

ASPECTS OF LAND AND LABOUR IN KENYA, 1919-1939.

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## PREFACE

An attempt at a magnum opus such as this in middle age provokes varying responses: one's off-spring are supportive and continue to bear with the prolongation of the academic second childhood, and most of one's friends react with astonishment. But there are a number of people without whose encouragement and help this work would never have materialised; to these I owe a great deal:

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I have thought much of my late parents who, while my father served in the Colonial Administration of Tanganyika Territory, lived in East Africa during the inter-war years, and whose remembered reminiscences have provided any 'atmosphere' behind this work.

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"'Long ago, runs the native legend, when God was making the world, He made the sun, the rain, the grass, the beasts, and then the thunder, which was not so well, and then death, which was not well at all. So the beasts held council to decide who should be sent, as messenger of the beasts, to appeal for the remission of God's last sending, and to explain the case of the beasts. And the chameleon volunteered. But he hesitated so long between each step forward that when he arrived it was night, and God had gone into his house and pulled to the door-slab.' Kenya governments please note."

J.G. Le Breton (1935)

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

It is a dangerous system of Government in a country of which our knowledge is very imperfect, to be constantly urged by a desire of settling everything permanently, to do everything in a hurry, and in consequence wrong, and in our zeal for permanency to put the remedy out of reach.

- Sir Thomas Munro (1884)

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In these last decades of the twentieth century, Africa is often referred to as 'the hungry continent': an overall population growth of at least two per cent per annum has been accompanied by an annual decline in food production of three per cent.<sup>(1)</sup> Prolonged drought has parched the land and ruined crops; tribal wars and the breakdown of law and order have diverted labour and capital away from agriculture. A flow of refugees has strained the food resources of neighbouring countries. A contemporary observer noted recently that several African economies have undergone a reversal of the pattern of development which had characterised these countries a few decades previously: 'African countries that once exported food - Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe - have all become importers.'<sup>(2)</sup>

Africa has not always been threatened by starvation, although famine has periodically stalked the land. There was a time, a century ago, when there was enough land for shifting cultivators and nomadic pastoralists to follow traditional patterns of life, with subsistence agriculture and considerable numbers of beasts. There were tribal raids, sometimes somewhat in the nature of a sporting pastime, and sometimes associated with the blooding of the spears of an emergent warrior age-set. These 'wars', together with the incidence of tropical diseases, checked the growth of population and stock. However, once the Pax Britannica was imposed in Africa - in Kenya as well as in other

1. To the Point, 15 August 1980. It is asserted here that 600 people are dying every day in Africa of starvation, and that the 'worst afflicted area...is greater East Africa, stretching from the Sudan to Somalia and southwards to the northern reaches of Uganda and Kenya'.
2. Sunday Times, 31 August 1980.

possessions - Western medical expertise was available to cure and prevent human and animal diseases. With the resultant decline in the death rate, particularly that of infant mortality, population increased steadily, as may be seen in Appendix 3.

By the time Britain declared a Protectorate over part of East Africa in 1895, she had realised 'the vital importance of the control of the tropics for their economic value'. In Lugard's words, they:

...produce in abundance a class of raw materials and of foodstuffs which cannot be grown in temperate zones, and one so vital to the needs of civilised man that they have in very truth become essential to civilisation. (3)

Initially, therefore, British advisers saw in the Protectorate a most useful addition to the Empire. The strategic advantages were clear from the outset: the headwaters of the Nile River - believed to be the key to Egypt - were controlled by Britain; and French, German and Abyssinian territorial expansion was checked. Economic advantages included the production of raw materials needed in British industry, and the cultivation of exportable crops which were to render the building of the Uganda Railway a paying proposition. The emphasis, in keeping with contemporary attitudes, was on imperial trade and the expansion of Britain's colonial power.

Thus, a white administration legislated to assist white settler agriculture which was implicitly involved in producing those much-needed crops. The fact that this led to the exploitation of labour was, to much contemporary thinking, beside the point. Moreover, this could be justified as necessary from the imperial standpoint for the economic survival of the colony and of the settlers who had made it their home. Early settlers and administrators tended to consider the Protectorate, especially the fertile Highlands in the north-west of the country, as 'practically an estate belonging to His Majesty's Government'.<sup>(4)</sup> And there was apparently little awareness that the behaviour of early settlers, 'raiding, swashbuckling and shooting natives...', turned the whole country against the white man'.<sup>(5)</sup> It was an inauspicious

3. F.D. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (1929), p.6.

4. G. Bennett, Kenya: A Political History of the Colonial Period (1963), p.10.

5. G.H. Mungeam, 'Masai and Kikuyu Responses to the Establishment of British Administration in the East African Protectorate', Journal of African History, XI, 1 (1970), p.127.



beginning which did not augur well for the future of the colony.

In the course of this work, it will become apparent that, for a variety of reasons, the emphasis of Colonial Office administration altered during the inter-war years. In 1923, after nearly thirty years of legislating almost exclusively in favour of white settlers, the Colonial Office published a White Paper over the signature of the Duke of Devonshire. This, as well as securing white claims to the Highlands against Indian land aspirations, also laid stress on the paramountcy of African interests.<sup>(6)</sup> Deriving from this, there was to be, officially at least, a less exploitative attitude towards labour. From this date, the dual policy sought to encourage black and white agriculture on an equal basis. From being a 'white man's country' and clearly part of an imperial economic structure, Kenya became - by legislation at any rate - a land of equal opportunity for white and black. From this time on, administrative stress was laid on matters of Kenyan, as opposed to imperial, importance. As a corollary to the encouragement of African agriculture, forced labour, euphemistically described as 'gentle fatherly pressure of the right kind',<sup>(7)</sup> was phased out.

Another factor which assisted the change in Colonial Office attitudes and policies was the shift in political allegiances within Britain. A general election in January 1924 brought the Labour Party to power for the first time, although the Conservative Party assumed office again in November of the same year. The Labour Party was returned to power once more in June 1929, and this time the government remained in office for just over two years.<sup>(8)</sup> The sentiment behind these election results, together with lobbying from the Anti-Slavery Society, set the seal on the gradual liberalization of government in Kenya.

These issues, and others which will be discussed in the course of this study, played a vital role in giving shape to the development of Kenya's two most important assets: land and labour. And yet this is rarely reflected in the available literature on the subject. Indeed, publications dealing with different aspects of Kenya during the inter-war years have either been rather generalized or highly specialized.

6. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1923, Col.no.1227, p.6.

7. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 25 July 1923, Col.531.

8. H. Pelling, Modern Britain 1885-1955 (1974), p.202.

The Economic History of Kenya and Uganda: 1800-1970 by R.M.A. van Zwanenberg and A. King, is a work of great general interest, but one which often lacks the necessary supporting detail that would have given it greater substance. In contrast, A. Clayton and D.C. Savage's excellent study of labour and government in Kenya between 1895 and 1963 is minutely specialized in these aspects, but lacks the perspective to put labour into its natural context, which was agriculture.<sup>(9)</sup> These characteristics are a feature of virtually all the contributions on Kenya's development. Only R.L. Tignor's The Colonial Transformation of Kenya can be said to have bridged the gap, providing a carefully detailed analysis of local forces against a backdrop of changing views in the Colonial Office. Even so, the title of the work is a misnomer since it does not deal with Kenya as a whole but primarily with the Kikuyu response to colonisation.<sup>(10)</sup>

Furthermore, while much recent research, together with settler chronicles and reminiscences, provide valuable data and vivid atmosphere, it would appear that a simultaneous study of land - that is, agriculture - and labour has yet to be undertaken. These twin aspects of Kenya's history seem inseparable, and impinge on aspects of Kenyan life not previously broached by economic historians. In view of the foregoing, it is hoped that this study will be of some value in interpreting the complexities of these fields in the inter-war years, a period which saw the emergence of African nationalism and laid the foundations of the Kenya which was to emerge after independence in 1963.

Essential as a basic framework in a study of this kind are accurate statistics. Ideally, these should give clear and incontrovertible information on subjects such as population increase, revenue and expenditure, exports and imports, areas of land under cultivation, African and European taxation figures, and a regular recording of the contribution of African-grown commodities to the economy. Some of these statistics do exist, perhaps noted over a brief period by a zealous official and then forgotten by his successor. Others exist in several versions, and one is hard put to choose which is likely to be more accurate; after all, even the official statistics may have been slanted for Colonial Office approval.

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9. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya 1895-1963 (1974).

10. R.L. Tignor, The Colonial Transformation of Kenya (1976).

There appear to be reasonably accurate statistics for the 'non-native' population of Kenya, since census enumerations were taken in 1911, 1921, 1926 and 1931.<sup>(11)</sup> By the year 1938, fairly sophisticated break-downs of this section of the population were also available, based on age and occupation of inhabitants, duration of stay in the colony, and ratio of males to females. In the case of the African population, however, reliable data are unavailable. In each Annual Report from 1918/19 onwards, it is observed that:

No accurate census of the native population has yet been taken. The population figures are based on estimates made by the administrative authorities, and are related to the number of male adult tax-payers in the various districts. They are, in consequence, subject to a fairly wide margin of error....No reliable figures of births, deaths or infant mortality are obtainable. (12)

Similarly, labour returns appear to have been irregularly compiled, and give only a spasmodic record of tribesmen coming out to work. This, however, could be said to be sufficient for the observer to deduce that only a relatively small proportion of able-bodied men did in fact work for white settlers. Indeed, it is evident from Appendix 4 that, in the period under consideration, this never exceeded thirty-three per cent.

As far as agriculture is concerned, statistics are once again unreliable. As an example, one may quote the 1938 production figures for 'crystallised sugar' as 317 720 cwt. Yet total exports for 'refined sugar' for the same year amounted to 334 249 cwt. Furthermore, 308 398 cwt. of 'clean coffee' was produced, yet no less than 622 066 cwt. of 'raw coffee' was exported. Pyrethrum production for 1938 stood at 19 742 cwt.; but there is no mention of pyrethrum exports despite the fact that 'the greater part of the maize, coffee, tea, sisal and pyrethrum...is exported from the colony'.<sup>(13)</sup>

In these circumstances, one can but hark back to the comment made by A.G. Church after his visit to Kenya with the East Africa Commission in 1924:

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11. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1938, Col.no.1920, pp.8-10.

12. Ibid., p.16. No census of the African population was undertaken until 1948.

13. Ibid.

In East Africa we quickly came to the conclusion that only scanty and unreliable information regarding density and distribution of population, births and deaths, length of life, agricultural returns, distribution of soils, density and distribution of cattle...climate and distribution of rainfall, mineral resources, water power, forest resources, internal trade, existing and potential overseas markets, condition of labour and the like, is available. (14)

Church observed, moreover, that in spite of Kenya's involvement in the First World War, there was 'still no topographical survey of the territories...[which] would be of the greatest assistance in many activities of the Agricultural Department'.<sup>(15)</sup> In similar vein, Hailey remarked in 1938 that the lands in African occupation had not been 'cadastrally surveyed', so that it was impossible 'to calculate accurately the output per acre of different types of native crops'.<sup>(16)</sup>

The lack of a reliable set of statistics inevitably acts as a check on the accuracy with which conclusions may be drawn from them. Nevertheless, the available quantitative data has been brought together in the various appendices; and when it was considered necessary, alternative statistics are also shown. It is suggested that so long as this quantitative material is used with caution, it is possible to draw satisfactory conclusions as to trend rather than specific absolute changes in the movement of certain indices. Furthermore, qualitative evidence will be used to buttress the quantitative evidence when this is available.

There is at least one other critically important issue which requires consideration here: the ecological background against which development took place. It appears from the available literature that too few authors appreciate that the twin study of labour and agriculture in Kenya is unintelligible without a proper understanding of a land whose:

...area of 570 000 square miles, extending four degrees on each side of the Equator, is comparable with that of France. More than half the country is arid, but as the land rises inland, the prospects of cultivation improve while the climate moderates to sub-tropical and temperate under the

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14. A.G. Church, East Africa: A New Dominion (1927), p.59.

15. Ibid., p.66.

16. Lord Hailey, An African Survey (1938), p.959.

influence of altitude. The plateau and highland areas lying between 1 500 metres and 2 750 metres comprise some of the best land for agriculture in Africa. (17)

J.F. Lipscomb pointed out that although the climate of the Highlands is temperate, the sun is equatorial and the rays therefore are direct. The hottest days and the coolest nights occur at the same time of the year.<sup>(18)</sup> He added that '...arising out of the cool nights is the condition that many plants only grow during the hours of daylight'.<sup>(19)</sup> It follows, accordingly, that certain plants take longer to mature. W.T.W. Morgan emphasized that 'of the total area of the country only seventeen per cent of the land receives a rainfall consistently above 625 millimetres annually and is suitable for crop farming'.<sup>(20)</sup> Crop and livestock production is therefore restricted to about 12 000 000 hectares in the Highlands, the land extending towards Lake Victoria and the narrow coastal strip.<sup>(21)</sup> Even so, according to M. Salvadori, men of the calibre of Sir Charles Eliot and Lord Lugard erred in thinking that the entire Highland region could be cultivated: 'there was only a very small percentage of land usable for agriculture; unproductive terrain spread over a vast area, and the remainder was covered by very poor grazing'.<sup>(22)</sup> To compound the difficulties, it was learnt that 'there was only a relatively deep layer of fertile soil in wooded areas'.<sup>(23)</sup> This diminishes so rapidly that 'at 5-15 kilometers from forests this depth is only 10 to 12 centimeters'.<sup>(24)</sup> The Kikuyu, apparently, were 'well aware of varying land quality...[but] the quantity of land owned was generally more important than its quality, except in small areas'.<sup>(25)</sup>

In 1936, G. Milne noted that 'there are differences between soil and soil that are of very great importance in determining fertility'.<sup>(26)</sup>

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17. W.T.W. Morgan (ed.), East Africa: Its Peoples and Resources (1962), p.181.
  18. J.F. Lipscomb, White African (1956), p.97.
  19. Ibid., p.100.
  20. W.T.W. Morgan, op.cit.
  21. Ibid.
  22. M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938), p.16. (A free translation of the original text.)
  23. Ibid.
  24. Ibid.
  25. R.A. Bullock, 'Subsistence to Cash: Economic Change in Rural Kiambu', Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, XIV (1974), p.705.
  26. G. Milne, A Provisional Soil Map of East Africa (1936), p.20.

He observed that field work had only been done in connection with coffee, 'which is grown widely on one soil type occurring in Kikuyu country'.<sup>(27)</sup> In Central Kavirondo and Kamba, the soil - 'laterised red earths' - was 'much more sandy, usually a pinkish red in colour, and less resistant to erosion'.<sup>(28)</sup> This statement is of special interest, as it will be shown in Chapter Six that the worst erosion in the late 1930s was to be found in Kamba territory. Thus, in addition to the tribal proclivity towards over-grazing its land, the soil itself was specifically prone to erosion.

Other soils were particularly vulnerable in times of drought. These were the 'calcareous black clays...extensive in the drier and flatter regions' of Laikipia and North Nyeri:

...which are subjected to an alternation of short rainy seasons and prolonged drought....These black clays exaggerate the effect of drought, for they swell and become impervious when wet, thus increasing run-off, and their marked shrinkage in drying results in the formation of broad deep cracks which thoroughly dessicate the soil. (29)

Moreover, the Kenya Land Commission concluded in 1933 that 'in many places, the nature of the soil does not lend itself to effective agricultural use under present methods of cultivation'.<sup>(30)</sup>

Plant diseases and insect pests also played a telling part in Kenya agriculture, just as human diseases and different insect pests affected labour - and settlers. White ants, weevils, stalk-borer, infections of rust all played their part in inhibiting the exploitation of Kenya's agricultural potential.<sup>(31)</sup> There was naturally a great need for research and control, but the refusal of many African peasants to co-operate indicated a lack of trust in the administration's motives.<sup>(32)</sup> Hailey opined, moreover, that:

Under primitive conditions of agriculture the isolation of cultivated areas provided some protection against the spread of pests and diseases, but the extension of agricultural activities had necessitated the introduction of

27. Ibid., p.21.

28. Ibid., p.22.

29. Ibid., p.23.

30. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.206.

31. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.949.

32. T.R. Batten, Problems of African Development (1947), p.62.

measures of control. These measures have, in particular, been pressed on administrations where native and European plantations are found in the same area, and certain native crops are thought to be potential sources of infection. (33)

Even more insidious and devastating were the depredations of locusts, especially serious between 1927 and 1931. (34)

Cattle diseases lie beyond the purview of this study since pastoralism was a dying occupation during the inter-war years. None the less, they contributed to the feelings of settlers about African and squatter stock. Lack of inoculation against rinderpest and East Coast fever, due to the advice of witch-doctors, meant that uninoculated animals moved into areas contiguous to precious settler herds.

Human diseases greatly affected labour, and some of them affected settlers as well. There is comment in 1918 on:

...the enormous liability of the African to helminthic affections. Fully three-quarters of the native population is infected, and the question of ankylostomiasis alone must have a marked bearing on the labour market. In fact, it is possible that the African lethargy inherent in this tropical region is largely dependent on this cause. (35)

Plague, too, appeared to be endemic to most parts of Kenya, especially Kikuyu and Kavirondo. (36) The incidence of malaria was particularly high after heavy rains, and contributed to the debilitation of labour. (37) The Annual Reports of the 1930s comment regularly on the fact that 'the native population on the whole suffers severely from preventable disease'. (38) Furthermore, labour productivity must have been affected by an 'inadequate ill-balanced diet which renders the African population on the whole more unfit and less well-developed than might otherwise be the case'. (39)

33. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.969.

34. N.K. Strange, Kenya Today (1934), p.184.

35. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1918/19, Col.no.1073, p.9  
Ankylostomiasis, caused by a parasitic worm in the duodenum, results in extreme anaemia.

36. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1926, Col.no.1352, p.10.

37. East African Standard, 8 April 1938.

38. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.16.

39. Ibid.

Armed with this knowledge of ecological and demographic conditions which prevailed in East Africa, it is immediately apparent that the forces which shaped the development of Kenyan agriculture and labour are considerably complex. For example, the generally low level of labour productivity was not due simply to some form of inherent laziness on the part of the African; nor was the spread of soil erosion due solely to ignorance on the part of white farmers. Accordingly, this study aims to show, in all their complexity, the changing nuances in the relationship between white settler agriculturists and their labourers and the land. White settler access to legislation assured their dominance in the field of agriculture; and it was this dominance, which inhibited the development of African agriculture, resulting in a situation where there was growth of a kind but little development as such.

It is to be noted that in the use of generic terms, the root word will be used, as in 'Kikuyu', 'Kavirondo', 'Kamba'. For the sake of simplicity, the collective plural prefixes, 'Wa-' or 'Ba-' will not be used to denote the tribe or people as a group; the terms 'Africans' or 'blacks' will be employed. As far as settlers are concerned, they are referred to interchangeably as 'whites' or 'Europeans'. There will be little specific reference to Indian agriculture as this, in the period under review, never made a substantial contribution to the Kenya economy. Writing in 1938, Hailey believed that it might 'reasonably be doubted whether there is any considerable body of Indians who wish, under present conditions, to take to agriculture'.<sup>(40)</sup>

A final note on methodology may be permitted. At the commencement of this research, there was an initial determination to steer a course between the Scylla of Collingwood's 'scissors-and-paste' history and the Charybdis of Bloch's rejection of the biased witness of one man. However, the belief grew that with a subject as complex as this one, the purpose of study would be better served by the use of the multi-faceted presentation of relevant detail, and the subtle and lively reactions of certain witnesses. In reading for the topic, many settlers, administrators and tribesmen have come alive in the mind's eye. They resemble Macbeth's 'poor player':

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.

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40. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.338.



Yet this is no 'tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing': there is a contemporary relevance in other parts of Africa of the economic history of the Kenya of fifty years ago.

## CHAPTER TWO

### COLONIAL FOUNDATIONS IN THE EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE

I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of  
which many are dead, few are living, and countless  
numbers are still unborn.

- Nigerian chief.

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Discernible in the years before the colonisation of British East Africa are two threads of its fabric: one reflecting political and economic tensions in Britain and Europe, the other reacting to different stresses in the commerce of Central Africa and the Indian Ocean.

From 1816 to 1891, population in Britain doubled.<sup>(1)</sup> In the 1850s and 1860s ongoing industrialisation absorbed, among other things, a large proportion of the United States' huge exports of raw cotton, and assured British investors of profits. In those years of free trade, demands from foreign markets kept British factories busy and growing. However, after 1870:

The rise of international exchange production of raw materials and foodstuffs, fostered by the movements in terms of trade in the first half of the century, and long-distance transport innovations in the third quarter, so changed the conditions of supply that...declining prices of primary products, above all temperate zone agricultural commodities, threatened the incomes of Western Europe's still sizeable farming communities..<sup>(2)</sup>

British and continental European prices fell across a broad front. At the same time, industrial advances and rationalization in Germany and the United States led to generally reduced prices in manufactured goods, and particularly to a drop in interest rates in Britain.

With changing economic conditions in the 1870s, then, free trade faltered in the wake of tariff barriers erected by many Western European

1. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.64.

2. J.F. Munro, Africa and the International Economy 1800-1960 (1976), p.65.

nations.<sup>(3)</sup> Shut out from this commerce, Britain found herself becoming reliant upon a market in sub-Saharan Africa, where her trade '...was still three times the value of the combined trade of France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, the U.S.A. and India;<sup>(4)</sup> and where colonial dependencies might serve '...to overcome [the] particular difficulties and advance [the] ambitions'<sup>(5)</sup> of European businessmen in Africa. In this manner, merchants such as shipping-line owner, philanthropist and British East Africa Chartered Company chairman, William MacKinnon, and the German, Karl Peters, played an important, if peripheral, role in colonial development.

On the East African coast, there had been for many years a flourishing Arab trade in slaves, rubber and ivory. A British presence in this area had been marked by the attentions of Royal Navy gunboats on patrol intercepting Arab slave-trading dhows in an attempt to eliminate this trade, and also by a British consulate in Zanzibar. After 1873, the Sultan, reacting to British representations, terminated the slave trade with the mainland and his own slave markets.<sup>(6)</sup> This

...would seem to have had a differential economic impact - raising labour costs for plantation producers...at a time when prices for their commodities were static or declining, but doing nothing to raise the costs of collecting ivory and rubber in and from the interior. (7)

William MacKinnon inaugurated regular sailings between Aden and Zanzibar in 1872. He hoped to lease the Sultan's mainland territories, and thus link his shipping operations with the viable interior trade whose costs still made business worthwhile - for him and his competitors.

At the close of the 1870s, the European powers controlled only a small proportion of Africa. Change, in the shape of impending partition, took place early in the 1880s, triggered partly by Bismarck's electoral platform stressing the need for colonial expansion. A border dispute in the Congo Basin led to the calling of an international conference in Berlin in 1885. At this conference, in addition to the

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3. France, after her defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, particularly needed to re-build her own economy; and previous close trade relationships (Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860) fell by the wayside.

4. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.67.

5. Ibid.

6. Slavery in various forms still substantially existed elsewhere.

7. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.75.

Congo Free State borders being defined, spheres of interest were delineated between Germany, France and Britain in West Africa. The Congo Basin Treaties also included the future Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Nyasaland in the free trade area which stretched from the mouth of the Congo to the mouth of the Zambesi River.<sup>(8)</sup> Lord Lugard noted that the principles emerging from the Conference:

...aimed at the extension of the benefits of civilisation to the natives, the promotion of trade and navigation on a basis of perfect equality for all nations, and the preservation of the territories affected from the ravages of war. (9)

These high-sounding sentiments were to be belied in the subsequent 'colonising', 'protecting', and 'pacifying' expeditions by various powers.

An 1886 agreement further detailed German and British spheres of influence in East Africa. In 1888, in order to counter German activities and to give it governmental support, MacKinnon's Chartered Company became the Imperial British East Africa Company with a capital of £500 000.<sup>(10)</sup> Meanwhile, Karl Peters, under his numerous aliases,<sup>(11)</sup> continued to promote the interests of the Hamburg-based Society for Colonization by concluding treaties with the Baganda near the great lakes. By 1890, Germany, affected in the interim by a change in the international political situation, was obliged to withdraw from these, and instead bought a coastal strip from the Sultan of Zanzibar for £200 000.<sup>(12)</sup>

At the end of 1890, the intrepid Captain Lugard arrived in Uganda to find it threatened by the French and the Abyssinians. He thereupon made a British treaty with the Kabaka, effectively giving Britain the right to 'protect' the country, and assuring Britain of control of the Upper Nile, Egypt, the Suez Canal and the India trade. Lugard wrote in 1893:

...it must be realised that it is for our advantage and not alone at the dictates of duty that we have undertaken responsibilities in East Africa. It is

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8. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.134.

9. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.48.

10. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.49.

11. L. Woolf, Empire and Commerce in Africa (1920), p.236.

12. A. Pim, The Financial and Economic History of the African Tropical Territories (1940), p.108.

in order to foster the trade of our country and find outlets for our manufactures and surplus energies. (13)

Nearly forty years later, with hindsight, and with a life of achievement behind him, Lord Lugard wrote of this period:

Treaties were produced by the cartload in all the approved forms of legal verbiage - impossible of translation by ill-educated interpreters. It mattered not that the tribal chiefs had no power to dispose of communal rights, or that these few powerful potentates who might perhaps claim such authority looked on the white man's ambassador with contempt, and could hardly be expected to hand over their sovereignty or lands or other assets had they understood what was being asked of them. (14)

In the early 1890s, the potential of the Mau plateau (in Kikuyu country) for European settlement was starting to be realized. Thereafter, thought was given as to the suitability, profitability and, above all, exportability of crops to be grown in a highland area with a surprisingly temperate climate.

By the mid-1890s, it had become clear that the existing German and British companies were undercapitalised for ventures involving the transportation of, for example, the ivory and rubber previously mentioned.<sup>(15)</sup> At this stage, then, the metropolitan powers took over: in 1895, the British Foreign Office, acting for the Imperial government, bought out the Imperial British East Africa Company for £250 000 and established a Protectorate from Mombasa to the Uganda border.<sup>(16)</sup>

'Protection' clearly carried with it financial involvement. Thus Britain came to be affected in a variety of complex ways: administratively, through the Protectorate; strategically, in so far as she effectively blocked expansionary moves by France, Germany and Abyssinia; philanthropically, aiming to end the slave trade once and for all; and financially, looking for a good return on an investment.

13. Ibid., quoting from F.D. Lugard, The Rise of our East African Empire, pp.379-82.

14. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.15.

There was to be a continuing echo of this lack of comprehension or imperfect communication as colonisation proceeded, involving land alienations the extent of which was not understood, and also the promulgation in English of Ordinances intended for an African population.

15. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.77.

16. E. Huxley, White Man's Country (1935), Vol.I, p.74.

From the strategic viewpoint, there was the need for some link between Uganda and the Coast. Routes previously trodden by porters and slaves<sup>(17)</sup> - sometimes two thousand at a time<sup>(18)</sup> - had to be superseded by a quicker and more effective form of transport. British commitments in foreign railway-building (for example, in South America) having been fulfilled, the obvious solution, 'a Victorian and British solution',<sup>(19)</sup> was the building of a railway between Mombasa and Kisumu. R.W. Beachey noted that:

James Thomson's description of 'dead ivory' lying in the forests of the highlands of what is present-day Kenya led businessmen to believe that its haulage to the coast would pay the running expenses of a railway into the interior. (20)

The 'businessmen' were clearly casting envious and hopeful glances at the ivory trade which flourished in the hands of Somalis, Indians and coastal Swahili.<sup>(21)</sup>

The railway undertaking was sanctioned in 1896 as 'indispensable for the control of the interior and for checking the slave trade'.<sup>(22)</sup> An initial grant-in-aid of £100 700 was allowed by the British government towards the cost estimated in 1895 at £1 755 000. From 1902 to 1903, the grant-in-aid was increased; and by the time the railway-line was completed, the total cost was an embarrassingly high £5 550 000.<sup>(23)</sup> African labour contributed hardly at all to its construction. In all, between 1 000 and 2 000 Kikuyu and Kamba, through whose land the line passed, worked on it, as against the 35 000 indentured Indian labourers employed over the five-year span of its construction. The terrain through which the railway passed was by no means easy.<sup>(24)</sup> Marauding lions and African raids added their toll to the depredations of tropical diseases to which ill-fed and ill-housed labour, Indian and African, was prey.<sup>(25)</sup> In view of the unexpectedly large sum that was

17. A. Pim, op.cit., p.111.

18. R.W. Beachey, 'The East African Ivory Trade in the Nineteenth Century', Journal of African History, VIII, 2, 1967, p.273.

19. G. Bennett, op.cit., p.2.

20. R.W. Beachey, op.cit., p.271.

21. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya (1968), p.12.

22. A. Pim, op.cit., p.111.

23. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.27.

24. Ibid., p.20.

25. Twenty-nine Indian labourers lost their lives to the 'Man-eaters of Tsavo'. See the book by Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Patterson.

paid to build the railway-line, it was imperative that it be turned, not only into a 'civilising' factor,<sup>(26)</sup> but also into a paying proposition. The British Treasury was naturally particularly interested in recouping some of its outlay:

Traffic would somehow have to be created; it was the East African administration, which was actually in charge of the railway, that was made to feel primarily responsible for creating it. (27)

An export trade would have to be built up on agricultural production as there had, as yet, been no evidence of mineral deposits in the Protectorate. African subsistence agriculture existed, but the Administration - especially the then High Commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot - saw future Protectorate viability in the hands of white farmer-settlers. And in this regard, R.N. Lyne described the highlands as 'a well-watered country, suitable for colonization'.<sup>(28)</sup>

Farming operations obviously implied the use of land by farmers, and various steps, some autocratic and some based on careful legal and casuistical argument, were taken to back up British projects. In 1896, Sir Arthur Hardinge, Eliot's predecessor, had suggested that:

Her Majesty, having taken these people under her protection, enacts in their own interests that no alienation by them collectively or individually of any lands or other rights shall be recognised by her as valid unless ratified on her behalf by officers to whom she has committed the Government of the country. (29)

Hardinge also averred that:

...the Africans only 'owned' land so long as they occupied or cultivated it. Once they had moved off the land (a common occurrence where Africans followed a system of shifting agriculture or nomadic pastoralism) it became 'waste'. (30)

This shrewd - or ignorant - attitude coincided with the early colonists' opinion that parts of the land were indeed unoccupied, when in point of fact they were merely in a fallow or 'resting' stage of shifting cultivation; or alternatively were temporarily unused as the numbers of

26. F.H. Goldsmith, John Ainsworth, Pioneer Kenya Administrator (1955), p.89.

27. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), History of East Africa (1965), Vol.2, p.211.

28. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.62.

29. Ibid., p.47.

30. Ibid.

the rural inhabitants had been reduced by famine or disease. The result was that vast tracts of country were made available for alienation to British settlers. In 1897, a proclamation was issued, which reserved for railway purposes all land for a mile on each side of the railway-line beyond the coastal strip.<sup>(31)</sup> Two years later:

Lord Salisbury ruled that the zone was to be treated solely as a railway asset and was not to be disposed of without the assent of the Chief Engineer or the Foreign Office. (32)

This was one of the early 'ploys' used by the British administration to justify their taking over land that was previously used by Africans.

A later approach was the use of legal advice - of necessity - to keep the process of alienation technically above board. Thus Hailey wrote that:

...in 1899 the British government had accepted the view of their legal advisers that the declaration of a protectorate enabled it to claim sovereign rights over land, subject to the recognition of any private rights then existing. In general terms, this was considered to give the right to dispose of 'unoccupied' lands. (33)

To cover the earliest alienations to settlers, regulations issued in 1897 provided that:

...a certificate might be given for the occupation of land up to a maximum period of twenty-one years, but further stipulated that a certificate would not be granted in respect of land cultivated or regularly used by any native or native tribe. (34)

Albert Gray, a Foreign Office legal expert, suggested in 1900 that 'all waste and unappropriated land belong to Her Majesty'.<sup>(35)</sup> This presaged the East Africa Order-in-Council of 1901, which defined Crown lands as:

...all public lands within the East African Protectorate which for the time being are subject to the control of His Majesty by virtue of any Treaty, Convention or Agreement. (36)

31. Ibid., p.25.

32. Ibid., p.26.

33. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.742.

34. Ibid.

35. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.53.

36. Ibid.



There were precedents for this type of legislation in British colonies, just as imminent land divisions were, possibly unsuitably, based on those of Australia and Canada.

At this stage, commerce in the Protectorate was growing steadily. The exact number of settlers is not known, but there were government officials and also technical staff involved in railway construction. Indian traders had followed the railway-line. For exports and imports over the period 1896 to 1900, Appendix 5 gives useful growth figures. The breakdown of import and export statistics for the year 1899/1900 shows export dependence on indigenous products; while the high value of imports indicates the severe imbalance in the Protectorate's trade.

TABLE 1 <sup>(37)</sup>			
KENYA PROTECTORATE'S IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, 1899/1900			
1899/1900 Imports	(£)	1899/1900 Exports	(£)
Textiles	108 100	Ivory	37 300
Rice	70 300	Rubber	17 400
Wheat and wheat flour	62 500	Hides and Skins	10 200
Other foods	60 700	Grain	9 700
Alcoholic drinks	22 100		
Construction materials	20 500		
Hardware and glass beads	14 100		
TOTAL	446 600		121 600

Sir Charles Eliot replaced Hardinge as High Commissioner in 1900. His enthusiasm to 'sell' the Protectorate, which in 1902 was enlarged by the addition of the old eastern provinces of Uganda: Naivasha and Nyanza,<sup>(38)</sup> led to the beginnings of the white settler influx. Between 1902 and 1903:

Land grants increased rapidly, and it soon appeared that the administration had underestimated the extent to which natives could lay claim to the apparently

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37. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.54.

38. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.65. Nyanza was known until 1909 as Kisumu province.

empty lands of the highland area....Europeans had been permitted to acquire land in a manner that was beginning to cause hardship to the tribes concerned...the alienation process rapidly got 'out of hand'. (39)

On account of these claims, a local committee suggested in 1904 that before further European settlement was encouraged, certain areas should be reserved for Africans.<sup>(40)</sup> This was gradually introduced despite Eliot's doubts as to its necessity.<sup>(41)</sup>

The 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance introduced rules (later withdrawn) for a 'homestead system of settlement'.<sup>(42)</sup> There were exchanges between Eliot and Foreign Office advisers on prospective settlers' terms of tenancy: these were set originally at twenty-one years with an option to renew for a further like period. However, after unfavourable settler reaction, a lease of ninety-nine years was suggested and accepted. Allotments were made by the Land Office.<sup>(43)</sup> Conditions were set upon improvements to be made to farms. Rich settlers, such as Lord Delamere, took on 100 000-acre farms; others, such as the South Africans, Chamberlain and Flemmer, were offered 10 000 acres each, a vital factor in attracting other South Africans.<sup>(44)</sup>

Eliot, 'obsessed with attracting settlers',<sup>(45)</sup> wrote in 1903:

East Africa is a rich country...in the vegetable kingdom the Protectorate is doubly rich, for it has its own indigenous products and an immense capacity for growing the products of other countries. Among the former are india-rubber, copra, copal, various grains, castor-oil and fibre. Among plants which have been successfully introduced are cotton, coffee, vanilla, wheat, potatoes and almost all European vegetables. (46)

It was hardly surprising that some of his enthusiasm should 'rub off'

39. Hailey, op.cit., p.745.

40. Ibid.

41. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.78.

42. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.63.

43. H. Fearn, An African Economy (1961), p.93.

44. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.65. The cultural identity of the large number of war-impoverished Afrikaners led by van Rensburg which arrived in 1908 was ensured by the Administration's allocation to them of contiguous land, first on the Uasin-Gishu plateau and later at Trans N'zoia. They had a continual struggle to survive. See G.D. Groen, The Afrikaners in Kenya: 1903-1969, unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1974.

45. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit.

46. African Standard, 25 July 1903.

on intending settlers, and that their numbers should increase. In 1903, there were 117 European applications for land; and in the following year, 300. These were mostly for agricultural land near Nairobi in the Rift Valley.<sup>(47)</sup>

The early settlers of this period were for the most part English: 'English' South Africans disillusioned in the depression after the Boer War, or English aristocracy or gentry from Britain, including Lords Delamere, Hindlip and Cranworth, together with the younger sons of titled families. Most of these brought considerable sums of capital into the Protectorate.

Settler attitudes varied. For example, in a newspaper article, one settler lauded the fact that

When a man settles in a British possession he does so in the belief that he will receive the fair play which is the birthright of every Briton. (48)

Another gave the impression:

Because I am a gentleman and therefore honourable, everything that I do, no matter how crooked, is honourable. (49)

Devious dealings in land did follow early settlement. Racist attitudes towards Africans developed partly from an infectious South African example, and partly from an aristocratic English attitude of not wishing to mix with the 'lower orders', black or white. O. Mannoni commented: 'The colonizers of the heroic age - the era of colonial expansion - were fully convinced of the superiority of the civilisation they represented'.<sup>(50)</sup> He went on to point out that there were certain psychological satisfactions to be derived from this social superiority, as well as from the profits made in a colonial situation.<sup>(51)</sup>

A bond between settler and administrator existed in a showed - though not necessarily admitted - lack of any real knowledge of the African. Settlers could be harsh on labour in a manner learnt from the South African immigrants. The Administration, casting about for a means to control the Africans, ignorantly chose a system whereby chiefs and

47. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.69. See Appendix 2, Map C.

48. African Standard, 29 January 1903.

49. B.J. Berman, Administration and Politics in Colonial Kenya, unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1973.

50. O. Mannoni, Prospero and Caliban (1956), p.32.

51. Ibid.

headmen were imposed upon tribes which were acephalous and gerontocratic.<sup>(52)</sup> When, in 1902, the Village Headmen Ordinance was passed, it devolved upon these men, together with the officially appointed chiefs, to meet settlers demands for labour.

Dating from the construction of the railway-line, African labour had never shown great enthusiasm to 'come out' and work for the white man. As the number of settlers increased, official minds, focusing on exportable agricultural commodities which would make the railway pay, hit upon the idea of a hut tax similar to the South African model. To pay this, labour would subtly be obliged to work for wages for certain months of the year. In 1901, therefore, a hut tax of two rupees was imposed on each hut occupied by African families,<sup>(53)</sup> bringing in a total of £3 328 for that year.<sup>(54)</sup> Quite a number of the various tribesmen proved to be willing workers, but the Kikuyu especially was 'most amenable to European supervision and guidance'.<sup>(55)</sup> This was in direct contradiction to Sir Joseph Chamberlain's theory that:

...the African has been taught by centuries of experience that the only honourable employment for a man is fighting, and that labour is the work of slaves. (56)

Perhaps Chamberlain was right, and this was a contributing factor in the Africans' overall unwillingness to work even for intermittent spells for the white farmers.

Be that as it may, it is accepted by anthropologists that:

...fully integrated economic structures existed within and...among the African tribes before the British arrived. Based everywhere on agriculture and/or livestock, these structures comprised a complicated pattern of economic activities. (57)

Political organisations and world views varied among the tribes.

52. The Kikuyu, Kavirondo, Luhya, Kipsigi and Nandi were, inter alia, all gerontocracies. Only the Masai, Turkana and Suk were not; these had single leaders, such as the Masai Laibon, and in any event did not play such a large part in providing labour for white settlement.

53. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.65.

54. See Appendix 6.

55. African Standard, 10 March 1903.

56. African Standard, 15 March 1903.

57. R.D. Wolff, The Economics of Colonialism: Britain and Kenya 1870-1930 (1974), p.89.

Furthermore, the physical characteristics of the area inhabited affected the system of land tenure. As it was to a large extent Kikuyu land that was alienated by the British, and as members of this tribe formed a large proportion of the labour used by settlers, a brief mention of their land tenure system is in order.

Kikuyu country was characterised by 'a pattern of alternating ridges, separated by deep valleys'.<sup>(58)</sup> There was no tribal ownership of land as such, 'at most a vague sentiment of tribal territory'.<sup>(59)</sup> The unit cultivating land on each ridge was the mbari, but as the Kikuyu were shifting cultivators, and as different crops required different soils, the land cultivated was not necessarily contiguous.<sup>(60)</sup> Each different wife, too, tended her own crops to feed her own children. Homesteads were spread about and crops appeared to be '...a careless muddle, but in fact [this was] a useful method of preventing erosion and excessive evaporation'.<sup>(61)</sup> The tribe was divided into age-sets and was ruled by a Council of Elders. Hence the British imposition of nominated chiefs, although useful to the Administration, was inappropriate and as foreign to the Kikuyu as it was to other acephalous tribes. The Kavirondo, who lived in country with a similar topography, had systems of agriculture and land tenure which closely resembled those of the Kikuyu; and they, too, were acephalous and gerontocratic.

The problem of extracting a labour force from tribes which had had little or no culture contact with Europeans was a continuing one, despite the fact that white settlers believed that Africans could learn a great deal from them. Early in 1905, the High Commissioner's report for 1903/4 was published in the Press. It stated, inter alia, that:

Natives are as a rule erratic in their desire for work. All native labour comes from agricultural tribes with the result that the planting and reaping seasons, when labour is more required on the native's own farm coincide with the seasons when the settler requires most labour. (62)

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58. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country (1967), p.3.

59. Ibid., p.9.

60. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.36, pointed out that 'the indigenous practice of scattering holdings for each individual family over a wide area ...was a wise precaution against the consequences of a very localized destruction of crops by a tropical storm'.

61. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.4.

62. African Standard, 11 February 1905.

From this it was mooted that the best way to obtain labour might be through the formation of labour bureaux; but this, along with the system of headmen 'encouraging' labour to 'come out', was open to abuse. There were also suggestions that labour laws were necessary.

The labour problem became more pressing as more settlers arrived. The African Standard received a letter complaining that '...when [labourers] are paid their months' wages, the whole lot go, the result being that there is not a single man left'.<sup>(63)</sup> Another letter, a few months later, told of settler kindness being construed as weakness.<sup>(64)</sup> On the whole, however, settlers who treated their labourers well, who fed and housed them well, did not have the 'trouble' experienced by harsh, thoughtless, driving employers.

Sir Charles Eliot had resigned in a bitter mood over land problems with the Masai in 1904, and was replaced by Sir James Hayes Sadler in 1905. There was a change in overall administration in this year, too, as the Colonial Office took over responsibility for the Protectorate from the Foreign Office. J. Ainsworth, an 'old Africa hand' with much experience in African administration (who was in later years to become the Protectorate's first Chief Native Commissioner) noted: 'I am afraid that some of us are liable at times to look upon "new brooms" as somewhat of a nuisance'.<sup>(65)</sup> He admitted differences of opinion with the new High Commissioner. However, A. Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary, clearly welcomed the administrative change as:

...he disliked the Foreign Office's 'happy-go-lucky' style of making land grants and...feared the sort of men who would approach M.P.s and try to 'bounce' them into making concessions. <sup>(66)</sup>

The Protectorate was dealt with routinely - if distantly - by the Colonial Office. The hope implicit in land legislation drafted - that it would become a planter's and not a small settlers' country - antagonised the latter in a ten-year controversy.<sup>(67)</sup>

Lord Delamere became chairman of the 1905 Land Committee, the aim of which was:

63. African Standard, 28 January 1905.

64. African Standard, 7 July 1905.

65. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.89.

66. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.278.

67. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya (1968), p.85.

...to investigate the working of existing land legislation and the Land Office, to inquire into African rights in land and make suggestions for African reserves, and to investigate the position of land on the coastal strip. It heard forty-four witnesses, twenty-six of them settlers, and received several written memoranda. (68)

It was unfortunate that claims in land were still unsupported by surveys.<sup>(69)</sup> Later in the year, Colonel Montgomery, the newly-appointed Commissioner of Lands, recommended a rise in rents, from the existing level of a half-penny per acre per annum. He also recommended a change in the duration of leases. Some of his recommendations were approved, and the Colonial Office added anti-dumpling clauses to the proposed regulations in view of the subterfuges of some of the settlers.<sup>(70)</sup>

The report of the Land Committee was published in the following year, 1906. A prime necessity emerging from this was the appointment of a Native Affairs Commissioner. Editorial opinion in the East African Standard backed up this recommendation, and stressed the need for reserves where the Africans could be 'protected from interference by Europeans or Asiatics'.<sup>(71)</sup>

The East Africa Order-in-Council of 1906 elevated the High Commissioner to a Governor and an Executive Council was formed. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, also announced the establishment of a Legislative Council, with four Europeans and one Indian as nominated unofficials. Elgin further agreed to the provision of a Secretary for Native Affairs with three assistants whose task was 'the regulation and protection of native labourers'.<sup>(72)</sup> A.C. Hollis headed this group, and with it later became involved in controversial legislation.

African hut tax, which had produced good results vis-à-vis labour 'coming out' to work, was raised to three rupees per hut,<sup>(73)</sup> and in 1906 added £61 292 to the Protectorate coffers.<sup>(74)</sup> No records can be found for a non-African poll tax, and it is therefore presumed

68. Ibid., p.87.

69. Ibid., p.88.

70. Ibid., p.91.

71. East African Standard, 14 April 1906. In August 1905, the African Standard was renamed the East African Standard.

72. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya 1895-1963 (1974), p.32.

73. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4 July 1907, Col.854.

74. See Appendix 6.

that the European population contributed nothing in direct taxation. The settler argument against any form of direct taxation was that the capital which they had sunk in the Protectorate was their contribution to its financial viability; their profits from farming represented the 'interest' on their investment. Another feature of capital investment in the Protectorate was the formation of large syndicates which owned vast tracts of land. Typical of them was the East African Corporation, a large syndicate with links with the British Cotton-Growers Association,<sup>(75)</sup> which must have rejoiced when the Kavirondo of Nyanza (known as 'naked people') started to wear clothes.<sup>(76)</sup>

The 1905/6 land alienations comprised 60 000 acres, displacing in the process 11 000 Kikuyu.<sup>(77)</sup> Some of these stayed on in the employ of the new occupiers of the land as 'squatters', forming a cheap resident source of labour, but others moved away into two Kikuyu reserves whose boundaries were newly established.

Settlers in these years were trying out new crops such as coffee, wheat and maize, but in a petition of 1906 they complained of the lack of a market for these commodities, even when their crops produced good yields. Meanwhile, in the Nyanza province, Ainsworth began a well-planned policy to improve African agriculture in the reserves. The people began to:

...[appreciate] the use of money in place of the old system of barter and [to develop] into keen traders. We introduced cotton seed and ground nuts with some success. The sales of livestock, eggs, fowls, ghee (clarified butter), millet and maize began to increase yearly. The maize, however, was of poor quality. We decided, therefore, to try to improve the output. (78)

In addition to struggling with new crops, European settlers were still attempting to control elusive labour. A Colonists' Association meeting,

75. The British Cotton-Growers' Association was formed to reduce dependence upon American cotton.

76. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.67, quotes Ainsworth: 'For some time after 1906...a change began to take place. First the men took to loin-cloths and singlets, followed later by khaki coats and shorts; then the women took to coloured cloths fastened over one shoulder and so the old naked era began to pass away.'

77. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country (1967), p.18.

78. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.67, quoting Ainsworth.



confronted with demands to make work contracts more binding, initiated local legislation (not sent for Colonial Office approval for three months) in the shape of a Master and Servant Act. Payment in kind was allowed, and fines or imprisonment could be imposed for breach of contract.<sup>(79)</sup>

Between the years 1907 and 1912 labour problems became increasingly acute. Indeed, 1908 was a year of crisis: revenue fell £166 000 short of expectations,<sup>(80)</sup> and exports (comprising mostly ivory, beeswax, hides and skins and a little copra) fell by £6 000 to £157 000.<sup>(81)</sup> Labour was for the most part unreliable or non-existent when most needed. Desperate settlers, with the spectre of crops rotting for want of harvesting, were adamant that the Administration should act to compel workers to 'come out', as the imposition of hut tax had not resulted in sufficient numbers doing so. From the African viewpoint, selling the surplus of his own crop was a good way to make money to pay this tax.<sup>(82)</sup> Sympathetic letter-writers, including the Governor, saw no reason why the African should leave his home to work in a distant place where food was more expensive,<sup>(83)</sup> or where his exertions benefitted not himself but his employer.<sup>(84)</sup> The monthly contract wage varied between two and four rupees with posho,<sup>(85)</sup> the variation depending upon the physique of the worker.<sup>(86)</sup>

Sympathy was but one side of the coin: the other was typified by the public flogging meted out to three Africans by the aggressive Major Grogan. For the harsher settler element this was the right way to 'handle' Africans, but the editor of the East African Standard disapproved strongly.<sup>(87)</sup> Disapproval was in the air, too, when the visiting Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill,

79. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.32.

80. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.220.

81. See Appendix 5.

82. East African Standard, 14 January 1905.

83. East African Standard, 8 December 1906.

84. East African Standard, 9 November 1907.

85. Posho is the colloquial term for maize meal.

86. East African Standard, 4 May 1907. There was to be an echo of this in the findings of the Kenya Agricultural Commission in 1929, when Sir Daniel Hall reported on the high incidence of malnutrition among African men.

87. East African Standard, 4 May 1907.

witnessed examples of bad labour conditions.<sup>(88)</sup>

During his stay, a settler deputation called upon Churchill to recommend the imposition of poll tax, to 'encourage' out to work those Africans who did not pay hut tax. Other recommendations included Pass Laws (on the South African model) to eliminate desertion and thieving, a stock tax (for pastoralists) and a labour recruiting board. In consultation with the Governor and Churchill, the Native Affairs Department, led by Hollis, promulgated the Labour Rules at the end of 1907. These put the onus on employers to provide suitable housing for labourers, 'one good blanket free of charge on arrival at place of work',<sup>(89)</sup> such food as they were used to in their own country, and medical care then they were sick.

These Rules aroused settler wrath and provoked bitter letters to the Press. One in particular wrote with considerable - and understandable - feeling:

...it is grossly unfair to invite a settler to this country...to give him land under conditions which force him to work and at the same time to do away with the very foundation on which the whole of his enterprise is based, namely cheap labour, whilst the Native is allowed to retain large tracts of land on which he can remain in idleness, and no attempt to alleviate or raise him is made, and if a period of famine arrives, he has only to apply for assistance or help from the Government. <sup>(90)</sup>

Throughout this period, it was the small, under-capitalised settler who had such a struggle to make ends meet, let alone a profit.<sup>(91)</sup> The owners of large estates were generally well-off pastoralists.<sup>(92)</sup>

A 'Great Labour Meeting' was held in March 1908, to press for the withdrawal of the Rules. After heated discussion, a deputation led by Delamere and Baillie went to Government House where there were vehement exchanges. When Sadler met the settlers again the following day, he refused to withdraw the Rules, agreeing only to modify them. It was

88. It was just as well that Churchill could see 'on-the-spot' conditions. In these years before the First World War, communications to England from East Africa took weeks to reach their destination and over a month for a reply to be received. Telegraphic communication came later.

89. East African Standard, 30 November 1907.

90. East African Standard, 14 March 1908.

91. There was as yet no Land Bank to which farmers could apply for a loan.

92. East African Standard, 11 July 1908.

established, inter alia, that:

...the Master and Servant Ordinance contained obligations for both parties, but the proposed giving of judicial powers to headmen might help the apprehension of deserters; payment might be asked for a blanket;...he would try to check any rise in wages, but could not fix legal maxima; government departments would conform to the new rules; 'encouragement' was the government's policy. (93)

Sadler then suspended Delamere and Baillie from the Legislative Council, but later in the year he accepted them as members of the Ukamba Province Labour Board. (94)

The Governor's subsequent tours throughout the Protectorate, holding meetings with agriculturalists and ranchers inland and fibre concessionnaires at the coast, resulted in the 'Labour Despatches' at the end of 1908, in which the needs of each group were reported on. An improvement in the supply of labour had occurred after the promulgation of the Rules, and there were signs that desertions were decreasing as labour 'settled down'. Conclusions drawn from the Governor's safari were that upland requirements could be met by local labour, but that fibre industries at the coast would need indentured labour.

In the House of Commons, there was again discussion of a poll tax, although it was noted that 'it is easier to count huts than heads'. (95) And as at this time no one had a clear idea of the numbers of the African population - there was no African census until 1948 - this could well prove to be an arduous task.

Concurrently with labour worries, the minds of white settlers were exercised over possible Indian agricultural settlement. Their fears were stilled by Lord Elgin whose 'Pledges' in 1908 assured whites that the Highlands would be set aside for them alone, and that Indians would be settled near the coast.

After Sadler's resignation, Sir Percy Girouard became Governor in 1909. Upon his arrival, he found 'an utter absence of any policy'. (96) However, during his tenure of office, increased economic development

93. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.36.

94. East African Standard, 15 August 1908.

95. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 20 July 1908, Col.1332.

96. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith, op.cit., p.282.

did take place in the Protectorate to the background of improved world trading conditions. Settlement continued to increase slowly.

Early in 1909, a new Master and Servant Ordinance was promulgated. It covered offences by servants: refusal to work, drunkenness, neglect of duty, desertion and damage to property.<sup>(97)</sup> Employers' offences included unreasonable withholding of wages, removal of employees' property, and non-supply of blanket, food or other articles.<sup>(98)</sup> In October, the Legislative Council discussed the registration of African servants and again the possible imposition of a Pass Law.<sup>(99)</sup>

While colonists on the spot were complaining of the inadequacies of labour and of the railway,<sup>(100)</sup> Cathcart Wilson said in the House of Commons:

We have got a country which everyone who had been there believes to be one of immense possibilities and immense prospects. We know that products of all sorts can be grown there. We know that the natives are an industrious and intelligent race. <sup>(101)</sup>

However, conditions in the Protectorate were considerably less cheerful. Parts of the Protectorate were threatened by famine, and East Coast Fever was a problem. There was insufficient grass in the reserves for an increasing number of African cattle,<sup>(102)</sup> and the wheat crop was practically wiped out by rust as there was still no rust-resistant seed.<sup>(103)</sup>

None the less, all was not gloom. During 1910, British capital investment in Africa as a whole amounted to £455 000 000; and the Protectorate also benefitted. Furthermore, the lack of success with cotton crops was compensated for by rising coffee and maize prices following in the latter case a high world price for maize.<sup>(104)</sup>

In the wake of this improvement, a toned-down but still

97. Desertion usually took place after an advance of money to an employee - East African Standard, 29 May 1909.

98. East African Standard, 20 March 1909.

99. East African Standard, 16 October 1909.

100. The British East Africa Fibre and Industrial Company Ltd. wanted special rail concessions for their labour. East African Standard, 8 January 1910.

101. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 27 July 1909, Col.1039.

102. East African Standard, 22 January 1910.

103. A. Pim, op.cit., p.113.

104. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.225.

potentially caustic and explosive Grogan commented at a Colonists' Association meeting that:

Abnormal rises in the market price of agricultural products tend to temporary rises in the payable wage rate;...such temporary rises tend to dislocate the labour market with ultimate damage to native interests....Constant employment at a fair rate can only be secured by careful organisation of the labour supply. (105)

Wages at this time varied between four rupees in the Highlands, six rupees in the lowlands and ten rupees at the coast. Africans naturally opted for the highest paying area, but this for the most part meant movement out of a home district, and there were continuing problems of transport. The great distance to be travelled in many cases brought delays on the journey, appallingly crowded conditions in railway coaches,<sup>(106)</sup> and lack of feeding facilities en route. It was estimated that 'boys' sometimes took months to recover from their journeys.<sup>(107)</sup>

There was thus all the more reason for many Africans to prefer living as squatters on white farms. A related situation arose, too, where absentee white landlords leased farms to Africans - a process known as 'Kaffir farming'. For example, Swahili from the coast rented land, and exported a 'wonderful' amount of maize from their 'small' areas.<sup>(108)</sup>

In 1911, shortage of labour affected the rubber output as estates could not be worked to full capacity.<sup>(109)</sup> Sisal growers faced an uncertain future because their system of decortication was wasteful, an instance of poor processing which was to be criticised by visiting experts in the future. Settlers at Ulu suggested a reduction in railway freights on fencing posts to encourage the fencing of farms. At the

105. East African Standard, 1 October 1910.

106. Sir William Byles referred to the manner of entraining labour for the coast, which 'if applied to the trucking of sheep would be considered cruelty to animals'. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 22 April 1914, Co.904.

107. A new type of 3rd class railway compartment was introduced in 1914. East African Standard, 30 May 1914.

108. East African Standard, 4 February 1911.

109. East African Standard, 14 January 1911. At this time the price of rubber on the London market was rising. In 1908 rubber sold at 3s.8d per pound; in 1912 at 12s. per pound. By 1913 the rubber boom collapsed. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.222.

end of this year, the Agricultural Report summed up:

Soil, climate and labour supplies are the constituents of our national capital in East Africa. We are a community of primary producers. We sell to industrial Europe the raw material which is the lifeblood of the workshop. (110)

Exports increased sizeably despite local problems, and there was hope of a return to earlier prosperity.<sup>(111)</sup> Mooted for the first time was the necessity of a Land Bank from which farmers could borrow money at three or four per cent instead of the eight per cent they were presently paying on loans.<sup>(112)</sup>

In the middle of 1912, Sir Percy Girouard, who had been very pro-settler in his outlook,<sup>(113)</sup> resigned after conniving on their behalf to acquire Masai-held land. He was replaced by H.C. Belfield (afterwards Sir Henry Conway Belfield), who had 'little sympathy or understanding of African problems and...easily succumbed to settler pressures'.<sup>(114)</sup> These pressures included an appeal to the Administration for an 'adequate' increase in African taxation and the imposition of a stock tax on pastoral tribes.<sup>(115)</sup>

Further settler pressure in 1912 resulted in an intensification of measures taken to compel Africans to 'come out' to work:

If word came through the District Commissioner that a European previously unknown to him wanted labour, he would summon a large number of men and ask who wanted to go. If the number fell short of that asked for, he would report to the Government officer, and if informed that he must make the number complete, he would order certain men to go. A Spearman would be sent to arrest any man who refused to go and he would be taken before the Native Council at headquarters, by which he would be fined three goats for disobeying the chief; the goats would be slaughtered and eaten by the Council. The Council would then order him to go, an order which he could not escape obeying. (116)

110. East African Standard, 25 November 1911.

111. See Appendix 5.

112. East African Standard, 5 August 1911.

113. B.J. Berman, op.cit., p.12, comments on the close links which developed between rich settlers and the Administration as for the most part they shared a similar social background.

114. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.41.

115. East African Standard, 10 August 1912.

116. L. Woolf, op.cit., p.344 quoting the Report of the Labour Commission.

The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society continually challenged the Administration's 'duty' to secure labour for settlers; and their lobbying bore fruit in later legislation.

During Belfield's governorship, it was discovered that ten per cent of the 1902 rolling-stock on the railway had disappeared, the remainder was 'on its last legs' and that congestion at Mombasa and Lake ports produced bottle-necks in supply.<sup>(117)</sup>

In spite of this, Lord Elgin authorised as a temporary measure a reduced rate 'on many kinds of agricultural produce of half-penny per ton per mile'.<sup>(118)</sup> Settlers who employed machinery to replace men received a special rate for agricultural implements: Rs. 6,27 per ton per mile, with fencing posts' transport reduced from Rs. 6,27 to Rs. 3,13 for each additional mile over 100 miles.<sup>(119)</sup> Following European example, Africans started using ploughs on their own shambas to replace traditional digging sticks.<sup>(120)</sup>

Examples of 'learning by doing' might work in agricultural methods, but general communication of white with black remained minimal except in certain cases.<sup>(121)</sup> There were also problems of comprehension in the promulgation in English of official enactments concerning Africans in the Government Gazette. E. Harvey commented that there was 'no way of making [these] known to the native community'.<sup>(122)</sup>

The Annual Protectorate Report for 1912/13 noted the rise in revenue from £467 000 to the 1908/9 figure of £485 000. The Imperial Treasury granted £23 500 as part of a second instalment towards the cost of new rolling-stock for the railway. Imports included cotton goods, flour, maize, agricultural machinery, arms and ammunition, liquor, cutlery and hardware. Exports comprised grain and oil seeds, maize, ground nuts, beans, peas, potatoes, a little coffee, and less ivory and wool than previously.<sup>(123)</sup> Land values were reported to have risen,<sup>(124)</sup> and there was said to be scope for wheat and citrus fruit

117. East African Standard, 27 February 1915.

118. East African Standard, 5 October 1912.

119. East African Standard, 10 August 1912.

120. Shamba is an African word for farm.

121. District Officers usually learnt the language of the people among whom they worked, but if they were moved away to another district on a subsequent 'tour' there were again problems of communication.

122. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 16 April 1913, Col.1916.

123. East African Standard, 28 March 1914. There is no explanation as to why maize appears both as an export and an import.

124. Land values rose to 7s.6d. per acre. East African Standard, 4 July 1914.

growing. Reflecting the Protectorate's dependence on, and links with, Britain, it was noted that the boom there had resulted in a rise of up to twenty per cent in the prices of materials needed by the Public Works Department.<sup>(125)</sup> It was noted by C.C. Wrigley that up to 1914 'native production' was contributing more to the wealth of the country than settler agriculture.<sup>(126)</sup>

The trials of white settlers were thoroughly examined in an interview with a Mr. Buckland in 1914. He opined that the Protectorate was a planter's not a settler's country, noting that an intending settler needed at least £3 000 to £4 000:

Formerly the Government assisted immigrants by giving them free grants of 640 acres of land for an agricultural farm and of 5 000 acres for a grazing farm, provided that the allottee could show that he had a capital of £1 000. But now the Government sells the land by auction in lots of about 8 000 acres for mixed farming and they realise about 7s.6d. per acre. (127)

He also observed that land which had been proved suitable for coffee fetched £3 to £4, or even £7 per acre, and that grazing land could be purchased for about £1 an acre. These prices ruled for land at a distance from the railway-line, while within ten to twelve miles of the line it fetched prices of up to £15 per acre.<sup>(128)</sup>

After the outbreak of war it was clear that:

Black men from one side of the wholly mythical line in the bush (men who had never heard of Belgium or the Balkans or the Triple Entente) would soon be slaughtering equally ill-informed black men on the other side, with European rifles, in the name of King George and in the name of the Kaiser. (129)

Shortly afterwards, Dar-es-Salaam was bombarded. Fears that the Germans might attempt to advance on Kisumu through Kisii materialised in their occupation of Karunga in 1915 '(when Bowker's Horse took part in a naval operation on the railway's steamer, "Winifred"!'.<sup>(130)</sup>

During 1915, the Legislative Council considered the proposed

125. East African Standard, 28 March 1914.

126. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.227.

127. East African Standard, 4 July 1914.

128. East African Standard, 4 July 1914.

129. E. Huxley, op.cit., p.315.

130. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.93.



Native Registration Bill and the Bill to regulate the Residence of African families on farms, and passed the Recruitment of Native Carriers Bill.<sup>(131)</sup> Of greater importance, however, was the amendment (due to settler pressure) of the Crown Lands Ordinance which laid down that '...Crown Lands were to be held to include "all lands reserved for the use of any native tribe"'.<sup>(132)</sup> It also gave the Governor the power '...to sell [these] for agricultural and building purposes to Europeans only...to veto the purchase of these lands by Indians',<sup>(133)</sup> and to reduce African areas if they were found to be 'unnecessarily large'.<sup>(134)</sup> In the same year, settlers' leases changed from 99 years to 999 years, were thenceforth to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder instead of being allotted to applicants.<sup>(135)</sup>

In the middle years of the war, there was talk of a Soldier Settlement Scheme, but its conditions were not set out until after hostilities ended. E. Huxley noted that from 1917 to 1919 the Protectorate was cut off from its market; coffee, sisal, flax and wool could not be exported.<sup>(136)</sup> However, figures in Appendix 5 do not show an appreciable decline in exports, although in the early years of the war there were clearly fewer imports. Pressures on allied shipping must surely have been very great, and yet the need in Britain for Protectorate products did not appear to diminish.

To the background of devastating drought and famine throughout 1917 and 1918, and influenza in 1918, Koru settlers observed that:

The economic future of the native is very largely dependent on the opportunities afforded him of learning up-to-date European methods by constant contact with European employers. (137)

Ainsworth asserted that 'The natives most advanced in their local agricultural development are those who have been most regular in their contribution to the labour market'.<sup>(138)</sup> Seed corn was distributed to

131. The Native Registration Bill was shelved 'for the duration', on account of the absence on active service of so many men whose opinion on it mattered.

132. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.747.

133. *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, 14 July 1920, Col.120.

134. L. Mair, *Native Policies in Africa* (1936), p.81.

135. E. Huxley, *op.cit.*, p.194.

136. *Ibid.*, p.32.

137. *East African Standard*, 4 May 1918.

138. *East African Standard*, 4 May 1918.

reserves, and twenty ploughs were sent to Kisii to increase the yield of maize and other food.<sup>(139)</sup>

In March 1918, while Ainsworth was Adviser on Native Affairs, a member of the Executive Council and also chairman of the Famine Committee, the East African Standard published his Memorandum to the Legislative Council. This included, inter alia, the proposal that:

No black man shall purchase or lease land in declared white areas, except in so far as native locations shall be defined in towns....And, per contra, no white or other non-African will be allowed to purchase or lease land in a native district except in trade centres defined for that purpose by the Government. (140)

He also averred that the African was much changed by the war and that tribal conditions had also altered.<sup>(141)</sup> In June, when Ainsworth was Military Commissioner for Labour, he was appointed Chief Native Commissioner. A month previously, fresh from military operations in Nyasaland, Major-General Sir Edward Northey became Governor of the Protectorate. These two men were to be involved in fierce controversy after the war, as they endeavoured to regulate the Protectorate's labour supply.

Meanwhile, the Crown Lands Ordinance was again amended with:

...the power of veto extended to the acquisition of land in the township areas...and in the conditions of sale of these Crown Lands a clause inserted which said that no one other than a British subject of European origin was entitled to bid. (142)

Further control came with the Resident Natives Ordinance which set forth that 'no African should live on European land unless he contracted to work for eighty days per annum'.<sup>(143)</sup> The Native Registration Ordinance (in mothballs since 1915), with its concomitant system of kipandes, was also passed. Repercussions of it echoed down the years thereafter.

In the first two decades of its existence, the Protectorate had

139. East African Standard, 6 April 1918.

140. F.H. Goldsmith, op.cit., p.100.

141. Ibid.

142. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.121.

143. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.238.

grown from a small, struggling white community in a sea of Africans to one in which the European population had grown from a few hundred in the 1890s to 5 570 in 1918. Revenue had increased fifty times; imports seven times; and exports and expenditure both showed a ten-fold growth. The next twenty years was to evidence an even more complex struggle for economic survival. The new Kenya, born in 1920, would rely on agricultural exports to the exclusion of nearly all else. In so doing, she would set a solitary precedent in an increasingly competitive world.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### AFTERMATH OF WAR:

#### THE NEW KENYA COLONY, 1919-1923

Soldier from the wars returning,  
 Spoiler of the taken town,  
 Here is ease that asks not earning;  
 Turn you in and sit you down.

- A.E. Houseman

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For demobilised British East African soldiers - both black and white - there was to be no easy homecoming. As far as white settlers were concerned, their wives and a depleted labour force had kept farms going as best they could during their absence on active service. Nevertheless, many settler farms were derelict: the toll of wind and rain and the depredations of white ants were evident, fields had been neglected and pastoralists' herds had deteriorated.<sup>(1)</sup> To restore viability to farming enterprises, returning soldiers had to borrow at eight per cent from the banks, and thus were burdened with the indebtedness 'which became so crushing in later years of slump'.<sup>(2)</sup>

For the 166 000 blacks recruited in the Courier Corps,<sup>(3)</sup> casualties had been heavy through disease as well as enemy action,<sup>(4)</sup> and there were problems at home too. As far as many families were concerned, their menfolk had vanished, their fates unknown. Tuberculosis, picked up on active service, spread from carriers of the disease. And influenza 'swept like a tidal wave to [the] very confines [of the Protectorate]', being particularly bad up-country.<sup>(5)</sup> This resulted in

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1. M.F. Hill, Permanent Way (1949), p.377. It had also been difficult to import agricultural machinery during the war. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the East Africa Protectorate, 1918/19, Col.no.1073, p.8.
  2. E. Huxley, Settlers of Kenya (1948), p.33.
  3. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.120; and A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.88. These men had been recruited by chiefs, hence the chiefs had become the paid labour agents of the government.
  4. Ainsworth estimated the casualties at 155 100, as quoted in A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.87. However, M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.293, quotes B.A. Ogot's figures at 50 000.
  5. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the East Africa Protectorate, 1918/19, Col.no.1073, p.19.

an 'unprecedented' shortage of labour,<sup>(6)</sup> which meant that farmers could not extend their cultivation, and even in extreme cases were forced to sell their farms for 'ridiculously nominal sums'.<sup>(7)</sup> The failure of both long and short rains contributed to the difficulties.<sup>(8)</sup> Furthermore, many officers of the Administration - 'an under-staffed, over-taxed body of war-stale Government servants',<sup>(9)</sup> - were overdue for leave and had also been stricken with influenza.

In 1919, therefore, local tribulations stemming from the prolonged resistance of the Germans in Tanganyika were but a part of the overall post-war picture. The Protectorate, like many other territories in Africa,

...felt the financial and commercial backwash of Europe's turn to war. The inflow of private and public capital from Europe dried up.... Primary product prices moved sharply upwards. <sup>(10)</sup>

Trade in agricultural exports was held up by lack of shipping space, but once this returned to normal there was 'a scramble for commodities by the world's industrial economies'.<sup>(11)</sup>

Protectorate coffee exports increased from 16 552 cwt. valued at £46 028 in 1917 to 71 545 cwt. valued at £244 468 in 1919.<sup>(12)</sup> This was due to 'augmented development' - in spite of labour difficulties.<sup>(13)</sup> Maize exports rose from 10 672 cwt. valued at £2 748 in 1917, through the 1918 output of 1 339 cwt. valued at £417 to the 1919 figures of 55 776 cwt. exported and valued at £21 437.<sup>(14)</sup> The value of sisal exports rose from £197 473 in 1918 to £224 025 in 1919.<sup>(15)</sup> It was

6. East African Standard, 11 January 1919.
7. East African Standard, 1 March 1919.
8. The 'long' rains last from the end of March to the end of May; the 'short' rains fall from mid-October to mid-November, in keeping with the changing monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.15.
9. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the East Africa Protectorate, 1918/19, Col.no.1073, p.18.
10. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.121.
11. Ibid., p.122.
12. There are no figures for 1918, presumably because the bulk of the crop was lost owing to the sickness of labour. East African Standard, 2 August 1919.
13. East African Standard, 9 August 1919.
14. There had been anticipation, 'if only the labour is sufficient to pick it', of a 'bumper crop of maize, beans etc. this season, but the price is only 25 to 30 cents a load of 60 lbs.' East African Standard, 8 November 1919.
15. S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa (1938), Table 64, no page.

noted in the Press that:

...wheat seems to be the favourite crop on the West Kenia (sic) farms and, at the present price of Rs. 10 per load, should prove a gold mine. (16)

In the boom year of 1919, therefore, high primary produce prices on world markets made agriculture profitable and worthwhile for struggling Protectorate cultivators.

Lugard pointed out that the war 'profoundly changed the economic conditions of the world'.<sup>(17)</sup> With its end, Britain realised that German policy, taking advantage of the 'open door',<sup>(18)</sup> had been deliberately to divert raw materials vitally needed in her industry (witness German shipping lines which called at Mombasa en route to Hamburg). Britain decided thenceforth to draw together all parts of her Empire, and to implement the 1918 resolutions:

...that the Empire resources in raw material should be safeguarded and utilised for the requirements of the Empire and for purposes of negotiation with other countries. (19)

The outcome of this resolve was 'Imperial Preference', long advocated by those seeing the need for Great Britain to be self-sufficient.<sup>(20)</sup>

Thus the preference duty on British-grown coffee was regarded by the Protectorate Coffee Planters' Union 'with great appreciation'.<sup>(21)</sup> A contemporary letter in The Times suggested that powers neutral in the war could be satisfied after the fulfilment of British needs, and that the British government had 'the right to deal as it thinks fit with the produce of its tropical dependencies'.<sup>(22)</sup>

The conduct of the war left Britain with a huge burden of indebtedness and heavy taxation. Valuable British markets overseas - for example, in cotton - had been lost to India and Japan. Lugard urged the black producer in Africa voluntarily:

16. East African Standard, 8 November 1919.

17. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.267.

18. British control of large regions of tropical Africa brought equal opportunities for the development of markets to all, including rival nations and the Africans themselves. These were financed as free gifts from Imperial revenues or as loans from Imperial credit. Ibid., p.60.

19. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.169.

20. Ibid., p.268.

21. East African Standard, 13 December 1919.

22. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.273.

...to acquiesce in the limitation of his market, provided that the whole of his output is absorbed at remunerative prices....The African, who shares with us the Empire's benefits, must learn that it is his duty and privilege to share its burdens. (23)

L. Mair commented on the 'Empire-consciousness' of the post-war era, and noted that it had led to a burgeoning awareness of the colonial power's tangible links with, and responsibility to, its subject peoples.<sup>(24)</sup> There was no doubt that Britain's links with her Empire were strengthening: her trade with British Tropical Africa grew from under £11 250 000 in 1909 to over £76 250 000 in 1929.<sup>(25)</sup> In addition to this, there were new social ties in the shape of ex-soldiers from Britain who emigrated to the Protectorate.

The Ex-Soldier Settlement Scheme had been mooted earlier, in 1916. In that year, Governor Belfield had assessed the area of surveyed land awaiting alienation at 3 200 square miles; and had opined that the settlement scheme, with 5 000 farms of 160 and 240 acres, would take about half of it.<sup>(26)</sup> After the war, an article in the East African Standard noted that there were two categories of land available for allotment: 250 lots of not more than 100 acres, and 800 lots of not more than 160 acres. Applicants were divided into two classes: one, for men with limited capital resources who would receive free grants; the other, for men with £1 000 and an assumed annual income of £200, was for the purchase of larger farms. There were 257 of the former type and 1 052 of the latter. Both classes would be held in lease-hold of 999 years, with the State continuing to draw revenue. Of the 1 600 applications for farms, the government approved 1 352.<sup>(27)</sup>

Although some of the new settlers - for example, ex-officers - had private means, many of them possessed virtually no financial backing and virtually no knowledge of agriculture.<sup>(28)</sup> Adding to these problems was the fact that the farms were distributed by drawing lots and were only indicated on maps. Indeed, 'the ground had never been reconnoitred, and many of the farms were in districts which had not even

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23. Ibid., pp.274-275.

24. L. Mair, op.cit., p.2.

25. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.498.

26. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.23.

27. East African Standard, 5 April 1919. According to Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.748, 'there were few considerable alienations after 1919'.

28. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.95.

been explored'.<sup>(29)</sup> A Coffee Planters' Union meeting in 1919 observed that:

...the native loves to sample the new-comer to see if perchance he can find a master who will let him do as he likes and pay him wages commensurate with what he thinks his value. <sup>(30)</sup>

The new arrivals were British, not South African, and so tended to be sympathetic to labour.<sup>(31)</sup> At least this was the view of several of the older settlers, who believed that the new arrivals were 'spoiling' the labour market.

The aim of the Ex-Soldier Settlement Scheme had been to double the white population of what was to be, from March 1920, Kenya Colony.<sup>(32)</sup> In fact, there was a seventy per cent increase in population between 1919 and 1921.<sup>(33)</sup> The ex-servicemen did swell settler ranks, but in doing so, they compounded the labour problem.<sup>(34)</sup> At a time when prices of agricultural commodities were buoyant, all farmers needed as many labourers as they could get. On the other hand, the African, after the cessation of hostilities, and '...with something of the feeling of the freed slave, returned to his village and was content to remain there occupied with his own concerns'.<sup>(35)</sup> To counter this, between 1919 and 1925, there was 'a spate of labour legislation... which formed the fundamental labor framework for Kenya in the inter-war period'.<sup>(36)</sup> This included legislation regarding squatters (the Resident Natives Ordinance), African registration, and amendments to both the Master and Servant Ordinance and the Native Authority Ordinance.<sup>(37)</sup>

29. Ibid., p.96. (A free translation of the original French text).

30. East African Standard, 13 December 1919.

31. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.109.

32. C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, The Myth of Mau-Mau: Nationalism in Kenya (1966), p.33.

33. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.94.

34. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 4 July 1920, Col.127.

35. A.G. Church, op.cit., p.161.

36. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.153.

37. In terms of the Master and Servant Ordinance, as amended, labour inspectors saw to the proper observation of contracts between employer and employee. They 'took up the interests of the native labourer as against the employer, and...saw that the labourer was properly housed and paid and sent to hospital when necessary at the employer's expense and proper compensation in accidents'. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.955.



Above all, however, it included the Ainsworth Circular issued in 1919.<sup>(38)</sup> This Circular:

...called upon government officers from labour-supplying districts to bring the matter of labouring regularly to the attention of chiefs and to inform them that it was in the interests of the African people that young men should go out and not be 'idle' in the reserves. Officers should use every possible lawful influence to encourage Africans to engage for labour. When farms were close to the reserve women and children should be encouraged to seek employment. The district commissioners were to keep a record on chiefs indicating how helpful they were in labour matters,...and were to hold barazas to inform the people about labour possibilities. (39)

The Circular stirred up a hornet's nest of reaction. W. McGregor Ross called it 'the high-water mark of exploitation',<sup>(40)</sup> while the farming community said it 'deserved their thanks'.<sup>(41)</sup>

A week after its promulgation, a letter signed by the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda and Dr. J.W. Arthur of the Church of Scotland Mission, was published. This Memorandum stressed that ideally all labour should be voluntary, and that to put such power in the hands of chiefs would 'lead to unsatisfactory results'. The three signatories were of the opinion that compulsory labour so long as necessary should be legalised; that it should be confined to able-bodied men, with no government pressure on women and children; that it should be properly inspected, 'clearly defined' and 'exactd uniformly' from each tribe and each man in the tribe; that each man should be free to choose his own employer; that there should be 'reasonable' exemptions for those in

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38. East African Standard, 1 November 1919. It is probable that the Circular was issued at the behest of the Governor, Sir Edward Northey. In the ensuing controversy surrounding the Circular, Ainsworth was defended in the House of Commons by Lieutenant-Colonel Amery, the Under-Secretary, as 'an official who has always been a friend to the natives'. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.954.

39. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.157. A 'helpful' chief might 'send out his swashbucklers, who seize a gang of the most inoffensive and the most industrious men in the reserve, and generally collect a few sheep or chickens to compensate them for their trouble'. East African Standard, 8 November 1919.

40. W. McGregor Ross, Kenya from Within (1927), p.104.

41. East African Standard, 1 November 1919.

permanent work; and that compulsory labour should be directed primarily to state work so that voluntary labour might be available for private employers.<sup>(42)</sup>

In the House of Commons four months later, the Colonial Under-Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Amery, defended the Circular. He saw the Bishops' Memorandum as 'being in entire accord with the main purpose' of the Circular,<sup>(43)</sup> and claimed that Sir Edward Northey had assured him that 'compulsion was not his intention out there'. Amery went on to point out that:

...native commissioners are there and their purpose is to see that the native chiefs do not go beyond purely lawful persuasion. (44)

Nevertheless, several Members of Parliament criticised the Colonial Office for being about 'to hand over control to the settlers'.<sup>(45)</sup> A Labour Member averred that '...we feel we do not stand above the coloured man, we stand at his side'.<sup>(46)</sup> In similar vein, Colonel Wedgwood wanted nothing to do with exploitation, seeing a settler point-of-view as 'diametrically opposed to ours'.<sup>(47)</sup>

In July 1920 there was further reaction, this time in the House of Lords. Lord Islington condemned the Circular as 'approaching perilously close to enforced labour with all the attendant abuses'. Inquiring whether it had been submitted to the Colonial Office before publication, he described it as 'an entire departure from our colonial practice' and 'a violation of the spirit and letter of the League of Nations covenant'.<sup>(48)</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury, although aware of the usefulness to the country of 'properly safeguarded, properly inspected and properly regulated' labour, felt that it was:

...not possible markedly to draw the line....  
That crop has got to be got in. The greater portion of its profit is going to private individuals and a certain part to the Government. Is that crop to be got in rapidly, and if so, will voluntary labour suffice for the purpose? (49)

42. East African Standard, 8 November 1919.

43. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.954.

44. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.955.

45. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.943.

46. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.932.

47. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 26 April 1920, Col.941.

48. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Cols.125-126.

49. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.134.

To this he added the truism: 'No body of men who are anxious to become rich can at all times be trusted...to act justly towards those on whose labour their riches depend'.<sup>(50)</sup>

Defending the action of Northey, described by Lord Milner as 'intolerable',<sup>(51)</sup> the Colonial Secretary refused to withdraw the Circular. He insisted that:

The difficulty in this question of native labour is to steer a middle course between allowing the natives to live in idleness and vice and using improper means to get them to work and permitting them to be employed on unfair terms or to be improperly cared for....Labour must be forthcoming if the country is to be developed as it should be. The country needs it and the native is better for it....But we are not prepared to go beyond influence, advice and encouragement. <sup>(52)</sup>

Meanwhile, on the Kenya front, the hard-working missionary Dr. Arthur protested at considerable length against compulsory labour. He stood out against the labour of women and children; but for a definition of able-bodied men, for terms of employment and duration of work, and for the need for registration and the establishment of labour bureaux.<sup>(53)</sup>

The issue at stake was indeed a complex one: '...easy in Downing Street, but difficult for officials caught between their duty and the settlers' pressures'.<sup>(54)</sup> As had appeared on previous occasions and would re-appear in the future, the opinion of Englishmen who had not visited Kenya, or alternatively had no financial commitment to the colony, was totally against the settlers and quite unable to appreciate their point of view.

On the spot, it was clear that the government was responsible for the soldier settlers, and that also an increase in productivity was imperative for Kenya's economic survival in a competitive world.<sup>(55)</sup>

High primary commodity prices continued into 1920, and white settler agriculture thrived. Maize, an 'easy' crop,<sup>(56)</sup> became increasingly popular: 1 339 cwt. worth £417 were exported in 1918; in

50. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.135.

51. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.145.

52. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Cols.155-156, 158.

53. East African Standard, 10 January 1920.

54. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.293.

55. E. Huxley, White Man's Country (1935), Vol.2, p.58.

56. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith(eds.), op.cit., p.239.

1919, 55 776 cwt. worth £21 437 left the Protectorate; but in 1920, 145 554 cwt. to the value of £51 491 were exported.<sup>(57)</sup> Coffee exports also increased in weight and value in 1920, but a straw-in-the-wind was the figure for the sisal crop. The export of this commodity dropped from 5 600 cwt. in 1919 to 4 196 cwt. in 1920, with corresponding export values of £224 025 in 1919 down to £122 558 in 1920.<sup>(58)</sup> The flax price, responding to the wartime interruption of exports of this commodity from Russia and Belgium,<sup>(59)</sup> was set in June 1919 at over £300 per ton, reaching £500 per ton in August 1920, on the way to a record price of £590.<sup>(60)</sup> However, earnings from the export of hides and skins, which had 'carried' the economy from 1909 to 1914, dropped from £156 547 in 1919 to £141 086 in 1920, providing none the less a sizeable share of exports.<sup>(61)</sup> There are no separate figures for African agriculture until 1922. Although Munro believed that it was 'stifled',<sup>(62)</sup> the Kenya Administration was of the opinion that African agriculture possessed great potential.<sup>(63)</sup> According to the Annual Report, the area occupied by African tribes was eight times larger than the 'white' area: 24 280 000 acres of African land as against 3 157 000 acres of European-occupied land. Accordingly,

...it will be seen that in order to develop the agricultural resources and wealth of the Protectorate it is essential that native agriculture should be fostered. Native progress will necessarily be slow and a large number of instructors will be needed. (64)

The Report suggested that emphasis should be placed on the growing of exportable commodities such as maize, sorghum and millets, ground-nuts, sim-sim, cotton, peas, beans and rice, the last mentioned to satisfy local demand.<sup>(65)</sup>

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57. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., Table 64, no page.

R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.146, gives the 1920 maize export figure as £113 973.

58. S.H. Frankel, op.cit.

59. R.D. Wolff, op.cit., p.84.

60. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.377. Lord Cranworth, Kenya Chronicles (1939), p.300, puts the highest figure fetched by flax at £800 per ton, estimating the f.o.b. costs at £150 per ton.

61. See Appendix 7.

62. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.124.

63. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1920/21, Col.no.1122, p.15.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

Disturbing the euphoria of high prices for settler-grown agricultural commodities came changes in the currency, which up till this time had been based on the Indian rupee. In the post-war monetary upheaval,<sup>(66)</sup> the value of the rupee changed from its original value of 1s.4d. to 1s.6d. at the beginning of 1919, and had risen to 2s.4d. by December 1919, at which time its value was checked by legislation. As part of the Administration's policy of stabilising the currency, the value of the rupee was reduced to 2s. as from 31 March 1920.<sup>(67)</sup>

Thus the producer who sold commodities in London and was paid in sterling received approximately only half as many rupees as previously. His costs in the colony remained the same; therefore, he needed to sell twice as much produce in order to pay interest on a bank overdraft.<sup>(68)</sup> As C.C. Wrigley has pointed out, farmers were 'saddled with a 50 per cent increase in their indebtedness'.<sup>(69)</sup> The problems of new settlers were also compounded by the new exchange rates when they brought in capital. Sir Edward Northey, on a London visit at the end of 1919, had relevant discussions with the Colonial Office on this point. A solution to the currency problem - The Currency Notes Ordinance, 1920 - provided for the issue of currency notes by the East African Currency Board in denominations of florins and pounds at a rate of ten florins to one pound. Understandably, there was initial confusion amongst the Africans 'to whom a paper currency [was] entirely unsuitable'.<sup>(70)</sup>

Northey's London talks also covered the need for new forms of taxation - on land and cattle - in addition to existing railway surcharges and increased freights.<sup>(71)</sup> Nevertheless, taxation on white settlers continued to remain 'indirect'. Meanwhile, the Hut Tax on Africans had risen to eight rupees by mid-1920. Although no figures are available, this tax not only contributed hugely to colonial revenue, but was also used as a means to induce labour to 'come out' to work. Archdeacon Owen (of Kavirondo) stated in this connection that 'compulsion by taxation is not properly economic taxation, but direct compulsion'.<sup>(72)</sup>

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66. Britain abandoned the gold standard in 1914.

67. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1919/20, Col.no.1089, p.5.

68. E. Huxley, *op.cit.*, p.72.

69. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.234.

70. East African Standard, 1 November 1919. See Appendix 8.

71. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1921, Col.no.1153, p.15.

72. East African Standard, 4 September 1920.

By the middle of 1920, despite the humanitarian and ecclesiastical outcry, there were renewed injunctions on compulsory labour from the Colonial Secretary, Lord Milner. On this occasion, they concerned the provisions of the Native Authority Amendment Ordinance of 1919. This Ordinance dealt with paid African labour for the government, hence implying that labour was to be compulsory for government projects only. Reacting to the outcry, Lord Milner insisted that there was to be no compulsory labour for private purposes:

There is no question of force of compulsion, but only encouragement and advice through the native chiefs and headmen....It is my opinion that the Protectorate Government would be failing in its duty if it did not use all lawful and reasonable means to encourage the supply of labour for the settlers who have embarked on enterprises calculated to assist not only the Protectorate itself but also this country and other parts of the Empire by the production of raw materials which are in urgent demand. (73)

Archdeacon Owen responded by suggesting ways of encouraging labour other than through chiefs: the closure of trading centres in the reserves; discouragement of the growing of paying crops; and neglecting the maintenance of cart roads to discourage Indian traders.<sup>(74)</sup>

Early in 1921, Lord Milner was visited by a deputation composed mainly of clerics, which included the Archbishop of Canterbury. These men stressed:

...the grave danger to the Empire of laying upon its officers responsibility in the recruiting of native labour which would make them cease to be regarded by the natives as impartial judges and disinterested counsellors and friends. (75)

The deputation suggested the formation of a Royal Commission. A month later, the East African Standard published a Missionary Memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies calling for the implementation of the principles of trusteeship (enumerated not long before in Paris).<sup>(76)</sup>

73. East African Standard, 4 September 1920.

74. East African Standard, 11 September 1920. The discouragement of paying crops was a counter-productive and uncharacteristic suggestion from a churchman interested in promoting the welfare of his 'flock'.

75. East African Standard, 22 January 1921.

76. East African Standard, 19 February 1921.

It was pointed out shrewdly that forced labour would:

...check enterprise and ingenuity...and divert attention from the possibilities of progress through the introduction of labour-saving machinery, and thus to act as a bar to economic advance. (77)

This telling observation linked with subsequent appeals in the columns of the East African Standard for farmers to lower the costs of production in the prevailing economic climate; to share the use of agricultural implements; and to 'stay on shamba doing things in a proper farming way with a small number of boys'. (78)

Meanwhile, the onset of the post-war depression had begun to make itself felt. The combination of the lowered overseas prices for agricultural commodities and the local currency crisis, resulted in a reappraisal of wages paid to African labour. After many discussions at farmer's meetings, it was decided that if all settlers acted in concert it would be possible to reduce wages by one-third and hence contribute towards making export crops pay. (79) The Administration was sympathetic, and arranged to have district officers explain to chiefs and headmen about the altered value of the rupee and the issuance of the florin. Lord Delamere opined that it was not a wage reduction at all, but 'simply a return to the pre-war level'. (80) It was emphasized by the Convention of Associations that victimization of the Africans was not intended. (81) The moment, however, was an opportune one as there was an 'undoubted excess of labour over the demand in the country...and the planting season was over'. (82)

Wage reduction was but a part of the settlers' struggle to survive in a Kenya affected by the 1921/22 drop in world prices for primary produce:

We hung on with our teeth by selling land and other assets....Others, alas, with even less resources, fell by the way, and real poverty reared its ugly face. (83)

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77. East African Standard, 19 February 1921.

78. East African Standard, 9 April 1921.

79. East African Standard, 26 March 1921.

80. East African Standard, 23 April 1921.

81. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.108, describes the Convention of Associations as 'the so-called settlers' parliament'. It was based on a grouping of farmers' associations.

82. East African Standard, 23 April 1921.

83. Lord Cranworth, op.cit., p.303.

The price of coffee rose slightly on the London market,<sup>(84)</sup> but flax and sisal prices collapsed. Lord Cranworth was among those whose flax exports were affected:

...with amazing rapidity our fairy castle crumbled before our eyes. The price had been forced up so high that customers simply could not afford linen. ...The demand decreased weekly, and down, down, down went the price of flax even quicker than it had risen. (85)

The sisal price dropped from £96 per ton to £12 10s.0d., 'and yet [survived] albeit with a struggle'.<sup>(86)</sup>

In view of the bitter struggle for survival, the wage reduction, scheduled for 1 June 1921, was considered imperative. It was believed that Africans realised that 'the European was feeling the pressure',<sup>(87)</sup> but a letter from the Kikuyu Association showed this organisation to be against the wage reduction.<sup>(88)</sup> Farmers' Associations urged a standardization of wages, the feeling being that any farmer paying his labour at a higher rate would be 'letting the side down'; he would have no labour problems but would exacerbate the difficulties of his less affluent neighbours. Employers' overheads were indeed rising,<sup>(89)</sup> but it was more than ever necessary that good working conditions be provided. Jerry-built housing, 'bush' sanitation, 'disorganised' cooking facilities, lack of water and the absence of green food with the posho ration all came under the fire of very necessary criticism.<sup>(90)</sup> These factors indeed contributed to the unwillingness of labour to 'come out' to work.

In October 1921, Winston Churchill, who had succeeded Lord Milner as the Colonial Secretary, reviewed the colony's labour policy. The result was a series of changes. There was to be traditional unpaid labour by Africans in the reserves for the benefit of the reserves. In

84. East African Standard, 23 April 1921. The coffee price rose from £70 per ton in 1914 to £80 per ton in 1921.

85. Lord Cranworth, op.cit., p.300.

86. Ibid.

87. East African Standard, 7 May 1921.

88. East African Standard, 4 June 1921. The Kikuyu Association was composed of a group of leading Christian Kikuyu formed in mid-1920 to articulate grievances felt by them. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.227.

89. Blankets that used to cost Fls.1-50 now cost Fls.4-50. East African Standard, 4 June 1921.

90. East African Standard, 1 October 1921.



the case of private employers, there was to be voluntary labour only. Chiefs and administrative officers were to inculcate the value of work but were not to participate in recruiting labour. Compulsory paid labour was to remain in principle (on the Statute Book) yet was to be avoided 'except when absolutely necessary for essential services'.<sup>(91)</sup>

The railway extension to Uasin-Gishu was a case in point.<sup>(92)</sup> Labour for its construction fell under the category of 'essential services' and was duly exacted.<sup>(93)</sup> However, by July 1922, of the 12 000 'boys' needed, less than 5 000 were on site.<sup>(94)</sup> Concurrently, as a result of this labour drain, settlers had problems obtaining labour for vital crop harvesting. There appeared to be a critical level of labour extraction above which no cajoling or coercing would operate.

Wage reduction throughout most of 1922 was deemed a success and a saving, although some employers continued to side-step the consensus agreement.<sup>(95)</sup> Parallel with the reduction of wages, earlier moves towards a comparable reduction in hut and poll tax were continued, these moves being given a fillip by news of the reduction of hut tax in South African in May 1922.<sup>(96)</sup> The subsequent hut tax reduction in Kenya was triggered by a strike in Nairobi on behalf of Harry Thuku. In June, a great baraza was held in Central Kavirondo at which a hut tax reduction to Fls.6/- was announced by the Chief Native Commissioner.<sup>(97)</sup>

At the same baraza, the Chief Native Commissioner made public the government's wish that despite the usefulness of the reduction in customs and freights on the traditional African exports of hides and skins, 'the natives should increase their production of marketable

91. East African Standard, 15 October 1921.

92. Such was the slowness of progress that wheat was seen to be rotting at Uasin-Gishu in 1921 for want of transport from farms 'away' from the line. East African Standard, 9 April 1921.

93. This was in terms of the Native Authority Ordinance of 1922, which allowed the use of compulsory paid labour for sixty days per annum for works sanctioned by the Secretary of State. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.615.

94. The extreme cold at the high altitude was to blame; there were more labourers when the lower parts of the line were built. East African Standard, 22 July 1922.

95. Wage reduction was one of the factors contributing to Contemporary African unrest. S.M. Lind Holmes, Harry Thuku and the Emergence of African Nationalism in Kenya, unp. Honours Long Essay, 1978, p.31.

96. East African Standard, 13 May 1922.

97. East African Standard, 3 June 1922. A baraza was a large tribal meeting usually called for some exposition of policy or to make an announcement.

[Food] crops'.<sup>(98)</sup> It was suggested that an Agricultural Department pamphlet - to be translated into Kiswahili - be utilised in an effort to up-date African agricultural methods.<sup>(99)</sup>

Even before the arrival of the British, 'fully integrated economic structures existed within and...among the African tribes...based on agriculture or livestock'.<sup>(100)</sup> In the years before the First World War, Africans had begun to follow the British settlers' example: bullock ploughing was noticed in the Kikuyu reserve, possibly learnt from the Kabete Agricultural Farm founded in 1907.<sup>(101)</sup> The year 1912 saw the opening of the Church of Scotland Mission workshop for the technical education of Africans; and seven 'agriculturals' were among the first pupils.<sup>(102)</sup> The first budgetary provision for African agriculture - less than £2 000 - was made in 1918.<sup>(103)</sup> In 1920 it was noted that African reserve production was starting to drop.<sup>(104)</sup> Two years later, six European officers and fifteen African assistants were recruited 'to encourage the cultivation of such exportable crops as cotton, rice, sim-sim, ground-nuts, maize and beans'.<sup>(105)</sup>

Before the encouragement of the production of exportable crops, trading had been carried on in the reserves. L.J. Wood noted the presence of rural markets only in agricultural parts of the country.<sup>(106)</sup> These markets, according to Hailey, were 'largely in the hands of women who freely [exchanged] their surplus products without the need for any licence or permit'.<sup>(107)</sup> The selling of imported goods was in the hands of men. The later commerce in exportable products was conducted by Indian traders.<sup>(108)</sup>

Until the arrival of the new Governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, African agriculture had been fairly actively discouraged for fear of a

98. East African Standard, 3 June 1922.

99. It is surmised that this directive applied only to Central Kavirondo. There was no general encouragement of new methods until the arrival of Governor Sir Robert Coryndon later in the year.

100. R.D. Wolff, op.cit., p.89.

101. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.51; and Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.949.

102. East African Standard, 23 March 1912.

103. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.94.

104. Ibid., p.110.

105. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.294.

106. L.J. Wood, 'Population Density and Rural Market Provision', Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, Vol.XIV, 1974, p.717.

107. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.421.

108. Ibid.

labour shortage,<sup>(109)</sup> and competition with white agriculture.<sup>(110)</sup> Sir Robert, despite his South African origins and settler sympathies, '... laid down a policy of active encouragement for agricultural production in the African areas and instituted training schools'.<sup>(111)</sup> Before 1922, therefore, most African shambas - or gardens - were run along the customary lines of shifting cultivation which varied little among settled African tribes.<sup>(112)</sup> J.F. Lipscomb described this as being 'almost always profligate of natural resources'.<sup>(113)</sup> Lugard, quoting the words of a Mr. Thompson, Director of Forests in Nigeria, noted that in this form of agriculture:

...the acreage of land taken up for cultivation is from five to six times in excess of the requirements of the cultivator under a less wasteful system. <sup>(114)</sup>

However, the system appeared to work in with the ecology of the area inhabited. Provided there was sufficient land and not too large a population, it functioned perfectly adequately for subsistence farmers - as long as the balance was not upset during the absence of the men working for white settlers.<sup>(115)</sup>

Superficially, African gardens might appear to be the 'careless muddle' referred to earlier.<sup>(116)</sup> More closely examined, however, they were a masterpiece of adaptation to the environment. For example, the Kara tribe, who lived on an island in Lake Victoria, practised a three-crop rotation. After manure had been dug in, they sowed bullrush millet which is 'a slow-growing leguminosa which [took] nine months to produce a crop of nine tons of green matter per acre'.<sup>(117)</sup> This green manure was then dug in, and in the second year millet was again sown but this time interplanted with ground-nuts. A third sowing of millet followed a year later, interplanted with sorghum or cassava.<sup>(118)</sup> In contrast to the Kara were the Chagga, who occupied the southern and eastern

109. A.G. Church, op.cit., p.87.

110. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.94; and N. Leys, Kenya (1968), p.76.

111. A.M. MacPhee, Kenya (1968), p.76.

112. The reference here is to 'sedentary' tribes rather than 'nomadic' ones.

113. J.F. Lipscomb, op.cit., p.47.

114. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.237.

115. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.127.

116. Vide supra, p.23.

117. E.S. Clayton, Agrarian Development in Peasant Economies: Some Lessons from Kenya (1964), p.64.

118. Ibid.

slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. Their staple food was the banana 'which also [provided] fodder for cattle and thatching for houses'.<sup>(119)</sup>

Bananas were therefore the main crop which did not permit rotation, but on lower slopes there were 'smaller plots of maize and millet for brewing beer'.<sup>(120)</sup> Manure came from stall-fed cattle kept in the family dwelling.

L.S.B. Leakey has noted the agricultural methods of the Kikuyu: these applied with minuscule regional changes to other settled cultivators. On a set acre of ground:

He plants over the whole area maize, beans of two kinds and tree peas. In planting these, the maize and tree pea seeds are put in first, irregularly, all over the plot, and in a few days - when the seedlings have appeared - the two varieties of beans are planted, again quite irregularly, in the gaps between the maize and pea seedlings. In a few days, the bean seedlings also appear, and then cuttings of sweet potato vine are put in all among the growing seedlings of the various other crops. <sup>(121)</sup>

The beans grew faster than the other plants, and so the farmer harvested these, leaving the slower maize and the sweet potato vine which gradually covered the ground. This prevented erosion or soil-loss during heavy thunderstorms, and prevented the hot sun from drying up the soil.<sup>(122)</sup> Once the dry season is almost over,

...the tree-peas are harvested, but instead of being uprooted they are roughly pruned and left to stand during the succeeding short rains when they flower a second time....With the coming of the short rains, a second plot of ground - which had been prepared for planting during the dry season - is planted very much in the same way as before only the tree-pea is replaced by eleusine and millet. <sup>(123)</sup>

It can be clearly understood that if this system were used on ridged or hilly land by a number of men, with each wife planting separately for her own children,<sup>(124)</sup> the result could indeed be anathema to the tidy

119. Ibid., p.65.

120. Ibid.

121. L.S.B. Leakey, Kenya: Contrasts and Problems (1936), p.119. N. Leys, op.cit., p.40, quoted from G.H. Wilson, who noted that 'planting is done by dropping a couple of seeds into a little hollow made by the toes in the ground, and then covering them over and pressing them in with the foot'.

122. L.S.B. Leakey, op.cit., p.120.

123. Ibid., p.121.

124. Vide supra, p.23.

English farmer accustomed to neat fields on gentle slopes.

The Englishman would have had to scare away greedy birds but not wild animals. In this connection, N. Leys, has quoted G.H. Wilson who observed:

Night and day the fields must be watched, from the sowing in November or December until the maize is safely stored at the end of May. Baboons and monkeys are ever on the watch to sneak in by day. Wild pigs may swarm in by night. Then as the grain forms and ripens, birds must be scared away. One night or one day may be long enough to destroy most of the crops if the villagers neglect to watch. (125)

These hazards pertained also, obviously, when exportable crops were grown, using 'civilised' methods.

From 1922 onwards, then, African agriculturists were encouraged to raise cash crops, because the prices and quantities of their previous export commodities had dropped so conspicuously.<sup>(126)</sup> This is evident in Table 2 below. These figures typified the smaller part played by African agriculture in the 1920s.<sup>(127)</sup> Raised railway freights had contributed to this decline, but the export tax on hides had been abolished as recommended in the Annual Report.<sup>(128)</sup>

TABLE 2 <sup>(129)</sup>		
SELECTED AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS, 1916 and 1922		
	1916	1922
Exports of sesame (sim-sim)	3 701 tons	150 tons
Value of sesame	£ 29 000	£1 200
Exports of maize	9 997 tons	1 100 tons
Value of maize	£287 000	£4 000
Exports of hides	794 tons	3 tons
Value of hides	£ 63 000	£ 300

125. N. Leys, op.cit., p.40.

126. Once Africans began to produce in excess of subsistence they formed, for Marxist writers, a true peasantry. J.M. Lonsdale, 'Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa', Journal of African History, Vol.IX (1968), p.123.

127. C.C. Wrigley notes the following percentage contribution to agricultural exports of African production:

1912/13: African production formed 70% of exports

1928 : African production formed less than 20% of exports.

128. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1922, Col.no.1188, p.9.

129. N. Leys, op.cit., p.205.

A Colonial Office Minute of November 1922 set forth the decision 'to let European agriculture fend for itself and concentrate on developing native production'.<sup>(130)</sup> This announcement cannot have been welcomed by white settlers who had long been worried at the prospect of African competition - especially in coffee-growing - and the loss of potential labour working its own land.<sup>(131)</sup> A strongly-worded and knowledgeable letter from Archdeacon Owen of Kavirondo urged 'the utmost development of native mass production' as being 'essential to the success of the colony'. Reasons given for this included, inter alia, the fact that a certain proportion of Africans preferred shamba life to reserve life; that young unmarried men who had no recognized plot of land to cultivate would not be willing to work on family cultivation while parents 'pocketed the proceeds of the crop'; that some would prefer 'the certainty of a regular wage to the varying fortune of the seasons'; and that with the encouragement of African production, there would be an increase in African wealth and a raising of the standard of living in the reserves.<sup>(132)</sup>

The Archdeacon called for mutual co-operation, explaining that the 'native problem' was a problem for Africans as well: 'The natives are beginning to tackle it and to press for an adequate expenditure from their taxation on agriculture in the Reserves.'<sup>(133)</sup> This exposition of attitude could have served to calm settlers' fears;<sup>(134)</sup> but it was also an extremely clear indictment of the use to which hut and poll tax had been put over the years, in contributing so largely to Colony solvency and so minimally to medical, housing, transport and agricultural development in the reserves.

Settlers' financial worries were fortunately cushioned at about this time by the introduction of high import tariffs to protect local farming, which facilitated the development of 'English-style stock and arable farming'.<sup>(135)</sup> Further comfort came to settlers in 1922 with

130. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.294.

131. Seven hundred coffee farms in 1922 employed an average of 35 000 African labourers. R.D. Wolff, op.cit., p.78.

132. East African Standard, 4 November 1922.

133. East African Standard, 4 November 1922.

134. At this time there was a tightening-up of labour contract regulations and a legal decision on the 30-day calendar month as a unit of measure of employment. East African Standard, 19 August 1922, 23 September 1922.

135. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya (1968), p.290.

Churchill's assurance on white settlement in the Highlands:

We consider that we are pledged by undertakings given in the past to reserve the Highlands of East Africa exclusively for European settlers, and we do not intend to depart from that pledge. (136)

Prior to this, there had been fears that Indian settlement might be allowed in the Highlands. At this time, Indians were, for the most part, involved in the Colony as traders, but some had been settled in the Kibos agricultural area since 1904.<sup>(137)</sup> Others had farms near the coast, characteristically close to trading centres.

Indians were clearly aware of the unused potential of farmlands in the Highlands. This is evident in an article written in 1923 by one of them, Mangal Das, after an extensive motor tour of the colony:

The sight of all those beautiful rich lands lying waste and producing nothing filled one with despair. There were indeed small patches of cultivated land which from a distance looked like having been ripped up by a bad golfer. (138)

There is a distinct possibility that this referred to vacant farms owned by absentee landlords and cultivated by squatters - a relic of earlier dummyming perhaps or of settler bankruptcy in hard times.

White alarm for 'their' land took the form of anti-Indian lobbying and pressure; but Churchill's pledge in 1922, and the Duke of Devonshire's White Paper in 1923, indicated a clarification of Colonial Office opinion and the start of a changed trend in policy.<sup>(139)</sup> The previous emphasis on the paramountcy of white interests, as expounded by Northey in 1918, was replaced by the concept of black paramountcy, with the primary duty of government being the advancement of the African.<sup>(140)</sup> From 1923 onwards, the new Dual Policy aimed to foster European and African agricultural development equally.<sup>(141)</sup> This linked, too, with a renewed awareness of the League of Nations'

136. Lord Altrincham (formerly Sir Edward Grigg), Kenya's Opportunity (1955), pp.31-32.

137. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.91.

138. East African Standard, 9 April 1921.

139. The Duke of Devonshire replaced Winston Churchill as Colonial Secretary in October 1922.

140. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1923, Col.no.1227, p.6.

141. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.44.

principles of trusteeship.<sup>(142)</sup>

With the publication of the White Paper, there was expressed 'a need to educate and promote the economic development of the African population'.<sup>(143)</sup> At a great baraza held in Kisumu, in March 1923, the new Governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, stressed the need to encourage African production in toto, and especially that of maize, cotton, ghes, rice, sim-sim, beans and ground-nuts. At Fort Hall, Coryndon referred to work on European shambas as 'a most valuable educative factor'.<sup>(144)</sup>

Despite the closure, for reasons of economy, of the Agricultural Farm at Kabete in 1923, it was in this year that a separate staff for the development of African agriculture was created: 'The work done consisted of direct instruction from native cultivators and the maintenance of small demonstration plots.'<sup>(145)</sup> These were later abandoned in favour of the establishment of large seed farms.<sup>(146)</sup> Nevertheless, there was now a serious government commitment to promote African agriculture, no matter what this might mean in the way of labour problems for white settlers.

For these settlers, the year 1923 marked the beginning of an upswing in their fortunes. A large maize crop was expected, and prospects looked promising for coffee planters with bushes about to be in full berry.<sup>(147)</sup> The hope was expressed at the Annual General Meeting of the British East Africa Farmers' Association that labour would be forthcoming when needed. As a precaution against the possibility that labour might not 'come out' at the vital time, and in view of the fact that there had been a decrease in the number of labour units employed in the six months ending 30 June 1922, there was talk of the need for exercising greater economy in the use and management of African labour.<sup>(148)</sup> Labour unit figures published in the Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture are self-explanatory: 53 709 in 1920; 67 388 in 1921; and 61 949 in 1922.<sup>(149)</sup> From the African viewpoint, wages remained low: for example, Shs.8 per month for an unskilled worker

142. E. Huxley, East Africa (1941), p.41.

143. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.293.

144. East African Standard, 24 March 1923.

145. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.964.

146. Ibid.

147. East African Standard, 2 June 1923.

148. East African Standard, 16 June 1923.

149. East African Standard, 1 September 1923.



in Koru. Aware of government encouragement of their agriculture, it is easy to see that this kind of wage offered little incentive to the Africans, even if bonuses were paid, as was the case in the Thika district.<sup>(150)</sup>

The problems faced by the white coffee planters were high-lighted in the East African Standard:

The coffee industry is one of peculiar difficulty. The whole of the crop ripens within a few weeks and for a short period there exists an abnormal demand for labour. The work is not heavy, and the picking of the cherry has been accomplished in many instances by women and children receiving a flat rate remuneration based on the piece-work accomplished. <sup>(151)</sup>

By the end of 1923, a large white-grown coffee crop was ready for picking, but little labour was forthcoming. At Ruiru:

Planters are at their wits' end as to what they are to do to gather in the valuable coffee berries, paying panic prices for picking....The casual local labour is hopelessly independent and uncertain, and for the reason that harvests and Hut and Poll Tax have already been paid. <sup>(152)</sup>

Ruiru was considered to be in an unfortunate geographical position because it was rather far from the closely-settled Thika district. In addition, the demand for labour was accentuated by the large-scale development of coffee plantations.

Figures read out at a Ruiru Farmers' Association meeting showed that 400-500 tons of coffee valued at £40 000 remained to be picked in that district alone. For this purpose, 5 000 to 6 000 casual labourers would be needed over a brief period.<sup>(153)</sup> At N'gong and M'bagathu plantations, there were 1 575 acres of coffee in need of picking, but labour was short.<sup>(154)</sup>

The shortage was blamed on the timing of the collection of hut and poll tax. It was suggested that the Administration change this so that Africans still needed money to pay their taxes and/or that government should 'encourage' labour to 'come out' to prevent the loss

150. East African Standard, 21 July 1923.

151. East African Standard, 1 December 1923.

152. East African Standard, 1 December 1923.

153. East African Standard, 8 December 1923.

154. East African Standard, 8 December 1923.

of the coffee crop.<sup>(155)</sup> It was later noted that the availability of labour at Ruiru did improve, but that much coffee was lost in the crisis period from late October to early November.<sup>(156)</sup>

Coffee exports rose from 72 000 tons in 1919/20 to 90 000 tons in 1922/23. Sisal exports rose in the same period from 5 000 to 7 000 tons; maize from 316 000 tons to 518 000 tons; and wheat from 10 000 tons to 38 000 tons.<sup>(157)</sup>

The post-war years in Kenya brought to the surface all the pressures and tensions of the struggling colony. As will be seen, the resolution or continuation of these pressures depended above all upon the extent to which the labour crisis was alleviated.

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155. East African Standard, 15 December 1923.

156. East African Standard, 15 December 1923.

157. See Appendix 7.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PRESSURES OF RAPID EXPANSION, 1924-1929

...we have been inclined to regard the labourer as a plant - a rare orchid or a noxious weed according to our varying individual outlooks - which will react theoretically to certain conditions and grow or be retarded accordingly.

East African Standard, 1 June 1927.

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By 1924, many of Kenya's short-term post-war problems had faded, save the residual effects of the Ex-Soldier Settlement Scheme and the hardy perennial, labour. The post-war boom had come and gone in 1919/20; the 1921/22 depression, 'which had served as the first intimation that the global context for Africa's trade and production had altered since 1914', was over.<sup>(1)</sup> The year 1923 brought with it a slight upswing in the colony's economic fortunes which was to be continued, though not necessarily consistently, until the latter part of 1929.

The period 1924-1929 was typified by an evaluation of ideals, by the scrutiny of the practical implementation of these, by attempts at settler dominance, by the government's invocation of duty as the motivation of African labour and by the hard facts behind economic survival in a world where:

...lurked longer term effects of the war which dampened demand for raw materials and food supplies in European markets, and prevented African trade in the 1920s from attaining the rate of growth it had achieved between 1896 and 1914. (2)

The changed economic balance of this period saw Britain's abandonment of free trade and her continued preoccupation with imperial preference. After the brief depression of 1921/22, there was an upward movement in commodity prices. This was not consistent throughout the commodity range but varied from one product to another, so that while the output or price obtained for one product might rise, for another these indices might decline. Factors governing these differences could vary according

1. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.124.

2. Ibid., p.125.

to external demand or local conditions of production. These included availability of labour,<sup>(3)</sup> incidence of rainfall (or lack of it) and the deprivations of a variety of insect pests.

The upswing of 1923 set the trend for the mid-1920s. Coffee exports in 1924 weighed 160 000 cwt. and were valued at £799 000 as against 139 000 cwt. valued at £491 000 in 1923.<sup>(4)</sup> The 1922 and 1923 figures for sisal were approximately the same: 8 000 cwt. was exported in both years. However, the fall in the price of sisal was evident in the value of these exports: £259 000 and £236 000 respectively for these years.<sup>(5)</sup> The 1924 sisal exports rose by 52 000 cwt. and were valued at £398 000.<sup>(6)</sup> The export of maize 'took off' in 1920, almost recovering to its 1914 export figure. By 1924, maize exports, weighing a record-breaking 1 144 000 cwt. and valued at £381 000, were on their way even higher but tended to fluctuate every few years.<sup>(7)</sup> The export of hides rose by 12 000 cwt. from 1923 to 1924, while the value rose by £87 000.<sup>(8)</sup> Raw cotton, which had done well in 1921,<sup>(9)</sup> collapsed in 1923 and 1924 with exports of 600 cwt. and 2 000 cwt. valued at £3 000 and £12 000.<sup>(10)</sup> This crop, like maize, tended to fluctuate in export quantity as commodity prices varied in the world market.

From the viewpoint of the inhabitants of Kenya, 1924 was a year of 'below average' rainfall,<sup>(11)</sup> contrasting with the 'phenomenally heavy' rains in April and May 1923.<sup>(12)</sup> As the 1923 coffee crop had been affected by a shortage of labour, plans were made to prevent a repetition of this with the greatly-increased yields expected in the future: a two-fold increase in 1926 and a three-fold increase by 1930.<sup>(13)</sup>

3. Disease played a part in this, quite apart from disinclination to work.
4. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1927, Col.no.1425, p.61. The 1922 output of coffee had been 78 000 cwt. valued at £280 000. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., Table 64, no page.
5. S.H. Frankel, op.cit.
6. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1927, Col.no.1425, p.61.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. 1 600 cwt. valued at £18 700. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., Table 64, no page.
10. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1927, Col.no.1425, p.61.
11. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1924, Col.no.1282, p.17.
12. East African Standard, 16 February 1924.
13. East African Standard, 16 February 1924.

The labour shortage had led to increased wages and the loss of part of the coffee crop. To complicate matters:

...planters [did] not insist on their labour maintaining a standard quality in picking because they [were] apprehensive that the labour [would] leave work and go elsewhere. Consequently the labour [was] permitted to pick under-ripe and over-ripe coffee, which [lowered] the quality of the marketable article very considerably, and [had] a damaging effect on Kenya coffee generally. (14)

To many planters, the answer to unforthcoming labour was a change in the date of hut and poll tax collection. Repeated requests for this were initially ignored because the Treasury insisted that 'the tax must be collected at such time as will permit it to be included in the yearly balance sheet on December 31st'. (15)

Despite planters' claims of large wage pay-outs, (16) it was wondered at the Annual General Meeting of the Kikuyu Province Labour Recruiting Association if low wages were a factor contributing to the poor labour turn-out. (17) Labour was also said to be more 'sophisticated'. (18) Farmers, urged over the years to make better use of available labour, appeared at last to have made an effort to do so. A government department reported that:

...better use is made of labour than was formerly the case, due to economy in management and increased experience in the handling of unskilled labour. There is also a steady increase in the efficiency of the labourers. (19)

This could have been due, inter alia, to a new awareness of workers' diet. A daily ration of two pounds of posho for casual labour was considered to be insufficient, and additions to this from workers' wages or to be supplied by the employer were recommended. (20)

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14. East African Standard, 16 February 1924.

15. East African Standard, 8 November 1924.

16. East African Standard, 15 March 1924. The average coffee planter's total wage bill ranged between £75 and £100 per month.

17. East African Standard, 23 February 1924.

18. East African Standard, 19 July 1924. Labourers were said to have 'played one farm off against another' in order to raise wages.

19. East African Standard, 20 October 1924.

20. East African Standard, 5 January 1924. A squatter living on the same farm as employed casual labour was usually better nourished because he had a more varied diet.

Concomitant with increased labour requirements, and presumably also a contributory cause of these, was a large increase in areas under cultivation by settlers. In some cases these:

...[had] practically doubled and there [was] an increasing attention to crops of a type that [required] large numbers of labour at definite periods of the year. (21)

Amongst these were the white-owned coffee shambas whose occupiers were determined to prevent Africans from competing by growing their own coffee. Maize and sisal plantations were also greatly expanded, but demands from sisal growers were different from maize and coffee planters.

Coryndon's encouragement of African production did not come up against the coffee-growing barrier as this was not one of the crops recommended as suitable for African cultivation. However, it became clear towards the end of 1924 that the African knew:

...that he was under no obligation to any white man after he [had] paid his tax, and that he had the opportunity through increased cultivation in his reserve to earn the money and avoid coming out at all. (22)

To the personal unwillingness of Africans to work on white-owned farms must be added the fact that the construction of the Thika-Nyeri railway-line took approximately 6 000 workers off the labour market at a time when they were sorely needed in agriculture.<sup>(23)</sup> Furthermore, wages offered by white farmers held out no temptation vis-à-vis those offered by professional labour recruiters.<sup>(24)</sup>

With this unpromising labour situation before him, and nudged continually by settler demands for closer links with other East African territories, Coryndon assured members of the Legislative Council that he was consulting with the Colonial Office regarding the movement of labour between the East African dependencies. He did not think that

21. East African Standard, 20 October 1924. The reference here is clearly to the growing of coffee and maize which required a large labour force at harvest time, and relatively few labourers during the rest of the year.

22. East African Standard, 23 October 1924. The settlers, sensing potential competition, objected to Africans using experience gained on white-owned plantations to grow their own coffee. Using the excuse of the possible spread of plant disease, the settlers successfully pressured Governor Belfield to prohibit Africans from growing coffee. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.291.

23. East African Standard, 26 April 1924.

24. East African Standard, 23 February 1924.

government encouragement of African agricultural production would have 'an adverse effect on the supply of voluntary labour outside the reserve if measures and safeguards...already indicated were taken and observed'. None the less, five weeks later, the British government announced its refusal to permit labour from Tanganyika Territory to be recruited for Kenya: it 'informed the Mandates Commission that it had decided not to recruit natives from any mandated territory'.<sup>(25)</sup>

A Labour government had come to power in Britain in 1924. In order to investigate the economic possibilities regarding the closer East African links favoured by settlers as a partial solution to their labour problems, the Secretary of State, J.H. Thomas, appointed a Parliamentary Committee in July 1924. This East Africa Commission, as it came to be known, was under the chairmanship of Major William Ormsby-Gore.<sup>(26)</sup> The other commissioners were J.A. Calder of the Colonial Office, F.C. Linfield and A.G. Church, two members of Parliament.<sup>(27)</sup>

This Commission was but one of many appointed during the latter half of the 1920s. In this regard, Lord Cranworth observed:

There descended upon the land at this time an almost unbroken series of Government Commissions and Committees...well-intentioned, and by no means all served no useful purpose. <sup>(28)</sup>

The East Africa Commission, according to Lord Cranworth, was one of the 'useful' ones. Indeed, its findings continued to be of interest after the subsequent return of the Conservative Party to power later in 1924.<sup>(29)</sup>

An examination of the commissioners' route and time-table provoked local comment that the Commission's appraisal could only be 'very cursory'. Only one day was to be spent in each centre, and the tour was to last under four weeks.<sup>(30)</sup> The 'cursory' nature of the Commission's work is all the more evident when note is made of the wide terms of reference: 'to consider and report on the measures to be taken to accelerate the economic development of the British East African

25. East African Standard, 28 June 1924.

26. Major Ormsby-Gore later became Colonial Secretary.

27. A.G. Church, op.cit., p.11.

28. Lord Cranworth, op.cit., p.304.

29. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.126.

30. East African Standard, 1 November 1924. The tour covered only the white Highlands; no coastal belt districts were included in the itinerary.

dependencies'. This included closer co-ordination of policy, and the improvement of conditions for Africans.<sup>(31)</sup>

Despite the 'cursory' label on their efforts, the commissioners would appear to have made a remarkably comprehensive examination of the Colony. There were comments, inter alia, on the insecurity felt by Africans regarding land;<sup>(32)</sup> the cultivation of cotton ('the most important product'); the incidence of malaria (no mosquito extermination had yet been undertaken); and the 'disaster' of soil erosion.<sup>(33)</sup> In addition, there were found to be few roads to feed the railways, in particular, a lack of 'metalled roads, to withstand torrential rain and great daily extremes of temperature'.<sup>(34)</sup>

Furthermore, Church commented on the fact that existing government policy was too much influenced by settlers,<sup>(35)</sup> and that complaints about labour were 'loudest where there were the largest numbers of white settlers'.<sup>(36)</sup> With regard to labour, the commissioners reported:

We were not satisfied that there was any great reluctance on the part of natives to leave their villages or reserves to work for the white man. ...Many of them are unfeignedly glad to be free ...of the restraints exercised by their elders and chiefs....We were informed that the long journey was the modern equivalent of the former adventure of tribal warfare. (37)

It was soon realised that settler antipathy to African cultivation was rooted in the belief that it might result in labour shortage, rather than the possible transmission of plant disease.

A solution to settlers' labour difficulties had long been the use of squatter labour.<sup>(38)</sup> Squatters formed a convenient and

31. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1924, Col.no.1282, p.3.

32. 'At every meeting we had with the natives, there was evidence of a feeling of insecurity as regards the tenure of their lands. The legal position appears to be that no individual native and no native tribe as a whole has any right to land in the Colony which can be recognised by the Courts.' Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.369.

33. A.G. Church, op.cit., pp.62-63.

34. Ibid., p.78.

35. Ibid., p.83.

36. Ibid., p.159.

37. Ibid., p.161.

38. Squatters were members of African families who had originally lived on, or had later been moved onto, land alienated to white settlers.



inexpensive labour force; their wages were minimal (less than casual labour) because they were entitled to run cattle and grow crops on their employer's land. The employer took part of this crop as payment for the use of the land.<sup>(39)</sup> If he was a 'good' employer, he would supplement cash wages and posho with meat, and would provide material for hut construction.<sup>(40)</sup> If the employer was a 'bad' one, the squatter 'lived wretchedly'.<sup>(41)</sup> Squatters, debarred by the agricultural holdings law from owning land, had little interest in planting permanent crops, despite the fact that some of them were right-holders.<sup>(42)</sup>

By 1925, it was clear that some form of contract with employers was necessary. A Resident Natives Bill had been prepared in 1916, but had been opposed because it limited the number of families allowed on one farm to fifteen.<sup>(43)</sup> In 1918, the Resident Native Labourers Ordinance was passed, requiring that adult men living on farms should work for not less than 180 days per annum for the farmer on whose land they lived; that they should return to the reserves when no longer employed as resident labourers; and that farmers could have as many resident labourers as they needed, providing magisterial permission had been given to district commissioners to allow such men to work.<sup>(44)</sup>

Legal argument in this context between 1918 and 1925 related to an attempt to put the resident labour system under the Master and Servant Ordinance by adding to the latter a clause regarding written contracts for five- to seven-year work periods. In 1924, the 1918 Ordinance was amended after a Supreme Court ruling that a squatter was a tenant and not a servant. In the following year, a new Resident Native Labourers Ordinance was passed, and approved by the Colonial Secretary.<sup>(45)</sup> The object of this Ordinance was:

...to encourage resident native labour on farms

39. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.107.

40. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.129.

41. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.347.

42. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country (1967), p.35.

43. 'The local press observed that farms needed more than fifteen men and the government was discouraging enterprising work-seekers.'  
A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.95.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p.130. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya: 1919-1939 (1975), p.254, opined that the 1925 Resident Native Labour Ordinance was 'as ineffective as that of 1918', as the squatter was 'still not bound by the Native Registration Ordinance although his obligations had increased'.

and to take measures for the regulation of squatting or living of natives in places other than those appointed for them by the Government and for the preservation of law and order amongst such natives. (46)

A definition of the squatters' position had become more than ever necessary owing to the enormous increase in the number of cattle they owned.

These cattle not only brought disease into the settlers' herds,<sup>(47)</sup> but their large numbers contributed to the severe erosion which developed when soil, bared of all grass, was at the mercy of wind and water.<sup>(48)</sup> To remedy this situation, a Crop Production and Livestock Ordinance was passed in 1926. This dealt, inter alia, with 'the disposal of surplus and undesirable livestock and also [with] the limiting [of] the number of stock to be carried in any one area'.<sup>(49)</sup>

In spite of the presence of squatters on many farms, settlers still had labour difficulties, particularly those agriculturists whose seasonal demands during harvest time required a short, sharp increase in workers.<sup>(50)</sup> The Economic and Finance Committee in 1925 made suggestions regarding labour use including, inter alia, that coffee planters should limit acreage and intensify the crop yield through the use of manure;<sup>(51)</sup> that Africans should be taught to pick with two hands; that oxen and mechanical appliances be used, so that more labour was available for picking.<sup>(52)</sup>

Sisal planters had heeded earlier warnings on the need for better

46. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1925, Col.no.1321, p.5.
47. 'Witch-doctors' influenced reserve inhabitants against having their cattle inoculated against various endemic diseases and thus undermined the work of the veterinary department. East African Standard, 6 December 1924.
48. In 1923, there had been 82 000 squatter cattle; by 1926, there were 112 000. This state of affairs pertained particularly in the reserves. East African Standard, 30 October 1926.
49. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1925, Col.no.1321, p.6. Included in this legislation was also 'the power to prohibit trading in produce of inferior quality'. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.1470.
50. At the height of the 'flush' of coffee, 66 per cent to 500 per cent more labour was required. East African Standard, 31 January 1925.
51. In 1924, 7 010 acres were under coffee; in 1925, 7 746 acres and by 1927, 11 000 acres. East African Standard, 31 January 1925.
52. East African Standard, 21 February 1925. The Ruiru Farmers Association suggested that picking could be doubled by supplying workers with bags hung round their necks into which the coffee (then picked by both hands) would be placed.

labour organisation and better methods of payment, and consequently suffered no acute labour shortage. In the main, their labourers came from the Nyanza Province as the Kikuyu were not strong enough for the harvesting. Cutters were paid according to the number of leaves they cut per day (the average daily task was 2 000 leaves), and factory hands according to output. Labour streamlining was revealed in the following statistics: whereas 150 'boys' were required to handle 2 tons of fibre per day in 1920, only 100 'boys' were needed to perform the same task in 1925.<sup>(53)</sup> Further rationalization was achieved by using tractors on account of the high cost of draught oxen.<sup>(54)</sup> Moreover, the use of one tractor eliminated the need for fifty-seven 'boys' and teams of oxen,<sup>(55)</sup> and the use of one plough eliminated the need for 200 'boys'.<sup>(56)</sup>

Whether it was for private or government purposes, labour held the floor as the main problem of 1925. There was 'no control over the boys who had been to a mission' and 'a great deal of idle labour [was] in existence'.<sup>(57)</sup> Wages on some coffee plantations rose, in spite of Africans previously being considered 'not worth' the extra pay.<sup>(58)</sup> Concurrently, the hut and poll tax also rose to Shs.10 per annum, whereupon the coffee planters had little trouble obtaining labour.<sup>(59)</sup>

Encouragement of the use of casual daily labour was to be avoided by planters (according to the Coffee Planters' Union) as leaving them open to 'concerted action' by labour when Africans wanted to raise wages.<sup>(60)</sup> Accordingly, the Ruiru farmers, who had experienced picking problems previously, plumped for labour-saving devices rather than extra casual labour.<sup>(61)</sup>

The Colonial Secretary refused to grant 'general approval of compulsory labour', but permitted 'limited compulsory recruitment not exceeding 4 000 men [to be] dispersed at the earliest opportunity'.<sup>(62)</sup>

53. East African Standard, 21 February 1925.

54. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1925, Col.no.1321, p.15.

55. East African Standard, 24 April 1926.

56. East African Standard, 23 October 1926.

57. East African Standard, 14 March 1925.

58. East African Standard, 14 February 1925.

59. East African Standard, 2 May 1925.

60. East African Standard, 13 June 1925.

61. East African Standard, 27 June 1925.

62. East African Standard, 1 August 1925.

Thereafter, a White Paper was issued in August 1925 which opposed compulsory labour, except in so far as 'those who are compelled to give their labour understand the general utility of the works on which they are employed'.<sup>(63)</sup> In the House of Lords, the Earl of Balfour, as Lord President of the Council, emphasized how all development hung together:

When it is said that you are compelling the natives to serve on the railway, if the natives are to have any market for their produce, if our lessons in agriculture are to be of benefit to them if they are to learn how to cultivate their reserves and obtain ...a marketable surplus produce, all these things would be absolutely useless unless you give them the railway by your capital, by your knowledge, by your enterprise, by your designing and by your invention, all the slowly built up instruments of commercial civilisation which are the common property of civilised men, which they have in turn to give to the native, and which, surely, they have the right to ask the native to help them in conferring upon the community at large. <sup>(64)</sup>

It was further noted that the standard of work under any system of compulsion would be inferior to that of voluntary workers, as equally would be the physique of those employed.<sup>(65)</sup>

Further labour legislation in 1925 was included in the Master and Servant Amendment Ordinance. This set forth, *inter alia*, that the ratio of days of compulsory work to days of leave be fixed at five to two, and that desertion no longer be regarded as a cognisable offence.<sup>(66)</sup>

Steps taken in 1924 towards a greater recognition of the importance of the reserves (that is, the formation of Local Native Councils) were a further step forward in 1926. The demarcation of reserves, as recommended by the East Africa Commission, was formally gazetted.<sup>(67)</sup> 'Good progress' was made in the reserves, and lively interest shown in the 1926 extension of educational and medical facilities.<sup>(68)</sup>

Once an African in employment outside the reserves became ill,

63. East African Standard, 29 August 1925.

64. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.410.

65. East African Standard, 29 August 1925.

66. East African Standard, 18 April 1925.

67. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.748. This counter to the afore-mentioned feeling of 'insecurity' left 16 000 square miles for white occupation in the densely populated Highlands areas inhabited by Kikuyu and Kavirondo.

68. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1926, Col.no.1352, p.7.

however, the Native Labourers' (Medical Treatment) Rules came into effect. This made it 'incumbent upon employers...to maintain a supply of necessary medicines on their farms and to provide free medical treatment for their servants'.<sup>(69)</sup> Attitudes towards Africans generally had become more sympathetic, and it was noted that a senior officer of the Administration had begun to study African law and customs.<sup>(70)</sup>

Sir Robert Coryndon had died in February 1925. And with his death, the liberalization of the Administration, producing these sympathetic attitudes, received a considerable blow.<sup>(71)</sup> E.B. Denham became Acting Governor until the arrival in October of that year of Sir Edward Grigg.

The new Governor's attitude was revealed early in 1926, when a Conference of Governors of East African Territories was held to discuss the problems of African land tenure and white settlement.<sup>(72)</sup> Agreement emerged on the dual policy, and on the liberty of the African 'who must be free to choose the kind of work he may prefer....No obstacles should be placed in his way to sell his labour in the best market'. Assurances were made, furthermore, on the need of the African to be 'absolutely secure in the occupation of sufficient land for his own use'.<sup>(73)</sup> However, there were to be barazas where Africans were to be 'reminded of their responsibilities towards, and opportunities for work in, the settled areas of the colony'.<sup>(74)</sup>

A retrogressive step of this sort was countered by pressure from the Anti-Slavery Society and by the missions. It was clear, too, that Grigg was receiving less and less support from the Colonial Secretary, Amery.<sup>(75)</sup>

Arising from a contemporaneous Convention of Associations meeting was a call for a definite official labour policy to put an end to the inconsistencies of previous years.<sup>(76)</sup> This need had been triggered by suggestions that indentured labour be imported into Kenya.<sup>(77)</sup> It

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., p.8.

71. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.125.

72. East African Standard, 30 January 1926.

73. East African Standard, 20 February 1926.

74. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.125.

75. Ibid., p.126.

76. East African Standard, 27 February 1926.

77. In the past, Africans from other territories, Indians, Chinese and even Italians had been suggested in this connection.

was opined that the importation of labour would have to be strictly controlled or else chaos would result.<sup>(78)</sup> By September 1926, it was declared in an article in the East African Standard that such was the pace of growth that imported labour might well be essential: there was 'a seeming wave of prosperity', probably due to imported capital.<sup>(79)</sup> A.M. MacPhee noted that in these years capital 'began to flow in at the rate of £1 000 000 a year'.<sup>(80)</sup> In response to this, a leading article in the newspaper called for the formation of a Development Board.<sup>(81)</sup>

Government policy was simultaneously criticised as consisting 'very largely in a list of things which the Government shall not be called upon to do':

The Government attempts to administer the reserves by the use of a staff of white officials who, in the majority of cases know nothing of the natives, or even their language, and the natives know nothing of the mind of the officials. There is no real Native Authority; in many cases, the connecting link is a degenerate old chief who has long lost touch with the progress of the country and of his people. (82)

A comprehensive report from the Chief Native Commissioner was badly needed, but previous experience had found this official unhelpful and even evasive, sheltering behind his official position when confronted by settler queries.<sup>(83)</sup>

The Chief Native Commissioner, G.V. Maxwell, did in fact tour the reserves at the end of 1926. The report on his safari expressed his appreciation of the usefulness of the Local Native Councils, although some chiefs were 'hopelessly inefficient', in spite of their 'generous' increase in pay in 1925. Maxwell suggested extended tours by officials, and recommended their being re-posted to the same areas for longer periods in order to get to know the inhabitants. He also commented on the professional recruiters' reprehensible practice of

78. A Labour Commission was appointed by the Convention of Associations to investigate the shortfall of agricultural labour which existed despite the flow of unrestricted voluntary labour between the East Africa territories. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.124.

79. East African Standard, 25 September 1926.

80. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.76. It was this increased importation of capital which 'not only increased production, but also dealt with the commercial balance deficit which in 1924 was £1 800 000 - M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.125.

81. East African Standard, 20 September 1926.

82. East African Standard, 20 September 1926.

83. East African Standard, 27 February 1926.

'crimping' labour.<sup>(84)</sup>

In December 1926, extracts from the Chief Native Commissioner's report were belatedly published.<sup>(85)</sup> He noted, inter alia, that the Kikuyu were suspicious regarding the Supreme Court judgment on land tenure that they were 'tenants-at-will' of the Crown. Changes in Kikuyu society at this time were due not only to 'the ceremonial and periodical change of Kikuyu tribal governance' but also to:

...the deeper and more permanent change which the younger generation are bringing....For the younger men are suggesting that the value of the stock paid by the incoming generation might well be used for the establishment of schools and other public institutions. <sup>(86)</sup>

This indicated a substitution of money in place of sacrificial goats.

Maxwell went on to detail tribal progress: in Nyanza, the Africans were 'extremely prosperous, quiet and contented'. There was 'inertia' amongst the Luo people, 'progress' among the Embu and the Chika. The Kisii were 'contentious and independent', the Kona 'virile and aggressive'. The Lumbwa, although 'conservative', were stock-thieves; the Tharaka also 'conservative' and 'suspicious of innovation'. The Kamba were 'addicted to immoderate drinking and excessive and immoral dancing'.<sup>(87)</sup> One may note here the diversity of the people from whom settler labour was drawn.

The year 1926 saw the first imposition of a poll tax on whites and Indians, of Shs.30 and Shs.20 respectively, a minuscule contribution towards each community's educational facilities. This year, however, saw the establishment of the Kenya Advisory Committee to link with the Advisory Committee in Britain. Its object was 'to give information on land and crops to settlers with capital, and to give information about suitable farms for apprentices desiring to work on farms'.<sup>(88)</sup> This committee put Kenya in touch with organisations such as the Empire Marketing Board, and was instrumental in exploring the possibilities of the Land Bank still so sorely needed in the colony.

84. East African Standard, 23 October 1926. 'Crimping' labour referred to the deflection of labour met on the road to other employment.

85. East African Standard, 18 December 1926.

86. East African Standard, 18 December 1926.

87. East African Standard, 6 December 1924. See Appendix 1, Map A, for location of various tribes.

88. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1926, Col.no.1352, p.5.

Agricultural progress in 1926 was reflected in the increased acreages put under wheat, tea and barley, and in the extension of the European areas of cultivation of maize, coffee, sisal and sugar-cane.<sup>(89)</sup> 'Above average' rainfall in Nyanza and Kikuyu resulted in low crop yields;<sup>(90)</sup> while fever in Nyanza affected worker productivity, leading to a reduction in output of marketable crops.<sup>(91)</sup>

In the following year, rainfall was capricious. For example, in some districts, the maize area had insufficient rain, which combined with the depredations of the stalk-borer to reduce the crop. In other areas, coffee bushes did not receive enough rain at the right time, so the crop 'revealed a substantial shortfall'. Furthermore, African reserves experienced drought conditions, and hence produced little marketable surplus.<sup>(92)</sup>

A carry-over from the immediate post-war period was noted by Huxley: of the 1 031 farms allotted by the government to ex-soldier settlers, only 790 were still being farmed by the original owners in 1927.<sup>(93)</sup> Most of these farmers, and the older established ones as well, continued to experience a shortage of labour. This was despite improvement at Kisumu and Thika,<sup>(94)</sup> and the Chamber of Commerce Report that in general labour had 'improved considerably since October'.<sup>(95)</sup> All farmers had been continually advised of the need to conserve labour. To encourage labourers, it was even suggested that wages should relate to market prices for commodities as an incentive when prices were high.<sup>(96)</sup> It was noted in the East African Standard that in 1907, 10 000 Africans had worked for 'a handful of settlers', while in 1927,

89. Ibid., p.6. It was pointed out by M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.123, that these greatly increased acreages would only start producing crops several years later: sisal took three years to reach maturity, coffee four years and wheat three years. This meant that the crops would reach maturity only after the low prices of the early 1930s hit Kenya colony.

90. 'It should never be forgotten that years of average rainfall are rare in Africa. Floods are nearly as common as droughts.' N. Leys, op.cit., p.40.

91. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1926, Col.no.1352, p.6.

92. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1927, Col.no.1425, p.24.

93. E. Huxley, Settlers of Kenya (1948), p.34.

94. East African Standard, 15 January 1927 and East African Standard, 12 February 1927.

95. East African Standard, 19 February 1927.

96. East African Standard, 22 January 1927.



185 000 Africans were working outside the reserves.<sup>(97)</sup> Even so, this 185 000 represented the number of workers who had 'come out' from an able-bodied African male population of 509 528, or approximately 36,3 per cent.<sup>(98)</sup>

To investigate ways of improving the labour situation, a Labour Commission was appointed in 1927. Its prime observation was that:

The requirements for 1927, 1928 and 1929 should be forthcoming from the present sources of supply, if ordinary measures are taken to conserve the use of labour, to improve farm management and supervision and to extend the scope of mechanical aids to agriculture. <sup>(99)</sup>

It was found that the construction of the Uasin-Gishu railway-line in 1924 and 1925 had resulted in a large demand for labour. However, despite the discharge of large numbers of workers at the end of 1924 and early 1925, there had been no improvement in the labour supply because men had taken an accumulation of wages back to the reserves, and 'were not disposed again to seek employment until their cash resources had been expended'.<sup>(100)</sup>

Another factor noted by the Commission was the possible misunderstanding in the African mind of the government's intention in the dual policy.<sup>(101)</sup> It was opined, furthermore, that farmers had become so used to an 'appreciable margin of profit' that they had not made note of the unprofitable employment of labour, 'the only check being provided by the difficulty in securing labour as and when required'; nor had they investigated fully the usefulness of labour-saving machinery.<sup>(102)</sup>

While settlers' and administrators' minds were exercised over labour realities, the intellects of their Lordships, five thousand miles away, were preoccupied with the intricacies of trusteeship. There had

97. East African Standard, 23 April 1927.

98. East African Standard, 28 February 1927. See Appendix 4.

99. East African Standard, 28 May 1927. The use of mechanical aids depended upon the price of fuel oil.

100. East African Standard, 28 May 1927.

101. Africans found it difficult to realise that the government intended to encourage their agriculture pari passu with white agriculture. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.122, define the dual policy as 'the complementary development of native and non-native production'.

102. East African Standard, 28 May 1927. The white farming community was gratified when labour 'came out' to work as a result of a food shortage in the reserves following a maize price rise.

been 'a demand...in the colony for an elected European majority over all parties in the Legislature'.<sup>(103)</sup> Furthermore, the 1927 White Paper, in a departure from previous policy, 'broached the question of constituting a Federal Government or some other form of closer union for East African territories north of the Zambezi'.<sup>(104)</sup> Following on from this was the possible modification in the declared policy of trusteeship. Lord Olivier saw no need for this federal administrative link as a system of tariff regulations already existed between Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. The nub of the situation appeared to be that if there were a federal government centred on Nairobi, with proportional representation of Europeans, the European landowners in Kenya would be in a position 'to dictate internal policy, including native policy, throughout East Africa'.<sup>(105)</sup> This could well imperil the established paramountcy of African interests in terms of the dual policy.

During 1927 and 1928, the Hilton-Young Commission visited Kenya to investigate what had been discussed in the House of Lords, namely, closer union. Its members were presented with memoranda by the Kavirondo and Kikuyu Associations. The former, listing all the duties of men in the tribe, averred that, contrary to hearsay, all the work was not done by women, and that women suffered when menfolk were away earning money. This memorandum stressed particularly the need for consultation with 'our rulers'.<sup>(106)</sup>

The Kikuyu memorandum was a lengthy and comprehensive document. It requested, inter alia, the abolition of the kipande system; adequate safeguards against further alienation of land; removal of restrictions on the cultivation of coffee by Africans; compulsory education; the provision of hospitals; and direct African representation. There was a firm stand on the issue that until these measures were introduced, the Association considered political federation premature. On the question of trusteeship, the Kikuyu saw 'a decided tendency in the direction of usurping the native's land and of reducing him to the position of a wage-earner, and restricting him in movement and opportunities'.<sup>(107)</sup>

103. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 7 December 1927, Col.551.

104. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 7 December 1927, Col.552.

105. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 7 December 1927, Cols.555, 559. The emphasis on the paramountcy of African interests was apparently derided in Kenya.

106. East African Standard, 31 December 1927.

107. East African Standard, 4 February 1928.

There was voiced, moreover, a concern for security of tenure, and a wish that the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 be abolished.<sup>(108)</sup> There was, in addition, an exposition of safeguards needed against the exploitation of labour.<sup>(109)</sup>

The progressive demarcation of reserves begun in 1926 was welcomed by Africans in 1928 as 'a guarantee that Government [intended] to preserve to the native communities the land which [had] been set aside for them'.<sup>(110)</sup> Within the reserves, however, there were worsening problems of over-stocking, and crops were adversely affected by lack of rain. The white agricultural sector also suffered from drought, while rust attacked the wheat crop growing in areas of better rainfall.

Above all, however, were the ravages of locusts - the worst for thirty years.<sup>(111)</sup> A settler vividly recorded this:

Great migratory swarms swept over the country and devoured everything, even to the leather seats of cars. These were followed by the swamp variety. ...In a sense these are less devastating, for they display a gourmet's taste in feeding off the best of everything - banana leaves, pineapples, grass lawns, pasture land, maize, lucerne and vegetables. Both species leave indigenous trees severely alone. But in every sense of the word, they blot out the sun....The farmer is compelled to watch his acres of maize, rich in cob, become derelict rows of stalks. <sup>(112)</sup>

Lord Cranworth reacted similarly:

[The locusts] cleared the grass, the maize, the wheat. Where they rested for the night the weight of their millions broke huge branches of trees.... Coffee and sisal withstood their ravages best. <sup>(113)</sup>

When farms were visited by plagues in these biblical proportions, how puny and pointless appeared contemporary efforts to restore the

108. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 'provided for the proclamation as reserves, of any Crown land "required for the use and support of the members of the native tribes of the Protectorate".' M.P.K. Sorrenson, Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country (1967), p.19.

109. East African Standard, 4 February 1926.

110. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1928, Col.no.1463, p.21.

111. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.81. These were especially bad in the Kamba province.

112. N.K. Strange, op.cit., p.183.

113. Lord Cranworth, op.cit., p.304.

fertility of the soil through crop rotation and mixed farming.<sup>(114)</sup> One comfort, however, was the government rebate on kerosene for agricultural machinery, now more than ever needed to redress the damage.<sup>(115)</sup>

Early in 1928, the President of the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce had warned the Colony against 'an impending dull period'.<sup>(116)</sup> The validity of this warning was borne out in a survey of varying prices for primary commodities during the year. Coffee and sisal exports (unaffected by locusts) rose: coffee by nearly 2 000 cwt. and sisal by 24 000 cwt. The value of the coffee crop, however, dropped by £20 000, while the sisal crop's value rose by £27 000. Maize exports of 1 798 000 cwt. in 1927 dropped to 893 000 in 1928, with a comparable loss of value from £506 000 in 1927 to £306 000 in 1928. Wheat, grown presumably in areas less affected by drought and locusts, showed a greatly increased export quantity from 278 cwt. in 1927 valued at £200 to 137 000 cwt. valued at £76 000 in 1928. In addition, 306 000 cwt. of sisal valued at £469 000 were exported in 1927, as against 330 000 cwt. valued at £496 000 in 1928. There was a marked increase in the value of exported hides: £153 000 in 1927 to £239 000 in 1928. Sugar exports dropped by approximately half in both export quantity and value: 25 000 cwt. valued at £37 000 in 1927 as against 12 000 cwt. valued at £19 000 in 1928.<sup>(117)</sup> Frankel noted a ten-fold increase in both quantity and value of tea exports: 8 cwt. valued at £71 in 1927 rose to 90 cwt. valued at £728 in 1928.<sup>(118)</sup>

The early months of 1929 brought a continuation of the 1928 drought. Damage estimated at £55 000 was caused by a further locust invasion of ripening crops.<sup>(119)</sup> Times were hard for both European and African agriculturists. The extensive failure of crops led to the formation in March of a Food Control Board to organise famine relief to

114. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1928, Col.no.1463, p.24.

115. Ibid.

116. East African Standard, 28 January 1928.

117. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1928, Col.no.1463, p.71.

118. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., Table 64, no page. There are no figures for tea exports in the Annual Report. This large increase in output relates to the greatly increased acreage planted:

1924/25 area under tea - 382 acres

1927/28 area under tea - 4 809 acres.

119. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1929, Col.no.1510, p.151.

the tune of £60 000.<sup>(120)</sup>

The need to import maize from South Africa was a measure of the extent of crop losses. By 1929, maize was the main crop on approximately half of the estates in Kenya.<sup>(121)</sup> This monoculture was subsidized by the colonial government on the advice of the Bowring Committee which, in 1922/23, had 'argued that Kenya farmers should concentrate on maize cultivation which would provide the railway with bulk shipping'.<sup>(122)</sup> Furthermore, the Committee:

...had recommended a fixed railways charge on maize exports in order to help pay for the fixed interest charges which had been incurred on loans to build the railways, and as a result, cereals were transported to the coast at a special rate, so that the branch railway lines which carried the produce made an annual loss up to 1939. <sup>(123)</sup>

The 1928 Maize Conference chairman stood by these special subsidized rates despite the Railways' losses, because 'maize had developed Kenya'. However, in 1929 the Railways felt acutely the loss of £72 416 which was made in that year.<sup>(124)</sup>

An increasing awareness of the Colony's problems led to the appointment in 1929 of the Kenya Agricultural Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Daniel Hall. This influential commission arrived at a thorough and wide-ranging report. It called 'urgent attention to the need for a radical revision of farming practice both in the Highlands and in native areas'.<sup>(125)</sup> Furthermore, the commissioners:

...confessed [their] uneasiness over the racial discrimination involved in the total exclusion of Africans from coffee raising....[They] recommended the imposition of a considerable licensing fee in order to make sure that coffee would be grown only on large, well-run African estates. <sup>(126)</sup>

It was noted that for years 'the virtual monoculture of maize had been

120. Ibid., p.28. 'It became necessary to import 30 358 bags of maize from South Africa to meet the shortage which existed before supplies from the new crop became available.'

121. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, The Agricultural History of Kenya (1975), p.16.

122. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.146.

123. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.16.

124. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.488.

125. Ibid.

126. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.292.

an outstanding feature of the economy'.<sup>(127)</sup>

This over-emphasis on the cultivation of maize was to have serious repercussions. In a later book, Sir Daniel Hall observed:

Many African settlers have found how quickly soil exhaustion can set in with repeated croppings of maize. An experienced farmer in Kenya found that after the eighth crop of maize the land would no longer produce a paying crop. I have seen the land almost infertile after a third crop. (128)

Not only was the fertility of the soil to need care, but more importantly the very preservation of the soil itself.

Soil loss or soil erosion had become increasingly evident in parts of Kenya for many years. Traditional African agricultural methods of soil conservation countered it as long as population increase did not exert pressure on the land. However, once the Pax Britannica ended tribal warfare, and colonial medical services raised standards of hygiene and stemmed the high incidence of infant mortality, there was a steady rise in population figures. European agricultural methods, especially the use of the plough instead of 'old-fashioned' implements, disrupted the traditional system.<sup>(129)</sup> The plough was used up and down slopes, instead of along the contours of the land, and led to erosion by water during the heavy rains. Erosion as a result of wind came mainly as a result of the overstocking of the land together with drought when grazing was 'eaten down to the ground or dried up and withered'.<sup>(130)</sup>

In the late 1920s it was noted that the numbers of squatter cattle had increased hugely. This is evident in Table 3 below. The Agricultural Census Report of 1927/28 revealed that:

The total acreage of land under European occupation is just under five million acres, and of that area, twenty per cent, 925 613 acres is given to the use of 111 682 squatters, men, women and children. That enormous area of land, which is largely unproductive so far as the country was concerned, provide the main grazing for 675 000 head of native

127. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.488.

128. Sir A.D. Hall, The Improvement of Native Agriculture in relation to Population and Public Health (1936), p.7.

129. J. Middleton and G. Kershaw, The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya (1965), p.22. The implements referred to are a seven-foot wooden digging-stick and a shorter iron-tipped digging stick.

130. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.580.

stock of all kinds, of which more than two-thirds are sheep and goats. The figure was about twelve per cent of the total livestock possessions of the native tribes in the colony, and is greater than the whole of the European-owned cattle and sheep in the colony. (131)

It was stressed in the Report that squatter stock would have to be considerably reduced to make way for greater economic use of the land. (132)

TABLE 3 <sup>(133)</sup>		
NUMBERS OF ANIMALS OWNED BY SQUATTERS		
	1925	1928
Cattle	115 000	203 000
Sheep	109 000	212 000
Goats	148 000	200 000

At a farmers' meeting, a Captain French attacked coffee planters who had land in excess of their requirements specifically to house squatters in order to provide cheap resident labour. (134) An article in the East African Standard claimed that only fifty per cent of labour returns were made regularly, laying the blame squarely on European and Indian farmers. (135)

Attention was again focused on forced labour in the latter half of 1929. Attacks on the system had been made several times during the year by the Anti-Slavery Society. At the International Labour Organisation's conference in Geneva in July, W. McGregor Ross put the viewpoint of the British labour movement. He asked for adequate control

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131. East African Standard, 30 March 1929. It has been pointed out that goats played an important part in Kikuyu life. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya: 1919-1939 (1975), p.223.
132. A report from the Fort Ternan area commented on the moving to the Lumbwa reserve of 2 500 head of squatter stock 'under veterinary and police guard'. East African Standard, 13 July 1929.
133. East African Standard, 30 May 1929.
134. East African Standard, 13 July 1929.
135. East African Standard, 9 March 1929. In addition to white farmers, there were a few Indian farmers cultivating sugar, 'a coarse sugar (jagree) much favoured by Asian and African consumers' in Nyanza. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.95.

of it, and 'a rapid and progressive reduction of its use and for its total abolition at the earliest possible date'.<sup>(136)</sup>

In Kenya, a forthright article by Archdeacon Owen was reprinted from the Manchester Guardian. In this, he revealed that the 'subordinate African officials' who oversee the exaction of forced labour were paid Shs.4 per month. 'Rumour has it that this small official salary is increased by methods which would not bear the light of day.'<sup>(137)</sup> He added:

There is a good reason for believing that if taxation from Africans were to be spent honestly in developing the areas from which the taxation is drawn, there would be ample and to spare to pay voluntary labour to do the work now required compulsorily to be done without payment. <sup>(138)</sup>

Sir Daniel Hall, on the other hand, claimed that forced labour did not exist and that Africans came to work because they wanted to earn money. However, he acknowledged that supplies of labour were 'not inexhaustible' as Africans were improving their own agriculture.<sup>(139)</sup>

In the last months of 1929, very heavy rains disrupted harvesting operations in maize and wheat areas, but on the whole agricultural output exceeded that of previous years.<sup>(140)</sup> Most disappointingly, however, there was 'a startling drop in the value of primary products on the world's markets' after the collapse of the New York stock exchange in October 1929.<sup>(141)</sup> Farmers, therefore, received no benefit from their higher yields. In fact:

...an agricultural colony like Kenya was peculiarly susceptible to an economic blizzard which followed drought and joined forces with the locusts to wreck human endeavour. <sup>(142)</sup>

The total dependence of the colony upon agriculture until the later discovery of payable gold - and even after this - made Kenya overly vulnerable to fluctuations in world market prices of primary commodities.

The following five years were to be characterized by 'a steady increasing depression and enforced economies' as the contraction in

136. East African Standard, 6 July 1929.

137. East African Standard, 6 July 1929.

138. East African Standard, 6 July 1929.

139. East African Standard, 1 February 1930.

140. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1929, Col.no.1510, p.28.

141. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.482.

142. Ibid., p.483.



world trade hit the export-oriented economy of Kenya.<sup>(143)</sup> A.M. MacPhee referred to the period surveyed in this chapter as 'The Gilded Years'.<sup>(144)</sup> With the onset of the depression from 1929 onwards, the carefree expansion of this time was replaced by a desperate struggle on the part of Kenya settlers to remain solvent. The way was clear - in the interests of keeping Kenya's economy afloat - for greater encouragement and development of African agriculture.

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143. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., p.264.

144. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.75.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE VULNERABILITY OF AN EXPORT- ORIENTED ECONOMY, 1930-1934

A continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cuts down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered, and in a short time, the soil, once the sod is turned under, is cropped out, and next it starts to blow away.

- Ernest Hemingway.

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Kenya in the early 1930s was no longer the affluent, developing colony of the late 1920s. White and black inhabitants were affected by pressures from 'within', which included the vagaries of climate, locust ravages, and, worst of all, the spreading erosion of precious soil.<sup>(1)</sup> From 'without', the traumatic drop in primary produce prices swiftly counteracted both increased acreages under cultivation and concomitant output. The same price drop rendered even more fruitless, at a personal level, the Kenya settler's attempts to extricate himself from the sticky web of indebtedness. From the viewpoint of the Administration, the colony's finances were also in a precarious state as a result of long-term loans. Frankel observed that borrowing from abroad was 'a two-edged weapon' and that:

...Kenya has suffered in a greater degree than any other British territory from its vulnerability as a result of its heavy debt burden, its limited number of exportable products and their fall in price during the depression. (2)

In order to ensure Kenya's viability as far as possible, and thus stem the increase in both private and public indebtedness, there was, in the early 1930s, a marked increase in the intervention of the Administration in economic and agricultural affairs.

1. Among the other internal problems were the 'seditious tendencies' of certain sectors of the African population at this time which related to the crisis over female circumcision. East African Standard, 8 February 1930.
2. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., pp.260-261. 'Three agricultural products, coffee, sisal and maize, alone accounted for over fifty per cent of the value of Kenya's domestic exports.'

Continuing the late 1920s trend which, in 1929, produced a Food Control Board (vital in famine relief),<sup>(3)</sup> and a Board of Agriculture (to administer European farming),<sup>(4)</sup> the year 1930 saw the promulgation of the Agricultural Advances Ordinance. This 'established advisory boards to provide financing for farmers during the period between the planting and harvesting of crops'.<sup>(5)</sup> The formation of these advisory boards was a constructive step towards the creation of a Land Bank in July 1931.<sup>(6)</sup> This fulfilled a long-standing need, borne out by the jibe: 'A Kenya farmer settles down, but never settles up.'<sup>(7)</sup>

Government intervention was further manifested in the renewed and necessary impetus behind the development of African agriculture.<sup>(8)</sup> In this regard, Munro has written:

Official policy in Kenya, previously wholeheartedly inclined towards settler agriculture began to develop on ambivalence which was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that while the prohibition on African-grown coffee was removed in districts remote from the main centres of settler planting and mixed farming ...it was maintained in the Kikuyu-inhabited districts from which the European estates drew the bulk of their labour. (9)

Kikuyu chiefs had repeatedly appealed against this injunction in the past, and were to do so again.

The viewpoints of three African tribes were put forward in a memorandum presented in London when three chiefs - Koinange Mbiu of the Kikuyu, James Mutua of the Kamba, and Ezekiel Apindi of the Kavirondo - appeared before a Joint Committee of Parliament in May 1930.<sup>(10)</sup>

Covering many aspects of the colonial situation, including the proposed closer union, Koinange said that he was 'exceptionally pleased and grateful for the attempts being made to assist and develop their

3. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1929, Col.no.1510, p.20.

4. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.87.

5. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.187. Advances earned interest of eight per cent, and were paid in monthly instalments to meet payment of wages and current expenses.

6. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.7. This report noted the Land Bank's initial capital as £240 000. However, R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.188, stated that this figure was £500 000.

7. East African Standard, 9 April 1921.

8. Vide supra, p.53.

9. J.F. Munro, op.cit., p.157.

10. East African Standard, 30 May 1930.

agriculture'. Furthermore, having seen new warehousing facilities, he:

...wanted to know what steps were being taken, now their agriculture was being developed, to enable them also to export coffee, should they be trained to a point where they could do so. He wished the Joint Committee to remember and record that although the seed was bought and planted by the settlers in Kenya, it was the Africans who did all the labour connected with it, and therefore gradually they were becoming perfectly competent to deal with it. (11)

It was quite clear that with the planting of increased acreage of coffee, an increasing number of Africans would indeed become 'competent' to farm coffee on their own behalf.

Although there are discrepancies in the figures for the acreages of coffee planted in 1928, 1929 and 1930, an increase of approximately 6 000 acres per annum is apparently evident.<sup>(12)</sup> What is unclear, however, is the proportion of the acreage that was under established coffee ready to be harvested, as opposed to immature bushes more recently planted. The latter would take several years to produce a harvestable crop.<sup>(13)</sup> Salvadori noted that the total cultivated area diminished by more than 100 000 acres in less than three years, when a number of farmers, deeply in debt, had to abandon their farms.<sup>(14)</sup> His statistics reflect an increased acreage for coffee, sisal and tea plantations; hence the loss of cultivated acreage applies to maize and wheat between 1930 and 1932 inclusive.<sup>(15)</sup>

Fortunately for Kenyans, 'abundant' short rains had fallen at the end of 1929, thereby eliminating immediate worries about the shortage of food.<sup>(16)</sup> In fact, these rains contributed to the rise in the colony's 1930 exports - by £676 661 - to a figure of £3 422 571.<sup>(17)</sup>

In 1930, 310 888 cwt. of coffee to the value of £1 426 869 was exported, showing a considerable increase over the 1929 'low' of 133 234 cwt. valued at £703 158.<sup>(18)</sup> Sisal exports in 1929 weighed

11. East African Standard, 30 May 1930.

12. See Appendix 9.

13. M. Salvadori, op.cit., pp.122-123. Sisal takes three years to mature, coffee four years and tea five years.

14. Ibid., p.105.

15. Ibid., p.119.

16. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.6.

17. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.483. See Appendix 7.

18. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.57.

312 954 cwt. and were valued at £553 572. By 1930, sisal exports had risen to 318 940 cwt.; but as a result of low market prices, that increased export fetched only £437 269.<sup>(19)</sup>

The Ruiru Farmers' Association held a special meeting in June 1930 to discuss costs of production on plantations as a result of the drop in coffee and sisal prices. The London price of 'Grade A' coffee was £86 per ton. However, costs of production amounted to approximately £72 per ton, of which wages for African labour took 35 per cent. The sisal price was down to £26 per ton.<sup>(20)</sup> There was a clear need for farmers to exercise economy. The Administration was to be asked to hold a baraza to explain the economic situation to the Africans.<sup>(21)</sup> A week later, a baraza of settlers, officials, African chiefs and tribesmen 'met in a coffee-growing district [Ruiru] where the contact between a planter and his labourers [was] very close and where there [was] mutual dependence'.<sup>(22)</sup>

In this area, the East African Standard reported that on the basis of a coffee crop of 12 000 tons, planters would pay out approximately £60 000 in wages and medical attention. Coffee cultivation, it was asserted, was 'a meeting ground' of the dual policy: 'a susceptible and sensitive partnership'.<sup>(23)</sup> However, it was noted that:

...association with an organised industry is having a steadily increasing effect upon the native outlook. He is beginning to understand something more than a bare glimmering of the essentials....It is being borne in upon him that world conditions and factors entirely outside the control of local governments and settlers influence the price he obtains for the product of his toil....The man from whom in the past he received the money for a simple job of work is unable to sell his coffee, or his maize, or his sisal or his wheat for the same high price he received a year ago....That being so, the produce must be placed on the market more cheaply. Included in the costs are the wages of the labourers. They are certainly worthy of their hire, but their hire must have a relationship with the value of the goods they help to produce. (24)

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19. Ibid.

20. East African Standard, 28 June 1930.

21. East African Standard, 28 June 1930.

22. East African Standard, 5 July 1930.

23. East African Standard, 5 July 1930.

24. East African Standard, 5 July 1930.

Following on from the discussion at this baraza was a request for a cereal subsidy of Shs.1 per bag on all cereals exported that season. (25)

The mid-July meeting of the Convention of Associations endorsed this request, urging that the Uganda Railway should apply an inclusive rate of Shs.1 per bag of cereal 'from station to ship'. Other requests from members included, inter alia, a reduction in charges by railway, shipping and port authorities and by coffee-curing mills; and a suggestion that the Board of Trade consider the granting of a subsidy to coffee. (26)

Opening a subsequent meeting of the Legislative Council, the Governor, Sir Edward Grigg, announced that the Port Advisory Board was to reduce storage charges on maize and wheat by 80 per cent. He considered, however, that a coffee subsidy was out of the question as it was 'only a palliative', and that greater efforts should be made by settlers themselves as Kenya relied 'wholly on agriculture'. (27) The total value of these concessions for 1930, and thus the extent of government subsidy for European farming, is shown in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4 <sup>(28)</sup>	
<u>GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS TO SETTLER AGRICULTURE, 1930</u>	
Freight rate reduction to the Cereal Industry (recoverable)	£ 33 330
Waiving of Conditioning Charges	15 071
Subsidy to Maize Industry	81 000
Advances under Agricultural Advances Ordinance (recoverable)	100 000
Reduction in Freight and Storage Charges	<u>56 764</u>
	<u>£286 165</u>

Thanks to the fact that there were only a 'few isolated swarms'

25. East African Standard, 5 July 1930.

26. East African Standard, 12 July 1930.

27. East African Standard, 19 July 1930. R.D. Wolff, op.cit., p.88, observed: 'It is no exaggeration to conclude that the quantity and quality of official assistance to European agriculture in Kenya were among the highest in any colonial experience.'

28. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.7.

of locusts, the 1930 wheat and maize crops were good.<sup>(29)</sup> Indeed, that year's wheat export of 214 528 cwt. was 114 925 cwt. higher than the 1929 figure; and the value of wheat exports rose by £53 168 over the 1929 figure to £91 449.<sup>(30)</sup> The 1930 maize export reached a 'high' of 2 222 528 cwt. as against 764 770 cwt. for 1929, with corresponding values of £565 517 for 1930 and £305 892 for 1929.<sup>(31)</sup> Hill noted that propitious weather had, in fact, contributed to the £676 661 increase in domestic exports, which for 1930 stood at £3 422 571.<sup>(32)</sup> He, like others, commented on the low price of primary products, which 'eliminated the margin of profit', and on the fact that 'the import trade shrivelled'.<sup>(33)</sup>

In an attempt to restore a reasonable profit margin, farmers once more considered a reduction in wages.<sup>(34)</sup> Kitale farmers supported a twenty per cent reduction provided three-quarters of the farmers agreed to this.<sup>(35)</sup> Sotik coffee-planters called for a reduction in railway freight charges because many of the farms in that area were from fifty-five to seventy-six miles from the nearest railway station.<sup>(36)</sup>

Costs of production, set forth in a newspaper article on the cultivation of maize, but applicable to other crops with slight variation, included petrol, tractor fuels and oils, ginneries, rail charges, other transport, bank interest and wages.<sup>(37)</sup> The Subukia Farmers' Association appeared to stand alone in its recommendations that the answer to the labour problem lay in increased supervision and

29. Ibid., p.6.

30. Ibid., p.57.

31. Ibid. Early in the depression, the overseas price of maize fell lower than the price in Kenya where the market was principally supplied by African-grown maize. European maize cultivators, especially in the Nyanza and Central Provinces, were most concerned at this development. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., pp.303-304.

32. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.483.

33. Ibid., p.497.

34. Argument in letters to the Press on this subject took two viewpoints: One letter-writer averred that if there was a twenty per cent reduction in wages, this would mean that the African was 'footing the bill' for the farmers. Another claimed that wages had increased since 1925, and that this was not due to an increase in productivity, but merely indicated that demand had outstripped the supply. East African Standard, 2 August 1930.

35. East African Standard, 19 July 1930.

36. East African Standard, 19 July 1930.

37. East African Standard, 27 September 1930.

the setting of tasks.<sup>(38)</sup> Tignor commented:

In 1930 each occupier had an average of only 3 ploughs, 2 harrows, and 3 cultivators. There were only 1 060 gas and oil engines, 204 steam engines, 1 395 motor tractors, 501 churns, 593 separators, but these were divided among 2 100 occupiers whose average farm holding was 2 437 acres of which 250 were actually under cultivation. <sup>(39)</sup>

These figures of so few implements might presume an emphasis on labour. However, a contrary opinion was expressed by the Director of Agriculture who considered that 'the introduction of machinery has tended considerably to displace labourers'.<sup>(40)</sup>

Settler reliance on squatter labour continued into the 1930s. In June 1930, it was proposed at a Convention of Associations meeting that squatters' obligatory 180 days of work per annum should be increased to 240, and that squatter contracts should be for one year with three months' notice.<sup>(41)</sup> At the same time, the numbers of squatter stock were still rising and threatened many acres of European-owned grazing.<sup>(42)</sup>

Archdeacon Owen's attacks on forced labour as wasteful and cruel continued intermittently and eloquently throughout 1930. Lord Delamere opined that the government kept the forced labour system in the statute book 'against certain purposes and emergencies'.<sup>(43)</sup> Furthermore, a leading article in the East African Standard expressed the view that the time had come for 'the complete abolition' of forced labour.<sup>(44)</sup> It was noted, however, that 'for the first time in many years the supply of native labour slightly exceeded the demand'.<sup>(45)</sup> And, in fact, as the depression wore on so the unemployment of the African became a problem along with that of unemployed Europeans whose numbers were swelled by bankrupt farmers.<sup>(46)</sup>

38. East African Standard, 4 October 1930.

39. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.150.

40. East African Standard, 20 December 1930.

41. East African Standard, 21 June 1930.

42. East African Standard, 4 October 1930. Comment was subsequently made on the 'peculiar position which cattle and goats occupy in native social life'. It was further observed that these animals acquired 'a kind of reflected sanctity' on account of ceremonial use. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, pp.361-362.

43. East African Standard, 13 September 1930.

44. East African Standard, 13 September 1930.

45. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.52.

46. It was suggested that these Europeans be taken on as assistants on farms, with free board and lodging. Approximately 150 Europeans were unemployed at this time; many of them farming men. East African Standard, 31 January 1931.



In February 1931, the same month in which Sir Joseph Byrne became governor, a leading article on forced labour set out its disadvantages.<sup>(47)</sup> These included, inter alia, that the burden was rarely equally distributed; that it was very difficult to prevent the abuse of power; that forced labour created a feeling of insecurity which 'militated' against a growth of confidence in the government'; and that forced labour led to a restriction of normal trade since labourers had no wages to spend.<sup>(48)</sup>

Two months later, a White Paper was published announcing that 'the government proposes to proceed with the ratification of the draft convention against forced or compulsory labour adopted at the International Labour Conference in Geneva'.<sup>(49)</sup> Four months later, it was observed that forced labour was being 'phased out'.<sup>(50)</sup> In support of this, L. Mair noted a 'decline' in forced labour, from 1 500 labourers employed in 1925 to 700 in 1932.<sup>(51)</sup>

However, the fact that forced labour was still being used, albeit with some caution, was borne out by the gazetting of a bill in December 1932, for introduction to the Legislative Council. This required, inter alia, that forced labour be limited to males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five; that it be limited to sixty days per annum; that it be paid at market rates and be on the same footing as voluntary labour in cases of injury or death. Furthermore, forced labour was not to be used in unhealthy districts, and its use for agricultural purposes was to be limited to cases of famine or deficiency in food supplies.<sup>(52)</sup> Elected members of the Legislative Council welcomed this bill because 'it only stated what had been the case in Kenya for many years'.<sup>(53)</sup>

In 1931, 'all unskilled and much of the skilled labour on estates was performed by African natives'.<sup>(54)</sup> The trend at this time was for employers to avoid altogether the professional labour recruiters, be they European or Asian, and instead to obtain labour less expensively through the offices of a trusted headman.<sup>(55)</sup> Labourers were mostly

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47. East African Standard, 7 February 1931.

48. East African Standard, 7 February 1931.

49. East African Standard, 25 April 1931.

50. East African Standard, 1 August 1931.

51. L. Mair, op.cit., p.92.

52. East African Standard, 10 December 1932.

53. East African Standard, 24 December 1932.

54. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.22.

55. Ibid.

employed on monthly contracts, so that greater freedom was ensured for both employer and employee. The employer provided housing and blankets, food and cooking utensils.<sup>(56)</sup> He was, moreover, 'by law required to keep sufficient medicines and medical comforts for the requirements of his employees'.<sup>(57)</sup> The average number of labourers employed monthly on European holdings for the census year ending February 1931 was 120 210, a figure which was 5 675 less than the previous year.<sup>(58)</sup>

In these circumstances, it was perhaps inevitable that the pressure to reduce wages would increase. Indeed, the Kenya Native Affairs Department Report for 1931 noted that wages 'in all industries fell to some extent, and in some cases to a great extent'. Furthermore, 'a number of firms employing native labour were compelled to close down, particularly sisal estates'.<sup>(59)</sup> The fall in wages was well accepted by workers:

...a testimony no less to the common sense and loyalty of the native labourers than in the relations of mutual esteem and affection established in Kenya between the European master and his African servant. (60)

It was clear that the hard core of African labourers realised that their lives, as well as those of their employers, were affected by low overseas prices for the commodities which they helped to cultivate.

As a grounding for the important role being assigned to African agriculture, a continuing emphasis was placed on agricultural education. In 1930, there were 'twenty-two native agricultural instructors (all Kikuyu) in the districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall and South Nyeri, and nine agricultural instructors (all Embu) in the Embu district'.<sup>(61)</sup> The

56. 'As a general rule wattle and daub huts are provided for labourers on estates, while corrugated iron shelters are usually found in contractors' camps. Owing largely to the generally depressed conditions prevailing, little replacement of insanitary types of houses by permanent buildings has taken place.' Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1930, Col.no.1562, p.52.

57. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.23.

58. Ibid. Of the figure given in this report, 89 856 were men, 3 387 were women, 19 393 were children and 7 574 were casual workers.

59. East African Standard, 22 October 1932.

60. East African Standard, 22 October 1932.

61. Correspondence between the Kikuyu Central Association and the Colonial Office, 1929-1930 (no date of publication), p.13.

same year saw the establishment of a special school for the Suk tribe in the arid Turkana province, where there was instruction in the cultivation of supplementary food crops.<sup>(62)</sup> A retired Provincial Commissioner stressed the need for an agricultural rather than a literary emphasis in African education.<sup>(63)</sup> In 1931, Local Native Councils were doubly useful: large seed farms were established at their headquarters,<sup>(64)</sup> and they sought to assist the Kikuyu Native Producers' Co-operative Society through the creation of central buying stations for crops within the reserves.<sup>(65)</sup>

There appear to be different viewpoints on African agricultural progress. The official attitude was that African agriculture 'was becoming increasingly recognised as an important factor in the economic structure of the colony', mentioning the introduction of (unspecified) new crops and 'the improvement of existing forms of cultivation'.<sup>(66)</sup> Wrigley, however, saw the depression as a 'disaster' for African agriculture since African-grown commodities 'slumped worse than European agricultural staples'.<sup>(67)</sup> Furthermore, Sir Gerald Portal's turn-of-the-century remark that the Kikuyu were 'industrious and careful agriculturalists',<sup>(68)</sup> was countered by T.R. Batten's later sweeping generalisation that most African farmers lacked skill as producers.<sup>(69)</sup>

It was noted by Hill that Kenya's exports continued to drop in 1931 - by over £1 000 000.<sup>(70)</sup> The Annual Report admitted that trading conditions were 'extremely difficult', and that there was 'a progressive contraction in the purchasing power of the population'.<sup>(71)</sup> However, imports were limited to minimum requirements, and this led to a steadying of the local market and the prevention of a general collapse.<sup>(72)</sup> Britain's abandonment of the gold standard in September 1931 and

62. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.964.

63. *East African Standard*, 1 August 1931.

64. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.964.

65. R.L. Tignor, *op.cit.*, p.299. This experiment was not successful. The co-operative Society in Kikuyu and elsewhere was disbanded in 1932/33.

66. *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate*, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.23.

67. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.250.

68. K. Ingham, *A History of East Africa* (1962), p.163.

69. T.R. Batten, *op.cit.*, p.89.

70. M.F. Hill, *op.cit.*, p.483.

71. *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate*, 1931, Col.no.1606, pp.25-26.

72. *Ibid.*, p.26.

depreciation of sterling led to an 'improvement in the price of exportable commodities on the world's markets quoted in terms of sterling [and] thus increased the possibility of effecting sales overseas at remunerative rates'.<sup>(73)</sup>

Late in 1931, gold in payable quantities was found at Kakamega in Kavirondo.<sup>(74)</sup> This helped to solve the problem of unemployment for both Europeans and Africans, but also meant that 'alienation procedures were initiated immediately' so that the Administration and settlers were able to monopolise the benefits of this section of the Kavirondo reserve.<sup>(75)</sup> The discovery of gold, in fact, proved vital to the viability of Kenya's economy during the depression, when agricultural export prices dropped so low.<sup>(76)</sup>

The year 1932 was to be 'a year of unremitting anxiety', despite an improvement in the import/export trade, since low prices for primary products continued to hamstring the colony's economy.<sup>(77)</sup> At the Imperial Conference held in Ottawa in July of that year, 'preferences pre-extended to British goods [were] abandoned in favour of specific trade agreements giving preference to goods which [were] the produce of the countries concerned'.<sup>(78)</sup> In Kenya, no preferential treatment was given to British goods. Furthermore, a 'complete' customs union existed between Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, 'under which the produce and manufacture of any of the three territories [was] admitted free of duty into the consuming country, and duty-paid goods [might] be transferred to any of the other territories'.<sup>(79)</sup>

Coffee acreage in Kenya in 1932 remained static, but the yield dropped from 310 168 cwt. in 1931 to 170 091 cwt. in 1932.<sup>(80)</sup> Nevertheless, coffee continued its role as 'the mainstay' of the economy, constituting no less than 53 per cent of the total export output.<sup>(81)</sup>

73. *Ibid.*

74. M. Salvadori, *op.cit.*, pp.105-106.

75. H.A. Wieschoff, *Colonial Policies in Africa* (1944), p.50. The Native Lands Trust Ordinance of 1930 'included provisions which could be interpreted to the advantage of the Europeans should they desire to take liberties in acquiring Native lands'.

76. *East African Standard*, 5 November 1932.

77. *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate*, 1932, Col.no.1659, p.23.

78. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.1343.

79. *Ibid.*, p.1344.

80. *Annual Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate*, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.21, and 1932, Col.no.1659, p.19.

81. A. Pim, *op.cit.*, p.117.

Maize acreage dropped by 40 380 acres to 160 546 acres in 1932, and the yield dramatically followed suit by falling from 1 649 728 bags in 1931 to 762 622 bags in 1932.<sup>(82)</sup> Wheat acreage and output also dropped from 68 851 acres producing 194 377 bags in 1931 to 43 168 acres producing 86 862 bags in 1932.<sup>(83)</sup> Local wheat production was not sufficient for domestic needs; hence wheat imports larger than in the previous year were needed.<sup>(84)</sup> The sisal acreage increased from 137 299 acres in 1931 to 145 660 acres in 1932, but the yield decreased from 18 858 tons in 1931 to 14 674 tons in 1932.<sup>(85)</sup> Sisal was cultivated for the most part by big companies on account of the large capital outlay needed.<sup>(86)</sup> Acreage under sugar-cane increased marginally over these years, but output soared from 77 120 cwt. in 1931 to 104 700 cwt. in 1932,<sup>(87)</sup> constituting eight per cent of all exports.<sup>(88)</sup>

The cultivation of tea, begun in 1925, had started to play an important part in Kenya agriculture by the early 1930s.<sup>(89)</sup> Three companies - the African Highland Produce Company Ltd., the Kenya Tea Company Ltd. and the Buret Tea Company - had between them 6 900 acres of Nyanza Province under tea by 1930.<sup>(90)</sup> There were, moreover, independent growers in the same area who had seen the possibility of tea cultivation at Kericho.<sup>(91)</sup> From covering 10 258 acres in 1931, tea estates occupied 11 258 acres in 1932. Although the increase in acreage was slight, impressive growth is reflected in output: 930 209 pounds in 1931 rose to 1 500 249 pounds in 1932.<sup>(92)</sup>

Up to and including 1932, African produce was sold for domestic consumption. In this year, however, a major part of the long-sought break-through for African-grown coffee was achieved. The Administration, going against settler opposition, announced its intention to end the prohibition on African-grown coffee. Strict rules were drawn up to

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82. Annual Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1931, Col.no.1606, p.21, and 1932, Col.no.1659, p.19.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. A. Pim, op.cit., p.117.

89. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.98.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92. Vide supra, p.86.

regulate the cultivation of the crop: cultivation was to be permitted in designated areas; cultivators were to be licensed at twenty cents per 100 trees; the Director of Agriculture was to check on the outbreak of spread of disease; and seedlings were to be acquired from the Agricultural Department. The earlier 'ambivalence' of the Administration was revealed in that Kikuyu districts were not permitted to grow coffee.<sup>(93)</sup> The Kikuyu reserves did, nevertheless, produce saleable surpluses of various commodities as is indicated in Table 5 below. These were mostly 'exported into European settlement areas and consumed by the African population resident there'.<sup>(94)</sup>

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Maize	£101 489	36 905 tons
Beans	25 267	6 563
European Potatoes	21 940	9 973
Sweet Potatoes	9 398	5 080
Millet	4 510	820
Yams	2 666	1 441
Sugar Cane	3 763	4 181
Wattle	15 780	9 017
Bananas	13 700	548 000 bunches

Two important Commissions visited Kenya in 1932. One was the Financial Commission under Lord Moyne, sent out from Britain to enquire into the racial distribution of taxation and services; and the second was the Kenya Land Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Morris

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93. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.292. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.383, noted that 'the influence of European farming interests on Kenya policy has been exerted through the official and unofficial channels.... It is true to say that at certain periods, these interests have exercised an influence on policy hardly less than that which they might had attained under a fully developed form of responsible government'.

94. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.292.

95. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.1979.

Carter. Lord Moyne's terms of reference were to report on the low direct taxation, that is, the 'non-native' poll tax.<sup>(96)</sup> It had been apparent for many years that the hut and poll tax imposed on the African population had made a major contribution to the colony's revenue, had funded development in Kenya, and had been used only minimally to assist advance in the reserves from where it was derived. The poll tax imposed on Europeans and Asians had been devoted to the education of these groups only.<sup>(97)</sup> The merest suggestion of an income tax for Europeans had always met with the stiffest settler opposition.

It was noted that neither the Ormsby-Gore nor the Hilton Young commissions found African taxation too heavy. However, in 1932, Lord Moyne opined that 'the natives were bearing relatively the greater burden', with 'heavier individual sacrifice than that at present imposed on the non-native population!'<sup>(98)</sup> It was observed that a European community of 17 285 contributed about £665 781 in direct and indirect taxation, receiving about £171 247 in government services. Indians, numbering 56 903 contributed £385 658, and received government services to the value of about £46 080. Africans, probably under-estimated at 2 950 000, contributed £791 100, receiving approximately £331 956 in services which gave them few advantages.<sup>(99)</sup> Lord Moyne suggested, inter alia, rebates for Local Native Councils and commented on the obsolescence of hut and poll tax.<sup>(100)</sup>

The 1931 Joint Select Committee of Parliament - on the strength of earlier evidence from African Chiefs<sup>(101)</sup> - had required that 'an authoritative enquiry should be made into the present and prospective needs of the natives in the matter of land and adequate security'.<sup>(102)</sup> This enquiry took the form of the Kenya Land Commission appointed in April 1932 'to consider and report upon certain land problems in Kenya'.<sup>(103)</sup> A lengthy report was presented late in 1933 and published in 1934.

96. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.496.

97. Vide supra, p.73.

98. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.168.

99. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.495.

100. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.169.

101. Vide supra, p.85.

102. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.749.

103. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd,4556, p.1. The chairman was Sir Morris Carter. His assistants were R.W. Hemsted, Captain F. O'B. Wilson and S.H. Fazan, a district commissioner in Kikuyu.

Such was the significance of this Commission that its terms of reference need to be spelled out fully:

...to consider the needs of the native population present and prospective with respect to land whether to be held on tribal or on individual tenure;  
to consider the desirability and practicality of setting aside further areas of land for the... occupancy of communities or...detribalised natives;  
to determine the nature and extent of claims asserted by natives over land alienated to non-natives, and to make recommendations for adequate settlement;  
to examine claims asserted by natives over land not yet alienated; and  
to define the area, generally known as the Highlands, within which persons of European descent are to have a privileged position in accordance with the White Paper of 1923. (104)

The response was impressive: 507 memoranda were presented; 487 out of the 736 witnesses were Africans. Of the remaining 249 'non-native' witnesses, 94 were government officials. There were 212 statements by magistrates and 400 letters from Kikuyu tribesmen. Evidence on oath was taken at barazas, some of it 'too voluminous to be printed'. (105)

Although all tribes were thoroughly investigated, the emphasis was upon the Kikuyu because of 'the exceptional degree of individualism to which this tribe had attained in its conception of land-holding'. (106)

The recommendations of this Commission were to have a seminal influence on future land dispositions. These, in turn, were to affect the future of both African and European agriculture in Kenya. The investigation revealed the selfish short-sightedness of early land alienations, and the hopes and fears of 'ordinary' Africans as well as the more sophisticated ones.

A primary recommendation was that of compensation for alienated land. It was observed that alienation in Kiambu had resulted in an increase of the population density of this area. However, it was clear that the community had benefited from the establishment of Nairobi on part of this land, by way of better transport, better health conditions, and better marketing facilities. (107)

Stressing the need to know how people utilized their land before

104. Ibid., pp.1-2.

105. Ibid., p.3.

106. Ibid., p.4.

107. Ibid., p.13.



comment was made on any supposed shortage, the commissioners emphasized that 'an apparent shortage may often be due to lack of skill in the use of land'.<sup>(108)</sup> Furthermore, lack of skill may be due, not only to lack of agricultural or pastoral attainment, but to an 'unsuitability in the land system which prevents the distribution of the population to the best advantage'.<sup>(109)</sup>

It was reported by the Commission that 'judged by European standards, the Kikuyu is not a good farmer, but he is well above the average of the East African tribes'.<sup>(110)</sup> The Kikuyu were said to have enough money to live according to the old standards, but insufficient to be able to attain the new standards 'by which a healthy people, useful to the Colony as a whole, can be maintained'. Nevertheless, their diet was 'satisfactory and ahead of most other tribes'.<sup>(111)</sup>

The commissioners further noted that the density at which people were living had, to a large extent, prevented the practice of shifting cultivation and the frequent fallowing of large stretches of land. In their own words:

While this will ultimately lead to a better and more economical use of land, there is a grave risk that, until natives have adapted themselves to the new conditions and realised the necessity of deep ploughing and manuring, there will be considerable deterioration of the soil through exhaustion. (112)

There had already been signs of this, much of it stemming from the (possibly unsupervised) imitation of European farming methods, and the over-emphasis on a single cash crop such as maize which was known to impoverish the soil.

A trend towards the breakdown of the githaka system was also apparent.<sup>(113)</sup> With a general increase in the African population,<sup>(114)</sup>

108. Ibid., p.139.

109. Ibid., p.140.

110. Ibid., p.141.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p.142.

113. M.P.K. Sorrenson, op.cit., p.9, noted that 'the founder of a mbari [clan] acquired what was in many respects an individual title to githaka [estates]; on his death a communal form of title was created...[but] there was no centralized tribal authority'.

114. 'The estimated native population in 1932 was 3 007 645 as compared with an estimate in 1927 of 2 793 963'. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1932, Col.no.1659, p.13.

it was inevitable that Kikuyu and, to a lesser extent, Kavirondo, where much land had been alienated to Europeans, were becoming extremely crowded.<sup>(115)</sup> The fragmentation inherent in Kikuyu land-holding resulted in some clan members being 'squeezed out'. When this happened, these Africans - usually ahoi (tenants) - moved away, either to become squatters on European-occupied land, or else to find farming space in less densely-populated areas and eventually to become absorbed into a new group.<sup>(116)</sup>

Contributing to the break-down of the githaka was the desire of African farmers to own their own land under a system of individual tenure. Thus, the planting of permanent crops in areas whose boundaries were fixed, together with the use of money by a growing population, all contributed towards 'the evolution of individualism' among the Kikuyu and the Kavirondo.<sup>(117)</sup>

The position among the part-agriculturist/part-pastoralist Kamba was found to be very serious, owing to the nature of the soil in their district.<sup>(118)</sup> It was hoped by the commissioners, however, that once traditional methods of cultivation were eschewed and tribesmen gained 'an increased knowledge of the principles of dry-farming', development would be possible on previously uncultivated land.<sup>(119)</sup>

The Commission's Report clearly showed the penetration and sympathy of their survey:

...it is not to be expected that native custom will readily accommodate itself or provide a measure of solving problems of local congestion which are outside the range of tribal experience. (120)

115. In the African reserves, average population density was fifty-four to the square mile. The three Kikuyu and the three Kavirondo districts occupied 8 856 square miles and their population was 1 515 578. This meant that about half the population of the whole country was living in those two areas, the total of which was approximately one-twenty-fifth part of the whole area of the Colony. Thus the density there was 171 to the square mile as against an average of twenty-seven for the rest of the reserves. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, pp.350-351.

116. Ibid., Appendix VI, p.567.

117. Ibid.

118. Desert conditions had developed in Kamba areas as the land was carrying three times the 'normal' number of cattle. A Kamba would rather starve than kill his cattle. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.67. Vide supra, p.8.

119. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.206.

120. Ibid.

However, ultimate proposals included an addition of 2 629 square miles to existing reserves, of which 2 474 were allotted in satisfaction of claims of right; 896 on grounds of economic need; and 259 as temporary reserves to be held on lease terminable by the government.<sup>(121)</sup> In all, the enlarged African reserves would cover a total area of 50 000 square miles.<sup>(122)</sup> A later Order-in-Council set the area of European-occupied land at 16 700 square miles.<sup>(123)</sup>

The Board of Agriculture at this time recommended to the Kenya Land Commission that various forms of credit be made available to farmers: long-term credit for permanent improvements and the purchase of land; intermediary credit (from nine months to five years) for the purchase of livestock and implements; and short-term credit for bills and overdrafts to carry producers over the marketing period.<sup>(124)</sup>

While the Commission was involved in its investigation, the drought conditions threatening since 1931 had deteriorated. Planters at Ruiru appealed for government relief in their 'disastrous' situation with the coffee crop all but ruined.<sup>(125)</sup> Two weeks later, an early crop was stripped off the bushes, but the loss was 'very heavy'.<sup>(126)</sup> There was a little rain at Nakuru, but not enough to break the drought.<sup>(127)</sup> Rain at Thika was too late to save the crop; some estates were 'stripped of sixty to seventy per cent of their total crop', and the government's 'sympathetic consideration' was requested.<sup>(128)</sup> By mid-June, there was still no relief for planters at Ruiru; the drought had reduced the flow of rivers to the point where it threatened the sisal power plants.<sup>(129)</sup>

In South Nyeri, the Africans started to feed banana stems to their stock to supplement grazing.<sup>(130)</sup> Thorn trees and bushes were

121. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.750.

122. D.C. Savage and J.F. Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate', *Journal of African History*, 7(2), (1966), p.341. 'Up to March, 1922, 13 748 members of the Carrier Corps were still untraced in Kenay, with pay amounting to £66 748 remaining unclaimed. The Kenya Land Commission recommended that the funds be used to improve water supplies, combat soil erosion and eliminate tsetse fly in the reserves.'

123. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.750.

124. P. van Zwanenberg, 'Kenya's Punitive Colonial Capitalism: The Primitive Economic Weakness of Kenya's Settlers up to 1940', *Revue Canadienne des études africaines*, IX(2), (1975), p.282.

125. *East African Standard*, 6 May 1933.

126. *East African Standard*, 20 May 1933.

127. *East African Standard*, 6 May 1933.

128. *East African Standard*, 20 May 1933.

129. *East African Standard*, 10 June 1933.

130. *Report of the Kenya Land Commission* (1934), Cmd.4556, Appendix X, p.580.

the only feed left in the Rift Valley Province. In South Turkana, the camels had a better chance of survival than the cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. The Provincial Commissioner at Nzoia recommended the culling of all 'weeds' in order to 'leave more grazing for better beasts'.<sup>(131)</sup>

It was in these difficult circumstances that attention turned yet again to the problem of squatter stock. Opinion among farmers' associations in the Highlands ranged from 'limiting' squatter stock to 'abolishing' it.<sup>(132)</sup> Indeed, the squatter problem had assumed such large proportions that the government appointed a committee to report on any amendments which might be necessary to the Resident Native Labourers Ordinance of 1925.<sup>(133)</sup> It was opined in a leading article in the East African Standard that the squatter system worked well on large plantations, but not in intensive farming because stock was 'the complicating factor'.<sup>(134)</sup> In September 1933, squatters owned 203 604 cattle, 170 961 sheep and 261 340 goats.<sup>(135)</sup> Furthermore, in spite of the depression in agriculture, the 1931 population figure of 110 500 squatter men, women and children had risen in 1932 to 114 400; and 'at a conservative estimate', squatters occupied 'not much less than one million acres'.<sup>(136)</sup>

Meanwhile, most 1933 primary product prices tended to harden, although the coffee price reached a new low level.<sup>(137)</sup> Continuing difficulties loomed for producers of maize, wheat, sisal and sugar (although mercifully there were no locusts). As had been the case in 1932, the wheat crop was insufficient for local consumption, and imports of this commodity were again needed.<sup>(138)</sup> Salvadori observed that 'in 1933 the area planted with wheat was only one third of what it had been

131. Ibid., pp.583-585.

132. East African Standard, 2 September 1933.

133. East African Standard, 8 July 1933. 'Greater severity' was to be exercised to enforce the provisions of the 1925 Ordinance.

134. East African Standard, 9 September 1933.

135. East African Standard, 23 September 1933. Regarding the counting of stock, Chief Koinange observed: 'All the counts that are made of the sheep and stock by the Agricultural Department are purely imaginary, because we keep back the true number which we possess for fear that we shall be told that we have got too many.' Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.356.

136. East African Standard, 9 September 1933.

137. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1933, Col.no.1688, pp.16 and 21.

138. Ibid., p.16.

in 1928', so presumably this was a factor contributing to the shortage.<sup>(139)</sup> Figures for African production are unavailable.<sup>(140)</sup> None the less, an indication of trend is provided by Hill, who has quoted f.o.r. values on a representative sample of crops. This is shown in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6 <sup>(141)</sup>		
<u>F.O.R. VALUES ON VARIOUS CROPS, 1928 AND 1933</u>		
<u>Crop</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1933</u>
Maize	Sh.11/10 per bag	Sh.3/20 per bag
Sisal	Sh.541 per ton	Sh.171 per ton
Coffee	Sh.89/50 per cwt.	Sh.46/50 per cwt.
Wattlebark	Sh.161 per ton	Sh.36 per ton

By 1933, the Kenya economy was well into the trough of the depression. The colony's heavy reliance on exports meant that enormous efforts had to be made to increase output in the face of continuing low commodity prices on world markets. Coupled with this was the high interest to be paid on external loans. In all, Kenyan farmers faced an almost Sisyphean task. S.H. Frankel noted that:

The burden of external debt can be fully appreciated only if we consider the extent to which the volume of exports had to be increased during the depression to combat the fall in prices.<sup>(142)</sup>

Frankel observed, furthermore, that the depression was accompanied by 'the almost complete cessation of private investment and government borrowing from abroad'. It is evident in Table 7 below that there was also 'a marked decline in imports which intensified the fall in value of exports'.<sup>(143)</sup>

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139. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.120. (A free translation from the original French text).

140. Figures for African agricultural exports, however, are available, and are contained in Appendix 10.

141. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.483.

142. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., p.264.

143. Ibid.

TABLE 7<sup>(144)</sup>  
COMPARISON OF KENYA'S EXPORTS  
IN 1928 AND 1933

<u>Crop</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1933</u>
Coffee (quantity)	212 000 cwt.	257 000 cwt.
(value)	£1 120 000	£ 832 000
Sisal (quantity)	16 516 tons	19 850 tons
(value)	£ 496 000	£ 250 000
Maize and maize meal (quantity)	892 000 cwt.	1 132 000 cwt.
(value)	£ 306 000	£ 213 000

Moreover, it was Frankel's firm belief that it was only 'the more stringent collection of hut and poll tax, which brought in no less than £558 000 in 1933',<sup>(145)</sup> which kept the budget deficit lower than it might have been. This statement is clear evidence that there was still no income tax on Europeans or Indians at this time. A small step towards more complete direct taxation was taken with the passing of the Non-Native Poll Tax Ordinance of 1933.<sup>(146)</sup> This provided for the levying of a poll tax on non-Africans 'at a rate graduating according to the tax-payer's income', and was to be in force until the end of 1934. The low level of European and Indian taxation under this Ordinance is evident in Table 8 below. It was estimated that this tax would 'produce an income of £66 000 in a full year as against an estimated revenue of £35 000 under the old Non-Native Poll Tax Ordinance'.<sup>(147)</sup>

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144. Ibid.

145. Ibid. This sum represented between one-fifth and one-sixth of the Colony's revenue of £3 121 497 in 1933.

146. Vide supra, p.73. The only other tax paid by Europeans and Indians was towards the education of their children. It was charged at a flat rate of Sh.30 per head.

147. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1933, Col.no.1688, p.51.

TABLE 8 <sup>(148)</sup>	
NON-NATIVE POLL TAX, 1933/34	
<u>Tax</u>	<u>Income</u>
Shs.30	under £100
Shs.40	£100-£200
increases of Shs.20 per £100	
Shs.180	£500-£700
increases of Shs.40 per £100	
Shs.500	£1 400-£1 500
graduating more sharply to	
Shs.10 000	£10 000

Presumably this increase in the tax burden on Europeans and Indians permitted a small reduction in that imposed in 1934 on Africans. The African hut and poll tax for this year showed a slight drop: for example, the Masai tax was reduced from Shs.20 in 1933 to Shs.14 per hut or poll in 1934, but tax on 'other tribes' remained the same at Shs.12 per hut or poll in both years.<sup>(149)</sup>

Export output in 1934 remained low. In 1928, Kenya's exports had been valued at £3 266 000, but in 1934 they were worth £1 910 000.<sup>(150)</sup> Hill maintained that 'the Kenya farmer was forced to work his land to dust and ruinously to exploit fertility in order to keep his head above the slough'.<sup>(151)</sup> However, Berman believed that such was the concentration of land in the hands of a few farmers or syndicates that, by 1934, fourteen per cent of farmers owned thirty-nine per cent of the alienated land.<sup>(152)</sup> Salvadori further expanded on these figures to show that in this year only ten per cent of the land alienated to Europeans was even cultivated.<sup>(153)</sup> He noted, moreover, that many sisal plantations were abandoned, and that the area under maize was fifty-five per cent less than it had been in 1929.<sup>(154)</sup>

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148. Ibid.

149. Annual Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1933, Col.no.1688, p.52, and 1934, Col.no.1722, p.51.

150. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., p.264.

151. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.483.

152. B.J. Berman, op.cit., p.169.

153. M. Salvadori, op.cit., p.116.

154. Ibid., pp.119-120.

Low prices for primary products pertained throughout 1934, to the discomfiture of farmers. Coffee acreage, nevertheless, increased from 100 387 acres in 1933 to 102 238 acres in 1934, but the yield dropped from 303 998 cwt. in 1933 to 235 009 cwt. in 1934.<sup>(155)</sup> In the case of maize, 164 018 acres were under cultivation in 1933 compared with 112 949 in 1934; output in 1933 was 1 139 616 bags, but in 1934 it amounted to a disappointing 746 893 bags. In 1933, 63 498 bags of wheat were harvested off 164 018 acres, whereas in 1934 the improvement of 145 581 bags was marked. Barley figures showed a greater increase in yield than in acreage, indicating improved cultivation techniques for this crop. Sisal covered 139 834 acres in 1933 and 141 495 acres in 1934, with an increased output rising from 17 369 tons in 1933 to 20 127 tons in 1934. Tea, on a fractionally smaller acreage, increased in output from 2 421 056 pounds in 1933 to 3 063 687 pounds in 1934. Sugar production, on a slightly more extensive acreage, rose from 106 320 cwt. in 1933 to 112 980 cwt. in 1934. Of interest were the 401 acres (with as yet no output) planted with pyrethrum in 1934.<sup>(156)</sup>

Unemployment continued with the depression, although the position did not warrant the taking of any 'special steps'.<sup>(157)</sup> However, thousands of Africans were out of work, and a leading article in the East African Standard stressed that:

The country has a duty towards them....The government is busy heaping upon Native Authorities in the reserves an increasing measure of responsibility for their own affairs. One of these responsibilities should be to look after men and women of their own tribe - and young children too - who loaf around the towns. (158)

Nairobi was plagued by vagrants, who possibly were involved in the reported increase in crime.<sup>(159)</sup> Although the July stevedores' strike was quickly settled, it was symptomatic of the discontent with working conditions which simmered below the surface in Mombasa.<sup>(160)</sup>

Early in 1934, the colony was divided into four provinces to

155. The coffee crop was seriously affected by the continuing drought. East African Standard, 13 October 1934.

156. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1934, Col.no.1722, p.16.

157. East African Standard, 28 April 1934.

158. East African Standard, 20 January 1934.

159. East African Standard, 30 June 1934, 11 August 1934.

160. East African Standard, 14 July 1934.



facilitate administration. At about the same time, the Subukia farmers suggested a new Squatters' Ordinance to replace the Native Labour Ordinance of 1933. It was recommended that the reference to 'agreements' in the 1933 Ordinance be deleted, as 'contracts are entirely unintelligible' to Africans. Other new dispositions included: that where an African accepted land in lieu of rations, his registration certificate should be so endorsed by his employer; that times of work should be arranged; that the number of stock permitted should be made quite clear; that squatter employment should establish an implied contract for twelve calendar months from the date of engagement; that contracts should continue indefinitely for periods of twelve months, with three months' notice on either side; and that when notice was given, it should be lawful for the squatter to remain to harvest his crops.<sup>(161)</sup>

When officially presented, the draft of the new Squatters' Ordinance contained various innovations. These included: a contract of not less than one year which might be extended to five years (instead of the previous three years); the issue of an employment certificate; the assurance of medical attention when necessary; and compensation in lieu of crops if and when the squatter moved away. Local authorities were to be empowered to prohibit the engagement of squatters on any farm, might limit the number to be engaged, or might prohibit the keeping of stock by squatters or limit the number to be kept. The occupier/employer might legally purchase the squatter's stock or produce. The squatter might be fined Shs.100 'if he grows upon the farm any crop which by his contract he is prohibited from growing'. Manure produced on the farm belonged to the squatter; if unwanted by him, 'the occupier might use the manure for purposes of cultivation free of charge other than the cost of transporting the manure from one place on the farm to another'.<sup>(162)</sup> It was apparent that firm control was to be kept over both occupier and squatter.

The Kikuyu Central Association's memorandum published in May 1934 also called for changes. Included was a request for direct representation for Africans on the Legislative Council, and for the appointment of a Paramount Chief for the Kikuyu tribe. Furthermore, an education for Africans similar to that given to Europeans and Indians was wanted.

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161. East African Standard, 20 January 1934.

162. East African Standard, 10 February 1934.

Demands on the Imperial Government included an agreement on land, the abolition of hut tax (but not poll tax), the abolition of African registration certificates and the coffee-growing rules.<sup>(163)</sup>

From the depths of the depression and from the seemingly blinkered limitations of officials, it was hard to believe that anything in Kenya would ever change for the better. Nevertheless, in the following five years, Kenya's economy was once more to become viable, and problem areas in the employment of labour pin-pointed.

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163. East African Standard, 5 May 1934.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE RETURN TO PROSPERITY AND LABOUR PROBLEMS, 1935-1939

...we want every freed slave to be turned not  
into an idle vagrant, but into a free labourer  
working for a recognised wage.

- G.N. Curzon (1898).

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Although the face of Kenya was turned towards renewed prosperity in the latter half of the 1930s, there remained some persistent legacies of the depression which had so adversely affected her economy.

So impoverished had been the white farmers - particularly those ex-soldier settlers who possessed little agrarian knowledge and who received little helpful advice - that extensive farming (which required less capital) had replaced intensive farming on a wide front by the mid-1930s.<sup>(1)</sup> With this type of farming, agricultural efficiency plummeted largely as a result of the lack of supervision of African labour.<sup>(2)</sup> Furthermore, during the slump, the demand for plantation labour had declined;<sup>(3)</sup> and this, as well as creating an unemployment problem among Africans, fanned the discontent that had briefly flickered at Mombasa in 1934.

The death of Lord Delamere in 1931 had signalled the beginning of a decline in settler political dominance.<sup>(4)</sup> Lord Francis Scott assumed the Delamere mantle, but 'did not establish his authority until the late nineteen-thirties'.<sup>(5)</sup> Meanwhile, Sir Joseph Byrne - a 'tough and suspicious' man who had become Governor in 1931 - was referred to as 'the first real attempt at a Governor which Kenya has ever had'.<sup>(6)</sup> Unprepared to brook any settler 'old boy' system, he had to contend

1. J.F. Lipscomb, op.cit., p.85.

2. Ibid.

3. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.142.

4. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.82.

5. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.165. 'He was aloof and frequently ill from war injuries, but he had been a Guards officer and...was related to the Royal Family.'

6. Ibid.

with the large landowners who attempted to dominate Kenya politics and agriculture.<sup>(7)</sup> Up to a point, the settler landowners were successful because:

...[they] were able to rule out proposals for a land tax or for an increase of direct instead of indirect taxes, [and] the tax burden was therefore kept squarely on the shoulders of the poor whites and of the coloured races. (8)

Lord Francis Scott, however, did criticise white tax evasion as setting a bad example to the Africans.<sup>(9)</sup>

The economic ebb-tide in Kenya had begun to turn with the discovery of payable gold at Kakamega in 1932. The mining industry had given jobs to 1 000 whites and 10 000 Africans from farms in the surrounding areas.<sup>(10)</sup> In addition, recovery was reinforced by the successful cultivation of high-quality pyrethrum in the Highlands.<sup>(11)</sup> As the world's recovery from the depression continued, so 'the prices of some primary products registered an appreciable advance' during the course of 1935. In response to these more favourable circumstances, Kenya farmers expanded their production of agricultural produce. Indeed, although no agricultural census was taken in 1935, Frankel's estimates of production on white farms (contained in Appendix 7) indicate significant improvement across a broad front - in maize, wheat, sisal, wattle bark, sugar and tea.<sup>(12)</sup> Even the continued low price for coffee did not prevent an increase in output, while the export of hides and skins declined only marginally.<sup>(13)</sup> The mid-1930s, then, marked a return to more prosperous conditions for white farmers.

That prosperity, it was argued, could have been even greater were it not for what was regarded as unfair competition from African-grown crops. As early as 1933, while on a visit to Kenya, the Colonial

7. Byrne successfully 'stifled' the settler dominated Board of Agriculture. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, *op.cit.*, p.166.

8. R.K.P. Pankhurst, *Kenya: The History of Two Nations* (1954), p.71.

9. *East African Standard*, 12 April 1935.

10. A.M. MacPhee, *op.cit.*, p.88. 'It had been computed that some 7 000 labourers found employment on mine surface works, and nearly 5 000 were employed underground.'

11. *Ibid.* Approximately 400 acres of pyrethrum had been planted by 1933.

12. S.H. Frankel, *op.cit.*, Table 64, no page.

13. *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate*, 1935, Col.no.1771, p.14.

Secretary, P. Cunliffe-Lister, had expressed his concern about 'the growth of a petty African trading class, many of whom had little capital, and in the view of the State, were parasitic on the productive farming members of the society'.<sup>(14)</sup> It was thought that these small traders and their Indian counterparts cheated farmers out of fair prices for their products.<sup>(15)</sup> Moreover, as the traders ignored crop quality, they did not pay higher prices for choice crops, and thus provided no incentive for farmers to grow these.<sup>(16)</sup>

Some form of quality control was clearly called for, particularly if the newly-improved conditions were to be maintained. Accordingly, an Ordinance was introduced in 1935 to regulate the marketing of African produce. The Native Produce Market Ordinance:

...[gave] additional powers to control and regulate native produce. Purchase [might] only be under licence. Exclusive licences [might] be granted for periods up to seven years for products or technical methods new to an area. The Governor-in-Council [might] prescribe minimum prices where an exclusive licence was granted, and barter [might] be prohibited....This Ordinance [was] applied to wheat, maize, milk and butter. (17)

Such was the effect of this Ordinance that in the following year, 1936, African-grown maize of high quality was exported overseas for the first time since the 1920s.<sup>(18)</sup> R.L. Tignor pointed out that as well as being behind this legislation, the white settlers were its chief beneficiaries: the overseas price of maize was lower than that pertaining in Kenya where African-grown maize had dominated the market.<sup>(19)</sup> Members of the Kenya Farmers' Association were as obstructive and self-interested in matters of African commercialised maize-growing as they had been about African coffee cultivation.<sup>(20)</sup>

14. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.300.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid. '...a large quantity of inferior stuff is often bought and mixed with better produce, lowering its grade and making it hard to sell.'

17. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.1421.

18. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.302. African-grown maize had been exported to Tanganyika Territory prior to this time.

19. Ibid., p.303.

20. Fairly large-scale commercial agriculture was found mainly amongst the Kikuyu, on land where the Kenya Land Commission had noted increasing population pressure.

In addition to Kenya's internal and overseas trade, there was a considerable entrepôt trade with Tanganyika and Uganda. This, together with 'the common railway shared with Uganda', made Kenya's balance of trade position difficult to analyse. Most reports confirmed 'a visible adverse balance of trade of about £3 000 000 in the years 1928-29, and of about £1 300 000 in 1930, becoming slightly favourable in 1933'.<sup>(21)</sup> From this year onwards, Kenya's position in this respect began to improve. Nevertheless, Hailey believed that 'in every year before 1936, it must be doubtful whether even with a substantial income from abroad, the balance of trade was satisfactory except with the support of continuous capital investment'.<sup>(22)</sup>

During the mid-1930s, therefore, foreign indebtedness remained a serious problem.<sup>(23)</sup> Batten observed that this type of situation might 'force the debtor country to concentrate too much on the export trade as the only means by which it can obtain money to meet the interest owing abroad, and to neglect adequate production for local needs'.<sup>(24)</sup> It was also clear that:

when a few hundred thousand pounds of Kenya's limited loan capital are used to assist European settlement and development, they constitute investments which are secured on sound assets, on which interest is paid, and which are in most cases ultimately recoverable in full. When the much larger sums that were needed for African settlement and development are used, they represent an essential investment in progress and social stability, but little is recoverable in cash. (25)

All the same, as the years went by, any investment in Kenya's stability would have been as socially beneficial as the more tangible profits derived from white agriculture.

21. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.1350. Re-exports included raw coffee, raw cotton, machinery, cotton textiles, oils, motor cars and parts, and motor lorries and parts. 1936 figures for raw coffee and oils were the highest at values of £396 212 and £445 571 respectively. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.26.

22. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.1351.

23. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., p.174, confirmed that interest rates at this time were 'exceptionally high'.

24. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.117.

25. J.F. Lipscomb, op.cit., p.63.

Accompanying Kenya's return to more prosperous circumstances was renewed concern for the need to control that vital ingredient of agricultural success: labour. Central to this issue was the kipande, a registration certificate which provided some means of control but which was considered by Africans as 'a symbol of their perpetual inferiority'.<sup>(26)</sup> The kipande was a useful means of control in so far as it provided proof of identity and contained a record of employers and wages earned. However, in February 1936, at the annual general meeting of the Thika District Association, members referred to 'the contempt in which the kipande system was held by natives':

At the present time a native can terminate a contract by throwing away his kipande and applying for a new one, often under another name. The old method of checking up finger-prints has been abandoned, and therefore it is impossible to keep a check on the number of kipandes with which a native has been issued. Further, as each new kipande has no previous record of employment entered upon it, it is of no assistance to his employer who may be engaging his next-door neighbour's deserter. (27)

A month later, at their annual general meeting, members of the Ruiru District Association commented on the breakdown of the kipande system. They called on the government to render registration more effective, as it was essential in controlling labour.<sup>(28)</sup>

Another issue which gave rise to concern at this time was the collection of hut and poll taxes in the reserves. 'Bad things are being done', claimed Canon Burns, 'so blatant and apparent that everyone is cognisant of them.'<sup>(29)</sup> These even included the victimisation of widows unless they paid chiefs a sum of money; individuals being beaten by askaris;<sup>(30)</sup> and land being taken over by chiefs if individuals were unable to pay their taxes. It was partly in response to this that Sir Alan Pim headed a commission to inquire into finance and taxation in Kenya in early 1936.<sup>(31)</sup>

26. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.171.

27. East African Standard, 7 February 1936.

28. East African Standard, 6 March 1936.

29. East African Standard, 17 January 1936.

30. An askari is a tribal policeman.

31. S.H. Frankel, op.cit., p.261.

The commissioners' recommendations included a reduction in African hut and poll tax, and led to the passing of the Native Hut and Poll Tax (Amendment) Ordinance of 1936. This stipulated that Africans under the age of eighteen years should not be required to pay poll tax. Furthermore, if an African had more wives than huts, he had only to pay a tax for each hut.<sup>(32)</sup> A year later, in May 1937, a further result of the Pim Commission percolated through officialdom to emerge as a recommendation for the 'advisability and possibility' of a reduction in hut and poll tax on additional huts. The Governor appointed a committee to consider the matter.<sup>(33)</sup> It was urged that a lower tax than the running rate of Shs.12 per hut per annum be considered, along with a reduction in tax for African women.<sup>(34)</sup> As far as can be ascertained, however, nothing was done about this prior to the Second World War, and there the matter rested.

The issue of taxation soon became embroiled with political matters on a broader front. Throughout Byrne's governorship, from 1931 to 1936, white settlers attempted to increase their influence on the Executive Council. Their aim, in fact, was the granting of responsible government for Kenya.<sup>(35)</sup> After several unfruitful and stormy meetings of the Legislative Council, two members, Major F.N. Cavendish-Bentinck and Captain H.E. Schwartz, called personally on the Colonial Office in London. The Colonial Office refused to accede to their request for 'closer and more effective consultation' for settlers with the Kenya government. Shortly thereafter, however, a rapprochement between settlers and administration was reached: 'settlers accepting income tax in return for an increase in their numbers in the Executive Council'.<sup>(36)</sup> This involved a reduction in official members from eight to four. A pertinent rider to this agreement was that the white population should not be asked to contribute in any way to the extension of African social services.<sup>(37)</sup> At long last, then, an income tax was imposed upon white settlers in 1937, bringing in a total of £18 161 for that year.

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32. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1936, Col.no.1806, p.54.

33. East African Standard, 7 May 1937.

34. East African Standard, 7 May 1937.

35. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.166.

36. Ibid., p.167.

37. R.K.P. Pankhurst, op.cit., p.71.



Concurrently, 'non-native' poll tax contributed £44 664 to colonial revenue and hut and poll tax £532 895, still by far the lion's share of total tax revenue.<sup>(38)</sup>

Meanwhile, prices of primary products continued to improve in 1936,<sup>(39)</sup> with the result that this was a record year for Kenyan agriculture.<sup>(40)</sup> An exception to the upward trend was sisal, the price of which remained static.<sup>(41)</sup> Sisal exports, on the other hand, showed a steady increase, reaching 32 185 long tons valued at £128 565 in 1936.<sup>(42)</sup> In the case of virtually every other crop, however, substantial progress was recorded.

With regard to the coffee industry, different conditions of soil and climate governed whether the Arabica or Robusta variety was grown. In order to maintain quality in the face of overseas competition, berry disease and infestations of mealy-bug were studied by the Department of Agriculture. The Kenya Coffee Board exercised control over the industry, which by 1936 included coffee curing and cleaning factories at Nairobi, Kitale and Mombasa.<sup>(43)</sup> The Coffee Board also negotiated the establishment of Coffee Exchanges in East Africa.<sup>(44)</sup>

Concurrently, tea production improved rapidly. Hailey noted a nearly ten-fold increase in production between 1930 and 1936, from 930 209 pounds to 9 043 124 pounds,<sup>(45)</sup> although the Annual Report for 1936 puts the 1936 production figure at 6 777 154 pounds.<sup>(46)</sup> Tea interests in Kenya were controlled by the Kenya Tea Growers' Association, which 'decided on such matters as export quotas and dealt with labour officers in such matters as juvenile labour and labour conditions in general'.<sup>(47)</sup> Many of the labourers on tea estates came from the Luo

38. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.56.

39. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1936, Col.no.1806, p.14.

40. East African Standard, 30 July 1937. This reflected higher prices 'rather than any increase in the volume of exports'.

41. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1936, Col.no.1806, p.14.

42. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

43. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.923.

44. East African Standard, 30 July 1937.

45. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.924.

46. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

47. H. Fearn, op.cit., p.151.

and Kisii tribes of Nyanza Province.<sup>(48)</sup>

The cultivation of sugar cane was mainly in the hands of white farmers by 1936, although Indian cultivation of the crop continued successfully on a smaller scale.<sup>(49)</sup> In 1936, 258 453 cwt. of crystallised sugar was produced from an area of 11 568 acres,<sup>(50)</sup> and 306 308 cwt. of refined sugar valued at £164 821 was exported.<sup>(51)</sup> H. Fearn commented on the heavy local demand being due to 'the drinking of sweet tea' by Africans, who 'cannot buy sugar in sufficient quantity in the shops and ask for a sugar ration as part of their emoluments when seeking employment'.<sup>(52)</sup>

Wheat, covering an area of 52 135 acres in 1936, was grown for the most part at altitudes of between 7 000 and 9 000 feet. Some strains, however, grew well at lower levels.<sup>(53)</sup> Output for 1936 was 152 964 200-lb bags,<sup>(54)</sup> while 45 996 cwt. of wheat and 61 875 cwt. of wheat flour were exported in that year.<sup>(55)</sup> Ongoing research by the Department of Agriculture aimed to produce rust-resistant varieties of wheat, but 'it is said to be difficult to find a strain that will be resistant to all forms of rust and yet up to the present standard in quality'.<sup>(56)</sup> Of much greater importance than wheat was the production of maize: 117 848 acres of maize produced 1 011 863 200-lb bags in 1936,<sup>(57)</sup> a large increase over the previous year's output of 969 485 bags.<sup>(58)</sup> In 1936, 1 452 380 cwt. of maize was exported, valued at £233 371.<sup>(59)</sup>

48. *Ibid.*, p.152.

49. Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.338, noted, presumably referring to the middle or late 1930s when his book was researched: 'It may reasonably be doubted whether there is any considerably body of Indians, who wish, under present conditions to take to agriculture; the question seems at this stage to have become largely one of status.'

50. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

51. *Ibid.*, p.26. There is no explanation for these figures except that perhaps it may be explained by total sugar production.

52. H. Fearn, *op.cit.*, p.153.

53. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.921.

54. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

55. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.921.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

58. *Vide supra*, p.110.

59. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.26.

A new and important production statistic quoted officially for the first time was that of pyrethrum. From its modest beginnings of 425 acres in 1933,<sup>(60)</sup> the crop in 1936 covered 3 794 acres from which 8 933 cwt. of pyrethrum was produced.<sup>(61)</sup> Hill noted that yields per acre were high, and that pyrethrum flowers fetched between £80 and £100 per ton. Furthermore, the pyrethrin content of Kenya flowers was particularly high.<sup>(62)</sup> It was pointed out, however, that:

Because the flowers have to be artifically dried before sale, and because the picking needs a large number of unskilled resident labourers, the increase in acreage under pyrethrum caused excessive deforestation and erosion, and the margin of profit encouraged exploitative farming. (63)

Cultivation of this crop became so profitable that the acreage increased a hundred-fold in the six-year period 1933-1939, contributing in large measure to the recovery of Kenya farmers' finances.<sup>(64)</sup> Further financial aid to the agricultural community was forthcoming with the passing of the Farmers' Assistance Ordinance No.18 of 1936, which provided for 'a system of short-term agricultural relief'.<sup>(65)</sup>

African production, of the crops which they were encouraged to grow, proceeded well. Sorghum was grown extensively and became a cash crop where cultivators were near markets.<sup>(66)</sup> Hailey learned that 'every part of the plant [was] used: the flour for human food, the bran for feeding stock, the leaves for fodder, and the stalks for building houses and fences'.<sup>(67)</sup> Groundnuts were also versatile: they renovated the soil and moreover were used for fodder.<sup>(68)</sup> Few yams were grown as rainfall was mostly insufficient in Kenya. However, the cultivation of

60. Vide supra, p.106.

61. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.15.

62. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.501. Lord Cranworth, op.cit., p.325, noted that the Kenya crop was 'of a quality which commands a price of about fifty per cent in advance of that produced in Japan, which has been till recently the principal source of the world's supply'.

63. M.F. Hill, op.cit., p.501.

64. Ibid.

65. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1936, Col.no.1806, p.52.

66. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.894.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., p.897.

rice, mostly in Nyanza Province and near the coast, was rewarding. In 1936, after only two years of cultivation, 2 000 bags of rice were exported from Nyanza.<sup>(69)</sup> Sesame, or sim-sim, thrived in areas of moderate rainfall, such as Nyanza. Hailey commented on the fact that the white-seeded varieties were being tried in Coast Province. In 1936, 3 958 tons of seed and 85 455 gallons of oil were exported from Kenya.<sup>(70)</sup>

Cotton, according to Lugard, '[enjoyed] the advantage of being a later crop than the main staples'.<sup>(71)</sup> First introduced in 1907,<sup>(72)</sup> cotton was not an 'easy' crop. It required careful weeding and accurate timing of the harvest when the cotton boll was at exactly the right stage of development.<sup>(73)</sup> By 1936, however, cotton was the chief crop in the African reserves of Nyanza Province and Coast Province. The 1930 output of 783 bales, each weighing 400 pounds, was bettered in 1936 by 16 165 bales, and there were twelve ginneries in operation.<sup>(74)</sup> Hailey observed that 'in some areas cotton has been worked in satisfactorily with other crops, but in other areas, it is causing over-cropping, and where it is grown on hill slopes, it is said to be responsible for soil erosion'.<sup>(75)</sup>

In the African reserves, maize covered an area of 1 750 000 acres, and was an important food and cash crop. The main problems in its cultivation for export by Africans were the high cost of rail and ocean freights, and distance from markets.<sup>(76)</sup> L.S.B. Leakey, writing in 1936, complained that there was 'no organisation to facilitate the flow of produce from the African areas'.<sup>(77)</sup> Nevertheless, he was hopeful that there would be an improvement as more roads were being opened up each year.<sup>(78)</sup>

Agricultural education for African farmers continued fairly

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., p.899.

71. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.524.

72. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.221.

73. Ibid. The Luo were cattle-keepers, loath to be concerned with a crop which competed with the 'easier' maize. Low yields and low returns resulted from their inattention to weeding the cotton.

74. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.903.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., p.892.

77. L.S.B. Leakey, op.cit., p.114.

78. Ibid.

steadily in the mid-1930s. In 1936, there were 157 African demonstrators and grain inspectors working in Nyanza Province, and 173 in Central Province.<sup>(79)</sup> However, Tignor noted the impracticality of the experimental four-acre small-holdings which had been started in Kikuyu in 1931. By 1937, only 2 000 of these farms remained in Kenya.<sup>(80)</sup> There were a number of reasons for this, among them the limited area of arable land. This meant that animals were grazed on 'less desirable more arid communal lands' some distance away from agricultural plots, and hence were not used to provide fertiliser for crops.<sup>(81)</sup> The fragmentation of land-holdings was also a complicating factor as the population increased: 'at any given moment a piece of family land would have a number of small plots on it, and on such divided estates unified schemes of mixed farming were not likely to develop'.<sup>(82)</sup>

Population increase within the reserves led to many tribesmen - especially Kikuyu - moving out and joining the already large number of squatters. In 1936, it was estimated that there were over 100 000 squatters.<sup>(83)</sup> Living on white farms, these Africans received more land to cultivate than they would have were they to have remained in the reserves; but, importantly, they did not own this land.<sup>(84)</sup>

In 1937, a spate of legislation redefined the settler's continuing love-hate relationship with his labour. The month of March (a few weeks before Sir Robert Brooke-Popham became Governor) saw the publication of a new Squatters' Bill which was to become the Resident Labourers' Ordinance of 1937. It was pointed out that:

...the main fundamental change...as compared with the 1925 Ordinance, is the exercise of local option. Local authorities may prohibit the engagement of resident labourers, or squatters, on any farm, or group of farms, having due regard to the wishes of the farm occupiers within their areas of jurisdiction, so far as can be reasonably and conveniently ascertained. <sup>(85)</sup>

Another important change was the extension of the squatter's contract

79. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.964.

80. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.306. After an exhaustive search, it has not been possible to determine the original number of four-acre plots.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. L.S.B. Leakey, op.cit., p.105.

84. Ibid.

85. East African Standard, 19 March 1937.

from three to five years with three months' notice instead of six. The 180 days of work per annum remained a minimum; the maximum was 270. In future, moreover, the squatter's contract was to be endorsed on his kipande, to bring the squatter into line with the terms of the Native Registration Ordinance, and he was to be 'signed off' upon termination of his contract. The occupier was to provide building material for family huts, land for cultivation, and, when agreed upon, land for grazing. If the farm changed hands, 'the contract would be deemed to have been assigned to the new occupier and to be a contract between the new occupier and the resident labourer'.<sup>(86)</sup>

Soon thereafter, there was criticism of this proposed Ordinance. E.H. Wright, a settler, noted at a Thompson's Falls District Association meeting:

...there are three evils connected with the Squatter or Resident Labour System: first the goat, then squatter stock in general and last the squatter himself and his family....I am convinced that in the most progressive parts of the country, squatters will go by the board. (Applause) <sup>(87)</sup>

In July, another settler, a Mr. Skelton, took exception to the local authority being empowered to decide how many days a squatter should work, and opined that 'this should be at the discretion of the employer'.<sup>(88)</sup>

In the Legislative Council at the end of July 1937, a Bill to Regulate the Residence of Labourers on Farms was discussed, stress being laid on the omission of the word 'squatter'. This was to be interpreted that resident labourers were servants and not tenants:

...people who came to reside on land which is alienated with a view to offering themselves as labourers in payment of money, and the right to graze certain stock on those farms. <sup>(89)</sup>

In view of the need to control the resident labourer and his stock, this was interpreted as 'a consolidating bill'. Local authorities were to have regard to the wishes and reasonable labour requirements of the occupiers. The co-operation of all was requested if and when resident labourers were turned off land, as they had to have land to go to, and

86. East African Standard, 19 March 1937.

87. East African Standard, 4 June 1937.

88. East African Standard, 16 July 1937.

89. East African Standard, 30 July 1937.

'the government was actively engaged in getting that land'.<sup>(90)</sup> This exercise, in the crowded reserves, was far from easy.

There was a sequel to this discussion at the following Legislative Council meeting when it was commented that the Resident Native Labourers' Bill had been put forward by the stock-owning section of the community.<sup>(91)</sup> Captain E.C. Long thought squatters were 'more trouble than they were worth':

...if the sisal and pyetethrum people wanted to keep resident native labour they could do so....  
~~But~~ they brought in all kinds of stock disease, 'did in' the land, and were terribly difficult to manage. <sup>(92)</sup>

Colonel T.O. Fitzgerald resented the powers of interference of the local authority, which he averred 'had all the makings of a first-class dog-fight between the occupier, the local authority and the resident native labourer'.<sup>(93)</sup>

Archdeacon Burns, representing African interests, believed that the African and settler were in mutual need of each other. He emphasized further that the social system of the people of Africa 'rested on the bedrock of sheep, goats and cattle, particularly goats'.<sup>(94)</sup> E.H. Wright saw the interests of stock-owners taking precedence over those of coffee-planters and producers of other crops. The Chief Native Commissioner was interested in the bill only 'to see that no employer kept on his farm more resident labourers than he could usefully employ in one year'. Major Grogan said he had 'cleared all squatters off land under my control ~~because~~ uncontrolled natives were a disaster to the Colony'.<sup>(95)</sup>

In a continuing debate, the Attorney-General stressed that the local authority would consider 'the interests and extent of each farm within the area to be affected by such an order', so that the rights of a large farmer would be safeguarded against the pressure from small farmers surrounding his farm. Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkwood thought that Africans should get permission to sell produce grown on the occupier's

90. East African Standard, 30 July 1937.

91. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

92. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

93. In the case of absentee landlords, the 'occupier' could in fact be a squatter himself. East African Standard, 28 May 1937.

94. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

95. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

land, but Archdeacon Burns stood out for the view that such produce was 'undoubtedly the native's own property'. C. Harvey believed that there was 'no harm in getting permission to sell produce as [the squatter] had to get permission to do everything else'. Major Grogan considered that the African should give notice to the occupier of his intention to sell produce.<sup>(96)</sup>

Alongside the controversy revolving around squatters and their stock, there was growing concern for settler security in the white Highlands. Major Cavendish-Bentinck praised the usefulness of the recommendations - still unimplemented - of the Kenya Land Commission of 1933 in protecting African reserves.<sup>(97)</sup> However, '...we consider it would be invidious if the native reserves were to be protected in this manner and no similar security given to the Eastern Highlands'.<sup>(98)</sup> The Major wanted an assurance from 'His Majesty's Government definitely to accept once and for all the commissioners' definition of the boundaries of the European Highlands', and an ordinance promulgated to this effect.<sup>(99)</sup>

It was becoming increasingly apparent that settlers wanted to shore up their position by having all issues clearly defined; only Major Grogan ridiculed this 'urge for defining things'.<sup>(100)</sup> In mid-1937, further definitions were added to the Native Registration Ordinance. Included, inter alia, were 'penalties and methods of procedure to bring this into line with the new Employment of Servants Bill'.<sup>(101)</sup>

The 'old' definition of a deserter was 'a servant who absented himself from his employer's service with "intent" not to return'; the 'new' definition as 'absence by a servant without lawful excuse for a period exceeding seven whole consecutive days from his place of employment'. Task work was 'such amount of piece work as can in the opinion of a labour officer be performed by a servant in six hours working diligently at such work'. There was consideration, furthermore, of the decoying and harbouring of servants, the employment of juveniles, and medical assistance to servants. Major Grogan not uncharacteristically

96. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

97. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

98. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

99. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

100. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

101. East African Standard, 9 July 1937.



thought that so much of 'this stuff [was] forced upon them that after a time no reasonable people paid any attention'.<sup>(102)</sup>

Despite being hedged about with definitions, labour for settlers was still hard to come by. And where the gold mines of Kakamega had provided employment for white and black during the depression, work on the mines abstracted labour needed on the expanding acreage brought under cultivation in response to rising primary product prices.<sup>(103)</sup>

For African farmers, 1937 was a prosperous year, with 'adequate rainfall, soaring prices, absence of locusts and abundance of employment with improved wages'. Areas previously hit by famine recuperated in an 'amazing' manner.<sup>(104)</sup> Hut and poll tax brought in £532 895,<sup>(105)</sup> which was £12 000 less than the 1936 figure,<sup>(106)</sup> thanks to the reduced rates for certain areas being maintained.<sup>(107)</sup>

It was noted late in 1937 that the implementation of the Marketing of Native Produce Ordinance had 'a pronounced effect'. African traders, who used to travel through the reserves buying produce at a price 'well below the market value',<sup>(108)</sup> were now prevented from doing so by the Ordinance:

...all produce of specified kinds for sale, except that sold by one native to another for local consumption, was now brought to gazetted marketing and trading centres, where the price for the day was displayed on a board and a standard measure used. <sup>(109)</sup>

Africans thus ceased to be at the mercy of itinerant buyers and could attend markets close to their homes.

African prosperity was unfortunately a factor contributing to white anxiety over labour. This development, whereby a growing number of Africans no longer needed cash wages, coupled with the labour demands of nascent industry, led to 'non-native agriculture being placed in some degree of jeopardy'.<sup>(110)</sup> Many Africans appeared to be aware of

102. East African Standard, 6 August 1937.

103. East African Standard, 9 July 1937.

104. East African Standard, 15 October 1937.

105. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.56.

106. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1936, Col.no.1806, p.57.

107. East African Standard, 15 October 1937.

108. Vide supra, p.111.

109. East African Standard, 15 October 1937.

110. East African Standard, 3 December 1937.

their increased bargaining power. For example, coffee planters were worried about the picking of their crop as African women insisted upon an increase in their pay for picking.<sup>(111)</sup> An East African Standard editorial urged that an enquiry be initiated into 'not only the needs and financial difficulties of the employer, but the economic conditions and social requirements and potentialities of the African as well'.<sup>(112)</sup>

Simultaneously, unemployed Africans were creating a problem in Nairobi. A correspondent of the newspaper suggested that this 'potential labour force of 5 000 people' could usefully find work in other parts of the colony.<sup>(113)</sup> Nevertheless, African labour figures for the month of December stood at 186 661, 'a record for the Colony'.<sup>(114)</sup> Moreover, it was noted officially that:

Whilst labour was not plentiful during the first nine months of 1937, no acute shortage occurred, and by the end of the year, the position was satisfactory. It was noteworthy that employers who were well-known to take a personal interest in their employees, and to feed and house them well, obtained labour with ease. <sup>(115)</sup>

In this respect - that concerned and sympathetic employers experienced little labour difficulty - times had not changed.

A.M. MacPhee referred to 1938 and 1939 as 'years of consolidation for Kenya in spite of growing threats of war'.<sup>(116)</sup> To facilitate coherence in certain aspects of both labour and agriculture, developments during those years will be handled together when topics require this.

Labour problems appeared to deteriorate in 1938, and were particularly commented on at the Trans Nzoia District Association's annual general meeting in February. Major J.G. Le Breton suggested the provision of camps to facilitate the movement of migrant labour, and an end to the 'wage war'.<sup>(117)</sup> Two months later, the labour shortage at Sotik was blamed on the debility resulting from the ravages of malaria in the Lumbwa reserve, and 'the increasing reluctance of the Kisii Jalno tribes to do any really hard work'.<sup>(118)</sup>

111. East African Standard, 3 December 1937.

112. East African Standard, 3 December 1937.

113. East African Standard, 10 December 1937.

114. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1937, Col.no.1858, p.28.

115. Ibid.

116. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.90.

117. East African Standard, 4 February 1938.

118. East African Standard, 8 April 1938.

In April 1938, the Legislative Council considered ways to 'minimise the complexity of the labour situation'. Proposals by Major Cavendish-Bentinck were that the Resident Native Labour Ordinance passed in August 1937 be brought into force; that the staff of the Labour Department be increased; that the dual policy be strictly adhered to; and that measures be introduced to deal with the unemployed Africans in Nairobi.<sup>(119)</sup> For the moment, thanks to the fall in the price of sisal and the low price of cotton, the recent labour shortage was over, but it was opined by Major Cavendish-Bentinck that 'the real trouble was not in the numbers of natives coming out to work, but in the frightfully wasteful manner in which they were employed, and to lack of organisation'. The Major complained, moreover, 'that it took two-and-a-half men to do one man's work, and that the native considered he had done a fairly hard year's work when he had done about four and a half months'.<sup>(120)</sup>

In reaction to these claims, the ex-Chief Native Commissioner, H.R. Montgomery, observed that available Africans were coming out to work 'extremely well', and that in any case the Resident Native Labourers Ordinance could not be implemented until the Colonial Secretary was satisfied that there was enough land available to which the squatters - mainly Kikuyu - could return. The Masai land, which was available for alienation for this purpose, protected headwaters and 'would be dangerous in the hands of Kikuyu'.<sup>(121)</sup> Towards the end of the debate, S.V. Cooke urged the Chief Native Commissioner to go ahead with a firm and constructive policy, and hoped he 'would not sit on the fence with one eye on the Manchester Guardian and the other on the East African Standard'. The final vote was for the implementation of the Ordinance.<sup>(122)</sup>

There was subsequent comment on labour difficulties, and a call for the government to form a central labour organisation to regulate the supply and distribution of labour.<sup>(123)</sup> At a Thika District Association meeting, several speakers stressed 'the tendency of Kikuyu labour to consider themselves coffee-picking specialists and to refuse to perform

119. East African Standard, 29 April 1938.

120. East African Standard, 29 April 1938.

121. East African Standard, 29 April 1938. A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, op.cit., p.176, noted that the Colonial Secretary's approval 'was held up until late in 1939'.

122. East African Standard, 29 April 1938.

123. East African Standard, 13 May 1938.

heavier manual labour'.<sup>(124)</sup> P. de V. Allen, the Principal Labour Officer, turned down the suggestion of a central labour organisation as 'unworkable', described the detribalised Nairobi Africans as 'unemployables', and reiterated the 'great secret' which lay in the handling and good treatment of labourers. In line with this, he called for improved housing and food to attract labour, as 'better food meant better work'.<sup>(125)</sup>

Later, in May 1938, the focus of attention shifted to the employment of juvenile labour. Archdeacon Owen, writing in the Manchester Guardian, attacked a clause, in a bill to control the employment of servants, to the effect that 'no juvenile under the age of ten years shall be allowed to enter into a contract of service'. The Archdeacon singled out particularly the tea industry, where 'the small hands and fingers of children can [pick] more neatly and with less damage to the crop than adults'.<sup>(126)</sup> Juvenile labour was also useful in the pyrethrum industry; indeed, it was believed that the industry would suffer were children prevented from working.<sup>(127)</sup>

A committee formed in December 1938 found little abuse of juvenile labour in Kenya. The investigation revealed that although exact figures were unavailable, only about 14 000 children out of a total of between 35 000 and 36 000 were at work at any one time;<sup>(128)</sup> most of the children were boys; that the tea estates at Kericho and Limuru were the largest employers of children, with 5 500 per month,<sup>(129)</sup> and that children also worked on coffee, sisal and pyrethrum estates.<sup>(130)</sup> Some

124. East African Standard, 13 May 1938.

125. East African Standard, 13 May 1938.

126. East African Standard, 27 May 1938.

127. East African Standard, 9 August 1938.

128. The latest estimate of African population in Kenya was 3 253 689. Using a new formula, the estimated total of males was 1 536 392. Of these 34 per cent were in the 'able-bodied' group between the ages of sixteen and forty, and comprised 523 193. 13.92 per cent were between the ages of ten and sixteen years, comprising 214 000. East African Standard, 21 October 1938.

129. Conditions were good on tea estates, and most of the children were over the age of twelve years. The children, working by the day or on a 30-day contract, picked leaf or weeded, and were paid Shs.5 to Shs.7 per month. Some earned a bonus. East African Standard, 12 December 1938.

130. Sisal estates employed children for light work, hanging up bunches of fibre to dry and weeding. Conditions were not good and the wages were between Shs.4 and Shs.7. East African Standard, 16 December 1938.

children helped their mothers with picking, but on the whole, parental control was 'not what it used to be'. The committee was conscious of a moral obligation 'to keep track of employed juveniles'.<sup>(131)</sup>

It was reported in January 1939 that in the House of Commons the Colonial Secretary had approved the recommendations of the committee.<sup>(132)</sup> Subsequently, Archdeacon Owen complained that some children were 'lost' after parents had sent them out to work on account of heavy taxation. He urged that the age for employment be raised to fourteen years.<sup>(133)</sup> However, a letter over the signatures of the Bishop of Mombasa and the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society noted that the government was 'doing its utmost to regulate in the best possible way all forms of juvenile employment'.<sup>(134)</sup> And there the matter rested.

With regard to agriculture, the dominant theme for 1938 was one of expanding output. However, earning fluctuated from one crop to another as the prices of some primary produce declined. In the case of sisal, 27 872 tons valued at £440 920 were exported in 1938 as against 29 835 tons valued at £654 914 in 1937. Raw cotton output in 1937 was 1 424 755 centals worth £4 460 801; in 1938, the lower cotton price was evident when the output of 1 657 800 centals was valued at only £3 532 063. Maize output was 1 179 340 cwt. worth £259 346 in 1938 as compared with 728 373 cwt. worth £198 832 in 1937. The 1937 output of raw coffee of 531 842 cwt. rose to 622 066 cwt. in 1938, but the lower price for coffee was reflected in the corresponding values of £1 153 179 for 1937 and £1 095 449 for 1938. Some 301 000 cwt. of refined sugar was produced in 1937, worth £167 417; in 1938, the output of this commodity rose to 334 249 cwt. and was worth £183 611. Tea production continued its upward trend: 83 197 cwt. for 1937 grew to 85 440 cwt. in 1938 and values rose from £474 599 to £508 066.<sup>(135)</sup> There was a small-scale renewal of interest in the cultivation of flax, and also limited production of tobacco.<sup>(136)</sup>

Overseas markets were uncertain at this time and the prices of

131. East African Standard, 16 December 1938.

132. East African Standard, 6 January 1939.

133. East African Standard, 20 January 1939.

134. East African Standard, 10 February 1939.

135. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1938, Col.no.1920, p.28.

136. Ibid., p.16.

many agricultural commodities were low. These factors affected the hides and skins industry in the African reserves.<sup>(137)</sup> In 1937, 79 953 cwt. of hides were exported, valued at £280 384; but in 1938, the 87 458 cwt. of hides exported were only worth £190 819.<sup>(138)</sup> There was, nevertheless, a general progress in agricultural development in the African reserves. Improved farming methods together with organised marketing facilities upgraded the traditional peasant agriculture and controlled sales of produce. African agricultural schools near Nairobi (for Central Province) and Bukura (for Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces) emphasized proper rotation of crops to safeguard soil fertility. The prevention of soil erosion was also stressed.<sup>(139)</sup>

The erosion of soil was indeed rapidly becoming an increasingly serious problem. In the late 1930s, whenever there was talk of African reserves or squatters or cash crop cultivation, so also was concern expressed at the dire loss of soil. Hailey noted that the problem arose 'from the acceleration of the normal rate of erosion by reason of the activities of man'.<sup>(140)</sup> Such was the severity of the problem that, in certain areas, twelve inches of top soil had been lost during the course of a single year.<sup>(141)</sup>

A special soil conservation service was organised under the Department of Agriculture, and studies made of the 'sheet', 'gully' and 'wind' erosion which plagued the colony.<sup>(142)</sup> Causes of these extreme forms of soil loss in African reserves included: rapid population growth; an increased desire for profits from cash crops (particularly cotton and maize); the absence of mixed farming; the utilization of unsuitable slopes for crop-planting; over-grazing by too many animals; and the fragmentation of land-holdings.<sup>(143)</sup> Education in soil conservation was moderately successful in the Kikuyu reserve, where anti-erosion measures advocated by Local Native Councils were put into practice: the Kikuyu planted wattle trees on hillsides, used compost

137. *Ibid.*, p.18.

138. *Ibid.*, p.28.

139. *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

140. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.1056.

141. *Ibid.*, p.1058. J.F. Lipscomb, *op.cit.*, p.55, observed that such torrential rain was 'incomprehensible' to people from countries which only ever had light rain.

142. Lord Hailey, *op.cit.*, p.1057.

143. G.V. Jacks and R.O. Whyte, The Rape of the Earth (1939), p.73.

and practised mixed farming.<sup>(144)</sup> In the other reserves, however, little progress was recorded.

Lack of funds prevented effective large-scale government action, and measures such as compulsory de-stocking and rotational grazing ran counter to traditional African custom. Between 1931 and 1936, in the Kamasia reserve:

...only 7 000 acres out of nearly 700 000 acres which needed reconditioning were dealt with by being closed to stock long enough for seeds to establish themselves, by making contour furrows, and in some cases by actual planting of grass. The cost to the government was a little over £5 000. <sup>(145)</sup>

At the conclusion of this programme, herdsmen simply returned to the reconditioned areas, animals overgrazed them once again, and the old hazardous situation reappeared.<sup>(146)</sup>

Governor Brooke-Popham had referred to the Kamasia reserve in his opening address to the Legislative Council in July 1937. He also spoke of the need in the Machakos (Kamba) reserve for the terracing and reconditioning of land. In the same year, the government received funds, 'part grant and part loan', amounting to £34 000 to finance anti-erosion schemes for the whole Kamba reserve,<sup>(147)</sup> 'thirty-seven per cent of which was eroded to the sub-soil and beyond'.<sup>(148)</sup> This reserve which could 'properly support 60 000 cattle', was in fact the home of '250 000 head of cattle, 269 000 goats and 50 000 sheep'.<sup>(149)</sup>

On the strength of this appalling over-stocking and the cost of reconditioning, the government decided to undertake the de-stocking of the Kamba reserve.<sup>(150)</sup> Cattle were duly rounded up and sold to Messrs. Liebig who had several large meat-packing factories in Kenya.<sup>(151)</sup> In reaction, some 1 500 Kamba tribesmen marched on Nairobi to protest against the de-stocking policy, which involved approximately sixty per

144. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.104.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid. G.V. Jacks and R.O. Whyte, op.cit., p.151, stated that in certain cases, unpalatable grasses were planted to ensure the covering and protection of the soil.

147. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.105.

148. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.1096.

149. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.103.

150. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.342. Tignor noted that it would cost between £120 000 and £250 000 'to save Machakos reserve'.

151. A.M. MacPhee, op.cit., p.69.

cent of their stock.<sup>(152)</sup> A subsequent visit to Machakos by Governor Brooke-Popham defused the crisis after some concessions were made.<sup>(153)</sup>

The Kamba episode was but one facet of the unrest which was sweeping Kenya in the late 1930s. In March 1939, unrest in the Lumbwa area was described as 'merely seasonal as it occurred during the season between harvest and planting', but was 'a menace to society in general'.<sup>(154)</sup> It was pointed out in the East African Standard that the unrest 'took the form of indiscipline and thieving of all kinds', and was clear evidence of a growing disregard for the authority of the government.<sup>(155)</sup>

There was also incidence of unrest at Samburu in early June.<sup>(156)</sup> Four weeks later, there was a strike in the railway workshops in Nairobi when 'boys wanted a promise to receive the old rate of pay'. When efforts to persuade them to complete their indentures failed, the boys were repatriated to their homes'.<sup>(157)</sup>

At the end of July 1939, African employees on 'the island' at Mombasa went out on strike. It was opined in the Press that the situation was 'getting serious', as there appeared to be 'a general movement by natives...to demand increases in pay'.<sup>(158)</sup> Concurrently, Harry Thuku addressed a meeting of the Kikuyu Provincial Association on the subject of the Kenya (Native Lands) Ordinance of 1939. The gathering was pleased that the designation of 'Crown Lands' was removed from 'Native Lands' which became theirs. Moreover, there was great satisfaction that the designation 'Native Reserve' was similarly removed. In future, those areas were to be called 'Native Lands' and 'Native Areas'.<sup>(159)</sup>

Early in August 1939, there was trouble in Mombasa when African employees of the Public Works Department demanded an increase in wages, 'amounting to approximately fifty per cent, plus free housing, fourteen days' leave on full pay, and free transport to and from their reserves'.<sup>(160)</sup> Similar demands from labourers in the Municipal Conservancy Department met with a Shs.3 increase in housing allowance.

152. R.L. Tignor, op.cit., p.345.

153. Ibid., p.348. Concessions included the reintroduction of voluntary sales and the stopping of compulsory sales.

154. East African Standard, 10 March 1939.

155. East African Standard, 10 March 1939.

156. East African Standard, 2 June 1939.

157. East African Standard, 30 June 1939.

158. East African Standard, 28 July 1939.

159. East African Standard, 28 July 1939.

160. East African Standard, 4 August 1939.



Demands were also made by Railway employees, by labourers at the Mombasa Electric Light and Power Company's generating station, by workers at the Texaco Oil Company's installation and by the Vacuum Oil Company's African labour. Workers from the African Lightering and Stevedoring Company were 'prevented from going to work by native strikers previously employed by the Kenya Landing and Shipping Company'.<sup>(161)</sup> After police had made arrests, business resumed in Mombasa.

For some months previously, beginning in February 1939, the government's 'native policy' had been queried:

There are many thoughtful people throughout Kenya today who are convinced that the Native Policy of this country is wrong; they have an uneasy feeling that it will lead the Colony and all its peoples into serious trouble before many years are over.... There is no real direction. (162)

The breakdown of tribalism was rapidly becoming more of a reality: 'the younger African is turning his back on all his ties and throwing over-board every social sanction'. The East African Standard reported that:

Our idea seems to be that in order to obtain public revenue for social services, in order to foster commerce,...we must revolutionize the whole traditional system of peasant agriculture on which native life is based. It is said that where at one time the Kikuyu people had forty different species of food plants, most of which were planted in their gardens, the average now is less than a quarter. Cash crops have taken their place. Planting for export or for sale in the local town markets is the objective. The Native people are being taught to abandon much of the knowledge and practice of the past. (163)

The result was seen in malnutrition and the urban-based deterioration in African standards of behaviour.

Six months afterwards, in the wake of the crippling strikes in Mombasa, a further evaluation was made. Lord Francis Scott, who had finally emerged as an effective settler leader, claimed that 'native policy and administration has deteriorated to such a terrific degree that the Government no longer has the respect of the native peoples'.<sup>(164)</sup> Quoting instances of inept government action, he admitted that 'it is

161. East African Standard, 4 August 1939.

162. East African Standard, 3 February 1939.

163. East African Standard, 3 February 1939.

164. East African Standard, 4 August 1939.

difficult to point to any clear examples of administrative failure', but averred that thinking people had much to be anxious about.<sup>(165)</sup>

Thus, Lord Francis Scott might have done well to echo Curzon's words of sixty years earlier, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Though no longer technically a slave, the African worker certainly was no 'free labourer'; nor was his wage sufficient, even if 'recognised'. Any advantage he had achieved over the years since Kenya was 'protected' and 'colonised', had been but grudgingly awarded him by a Colonial Office administration overly influenced by settlers. Forced labour, until its phasing out, had indeed been tantamount to slavery. The settlers' denial to Africans of a fair share of Kenya's assets, financial and agricultural, and their frequent exploitation of African labour exacted a price that was paid after 1945.

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165. East African Standard, 4 August 1939.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

You say 'exploitation' when you want to be disagreeable to those who are developing any country or industry; you say 'enterprise' when you want to be kind or favourable to those who are carrying on industrial development.

- The Earl of Balfour (1925)

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Economic and social change in Kenya between the two world wars was fraught with problems. Settlers returning from war service anticipated an entrenchment of the pre-war status quo; new settlers looked for a land of opportunity where success in a balmy climate would attend their (frequently unskilful) efforts. Instead, unexpected developments and revelations lay ahead for all whites in Kenya.

With hindsight, the early years of the 1920s were in the nature of a watershed: the imperial emphasis on the colony was altered and the settlers' dominance eroded by pronouncements from Whitehall. The most seminal of these was the White Paper of 1923, which heralded the dual policy whereby black and white agriculture would be encouraged equally.<sup>(1)</sup> In this document, white settlers saw their precious labour force being denied them and directed literally 'to cultivate its own garden'.

Settler dominance in the Legislative Council and links with gubernatorial muscle saw to it that African cultivation would be encouraged only in the direction of crops which would not compete with white agriculture.<sup>(2)</sup> The same dominance saw to it that the direct taxation of Africans increased, partly to provide the financial backbone of the colony and partly to impel 'the lazy niggers to work'.<sup>(3)</sup>

Sympathy with the position of the settler farmers, whose task was to grow the exportable crops which would render the building of the Uganda Railway a paying proposition, was expressed in Britain. Lord Olivier believed that the government:

1. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.27.

2. Ibid., p.23.

3. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.145.

...has a duty to perform to those individuals and communities not of African race, who, by their courage and enterprise, and often at the instance of, or with the encouragement of, Governments... have made their homes or at least the sphere of their life's work, in Africa. (4)

However, the enunciation of Colonial Office policy in the mid-1920s was quite clear: the doctrine of trusteeship, as set forth in the covenant of the League of Nations, resulted in a new responsibility for sovereign powers in the treatment of subject peoples.

On the strength of this change, settler attitudes tended to harden, while officials did their best with sometimes conflicting instructions:

Some are told that they are not to do anything to urge the native to go out and work for the white man...; some act on that principle, and when they do so, are told that they are doing wrong, and that they ought to urge the natives to come out and work. (5)

Meanwhile, African farmers strove to produce cash crops on pieces of land which, due to the fragmentation of land-holdings, were rapidly becoming uneconomic. In reaction to this, African chiefs visited London in a deputation to explain the vital need for increased allocations of land; and African political activists spoke out in the same cause. (6)

As happened so frequently, attitudes in Britain related only simplistically to realities in Kenya - unless the speaker had visited the colony. For example, Lord Buckmaster observed:

You have got two competing schemes of life out there. ...The negligent indolent native...and this vigorous civilised development going on next door, and the two things do not agree. (7)

Commissions appointed by the Colonial Office visited the colony; and while the commissioners themselves were often greatly enlightened, their recommendations were not always acted upon with alacrity.

It would appear that there were certain factors which provided a built-in resistance to change. This is not necessarily opined in any spirit of condemnation: attitudes of blacks and whites in Kenya between

4. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.365.

5. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 11 December 1929, Col.595.

6. Vide supra, pp.85, 108.

7. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.402.

the two world wars were quite comprehensible, even if short-sighted.

The settlers believed that the economy of Kenya depended primarily, if not exclusively, upon their export crops. The individual settler saw himself as somewhat of a pioneer, conscious (in colonial comfort if he was moderately successful) of his imperial duty.<sup>(8)</sup> Lord Cranworth invoked Rudyard Kipling's words on the British soldier to describe 'the much criticised white settler':

'He ain't no thin red hero,  
Nor he ain't no blackguard too.'  
.../Settlers/ are merely a representative section  
of the white races of the Empire...no mean  
compliment. (9)

A few years later, another settler listed the qualities required of a settler:

An efficient settler needs to be a Jack-of-all-trades. He must know the rudiments of surgery and medicine, as well as the treatment of stock diseases and insect pests. He has to have a practical knowledge of road, bridge, dam, and irrigation furrow construction and repair. Mechanical knowledge and carpentry are also valuable assets, and a smattering of law comes in useful in settling disputes amongst his labour and avoiding altercations with his neighbours. (10)

It was admitted by the same writer, however, that life in Kenya - 'The Public Schoolboys' Colony' - '...makes for independence, initiative and good fellowship, but in the course of time, it appears to undermine stability of purpose and blurs that all-essential, all-necessary sense of proportion, which should form the social basis of a community'.<sup>(11)</sup> The loss - or mislaying - of this sense of proportion was borne out by the fact that some settlers were 'extremely inclined to adopt pet tribes',<sup>(12)</sup> although this could be understandable in view of the constant search for conscientious workers.

Major Grogan, in considering the labour problem, saw the white settler as 'not merely the individual producer, as he is in Canada or

8. J.F. Lipscomb, op.cit., p.20, quotes K. Hancock: 'The white man in the tropics is the most expensive of God's creatures.'

9. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.576.

10. N.K. Strange, op.cit., p.167.

11. Ibid., p.170.

12. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.399.

Australia - he is the yeast that leavens the inert dough of Africa's peoples'.<sup>(13)</sup> The 'inertia of the dough' was in large measure due to the 'dough' being for the most part circumscribed by traditional custom or afflicted by disease.<sup>(14)</sup> Another factor affecting labour was spelled out by Lord Olivier:

...like all primitive peoples, the African native is quick to recognise the difference between what is known as a gentleman and not being a gentleman. ...For twenty to thirty years they have not been treated as by gentlemen. (15)

In other words, the treatment meted out to labour had an important bearing upon the responsiveness and productivity of that labour.<sup>(16)</sup>

Problems of labour were always closely linked with the viability of agriculture in Kenya. R. van Zwanenberg noted a prime difference between Kenya and other colonies in that agricultural growth in Kenya stemmed from white settler production and not, as in many other colonies, from peasant production.<sup>(17)</sup> White agricultural production took place on land alienated by the Crown 'in a series of legal fictions which it is not always easy to follow'.<sup>(18)</sup> In many cases, land was chosen to be alienated because it appeared to be unoccupied, and, more important, particularly fertile. Alienated land, a relatively small part of the colony, did not necessarily comprise a large proportion of the fertile land in the colony. Much equally fertile land remained - to be declared reserves - in the hands of the Africans.<sup>(19)</sup>

Before the First World War, white settlers were for the most part large land-owners with considerable financial resources. Some estates were farmed by companies or syndicates with financial backing from abroad. Plantation agriculture tended to be labour-intensive; and in the case of certain crops, this was especially so at harvest-time. Labour requirements therefore varied seasonally, but when needed to reap or pick an export crop and was unforthcoming, a crisis situation pertained.

13. F.D. Lugard, op.cit., p.393.

14. Vide supra, p.9.

15. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.371.

16. The Earl of Mayo observed in the House of Lords that: 'A negro, if he is well treated, is a jolly sort of fellow.' Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 14 July 1920, Col.148.

17. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.3.

18. Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 20 May 1925, Col.402.

19. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.11.

The amortization of debts incurred by the building of the Uganda Railway, together with the economic viability of the colony, depended upon the settlers' capacity to produce these export crops. And prices of export crops in turn depended upon the world market. Thus the Kenya economy was doubly contained: firstly, by the necessity to repay overseas debts at a time when interest rates were high; and secondly, by having to sell its exports on a world market where prices at crucial moments were often exceptionally low. Moreover, the domestic market in Kenya was undeveloped - another reason for the emphasis placed upon the export trade.<sup>(20)</sup> However, the lot of the large-scale farmer was cushioned by private means against falling prices, inclement weather and voracious insect pests.

On the other hand, the small-scale farmer who immigrated into Kenya between the wars tended to lack agricultural expertise and sufficient funds to recover from his mistakes.<sup>(21)</sup> He generally opted to grow maize, an 'easy crop' but one which tended to impoverish the soil. Until 1931, when the Land Bank was founded, he was obliged to pay high rates of interest on loans from commercial banks. In land deals, he was at the mercy of the large speculators, and in the marketing of his crops he had to bargain with international specialists.<sup>(22)</sup> For him, drought, falling prices and/or unavailable labour could all spell ruin.

The African agriculturalist also experienced difficulties. In this regard, African systems of land tenure had important effects on agricultural practice:

...not only may the character of the crops determine the system of tenure, but the tenure and the character of the land may determine the character of the crop. Obsolete methods of holding land may entail obsolete systems of cultivation. (23)

With the breakdown of the githaka system and the increasing fragmentation of land-holdings, there was every chance that the smallness of the plot of land would militate against economic cultivation.

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20. Ibid., p.9.

21. P. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., pp.280, 288.

22. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., pp.20-21.

23. C.K. Meek, Land Law and Custom in the Colonies (1949), pp.3-4.

Furthermore, if the African was a subsistence farmer, he was obliged to work for a white settler to earn enough money to pay his hut and poll tax. Until compulsory labour was phased out, he might find himself forced to work for the administration in certain circumstances. If, however, the African grew subsistence crops and cash crops, there was a chance that the profit from the sale of the surplus crops would pay his taxes. If he was a fairly successful cultivator, he could often undercut the white farmer's prices;<sup>(24)</sup> but to do this he had to solve a transport problem: the lack of road links to the nearest railway-line so as to get his crops to market.<sup>(25)</sup> And there were further difficulties even when crops finally arrived at the market: the marketing of African-grown products was controlled by whites. In terms of the Marketing Act of 1936, for example, African maize producers were forced 'to sell their produce to accredited agents of the government (the representatives of the Kenya Farmers' Association) which enabled all sales of maize to be graded'.<sup>(26)</sup>

In all the problems which confronted African farmers, there was a crying need for education. However, the efforts of the Agricultural Department to reach out effectively to the increasing African population were limited - by both lack of funds and manpower. In the late 1920s, agricultural staff concentrated mainly on crops grown for sale; subsistence agriculture 'received but little attention....Of the forty-two agricultural officers in the Kenya service in 1929, only twelve were employed in native reserves'.<sup>(27)</sup> And although the methods of permanent cultivation were as easy to follow as those of shifting cultivation,<sup>(28)</sup> instructors had difficulties weaning a man away from a system which 'is at present bound up with his tribal organisation and his religion, the whole social framework which gives him status and a place in the community'.<sup>(29)</sup> E.S. Clayton observed that: 'The problems of the peasant

24. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.23.

25. Ibid., p.28.

26. Ibid., p.21.

27. A.D. Hall, op.cit., p.89.

28. E.S. Clayton, op.cit., p.7.

29. A.D. Hall, op.cit., p.88. 'As the matter appears to primitive man, one never knows whether tribal spirits will not be outraged by the new method...and give vent to their anger on the whole community, which allowed one of its members to engage in sacriligious practices. Therefore the community stops innovation, and with it, progress to greater wealth.'



farmer have seemed to defy the wit of even the most able and enlightened officials.'<sup>(30)</sup>

The Report of the Kenya Land Commission quoted a section of a Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India in 1928, suggesting that:

No substantial improvement in agriculture can be effected unless the cultivator has the will to achieve a better standard of living....Of all the factors making for a prosperous agriculture, the most important is the outlook of the peasant himself. (31)

Thus, it was argued, if 'civilised wants' could be created, either in the mind of the African labourer or farmer, the wish to succeed financially in order to buy possessions would be instilled. Nevertheless, there were pitfalls on the path to success.

Once the peasant was persuaded of the advantages of white agriculture, there was concurrently the likelihood of the ecological disaster of soil erosion:

The introduction of European agriculture and the adoption of semi-continuous cultivation by shortening the land's resting period meant, in effect, that mankind, white and black, had assumed dominance on soils that were still by their nature suited only for the indigenous vegetation. (32)

The segregation of the black and white farming areas into alienated land and reserves served to inhibit reconditioning plans which 'required unified treatment and co-ordinated land utilization practices' throughout the area.<sup>(33)</sup>

Control of squatter stock went hand-in-hand with soil conservation measures. And squatters, the squeezed-out landless overflow from the crowded reserves that was so useful to settlers, did not understand or take kindly to outside interference.<sup>(34)</sup>

By the end of the inter-war period, African agriculture was contributing more significantly to Kenya's economy. However, as Hailey

30. E.S. Clayton, op.cit., p.62.

31. Report of the Kenya Land Commission (1934), Cmd.4556, p.353.

32. G.V. Jacks and R.O. Whyte, op.cit., p.252.

33. Ibid., pp.253-254.

34. Vide supra, pp.128-129.

observed:

It is clear that the most urgent problem...is the introduction of methods which will maintain soil fertility without extensive recourse to shifting cultivation. But if new methods of fertilisation are to win their way, they must be adapted to the financial and labour resources of the average native farmer. (35)

Simultaneously, to give the farmer a permanent stake in the land, the old feeling of insecurity and fear of fragmentation inherent in the traditional system of land tenure had to be allayed. Individual tenure did in fact develop in response to changed economic conditions,<sup>(36)</sup> but was not legislated for until the 1950s.

Meanwhile, the Second World War aggravated the feelings of frustration and bitterness by compelling many Africans to fight a war which was not their war. By 1945, the white settlers formed only 'a minute European island in tropical Africa, an island that was shortly to be overwhelmed in the tide of African nationalism rising in the revolution at the end of colonial rule'.<sup>(37)</sup> The Labour Party's electoral victory in Britain after the war, and the subsequent plans for promoting a more genuine development of Africans, proved to be too little too late for Kenya. Discontent erupted in the shape of the Mau-Mau rebellion in the early 1950s.

Once the Emergency of 1952-54 was at an end, immediate plans were drawn up to improve the Africans' lot: the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 provided for large-scale land consolidation in order to streamline African agriculture;<sup>(38)</sup> while the East Africa Royal Commission Report of 1955 provided security of tenure for Africans and, indeed, aimed at the removal of all racial discrimination in land-holdings in Kenya.<sup>(39)</sup> From the mid-1950s onwards, then, African agriculture gradually came into its own.

This change was long overdue. Its tardiness was due in part to traditional African attitudes, but in the main was the result of myopic self-interest on the part of white settlers. A concatenation of

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35. Lord Hailey, op.cit., p.960.

36. T.R. Batten, op.cit., p.39.

37. V. Harlow, E.M. Chilver and A. Smith (eds.), op.cit., p.332.

38. M.J. Herskovits and M. Harwitz, Economic Transition in Africa (1964), p.170.

39. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit., p.27.

situations, created originally by the 'grandmotherly control' of the Colonial Office,<sup>(40)</sup> and dealt with by ad hoc settler-oriented legislation, enhanced the importance of self-centred white agriculturists. The majority of the settlers monopolised the government services and overseas loans.<sup>(41)</sup> In consequence, little help was given to Africans who attempted to grow cash crops; and in fact, the cultivation and disposal of these, when permitted, were controlled by settler-dominated marketing boards under the aegis of the Kenya Farmers' Association. Thus despite the 'paramountcy' of black interests provided for in 1923, it was the white settlers who decided what these were, and the colonial administration often saw its own interests tie in with those of the white settlers.<sup>(42)</sup>

In their determination to keep Kenya's main assets for themselves, the whites may be said to have galvanised Mau-Mau into action and to have prevented the overall development of Kenya agriculture. One may hark back to Marley's words in the House of Commons in 1929: 'In taking up the white man's burden, we ought not at the same moment to take away the black man's birthright.'<sup>(43)</sup> In large measure, unfortunately, this was indeed a constant theme in Kenya's development during the inter-war years.

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40. A.G. Church, op.cit., p.225.

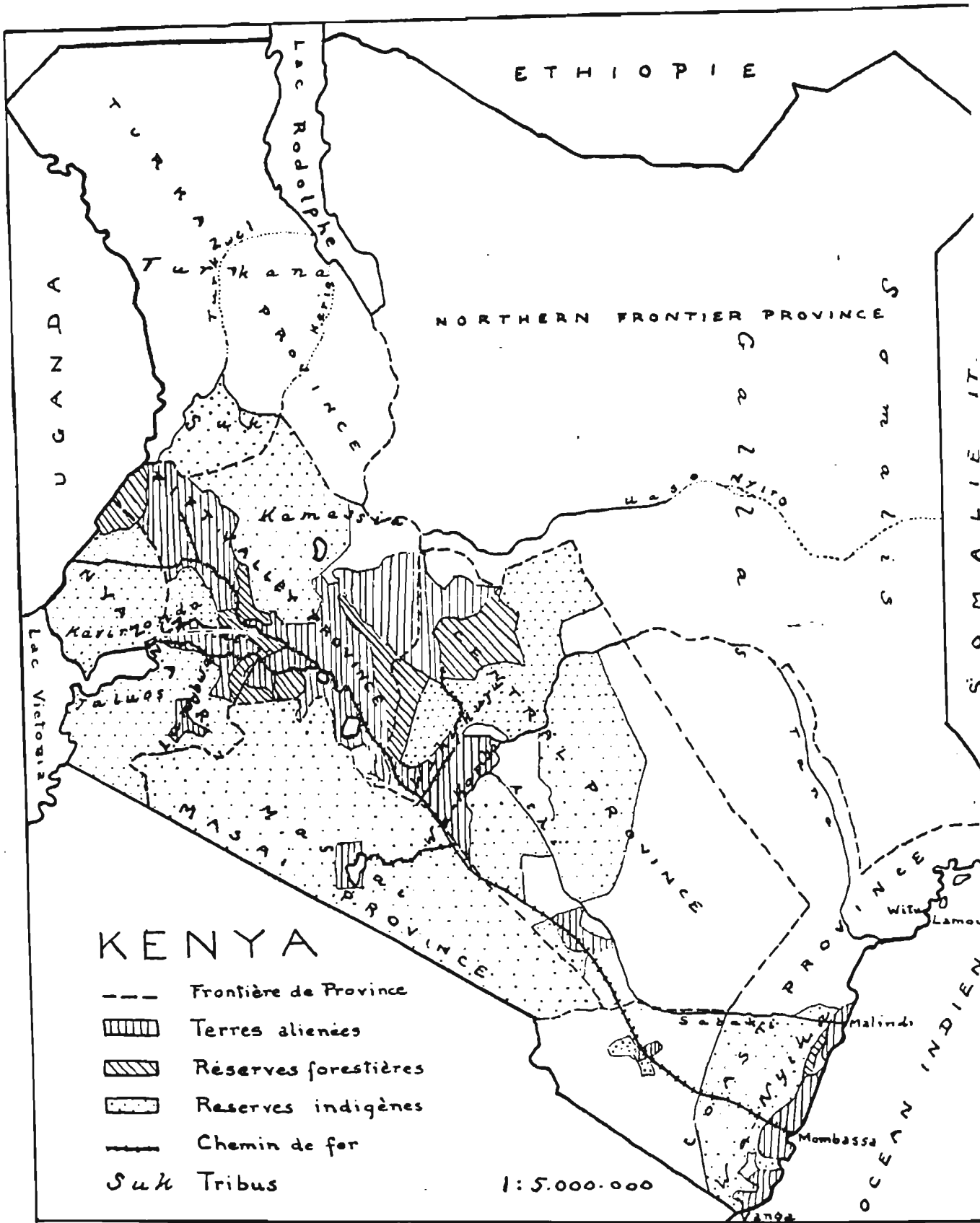
41. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg and A. King, op.cit., p.39.

42. R. van Zwanenberg, op.cit.

43. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 11 December 1929, Col.589.

APPENDIX 1

MAP A: KENYA GENERAL



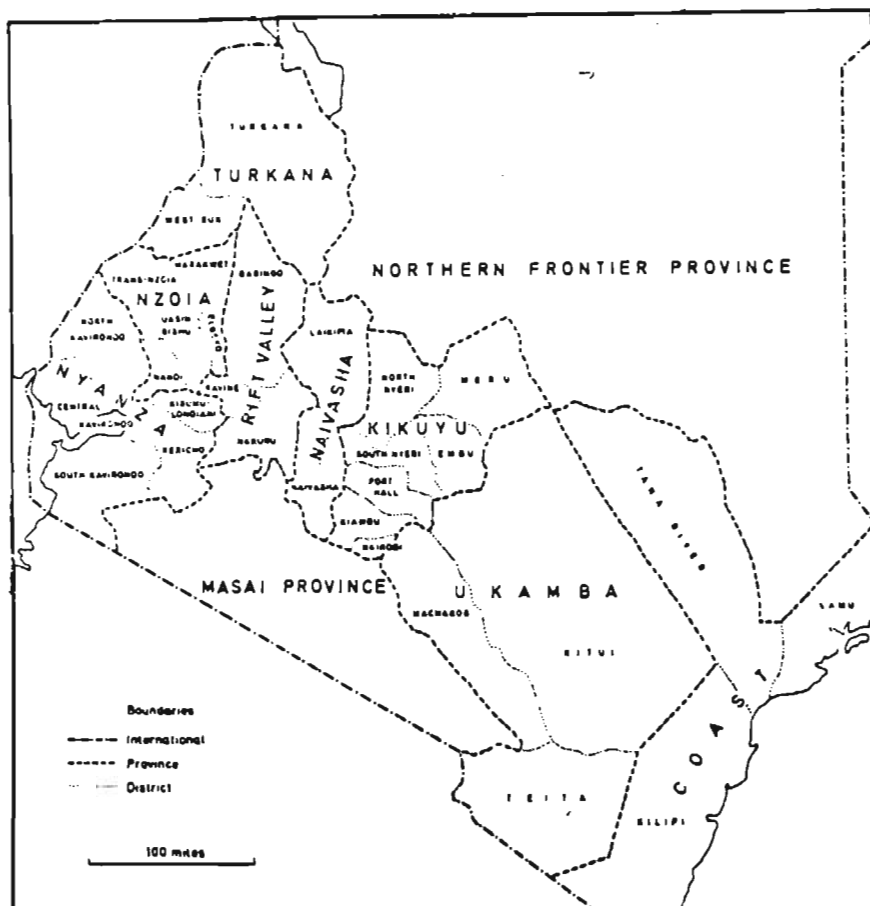
Source: M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938), p.20.

APPENDIX 2

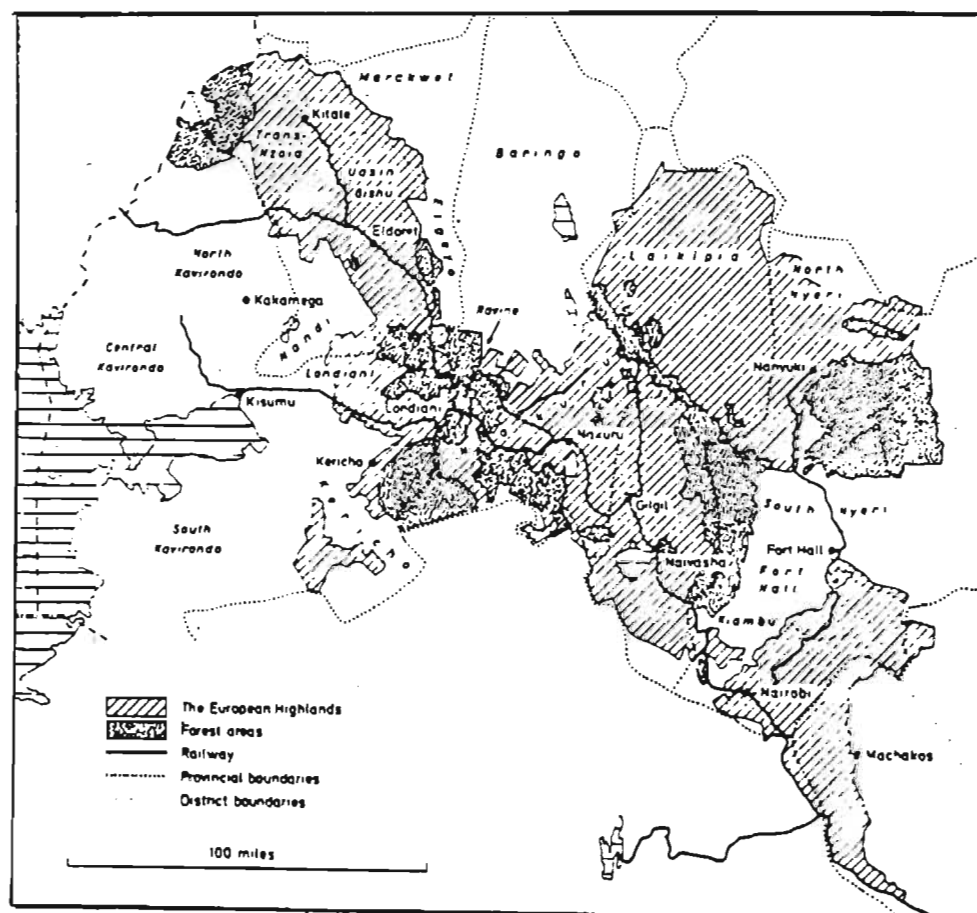
MAP B: PROVINCIAL AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS

MAP C: ALIENATED LAND

MAP 8



MAP C



APPENDIX 3

POPULATION, 1901-1939



YEAR	EUROPEAN	INDIAN	GOAN	ARAB	OTHER	NATIVE (ESTIMATED)	TOTAL
1901	No statistics available prior to 1902.						
1902	±500 (a)						
1903	450 (b)	5 000 (b)					
1904	±900 (a)						
1905	954 (a)						
1906	1 814 (a)						
1907	1 425						
1908	1 738 (a)						
1909	2 137 (a)						
1910	2 654 (a)						
1911	3 256 (a)						
1912	3 392 (a)						
1913	4 586 (a)						
1914	5 438 (a)						
1915							
1916							
1917							
1918	5 570	15 407	2 020	7 468	236	2 627 080	2 627 080
1919	5 919	16 706	2 393	9 567	237	2 684 847	2 719 664
1920	9 651	22 822	2 431	10 102	627	2 330 112	2 373 754
1921*	9 651	25 880	2 430	10 102	675	2 348 788	2 393 468

YEAR	EUROPEAN	INDIAN	GOAN	ARAB	OTHER	NATIVE (ESTIMATED)	TOTAL
1922	9 651	22 822	2 431	10 102	627	2 500 000	2 545 633
1923	9 651	22 822	2 431	10 102	627	2 500 000	2 545 633
1924*	11 002	24 771		9 753		2 560 983	2 606 509
1925	12 529	26 759 (b)		10 557	3 824 (b)	2 549 300	2 602 969
1926	} No census of 'non-native' population, 1926-1930.					2 682 848	2 736 517
1927						2 793 963	
1928						2 838 022	
1929						2 930 604	3 003 158
1930						2 951 023	3 024 911
1931*	16 812	39 644	3 979	12 166	1 346	2 966 993	3 040 940
1932	17 249	51 449				3 007 645	3 076 343
1933	17 620	56 506				3 017 117	3 091 243
1934	17 501	34 955	3 316	12 131	1 401	3 024 975	3 094 279
1935	17 997	36 461	3 437	12 599	1 436	3 012 421	3 084 351
1936	18 269	38 325	3 510	12 855	1 587	3 186 976	3 261 522
1937	19 211	42 368	3 658	13 660	1 605	3 253 689	3 334 191
1938							
1939							

Sources: In the absence of any indication to the contrary, the above figures are drawn from the Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate for the relevant years.

(a) M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938).

(b) East African Standard.

\* Census year.

APPENDIX 4

PERCENTAGE OF AFRICAN ADULT MALES  
IN AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT, 1924-1930

MONTH	YEAR	PERCENTAGE
July	1924	27,50
August	1924	-
September	1924	25,59
October	1924	25,48
November	1924	25,82
December	1924	-
January	1925	25,73
February	1925	-
March	1925	26,75
April	1925	27,66
May	1925	28,62
June	1925	29,00
July	1925	} No statistics available
August	1925	
September	1925	
October	1925	
November	1925	
December	1925	
January	1926	}
February	1926	
March	1926	27,23
April	1926	27,43
May	1926	28,58
June	1926	28,40
July	1926	27,84
August	1926	28,45
September	1926 to	} No statistics available
September	1929	
October	1929	31,03
November	1929	-
December	1929	-
January	1930	31,01

Source: East African Standard, 1924-1930.

APPENDIX 5

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS,  
1895-96 - 1918-19

YEAR	IMPORTS (£)	EXPORTS (£)
1895-96	176 933	73 764
1896-97	261 706	78 135
1897-98	297 655	72 618
1898-99	472 370	71 145
1899-1900	446 612	121 628
1900-1901	450 004	71 327
1901-02	421 260	96 339
1902-03	443 032	134 530
1903-04	436 947	134 158
1904-05	741 800	234 700
1905-06	974 000	332 800
1906-07	1 226 600	163 700
1907-08	1 217 000	157 100
1908-09	1 774 000	140 400
1909-10	1 165 700	190 700
1910-11	1 606 500	276 500
1911-12	2 070 100	333 700
1912-13	2 891 500	421 100
1913-14	3 397 400	443 600
1914-15	1 469 000	315 000
1915-16	1 708 000	444 000
1916-17	3 024 000	587 000
1917-18	2 810 000	1 543 000
1918-19	3 398 000	2 231 000

Source: M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938), pp.54, 71, 83, 89.

Note: From 1917-18, exports include statistics for Uganda.

APPENDIX 6

TAXATION YIELDS, 1923-1937

YEAR	CUSTOMS REVENUE	HUT AND/OR POLL TAX	POLL TAX (NON-NATIVE)	PETROL TAX	ESTATE DUTY	WINES AND SPIRITS CONSUMPTION TAX (FROM 1932 'ENTERTAIN- MENT TAX') (£)	EUROPEAN EDUCATION TAX	ASIATIC EDUCATION TAX	TOTAL
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
1923		575 089 (a)							
1924		574 922 (a)							
1925		537 478 (a)							
1926		558 044 (a)							
1927		570 783 (a)							
1928		574 000 (a)							
1929									
1930									
1931	698 571	530 877	42 571	27 260	34 680	17 114	11 399	14 481	1 376 953
1932	597 262	515 277	61 866	32 205	6 815	4 555	10 314	11 179	1 239 473
1933	581 770	557 791	64 244	53 052	19 610	4 597	10 309	9 677	1 301 050
1934	611 606	514 480	68 307	55 631	16 942	5 847	11 249	11 384	1 295 446
1935	690 380	502 302	70 987	58 982	9 956	5 727	11 820	12 973	1 363 127
1936	775 011	544 897	75 091	62 791	11 108	5 753	11 378	13 783	1 499 812
1937	897 888	532 895	44 664	59 237	11 834	5 954	-	-	1 570 633

Sources: Unless indicated otherwise, the above statistics are drawn from the Annual Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate for the relevant years.

(a) East African Standard.



APPENDIX 7

SELECTED DOMESTIC EXPORTS  
OF KENYA, 1908-1937

YEAR	COFFEE		SISAL		HIDES AND SKINS		MAIZE	
	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)
1908	-	-	-	-	-	27 312	-	-
1909	169	236	-	-	-	15 261	-	11 899
1910	630	1 068	-	-	-	44 724	35 621	5 995
1911	1 220	2 995	-	-	-	62 258	119 972	21 297
1912	2 089	5 765	-	-	-	72 250	181 788	43 270
1913	3 032	11 071	-	-	-	87 673	226 438	53 920
1914	5 501	18 502	-	-	-	147 474	189 855	34 715
1915	7 784	21 738	1 652	35 537	-	106 392	59 843	13 665
1916	6 028	17 297	2 320	74 669	-	104 764	8 421	1 855
1917	16 552	46 028	3 105	126 258	-	156 056	10 672	2 748
1918	-	-	4 517	197 473	-	-	1 339	417
1919	71 545	244 468	5 600	224 025	-	156 547	55 776	21 437
1920	106 386	392 507	4 196	122 558	-	141 086	145 554	51 491
1921	98 987	379 100	5 702	183 683	-	41 552	270 555	117 300
1922	77 902	279 722	8 970	259 344	-	49 429	393 769	148 910
1923	139 028	491 181	8 820	236 044	-	118 413	874 701	249 545
1924	158 411	635 618	11 416	399 277	-	215 160	1 164 051	381 144
1925	147 257	823 901	14 363	531 129	-	325 145	1 219 076	416 964

YEAR	COFFEE		SISAL		HIDES AND SKINS		MAIZE	
	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)
1926	140 920	747 195	14 928	579 499	-	239 795	929 178	280 596
1927	209 805	1 140 293	15 839	468 974	-	246 228	1 787 665	505 893
1928	211 608	1 119 448	16 516	495 958	-	347 825	892 660	306 078
1929	133 091	102 760	15 647	553 572	-	353 448	764 769	305 892
1930	310 088	1 426 869	15 947	437 269	-	188 104	2 222 528	565 517
1931	245 903	986 429	15 994	232 564	-	109 458	1 859 517	419 599
1932	275 916	1 213 715	15 385	186 574	-	117 124	514 917	117 677
1933	256 972	831 197	19 850	249 868	-	159 324	1 131 549	212 699
1934	186 759	491 759	24 016	311 371	-	195 915	439 958	104 754
1935	358 072	929 796	32 136	423 112	-	180 915	1 198 605	184 965
1936	-	968 000*	34 746	690 459	-	191 000*	-	233 000*
1937	-	733 000*	31 275	673 719	-	302 000*	-	199 000*

Source: S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa (1938), Table 64,  
no page.

\* To nearest £000.

YEAR	TEA		SUGAR		RAW COTTON		TOTAL (£)
	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	
1908	-	-	-	-	725	1 843	157 097
1909	-	-	-	-	2 244	5 907	140 418
1910	-	-	-	-	1 266	4 440	190 668
1911	-	-	-	-	1 632**	7 477	276 480
1912	-	-	-	-	1 660	6 313	333 670
1913	-	-	-	-	2 636	11 831	421 084
1914	-	-	-	-	1 349**	5 476	443 624
1915	-	-	-	-	175**	614	314 804
1916	-	-	-	-	-	2 920	329 519
1917	-	-	-	-	-	2 425	587 044
1918	-	-	-	-	200	1 475	758 411
1919	-	-	-	-	337	3 284	984 370
1920	-	-	-	-	645	6 348	1 178 460
1921	-	-	-	-	1 615	18 738	1 832 805
1922	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 084 590
1923	-	-	1 526	2 154	677	3 026	1 564 955
1924	-	-	2 675	6 092	677	2 764	2 239 614
1925	-	-	5 271	9 417	1 696	8 347	2 724 629

YEAR	TEA		SUGAR		RAW COTTON		TOTAL (£)
	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	QUANTITY (cwt.)	VALUE (£)	
1926	-	-	21 932	29 254	1 261	5 149	2 414 341
1927	8	71	21 619	32 051	570	1 731	3 086 916
1928	90	728	13 070	18 790	2 527	10 710	3 266 403
1929	71	738	15 343	25 181	803	2 433	2 745 910
1930	1 434	8 193	15 045	19 247	4 920	14 424	3 422 571
1931	3 158	16 795	21 196	24 647	3 131	6 588	2 343 874
1932	6 252	29 261	15 568	17 617	4 516	8 589	2 280 982
1933	17 462	76 667	82 214	66 735	10 660	25 584	2 246 999
1934	22 115	112 062	72 735	57 511	11 748	28 483	1 909 871
1935	45 108	217 047	83 923	52 017	28 419**	76 326	2 978 307
1936	67 099	335 690	125 656	74 694	58 152**	149 789	3 888 000*
1937	81 835	466 872	74 136	43 899	71 189**	191 518	3 954 000*

Source: S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa (1938),  
Table 64, no page.

\* To nearest £000.

\*\* Indicates centals.

APPENDIX 8

CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES

### CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES

Until 1905, the currency of the East Africa Protectorate consisted of annas and rupees, with 16 annas equal to 1 rupee. The sterling value of the rupee tended to fluctuate: in 1897, 1 rupee was worth  $1/0\frac{1}{2}$ d. but, in 1905, the exchange rate was fixed at 1 rupee equal to  $1/4$ d. The currency pattern from then until the First World War was:

100 cents : 1 Rupee

15 Rupees : £1

For convenience, a table of equivalents is set out below:

<u>TABLE OF EQUIVALENTS</u>			
25 cents	: 4d.	1d.	: 6,25 cts.
50 cents	: 8d.	3d.	: 18,75 cts.
1 Rupee	: $1/4$ d.	6d.	: 37,50 cts.
2 Rupees	: $2/8$ d.	9d.	: 56,25 cts.
3 Rupees	: $4/0$ d.	1/-	: 75 cts.
4 Rupees	: $5/4$ d.	2/-	: 1 Rupee 50 cts.
5 Rupees	: $6/8$ d.	3/-	: 2 Rupees 25 cts.
6 Rupees	: $8/0$ d.	4/-	: 3 Rupees
7 Rupees	: $9/4$ d.	5/-	: 3 Rupees 75 cts.
8 Rupees	: $10/8$ d.	6/-	: 4 Rupees 50 cts.
9 Rupees	: $12/0$ d.	7/-	: 5 Rupees 25 cts.
10 Rupees	: $13/4$ d.	8/-	: 6 Rupees
11 Rupees	: $14/8$ d.	9/-	: 6 Rupees 75 cts.
12 Rupees	: $16/0$ d.	10/-	: 7 Rupees 50 cts.
13 Rupees	: $17/4$ d.	12/-	: 9 Rupees
14 Rupees	: $18/8$ d.	15/-	: 11 Rupees
15 Rupees	: £1	£1	: 15 Rupees

Source: A. Clayton and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963 (1974), p.xxiv.

APPENDIX 9

AREA OF PRINCIPAL  
EUROPEAN CROPS, 1920-1936  
(Acres)



YEAR	COFFEE	SISAL	TEA	SUGAR CANE	COCONUTS	MAIZE	WHEAT	BARLEY
1920	34 000	31 000		1 000	9 000	32 000	5 000	1 000
1921								
1922								
1923	52 249 (a)							
1924	7 010 (a)	7 000 (a)	382 (a)					
1925	65 000	53 000		7 000	9 000	156 000	24 000	1 000
1926	68 950 (a)	60 197 (a)	1 689 (a)	6 747 (a)	8 766 (a)	193 187 (a)	43 763 (a)	3 558 (a)
1927	75 000	48 621 (a)	4 809 (a)	9 408 (a)	8 000	192 592 (a)	65 036 (a)	4 000
1928	78 461 (a)	68 717 (a)	5 000	9 000	8 000	216 000	88 429 (a)	5 933 (a)
1929	84 000 (a)	109 000	6 000	11 000	8 000	246 000	75 102 (a)	7 000
1930	96 000	130 000	8 000	12 000	8 000	212 000	79 000	3 000
1931	97 000	137 000	10 000	13 000	8 000	201 000	69 000	2 000
1932	99 000	146 000	11 000	12 000	8 000	161 000	43 000	2 000
1933	100 000	140 000	12 000	12 000	8 000	164 000	30 000	3 000
1934	102 000	141 000	12 000	13 000	8 000	113 000	35 000	4 000
1935								
1936	101 234 (a)							

Sources: Unless otherwise indicated, the above statistics are drawn from M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938).

(a) East African Standard.

APPENDIX 10

ESTIMATED VALUES OF AGRICULTURAL  
EXPORTS OF NATIVE ORIGIN, 1928-1933

	1928 (£)	1929 (£)	1930 (£)	1931 (£)	1932 (£)	1933 (£)
Animals	11 000	10 300	8 600	5 000	3 600	2 300
Copra and Coconuts	23 000	2 500	2 250	1 200	500	1 000
Cotton	24 000	24 800	17 200	6 500	8 600	23 600
Cotton seed	-	5 400	5 000	-	500	300
Groundnuts	19 659	29 500	16 500	6 000	1 200	3 200
Maize	50 000	45 000	75 000	-	12 500	36 000
Milletts	423	240	2 800	20	100	300
Pulse and Beans	13 000	12 500	14 000	6 000	6 000	6 000
Sim-sim	27 355	27 500	15 200	5 000	28 500	36 700
Hides	200 000	220 000	105 000	60 000	86 500	130 000
Skins	100 000	87 000	73 000	35 000	15 700	20 000
Oils - various	5 000	10 000	6 700	3 200	5 600	6 000
Potatoes	7 000	24 000	10 500	13 000	9 300	8 000
Wattle bark and extract	-	35 000	42 000	71 000	79 500	66 000
Other	2 000	2 000	2 000	2 000	4 000	5 000

Source: Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the  
People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1933,  
Col.no.1688, p.17.

APPENDIX 11

AREA OCCUPIED, NUMBER OF OCCUPIERS  
AND AREA CULTIVATED, 1920-1934

PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS	AREA OCCUPIED (thousands of acres)		NUMBER OF OCCUPIERS		AREA CULTIVATED (thousands of acres)	
	1920	1934	1920	1934	1920	1934
Kenya (total)	3 157	5 138	1 183	2 027	176	479
Coast Province	135	277	41	46	16	34
Central Province	-	1 236	-	673	-	167
Machakos	307	301	42	46	9	17
North Nyeri	179	444	57	160	2	9
Nairobi	36	45	72	26	2	8
Kiambu	246	210	239	295	31	62
Thika	107	255	52	137	15	64
Rift Valley Province	1 874	3 187	-	1 101	-	227
Naivasha	546	761	86	120	7	12
Laikipia	83	718	20	93	-	1
Nakuru	496	631	130	275	36	75
Uasin Gishu	466	547	201	279	28	59
Trans-Nzoia	183	428	76	289	7	71
Nandi	5	73	3	26	-	5
Ravine	96	29	26	19	4	4
Nyanza Province	-	418	-	207	-	51
Kisumu-Londiani	93	273	58	122	9	32
Kericho	168	137	58	52	4	17

Source: M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya  
(1938), p.114.

APPENDIX 12

CHIEF PRODUCTS OF EUROPEAN  
FARMS, 1919-20 - 1935

YEAR	COFFEE (cwt.)	SISAL (tons)	TEA (pounds)	MAIZE (bags)	WHEAT (bags)	MILK (gallons)	BUTTER (pounds)	WOOL (pounds)
1919-20	72 000	5 000	-	316 000	10 000	994 000	159 000	217 000
1922-23	90 000	7 000	-	518 000	38 000	352 000	247 000	445 000
1925-26	135 000	13 000	-	927 000	80 000	395 000	292 000	671 000
1928-29	122 000	16 000	153 000	1 099 000	228 000	791 000	291 000	940 000
1930	145 000	21 000	?	1 859 000	293 000	1 027 000	372 000	893 000
1931	310 000	19 000	930 000	1 650 000	194 000	1 102 000	313 000	655 000
1932	246 000	15 000	1 500 000	763 000	87 000	1 019 000	285 000	814 000
1933	304 000	17 000	2 421 000	1 140 000	63 000	1 139 000	351 000	721 000
1934	235 000	20 000	3 064 000	747 000	146 000	939 000	307 000	931 000
1935	234 000	32 000	6 031 000	970 000	180 000	-	-	-

Source: M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya  
(1938), p.122.

APPENDIX 13

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION,  
1921-1937



YEAR	EUROPEANS (£)	INDIANS (£)	ARABS AND AFRICANS (£)	ADMINISTRATION (£)	TOTAL (£)
1921	Not known	Not known	Not known		10 889
1922	14 105	8 650	24 420		47 175
1923	14 444	8 000	12 637		35 081
1924	22 004	11 974	11 972		45 950
1925	26 247	11 943	36 017		74 207
1926	24 824	14 470	53 418		92 712
1927	36 092	17 318	52 429	15 387	121 226
1928	42 915	23 113	81 592	14 765	162 385
1929	51 125	26 325	83 180	16 064	176 694
1930	No statistics compiled, 1930-35.				
1931					
1932					
1933					
1934					
1935					
1936	46 529	37 341	75 348	11 244	170 512 (a)
1937	49 255	39 140	82 444	11 395	184 315 (b)

Source: Annual Reports on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate for the relevant years.

Note: (a) Includes 'Extraordinary expenses' of £50.

(b) Includes 'Extraordinary expenses' of £2 111.

APPENDIX 14

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

1895-1939

REVENUE (£)				EXPENDITURE (£)			
YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL	YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL
1895	39 186 (a)			1895	147 640 (a)		
1896				1896			
1897				1897			
1898				1898			
1899	64 275 (a)			1899	193 438 (a)		
1900		1900	64 000	1900		1900	193 000
1901		1901	68 000	1901		1901	278 000
1902		1902	95 000	1902		1902	311 000
1903	406 000 (a)	1903	109 000	1903	303 000 (a)	1903	419 000
1904		1904	155 000	1904		1904	303 000
1905		1905	270 000	1905		1905	419 000
1906		1906	461 000	1906		1906	616 000
1907	668 000 (a)	1907	475 000	1907	692 000 (a)	1907	692 000
1908-09	624 000 (a)	1908	486 000	1908	703 000 (a)	1908	703 000
1909-10	637 000 (a)	1909	503 000	1909	669 000 (a)	1909	669 000
1910-11	740 000 (a)	1910	610 000	1910	682 000 (a)	1910	682 000
1911-12	919 000 (a)	1911	729 000	1911	772 000 (a)	1911	772 000
1912-13	976 000 (a)	1912	953 000	1912	961 000 (a)	1912	961 000
1913-14	1 124 000 (a)	1913	1 124 000	1913-14	1 116 000 (a)	1913	1 116 000
1914-15	984 756	1914	985 000	1914-15	1 151 730	1914	1 152 000
1915-16	1 165 561	1915	1 166 000	1915-16	1 072 917	1915	1 073 000

REVENUE (£)				EXPENDITURE (£)			
YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL	YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL
1916-17	1 533 783	1916	1 534 000	1916-17	1 197 396	1916	1 197 000
1917-18	1 368 329	1917	1 368 000	1917-18	1 490 571	1917	1 491 000
1918-19	1 548 703	1918	1 549 000	1918-19	1 570 705	1918	1 571 000
1919-20	1 726 435	1919	2 590 000	1919-20	2 024 861	1919	3 037 000
1920-21	2 978 786	1920	2 979 000	1920-21	2 976 960	1920	2 977 000
1921	1 891 679	1921	1 291 000*	1921	1 666 785	1921	1 667 000*
1922	1 649 032	1922	1 649 000	1922	1 972 212	1922	1 972 000
1923	1 839 447	1923	1 839 000	1923	2 137 633	1923	2 138 000
1924	2 111 565	1924	2 112 000	1924	2 112 000	1924	1 862 000
1925		1925	2 431 000	1925	2 431 000	1925	2 340 000
1926	2 627 223	1926	2 627 000	1926	2 414 681	1926	2 415 000
1927	2 846 110	1927	2 846 000	1927	2 515 115	1927	2 515 000
1928	3 020 694	1928	3 021 000	1928	2 834 647	1928	2 835 000
1929	3 333 742	1929	3 334 000	1929	3 505 073	1929	3 505 000
1930	3 241 600	1930	3 226 000	1930	3 438 874	1930	3 423 000
1931	3 066 930	1931	3 036 000	1931	3 216 089	1931	3 185 000
1932	3 010 214	1932	3 007 000	1932	3 119 723	1932	3 116 000
1933	3 121 497	1933	3 116 000	1933	3 168 035	1933	3 162 000
1934	3 183 000 (a)	1934	3 178 000	1934	3 181 000 (a)	1934	3 173 000
1935	3 304 000 (a)	1935	3 274 000	1935	3 253 000 (a)	1935	3 218 000
1936		1936	3 450 000	1936		1936	3 286 000

REVENUE (£)				EXPENDITURE (£)			
YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL	YEAR	OFFICIAL & OTHER	YEAR	S.H. FRANKEL
1937		1937	3 667 000	1937		1937	3 566 000
1938		1938		1938		1938	
1939		1939		1939		1939	

Sources: Unless there is any indication to the contrary, the above statistics are drawn from the Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Kenya Colony and Protectorate for the relevant years.

The alternative columns of revenue and expenditure statistics is drawn from S.H. Frankel, Capital Investment in Africa (1938).

(a) M. Salvadori, La Colonisation Européenne au Kenya (1938).

\* For 9 months only.

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- (ii) Parliamentary Debates
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- (iii) Unpublished Theses and Long Essays

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    - 1924 {Col.1282}; 1925 {Col.1321}; 1926 {Col.1352};
    - 1927 {Col.1425}; 1928 {Col.1463}; 1929 {Col.1510};
    - 1930 {Col.1562}; 1931 {Col.1606}; 1932 {Col.1659};
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