that,

“The Reserve is a breeding-ground of idleness, and a check upon the development of the native. At best it is a necessary evil to the gradual elimination of which we may fairly and reasonably look forward.”³

A month later, the same paper stated that “Throughout the world, among all nations, man labours in orders that he might live”.⁴ If there were no Reserves, the native would have to work. The paper pressed for the gradual abolition of the Reserves.

The Leader of East Africa had been critical of the Reserves before the War, for they fostered tribalism and idleness. When, in 1915, legislation was introduced for the conscription of native porters, the Leader approved.

“Under the proposed Ordinance our idle, irresponsible natives will at last be compelled to do their duty towards the Empire, which has done so much for their safety and welfare”.⁵

Again in 1917, the Leader was concerned over the use of black troops against white enemies, but felt that closer white settlement, after the War, would minimise any danger of native troubles.⁶

¹ For the Economic Commission, Delamere, Grogan, T.A Wood, W.C Hunter, & Powys Cobb were members. For the Land Settlement Commission, P.H Clarke, Maclellan Wilson, McCall, and F. W. Baillie.

² Cf EAS 26.1.18. p.5,7,12; 2.2.18. pp. 9 & 14; 23.2.18. p.10a & p.8. In Legco, Delamere proposed doubling the Governor’s salary. Note these Settler meetings had some Asian support.

³ EAS. 21.10.16. p.11.

⁴ EAS. 11.11.16. p.12. (cf also Churchill’s comment in “My African Journey” p.63, “no man has a right to be idle”).

⁵ LEA. 21.8.15. p.14.

⁶ LEA. 17.2.17. pp. 5-6b; cf also Hobley on the use of Black troops, “they even saw that the courage of the white was no greater than that of the black. After all this can it be wondered that the prestige of the white race has suffered in the war” (“Bantu Beliefs and Magic” p.287).



But the sharpest expressions of settler views were revealed in the reports of the two local Commissions published early in 1919. Whilst the Commissions were taking evidence in 1917, Ainsworth – soon to become the first Chief Native Commissioner – had made public his views on native policy, emphasising the need for Reserves and for native education.¹ It was his “Segregation Policy”² which was most sharply criticised by the Economic Commission. The Commission advocated a return to Sir Charles Eliot’s policy of “intimate contact” and “interpenetration of black and white”.³ The function of the European community was “to act as a yeast leavening the inert dough of Africa’s indigenous peoples”.⁴ The narrow official view of Reserves stemmed from

“that unreasonable dread of ‘exploitation’ of black by white to which expression has been given by public men both in this country and in England”.⁵

Reserves ought not to be sacrosanct but limited to “the acreage found to be actually under beneficial occupation”.⁶ Tribes should be concentrated leaving “the interspersed tracts not needed for native occupation....available for white settlement”.⁷ The Commission condemned the existing administration in the Reserves as “notoriously bad”;

¹ J. Ainsworth “The Question of Segregation as between Black and White in British East Africa”. Cf. Evidence Economic Commission (1919). Also EAS 16.3.18. p.11 & 18. The creation of the post of CNC was the first step in the establishment of the often proposed Dual Administration. Though Ainsworth became CNC on the 15.6.18, Dual Administration was not implemented till 1921 (and abandoned in 1929).

² Economic Commission Report (1919) p.18.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. p.3.

⁵ Ibid. p.19.

⁶ Ibid. p.18.

⁷ Ibid. p.19.

“The machinery of Government consists of Government appointed Chiefs and spearmen whose authority rests on no sort of tribal sanction”.¹

The view of the majority of the members of the Land Settlement Commission were in harmony with such ideas. Their report advocated the removal of certain areas from the Reserves for settlement; the most important being portions of the Kamba and Kikuyu reserves close to the railway.² The evidence of administrative officers that such a step was a breach of faith and would lead to trouble,³ were blithely ignored. Local politicians were riding high, thirsting after the heady wine of self-government.⁴

They could draw encouragement from the legislation of the War years, much of which made for the stricter control of the African as a labourer.⁵ The demands of War justified the use of compulsion and conscription. At the same time, native taxation was increased in the most populous native districts. But perhaps the clearest indication of the shift in political power came with the abandonment of the Native Authority Amendment Bill of 1918. Originally introduced by Ainsworth to authorise Chiefs to compel native agricultural development in the Reserves, it was withdrawn after unofficial objections, Government admitting that it was a “highly contentious matter of native policy”.⁶ In its place a bill was substituted providing for compulsory cultivation in times of famine only. It had been an oft-expressed settler fear that the development of Reserves created a labour shortage.

It is against this background of increasing settler influence and with the local Government pre-occupied with the military needs, that the effects of War on the African population must be considered. At the commencement of hostilities the Giryama revolted. The Kisii, after the abandonment of their Government station, broke loose and turned to looting. Elsewhere, the reaction was one of suspicion and astonishment. The Nandi were restless, fearing the mobilised Uasin Gishu settlers. In Ukamba the P.C. reported,

“After the outbreak of the War the hopes of the Akamba and the Akikiyu were raised to a certain extent by the revival of the old belief that Europeans are in temporary occupation only in East Africa and that a war between Briton and Teuton was the beginning of the end...these hopes have been dispelled”.⁷

¹ Ibid. p.19. Note also the Commission’s report on Official/unofficial tensions (p.23) and the appeal in Tate’s memo of 3.5.17 (pp.220 et.s.). For Official Settler difficulties cf Ukamba Annual Report 1911-12 pp.45-46. “The Limuru Settlers’ Association, in particular, seems unwilling to abide by any law and desires to constitute itself a Court of Appeal. There is a great inclination to intimidate officers”.

² Land Settlement Commission Report (1919) para 32.33.

³ Ibid. Appendix I (Ainsworth; Northcote: also Ainsworth Papers (Rhodes House Mss. Afr. S. 382). Ainsworth to C.S 23.12.18. cf also correspondence on CPA file 22 © 1918 “Native Affairs” – 21.2.18 onwards – concerning Belfield’s promise to honour the Kikuyu Reserves, in 1914.

⁴ Apart from the alienation of a portion of the Nandi Reserve, plans for alienation achieved very little.

⁵ The Native Followers’ Ordinance (29/1915) was a war-time measure. Of a more permanent nature were the Resident Natives Ordinance (35/1918), The Registration of Natives Ordinance (15/1915) The Hut and Poll Tax Amendment (40/1915). In 1916 the Masters and Servants Ordinance was amended to make desertion cognisable to the Police (1/1916). (This last was not repealed till Ordinance 4/1925).

⁶ Legco. 2nd Session 1918, p.21. cf also 1st Session 1918 p.40; LEA 20.4.18. p.20.

⁷ CPA. Ukamba Report 1914-15. p.3. cf also Hobley’s comment in 1912 “the idea still exists that the Europeans will eventually all leave the country” (Ukamba Report 1911-12. p.18).

On the Frontier there was temporary peace following the Marahan operations, but the region was to be disturbed by fresh troubles on the Abyssinian border and with the Aulihan. In Turkana, the War years brought two major punitive expeditions. But there were also amongst all tribes, assurances of loyalty from the chiefs and generous gifts of livestock.

On the outbreak of War, there was an immediate demand for military porters, but this remained moderate until late 1915, when it began to spiral. By November 1914, 7,000 porters had been recruited. By February 1915, a further 28,000 porters (4,000 of them from Uganda) had been enlisted. But the actual strength of the labour force (soon to be called the Carrier Corps) dropped to a little short of 11,000 men in the first quarter of 1915, whereas the army required 16,000 men. 3,000 men were needed each month as replacements to bring the force up to strength. Early in 1915, legislation was introduced to provide for the conscription of military labour. By October 1916, the Carrier Corps, recruited from both Uganda and the Protectorate, had expanded to a force of 64,000 men.¹

Between April 1915 and March 1916 demands were made on all provinces for military porters, but the main areas of recruitment were Ukamba, Kenia, and above all Nyanza. In that period, Ukamba produced 8,527, Kenia 11,856 and Nyanza 23,600 porters. At first the period of service was for 6 months, but this was increased to 9 months, and then in some cases, for the duration. The demands for 1916-17 became more pressing. Ukamba supplied 10,976, Kenia 8,204 and Nyanza 40,400 porters.² The succeeding year brought increased demands since,

“Animal and mechanical transport had failed and the success of the campaign depended on sufficient porters to undertake the work”.³

A levy en masse took place in the first half on 1917. From Seyidie some 5,000 men were recruited, 12,440 from Ukamba, and 18,400 from Kenia. Nyanza after the great efforts of earlier years, produced only 27,000 men.⁴ The Missions lent their support by raising and leading volunteer units; for example 1,421 Mission Volunteers from Fort Hall and 251 Volunteers from Nyeri. But this mass recruitment made serious inroads on manpower. In Ukamba, for instance, it was estimated that, from first to last, 77% of the male adults of Machakos, 75% of those from Kitui, and 53% from Kiambu, had been enlisted at one time or another.⁵

The flow of ‘returned empties’ took place simultaneously with fresh recruitment. In March 1918, Ukamba which had supplied about 30,000 porters, reported that 10,000 had returned and a further 2,400 were known to be dead. But many of the repatriates

¹ Legco. Special Session 1915. p.3; 3rd Session 1916, p.4.

² Annual Reports, Nyanza, Ukamba, Kenia 1914-15. CPA. Kenia Record Book p.245 (15.9.17). also Rules under Native Followers Ordinance (29.9.15; 19.4.16. O&R. 1915-1916).

³ CPA. Ukamba Report 1917-1918. p.1. John Ainsworth was seconded as Military Labour Commissioner to take charge of the Carrier Corps in March 1917.

⁴ Annual Reports, Seyidie, Ukamba, Kenia, Nyanza, 1917-18. Machakos Records Mkos/59 p.125 (Military Labour Statistics).

⁵ CPA. Ukamba Report 1917-18. p.64. cf Legco 2nd Session 1917 p.3 for Mission volunteers. Also Fr. C. Cagnolo “The Akikuyu” p.275-277 and H. Meynard Smith “Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar” passim.

were unfit. In 1917-18, 1,300 of the Kenia repatriates had to be hospitalised on receiving their discharge.¹

A serious feature of the recruitment was the evidence it provided of ill health in the Reserves. There was a high rate of medical rejections. In 1915-16, the figure for Nyanza was running at 33%. When the levy en masse took place early in 1917, nearly 50% of the 33,000 examined in Kenia province were rejected. In Nyeri district alone, where 17,000 men were examined, 64% were rejected as unfit.²

The total recruitment figures for the Carrier Corps is not known. A conservative estimate was 160,000 men for the East Africa Protectorate, of whom 24,000 died. But many more were missing and were never traced.³

The Carrier Corps was the most striking, but by no means the only impact of the War on the Africans. Volunteers were required from the Police and for the enlarged K.A.R. In the main, these were drawn from the Kamba, Nandi, Kipsigi and Kavirondo. In 1915-16, the Machakos Kamba supplied 557 men for the Police and the K.A.R. In 1916-17 the Kipsigis sent 500 men. The K.A.R. alone expanded from a peacetime force of 2,500 men (for Uganda, Nyasaland, and East Africa) to over 33,000 strong, in July 1918. Casualties again were heavy; some 3,000 men dying of disease and 1,200 in battle.⁴

Throughout the War, labour was also required for the farms, for Government, for public works, and for punitive expeditions. Increasingly labour was obtained by compulsion through the chiefs supported, if need be, by police. Carrier Corps rejects were expected to go out to work locally. (Attempts were also made to get discharged porters to work on the farms, but this met with opposition). In 1915-16, Nyanza supplied 4,000 men for Government departments, 9,000 men for private employers (excluding private agreements), and another 4,000 men for Turkana operations. Meru regularly provided porters for the N.F.D. In 1917-18, Kenia provided – under compulsion – 5,000 men for local farmers.⁵

There was one glaring exception, the Masai. Early attempts to recruit Masai into the K.A.R. had been abandoned in 1907. For the greater part of the War, no demand was made on their manpower, save as scouts and intelligence agents. Some rifles were issued to the Moran, who undertook cattle forays into German East Africa for private profit. In April 1915, Rupert Hemsted, the Officer in Charge of Masai, proposed the formation of a Masai Company. Efforts to raise recruits in July 1916 proved a failure; the Moran were too busy with Eunoto ceremonies. In April 1918 shortly before his

¹ CPA Ukamba Report 1917-1918 p.65; CPA Kenia Report 1917-18 p.1-2.

² NPA. Nyanza Report 1915-16 p.50. CPA Kenia Report 1917-18 p. 3 and Appendix 4.

³ NAD Report 1918-19 p.21. But cf Carter Commission Report (para. 2048-1068) suggests that the number was nearer 400,000, of whom 39,000 were missing and untraced. Cf also M. Ross "Kenya from within" p.152; G. De Beer "African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference" (1923) pp.270-271. also J. Kenyatta "facing Mount Kenya" p.212.

⁴ CPA. Ukamba Report. 1915-16. p.47; NPA Nyanza Report 1916-17. p.2; Moyse Bartlett "King's African Rifles" p. 701.

⁵ NPA. Nyanza Report 1915-16 p.50; CPA. Kenia Report 1917-18 p.38. and Appendix 5. In Kenia Province in 1917 it was estimated that with a male adult population of just over 100,000; 26,210 were working with Government Departments, 18,428 with the Carrier Corps, 5,129 recruited for private employers and 27,392 out as voluntary labour, i.e. 77%.

departure on long leave, Hemsted revived his proposals. Recruiting commenced in July 1918, but the Moran were defiant. A Company of K.A.R. had to be despatched to the Masai Reserve to overawe them. Emergency legislation, gazetted on the 28th August, empowered the local authorities to conscript able bodied Masai for the armed forces. The Moran continued to ignore the orders of their elders, their laigwanak, and Government. Early in September 1918, an incident occurred at Olulunga. The D.C. Narok had entered a Masai manyatta, which was surrounded by K.A.R. Without orders the troops opened fire, narrowly missing the administrative officer, and killing two elderly Masai women. At dawn on the 11th September, the Moran charged the K.A.R. camp – with its two machine guns – but were beaten off, leaving 14 dead.¹ The whole policy of conscription was then thrown into disarray by the furious protests of Lord Delamere and his brother-in-law, Berkeley Cole.² Indeed Delamere, at the request of Government, took over the Masai reserve for a few weeks to negotiate a truce. Even so, only a few recruits were forthcoming. The Purko, the largest sub tribe, did not produce a single one. At the War's end, the bulk of the Masai remained unconscribed and triumphant in their resistance. It was a curious reflection on the limited effectiveness of those very native agents, who had so recently opposed Government in the Courts.

The War had a considerable economic effect on the Reserves. Through wages and purchases of stock, large sums of money were put into circulation, though there was also an increasing shortage of commercial goods. In Ukamba between 1915-1917, Kitui and Machakos districts disposed of 30,000 head of cattle for 713,000 rupees. Other pastoral tribes, such as the Nandi and Masai, disposed of livestock in large quantities, not always willingly. In 1916-17, the Masai sold 40,000 bullocks and 50,000 sheep to the Military. Nyanza – not normally a meat exporting area – sent out 50,000 cattle between 1914 and March 1918. In Embu district during 1917-18, the D.C. paid out to carriers and their dependents, 117,000 rupees in wages.³ On the Coast at the end of the War, discharged porters and askaris received gratuities of between 200 and 500 rupees, much of which they squandered.⁴

It was the misfortune of the Protectorate that the last two years of the War were also years of natural disasters, adding to the tribulations of the native population. The short rains of 1917 failed. The long rains of 1918 were overextended. There was food shortage and famine. In 1918, an influenza epidemic struck the tribes already suffering from malnutrition. The death rate was estimated at 155,000; in Kenia alone, the mortality was 50,000. In Ukamba where 50 Europeans and 250 Asians died, Native losses were very heavy; 767 in Nairobi, 7,591 in Machakos, 5,187 in Kitui, and 4,000 in Kiambu. The youngest and strongest suffered the most severely.⁵

The impact of the War and natural disasters affected the whole Protectorate. But the greatest pressures were felt in Nyanza, Ukamba, and Kenia. It was these very areas

¹ For events in Masai cf Sandford "An Administrative and Political History" chp VII-VIII. SPA.

Annual Reports 1914-39 (Vol. I Subject Heading "Moran"). Narok District Records. Report 1918-19.

² Cf E. Huxley. "Whiteman's Country" Vol. II. pp.39-49. LEA 21.9.18. p.1. Letter of Berkeley Cole. Cf also 28.9.18 pp.14 & 21; EAS. 21.9.18. p.4.

³ Only slightly less than the total tax collection for Embu District in that year.

⁴ MPA. Seyidie Report 1918-19 p.1; NPA Nyanza Report 1917-18 pl; CPA Ukamba Report 1915-16 p.33, 1916-17 p.42; SPA Vol. I Annual Reports 1914-39 (cattle sales 1916-17). CPA. Kenia Report 1917-18, p.4.

⁵ NAD Report. 1919 p.4. CPA Kenia Report 1918-19 p.1.

that, prior to the War, had acquiesced in demands for labour, taxation and obedience. Their acquiescence continued, but at the price of straining both their loyalty and their consent, straining also the levers of government. Even so, there were marked contrasts within these areas.

Nyanza had the greatest reserve of manpower with a population of 1.15 million people. Prior to the War, under John Ainsworth, its native areas were the most progressive in the Protectorate with rising agricultural exports. The reports of the War years present a mixed picture; a growing demand for clothing for women, an acceptance of money economy and the largest number of native schools for any province. But by 1917, there were reports of increasing numbers of men leaving North Kavirondo for Trans-Nzoia to escape the Carrier Corps. By 1917-18, recruitment had brought with it a decline in cultivation, so that a planting campaign had to be organised. There was a drought in late 1917. The last year of the War saw the repatriation of the porters and askaris to a province affected by food shortages and epidemics.¹ From December 1918 onward, the policy was to keep the men active.

“Work on roads and bridges was pushed vigorously, the objects being first to force men out to work, secondly to keep their minds occupied during the epidemic, and thirdly to improve communications in the Reserves”.²

Yet despite the upheaval caused by the War, the return of discharged troops and porters appears to have caused relatively little trouble. If labour “seems less forthcoming day by day”,³ the province quickly settled down. Of Kisii, one of the areas most disturbed by the War, the P.C. could report that it was

“Pleasant to record that a considerable amount of mistrust which still remains from the effects of the War generally and the experiences of the Carrier Corps in particular, has been dispelled”.⁴

Despite the fact that Nyanza bore the heaviest burden in the War, it was not to be the centre of political unrest.

In Ukamba, the War coincided with a breakthrough in education amongst the Kikuyu of Kiambu. These had been considered by the Administration to be very conservative.⁵ By 1916, the P.C. Ukamba noted a marked change,

“Formerly the Kiambu Kikuyu were distinguished from those of Fort Hall and Nyeri by a deliberate determination not to adopt European methods or culture”.⁶

¹ NPA. Nyanza Reports 1914-15 – 1918-19.

² NPA. Nyanza Reports 1918-19. pp.1-2.

³ Ibid. 1918-19 p.3 (The increased demands for labour were also noted).

⁴ Ibid. Report 1920-21 p.3

⁵ CPA. Ukamba Report 1914-15. p.14. “a conservative tribe” cf also 1911-12 Ukamba Report p.21 concerning Kiambu Kikuyu “this tribe has had a very unfortunate experience of our rule, as compared to the experience of other tribes”.

⁶ Ibid. Ukamba Report 1915-16, p.10.

But now there was a demand for education, and the missions looked forward to mass conversions. Previously local administrators had taken little active interest in native education. A report of 1915 admitted this.

“The Missionary Societies noting the lack of interest evinced by the administration in the work carried out by them have less and less, as time went on, referred to our decision those questions of native and educational policy which it is our clear duty to lay down for them...we cannot absolve ourselves from the charge of neglecting that essential work of education in which, up to a few years ago, the various Missionary Societies were the only bodies engaged. Mr. Ainsworth has, I am aware, given the matter his attention for years.....Mr. Ainsworth’s attitude, however, in this matter, is the result of his personal convictions and not the work of an official carrying out the co-ordinated policy of Government, which should obtain in all Provinces”.¹

It was one thing to lament over past failings, but quite another to convince European opinion of the necessity of spending public funds on native education. As late as 1908 the policy was one of “private enterprise with the help of grants-in-aid and building grants”.² When Europeans pressed for “free education”³ it was for European children. As Delamere had stressed in Legislative Council,

“a country like this, where so much depends on the wise handling of native races should make a speciality of given to the children of the ruling race the very best possible education”.⁴

Other aspects of native affairs in Ukamba earned comment. The excessive drinking of the Akamba drew repeated criticism, and – with the need to de-stock – became one of the perennial problems of the tribe. In Kiambu, the migration of Kikuyu from the Reserve to Rift Valley farms was under way. Concern over this was expressed in 1915. By 1917 the position was the more serious since it was liable to create a labour shortage.

“The exodus is viewed with great disapproval both by the Headmen and the Kiambu settlers”.⁵

In the following year it was estimated that over 1,600 families had left the district, no doubt encouraged by famine.⁶

But gradually, the disorganisation caused by the War became a major item in all reports. Local officers were concerned at the demands the African had to meet. Government was taking the tribes’ two most cherished assets; their stock and their young men.

¹ Ibid. Ukamba Report 1914-15 (“Education”).

² Legco Session 18.12.1908. Appropriations Bill Provision 16.

³ Ibid. Comment of Captain Cowie.

⁴ Legco 1st Session 1917 p.21. A report on European education revealed that out of 1062 white children, only 358 went to school (Legco 1917 pp. 16-17). For white illiteracy cf Ukamba Report 1915-16 p.42. also M. Ross op.cit. Ch. VII “The Diseducated”.

⁵ CPA. Ukamba Report. 1916-17 pp.13-14. cf also Report 1915-16 p.11.

⁶ Ibid. 1917-18. p.14.

“I trust”, wrote Traill, in 1917, “that these facts will be borne in mind when various questions in which natives are interested come up for settlement in the future.”¹

Of recruiting, he remarked,

“No one who has any sympathy with natives....could take part in the recruitment of porters for war service, which has been carried out....unceasingly through the year, without feelings of strong dislike....the need was imperative”.²

But as the War progressed, there developed an awareness of the growing sophistication of the Africans, more particularly in the urban areas. Old methods no longer sufficed. Africans were more conscious of their legal rights and there was bitterness over Carrier Corps recruitment. The average administrator bogged down in routine and war work, was losing touch with his people. For the tribesman, the D.C, was now

“an individual who pays him hurried visits at infrequent intervals for the sole purpose of dunning him for money or harassing him with lectures on his obligations towards the State or members of the European community”.³

In short, the administrator’s duty as an Imperial agent was having to take precedence over his role as a native representative.

With labour conscription and famine came the European demands for the alienation of some of the native lands. The proposals of the Land Settlement Commission had a marked effect on the Kiambu Kikuyu. Christians combined with pagans under headman Koinange wa Mbiu to defend their interests.⁴

“A considerable revolution in native ideas on land holding resulted, the Gethaka owners are releasing for cultivation much land held up under bush. Undoubtedly the way was paved for a system of individual land tenure by small holders”.⁵

There was a demand for land titles to secure the reserve against encroachment. Officers warned Government of the likelihood of trouble, if any land were taken; Northcote even suggesting the possibility of the Kikuyu resorting to a general strike.⁶

¹ Ibid. 1917-18. p.2.

² Ibid. p.59 (1917-18).

³ Ibid. Report. 1919-20. p.14.

⁴ CPA. Ukamba Report 1918-19 p.1 & 5. The first native political association, The Kikuyu Association, came into existence in 1920. The more militant group under Thuku broke away in 1921 to form the Young Kikuyu Association – later called the East African Association and then the Kikuyu Central Association. (cf Provincial Reports “Kikuyu Province” 1921 onwards and G. Bennett “The Development of Political Organisations in Kenya”. Political Studies V. 1957).

⁵ CPA. Ukamba Report 1918-19 p.5. cf also CPA. File 22 (c) 20 “Native Affairs. General Policy”.

⁶ CPA. Ukamba Report. 1918-19. p.6.

The stresses imposed on the tribal society – particularly on the native levers of Government – were reflected in the erosion of tribal authority and in the native attitude towards Europeans.

“Indiscipline both towards Europeans and the Tribal authorities, though chiefly the latter, is noticeable among both Akamba and AGikuyu tribes.

Towards Europeans it is evinced in the relationship of employment, in short disrespect where not confronted with legal restrictions....the fundamental cause is the awakening of the native doubtless owing to what he has learnt during the War...the native expects the European to act as his master and superior, is puzzled and takes advantage when the European does not so act, but submits willingly when he does. In fact the former system of Bluff, founded on the obvious differences between White and Black, has broken down and we must in future deal with the native on legal lines; no stronger argument for the necessity of a division of the Administration into White and Black divisions could be found.

In exactly the same way the Bluff of Headmanship in the Native Reserves had been ‘called’ by the native. Purely Administrative orders carry far less weight than formerly; the Headman, who in the Administrative sense has no status, tradition or experience among the Akamba and AGikuyu, is losing power; only where his authority is enforceable by law is it effective”.¹

The strains imposed by the War were felt throughout the province. But it was in the Kikuyu areas that the deterioration was most marked. Post war reports referred to the backwardness and conservatism of the Kamba, amenable in many matters, though impervious to arguments designed to persuade them to work, or to reduce their herds of cattle. If the Kamba had borne a greater share of the burden of the war, it was the Kiambu Kikuyu who showed the greater dis-ease.²

In the Kenia province, which was predominantly Kikuyu the later years of the War had the greatest impact. The Provincial Report for 1916-17, written by H.R.Tate, made unpleasant reading. Half the recruits for the Carrier Corps had proved to be medically unfit. The discharged porters had brought back many infections. There had been over 100 different outbreaks of smallpox in the Province. In Meru, a virulent dysentery had killed 2,000 people. Labour recruitment was having serious results. In Fort Hall,

“The villages are denuded of men between the ages of 16 and 35 years almost to a man”.³

Yet demands for labour were “importunate and insatiable”.¹ The effect on an Administration “understaffed and overdue for leave” was serious. By March 1917, “the burden became well nigh intolerable”.²

¹ Ibid. p.13.

² E.g. the comments in Ukamba Report 1920-21 p.18 and Ukamba 1923 Report p.11. The Thuku troubles had relatively little repercussion in Ukamba. Vide 1922 Report. p.2-3. Though note the odd incident of Ndonye was Kauti, a religious fanatic.

³ CPA. Kenia Report. 1916-17. p.20.

The massive recruiting drive meant labour troubles in the future.

“I have thought it only fair in the interests of those who have capital invested in the province to warn all employers of labour that owing to the shortage of labour which must inevitably occur for at least six months after the conclusion of hostilities, land owners will be well advised to concentrate for the present on existing work...and defer increasing cultivation”.³

Tate was not complaisant, but he felt some pride in the response of the tribes to the demands of the War.

“Though we all deplore the necessity which compels us to put the requisite amount of pressure upon our native peoples it is some recompense to feel that their loyalty was equal to the strain”.⁴

Attached to his report he enclosed a memorandum by Dr. Philp of the C.S.M, who had acted as Medical Officer of Health for the province, in the absence of any Government doctor. It was written with some heat and foreboding. The Doctor warned against the dangers of inviting further settlement, whilst there was an inadequate labour supply. If Government succumbed to pressure, the result would be disastrous. The Reserves were depleted. The needs of the African were for education, health services, Christianity, and by influencing him,

“To work with his hands, as the future of the native races of this country is undoubtedly to a very large extent, that of working under and in co-operation with the white man”.⁵

It was as a doctor that Philp’s points were most telling. The cerebro-spinal meningitis outbreak of 1913 had killed 20,000 people. The Carriers had brought back dysentery; in one month 600 people had died from it. His examination of recruits had revealed an alarming decline in the health of the Kikuyu. Heart cases were increasingly common. In some locations, he had had to reject up to 80% of the recruits as unfit. Those selected were the pick of the tribe. The death rate amongst them was high, perhaps 400 a month. Of those who returned, many were riddled with disease and many died.

“One result of the present lack of labour is the iniquitous proposal against which I lodged my utmost protest. It is to take all those rejected from the Carrier Corps and compel them to work on farms. None were rejected by me but those really unfit, and to compel by force a man with, say an article lesion, to work is no more justifiable than the torpedoing of the Lusitania”.⁶

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p.20-21.

⁴ Ibid. p.24.

⁵ Ibid. Appendix. Dr R.A. Philp. “The Labour Problem in the Kenya Province”. 7.2.17. Note other views on declining health of Africans. Hobley JAS 1923 p.298. (“Some Native Problems of East Africa”. Pt. 2) and V. M. McKeag (appendix to Central Province Report 1938).

⁶ CPA Kenia Report 196-17. Philp Memorandum.

The demands of the War could not be shirked. It is wise to keep the matter in perspective, to recall that on a single day on the Somme in 1916, there had been 60,000 casualties. In such a blood soaked world, no sacrifice seemed too great, least of all the sacrifice of others. Nevertheless local officers were alarmed at the results. In early 1918, Tate warned of the strain imposed on the tribal authorities.

“The altered outlook on life which has been experienced by so many young men while absent on war service from their homes is very marked and is already affecting the administration of the Reserves, the attitude of the natives towards the tribal authorities, and the social life generally of the Kikuyu both at home and outside the reserve”.¹

The situation varied from district to district. In Nyeri, many discharged porters complained of unpaid wages and refused to go out again to work. In Embu, recruits had come forward without pressure being exerted, due in part to the fitness of the repatriated porters. In Meru there was concern at a mortality rate of 15% amongst porters. Fort Hall claimed to have the highest percentage of men out at work. But after the levy of 1917, labour was hard to obtain:

“Natives adopted an attitude of passive resistance and it has been far more difficult to recruit compulsory labour than was previously the case..... Voluntary labour has been at its lowest ebb”.²

There were signs that consent had been overtaxed.

When Tate wrote his next annual report, 4 months after the end of the War, the full effects of famine and influenza were felt. Some 85,000 rupees from Government funds, and private subscriptions, had been spent in relieving hardship. The worst areas were Fort Hall, Embu, Meru and Chuka. Perhaps 50,000 people had died from famine and influenza, and others had migrated from their homes. There was an estimated decline in the native population of about 71,000.³ The lack of medical facilities drew from Tate a comment that combined idealism with earthy common sense.

“The past disregard of the medical needs of the Reserve have cost us the lives of several thousand bread winners and the loss to Government incidentally of thousands of rupees in taxes”.⁴

He noted that Government had failed to impart any technical education, with the result that there were no native artisans. No doubt overwork caused him to angrily add,

¹ Kenia Report 1917-18 p.2.

² Ibid. p.36.

³ For the decline in population cf figures quoted in Hemsted's History of Kikuyu Province 23.6.18. (CPA. File. Pub 24/6/1) But local officers felt that original population estimates were too high.

⁴ CPA. Kenia Report. 1918-19. p.41.

“If experience in the past has taught us anything it has shown us that our native population is incomparably the most valuable asset we possess in British East Africa. Exploitation in the future as continued in the past is certain to result in big dividends for a term of years, but failure to safeguard the health, working conditions, and legitimate rights and aspirations of the native population is a policy of sacrificing the future for the needs of the present, and can only end in our ultimate exposure as unjust stewards and in the fate reserved for those who are adjudged unworthy of their trust”.¹

The ‘Protest Voice’ was sounding a shrill note of warning. Torn between duty to country and duty to tribe, there was an awareness of the limits of tribal tolerance and the price that must be paid after war in terms of administrative prestige.

Nine years later, Rupert Hemsted as P.C. Kikuyu summed up the effects of the War on the local African.

“They brought back the knowledge that there were different kinds of white man than those they had hitherto known, but they also brought back some idea of the power of organisation”.²

This was the watershed of native political development.

“Combined with other causes, it is probable that the growth of native political organisations and of native independence of thought, really dates from the war.”³

These experiences were not peculiar to the Kikuyu. The Kamba and the Nyanza tribes had felt the impact of the War, conscription, increased taxation and famine. All suffered from the ill effects of the post war currency changes, reduced wages, and further tax increases. The post war demands for labour hit all. Yet the impression emerges that the tensions were greatest with the Kikuyu. Their sense of grievance over land was heightened by fear for their remaining lands. And yet they had not been as progressive as some of the Nyanza districts. Their desire for education was one of the factors that emerged during the War. If it was most marked in Kiambu, it also caused comment in Nyeri and Fort Hall.

“Missionary influence in the two districts...is considerable and is increasing, partly on account of a certain section of natives desiring to become literate, and partly owing to the fact that upon becoming a registered Mission adherent, a native thence forward challenges the local native authority and considers himself exempt from the demands of the manual labour market.”⁴

¹ Ibid.

² CPA. File PUB 24/6/1. Hemsted’s History (23.6.28) (unpaged).

³ Ibid.

⁴ CPA. Kenia Report 1918-19 p.38. cf also Report 1919-20. pp.18-20. concerning educational expansion. The more cynical view was that “the main desire is education rather than a new religion” (Traill. Ukamba Report. 1917-18. p.62) or as one P.C. put it “Education is the jam on the pill of religion” (Provincial Report. 1934. p.61).

The factors at work with the Kikuyu were their position at the centre of settlement (the effects of Eliot's chequerboard policy), weaknesses within the tribal system, the possible influence of a forest mentality,¹ the proximity of European influence, and the heavy migrations to the settled areas and away from tribal control. As Girouard had shrewdly noted in 1910, they of all tribes, were the most subject to change.² On these factors, the War acted as a catalyst, laying the groundwork for the post war problems.

The War saw the emergence of other problems that were to tax post war Kenya. The pressures of war made for a labour shortage and the Labour Circulars of 1919,³ just so soon as wartime conscription was abandoned (the arrival of 1,500 settlers with their families in November 1919 did not ease the situation). At a labour conference at Kisumu in September 1918, Ainsworth had urged the Nyanza chiefs,

“to do what they could to see that their young men instead of loafing in the reserves, were made to work”.⁴

The gospel of work must be preached every day. But Ainsworth opposed physical compulsion.

“If you want to throw stones at German glass houses do not live in a glass house yourself”.⁵

To the fury of the settlers, Ainsworth still hankered after the development of the reserves.

“To be straight, I do not see why a native should turn out to work for Europeans if he wants to develop his own land”.⁶

But with the Labour crisis of 1919, Ainsworth was faced with demands for labour for settled areas as a matter of priority.⁷

Again, the Indian issue came to the fore during the War over the question of the franchise.⁸ Anti-Indian feeling amongst Europeans was heightened by proposals that Tanganyika be made available for Indian settlement. But the early skirmishes were over representation on the Nairobi Municipality. The first municipal elections on a communal basis had been held in 1917 for 1 Goan, 2 Indian and 6 European seats.

¹ Cf Dr J. C Carrothers. “Psychology of Mau-Mau” (1954) *passim*. Also L. Leakey “Mau Mau and the Kikuyu”.

² *Supra* p. 92, 96.

³ For the Labour Controversy cf Cmd 873/1920 and Cmd 1509/1921. also Huxley *op.cit.* Vol. II. pp.60-69; N. Leys Kenya p.395-404. F.S. Welbourn “East African Rebels” (notes p.231). Kenia Province Report 1919-20 pp.13-16; Ukamba Report 1919-20 p.52. But NB. NPA. (Nandi Confidential File) for the Confidential Labour Circular of 24.2.19. which was not published in the White Papers.

⁴ LEA 21.9.18. p.13.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ EAS 21.9.18. p.5.

⁷ Despite the dual policy there appears to have been a decline or stagnation of native agricultural production in the 1920's. M. R. Dilley “British Policy in Kenya Colony” p.181. Leys *op.cit.* p.279. but see also Evidence, Carter Land Commission Vol. III. p.3072.

⁸ Cf Legco 2nd session 1917 pp.19-22 (Report of Select Committee on Franchise). For Indian proposals for settlement in Tanganyika cf Meinertzhagen Army Diary 1.2.19. Also W. R. Louis in JAH Vol. IV 3. For the post war Indian controversy cf Cmd 1311/1921 and Cmd 1922/1923.

When new elections fell due in late 1918, the Indians pressed for equality of representation on the Municipal Board (and other public bodies). They boycotted the municipal elections of December 1918.¹ There were also threats of refusal to pay taxes. The local European press was swift to condemn such action under headings of “No East African betrayal” and “Danger of Indian Agitation”.² Already the claims of African interests were being aired by Europeans as a counter to Asian pretensions.³

Even in the Reserves, there were signs of the changes that were to emerge in the decade of the 1920s. In 1917 McClure, the D.C. Nyeri, had established – on his own initiative – a native advisory council of 15 members, 8 of whom were nominated by him (2 from the missions), and the balance were elected. His success led the C.N.C., in May 1919, to propose, with the Governor’s approval, similar councils for districts and provinces. The aim was to give the native, “a direct interest in their own affairs..... promoting free discussion”.⁴ The immediate reaction of field officers was generally unfavourable. But another example of change had taken place in the Masai Reserve with the abandonment of the Paramount Chieftainship in 1918 for a Masai Council, which considered trading plot allocations and acted as a sounding board on more general matters. Earlier still, a special Masai suspense account had been established, into which were paid plot rents, communal fines, and voluntary subscriptions; the money being expended on the development of the Reserve.⁵ Before the end of the War, there were in existence prototypes of the post war pattern of local government: the Native Trust Fund of 1921, the Native Advisory Councils of 1922, and the Local Native Councils of 1924.

But such changes – in response to an awareness that old methods would no longer suffice – came from an administration on the defensive, not only in terms of the settlers, but with the ‘new African’, the ‘man in trousers’. Grievances over land, labour, and tax, provided fuel for the discontent that found its early expression in Kikuyu nationalism and the Thuku troubles of 1922.⁶ Prestige and that sure confidence in Western superiority no longer dazzled the ‘new African’, matured and embittered by wartime experiences. Nor can it be truthfully said that the ‘man in trousers’ ever received the devotion that the chameleons had lavished on “the man in the blanket”.⁷ And lacking sympathy for, or support from the ‘new African’, the administrators could no longer function as the unchallenged representatives of their tribes.

The Administration came out of the War without the political initiative and leaderless, its numbers reduced by death, transfer, and retirement. The element of continuity had

¹ CPA Ukamba Report. 1917-18. p.19. also 1918-19. p.17. (In fact the first European elections for the Municipality took place in late 1916. vide. Ukamba Report 1916-178. p.17). cf also LEA. 7.12.18. p.19.

² EAS. 21.12.18. p.13.

³ Cf LEA. 14.12.18. p.18 2nd Session Legco. 1918. pp. 44-48. EAS. 28.12.18. p.8 (Bishop of Zanzibar’s views).

⁴ MPA. (16/42). File. “Native Tribunals”. Circular 83. on “Native Advisory Councils” of 22.5.19.

⁵ Cf Sandford op.cit. Ch. VI section 4 and 7.

⁶ Vide Cmd 1691/1922 and W.M. Ross “Kenya from Within” Ch. XIII.

⁷ Administrators disliked Africans imitating European ways. Cf CPA Ukamba Report 1914-15 p.14; C. Dundas “A history of Kitui” (JRAI. Vol. 43. 1913) p. 508. Note Lugard’s letter to his wife in 1913. “I am somewhat baffled how to get in touch with the Educated Native. To start with I am not in sympathy with him”. (M. Perham. Lugard. Vol. II. p. 586).

been weakened by the departure of the pioneers.¹ A weak Governor and an interregnum coincided with settler political ascendancy.² And during the twenties the settlers appeared to gain the sympathy and ear of successive Governors and, occasionally, Whitehall. In the settled areas, administrative officers were isolated, their powers clipped by the advance of white democracy. In the Reserves, Dual Administration was welcomed by officers who hoped to be left free to work unhindered. But there, the Administration had lost – in some cases only temporarily – the passive consent of the tribes, as a result of grievances beyond its power to control.³ Under the acid test of War, its function as the Africans' representative had been undermined. The magic of prestige was dimmed.

¹ Hobley and Ainsworth retired in 1920. C. Dundas, Brett, Orde Browne, and E. D. Browne had transferred to Tanganyika. Plowman went to Somaliland. There was also a heavy rate of invalidings and retirement due to ill health. E.g. A.D.C. Gibson, M. Beech, J.M. Pearson, Le. Poer Power, and R. Skene, (and in 1919, another three officers died).

² An indication of the change in the political climate was that legislation imposing the death penalty for the rape of a white woman was successfully introduced in 1926. Such an Ordinance had been proposed in Girouard's time, but the CO had then refused to agree to the extreme penalty (cf. "East Africa"; 24.6.26. p.845, 8.7.26. p.893 and 901).

³ Compare P. Woodruff's comments on India after Amritsar. "Government had been carried on with the consent – usually apathetic and half-hearted, but still consent – of the governed. That consent now changed to active mistrust." ("The Guardians" p.213).

CONCLUSION

“Can we be sure of the continuance of that degree of acquiescence in our rule which is a necessary condition of administrative progress?”

(Lord Hailey. Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa).

These studies of district administration and district administrators were suggested originally by the belief that, hitherto, the history of 'primitive' colonial Government has been written too much from the viewpoint of general policy directives from Whitehall or the colonial Secretariat. Too little has been heard of what district officers actually did in the field. Political or administrative theory was one thing: policy in action tended to be another. And after all, for the subject peoples it was what was done that really mattered, rather than the intentions. An analysis of the administrator's role, as described in these studies, suggests certain tentative conclusions and underlines the importance of local factors, which the administrators had to accept, if they were to fulfil their task.

In the high noon of Imperialism, the British prided themselves that a few of their young men, backed by a handful of native police, governed huge areas, inhabited by large subject populations, with little apparent difficulty. How they in fact managed to do this is indeed an important historical question. Too often, perhaps, the performance of this miracle, when not ascribed to the intervention of the Almighty, was attributed to the superior character of the men concerned. They themselves believed that their success was largely due to prestige, personality, and bluff. It has been shown that there was more to it than that. Certainly it was not the invincible force that they might call up to punish recalcitrant subjects. For if this was the ultimate sanction – save in the very first stages of pacification – it was one that the D.C. and his superiors frowned upon as an admission of failure. In almost everything he did – whether recruiting carriers, keeping the peace, collecting tax, suppressing native risings, building bridges, or clearing roads – the District Officer, under the primitive conditions of early colonial administration, had to obtain and use the co-operation of native agents, who in turn were only effective if they could carry their people with them. As a result, the practical administrative problem of getting things done, and the political problem of keeping things quiet, depended on finding the right levers – the effective native agencies of indigenous collaboration. In effect, the District Officer had to become the paramount chief of the African society over which he ruled. In translating the policies imposed upon him from above by his masters, the man on the spot had to square them with the real wishes and interests of his native collaborators; so acting as an arbiter between the requirements of his own culture and those of another.

Apart from being exceedingly painful for the individual concerned, this translation of European theory into African practice often proved well nigh impossible. Perhaps the purpose was unintelligible, or even absurd, to the native agents. Perhaps it involved something they refused to undertake, or which their followers would not tolerate. In other words, to a greater or lesser extent, how much of the policy the District Officer actually achieved was restricted by the efficiency, co-operation, interests, or authority, of his African allies. So great was his dependence upon them that he might find himself the tool of their interests – as in the case of the Masai – rather than the agent of his own Government. In the pioneer colonial days, not only the administrative structure but, to a varying extent, actual policy was determined by the politics of native collaboration. For if the District Officer's gloss on policy was unacceptable to his native agents, or his agents could not impose it upon their people without loss of authority, then control over the district was in jeopardy; the alternatives being either

to discover new collaborators – which took time – or to call in the troops – which was expensive and so unpopular with the centre.

Once the importance of the politics of native collaboration is realised and it is admitted that the D.C. had a dual role as Imperial agent and African representative, the history of administration in African dependencies emerges in a new light. Plainly the Africans played a larger part in determining its character than historians have perhaps allowed them. Secondly it is easier to comprehend the gap between higher policy and what was actually being done in the districts. Thirdly the “Worm’s eye” view of colonial administration illuminates the practice of British Trusteeship. Too often, historians have regarded this as exclusively the projection of religious and humanitarian values, or movements, arising within British society. And that element should not be decried. But there were always more direct and practical sanctions in favour of trusteeship on the ground. They were found in the dependence of district administrators for peace and quiet – and for getting things done – on the collaboration of the subjects. If the administrator wished to retain control of his people, he had to represent their interests. Trusteeship was, to a varying degree, implicit in the D.C.’s role as native representative or paramount chief. And for a hard-pressed practical man, such a sanction in day to day administration was more effective than statements of principle.

The dilemma for Kenya’s administrators was that the conflicting interests of the settler community, and then the needs of the War, compelled them to neglect African interests and to wear out the popularity of their African collaborators in meeting these demands.¹ Equally important, the War coincided with the gaining of the political initiative by the settlers. And looking to the future, the pity was that the Kenya District Officer – absorbed in his parochial paternalism – was unable to tolerate the new challenge of native nationalist agitators² Instead, he regarded the ‘men in trousers’ as aliens and rivals to be jealously resisted, as were all rivals, for the better protection of ‘his’ people.

¹ But NB: Lord Hailey writing of Kenya chiefs during the Second War. “It is claimed, not without some truth, that in many localities the Chiefs are regarded not primarily as agents of the Administration, but as real representatives of local native interests”. (Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa, p. 221).

² In fairness, it must be said that when the effort was made, the response was disappointing (cf. Hemsted’s policy in Kikuyu Province in the 1920’s).

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File 25/17. Report of the Malindi Commission of Inquiry Correspondence.

140/105/18. Correspondence concerning the removal of certain Giriama.

5520. Masai Move. Legalishu and Others vs the Crown.

140/115/3. Kinangop Circumcision area.

140/115/2. Agreements between H.E. the Governor and the Masai Chiefs.

iv) Secretariat Archives, Nairobi. (N.S.A.)

ARC (PCRVP) 2/10/4. Masai Move.

ARC (PCRVP) 2/20/3 Masai Move. Reports of Officers.

ARC (DC NKU). 2/9/41. Ngong Report 1909/10; Ravine Report 1909/10; Baringo Report 1909/10.

(N.B. A fire in September 1939 destroyed the greater part of the Secretariat Archives).

v) Provincial Archives.

Isiolo. (Northern Frontier) (NFD) (records have been bound into volumes).

NFD/1 Marsabit Annual reports 1917-

NFD/6. Marsabit Handing Over Reports. 1916-

NFD/10. Provincial circulars.

NFD/11. Samburu Annual Reports and Handing over Reports 1914-

NFD/12. Wajir Annual Reports 1918-

NFD/19. Mandera Annual Reports. 1914-

NFD/23. Isiolo (Bulesa) Reports 1915-

NFD/41. Moyale Reports. 1914-

NFD/46. Northern Frontier Reports 1914-

NFD/55. Northern Frontier Handing Over Reports 1919-

NFD/61. Abyssinian Affairs. Raids and claims. 1913-19

NFD/63 Abyssinian Affairs. Correspondence with Addis. 1913-1923.

NFD/65 Abyssinian Affairs. General. 1918-25.

NFD/66. Jubaland Political Records pre-1915.

NFD/68. Notes on customs and history of various tribes.

NFD/70. Political Records, Moyale, Wajir, Gurreh.

NFD/71. Miscellaneous NFD documents 1910-43.

NFD/72. Somali Unrest. 1916, 1918.

NFD/142. Future of the NFD. 1918/19.

NFD/154-156. 3 volumes. Notes for the revision of the NFD Handbook.

Jubaland Provincial Records. (JPA) (Bundles I-IV).

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Jubaland. HMC. In. 1902 (incomplete).

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File. 561/15. Administration of Natives and Reserves.

File. 631/16. Vol. i-iii. Attack on Serenli. Claims for compensation.

File. 776/16. Outbreak of disease. Mfudu.

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Kisumu (Nyanza) (NPA).

Nyanza. Annual Reports. 1905/06-1918/19. (also Special Report. 1909).

John Ainsworth's Memorandum on White settlement. 1908.

Provincial Inspection Book. Vol. II. 1912-18.

Confidential File. Nandi (unnumbered) 1905-19.

Ainsworth's Duplicate book. (memoranda etc.) 1908-15..

Mombasa (Sevidie) (MPA)

References in brackets, below, are to Mombasa archives shelf numbers and file numbers. Most of the correspondence in these archives was directed to or from the Sub Commissioner at Mombasa. But the Sub Commissioner occasionally acted as Commissioner of the Protectorate and certain of the Commissioner's papers remained in his office. In addition, some of the Jubaland Provincial papers found their way to the Provincial Archives in Mombasa.

Until 1908 a simple filing system for "in" and "out" correspondence, by posts, was followed. This was slowly replaced by a system of subject files and minute papers.

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Rabai Sub District Report 1912/13.

Nyika reserve Report 1914/15.

H/O. Report 1912 (Tate to Hobley).

District Record Books, Malindi, Mombasa, Rabai, Vanga, Takaungu.

H.M. Commissioner Out. 1897(82/95), 1898(96/178), 1899 (Zanzibar) (76/51) 1900(87/128); 1901/02 (87/128); 1907(85/112); 1906/07(94/166).

His Excellency Out. 1908 (87/132).

H.M. Commissioner. IN. 1898(90/154); 1898/99(77/56); 1900 (76/52); 1901/03(98/193); 1904(94/167); 1906(88/138); 1907(87/129); 1908(86/124).

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Proclamations and Public Notices. 1895/96 (109/-).

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Circulars 1896 (82/93).

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Record Book "Administration of Jubaland" (117/-).

Lamu (Tanaland) In. 1899 (69/22); 1896-1900 (68/20).

Ukamba. In. 1896/97(75/48) 1899(75/74) 1901/02(65/1).
Out. 1896/1900(76/49) 1899(76/50) 1903 (Nairobi) (80/82).

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Out. 1898/1900(65/6).

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326/13); Mazrui arbitration board (64/62); Mazrui land, correspondence (5 vols); (61/-); Regulations for Arab officials (94/168).

Native Affairs. Administration of Native Reserves (20/103); Duruma tribe, opposition to recruiting (1917) (46/1074); Institution of a General Policy to deal with natives..suggestion for (9/300) DCs Ukamba (1910-12) (103/15); Circulars to DCs Seyidie (88/139); Native Tribunals (16/42); Tribal Retainers (50/1255).

Nyika.

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Kenia Province. Annual Reports. 1914/15-1918/19.

Nairobi, Embu, Meru District Record Books.

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File. Pub. 24/6/1. History of Kikuyu Province (23.6.28).

v. District Archives. (References are those given to the papers on being deposited in the Nairobi Archives).

Baringo (BAR).

BAR/11. Miscellaneous confidential correspondence (and circulars).

Bar/14 Vol. II. Political Records. (contains Fortnightly Intelligence Summary. NFD & Jubaland 1918).

Central Nyanza. (CN)

Port Ugowe Diary. 1899/1902.

CN/42. Confidential Records; Early history 1894/1901; Suba and Sumba cults.

CN/51. Confidential file. 1909/1922.

Elgeyo Maraquet. (ELGM).

Annual Reports 1912/13; 1917/18; 1918/19.

ELGM/7 Summary of Events. 1900/11.

ELGM/10 Miscellaneous correspondence to 1930.

Elgon Nyanza. (EN).

EN/1. District Records.

Embu. (MBU)

MBU/40. Secretariat Circulars 1906/1910.

MBU/41. Secretariat Circulars 1910/15.

Fort Hall. (FH).

FH/43. History of Fort Hall 1900-43 with extracts from F.G. Hall's letters; and history of Fort Hall station, Kikuyu customs, white settlement.

Kajiado. (KAJ)

KAJ/28. Ngong Record Book.

KAJ/29. Masai Record Book 1908/11

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KER/32. District History.

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KBU/81. Kiambu District Records. District History.

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Kfi/12. Volume II. Rabai Record book 1910/11.

Kfi/13. Volume III. Political Records.

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Annual Reports 1909/10, 1911/12; 1912/13. (LMU/10-11).

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RUM/6. Quarterly Report. March 1910.

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MKS/59 Political Record Book. Vol. IV.

MKS/61. Political Record Book. Vol. VI.

MKS/66. Ainsworth. Memo on land Tenure 1904 (for land Committee).

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MKS/100. Muigwathenia (K.C.A. Newspaper).

MKS/106. File no. 17. War and the KAR 1914 – onwards.

MKS/107. Papers concerning the murder of Captain Cooke.

MKS/109. Memo concerning various tribes 1906-07.

MKS/112. File . 1910/11 (Dundas/Langridge dispute).

MKS/129. Masai Move 1912. Police.

MKS/143. Deportees 1911.

MKS/202. PC's Inspection book 1915-18.

Mandera. (MDA)

MDA/30. Copy 'Abyssinia Confidential' Gwynn Report. 30.3.1909.

MDA/39. Mandera Political Record Book Vol. I.

MDA/40. Mandera Political Record Book Vol. IA.

MDA/41. Ms. Volume. Account of tribal feuds by V.G. Glenday and T.D. Butler.

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NN/22. District diary 1903-15.

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TANAR/9. Vol. II. Political Record book.

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TTA/5-6. Political Record books.

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Ms. I. Orchardson “The Kipsigi”.

(Mr. Matson kindly loaned me his notes on the Entebbe Archives (ESA) A/5; A/8; A/9; A/20): and his notes on the Zanzibar Gazette 1891-95).

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CMS Station Diary 1914-39 (loaned by Dr. D. Thomson) Kaloleni.

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J.M. Lonsdale – Politics and Society in Kavirondo (fellowship dissertation 1963).

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K. Sorrenson – Land Policy, Legislation and Settlement in the East Africa Protectorate 1895-1915. (Oxford thesis. 1962).

W.E.H. Stanner – The Kitui Kamba, a critical study of British Administration. (n.d.).

Rev. Dr. C.A. Wiggins – "Early Days in British East Africa and Uganda" (mimeographed 1963).

A Postscript Some Forty Years On

It is necessary to explain the references to the Provincial and District Records listed as part of bibliography.

These records were seen by me in the period December 1962 to August 1963. In most cases I brought in these records in from the districts and provinces and placed them in the Secretariat with references listed on the appropriate hand list for each district or province. These are the references used throughout this work for the district or provincial records and were given by me during the period December 1962 to August 1963 on a provisional basis.

An exception had to be made as regards the records held in the Provincial Commissioner's Office in Mombasa. These were too great for me to move; so their existing titles were listed by me over a period of weeks, as I examined the various files held there.

Subsequently, the Mombasa Provincial Records were moved to Nairobi and the whole collection of Provincial and District Records were re-organised and re-catalogued by Derek Charman a professional Archivist on temporary secondment from the Suffolk County Council.

It is necessary to mention certain other problems. In the 1960's "the 50 year rule" still applied to Government papers in Britain, so that the Colonial Office Records were only open to me up to 1913.

Since the coming of independence to Kenya, the spellings of names of some individuals, places, and of tribes, have undergone changes: for instance the "Masai" have become the "Maasai". But for consistency's sake, I have stuck to the old spelling, such was used in official correspondence both in Nairobi and Whitehall in the years covered by this work.

To conclude, the faults, errors, omissions, and the opinions expressed in this work, remain my own.

For accounts concerning the establishment of the National Archives in Kenya see the article by Derek Charman and Michael Cook in the journal "Archives" Volume VIII No.38 (October 1967) entitled "The Archive Services of East Africa", and a subsequent article in "African Research and Documentation" (No.32 1983) by John Walford, entitled "Colonial Archives and the Kenya National Archives".

THRC June 2006

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Note: (a) only those individuals mentioned more than once are listed;
(b) African names are given as spelt in the 1965 text, with revised names in parenthesis; modern names that are very different are listed separately.
(c) footnote references are included only where they add narrative detail.

Administration and administrators, attitudes, character, policy, and practice

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