

BRITISH GROUNDNUT SCHEME IN EAST AFRICA:
LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA

by

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PREFACE

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It is a generally accepted fact by most historians that not much has been written about African history, particularly on an isolated topic like the "Groundnuts Scheme" which is the subject of this paper. The paper represents an effort to supplement what has already been covered in the realm of history of this vast and growing continent.

Furthermore, the paper has been written as a part of both East African and British history since both communities played a part in the project. As such, it is hoped that it will be of interest to both the African and the English student of history.

While the author has sought to present the main objectives of the Scheme, he has also included comprehensive surveys of its progress, inherent problems and their possible solutions, its contributions and effects on African people and its political repercussions on the British Labour Government as its sponsor.

A special debt of gratitude is due to a number of persons. First, the author is grateful to Dr. Robin Higham, Associate Professor of History at Kansas State University, whose advice led to the selection of this topic. He also offered useful directions in conducting research, read half of the scripts and offered very useful suggestions. Second, many thanks go to Dr. Joseph Gallanar, Assistant Professor of History also at Kansas State University. He became the major advisor after Dr. Higham left for vacation. His persistent help led to the accomplishment of this piece of work. Third, the author is indebted to Miss Lois Turner, also Assistant Professor of History at Kansas State University, for reading

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Map of East Africa

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Introduction

"The British Groundnut Scheme" was a project designed to grow rapidly the large-scale, mechanized productions of groundnuts (peanuts) in East Africa. It became a matter of public concern on March 28, 1946. But its origins go back to well before the Second World War; examination of some factors which dominated the thinking of the leading figures in Britain is necessary. These factors had a very close bearing on the subject. In addition to the wartime scarcity of oils and fats, two other factors must be noted: the change in the British Colonial policy and the idea of colonial development and welfare.

The New British Colonial Policy and Colonial Development and Welfare

After the loss of the American colonies in 1783, a more flexible colonial policy emerged. It was based on the principle that the maximum of initiative and responsibility both politically and economically should rest with the colonial administration.¹ This meant the British government proceeded so that the colonies would eventually be able to provide for their own public and social services directly from their own revenue and indirectly from private corporations through sound, stable governments

¹Melville J. Herskovits, The Human Factor in Changing Africa (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 219.

of their own. In 1921, the British government started a program through which the Development and Welfare in the Empire would be handled. In 1929, the first Colonial Development Act was passed. This was:

...to authorize the making of advances for aiding and developing agriculture and industry in certain colonies and territories, to provide the extension of the colonial stock acts of 1877 and 1900, to stock forming part of the public debt of certain protected and mandated territories and to amend the Palestine and East African Loans Act of 1926 and section eleven of the Trust Act of 1921.²

Different sections of the act dealt with different colonial areas; however, the essence of the act was to make available £ 1,000,000 annually to meet the expenses of both the agricultural and the industrial establishments in the colonies. New projects such as research, education, health and other social services made the sum inadequate. As a consequence, a related act--"The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940"³ was passed. This act increased the annual appropriation to £ 5,000,000 for the next decade. It provided opportunity for promoting the development of the resources of the colonies, protectorates and the welfare of the peoples. It was also designed to relieve the Colonial and other governments from liability in respect of certain loans.⁴

²"Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1945 (8 and 9 Geo. 6, Ch. 20): Description and Purpose, together with an extract from a speech by the Secretary of State for the colonies, the Right Hon. Oliver Stanley, introducing the Bill in the House of Commons, 7 February 1945," in Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-1952 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), Vol. II, p. 1073.

³British Information Service (ed.), Economic Development in the British Colonies (New York: British Information Service, June 1949), p. 5. (Hereafter cited as Economic Development)

⁴Mansergh, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1075.

Five years later the same act required amendment. A bill, introduced by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Hon. Olver Stanley,⁵ increased the amount provided by the Act of 1940 to £ 120,000,000. Minor amendments included the continuation of certain programs. The distribution of this large sum was as follows: "Individual territories and groups of territories-- £ 85,000,000; centrally-administered schemes such as research, education and surveys--£ 25,000,000; supplementary--£ 11,000,000."⁶

With these funds now on hand, the colonial governments began drawing up ten-year plans which would enable them to develop and increase their own independent financial stability and provide adequate social services for their people. These plans, of course, had to meet the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the chief executive on colonial affairs.

A chain of bills was making steady progress and getting sufficient support from government circles as well as from the public. The sponsors argued that the bills, particularly that of 1929, were designed not only to assist the dependencies but also to relieve Britain's unemployment problem. The 1940 bill demonstrated how ambitious the government was. The critics of the bill (of 1940) argued that it was useless to pass such

⁵Oliver Stanley was the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Coalition government of Churchill. Since he was responsible for introducing the bill, it follows that the 1945 Act was the work of the Coalition government. The Labour Party taking over later in that year (1945) simply expanded by effecting numerous revolutionary socialist programs--nationalization, welfare state programs like social insurance, National Health service--at home, and Groundnuts Scheme, Gambian Egg Production, The Owen Falls Scheme--in the colonies.

⁶Economic Development, loc. cit.

a bill cause it would not be effected since the government was engaged in war. This did not appear true. In fact, just before the war ended, it was expanded by the passing of the 1945 bill.⁷

The trend of these acts was to establish a line of thought which culminated in the 1948 measure which created the Overseas Food Corporation (O.F.C.). This organization took over the responsibilities for the Groundnut Scheme, and extension of the entire Colonial Development and Welfare Program.⁸

These far reaching programs led to various sophisticated schemes which demanded more financial support; therefore, the colonial governments were obliged to raise money locally, either from reserves or through loans. In addition, sound and careful management was needed. The programs were later coordinated into about forty plans which were carried on in nearly all colonial territories, large and small. Economic and social programs--- public health, education, housing, communication, campaigns against soil erosion, tropical and other diseases, and prospecting for minerals received attention.⁹

Reasons for the Groundnut Scheme

Some of the fundamental questions to be asked are: Why was the idea of growing groundnuts on a large-scale basis conceived? Why was

⁷Anon. "Development of Colonial Resources; The African Groundnut Scheme," World Today, Vol. IV (March 1948), p. 103.

⁸The provisions and the work of the Corporation will be treated in detail under a separate section in this paper.

⁹World Today, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 104.

the British government so ambitious and so optimistic about it? Why was tropical Africa selected as the most convenient area of operation? Though most sources emphasize the economic and social, there are political and climatic reasons as well. They must now be examined carefully, one by one, in terms of their relevance to the East African Groundnut Scheme.

Coming back to the question, "Why was the idea of growing groundnuts on a large-scale basis conceived?" a part of the answer is found in the British economic situation. The time between the two wars (1918-1939) was a period of great depression and it was quite clear that Britain would not make sufficient recovery while fighting the Second World War, the after effects of which created, despite victory, various domestic problems.¹⁰ One left-over from the war was the shortage of oils, fats and other foodstuffs. This was quite acute as compared with that of other foodstuffs, and production was relatively low. Before the war, Britain had imported most of her oils and fats from Asian countries, particularly India, but after the war this was no longer possible for three major reasons: "(1) Political development in India, (2) Population growth in India and (3) The events of the war in the East Indies."¹¹

India was in the last stage of her struggle for independence achieved in 1947. This meant that all the responsibilities, political as well as economic, had to be handed over to the independent government of India, thus changing the whole structure of control of commerce and

¹⁰ Anon. "East African Groundnuts Plan: The First Stage," Crown Colonist, Vol. XVII (May 1947), p. 253.

¹¹ A. H. Bunting, "Land Development and Large Scale Food Production in East Africa by Overseas Food Corporation," Economic Botany, Vol. VI (Jan. - Mar. 1962), p. 55.

trade. It was now up to the Indian government to decide what to do with its agricultural products, and the demands of its own increasing population came first. Thus, the amount Britain was used to getting was drastically reduced. Finally, the war in the East Indies had effected the regular Indian supply to Britain because a considerable portion had to be sent to the East Indies to feed the soldiers there. With India so close it was the only appropriate source of supply to reduce the cost of transportation--which would have been much higher if the United States or Canada had been the suppliers.

Along with the food scarcity in general, there was also a financial deficit. At this time, the oils and fats were being produced in dollar countries, particularly the United States and Canada. Britain did not have the money to enable her to turn to these countries as new sources of supply. She had very little money to spend, hence she curtailed her buying. These two factors had great economic repercussions on Britain, especially upon her farmers whose home products were heavily supplemented with this foreign supply.¹²

Economically important also was the assistance the Groundnut Scheme was going to provide to the whole world and to Africa in particular. The world oil and fat supply was seriously reduced by high consumption in war. Britain thought that by undertaking this adventurous enterprise she could not only relieve herself but the whole world of the shortage.

¹²A. Akers, "African Peanut Project," Foreign Agriculture, Vol. XIII (May 1949), p. 111.

The world population was estimated to be increasing at the rate of fifteen to twenty million per year which would exceed the death rates. This meant that there would be an additional 150 million people after the war.¹³

The Scheme was to provide vast assistance to the African people. To understand this, it is first necessary to look into the agricultural situation in the British African colonies. It was primitive in nature, operated by ill-fed peasants who tilled their land with primitive tools. They had no concept of using any kind of fertilizers but were sensitive only to following their land and burning the bushes; as a result of which poverty was common. The British government thought the remedy was to teach sound farming methods to increase individual output. Many educational and medical services were also needed to help ease the misery, poverty and starvation. A Scheme based on sound farming methods would be an example to the African people of how to use their land. Many other resources would also be developed by expanding communication facilities and supplying more food for local consumption thereby relieving the pressure on the land.¹⁴

Critics of the Scheme expressed pessimistic views. They pointed out that despite the fact that the financial assistance provided was considerable, it was inadequate to solve the problems of poverty in the colonies. This could only be achieved, they argued, by:

¹³F. N. Howes, "Groundnuts (Africa)," Great Britain Ministry of Agriculture Journal, Vol. LV (April 1948), p. 25.

¹⁴B. F. Richardson, Jr., "Britain's Groundnut Scheme in East Africa," Journal of Geography, Vol. L (April 1951), p. 150.

...large-scale capital investment, the opening up of vast regions of unproductive land, and the application of modern methods of mechanical agriculture; any project of this kind involves such enormous capital expenditure and would take so long to become a paying concern as to be unattractive to private enterprise, quite apart from any objections to putting large regions of colonial land under private control. They can only be undertaken by some form of public corporation.¹⁵

Furthermore, not only Britain had the ambition to improve the East African economy, but internally, the East African territories themselves had illustrated the ambition to increase their wealth. The idea was apparent when there were signs that the war had begun to turn in favor of Britain. Various proposals for reconstruction and expansion were drafted. On August 1, 1945, for example, a Development and Reconstruction Authority was appointed in Kenya to enable the government to handle more effectively the post war planning. A Development and Reconstruction Fund was also set up in 1946 for the purpose of accumulating capital for development.

Each country devised programs of its own as a foundation for recovery since there was a great need to make up for the time lost during the war. Involved too, was the repairing of so much that had been left to crumble during the war years. There was another problem that was thought to be overwhelming--the resettlement of the ex-servicemen. These men had fought side by side with the British soldiers not only to defend East Africa from the Italian aggression, but in the Far East where British colonies like Malaya, Burma, India--just to name a few--were in danger of Japanese attack. Both the British and the East African governments were greatly concerned about these men. The Scheme, therefore, would also

¹⁵World Today, loc. cit.

be viewed as a government spending program to provide employment. Started along with it for similar purpose was the Owen Falls electricity project in Uganda. It was very successful and is a big economic asset to the whole of East Africa now.

The economic situation in the British colonies in Africa has improved greatly since then but not because of the Scheme. In this connection, the critics were right in their predictions because financial under-estimations were realized later and the Scheme failed completely, as shall be shown later. Again, it was because of the critics' insistence that the Scheme became the first government experiment despite the fact that the idea was initiated and planned by a private corporation. Just as the first Colonial Development Act was a government venture, so was the East African Groundnut Scheme, designed primarily to relieve Britain of some of her problems.

There were political as well as economic and social reasons for undertaking this extensive program. The Labour Party had in 1945 just defeated the Conservative Party in the election. It had to undertake venturesome programs to win confidence not only at home but in the colonies as well. Finally, and perhaps of minor importance, was the climatic reason. Supported by his knowledge and experience in Africa, Frank Samuel, Managing Director of the United Africa Company, went to see the Minister of Food and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁶ He suggested that East

¹⁶British Information Service (ed.), From Darkness to Light (New York: British Information Service, Dec. 1949), p. 10. Hereafter cited as From Darkness to Light.

Africa--Kenya, Tanganyika and part of Northern Rhodesia--was suitable for the operation in terms of temperature and rainfall, geographical position, vegetation, soil types and health conditions. (For position of East Africa, see map following.)

The Wakefield Mission and Its Report

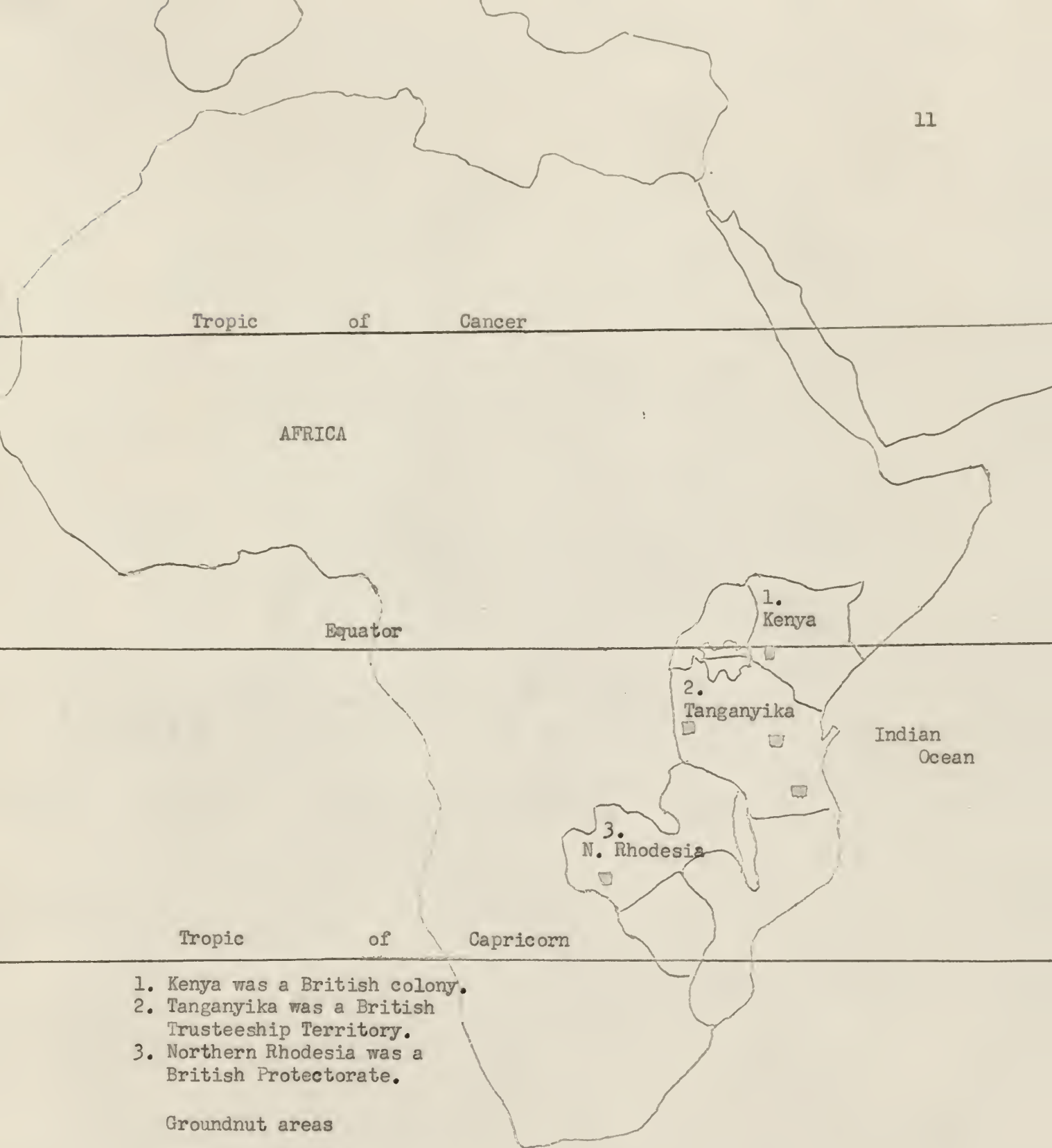
The Ministers of Food and of the Colonies viewed the suggestion as feasible and authorized an immediate investigation. A government team consisting of A. J. Wakefield, formerly Director of Agriculture in Tanganyika Territory, J. N. Rosa of the Colonial office, and D. L. Martin, Head of the Plantations Department of the United African Company, was dispatched to East Africa on June 20, 1946. By September 20, the team submitted a comprehensive report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁷ After studying this, the Minister of Food informed the House of Commons of the government's decision to embark on the project early in 1947. Prior to the government's action, the United Africa Company had made some progress in running the enterprise in 1946.

The government's decision was printed in the "White Paper" entitled A Plan for the Mechanized Production of Groundnuts in East and Central Africa.¹⁸

The essence of the plan was: to clear about 107 units of bushes inhabited with tsetseflies, plough it and turn it into agricultural land

¹⁷World Today, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 105.

¹⁸Herbert S. Frankel, The Economic Impact on Underdeveloped Societies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 141-142.



Location of the Three Selected Territories¹⁹

¹⁹Harold Fullard, Philip's School Atlas (East Africa) (London: George Philip and Son Ltd., 1959), p. 9.

for the growth of groundnuts and grass. Mechanized methods would be employed. Heavy equipment suitable to level and remove the bush would be needed. Harvesting machines capable of lifting the groundnuts by applying the methods already successful in the United States would be used. One unit would be 30,000 acres. Sufficient numbers of labourers would be needed for clearing purposes, about 300 Africans would be needed to work one unit, and about 750 Europeans should be employed for the whole scheme. The centers of operations would be in Tanganyika Territory where the land was plentiful but gave habitation to tsetseflies which are dangerous to human beings. At the start, eighty units would be opened in Tanganyika, seventeen in Northern Rhodesia and ten in Kenya.²⁰

Impracticability of the Estimates

The original plan in the "White Paper" estimated that the initial yield would be 850 pounds of groundnuts per acre; this would rise to 1,120 pounds after the soil had been properly fertilized. The goal was to have roughly 50,000 tons by 1950 and perhaps 800,000 tons by 1951. These estimates were based on the current shortage, which ranged from one and one-fourth to one and one-half million tons. They also depended upon the availability of sufficient equipment. Finally, it was estimated that production would cost roughly £ 14 ^{5s} ~~16d~~ per ton of shelled nuts.²¹ In making these estimates, one important factor--the cost of

²⁰ World Today, loc. cit.

²¹ The sources available did not indicate the market price by then.

transportation--was overlooked. The regions in which the scheme was to be started were in the interior of the continent. Because of the topography, success would be difficult.

Africa is a relatively high continent surrounded by a narrow coastal plain separated from the rest of the high plateau by a steep escarpment. There are high mountains and deep valleys making railway and road construction expensive. Rivers have their sources on the high plateau and run swiftly down to the sea. A series of falls and cataracts make them unnavigable. Rain in most parts is heavy, making roads and railways impassable. These facts together with lack of training of the native people made the estimates completely inaccurate despite their scrutiny and acceptance by the experts.

The operations ran far behind schedule because more time, workers and equipment were required than had been estimated. The O.F.C. felt the original estimates were useless and requested a revision early in 1948--a request that was sustained and the O.F.C. announced a new plan (White Paper, Cmd 8125) in 1950.²² The fact that the costs would be greater than estimated did not come by surprise. Early in 1948, the general feeling was that the costs were likely to rise a great deal more. This was the comment in The London Times before the O.F.C. realized how impossible it was going to be to operate under the original plan.²³

²²J.F.R. Hill, and J.P. Moffet, Tanganyika - A Review of Its Resources and their Development (Dar-es-Salaam: Government of Tanganyika, 1955), p. 543.

²³The (London) Times, February 13, 1948.

The Initial Stages of the Scheme Under
the United Africa Company

The Scheme was going to be a government-operated one. But by the end of 1946, nine months after the suggestion had been made to them, there was no government corporation ready to undertake the project. Therefore, a private corporation had to do so. The only one willing was the United Africa Company whose managing director had initiated the idea. In December, 1946, the Company, acting as an agent of the government, took the responsibility and started the Scheme. Two conditions were attached to the government's decisions to manage it this way: "First, it was emphasized that the Scheme must be completely flexible; second, the financial risks involved were fully recognized and were considered justified because of the acute world shortage of oils and fats and that the residue after the extraction of the oil would be used to feed the cows to increase milk production in the country."²⁴

Progress in 1947

Progress in 1947 was slow and frustrating. Nevertheless, it was on January 20 of that year when the advance party²⁵ arrived at Kongwa in the central province of Tanganyika. Their first duty was to prepare for the arrival of equipment expected to be used for clearing the bush. The group also aimed at having 150,000 acres ready for the first planting

²⁴World Today, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 107. See also, His Majesty's Stationery Office (ed.), A Plan for the Mechanized Production of Ground-nuts in East and Central Africa (London: September 20, 1946), pp. 38-39. (Hereafter cited as Cmd. 7030.)

²⁵The (London) Times, February 6, 1947.

anticipated to take place toward the end of the year.

The Kongwa region was selected as the nucleus of the entire operation because of its geographical suitability. It is approximately 3500 feet above sea level and about 240 miles from the port of Dar-es-Salaam.²⁶ Its characteristics are predominately tropical (see its position on map on following page).

A miscalculation contributed to the slowness and frustration. The end of the year had been chosen to make the first planting. This was wrong because it was to be a drier season when the area would receive only about five inches of rain. However, planting should have been done between May 1 and October 31.

Another problem was that the equipment did not arrive as anticipated. Some old equipment used in fighting the war in the Far East was shipped in but was not as efficient as expected. The order for new equipment was delayed, thus contributing to a very disappointing start, which was further retarded by the shortage of fuel in Britain, unfavorable weather conditions at sea, waterlogged spots on the Tanganyika Railway, crowding at the port of Dar-es-Salaam and a shortage of skilled African labour due to slow recruitment and insufficient training facilities. At the end of this first year, roughly 9000 acres instead of 150,000 had been cleared and planted with groundnuts.

However, all aspects were not bad. Some went very well. The yield per acre, for example, had been estimated to be 850 pounds but it turned

²⁶Fullard, op. cit., p. 10.



Map of Tanganyika Showing Location of Kongwa²⁷

²⁷Fullard, loc. cit.

out to be 900 pounds. Then, there had been predictions that the market price would fall but it went up considerably. Also, although initially slow, there were no grave difficulties in recruiting African workers. It was surprising and rather encouraging to find that the African chiefs cooperated in the recruiting process and even expressed their sincere approval of the entire project. In general, the Africans were enthusiastic and willing to work. Some came from other territories such as Kenya and Rhodesia--areas proposed in the original plan. Others walked long distances to Kongwa. The rate at which they mastered the basic principles of machine operation was certainly very encouraging.²⁸

After some progress had been made at Kongwa, two other areas were placed under cultivation. These were western and southern provinces. The western region, whose headquarters was to be Urambo, is situated 60 miles west of Tabora in central Tanganyika and about 500 miles west of Dar-es-Salaam on the east coast. It is about 3500 feet above sea level; the whole area ranges between 3500 and 4000 feet and is a part of the central African plateau. The rainfall is almost the same as Kongwa, only 33 inches a year, most of it falling from December to May. The soil in some places is rich red loam and in other places it is gray sand. Nearly the whole region is covered with dry forest. However, the general vegetation is tropical grassland or savanna. The target here was to develop at least 60,000 acres of land.²⁹

²⁸Anon., "Report on the First Year's Progress," Review of the River Plate (February 6, 1948), pp. 17-19.

²⁹Bunting, op. cit., p. 699.

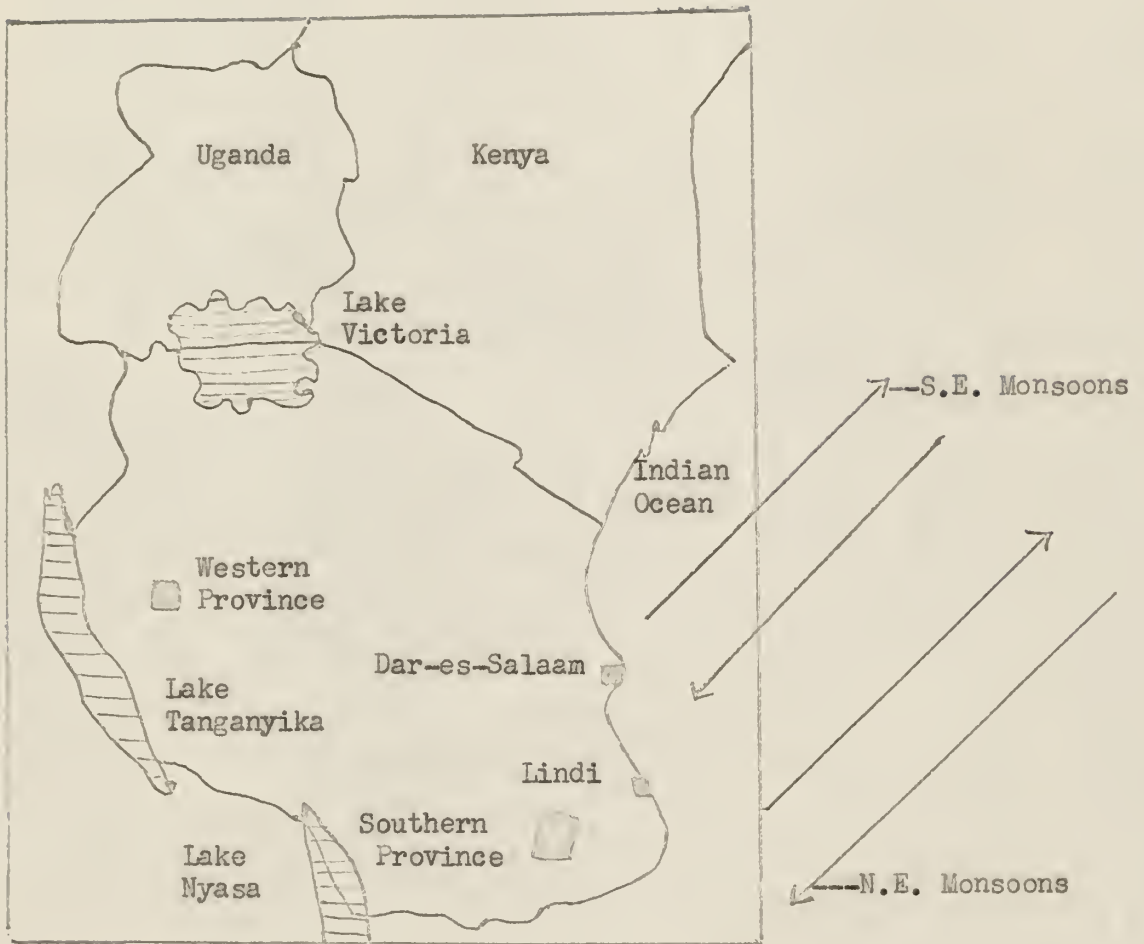
The southern province is different from the other two regions, both geographically and technically. It is relatively low, 1200 feet to 3000 feet above sea level. The rainfall, caused mainly by the monsoon winds, ranges from 30 to 40 inches a year, falling mostly from November to April. These regular seasonal winds blow one direction during one season and in exactly the opposite direction in the other. They are caused by the land mass of Asia and the Indian Ocean. During the northern summer, the land mass in Asia gets hot, causing the air to rise and develop a low pressure region. Air over the Indian Ocean, most of which lies south of the equator, is cool and heavy, causing a high pressure region. The resultant southeast monsoons then blow from the Indian Ocean toward Asia.

When the sun swings south, the low pressure belt swings with it. Air over Asia is cold and heavy and so blows southward causing the northeast monsoons. Since these winds are regular, rain in this region is more dependable than in the other two.³⁰ The following map shows the geographical position of the two provinces and the direction of the monsoon winds.³¹

The vegetation is generally the same as in the other regions-- tropical grassland. However, there are heavier forests in some parts because of the greater rainfall.

³⁰"East African Groundnuts Plan: The first stage: Advance party already in Tanganyika: Food Minister says he envisages similar enterprises," Crown Colonist, Vol. XVII (May 1947), p. 253.

³¹Fullard, op. cit., p. 12.



Location of Western and Southern Province and
Direction of Monsoon Winds

The amount of rain and its reliability were quite encouraging. But the experts thought perhaps the low elevation would make the area suitable only for pastoral development; however, they decided to develop about 65,000 acres. This groundnut region lies about 70 miles from Lindi, a port on the east coast just south of Dar-es-Salaam.

History and Constitution of the O.F.C.

The Overseas Food Corporation did not come into existence until February, 1948, when the Overseas Resources Act was passed. This act established two big corporations: the Colonial Development Corporation and the Overseas Food Corporation.³² The duties of the Colonial Development Corporation, the larger of the two, were to develop colonial territories. The O.F.C. was charged with:

1. Securing the investigation, formulation, and carrying out of projects for production or processing in places outside the United Kingdom of foodstuffs, and for the marketing of foodstuffs or such products; and
2. As the first project to be carried out by them, securing the large scale production of groundnuts, together with crops rotational therewith or ancillary thereto, in colonial territories in East and Central Africa, and the marketing thereof.³³

The constitution called for a governing board comprised of a chairman, a deputy chairman and not less than four nor more than ten other members as the Minister of Food should from time to time determine.

³²Economic Development, loc. cit., Also see Overseas Food Corporation, Report and Accounts for 1948-1949 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, September 1, 1949), p. 1.

³³Hill and Moffet, op. cit., p. 542.

The selection of the members was to be based upon the individual indication of capacity to carry out the required duties. This would be indicated by such things as experience, education and training. Sir Leslie Plummer was appointed Chairman and took office in March, 1948. The government had a great deal of confidence in him because of his reputable record. A. J. Wakefield, who headed the Government Investigation Mission, was a member of the board. J. N. Rosa, a South African-born banker, a member of Wakefield's mission which went to East Africa to investigate the feasibility of the Scheme, was also appointed to the board. He and Wakefield were later dismissed because it was felt that they contributed to the improper running of the O.F.C. J. McFadyen, first Deputy Chairman, remained full-time member of the board after being replaced by Sir Donald Perrot. He was mainly responsible for supplies and transport.³⁴

The O.F.C. was allowed to borrow £ 50,000,000, and a further £ 5,000,000 as temporary borrowings. The activities of the O.F.C. are explained in detail in different sections of the Act. It was made clear that the O.F.C. was entirely responsible to the Minister of Food. In carrying out its activities, not only in the colonies but elsewhere outside Britain, collaboration with local governments was necessary. For example, in Australia it had to work with the government of Queensland in growing coarse grain to feed cattle. In colonial territories it could undertake its activities only at the invitation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

³⁴"A Much Discussed Venture--The Government's Groundnuts Scheme: Officials, and Scene," The Illustrated London News, November 26, 1949, p. 813.

The act stated specifically that the interests of the native people should be carefully safeguarded. The corporation was instructed to set up committees as required for the purpose of looking into certain conditions and needs of the natives. Consultations with local authorities for the purpose of safety, health and general welfare of the employees of the Corporation was also a part of its obligations, thus reflecting the desire of British Colonial Administration to develop and to prepare the colonies for independence. It can also be added that the Labour government wanted to improve imperial relations by paying attention to the needs of the people.

The Bill (the Act of 1948) did not appear to the House of Commons to be controversial except for the clause relating to the transfer of the Scheme from the United Africa Company to the O.F.C. The opposition (conservatives) and some Labour members did not like the way the government was handling it. They wanted the Scheme to become a part of the Colonial Development Corporation at a later date. The government argued that the opposition's insistence for amendment was illogical because both the Colonial Development Corporation and the O.F.C. were public organizations and thus it made no difference which took over the responsibility of running the Scheme.

Two significant facts relating to this bill are important to note. "First, it was sponsored by five Ministers of the Crown--the Minister of Food, the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Minister for Economic Affairs, and the Secretary of State for the Commonwealth Relations."³⁵ Second, it was a new measure whereby colonies

³⁵World Today, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 110.

were to be developed by a government-sponsored organization and so it was received enthusiastically both by the political leaders and by the public. "Here undoubtedly," said Oliver Stanley, chief spokesman for the opposition, "is a measure on which it is possible for all sections of the House to agree."³⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the background of the Groundnut Scheme, touching the major portion of the Colonial Development and Welfare idea later extended in the acts of 1929, 1940, 1945, and 1948 and was run by the O.F.C. Some specific reasons why the Scheme was considered necessary have been discussed as have been a summary of the original plan and the original cost and time estimates. The later realization of the impracticability of the estimates which led to slow and disappointing progress during the first year has been sketched.

A brief account of the technical problems in terms of machinery, geography, climate, and transportation is included. Since the Scheme was undertaken by a public organization, the discussion of the O.F.C., its duties, extent of operation and officials, became a necessity.

The Scheme ended in a fiasco for many and varied reasons. Whether they were related to political, economic or social aspects of the East African milieu or to managerial lack of knowledge or to an excess of ambition on the part of the British is an aspect that requires careful discussion later.

³⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER II

TRANSPORTATION: ITS PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

General Outlook

The importance of the East African Groundnut Scheme was nation-wide as well as world-wide in terms of the reasons for which it was established. Its success depended on careful and highly technical methods from the beginning, but as time went on, it found itself handicapped by technical, administrative, racial, social, medical and transportation problems. These were not only akin to the scheme, but had always existed in the colonies, and still persist. Agricultural problems were largely new. All of these difficulties, together with the search for methods to solve them, created a unique situation resulting in the failure of the original plan.

The most crucial problems were those relating to transportation services. The regions selected lay far inland from supply centers. They were also uninhabited and completely devoid of civilized facilities. Unquestionably, the cost and time taken in transporting equipment would affect planning and provisioning. That transportation contributed to protracted delay is revealed in two areas: in the overloading of established transport facilities, and in the total lack of normal facilities in certain areas.¹ Regarding the first, at least a half-year's delay

¹Medwyn Ormerod, "The Transportation Problems of the East African Groundnut Scheme," Journal of the Institute of Transport, Vol. XXIII (July 1950), pp. 351-358. Mr. Ormerod was Transportation Manager, Overseas Food Corporation, London.

resulted from the overloading; regarding the second, it was important to remember that transport facilities were not the only limitations in the regions.

Existing Transportation Facilities

The fact that transportation problems were crucial did not necessarily mean that there was nothing like modern transportation. Prior to the coming of the English and the Germans in the late 19th century, the east coast of Africa had been under the influence of the Arab and Persian traders for many centuries. These traders sailed from their own ports with the help of the northeast monsoons and sailed back with the help of the southwest monsoons. Therefore, they built trading ports along the east coast of which Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar were the most important. They traded in slaves, ivory, gold, and spices. To get these commodities they had to penetrate into the interior. The traders made a few crude routes which extended as far as Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and northward to the southern shores of Lake Victoria. When the British and Germans came, they took advantage of these early establishments and made appreciable and rapid expansion. Shipping services, therefore, had operated from Mombasa in Kenya through Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam in Tanganyika and Zanzibar on the Island of Zanzibar to Beria in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), a distance of 1,250 nautical miles. After a half-century, from about 1895 to 1945, the British had made numerous improvements on the ports although deep-berth ports and intermediate lighter ports were limited. Regular liner services ran to them from various parts of the world.

Railways

The Germans lost Tanganyika after the First World War. It became a British Trusteeship Territory and the administrative system was patterned after that of Kenya and Uganda. In 1948, it was possible to amalgamate Tanganyika railways with those of Kenya and Uganda. Since then they have operated under the East African Railways and Harbours Authority, with its headquarters in Nairobi.

Prior to 1948, the Tanganyika railway system comprised one main line and some small branches. The main line ran, as it still does, from Dar-es-Salaam through Tabora in the Central Province to Kigoma on the shores of Lake Tanganyika on the extreme west. Another line ran from Tanga, also on the east coast, to Arusha close to the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. The Mtwara-Nachingwea line was constructed in the extreme south and was to be of great service to the Southern Province operation. Then a branch ran from Tabora northward to Mwanza on the southern shore of Lake Victoria. The Gulwe-Hogoro branch, which passed through Kongwa, was specially constructed for the Scheme in this area.²

Airways and Roads³

The airways were also very limited in scope. The East African Airways Corporation, though expanding very rapidly was of very little help

²Ibid., p. 351. See also B. F. Richardson, "Britain's Groundnut Scheme in East Africa," Journal of Geography, Vol. L (April 1951), p. 151.

³See map, Reproduced from Anon., "Air Transport in Africa Today: The Groundnut Scheme," The Aeroplane, Vol. LXXVI (March 25, 1949), p. 339.



Map of Airways and Roads

as far as the selected regions were concerned. Only a few airports, such as Dar-es-Salaam, Tabora and Mbaja existed. Moreover, it was difficult to transport heavy equipment by air even to accessible areas.

Roads were also limited and their immediate construction rendered another serious problem. Hills and deep valleys, particularly the great rift through the center of the country from north to south, added to this difficulty. The steep escarpment separating the plateau from the coastal strip made road construction difficult without modern machinery. The few roads that were in existence were poorly constructed, dusty in dry months and muddy and impassable for heavy traffic in wet months. These limited systems left many areas impenetrable.

Some New Considerations

An effective transport system was required to provide for the movement and distribution of supplies and the shipment of produce. The first area to be selected was in the Central Province around Kongwa. Only a 40-mile railway had to be constructed to connect Kongwa to the main line. Urambo lay some 575 miles farther west of Dar-es-Salaam but still close to the main line. Neither of these areas offered adequate agricultural land for the Scheme so future groundnut expansion had to be carried on substantially in the Southern Province where transport problems were special and crucial.

Specific Problems Pertaining to the Southern Province

The Southern Province had been surveyed and judged suitable for the operation. The first problem was to select a site for building a port. A mission led by P. E. Millbourn, Adviser on Shipping in Port to the Minister of Transport,⁴ left London to look into this problem. The mission reported in March, 1947, that Mtwara had been selected as the most suitable. A railway line was to be constructed from here to run across the Southern Province to the shores of Lake Nyasa and connect to Northern Rhodesia by lake service. It was also proposed that this line would be joined to the central system in central Tanganyika thus providing a sound communication among the three regions.⁵ Since Northern Rhodesia was one of the selected areas, the line would serve it, too. The expansion of the scheme was not restricted to Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia. Nyasaland, also a British Protectorate, lay close by and its climate and geographical conditions were not different. Therefore, the southern railway was to be of economic and strategic importance not only to the future of Tanganyika and Rhodesia but to Nyasaland as well.

This plan for the Southern Province also included the construction of a pipeline. This was to cover a distance of about 128 miles and its purpose was to deliver large quantities of fuel from the coast to the interior. The base tanks were estimated to hold 12,000 tons, the pipehead

⁴Ormerod, op. cit., p. 353.

⁵Anon., "Mechanized Production of Groundnuts in Africa; Ambitious Scheme to Cultivate Over 3,000,000 Acres in Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia and Kenya," Crown Colonist (March 1947), p. 175 (especially paragraph one).

tanks 8,000 and the line itself to hold 4,000 to meet the required needs.

The first railway construction was started at Mkwaya and was opened as far as Nangauga in August, 1949. The Mtwara line, which was constructed later, had to link up with the Mkwaya line and extend about 81 miles as a single line to Nachingwea, which was to be the Area Headquarters for the Southern Province. This line was intended to link with the planned north-south railway from Northern Rhodesia through Tanganyika to Kenya. The importance of the line was not limited to the Groundnut Scheme. It went further by becoming a part of the whole East African transport system when the East African Railways and Harbours Administration took over the responsibility of running the Scheme from the O.F.C. in April, 1949.

The Port of Dar-es-Salaam and Its Limitations

In the port of Dar-es-Salaam the problem was of a different nature. It was an old port and very few improvements had been made. After the war there was a substantial increase in traffic and by 1949 there was severe congestion which led to delays in shipment both to and from Great Britain.⁶ These affected the Groundnut Scheme as well as the Tanganyika Government Department of Commercial Traders and the whole East African Railways and Harbours group.

Representatives of the British government, the Tanganyika government, and East African Railways and Harbours consulted together and agreed to

⁶"The East African Groundnut Scheme: Report on the First Year's Progress," Review of River Plate, February 6, 1948, p. 17.

eliminate the causes of these delays as far as possible. The first step was to study the conditions at the port of Dar-es-Salaam. Operations like stevedoring, lighterage, quay craning, clearance from the port area by rail and, to some extent, by road were scrutinized as were the man-made port facilities on a smaller scale. The amount of the lighterage quay, for example, was 1,460 feet; while storage sheds had a volume of about 15,000 deadweight tons. Finally, the open space reserved for stacking and quay handling was very limited.⁷

In general, the port was under constant pressure. Before the war, the amount of traffic was 180,000,000 freight tons every year. Between 1947-1948, this figure increased to well over 400,000 tons and by 1949 it had risen to more than 500,000 tons. The Scheme was held responsible for this increase; from 1947 to 1949 its traffic amounted to more than 65,000 tons annually. In 1947, this increase resulted in the appointment of a committee to regulate the traffic in Dar-es-Salaam. Members of the committee represented the port itself, East African Railways and Harbours authorities, and the O.F.C. It was also necessary to set up a corresponding committee in London representing the lines, the Crown Agents and the O.F.C. The main duty of the London committee was to program O.F.C. shipments.

The whole problem was so sophisticated that some of the things could not be controlled at both ports. Treaties gave to the port of Dar-es-Salaam heavy traffic from ports other than London. For example, freight from the Belgian Congo by the way of Lake Tanganyika went through the

⁷Ormerod, loc. cit.

port. The situation also revealed deficiencies in the system for registration of cargoes for shipment from Great Britain. To improve the situation, a number of shippers employed the device of registering more traffic than they actually had available. This device was used mainly in the case of motor cars which were singled out as the most limiting factor in handling traffic.

In January, 1949, a conference met in London to revise the programs as a remedy to the problem. There were two types of programs--short-term and long-term. The short-term developments were based on the present lighterage layout. Under this, improvements relating to additional equipment were put in order and a decision was reached as to the additional loadings as soon as these new suggestions were effected.

In March, 1947, a long-term development was published and sent to the East African High Commission (now, East African Organization Service) which was responsible for the central administration of organizations like East African Railways and Harbours, Post and Telecommunication Services, Higher Education, and East African Customs and Duties, and others. The development proposals encompassed provision for deep berths and a possible outlet through Mombasa for the produce from the central part of Tanganyika. The distance from central Tanganyika to Mombasa was far greater than to Dar-es-Salaam and it was anticipated that this proposal would be more costly, although it was a useful alternative.

Specific Problems Pertaining to Railways

The railways had difficulties of their own. The major ones resulted from tropical weather conditions and transit of equipment from abroad. The difficulties should have been avoided because they had been experienced during the war when the demands were so urgent.

The weather conditions in tropical Africa are characterized by heavy rains in certain months of the year and severe drought in other months due to change of direction of the monsoons (referred to in Chapter I).⁸ They are responsible for violent thunderstorms which affect the railway transportation greatly. Even by 1949, the railway system in Tanganyika was not yet of high quality. After heavy rains, the soil would be washed away from the lines, especially in steep areas. They would sink and traffic would be stopped for an indefinite period. During the drought, the effect was just as great because the ground would dry up, become dusty, crack, and would, consequently, be hazardous to trains.

The fleet of about sixty line locomotives was enlarged by "Garratts" shipped from Burma, by sixteen "MacArthurs" from Malaya, and six "4-8-2s" of 1946 United Kingdom manufacture followed by ten more of home manufacture in 1949.⁹ Different types of wagons (freight cars) were also ordered from about 1947 to 1949. During the 1949 drought, which was the most severe since the Scheme was started, new tank cars had to be brought in

⁸J.F.R. Hill and J. P. Moffet, Tanganyika: A Review of Its Resources and Their Development (Dar-es-Salaam: Government of Tanganyika, 1955), p. 149.

⁹Ormerod, op. cit., p. 353.

immediately because the existing fleet had to be used for carrying water instead of oil. In the rating system, a reduced rate on exports on "any station" basis had to be devised to stimulate export production especially among producers in the up-country.¹⁰ Relating to groundnut produce traffic, it was decided that special arrangements were necessary to have rates fixed which would be published according to established procedure. A combined tariff was also worked out to apply to all three territories---Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika.¹¹

Road Transport

There were inadequate railways to start with because the lines to the key areas---Kongwa and Nachingwea in the Southern Province---had not been constructed. This meant that, in its initial stages, the Scheme relied mainly on roads for both short and long distances. The first group which started its work at Kongwa in 1947 was sustained partly by road transport from Nairobi, a distance of more than 500 miles. From Dar-es-Salaam to Kongwa by road was about 350 miles and the first convoy from there arrived at Kongwa in June 1947.¹² These roads were dirty, muddy in rainy seasons and dusty during drought. In the rainy season they became impassable and the arrival of supplies was delayed for many days.

¹⁰The sources did not give the existing rate and also did not indicate how much reduction was made. Also, they did not show what the established procedure was.

¹¹Richardson, op. cit., pp. 150-157.

¹²"Transport and the Groundnut Scheme," World's Carriers, Vol. XLVI (February 15, 1950), pp. 191-192.

The O.F.C. also found itself short of a road fleet because of delays in delivery. This made it necessary to buy some vehicles that were military remnants. They were bought from Belgian, Italy and Egypt. These old vehicles were not very effective; they presented many operational and maintenance problems. Spare parts, not available in Tanganyika, had to be shipped in in large numbers. A normally effective operating fleet was not available for some time. Meanwhile, an order for new vehicles designed for local conditions had been sent in. It had been estimated that the Scheme would have about 2,000 vehicles with which to operate by 1948. At the same time, local people were being trained as drivers. Other measures were also being taken to eliminate equipment deficiencies in general, to improve bad roads, train inexperienced workers and install petrol (filling) stations.

Air Transport

Air transportation was the most limited. But, it was found to be a necessity for two reasons: first, it was faster; second, it was cheaper in transporting families and employees both from Great Britain and within East Africa.

The O.F.C. contracted privately owned charter planes, and from November 1, 1949, it engaged in extensive contracts with the British Overseas Airways Corporation. In East Africa air transport was widely used for local journeys and the East African Airways Corporation supplied most of the services by connecting the big cities and ports to the groundnut areas. However, for the sake of effectiveness, the O.F.C. sometimes had to charter aircraft for internal air freight work.

Some Special Shipping Considerations

The only means to get heavy, massive equipment from the United Kingdom and foreign countries like the United States, Canada, Belgium and Italy, was by sea. For this reason a new system, called "Liner Conference," was introduced, as a means of putting together independent private undertaking to avoid the worst features of competition. The East African Conference Line was one of these lines, and it did a remarkable job of shipping large quantities of cargo which the Scheme needed so badly; however, difficulties remained. The two ports, Dar-es-Salaam and in particular Lindi, were too small to admit large vessels, especially those used by commercial shippers and Crown Agents to ship heavy cargoes. Finally, inconvenient storage as well as insufficient derrick capacities also added to these problems.

Certain measures had to be adopted to ease the shipping and unloading of the required equipment and supplies. More careful preparations were made before shipping; caution was used in handling the equipment during unloading. It was also thought that most of the equipment would be safer if it was delivered on wheels or tracks.

Operating in an area that was entirely new, things were done on an experimental basis; so, in shipping of equipment, some experiments were carried on. Those that proved successful were: crating in asbestos sheeting was found to be an economical way of reducing damage; equipment covered with sheeting or grease was put on the deck with little or no damage; and small equipment was put together into large packages.

The standard of handling was also quite high.¹³

These devices proved effective and encouraging. Some people argued that more efficient rates were established through cooperation between large corporations and the Conference Lines than those established by the usual commercial practice. Others argued that it did not make much difference except that it facilitated shipping requirements.

Transportation Within the United Kingdom

After looking thoroughly into effective means of handling supplies and equipment in East Africa, particularly at the ports of Dar-es-Salaam, Lindi and Mtwara, it was recognized that related transportation requirements in the United Kingdom also had to be studied. Such requirements were connected with work done at the port such as packing into boxes, labeling, loading and assuring that all required equipment was loaded.

Although the O.F.C. operated like a free private commercial enterprise, public cooperation was fairly high. Since it was a government organization, the public had the responsibility of meeting most of the financial obligations involved. An effective transport system for the Scheme depended on effective home transport, a public concern. Of this relationship, Ormerod said:

It is not difficult to appreciate the great administrative and technical problems at present confronting the British Transport Commission. On the other hand, it is inevitable

¹³Ormerod, op. cit., p. 357.

that users look forward to signs of the resolution in particular of the problems of integration and charging¹⁴ policy. Meantime, one has found one's loyalty over-strained when the apologists of a particular transport media have advanced technological merits not borne out by the charges, and it is no doubt disappointing to the Commission itself that circumstances have forced it to apply for railway rating increases before the process of rating rail to other services is advanced.¹⁵

He pointed out that home transport operators had willingly worked together with the scheme and that such cooperation deserved appreciation. He praised the British Railways for handling heavy equipment and said this was quite successful. He also praised the Road Haulage Executive¹⁶ for handling a considerable proportion of traffic for the scheme.

Transport of the Produce

Transportation of Produce comprised three major stages: preparation of the nuts in the field, rail transport, and shipping. The nuts in the shell were collected by combine harvesters and put into bags. The bags were transported from the field by tractors drawn by agricultural trailers to neighbouring railway stations where they were stored in bulk. This necessitated adequate storage space at each loading station. It was discovered that bagged undecorticated groundnuts covered close to 100 cubic feet per ton in stacks 15 feet high. Therefore, 10,000 tons of groundnuts needed approximately 70,000 square feet. Storage in the open

¹⁴Sources give "charging" but because of possibility of printing errors, the word could be "changing."

¹⁵World's Carriers, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁶Road Haulage Executive was a government agency introduced under the Transit Act (no date given) to handle some of the traffic.

instead of sheeted storage was used because it was cheaper and the groundnuts were just as safe as they would be in sheeted storage.

The process of shelling the nuts took place at the railway stations, they were then shipped in bags in 30-ton wagons. At the port the nuts were removed from the bags, put into the storage bins and loaded into the ships by means of mechanical gear. Shipping groundnuts unbagged in large quantities would save 7 1/2 per cent of space but precautions against damage had to be taken. Shelled nuts were vulnerable to breakage due to handling or excess moisture; nevertheless, the completion of the deep berths allowed storage in the bags at the port until it was convenient to ship them.

This concluded the transportation problems which faced the East African Scheme. Possible solutions were put forth and implemented. The way was open for changes in the future as more experience and knowledge were gained.

CHAPTER III

TECHNICAL ASPECTS INVOLVED

While information regarding the physical characteristics of the areas was readily available from the Department of Education in Tanganyika and the Meteorological and Survey Departments of the East African Commission, the technological aspects were unknown. This chapter will be predominantly concerned with these aspects which will cover vegetation and clearing, soil types, water conservation, soil fertility, experimental crop studies, crop mechanization, plant protection and organizational aspects of the entire scheme. Of the three territorial areas designated for the Scheme, Tanganyika was selected as the starting territory. Here, three places were chosen. These areas, as mentioned earlier, were Kongwa in the central province, Urambo situated farther west, and the Southern Province. They were chosen on the basis of availability of land, geographical location, climatic conditions in relation to seasonal distribution of rain and to the amount required for growing the nuts.

Vegetation and Soil Types

Tanganyika has many hills, valleys and plains. Rainfall, which is the chief determinant of vegetation, varies from place to place but the difference among the amounts in the three areas (Kongwa, Urambo and the Southern Province) is not great. Vegetation, however, is not homogenous due to elevation. A vegetation analysis of Africa categorized the whole of Tanganyika (now called the Republic of Tanzania) into tropical grasslands

but this was not supported by the evidence of the vegetation from these specific areas. It was found that Kongwa was covered with thick, thorny, impenetrable deciduous trees and shrubs like accacia and baobabs.¹ Grassy patches existed where shallow lakes had been. The southern and western regions were covered with variants of plants called miombo which extended over a limitless area and in some places were found with leguminous types of plants—a vegetation which typifies the tropical grasslands which covers most of the Sudan, East Africa, and even the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. Groundnuts are leguminous plants, too, and it was believed that they would flourish very well in these areas.²

After the study of vegetation was complete, the stages of development and the methods to be employed were determined. Four stages were described. Since no good maps were available during the investigation, it was decided to make topographic, soil and vegetation maps on the basis of aerial and ground photographs. The main purpose here was to determine how much land was available, the extent of the units and the character of soil conservation systems. The maps would also help in directing the cutting down of the bush and in determining where to locate unit headquarters and workshop installations.

¹A. H. Bunting, "Technical Aspects of the East Africa Groundnuts Organization," Annals of Applied Biology, Vol. XXXVII (December, 1950), p. 700. See also A. H. Bunting, "Land Development and Large Scale Food Production in East Africa by the Overseas Food Corporation," Economic Botany, Vol. VI (January-March, 1952), pp. 56-59. Bunting was a biologist who first worked with the O.F.C., and now was with Research Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Wad Medani, in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

²A. H. Bunting, "Technical Aspects of the East Africa Groundnuts Organization," loc. cit.

These survey operations were followed by scientific work directed at determining soil types, genetic relationships, and soil formation and behavior. Most soils were red earth; however, in some places they were formed from transported materials. This resulted in yellow, gray and black soils, although they remained closely related to the general red earths.

One of the first problems the O.F.C. faced in the initial stages of the scheme was that of clearing vast areas of forests and bushes. New methods and equipment were required to work in these unexplored areas. Older settled areas of East Africa had been cleared by hand by barking, felling and burning the dry bushes. But this was crude, slow, and impracticable for working land on a massive scale. Before the war, in special areas such as sisal plantations and the coffee and tea fields of Kenya, mechanical methods had been used but only a limited area could be worked. For example, by 1943, the Kenya Government managed to clear only 3,000 acres of forest and bush on a contract basis. The modern equipment used was five caterpillar D8 tractors, Le Tourneau bulldozers and Le Tourneau H3 roters.³ Roots had to be collected by hand because machinery could not do it. Clearing operations for the Scheme were started in April, 1947. Within two years, 81,000 acres had been cleared at Kongwa, by the following year 65,000 acres at Urambo and 6,000 acres in the Southern Province had been cleared.

³J. MacBride, et al., "Mechanized Land Clearing; A Survey of Four Years' Experience in Tanganyika," World Crops, Vol. III (March, 1951), pp. 89-94. These pages give a general account of clearing experience at Kongwa and Urambo.

Clearing, Rooting, and Stumping

Before felling the trees, tractors suitable for knocking down trees were first used to penetrate the bushes so that caterpillar D8 type could be driven through later. The caterpillar D8 type was first tried at Urambo.

The clearing system was coupled with the soil conservation system which aimed at conserving rain water and preventing run-off. At Kongwa, fallen trees and bushes were piled up on contour lines which formed the basis for this conservation system. In other areas the bushes were simply piled up and burned because conservation was not a question of urgency. Contours, first prepared at vertical intervals of three feet which proved inadequate, were extended to 9-foot intervals. At Urambo piling was not a difficult problem because the chain method used caused the trees to fall in one direction. They could be dragged and piled together with ease.

Rooting and stumping were the most unsatisfactory of all the operations. The Le Tourneau three-tined road rippers⁴ drawn by D8 tractors were used but they soon were filled with roots making them incapable of working effectively. Gladwell rooters⁵ were introduced and used extensively in all three areas but they suffered the same problem as the D8s.

⁴Ibid., p. 91.

⁵A. L. Gladwell of Nairobi played a major role in the development of these clearing methods. The rooters were named in his honor. See Ibid., pp. 91-92 for Davis plough and other types of ploughs and rooters.

Davis ploughs were also tried but they cut the roots without extracting them making it impossible to use lighter implements such as rakes and harrows.

Tractors from the United States made by Caterpillar, Allis Chalmers, and International were generally effective. The British Shervick tractors introduced in 1948 in the Southern Province were found less effective than the American tractors because of long experience of American manufacturers. Design and maintenance were problems common to both British and American tractors. Designed for earth moving and road construction, they were not heavy enough to fell trees. Maintenance and repairs were difficult because there were insufficient workshops to handle all the equipment.

Clearing methods used at Urambo differed from those used at Kongwa. This was due to rainfall differences. At Urambo the rainfall amount was higher and erosion on cleared fields and roads was consequently greater. Square layouts used at Kongwa were not feasible at Urambo. Clearing was related to topography. It was easier to clear, remove the stumps, level, layout the farms and benches on plain land than on hilly, rolling land. This was a major feature on the Southern Province highlands.⁶

At Kongwa a topographic survey was not possible before the land was cleared because surveying equipment was not available. Surveying was done at Urambo before clearing and was very helpful in guiding the clearing operation. Air photographs had been prepared by the Colonial

⁶Ibid. For more information, see Anon., "The East African Groundnut Scheme: Report on the First Year's Progress," Review of the River Plate, February 6, 1948, pp. 17-18.

Surveys Organization and the O.F.C. used these preliminary photographs as a basis for further surveys.

A hurried beginning, inoperable equipment, and need for constant overhaul of equipment made work difficult. Heavy equipment was not reaching its destination. The Agricultural Director⁷ of the project said, "Of the first 350 track-type tractors that arrived in Dark-es-Salaam, approximately 90 per cent moved from the port under their own power; by November, only 10 per cent were still in operation."⁸ At Kongwa there were 800 heavy tractors; at Lindi there were five new heavy ones and twenty-six Shervick tractors which had not been tested for the work. Great Britain was unable to supply the immediate equipment needs and so the only solution was to resort to second-hand equipment used by the United States Army in the Philippines. Meanwhile, new equipment was ordered from the United States and Canada; but this presented two problems: first, Great Britain did not have enough funds to buy goods from dollar countries; second, it took a long time to get this equipment from the Canadian firm, Massey-Harris, which had to supply most of the machinery for the first two years.⁹

⁷The name of the Agricultural Director was not given in the sources.

⁸H. Akers, "Britain's African Peanut Project," Foreign Agriculture, Vol. XIII (May 1949), pp. 112-113.

⁹B. F. Richardson, "Britain's Groundnut Scheme in East Africa," Journal of Geography, Vol. L (April 1951), pp. 150-151. Also see L. D. Stamp, Africa: A Study in Tropical Development (New York: Chapman and Hall, 1953), p. 422 and F. N. Howes, op. cit., pp. 26-29. These sources contain related material but some differ on some specific things like the number of tractors and the acres cleared. Figures are merely approximations.

After four years labour, approximately 97,000 acres had been prepared for planting. Of this, 81,000 were at Kongwa, 14,500 at Urambo and 1,000 in the Southern Province. As noted earlier, effective measures to preserve rain water for irrigation were an essential part of the clearing system as it was also for control of erosion risks. The money and time factors did not permit construction of dams, benches and contours; nevertheless, they were under plan to be worked on in the near future. In addition, wind erosion had to be prevented. In clearing, grass strips and additional plantings of grass and trees in appropriate places were underway in all areas to reduce damage from wind erosion.

Soil Fertility

The scientific investigations to determine soil fertility fell into two categories: "the laboratory physical and chemical characterization of the main types, and the determination, by means of field experiments, of the main plant nutrient requirements of the main crops on the main soil types."¹⁰ The process appeared to be a long-term one but it provided a general view of the fertility conditions of the soils. Acid soils were scarce but it was discovered that bush fires increased the amount of potash. In higher, wetter areas, the amount of calcium was relatively low so there was no need for additional lime. The most prevalent deficiency in all areas was in phosphates which was necessary

¹⁰ A. H. Bunting, "Technical Aspects of the East Africa Groundnuts Organization," *op. cit.*, p. 701. See also A. H. Bunting, "Agricultural Research in the Groundnut Scheme," *Nature*, Vol. CLXVIII (April 21, 1951), pp. 638-639.

for rotational crops like maize and sorghum which used great amounts of phosphates. Additional nitrogen was not required for groundnuts, a leguminous crop because their nodules would supply the amount needed. Nearly 150 experiments were conducted every year for eight major crops-- groundnuts, sunflowers, maize, sorghum, safflower, castor bean, soya bean and niger oil. To ensure steady and adequate progress, it was anticipated that this number would increase, perhaps even double.

Generally the amount of organic matter was low; on high ground, a loss of 2 per cent in this matter was considered an exceptionally large one. The concentration was on the effect of crop residues and other organic materials on rotational sequences. The line followed was that adopted by the Empire Cotton Corporation which had been successful at Ukiriguru in Lake Province of Tanganyika.¹¹

Crop Research

The scientific work on crops was carried on by the Research and Scientific Department established in January 1947.¹² It aimed at starting economic systems on an agricultural basis suited to each region, and it established three experimental stations, one in each of the three regions, each covering about 800 acres. The staff at each

¹¹"Groundnut Project Advances: East African Wastelands," Illustrated Food Industry, Vol. XX (December, 1949), p. 1745. Comments on progress that was being made to preserve soil fertility. No further explanation was provided on what the Empire Cotton Corporation was really doing.

¹²Bunting, "Land Development and Large Scale Food Production in East Africa by the Overseas Food Corporation," op. cit., p. 62.

station was composed of seven Europeans and a sufficient number of Africans most of whom were in training for both laboratory and field work. The department headquarters were Kongwa and its hierarchical structure comprised an administrative section, a central chemical laboratory, a library and statistical departments. There were also specialists in each of the sections. The department suffered from a shortage of well-trained persons because of the scope of work it had to undertake; but it was soon realized that most of the work could be carried on by less-well trained workers.¹³

The organizational structure of experimental work on crops was as follows: the introduction and testing of different types of crops, their selection and breeding, and a study of cultural factors which included population density, arrangement, cultivation, ridging and dates of planting, and a study of crop sequence and rotations. The result of this experimental work was the introduction of a new crop called safflower, a thistle-like plant with large orange flowers. Dyestuffs and a drug can be prepared from its flowers. Agricultural administrators in other tropical countries of Africa were very cooperative in supplying different samples of crops.

Nearly 300 varieties of groundnuts were secured from different areas of the world. Because of the drought, the selection was centered on getting a drought-resistant, short-seasoned type of high yielder for Kongwa in particular. Among those selected were Natal common (probably

¹³Ibid., pp. 62-63. See also Anon., "The East African Groundnut Scheme: Report on the First Year's Progress," Review of the River Plate, February 6, 1948, p. 18.

from Natal in South Africa, as the name implies) and Spanish Bunch. For a long growing season, the type raised by the natives in Tanganyika proved more satisfactory than Natal common, especially in higher yields. A second advantage was the seed dormancy which helped to prevent a rosette disease. In the third place, resistance and tolerance to the rosette disease were distinctive characteristics of this type.

Different varieties of sunflower were also introduced. Most of them were the dwarf type and included Mouthner's Hungarian, Pole Star, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars and also Canadian selections and hybrids. The sunflowers are fleshy shrubs which need sufficient rain to do well since they are susceptible to drought.¹⁴ Sorghums were obtained from nearly every continent but most came from the United States. The club-headed type, developed in the United States, was unsuitable in East Africa, however, because the grains on the head were so closely packed that they formed good breeding conditions for insects and moulds during the warm humid days. This characteristic led to the combining of the giant yellow Kaura (or Kifaru, as it is known in East Africa), as well as resistance to storage pests favored by the presence of a horny external layer in the mature grain.¹⁵

¹⁴A. H. Bunting, "Agricultural Research in the Groundnut Scheme, 1947-1951: Work of the Overseas Food Corporation," Nature, Vol. CLXVIII (April 21, 1951), pp. 638-639.

¹⁵W. E. Bond, "Mechanization in Africa, Some Problems of the Groundnut Scheme," Review of Tropical Agriculture, Vol. XXVII (July 1950), pp. 170-171.

In maize (corn) breeding was delayed until later. However, many varieties had been obtained for experimental purposes. From Kenya a dwarf yellow type was introduced at Kongwa where it did very well. Katumbili from Tanganyika and a double hybrid variety from Southern Rhodesia were mixed with the type from Kenya to be planted in wetter regions where they were most likely to flourish. Research indicated that hybrid maize was needed in East Africa on a large scale but the O.F.C. was not in a position to undertake the programme.

The soya beans from North and South America could not adapt to equatorial climatic conditions in Tanganyika because of the long daylight hours. The selections were then made from the samples obtained from equatorial and subequatorial countries and appeared to do well in the long days. Of the six varieties selected, four yielded 1,500 to 1,600 pounds of grain per acre; other types yielded from 100 to 900 pounds.

The O.F.C. grew eight crops (groundnuts, sunflower, sorghum, maize, safflower, castor bean, soya bean and niger oil) out of the thirty that had been tested. The way remained open, however, for new crops from tropical and sub-tropical countries which would be introduced on a rotational basis.

Cultivational Methods

Cultivational methods were carried on in concurrence with mechanization techniques. Groundnuts were planted in rows of two, aiming at providing enough space for each plant and at the same time maintaining sufficient space for cultivation between the rows. However, the expected

advantages were lacking. Coupled with this was the importance of ridging the groundnuts which seemed to bring waterlogging to a minimum, increased water preservation, and assisted in harvesting the crop in soils which tended to compact at the end of the rain. A significant aspect of this undertaking was a careful study using the "gypsum"¹⁶ block technique of cultivational practice. This was in regard to the use of moisture and applied particularly to Kongwa where the storage of sub-soil moisture was a necessity.

In wetter regions grass was bulky. Rotation studies gave special attention to the effects of grass on nutrition and to leaching of soluble nitrogen and to the improving of soil properties. At Kongwa, attention was given to bare fallowing rather than tumble-down fallow¹⁷ which proved wasteful. Bare fallowing was valuable in improving groundnut yield and upland soil could be filled with water to field capacity after one season of bare fallowing.

Results of Crop Research

Physiological investigations resulted from the whole crop research programme conducted by the O.F.C. in 1948. Investigations on the Natal common groundnuts indicated that one-third of the weight of shelled or decorticated nuts was deposited during the last two weeks of growth,

¹⁶Gypsum is a hydrated surface of calcium occurring naturally in sedimentary rocks and used for making plaster of Paris, and for treating soil. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (Cleveland & New York, The World Publishing Co., 1960).

¹⁷The sources did not provide a clear distinction between bare-fallowing and tumble-down fallowing.

from thirteen to fifteen weeks after sowing, and that temporary drought during the vegetative period did not effect the growth rate. Two steps resulted: field studies of the harvesting date, which affirmed the above conclusions, and root bisect investigation. Concerning Natal common groundnuts, harvesting was supposed to be done only at the most favorable time. If harvested too early, the yield would not be as high as expected; if harvested too late, the nuts would shed. In relation to root studies, it was found that they went as deep as possible, in most cases from six to nine feet.

Finally, studies on crops revealed the importance of controlling surface wash which was so common in tropical regions because loss in good rich top soil meant loss in crop yield. The established methods were inadequate to control such loss. It was thought that ridging would give a reasonable amount of control but with the type of machinery available, it was not possible. At Urambo, Scientific Department started broad ridge and furrow ploughing, making ridges twelve feet wide in attempt to arrive at a successful way of controlling surface wash.¹⁸

Plant Protection

Plant protection rested on the control of outbreaks of diseases and insect attacks from an ecological standpoint. The destruction of tremendous stretches of virgin land meant the destruction of most existing

¹⁸ A. H. Bunting wrote an article in each the Annals of Applied Biology, in Economic Botany, and in Nature from which this material was obtained. He was also a co-writer of J. MacBride in an article in World Crops. All have been cited in previous footnotes.

insects like tsetse flies; on the other hand, it also meant the appearance of new insects and diseases, especially those that thrived on the new crops and lived comfortably on well-cleared, cultivated land.

Effort was made to learn all the new pests and diseases and to devise measures against them. Two new diseases appeared especially prevalent. The rosette virus disease which attacked groundnuts was carried by *Aphis craccivora* (also called plant louse), an insect that lived on plants by sucking their juice.¹⁹ The disease attacked the nuts at Urambo resulting in about a 40 per cent crop loss, although at Kongwa the disease was not as prevalent. The first step in controlling the aphids was to locate the pest in the surrounding bushes.²⁰ The insect was not found, but it was thought that it came from colonies of volunteer plants which had resisted the drought, and that it had flown away by the help of the wind currents to other areas. The volunteers grew from unharvested plants which made most of the plots present a threat to the next crop. One way to reduce that threat was to harvest more thoroughly in order to eliminate the volunteer plants. Two other possible techniques were: a different planting date, and different spacing. The next two tables show the effect of each on the incidence of rosette in groundnuts at Urambo from 1948 to 1949.

¹⁹Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, Bulletin of Entomological Research, Vol. XXXIX (August 1948), p. 233.

²⁰A. C. Evans, "Entomological Research in the Overseas Food Corporation (Tanganyika), Annals of Applied Biology, Vol. XXXVIII (June 1951), p. 526. (Bunting's articles also include information on diseases and pests but it was very sketchy.)

Table 1
Effect of Planting Date²¹

| Date of Planting | Plant Numbers (thousands/acre) | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Total at Harvest | Rosetted Plant at 15 March | Yield (lb/acre) |
| 18 December | 51.0 | 3.5 | 989 |
| 27 December | 46.8 | 5.9 | 814 |
| 2 January | 33.3 | 13.5 | 550 |
| 10 January | 37.4 | 16.0 | 361 |
| 19 January | 36.2 | 20.1 | 86 |
| 29 January | 41.5 | 14.9 | 86 |

The results indicated that there was less infection in the first two early plantings, so early planting was preferred to late planting.

Table 2
Effects of Spacing²²

| | Spacing Within Rows | | | Significant Differences | |
|--------------|----------------------|--------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| | 3 1/2" | 6 1/2" | 9 3/4" | 5% | 1% |
| Total Plants | 50.8 | 35.9 | 26.7 | 4.9 | 6.1 |
| Rosetted | 16.8 | 17.2 | 17.5 | 3.0 | 3.8 |
| | Spacing Between Rows | | | | |
| | 18"(S)* | 28"(S) | 36"(D) ⁺ | | |
| Total Plants | 44.2 | 27.9 | 41.2 | 4.9 | 6.1 |
| Rosetted | 18.6 | 15.5 | 17.3 | 3.0 | 3.8 |

*S = Single rows

⁺D = Double rows, 6" apart with 36" between centers of double rows.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 527.

After understanding that the disease was carried by an air-borne vector (aphis) and that early planting and wider spacing were controlling factors, the next step was to test possible insecticides that would assist in control. Among those tested were DDT and phosphorous anhydride.

Groundnut Pests

So far, diseases did not appear numerous but insects were plentiful. The ones that were spotted included:

Cercospora: a leaf spot of groundnuts, sclerotinum volfsii; a foot rot and crown rot which attacked the seedlings and was caused by Aspergillus niger. The foot rot was discovered to be very common in wetter regions and was increasingly becoming a problem. Alternavia carthami was a foot rot of sunflowers.²³

At Kongwa, a swarm of insects called Laphygma Exempta appeared in tremendous numbers but did not spread to large areas. They were soon consumed by migrating flocks of birds. Grasshoppers were also numerous and they devoured the leaves. The most common one was Hilda Patruelis, a leafhopper but which normally attacked the underground sections of the groundnuts, killing the plant. It was controlled before it had inflicted much damage. Termites were especially numerous in Southern Province and were most destructive to sunflowers and maize in all three areas. Both plants, especially those which matured early, had to remain standing in

²³Bulletin of Entomological Research, op. cit., Vol. XXXIX, pp. 231-236. The bulletin gives a list of insects associated with groundnuts in East Africa. W. F. Jepson, O.B.E., Ph.D. who studied these insects was an entomologist with the Department of Agriculture in Tanganyika in 1948.

the fields for a considerable length of time before they were harvested. These were normally the victims. Among the insecticides used to fight the termites were DDT and BHC applied together with fertilizers. This practice proved to be most effective.

Calidea dregi also destroyed sunflowers and sorghum. The growing grains and leaves of sorghum were attacked. With the sunflower, it penetrated through the micropyle and ate the kernel part of the plant. Seeds were never damaged but the kernel decreased in weight while that of the husk increased. Oil content was also reduced. At Urambo it was estimated that about 140,000 of these insects occupied each acre. This required a large amount of DDT, BHC and "pyrethrum"²⁴ power to bring them under control.

The Scientific Department

The Scientific Department worked in cooperation with the Tanganyika Department of Agriculture, the East African Agricultural Research Institute under Dr. Storey at Amani, and the East African Agricultural Research Organization under Dr. Keen in Nairobi. These three organizations sent representatives to meetings of the East African Scientific Committee and O.F.C. to supply all the information available in relation to agriculture in East Africa. The department also drew much information from

²⁴Pyrethrum is a shrub plant with long stems, finely cut leaves, and has white, purplish or red flowers from which the insect-killing powder is made. It has been widely grown in the Kenya highland since World War II.

British centers of research both in Britain and in the Commonwealth, the United States and French and Belgian colonies.

Conclusion

The general results indicated that it was possible to grow different types of crops in the three regions in Tanganyika as well as in other parts of East Africa. But at this time it was not possible to say that the results were completely satisfactory. More research had to be carried on to remove the obstacles which still caused the work to lag. A high degree of confidence had been established and the future of the Scheme was bright. Adjustment to the tropical weather conditions was gradually being achieved, workers were keen, results were promising and cooperation with other parties was sound.

CHAPTER IV

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE OVERSEAS FOOD CORPORATION: CONDITIONS IN 1948-1949

It proved impossible for the original plan of the Groundnut scheme to achieve its aims.¹ This did not mean that the entire scheme and the work that had been done were valueless and needed to be abandoned altogether. The British government still believed that the scheme was an important undertaking and that a new set of objectives should be worked out. It decided that the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies should assume the responsibility of directing it, not as an enormous undertaking such as the original plan had indicated, but as an experimental project.

Modification of the Plan

The original plan which called for the clearing of 3,210,100 acres was revised because the O.F.C. found itself quite incapable of executing it. Furthermore, the amount of money needed to pay the costs was far greater than was originally estimated. The revised plan prepared in 1948 proposed the clearing of 2,355,000 acres over a seven-year period and at a cost of about £ 66.7 million. These figures were unacceptable

¹His Majesty's Stationery Office (ed.), A Plan for the Mechanized Production of Groundnuts in East and Central Africa (London: 20th September 1946), hereafter cited as Cmd. 7030 (1946). See also, His Majesty's Stationery Office (ed.), East African Groundnuts Scheme: Review of Progress to the End of November, 1947 (London: 1948), hereafter cited as Cmd. 7314 (1948). He explains the progress within the first year. It was published in January, 1948 and the O.F.C. responsible for the revised plan took over on March 1, 1948.

to the government. For this reason, another plan was submitted on November 21, 1949, which required the working of 600,000 acres in the three regions by 1954. This plan was accepted and it was to be operated on a regional basis.

Of the 600,000 acres, Kongwa was allotted 90,000 acres of which 81,000 acres were to be put under production but because of two successive bad seasons, only 12,000 acres were cultivated in three years (1949-1951). Urambo was also to have 90,000 acres which were to be cleared in the next two years. There were two obstacles: first, famine broke out in the region and so railway transport was diverted to transporting food instead of equipment; second, additional capital was needed to attain this target.² It was, therefore, decided to clear only 65,000 acres by 1950.³

For the Southern Province, the revised plan aimed at clearing 420,000 acres. Of these, 20,000 acres had to be cleared within the first season ending in November, 1950, and the rest was to be completed by the end of 1954. The operation here, as can be seen from the number of acres, was far larger than the other two regions combined. More money was allocated for this area. Two large clearing teams were needed. Extensive housing and servicing facilities were to be provided at an approximate cost of £ 1,400,000.

²The sources do not give the original amount of money allocated for Urambo, and they do not indicate the additional amount that was needed.

³Overseas Food Corporation, The Future of the Overseas Food Corporation, (London: 1950), pp. 1-18, hereafter cited as Cmd. 8125 (1950).

The work under the new plan (for the Southern Provinces) started with the examination of the soil types around Nachingwea. A number of difficulties were uncovered. a) It was found that not more than 150,000 acres around Nachingwea could be made available for agriculture because of unsuitability of some soils and nature of vegetation. b) Only small fields of 1,000 acres each could be created and these were separated from each other by natural drainage courses and fields unsuitable for agriculture. c) The access to these fields and communication between them was difficult. This called for a more expensive road construction program than the original plan had provided. d) The nature of the soils rendered them highly liable to soil erosion and this also called for expensive soil protection measures to be taken. e) The cost of clearing each acre was higher than the original plan had provided.⁴ f) In 1949, it had been estimated that the work would be done by five clearing teams but by 1950, experience had shown that this was beyond the physical and financial resources of O.F.C. It was therefore decided to limit the teams to two. Theoretically, these two teams would be capable of clearing 60,000 acres a year.⁵

The situation as described above necessitated a proposal for a revised new plan for the Southern Provinces. It was suggested that the only way of reducing costs of clearance was to substitute hand labour for a part of the work being done by machinery. The substitution of

⁴No figures are provided. The new plan does not even say what the increase in cost was to be in figures. For further explanation see Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

hand labour eliminated the least efficient and most costly of the mechanical operations--piling and stumping. Nevertheless, the labour available for this work necessarily reduced the rate of progress to some 15,000-20,000 acres a year.

With regards to the entire revised plan, experience had shown: a) there was a loss of 95,000 acres from the planned production at Kongwa and Urambo; b) not more than 150,000 acres could be developed in the Southern Province without the construction of another costly base of operations; c) progress could not be achieved at the rate estimated, and costs of development and land clearing especially in the Southern Region were higher than had been estimated, which meant that the borrowing capacity of the O.F.C. could not pay for the preparation cost of the original 600,000 acres.⁶

The O.F.C. made a further proposal. On the basis of the results achieved, and the problems still unsolved, there was no reason to propose an increase in the existing borrowing capacity. The only solution, it was felt, was to devise another revised plan which could be executed within the £ 50 millions of long term capital authorized by the Overseas Resources Development Act of 1948.

When the Board reviewed the activities of the O.F.C. they recommended the following points: a) The effort to produce crops on land which had been prepared at a high cost in money and human effort should be maintained

⁶Ibid. The situation would be more complicated if enough sums were needed to meet the liabilities, all of them non-revenue earnings which fell on the corporation because the scheme had been scaled down as compared with that for which provision had been made in the attempt to carry out the original plan.

for period of (seven years) to indicate fairly conclusive results;

b) The groundnuts yield had been quite good on the areas already selected but this yield had been on experimental farms. What had to be done now was to reproduce similar results or something close to them on a field scale. But one problem here was realized; the groundnut, being a plant that does not lend itself readily to mass methods of cultivation over vast areas, made the attainment of economic production, which demanded wide farming, almost unworkable. This meant that the units should be reduced. It was then decided that smaller farms of 1,500 to 6,000 acres should be separately worked by men who could acquire thorough knowledge of certain peculiarities of land on their independent farms--peculiarities that were assumed to differ from farm to farm.⁷ c) Cutting down of forest and bushes by mechanical means had also proven impossible within either the period or the cost established in the previous plans. This should be done at an economic cost in relation to the value of the arable land already created. Simpler and slower methods must be employed partly to reduce the costs.⁸ d) Communications, installations, machines and manpower had already been built up over the past three years--for a major clearing in the Southern Province (that was due to start in December 1950). It was thought that it would be wasteful not to make use of this accumulation of resources at least for maximum tree cutting effort during

⁷Sources do not mention what these peculiarities were but they implied that they would relate to soil fertility, erosion and how well or badly the crops would flourish on various farms.

⁸Simpler and slower methods meant using hands instead of machinery.

the coming wet season. e) Provisions had to be made from the capital which remained at the disposal of the O.F.C. to meet commitments, especially those that need to be discontinued, and to provide some reserve margin for the unforeseen possibilities which would inevitably arise during the execution of any revised plan.⁹

On the basis of the above recommendations, the O.F.C. developed suggestions to attain, within their statutory borrowing power, the following wide range objectives. First, was to be established by the use of agricultural practices and scientific experiments, a system of farming which would make use of all the cleared land and if successful would lead to future development (preparation of more land.) Second, all the cleared land was to be provided with adequate equipment--permanent installations, machinery and implements--without which the capital expenditure on the land clearing would be wasted. Third, the first stage of what might become a plan to develop the total area (i.e., 150,000 acres) was to be started in the Southern Provinces. This stage would extend to 1957, serviced from Nachingwea, and would adequately make use of installations, machinery and manpower already at hand.¹⁰ Fourth, all present and future liabilities so far as they could be foreseen were to be provided for. And finally, a sense of permanence and stability without which no constructive objective could be achieved efficiently was to be created.¹¹

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰This was thought of as the most efficient and economical of the mechanized operations.

¹¹Ibid.

The estimates of costs and revenue had been provided for the first three seasons only, that is to September 30, 1953. The reason for this was, the corporation considered it unrealistic to work out detailed estimates of farm costs and predictions of crops, yields and prices over a longer period than three years, or to anticipate the changes in farming organization and technique and in crop rotations which might be the results of current experiments at that time. However, they regarded an assured future for agricultural production over a minimum period of seven years as essential to ultimate success. If the British government appeared unable to provide such an assurance the O.F.C. would then regard any further capital expenditure to be of doubtful justification. Furthermore, annual reports and budgets would be submitted each year based on a detailed appraisal of the progress of the Scheme. It should be remembered that an attempt was being made to frame a new system of farming in areas where farming, other than crude African agriculture, had not hitherto been attempted.¹²

The above plan, it was thought, provided for agricultural losses and unforeseen contingencies. The O.F.C. considered that the costs as they had been estimated could be reduced in time. As a result of their investigations and the best advice they could get from experts, the O.F.C. was satisfied that the prospects of success, and the advantages to African development which would result from it, justified such risks as might be involved in a seven-year commitment. They suggested therefore that such a commitment be accepted by the government. They were aware that the new

¹²Ibid.

plan could not in itself contribute importantly towards Britain's food supplies. The area under crop during the three years would be no more than as shown in the following table, and the best that could then be hoped for within the borrowing capacity of the O.F.C. was 250,000 to 300,000 acres available for production in some form.¹³

Table 3
Acreages Under Crop

| | Kongwa | Urambo | Southern Province | Total |
|---------|--------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| 1950/51 | 12,450 | 45,000 | 7,200 | 64,050 |
| 1951/52 | 12,450 | 45,000 | 16,800 | 74,250 |
| 1952/53 | 12,450 | 45,000 | 24,000 | 81,450 |

About 50% of this acreage was expected to be covered by ground-nuts, the rest being distributed among maize, sorghum and millet.

The Broad Outline of the Revised Plan

a) A provision was made for crop production on an acreage starting at 64,650 acres in the year ending September 30, 1951, and rising to 81,450 acres by September 1953.

b) The land prepared for agriculture was to be equipped with the installations, buildings, electricity, water supplies, plant, machinery, vehicles and tools essential for agricultural production.

¹³Ibid.

c) The resources already accumulated in Nachingwea, the capital of the Southern Province, were to be used for maximum tree felling effort in the subsequent season. This should result in the clearance of some 40,000 acres, thereafter, i.e., from June, 1951 to September, 1957, operations would be reduced to such yearly acreage as could be achieved by a permanent force fixed at thirty tractors, helped by hand labour. It was estimated that thirty tractors supplemented by hand labour would provide for a balanced and uniform annual effort. And about 15,000 acres would be made available for agriculture annually by using these methods.

d) Provision for commitments which arose from the reduction in scale of the previous plan, which included guarantees given in respect to port, railway and oil tank construction, breakages and maintenance expenses and compensation to employees for loss of office.

e) Reserve provision for accumulated depreciation liabilities and unforeseen contingencies.

The details of the plan will be explained on the regional basis in the subsequent paragraphs. (For the estimates, see the schedule).¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid.

| | | £ |
|--------------|---|-------------------|
| Schedule I | Capital Expenditure | 5,960,000 |
| Schedule II | Provision to meet farming costs to 30th September, 1953, including all administrative overheads and a depreciation provision for all assets utilized, less anticipated revenue from crops | 760,000 |
| Schedule III | Provision for past commitment | 2,660,000 |
| | Accumulated depreciation to 31st March 1951 | 370,000 |
| | Contingencies | <u>1,000,000</u> |
| | | <u>10,750,000</u> |
| Less: | The estimated net credits from utilization and sale of surplus stores and equipment | <u>2,250,000</u> |
| | | 8,500,000 |
| Add: | Estimated expenditure to 31st March, 1951 | <u>36,500,000</u> |
| | | £ 45,000,000 |

The Overseas Resources Development Act of 1948 had allowed the O.F.C. long-term borrowing powers amounting to £ 50,000,000 plus £ 5,000,000 for short-term advances. It was therefore possible for the O.F.C. to borrow a further £ 2,500,000 of long-term capital before the statutory limit was reached.¹⁵

The execution of the plan was the next step, and as it will soon be noted, it varied in the three regions--Kongwa, Urambo and Southern Province.

1. Kongwa

The first thing the O.F.C. did was to abolish the Regional Headquarters. Then three large farms of 12,000, 6,000, and 3,000 acres respectively were established. Each farm had a manager who was invested

¹⁵Ibid.

with maximum authority and would be directly responsible to the new General Manager. A fourth farm of about 1,500 acres was also established under the control of the Scientific Department and the Operational Research Unit. The purpose in laying out these farms was to conduct fully-costed field scale trials for about three years starting with the next planting season in December, 1950. Expansion to the remainder of the cleared land depended on the success or failure of the already established farms. To preserve the cleared area until the expansion was possible, ranching on a small scale was gradually introduced.¹⁶

2. Urambo

In the case of Urambo, clearing was reduced to 65,000 acres which was to be completed during the 1950 season. The O.F.C. thought that some 50,000 acres would be completed by November and that it would require three to four months longer to clear the remaining 15,000 acres. The amount of money that was required to equip Urambo for complete production on some 60,000 acres (which excluded 5,000 acres required for soil conservation works) was estimated at E 410,000.

The land was reorganized into two main administrative units, comprising:

- Unit No. 1 -- Six farms, ranging from 3,300 acres to 5,500 acres with one of 1,700 acres, and
- Unit No. 2 -- Seven farms of 1,500 acres each and four of 5,000 acres.

¹⁶
Ibid.

Each farm was regarded as a self-contained and responsible entity. The cropping programme comprised groundnuts, maize, and sorghum. (See below for estimates.)¹⁷

| | 1950/51 lbs. | 1951/52 lbs. | 1952/53 lbs. |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Groundnuts, Kernels | 600 | 650 | 700 |
| Maize | 1,000 | 1,200 | 1,400 |
| Sorghum | 1,000 | 1,200 | 1,300 |

The money provided for Urambo as indicated in the plan had to cover farming losses up to September, 1953. However, it was difficult to predict with accuracy what the results were going to be over so large a new farm, or how long it was going to take before production over the entire area became self-supporting. The success, it was thought, depended on the amount of improvements that were to be made on these farms.

3. Southern Province

As already pointed out, not more than 150,000 acres of good land was available in the Southern Province unless a new base of operations was constructed. Two land clearing teams had been assembled. Since mechanized land clearing was an expensive affair some hand labour had to be used. But hand labour required a longer cycle of operations. The O.F.C. found it necessary to put forth the following proposals: a) an all-out felling effort during the wet season of December, 1950 to April, 1951, using the resources available in Nachingwea; b) the reduction of

¹⁷Ibid.

the mechanized effort as from June, 1951, to a force of thirty operational tractors. The O.F.C. felt that things would work well by organizing a compact and manageable mechanical force, helped by hand labour. This force would be employed over a definite period of time of reasonable length instead of working to a predetermined target of acreage. Greater stability and coherence would be provided by this operation. It was estimated that by the end of 1957 105,000 acres should be finished, ready for agriculture and 35,000 to 45,000 should be in preparation. By 1954, it could be predicted whether it would be economically feasible to complete the development of the 150,000 acres that were available. This work would extend to 1960 or 1961. It was estimated that £ 5,225,000 would be needed to meet the expense of a clearing programme, surveys, soil conservation operations and necessary installations.¹⁸

A special committee set up by the O.F.C. examined the agricultural aspects for the region. The members of the committee included G. F. Clay, Agricultural Advisor to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Frank Sykes, an experienced English farmer who was also interested in African agriculture and was a member of the colonial Agricultural Advisory Committee, and representatives from the Tanganyika government.¹⁹ The committee, after careful investigations based on observations and discussions, came to the conclusions: that the Southern Region was suitable for giving good yields of groundnuts; that maize growing could

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The names of Tanganyika government representatives are not provided in the Cmd. 8125 (1950) from which most of this material was obtained.

also give good yields, but this remained to be proved; and that cotton and tobacco were to be experimented with and if successful, would improve the economic outlook of the Scheme in this region.

On the other hand, two problems were foreseen. There would be the serious farming problems in the future due to the difficulties of soil management. These, however, could be overcome by sound farming methods.

Second, there were high demands for power and labour during the busy planting season. This was likely to remain a permanent disadvantage to the Scheme. However, the committee was optimistic as to the eventual prospects and this could be a justification for the O.F.C.'s procedures. The farms in this region were laid out into 3,000 acres, each of which 2,400 acres were to be in crops each year. In the coming season seven farms were scheduled to be opened, but it was unlikely that more than 7,200 acres would be planted. It was worked out that about 105,000 acres would be opened for agricultural purposes by the end of 1957. In three years (1951-1953), groundnut yields were expected to have risen from 600 lbs. to 700 lbs., maize from 1000 lbs. to 1100 lbs., and millet, no increase at all (600-600).²⁰

Administrative Centres (Centers)

The administration of the Scheme included the London office, Nairobi offices and the East African headquarters. The London office had a nearly complete staff of one hundred and seventy. Under the new plan this number was to be reduced to about seventy by the end of 1953.

²⁰Ibid.

Nairobi, Kenya, was the trading and transport center for the whole of East Africa. Since the Scheme had been reduced in scope, it was necessary to keep a relatively small agency staff in Nairobi to take care of local purchases and control the air transport contract that had been entered into between O.F.C. and B.O.A.C. This reorganization left the door open for bringing the agency under the control of the London office at the end of the local decentralization process proposed in the new plan.

The Kongwa headquarters consisted of seventeen departments and a staff of one hundred and fifty Europeans. It needed a minimal annual budget of £ 270,000. This was quite expensive and plans were soon devised to reduce the office by decentralization and abolition of some departments. The process would be a gradual one and it was expected to be completed by the end of 1953 after which the annual cost would be reduced to about £ 40,000. The executive powers of the headquarters were to end by January, 1951, except in the field of finance. It was to be replaced by a group of four advisors representing the agriculture, engineering, labour and finance areas. These would be helped by seven assistants and an office staff. More authority was given to two regional general managers---one for the Central Region of Urambo and Kongwa and another for the Southern Region. They would be directly responsible to the Board in London. The advisors were given the right and the duty to advise the general managers and the Board. At the same time they were to make or seek reference to the Board at their discretion.

The disbandment of the Kongwa headquarters had several advantages. One was that it left the O.F.C. with a surplus of buildings which it would turn into storage and workshops. Second, the O.F.C. entered into

discussion with the Tanganyika government so that the government could use some of the buildings the O.F.C. could not use. Some of them were turned into hospitals. Others were probably sold rather than rented to the government providing an additional source of revenue for the O.F.C.²¹

The Staff

The O.F.C. also made changes in its staff, particularly the European staff. The following table shows the number employed at the time the new plan was devised and the subsequent annual reductions. The numbers include, also those employed by the Earthmoving and Construction Ltd.²²

Table 4
Number of Employees

| | Present Strength | As at 30/9/51 | As at 30/9/52 | As at 30/9/53 |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| O.F.C. | 1,283 | 888 | 778 | 609 |
| E.C. | 384 | 30 | - | - |
| | <u>1,667</u> | <u>918</u> | <u>778</u> | <u>609</u> |

The table shows that the reductions were drastic and severe. However, they were not more than was necessary if the Scheme was to be brought within the bounds of finance which the revised plan required. Severe disappointment and great personal hardships were certain to result

²²The Earthmoving and Construction Ltd. was a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the O.F.C. which was eventually eliminated as the table shows. The figures exclude the staff employed in the disposal of surplus plant, stores and equipment.

from the course of executing these reductions. The O.F.C. arranged compensation for its employees on their dismissal. This compensation had to cover six months' salary plus the earned leave due to them. This was the implementation of the statement made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food in the House of Commons on the 17th July, 1950.²³ The O.F.C. also included £ 400,000 to cover these liabilities. The case of employees of E.C. was different. These employees were hired on temporary contract terms and their case was to be dealt with in accordance with the terms laid down in individual contracts.

The African staff--clerks, tract drivers, and mechanics--were regarded as skilled workers. After studying their employment opportunities carefully, the O.F.C. decided to retain a large number of them within the scope of the revised plan, particularly those who had improved in their skills and competence. The demand for unskilled labour remained high and even increased because of expansion in agriculture and substitution of land labour for machines in the land-clearing operations.²⁴

Why was there a greater reduction in European staff than in African staff? First, it was not the general custom of the African workers, especially unskilled, to remain in continuous employment and as there was an ample demand for such labour throughout Tanganyika, no hardship was expected to arise. Second, the African economic demands were not as great as the European and so, the retaining of a large

²³The name and statement of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food were not given in the sources available. The Minister for Food was John Strachey.

²⁴Ibid.

African staff did not present a serious financial problem.

Commitments and Reserves

1. Railway Guarantees

In 1947 it has been decided to build a deep water port at Mtwara with a railway to run to Nachingwea. Because of time needed to finish the port and the first section of the railway to Ruo it was found necessary to construct a temporary port at Mkwaya, close to Lindi (see map on page 27) and connect it to the planned main line at Ruo. This was intended to continue to Nachingwea and be ready for traffic by October, 1949. The administration of the East African railways and harbours had agreed to finance these constructions from the East African Transport Loan, subject to guarantee from the Corporation of any shortness in interest and a sinking fund not covered by the port and railway earnings. The undertaking was reviewable after ten years. The guarantee was later expanded to cover any deficiency that might arise in operation costs. The port and railway construction was embarked upon on the basis of the estimated amount of traffic, both ingoing and outgoing, which would have resulted from carrying out the original plan.

The reduction of the original plan deprived these ports and railway works of any chances of being of economic benefits on the O.F.C.'s traffic alone. It had already made clear to the Ministry of Food in London that so far as their own requirements were concerned, the completion of the Mtwara Port and the rail section from Mtwara to Ruo was unnecessary, and that if for other reasons it was the wish of the government to

proceed, the obligations of the O.F.C. should be restricted to its inescapable liabilities as on, say the 31st December 1950.²⁵

2. Shell Oil Company Guarantees

An oil pipeline had been constructed from Mtwara to a tank centre in Nachingwea as a part of the entire Southern Region development. This line was completed in 1949. The Shell Company of East Africa Ltd. was responsible for ocean installation at Mtwara into which oil tankers discharged. It also handled installation at the inland terminal. The O.F.C. agreed to pay the company depreciation and interest incurred over a five-year period on the installations. This could only be paid if the amount of oil going through the pipes fell short of an agreed figure of 100,000 tons over the period. This figure was substantially less than the estimated consumption given to the company when the agreement was reached with the O.F.C.²⁶

Under the reduced plan it was unlikely that the consumption would exceed 5,000 tons yearly. Therefore, an additional account of £ 220,000 was set aside to cover a ten-year period for oil installations provided by the Shell Company at both Kongwa and Urambo.²⁷

²⁵Ibid. It was too early to assess correctly how much the liabilities for the Corporation were going to be in respect to the railway guarantees. However, £ 1,250,000 had been set aside for the purpose.

²⁶Depreciation and interest were then paid because the figure fell short and the company did not make profit on agreed figure of 100,000 tons.

²⁷Ibid.

3. Depreciation Expenses

Under the new plan the reduction in the scale of agricultural operations at Kongwa for which roads, buildings, plant and a large hospital and workshops had been provided necessitated maintenance and operation expenditure on a scale which could not fairly be charged against the farming of 12,000 acres only. It was, however, necessary to sustain these installations in case the results over the next three years should justify a subsequent expansion. To do so, a sum of £ 295,000 was provided to cover the costs.

At Kongwa, Urambo, and Nachingwea the O.F.C. found itself in possession of equipment and stores not required for the future operations. It was also faced with special non-recurring expenses of the organization. These costs could not be properly charged to the current expenses. For this reason a provision of £ 495,000 was made to cover the costs.

The total amount set aside to meet the above expenditures and compensation due to excessive staff was £ 2,660,000. This money was expected to be recovered by surplus stores and equipment valued at £ 2,250,000. A net provision for paying commitments arising from the past was £ 410,000; £ 370,000 was reserved to cover the accrued depreciation on the assets on 31st March, 1951. This sum was required for the revised plan. And again a sum of £ 1,000,000 was appropriated to meet the unpredicted contingencies.²⁸

²⁸Ibid.

4. Pending Problems

After presenting the revised plan and prescribing means for carrying it out, the O.F.C. still found itself confronted with three sets of problems. a) It was to get rid of the physical and contractual legacies entered into in the past (in the original plan). This appeared crucial and it was not expected to be over until after two years. b) A method whereby the future activities of the O.F.C. would not be overloaded with overhead representing the cost of present surpluses, whether of stores, plant, installations, buildings or manpower, had to be devised. This was basically a financial problem and was to be handled as such. c) Morale constituted the third problem. The new plan disposed of many of the O.F.C.'s personnel. Compensation and help in securing employment either in Tanganyika, or any other African country, or in England was being given. But this did not restore the confidence of the remaining employees in the security of their jobs. The restoration of such confidence depended on the success or failure of the Scheme.²⁹

Conclusion

It has been noted that the development of a second plan came as a result of the failure of the original plan. The reasons were many and varied. First, it was too large a plan; second, there were numerous miscalculations in the estimates--financial, employees, transportation facilities, and accomodation. But most important was the poor management .

²⁹Ibid.

The new plan was therefore designed to correct these errors and to avoid further repetition of them.

Although there was a general pattern of the new plan, process of reorganization was carried on on a regional basis--Kongwa, Urambo and Southern Province--because each region presented its own particular problems. Administrative centres, staff, commitments were examined. However, more problems were still anticipated especially those relating to contractual legacies, future overhead, and morale. At this point, the success or the failure of the Scheme was difficult to predict because the revised plan was in its infant stage. Success on experimental farms upon which the revised plan was based had been experienced and this gave a feeling of optimism. On the other hand, the original plan had failed; the new plan could also fail.

CHAPTER V

EMPLOYEES AND THEIR WELFARE

One of the objectives of the Groundnut Scheme was to provide opportunities for social and economic advancement for the Africans living in the areas selected. This was to work in accordance with the general aims of the British colonial policy and the obligations assumed by His Majesty's government under the United Nations Charter, and, in the case of Tanganyika, under the Trusteeship Agreement that had been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.¹ To this end the Africans employed by the Scheme would be encouraged to accept responsibility for the management of their own social services, and later to participate actively in the management of the agricultural, commercial and industrial phases of the undertaking. The fact that greater attention was to be paid to the welfare of African communities in the areas did not mean that the welfare of Europeans was to be overlooked. In this chapter the welfare of both races will be discussed. The discussion will encompass personnel and labour, catering and shops, education and social life, and finally health, in the years 1948 and 1949, since the years 1946 and 1947 have already been discussed in Chapters I and II.

¹Tanganyika was a German colony before the First World War; as a result of the war, Germany lost it. The British took over as a mandatory territory. The Mandatory System was changed to the Trusteeship System after the Second World War.

Personnel and Labour

1. European Staff

As the Scheme unfolded, there was a substantial increase in the number of European staff members both in London and in East Africa. The London staff increased from 119 to 232 and the East African staff more than doubled, increasing from 440 to 967. There was no shortage in the number of applicants. Statistics showed that there were more than 19,500 applicants every year, but analysis indicated that the O.F.C. experienced difficulties in obtaining accountants, field surveyors, engineering draftsmen and agricultural scientists. From the beginning, there were fears that the Europeans would be unwilling to accept jobs with the O.F.C., but as the Scheme progressed, this did not appear to be true. During the year, there were sixty-one resignations, twenty dismissals, and twenty-seven contracts were terminated. This did not create a problem at all because replacements were available almost immediately, due to the number of applications on the waiting list. The economic benefits that were attached were responsible for the large number of applicants. First, the salaries were very attractive; second, provident funds and pension funds were started for those in East Africa; and finally, the Superannuation Fund was introduced for those in London.²

²The Overseas Food Corporation, Report and Accounts for 1948-1949, (London: 1949), pp. 1-3, hereafter cited as Reports 1948-1949.

2. African Labour

The African comprised a larger proportion of the labour force. It was evident that the Scheme would be very dependent on the ability to get the Africans to work. It was found that they showed tremendous capacity and adaptability as drivers, maintenance men, operators of agricultural and land-clearing equipment. They also demonstrated ability in the simple mechanical work of repetitive nature. It was estimated in the original plan that the peak of the native labour force would be 57,100. The size of this African labour force presented a unique problem to the Scheme. It led to the formation of a special department. On the other hand, no serious difficulties were encountered in the recruiting process. On May 1, 1948, 6,844 skilled Africans had been employed and by April 1, 1949, the number increased to 13,619.³ Bearing in mind that the Scheme was started without African skilled workers, training of Africans in various skills was one of the contributions to the African people. Some of these people could not be expected to work for the O.F.C. indefinitely if the Scheme was to be successful. For various reasons, they could resign and find work with other groups. In so doing, they would not be required to undergo further training before they were employed. Even the unskilled workers also had an advantage. Their experience with the O.F.C. helped them to obtain employment with other corporations.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Problems Relating to "Skilled" Workers

The problems arising in this area were not of a quantitative but of a qualitative nature. The labour exchange was becoming worse every day. The poorest performance was shown at Urambo. The greatest promise was shown by the Luo and Wakamba tribesmen from Kenya and the Wasukuma from Tanganyika. In general, the African skilled labour was relatively lower than that of Asians and Europeans.

Furthermore, there were certain kinds of skilled workers that could not be obtained among the Africans in East Africa, e.g., superior clerks and technicians like generator and machine operators, refrigerator repairmen, skilled mechanics and carpenters. There were many Indians in East Africa, but they were not applicants for employment. The reason for this is hard to ascertain, but the Indians in East Africa have developed greater interest in businesses of their own rather than in being employed by either the government or private corporations. To supply needed skilled workers, the Corporation imported about 200 Mauritians and Seychelles. The chief suppliers of skilled African workers were Kenya and Tanganyika. Applicants either came in person or filed written applications. The Labour departments of Kenya and Tanganyika helped the applicants follow the proper procedures. Little man power was drawn from Uganda, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.⁵

⁵Ibid.

Unskilled Labour

The unskilled labour was plentiful in the three regions. There were two major causes for this shortage: First, at that time (1948-1949) the Africans living in the neighborhood grew enough food for themselves and their families. They had also a surplus to sell; hence, they could maintain themselves and pay their taxes without outside employment. Of course, their demands were not many, but sooner or later, they were expected to rise with a high influx of new foreign goods. Second, the railway construction in this area involved strenuous manual work which made it unpopular with the Africans. The railway labour shortage did not remain constant. At certain times there was a food shortage resulting from drought or destruction of the crops by insects like locusts in African areas. This lessened the problem of railway labour because the Africans were now forced to seek employment.

A major problem relating to African labour soon realized was its poor utilization. There were three main reasons for this. First, the greater number of the Europeans who worked with Africans could not communicate easily with them. The only language through which they could give instructions was Swahili, and since most of them neither spoke nor wrote Swahili, they could not make themselves understood. Second to the language problem was the dictatorial attitude demonstrated by the European staff. Most of them were young and thought that they were superior to native labourers and, thus had the right to expect obedience. They, therefore, bullied the African workers, thus damaging the relations between them and the Africans. Thirdly, there was no organized department

to handle this problem of labour utilization until the arrival of Colonel C. V. Merritt from Kenya at the end of March, 1949.⁶

The African Labour Turnover

The Africans showed up in numbers every month. The turnover averaged about 10 per cent per month. The figure was excessively high. A worker, unless he was under contract, could quit after collecting his first wage. This was found to be the practice among the Africans who preferred to cultivate their land before returning to work. Africans throughout East Africa have, over a long period of time, developed a tendency to regard any kind of job as temporary. Land was their security. So, whenever a worker felt that his land was in danger of going back to bush, he would leave the job or force his dismissal. Attempts to employ African workers on contract in Kongwa Region failed because many did not honour the contracts. The only practical way that succeeded was to offer the Africans fairly good salary, good living and working conditions for the men and their families.⁷

Wage Rates

In Tanganyika, as in other countries of East Africa, wages varied in different sections. At this time there was not much demand among

⁶Ibid., pp. 47-48. Colonel C. V. Merritt was a labour expert who had had long experience by working with Africans in Kenya. He also spoke Swahili very well and he could be understood by African workers without difficulty.

⁷Ibid.

African workers for salary increase. There were no active labour unions to do this. Increases were made at the discretion of the employer. The labour union movement became an active contending force in the 1950s, when they began to advocate uniformity and increase in wages. A worker in an urban center such as Nairobi Dar-es-Salaam would receive a higher wage than a worker in a town that was situated in a remote part of the country. The O.F.C. offered wages corresponding to those paid by the government of Tanganyika. In addition, the degree of skill varied which in turn affected the wages paid. An attempt was made not after very long to standardize rates of wages in the project. This was done on the basis of categorizing trades into groups which were also tested. A worker was, therefore, required to pass trade tests before he was promoted. Wages of the unskilled workers were not standardized. Wage rates were established on a regional basis and the Corporation's Regional Managers had authority to adjust the wages as they deemed necessary.⁸

Procedure in Case of Grievance

The unskilled workers in East Africa liked their problems to be discussed and settled in their presence rather than by reference. In view of this, it was necessary to establish a committee where the Africans could have their grievances voiced. Besides, some form of machinery was necessary through which the Africans could settle their personal affairs relating to marriage disputes, petty quarrels, as well

⁸Ibid.

as participating in the management of community problems and recreational pursuits. In realization of this, two kinds of councils, "domestic councils" and "works committees" were created in all the regions. The "domestic councils" were constituted of Africans. Their purpose was to allow the Africans to organize their communal life. The primary functions included solving domestic differences, improving the welfare of their communities and mediating all cases concerning civil differences. They worked in close collaboration with the African courts by sending to these courts the matters that they could not settle for themselves.

Since these councils handled disputes that would otherwise be handled by the government courts, they were formed in consultation with the Tanganyika government. The councils worked very well and encouraged the European communities to take a keen interest in the matters affecting the African communities, thus creating an understanding atmosphere. Moreover, they gave the African an opportunity to learn to be responsible for their own welfare.

The "works committees" were composed of appointed representatives of management and elected employees. The main objective was to devise a means of consultation between the administrative unit of the O.F.C. and the employed. Their functions included: a) the attempt to foster cooperation between units management and the employees, with the object of achieving and increasing the efficiency and well-being of the employees; b) the improvement of conditions of working for employees; c) to listen and try to find settlement for grievances; d) to attend to physical welfare at places of work; e) to try to collaborate with sports committees, welfare committees and domestic councils. Further to handling

African affairs, there was the O.F.C. African Employees Committee in Dar-es-Salaam whose functions were similar to those of the works committee.⁹

Finally, and apart from these councils and committees related to African affairs, there were also the Mauritian staff councils. They were for migrant Mauritian workers whose affairs needed similar considerations. For the Asians there were the O.F.C. and associated companies, and Asian Employees Association, which later became a registered trade union in Dar-es-Salaam.

Maintenance of Law and Order

A police force for the O.F.C. was organized primarily to supplement the Tanganyika government police force. Some farms were situated in remote areas and property on these farms was open to theft and malicious damage. More important still was the maintenance of law and order among the employees. The Tanganyika government organized an Auxiliary Police Force whose function was to patrol areas occupied by the O.F.C. The O.F.C. provided the funds for the maintenance of this auxiliary force. The chief officer was charged with the responsibilities of reporting to the Governor and the Commissioner of Police in Dar-es-Salaam. He was responsible to the Board of the O.F.C. for the protection of its personnel and property. A police training school was started at Ifunda to train constables.

⁹ Ibid.

The following statistics show the effectiveness of the force in discharging its duties.¹⁰

| Number of cases reported | Number of arrests | Number of convictions | Value of property stolen | Value of property recovered |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 728 | 518 | 427 | Shs. 137,516 | Shs. 61,175 |

Catering and Shops

It has been the practice of many corporations in East Africa to provide food and housing for their labourers. The O.F.C., though a government organization, followed suit for its labourers who earned Shs. 140 (about \$20.00) or less per month. With the recommendations of the Tanganyika government, the scale of the rations as authorized by the Corporation's administration was as follows:¹¹

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Maize Meal | 24 oz. per day |
| Beans | 4 oz. " " |
| Groundnuts | 2 oz. " " |
| Sugar | 8 oz. " " |
| Meat or fish in lieu | 2 lb. per week |
| Red Palm Oil | 2 oz. " " |
| Other vegetable oil | 2 oz. " " |
| Green leafy vegetables | 2 lbs. " " |
| Salt. | 4 oz. " " |

The reasons for providing such rations were psychological, health, and transport. Psychologically, the O.F.C. wanted to improve the morale of the workers and to demonstrate its interest in worker's welfare.

¹⁰Shs. 137,516 is approximately 19,646 U.S.A. dollars and Shs. 61,175 is approximately 8,740 dollars. One dollar is about Shs. 7,000 of the East African money. See Ibid., p. 50.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 50-51. Maize meal in East Africa was and is still the chief food for Africans. It was heavily supplemented by fresh beans, meat, and green vegetables which were mainly fresh because there were no refrigerating facilities.

Regarding health, most of the labourers were uneducated and did not know the correct diet for themselves and family. The departments of health of the Tanganyika government and that of the O.F.C. worked together on the question of African health. Finally, since shops were not situated within walking distance, the rationing practice had the objective of saving time and energy for the labourers, since most of them could afford neither cars nor bicycles.

In Kongwa, communal cooking directed by the Catering and Merchandise Department was common. There were between twenty and one hundred fifty messes established in different communities for both Europeans and Africans. In Urambo there were five European messes opened but no African messes were established so rationing took its place. Messes were not organized in the Southern Provinces.¹²

Towards the end of the year, research was conducted and it was discussed that Africans rations had improved greatly. Tinned foods and especially tinned meats were introduced. Tinned meat was well liked by the Africans who came to like it very well. Change in attitude took some time. There were three reasons. First, Africans were not and still are not used to eating tinned food. Because of the scarcity of fresh food, it was necessary for them to learn to eat the tinned food despite such superstitious beliefs that their women would become barren if they ate such food. Second, there were no local canneries to process

¹²No reasons are given why the Southern Province never organized messes, but it is possible that money shortage was the major reason. Another reason could be that Africans grew enough food in the area so they really did not bother to spend money in the messes.

tinned foods so that they could be available at any time; third, tinned foods were expensive and neither the O.F.C. nor the workers could afford to buy it in bulk.

Shopping Facilities

The responsibility of the O.F.C. was to provide shops and stores of various kinds. The O.F.C. controlled shops; later they were transferred to private ownership. The O.F.C.'s control was necessary because these areas were very remote from big shopping centers like Dar-es-Salaam, Tabora, Lindi and Dodoma, and it was difficult to induce private individuals from these centers to establish trading centers in remote, uninhabited areas. The O.F.C. itself had to take the initiative. But as soon as the shops were transferred to private ownership, the O.F.C. encouraged competition and discouraged monopoly. While in most East African cities, the Indians play a leading role in shop ownership, there are no indications that they took over shop ownership in the groundnut areas in Tanganyika. The O.F.C. transferred the shops, through selling them, to African and European private interests.¹³

Education and Social Life

The British government, when planning for the Scheme as early as 1946, recognized that it would be objectionable to place the management and the development of large areas of the African territories in East Africa under the permanent control of an organization from outside the

¹³Ibid., p. 52.

territories. With this in mind, it was considered wise to make arrangements with the territorial governments (Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia) so that the undertaking could, at an appropriate time, be transferred to them. This was envisaged as a step that would lead to a more distant goal of handing over the control of the project to the local people themselves, preferably on a cooperative basis which would insure the continuance of the benefits of large-scale mechanized and scientific production. This ultimate objective would depend on the availability of skilled and trained Africans for the efficient management and operation of the project. For this purpose the Ifunda Training Center had been established in 1948. It was located in a place owned by the Tanganyika government in a remote area of the Southern Highlands on the site of a former refugee camp.

The O.F.C. aimed at training 1,000 artisans every year--100 clerks, 250 civil engineering artisans, and 650 mechanical engineering artisans. Besides, the center aimed at training men for auxiliary police service and hospital and sanitary services. To run the center, about £ 80,000 a year was needed. The candidates were supposed to have had standard VI (grade VIII) education and would be in training by contract for four years and then sent to various units for further training of 3 1/2 years. The Tanganyika government was unable to supply an adequate number of students so the center turned to getting more from Kenya.¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid.

1. European Education

The arrival of a large European staff with their families created an educational problem for both the government of Tanganyika and the O.F.C. At that time there were no secondary schools in Tanganyika taking European children. Kenya, however, was equipped with European schools because it was settled by a large number of Europeans who built private schools for themselves. Tanganyika on the other hand had only a handful of Europeans, most of them government officials whose children were sent to Kenya schools at the expense of the government. Kenya schools were expensive and the O.F.C.'s European staff could not afford to send their children to them.¹⁵

To solve this problem, the O.F.C. started to build, equip, staff, and administer schools at Kongwa and Urambo. The government of Tanganyika agreed to pay 100% of the current expenses of these schools. The first school was opened on October 1, 1948, at Kongwa with teachers recruited from England. The 1948-1949 report shows that the number of children attending these schools rose from 30 to 120 in a period of six months. In the Southern Province, some children studied by correspondence, but parents were encouraged to send their children to Government Primary Boarding Schools where they could apply for remission of fees or bursaries.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

2. African Education

The establishment of African schools in groundnut areas depended on stabilization which in turn depended on the arrival of a sufficient number of families when villages were built. Urambo had the first housing program and so it had the first African school. At Kongwa, a community center was started where lectures were delivered to the English speaking Africans on subjects they chose themselves. The favorite subjects were advanced English, political science, agriculture, and art. Each evening the educated Africans became volunteer teachers of other Africans who were eager to learn English, arithmetic, reading and writing.¹⁷ Each member paid 15 s. a year and each class student paid 3 s.¹⁸ These fees were low.

The Tanganyika government assumed the responsibility of paying 90% of salaries and issued grants for building the O.F.C.'s schools. The government schools were free, but in all O.F.C. schools Africans had to pay fees. The fee-paying system in the British colonies was introduced by reducing the fees as a child passed on to higher grades until school became free. For example, the total fees in secondary schools in Kenya in 1948-1949 were about Shs. 250 and decreased from that amount. Teacher training colleges charged no fee. The fees were assessed according to the father's wealth. This was really an inaccurate method

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 15 s. is about \$2.00 whereas 3 s. is about \$.50.

because it was difficult to find out exactly how many head of cattle or how many chickens a person had. It was also difficult to know how much land he owned because land ownership was not registered.

In summary, the African schools were planned to give four years of practical education in handwork, farming, hygiene and general improvement of the home and village life.

Welfare

The Education and Social Welfare Department of the O.F.C. made an investigation of the entire welfare of the African community. The groundnut areas were remote and the surrounding African communities had not received much attention from the Tanganyika government. The examination of necessary programs in these areas, one could point out, was one of the contributions of the Scheme to the entire country of Tanganyika. It was also something that the British government would be credited for by the rest of the world in its colonial development policy. In May 1948, it submitted a report to the Board. The report stressed, "that the separation of welfare from general management was wrong in principle and socially harmful in practice."¹⁹ Upon the recommendations made in the report and with the agreement of the Board, the following conclusions were arrived at: 1) welfare of the people must be the responsibility of the management, 2) there should not be a chief welfare officer. The heads of departments and users of the African labour did not successfully apply this basic principle and failure led to the intervention of the

¹⁹Ibid., p. 53.

Central Management with the introduction of supervisory teams in all departments.

A Women's Voluntary Service was created. This important organization sent out teams to Dar-es-Salaam, Kongwa, and Urambo to help the arriving families of the workers. Their duties included preparations for the families' arrival, providing information, acting as escorts, and visiting families.²⁰

Social life in general was organized by the members of their staffs. The O.F.C. supplied capital equipment--club houses, tennis courts, open-air cinemas and football fields. All these were available to the staffs to operate. The clubs held weekly dances, gave gramophone recitals, and offered indoor games. Army entertaining unit was responsible for cinema performances, and showings took place not less than once a week.

By 1946, when the Scheme was initiated by the United Africa Company, a considerable number of Africans had been converted to Christianity. In 1948, Christian missions were extended to groundnut regions. Among the churches that attempted to meet the spiritual needs of the people in these areas were the Church Missionary Society (known as the Anglican Church) the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, and the Roman Catholic Church. The staff participated by subscribing money to build more churches and provide for their upkeep. Some Africans became Sunday School teachers and Catechists. At Urambo the Moravian Church made frequent contacts with African Christians and at Ifunda, the Swedish Church assumed similar responsibilities.

²⁰Ibid.

Finally, to educate and inform the employees of the O.F.C., the information division of the O.F.C. published several papers and journals. Among them were the "Kongwa Daily News," a monthly journal of the O.F.C. entitled "Our World," and a Swahili monthly paper, "Watangulizi."²¹

Health

One of the problems which faced the O.F.C. was that of maintaining the health of its employees. Careful attention was paid to services for preventing and dealing with various diseases. The Africans were already used to some tropical diseases like Malaria, but for Europeans such diseases were usually fatal. Generally, for the last three years the Scheme was in operation, the health of both the Europeans and Africans was good, although there had been outbreaks of epidemics like typhoid fever and amoebic dysentery. None were reported to be serious. The areas selected for the Scheme were insect infested--particularly with mosquitoes and tsetse flies--but because of the use of modern insecticides, the amount of sickness that might have resulted from these insects was reduced.

Health service was divided into two sections: preventive medicine and treatment of diseases.

Preventive medicine was the first responsibility of the health service. The endeavour was to prevent illness in spite of the risks

²¹The newspapers in contributing to social life also aroused social consciousness whereby different African tribal groups and racial groups came together as human beings living together as groups whose dealings affected each other.

to which the employees were exposed. In each region there was a Regional Health Officer or Medical Officer of Health charged with the duties of advising Regional Managers on health matters outside the hospitals; he carried out preventive medicine measures such as vaccination against small pox, chicken pox and measles, and supervised and controlled unit health centers within the region.²²

The size of the staff of the Regional Health Officer was determined by the health problems in each region. Normally, it consisted of British Health Inspectors and Health Visitors responsible for the supervision of all technical preventive medicine measures. Such measures as malaria control, tsetse fly control, and inspections were placed under their supervision. Together with them were the African Health Assistants concerned with African dwelling quarters, sanitation, water supply and spraying duties.²³

Diseases

During the year 1948-1949, a number of diseases were most common. Living conditions and general sanitation were not very satisfactory, but because of preventive medicine services no considerable outbreak of any of the diseases occurred. In Kongwa for example, two cases of typhoid, one in an Asian and another in an African were reported in April, 1948, and fourteen cases among Africans were reported in August. No further serious cases occurred. Kongwa also suffered an outbreak of minor infections. Three hundred cases of chicken pox and two hundred

²²Ibid., pp. 54-55.

²³Ibid.

and fifty of mumps were reported among Africans, especially children.²⁴

The most fatal and is still so among Africans in East Africa as a whole is pneumonia. It kills a person within a short time if immediate treatment is not taken. Malaria is very common too, but is not as fatal as pneumonia. Africans it seems are more resistant to it than Europeans and so, some do not care for treatment at all. (See graph on page 103.)

Hospitals

Equally important to the preventive medicine service in groundnut regions was the care of the sick and the injured. The O.F.C. had difficulties in providing enough hospitals within a short time. The few that were in existence were supplemented by tents. By April 1, 1948, there were three hospitals built at Kongwa, Urambo, and Nachingwea in the Southern Province. Two more were added at Mkwaya and Ifunda, and by March 1, 1949 they were ready for use. The following table shows the number of hospital beds available by March 1, 1949.

More than eight hundred people applied for treatment in the first week, and Kongwa hospital treated about 425 patients per week. The hospitals also treated people who were not employees of the O.F.C.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 153. They show the beds already equipped. Accommodation was completed for a total of 930 beds in all Groundnut Scheme areas. In March, 1949, a new hospital was completed at Kongwa and had better conditions for protracted illness, serious operations and nursing.

Table 5
Number of Hospital Beds

| Hospital | European | Non-European | Total |
|------------|----------|--------------|-------|
| Kongwa | 46 | 260 | 306 |
| Urambo | 12 | 114 | 126 |
| Nachingwea | 26 | 96 | 122 |
| Mkwaya | 24 | 76 | 100 |
| Ifunda | 8 | 30 | 38 |
| Total | 116 | 576 | 692 |

The staff consisted of European doctors, nurses (sisters) and technicians helped by African orderlies. Few Africans would qualify as doctors or nurses. Those that were available in the country were employed by the government in government hospitals. The hospitals had also surgical and medical specialists, pathologists and ophthalmologists. At the end of 1949 the European staff had increased from 50 to 101 as hospital admission rates increased. (See Table 6)²⁶

Table 6
Admission Rates Per 1,000
(per 4-week month)

| 1949 | January | | | February | | | March | | |
|----------------|---------|--------|--------|----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Eur. | Afr. | Others | Eur. | Afr. | Others | Eur. | Afr. | Others |
| Kongwa | 40.0 | 40.6 | 44.0 | 23.6 | 31.6 | 16.0 | 20.7 | 33.8 | 48.0 |
| Urambo | 29.0 | 84.0 | 102.0 | 60.0 | 44.4 | 136.0 | 54.0 | 45.2 | 172.0 |
| Nachingwea | 134.0 | 26.8 | -- | 104.0 | 23.5 | -- | 100.0 | 13.3 | -- |
| Mkwaya | 67.8 | 43.8 | -- | 70.2 | 39.5 | -- | 33.5 | 43.5 | -- |
| Ifunda | 9.1 | 53.0 | -- | 3.0 | 49.8 | -- | 20.0 | 30.0 | -- |
| Total | | | | | | | | | |
| Admission | 126.0 | 1149.0 | 17.0 | 95.0 | 846.0 | 12.0 | 89.0 | 838.0 | 23.0 |
| Actual figures | | | | | | | | | |

²⁶Ibid.

The high hospital admission and its effectiveness was also one of the major benefits the East Africans obtained from the work of O.F.C. This was so in the sense that the O.F.C. was not just interested in money-making but also in teaching the African community the benefits they would get from hospitals. This affected a change from use of native medicine to European medicine and removed a principal obstacle to African progress. The subsequent table indicates how rapidly this change took place.²⁷

Table 7

Admissions and Out-Patients
(April 1, 1948 to March 31, 1949)

| | Kongwa | Nachingwea | Urambo | Mkwaya | Ifunda | Totals |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Admission (European) | 494 | 215 | 279 | 135 | 17 | 1,140 |
| Admission (Non-European) | 7,921 | 753 | 3,370 | 677 | 270 | 12,991 |
| Attendances (European) | 4,328 | 1,230 | 1,102 | 1,601 | 345 | 8,606 |
| Attendances (Non-European) | 96,663 | 22,508 | 14,063 | 22,914 | 9,099 | 165,247 |

Medical standards in East Africa by late 1940s were not high enough. The O.F.C. in cooperation with the Tanganyika Department of Health worked to improve standards. One may add that in the O.F.C. hospital the mortality rate was greatly reduced, especially that resulting from pneumonia and dysentery. In May, 1949 for example, there were 23.6 deaths per 1,000 resulting from pneumonia, none from malaria, 21.7 from bacillary dysentery and none from amoebic dysentery. Incidents of tuberculosis and enteric

²⁷Ibid.

fever remained comparatively high--375.0 and 92.0 respectively. Medical services in the territories of the O.F.C. in East Africa were extensive. Government and church hospitals had to improve their standards to equal those of the O.F.C.²⁸

Additional services introduced by the O.F.C. to sustain high medical standards included: ophthalmic, dental and X-ray. Although there was a shortage of qualified men, the few that were available in bigger centres visited other areas frequently. For instance, one ophthalmologist was stationed at Kongwa and visited other areas monthly. According to his reports, no ophthalmic disease of African origin had been found in any European by March 1, 1949. Among those diseases common among Africans and Asians were purulent conjunctivitis and trachoma.

Most injuries resulted from flying metallic splinters while working in shops and from pricking by sharp thorns when clearing the brush. Tractor drivers were the usual victims of thorn pricking. Thirty-three ophthalmic operations were reported.²⁹

For dental services, the O.F.C. had only two surgeons. One was situated at Kongwa and visited Urambo and Ifunda frequently; another was at Nachingwea and visited Mkwaya. A dental laboratory was built at Kongwa and was directed by a European dental technician.

²⁸For additional information see added chart from Ibid., p. 154.

²⁹Ibid.

HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

January to March, 1949

(b) Common Diseases



The table below shows the performances of O.F.C. dentists for three months at Kongwa in 1949 and one year's work at Machingwea.³⁰

Table 8
Dentist Performance

| | Europeans | Africans | Total |
|--|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1. Attendance for examination and/or treatment | 1,788 | 1,300 | 3,088 |
| 2. Filling (amalgam, cement) | 778 | 2 | 781 |
| 3. Scaling | 232 | 12 | 244 |
| 4. Gum treatment | 112 | 165 | 277 |
| 5. Extraction | 371 | 1,017 | 1,388 |
| 6. Denture construction | 61 | 7 | 68 |
| 7. Denture repair | 50 | 3 | 53 |

There is one interesting point that can be brought out from these figures. A high degree of filling among the Europeans was probably a result of eating excessive sweet foods. In contrast, there were many cases of extraction and gum treatment among Africans. In addition, the high number of African dental cases indicated the degree of African responsiveness to dental services--services that had been uncommon in most African communities in East Africa.

By 1949, the "X-ray services" were still uncommon in remote parts of East Africa. The only places one would find them were big government hospitals in big cities such as Nairobi, Kisumu, and Dar-es-Salaam. The O.F.C. deserves credit for introducing these services in remote areas. It employed two radiographers to begin with. One was in charge of the X-ray department at Kongwa and the second at Nachingwea. The

³⁰Ibid.

entire 1949 work is shown below.³¹

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Case Returns: | | 2. Case Analysis | |
| Europeans | 1,055 | Bones and Joints | 1,253 |
| Non-Europeans | 1,505 | Chest and Heart | 838 |
| Total | <u>2,560</u> | Genito, urinary tract | 96 |
| | | Gastro-Intestinal tract | 39 |
| | | Dental | 353 |
| | | Sinus | 39 |
| | | Choleycstographies | 9 |
| | | Foreign bodies | 4 |
| | | Others | <u>4</u> |
| | | Total | <u>2,635</u> |

Separate figures were not given for Kongwa and Nachingwea.

Special Surveys Carried Out in Tanganyika

The O.F.C. did not restrict its surveys and research to its areas of operation--Kongwa, Urambo and Southern Province. It felt that its medical efficiency depended on health conditions in various communities in entire Tanganyika Territory. For this reason, therefore, it decided to extend its surveys throughout Tanganyika.

The first survey was carried on tuberculosis incidents. It took place in March and April, 1949, among all tribes in the Kongwa Region. Dr. Rosemary Jackson, a colonial medical research worker employed by the Tanganyika government helped conduct the survey. The incidence of tuberculosis was found to be high. Of the 216 persons examined, 60% showed a positive reaction and only 40% were negative.³² (See Table 9.)

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 157.

Table 9
Tuberculosis Incidents

| | Total Number Examined | Percentage Positive | Percentage Negative |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| All tribes | 216 | 60 | 40 |
| Wagogo (all ages) | 112 | 38 | 62 |
| Wagogo (adults) | 92 | 43 | 57 |
| Wagogo (children) | 20 | 15 | 85 |
| Other tribes | 104 | 84 | 16 |

The figures indicate that the Wagogo tribe when removed from their natural environment and placed in crowded camps together with other tribes would be in a relatively insecure position.

The importance of this survey was difficult to assess because similar surveys were not carried on in other tribes.

However, the Wagogo were studied in their natural surroundings and the figures included those of the employed and the unemployed of the Kongwa village. It could be assumed that the figures helped determine to what degree the Wagogo were sensitive to tubercule bacillus.

Second, was the "nutritional" survey. There were complaints arising from hospital staff that employees were on an inadequate and poor quality diet. As a result, a survey was made on October 20, 1948. The results indicated that there was neither an inadequate or poor diet. Fifty employees were used for the survey and compared with the previous survey taken at Kongwa; the condition of their skin was good, there were no cases of "phrynoderma,"³³ one case of "cheilosis,"³⁴ and two cases

³³Phrynoderma: a skin eruption resulting from Vitamin A deficiency.

³⁴Cheilosis: cracks at the angles of the mouth and of the lips resulting from riboflavin (one of the B vitamins) deficiency.

of "Bitot's spots."³⁵

Finally, there were cases involving operations. By December 31, 1948, 24,739 procedures had been attempted in Kongwa Region, 7,584 in Urambo, and 4,809 in the Southern Province. In addition, there were many surgical cases. For the year ending March 31, 1949, there were 721 cases of "Trauma"³⁶ including 105 fractures, 1,255 of non-trauma including 746 "septic infections,"³⁷ 2,143 of surgical operations including 1,828 general (major or minor) and 272 orthopaedic. There were 1276 cases of anaesthesia.³⁸

Conclusion

Realizing that the Scheme was operating in areas that had been uninhabited and with conditions unfavorable to human life, it is easy to say that it was a difficult task to establish the employee facilities. When one looks at the educational, social and medical services that had been established by the end of 1949, it can be concluded that one of the objectives was close to being achieved. The statistical tables give a

³⁵Bitot's Spots: shiny triangular spots on the conjunctiva, also associated with Vitamin A deficiency.

³⁶Trauma: an injury or wound violently produced.

³⁷Septic infections: arise from poisoning caused by absorption into the blood of pathogenic microorganisms.

³⁸Anaesthesia: comes from anesthesia which is a total or partial loss of the sense of pain, temperature or touch produced by a disease.

clear picture of the efficiency and extent to which the O.F.C. attempted to carry out its work. Furthermore, the O.F.C. can be credited for a high sense of responsibility for the needs of all races, European, African and Asian, in the regions.

The uncertainty of oils being produced placed the welfare services in jeopardy. Had the primary objective of the Scheme been accomplished, the O.F.C. would have made a permanent contribution to the welfare of East Africans.

CHAPTER VI

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

The Groundnut Scheme was an enormous agricultural adventure requiring the utilization of the newest technical facilities in order to produce something in those remote and undeveloped regions of Tropical Africa. There were many risks involved, but the financial ones were the most serious because nothing could be done without enough capital. Nevertheless, the purpose for which the Scheme was undertaken justified those risks. In this chapter we will look into the financial position of the Scheme after it had been in operation for two years (1946-1947).

When the O.F.C. took control of the Scheme from the United Africa Company early in April, 1948, over £ 7,000,000 had already been spent, and the expenditure was still increasing at a rapid rate.¹ The financial demands were so heavy that the Accounting Department found itself becoming insolvent. This situation called for an immediate review. It became evident that several actions should be taken. These included the establishment of:

- a) A proper account system capable of providing the Regional Managers, the Central Management in East Africa, and the Board in London with the accounting information required for the administration of the Corporation.
- b) A staff of good quality and ability in adequate numbers to do the accumulated work and the current work, to introduce the new accounts system, and to insure its continued efficient operation.
- c) An internal Audit Department should

¹The original sum of money voted to start the entire Scheme was £ 8,000,000 to clear 2,500,000 acres. By 1948 £ 7,000,000 had been spent, and the target had not been achieved.

be set up whose main function in the early stages would be to audit the contractor's books and control their expenditures, and d) to set up a financial control of expenditure.²

The Accounts

These can be discussed at three levels: the East African accounts, the London accounts, and the audit. The East African accounts had been investigated in July, 1947, by the Cooper Brothers & Co. Chartered Accountants.³ Their recommendations were submitted in February, 1948. Because of shortage of staff, their recommendations could not be implemented immediately. The major portion of the recommendations required decentralized accounting organizations to be set up in each region instead of having one central one in East Africa. This shortage also made recruitment of accountants slow. It was only towards the end of 1948 that some qualified personnel began to appear in East Africa. Meanwhile, it was decided to centralize the regional accounts and to postpone adopting the recommendations of Cooper Brothers⁴ so that they could be

²Reports 1948-1949, p. 59.

³Cooper Brothers & Co. was a company that was periodically contracted to audit the O.F.C.'s accounts. No information has been obtained on whether it was operating entirely in East Africa or whether it was one of the companies in England and had branches in East Africa. Most companies, however, operated both in England and East Africa, which might have been the case with Cooper Brothers.

⁴The details of the Cooper Brothers recommendations are not given. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how they compared or contrasted with those of the O.F.C. which took control in April, 1948, two months after the Cooper Brothers had been submitted. Again, to whom these Cooper Brothers recommendations were submitted, sources do not say.

incorporated in those of the O.F.C. as soon as it had taken over.

In London a newly organized accounts department was created. Failure to develop such a department before this was not due to any omission on the part of the Managing Agency, but to the fact that during their control the bulk of accounting work was done for them by the United Africa Company Limited, the organization that initiated the Scheme.

In addition the O.F.C. found that no internal audit department had existed in East Africa. The Internal Audit Division of the Ministry of Food in London had been auditing for the Managing Agency of the O.F.C. until February 29, 1948. In planning to set up an audit department, therefore, the O.F.C. encountered difficulties in recruiting which delayed its creation until September 1948. The main function of this Audit Department was to audit the contractor's accounts and to insure sound supervision of their expenditures. The department was to be generally responsible to the controller of the O.F.C.'s funds in East Africa. At the same time the Chief Internal Auditor was to have an access to the Board in London through sending it copies of his reports.

Financial Control

It was one of the policies of the O.F.C. to control its finances through a budgetary system sanctioned by the Board in London. The system could only work better if accounts were organized and capable of producing comprehensive returns of the actual expenditure. Before the system was effected, one of the preliminary steps in reorganizing was to have a rough estimate of future accounts. For this purpose budget offices had already been opened in both London and East Africa. They were charged with the

responsibility of preparing financial estimates of the O.F.C. Additional responsibilities included the production of financial plans through which major items could be carefully examined. The budget office in London was set up in April, 1948, and that in East Africa in May, 1948.

Before 1948, East Africa had depended on receiving financial direction and advice from the Board and London office. In reorganizing, the O.F.C. thought it as convenient to have an officer in East Africa at the management level to handle the many and frequent financial questions which had been previously referred to London. This step led to the creation of the post of controller which made a part of the Central Management in East Africa.

Next, it was necessary to test the entire reorganization plan. Early in 1949 a budget was worked out for the financial year ending March 31, 1949, and it received the approval of the Board. It was put into effect on April 1, 1949, until March 31, 1950, during which time the new accounting system should demonstrate its success or failure. The report covering the period pointed out that there were certain old defects still persisting. The accountants were still concerned with preparing the balance sheet and working on the accounts of the previous year, leaving the current account to fall into arrears. By October, 1949, it was obvious that something had to be done to remedy the situation, particularly as it related to store accounts.⁵

The first step was to strengthen the staff and increase its efficiency. Arrivals from London in December, 1949 enlarged the clerical

⁵ Store accounts meant keeping of accurate records of stores as they came and issued (equipments).

staff. The expansion of qualified supervisory staff did not take place until the end of 1950. The employment of qualified men was planned on a long-term basis. The Messrs. Cooper Brothers and Co., in realizing this problem, were very cooperative. They dispatched a team of seven trained men from London to advise the O.F.C. on how to have the accounting work done. The team arrived in East Africa in December, 1949.⁶

Moreover, the O.F.C. was interested in looking into the nature and the scope of the pending work. The study was quickly conducted and a report drawn up. The report showed that the work would be over by January, 1950. The report also revealed that the crucial arrears of work were related to: first, the accounting by quantity and value in terms of shipment, receipts and issue of stores, and second, the accounting records and practice in the control of all kinds of capital assets and equipment. The chief weakness was due to the lack of an extensive and up-to-date pricing on stores. This made the recording of accounts of the values of receipts and issues of stores unworkable. These corrections were concerned with the current year (1949-1950), but not the subsequent year (1950-1951). Something had to be done in order to assure that this new year started without major deficiencies which would affect the functioning of the Scheme. To this end the Board put out instructions outlining the procedure to be followed. They included a sound chain of responsibility for the East African accounts, arrangement to be made to insure that everybody understood the system, the expenditure drawn up within budget limits, and budget forms and procedures set up and followed.

⁶Ibid., p. 60.

And again, disbursing officers were given sufficient financial powers in order to control payments. Reports on returns were to be submitted to the Board for scrutiny and further suggestions.⁷

The above orders issued by the Board in London were supplemented by further steps to be followed in the form of accounts and accounting procedures. First, the accounts were to be decentralized to regions starting from the first of April, 1950. This step enabled the Central Accounting Office in Dar-es-Salaam to devote its extra time on clearing and closing the accounts of 1949-1950. (This meant that the 1950-1951 accounts were now being cared for by the regions.) Second, the 1950-51 budget was prepared with close attention to actual resources likely to be available for land-clearing or other types of work. There was no assumption that this budget was to have a high degree of accuracy to be applied in the future budgets. It was to be as flexible as possible and open to changes as would be deemed necessary. Third, a revised price list on stores was produced. It covered 218 sections in which there were about 120,000 items of stores. This was also revisable.⁸

While the 1950-51 accounts were prepared with maximum care, they were not expected to be perfect. Their purpose was to open a way for further improvements and to place the financial and store accounts on a fairly firm footing as the Scheme developed. It was not possible to include cost accounts in the new system immediately, but as time went on, this was to be included to cover some of the major activities of

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

the O.F.C. This was one of the reasons why the system was open to future changes. Furthermore, it was necessary to set up some form of financial control. The subsequent tables clarify how this was organized.⁹

Table 10
Financial Control on March 31, 1950
(net cash position)

| | £ |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Expenditure on the East African Groundnut Scheme | 30,009,809 |
| 2. Advances to Queensland British Food Corporation | 991,200 |
| 3. Advances to East African Railways and Harbours Administration | 1,952,994 |
| 4. Balances at Bankers and Cash on Hand | <u>695,997</u> |
| 5. Total Advances from the Minister of Food to 31st March, 1950 | £ 33,650,000 |

At the same time budget estimates of cash expenditure were submitted to the Minister of Food. This amounted to £ 12,600,000. Net cash expenditure against these estimates amounted to £ 12,076,000 and it ran as indicated below:¹⁰

Table 11
Net Cash Expenditure

| | Estimates | Actual |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Expenditure on East African Groundnut Scheme | 10,126,000 | 10,202,535 |
| Advances Queensland-British Food Corporation | 600,000 | 873,600 |
| Advances to East African Railways and Harbours Administration | 650,000 | 999,865 |
| Contingency Reserve | <u>1,224,000</u> | --- |
| | £ 12,600,000 | £ 12,076,000 |

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

Budgetary control, as it should be remembered, was not affected immediately. It was postponed until the accounts organization was in the position of coming out with item to item returns of actual expenditure. The 1949-1951 report showed that the position was arrived at early in April. Moreover, the current accounts were not satisfactory. Financial control was, therefore, carried for this specific purpose of examining carefully single items of expenditure and establishments. It worked well on the whole, but it was not adopted as a permanent system of financial administration.

Conclusion

When the financial review was carried, it had been discovered that one of the factors that led to the poor functioning of the Scheme was poor financial management. Much money had been spent without good results. For this reason therefore, stringent accounting, auditing and budget system was a must to avoid further mismanagement. As already noted, this was done by the introduction of a proper account system responsible for providing Regional Manager, Central management in East Africa, and the Board in London with all information relating to finances; a staff of good quality and ability and the establishment of internal audit department. A financial control system was also set up but it must be remembered that during the first part of the year, not much progress was made. It was a period when the new staff were just getting adjusted. However, some improvement appeared during the second part of the year leading to a substantial amount of control. Frequent supervision was in process, care was taken to stop further local arrears

of work appearing, and care of machines was improved in order to save money that was spent on repairs. All these depended on enough supervisory staff which was difficult to keep constant, but those present showed their capability in what they were doing.

CHAPTER VII

A PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY 1949-1951

By the middle of 1950, the Groundnut Scheme was in its fifth year. During the first two years (1946-1947) it was under the management of the United Africa Company. The O.F.C. took over in 1948. The year 1949-1950 can be looked at as the period in which the success or the failure of the new plan might be realized. In fact, the year was a disappointing and discouraging one. It was not a result of the improper functioning of the new plan, but of certain uncontrollable factors. In 1949, the regions were hit by severe drought. Famine broke out in the country which obligated the O.F.C. to turn its attention to famine relief. Railways and road transportation facilities were diverted from carrying equipment for the Scheme to carrying food supplies.

Again in 1949-1950 it was learned that there were fundamental differences between the three regions--Kongwa, Urambo and Southern Province. The differences appeared in the effect of topography and rainfall on soil conservation. A fine example to illustrate this was the sloping nature of many parts of the Southern Province as compared to more level ground of the Kongwa and Urambo regions. Other differences noted included the delay of the rain season at Kongwa, delay in removal of stumps and levelling at Urambo, and shortage of suitable equipment in the Southern Province. All of these factors caused a difference in the number of acres cleared and planted.

The following figures show the differences and clarify how slow the progress was during the 1949-50 period:¹

Table 12
Differences in Acreage

| Region | Acreage Aimed At | Acreage Planted |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Kongwa | 80,000 | 70,500 |
| Urambo | 20,000 | 13,000 |
| Southern Province | 2,000 | 1,400 |
| Total | 102,000 | 84,900 |

The shortage was 17,100 acres in all. This was not very encouraging.

The following is the acreage of crops planted in each region during the year 1949-1950. (The analysis by crops):²

Table 13
Difference in Crops

| Crop | Region | | | Totals |
|-----------|--------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| | Kongwa | Urambo | Southern Province | |
| Groundnut | 9,600 | 2,700 | 250 | 12,550 |
| Sunflower | 56,000 | 8,500 | 200 | 64,700 |
| Maize | 3,700 | 1,500 | 300 | 5,500 |
| Sorghum | 1,000 | 100 | -- | 1,200 |
| Safflower | 100 | -- | -- | 100 |
| Totals | 70,500 | 12,800 | 750 | 84,050 |

¹Overseas Food Corporation, Report and Accounts for 1949-1950 (London, 1950), p. 19. The totals differ slightly. This should be expected because some land was normally left for grass which was included for rotational purposes. Hereafter cited as Reports 1949-1950.

²Ibid.

Staff Problems

The year was also characterized by staff problems which not only affected the staff themselves but delayed the entire operation. The unit managers were loaded with many duties. The resignations started with Senior Field Assistants who left the work in the hands of new inexperienced field staff. At this time the morale was in jeopardy even among the newly recruited staff. To avoid sudden breakdown, the O.F.C. did not employ thorough methods of selecting new staff because it had to do it quickly. In this connection it again found itself burdened with a relatively large number of unreliable men who in themselves were another serious obstacle to the development of the Scheme.

A newspaper correspondent who had just returned from Tanganyika made this statement in London.

Anyone who has lived and worked on the Groundnut Scheme would agree that bewilderment and disillusion are and have been the prime sentiments shared between all grades. This is the tragedy. Many good vigorous men saw the writing on the wall and took themselves off to jobs elsewhere. Almost for certain they stayed in Africa, for once having experienced life in that country they were bitten with it. It was not the hardship of dust storms or the grilling sun that prompted them to move.³

Transportation

Transportation problems of various kinds have been discussed in Chapter III. The measures to remedy them have been touched upon, but this did not eliminate them entirely as they persisted in the later years.

³Anon., "No Confidence at Kongwa," The Economist, Vol. CLVII (November, 1949), p. 1132. See also The New York Times, October 17, 1949.

In the period 1949-1950 a deficiency in the total port handling power was a major limiting factor, both in the United Kingdom and in East Africa. In London, for example, there was a dock strike which affected the movement capacity in the East African ports. Consequently, urgent seasonal requirements were not met, thus preventing planting at the right time. Rain came at a certain time of the year and if planting did not take place at that time, it would not take place at all. No risks would be taken in late planting, which might mean that the crop would be affected by the subsequent dry season, and hence destroyed.

In the port of Dar-es-Salaam, the rates of clearance and discharge as planned in the previous year (1948-1949) were not achieved. This was due to delays in providing enough facilities, and limitation in meeting serious labour problems. Taking the first quarter of 1950 for example, it was found that the tonnage cleared at the port was half that cleared in the corresponding period of the last year (1949).

The Scheme as a Political Issue

As a political issue the Scheme became controversial when it started failing, especially in 1949. Alan Wood in writing about it said, "Many of the mistakes made in the Scheme have been precisely due to the fact that it has not been run on socialist lines."⁴ Two important questions of principle were involved: first, there was always an assumption that if things went wrong, all circumstances would fall under public examination,

⁴Alan Wood, "Socialism by Public Corporation," New Statesman and Nation, Vol. XXVII-XXXVIII (November 5, 1949), p. 507. Alan Wood was one of the employees of the O.F.C. He was a critic of the way the Scheme was operated.

debate and decision. This was the advantage of public as opposed to private enterprise. Second, there was a hope that those people directly informed would be aware that it was their deep concern to shape the policy with greater attention than if they were working for a private business. Neither was achieved by the O.F.C.

In considering the first condition, it was found that the O.F.C. did not supply enough information to the public who in this respect were regarded as "shareholders" who provided the money for the Scheme. For example, in February, 1947, a whitepaper (Cmd. 7030) was published followed in January, 1948, by the first "Review of Progress" (Cmd. 7314) relating the story to the end of November, 1947. From that time no other white paper was published until the first annual report of the O.F.C. came out in 1949. Despite the delay, the report was still out of date. It also concentrated on errors and miscalculations committed before the O.F.C. took over the duties and responsibilities. However, by this time about £ 23 million had already been spent--almost half of an estimated original cost. More money was needed but already those (public) responsible for producing the money were complaining of being insufficiently supplied with information pertaining to the operation of the Scheme.⁵

Furthermore, the Minister of Food, John Strachey, had not given a white paper providing for a basis for sound parliamentary discussions.

⁵"A costly experiment: a reorganization of the Overseas Food Corporation in London seems essential due to the results of the Groundnuts Scheme in Tanganyika," The Economist, Vol. CLVII (November 5, 1949), p. 989. See also "British Peanut Plan Meets Rising Costs," The New York Times, January 28, 1948.

His speeches came at the conclusion of the only two Parliamentary debates (March 14 and July 27, 1949). Alan Wood described them as "long and cloudy, and unsatisfactory."⁶ It was the responsibility of high level officials to furnish the information to the public instead of letting (expecting) them to learn about it here and there through the press. Among the information that leaked through the press was that clearing difficulties had been greater than expected and that growing of groundnuts on already cleared land had not demonstrated good economic prospects. However, the public had not been told officially if those things represented only temporary drawbacks or basic flaws which might endanger the future of the Scheme.⁷ Furthermore, Strachey's speech on March 14, had been very misleading when he said "the revenues from the Scheme may well add up to anything up to twice the original estimates and that it will be far more profitable than was originally estimated."⁸

Entire blame was directed at Strachey as a public figure who was charged with the duties of taking care of public interests. There were two levels at which his failure appeared: first, he did not represent the public honestly as he should have done as a party politician whose election to office rested on public votes; second, he had failed to check on the operations of the O.F.C. on behalf of the public, and to

⁶Wood, op. cit., p. 507. For further information see also "A Costly Experiment:...", op. cit., p. 990, which presents a similar complaint.

⁷Wood, loc. cit.

⁸Ibid.

make clear all the mistakes made and to seek advice on how to have them corrected. As a result he presented inaccurate information, consequently placing the whole question of the relation between himself as a ministerial chief executive and a public organization in jeopardy.

A second mistake that appeared in the Scheme was the failure to consider the people in the middle and lower ranks. First, the full use was not made of the technical knowledge of men who were on the spot. In other nationalized industries in England there were demands that workers should be given a place in the control of the industries. They were the people immediately concerned, and making full use of them would not only improve their efficiency but their morale also.

With the Scheme (as a nationalized industry) this demand was practically ignored. The fact that the bulk of the working group of the Scheme were Africans did not necessarily mean that they could not be given a larger share in managing its activities. Just as coal miners were allowed to participate in running coal mines in Britain so that they would know more about them and improve their efficiency, a similar opportunity could have been opened to Africans working with the Scheme.

In general, the point was that the Scheme was a nationalized enterprise that was supposed to be managed on the democratic socialist principles. The practice was already going on in England. There was no genuine reason why the same principles could not be practiced by the people in the Scheme.

It is horrifying and depressing to a degree to feel insecure in one's own job, not because of taking a venturesome risk which may not work, but because one is involved in a bureaucratic organization where mediocre values are acceptable. General conditions may be bad enough, but the worst drought

or cloud-burst is less damaging than finding oneself involved in an action which is questionable on grounds of wisdom, need or rightness, purely because a political question raised 3,000 miles away convinces the authorities, against the advice of the experts on the spot, that it must be done. Everyone forced into acceding to such a practice or taking part in it loses respect for the source of such orders, and themselves become muddled in carrying them out.⁹

Investigation revealed that apart from the factors mentioned, lack of mutual respect among the staff did great harm to the Scheme. Intra-staff fighting resulting from divergent principles caused some to transfer to other fields where they anticipated working without having to fight against dictatorial ignorance, emotions, and obstinacy. Efficient men, employed frequently withdrew because of poor performances from others, especially those in authority. Little encouragement and incentive was given by top officials to the more capable subordinates. A typical comment seems to have been, "It is a poor show. No amount of planning, good, bad, or indifferent, can ever come to life without the yeast of inspiration."¹⁰

Criticism continued to mount in Britain. It was one of the objectives of the Scheme, if successful, to bring a great deal of social and economic benefits not only to the people immediately concerned (the employees) but also to the whole of the territories (Tanganyika, Kenya, and Northern Rhodesia). The health, nutrition, housing, welfare and labour policies were regarded as integral parts of the project, in that

⁹"No Confidence at Kongwa," loc. cit.

¹⁰Ibid.

they aimed at raising the standard of living of people of East Africa. The O.F.C. was severely criticized for failure in this area. As a political issue at the time of election, this was expected. The Conservatives who were determined to unseat the Labourites, concentrated on the negative criticisms and overlooked the positive ones. Remembering the education, social and medical services, the O.F.C. provided, it would be difficult to take all these criticisms as constructive.

On November 19, 1949, Winston Churchill, leader of the opposition in Parliament, demanded an extensive probe into the project. Meanwhile, on November 20, two officials of the O.F.C., Wakefield and Rosa, were dismissed by the government on the grounds that they had demonstrated poor performance of their duties. Two days later a Parliamentary debate took place over Churchill's earlier motion regarding inquiry. Strechey, the Minister for Food, speaking for the government said that an inquiry would delay the work that was going on. He added that by 1954 only one-fifth of the estimated acreage could have been cleared and prepared for planting. The decision to continue, he stressed, was made because the primary need of relieving Britain and the world from a shortage of oils and fats had not been met. He also did not believe that the amount already spent was a waste because railroads, roads, ports and buildings had been established in required places.

The colonial secretary, Arthur Jones, supporting Strechey said, "The project has made great contributions to Africa."¹¹ All these

¹¹The New York Times, (November 22, 1949), p. 13. For supporting information see "Groundnuts on the Rocks," Time Magazine, Vol. LIV (November 14, 1949), p. 34.

optimistic statements from government representatives aroused furor among the opposition members. Although opposition did not demand the termination of the project, Colonel Oliver Stanley, their spokesman said, "The country's confidence in the enterprise has been shaken and that an inquiry was demanded."¹² The motion was lost by 315 to 161 votes.

The Events of 1950-1951

After 1950 the plans were that no further clearing could take place anywhere else except Lindi in the Southern Province. The former target was to have some 100,000 acres cleared by 1951 and 600,000 by 1954. The Lindi area according to surveys, had good soil and a sufficient amount of rainfall. Unfortunately, these plans did not materialize at the right time because transportation was still a crucial problem. Nevertheless, the government continued to give frequent announcements of revisions in the scope and even content of the enterprise. This created further political outburst, and a series of parliamentary debates fostered by the Conservatives. In the first debate, on July 18, 1950, they demanded that the government cut down the appropriation for continuing the project. The Conservatives were fully supported by the Liberals and almost unseated the Labour government. During the debate Maurice Webb, the new Minister for Food, frankly told the House that the project had shown many shortcomings and even admitted that it had been in the past very disappointing. He moved that the Scheme be recast on a long-term

¹²The New York Times, loc. cit.

basis. He added that the emphasis would eventually not be so much on the growing of nuts to produce fats, but more on a broad plan of colonial development. In addition, the O.F.C. was attacked for overlooking the objectives of the Colonial Development Act of 1948.¹³ The votes were 299 to 290 for the government.¹⁴

Concurrently, a committee was appointed to investigate and make recommendations to the government based on its findings. An initial recommendation was submitted on September 29, 1950. Its essence was to reduce the project in Kongwa region by five-six. It was based on the fact that there had been a loss of £ 1,400,000 in crop in that region. It suggested that "cropping of 74,000 acres of tract be trimmed next year (1951) to about 12,000 acres."¹⁵ The remainder, the committee continued to recommend, should be turned into pasture. The Board of the O.F.C. accepted these suggestions and even helped to foster the new idea also conceived by the committee that the future crops be limited to only groundnuts, sorghum and maize (corn), and crops like sunflower and safflower which had proved total failures, be eliminated completely.

In November of the same year it was reported that the Corporation had recorded £ 3,551,111 loss in its books. This meant the progress during the previous year (1949) had been nil. Even the cost of harvesting

¹³For the objectives of the Colonial Development Act of 1948, see Chapter I under O.F.C.

¹⁴The New York Times, July 19, 1950.

¹⁵The New York Times, September 30, 1950.

in that year was found to be greater than the value of crop.¹⁶ The year 1950 ended with a narrow chance for the Labour government to insist on furthering the Scheme. But by January, 1951, the Labour government had no alternative than to accept the fact that its attempt to grow ground-nuts on large-scale basis in East Africa had practically proved to be an expensive fiasco. A white paper was issued stating the abandonment of all plans. It was recommended, however, that the program be continued as a pilot project and that the responsibility of running it be transferred from the O.F.C. to the Secretary of State for the colonies.¹⁷

Conclusion

The Labourites won in the 1945 election not because the conservatives under Churchill's leadership had proven incapable, but the people simply preferred another leader for peace. (Churchill was a war leader.) The Labour government with Clement R. Attlee as Prime Minister wanted to reconstruct British economy. Being a Socialist government it embarked on Socialist programs,--Nationalization of major industries--Bank of England, the coal industries, civil aviation, telecommunications--just to name a few took the lead. Others included National Insurance Act of 1946, Health Service Act of 1946 and the repeal of the Trades Union and Disputes Act of 1927. All these measures dominated British politics from 1945 to 1951.

¹⁶The New York Times, November, 1950.

¹⁷This action eliminated the O.F.C. activities with the Scheme entirely.

But more controversial was the rapid independence given to colonies and programs that were started in some of them by the Labour Government. To run these programs, a loan of \$3,750,000,000 was obtained from the United States. This aroused much opposition in the 1950 election in which the Labourites won a bare majority in the House of Commons. In 1951 the situation was climaxed by the failure and the abandonment of the Groundnut Scheme because it had failed to produce the expected results. All these chain of issues led to the fall of the Labour Government in 1951, hence, politically, 1949-1951 was really a crucial period for the Labourites. A bill was introduced in the House of Commons to write off the E 36,000,000 that had been spent as the burial of Britain's Groundnut Scheme in East Africa.

CHAPTER VIII

EVALUATION

Now that the Groundnut Scheme was buried, what next? The attempt had not produced the expected results owing to the difficulties whose seriousness at the beginning was due to lack of pilot experiments. After it had been started, many problems were confronted which were quite extraordinary to a large-scale, mechanized agricultural project of this type under unfamiliar and hostile tropical conditions. Not only was it difficult with the machinery available to prepare the wild forests, but also, it was apparent that the inhospitable climatic and soil conditions were not conducive to yields set up in the plan. Other complications appeared. They included getting trained men and housing them adequately, getting rid of and improving the poor transportation facilities, and solving technical problems.

The reductions in the scope of the Scheme for 1948-1949 did not help at all. The difficulties were so great that they could not be overcome in the time set. The disappointing results and pessimistic attitude of both the Conservatives and the public in Britain opened a way for severe criticism; nevertheless, the history of the Scheme proves that the criticism was well taken. This criticism was voiced both in the press and in the Parliament. Finally, the government, having no other course, accepted abandonment of the Scheme and substituted the experimental project in tropical agriculture. An experimental project should have been a first consideration and not an afterthought. While the Scheme itself may have been a disappointment and a fiasco, the

experience obtained from it can be regarded as useful in formulating other plans for agricultural programs in underdeveloped countries, particularly those of Tropical Africa.

Furthermore, one can look at the failure of the Scheme from a different angle. The Conservatives attacked the Scheme as an example of Socialist practice. They included in their arguments that the farms should have been broken down into small privately-owned units so as to instill in the people a profit motive and a fear of personal loss which would induce them to work harder.¹ The amount of work done indicated that the men who worked with the Scheme were as enthusiastic and devoted as any group of pioneers who ventured to open up a wild land for their own personal benefits. The group could not be expected to succeed right away without experiencing some failures. The employees of the Groundnut Scheme worked tirelessly under severe weather conditions and bad leadership. James Cameron, writing in April, 1948, said:

This would be a formidable enough tropical adventure in any case, thus Groundnut Scheme, without having to dream up trucks where no trucks are, to force work out of tractors that have rotted away on Philippine beaches, to improvise something out of jeeps that actually arrive with the big-ends gone . . .

Ever so often some snarling malcontent goes home, determined to ventilate his frustrations and expose the plan's inadequacies.

¹The 1950 election, no party received a mandate and no strong government was possible. Another election was predicted to take place very soon. The Conservatives, therefore, thought of many reasons to prove to the public that the Labour Socialist programs had failed.

But most remain, very ordinary, decent bodies from workshops and offices and grocers' counters, growling at the obstinacy of this endless Africa, eating their paludrina pills, wanting their wives, mending and making do, and doing it well!²

Cameron went on to comment, "The extraordinary fact that these grouzers are at the same time doing a good job well, enthusiastic, cooperative, shoving their backs into the thing for no other reason I can except that they believe in it."³

Moreover, Britain, in undertaking the groundnut project, was not the only European nation which turned to public corporation as a major instrument for developing African virgin lands. France was also engaged in a similar ambitious undertaking aimed at relieving Europe from shortage of oils and fats. A good example of the French project was in French Senegal⁴ in West Africa at Kaffrine. The French government was engaged in developing groundnuts production with the help of intensive farming methods and mechanical means. One can easily observe similar problems encountered by the French.

²R. G. Tugwell, "Groundnut and Liberty," Common Cause, (January 1951), p. 314. James Cameron was one of the commentators on the operations of the Scheme. He wrote these words in April, 1948. Tugwell followed the operations of the Groundnut Scheme very closely and wrote about it for Common Cause especially in 1950. He was in East Africa himself, which he left in May, 1949. Tugwell, in his issue of April, 1950, was trying to defend the socialist ideal which was severely attacked by the Conservatives. He was professor of Political Science at London School of Economics, 1949 to 1950. It follows that it was during this period when he visited East Africa, and it also means that he did not stay there for a long time. As a political scientist, he wrote about the Groundnut Scheme at the time it was a major political issue. He was an American himself and he wrote the article for interested Americans.

³Ibid.

⁴French Senegal was a French colony in West Africa. Today it is an independent country called "Senegal."

The administrative part of the project was too large. The executive officers were not willing to divide job responsibilities. Efficiency was sacrificed for speed. A comparable situation had also developed in relationship to the Scheme. The Scheme failed insofar as it was part of the colonial development program. For instance, the Scheme can be linked to the familiar propaganda that the Empire was a treasure house with resources needing capital investment to bring returns within a reasonable period; but nobody would know precisely whether the outcome was going to be positive or negative. However, the investors went ahead to widen British policy and economy. The white conservatives in Kenya who started by severely criticizing the Scheme as a Socialist experiment, ended by praising it for strengthening British influence against the communist infiltration.

African Reaction to the Scheme

The Scheme was introduced in 1946, half a century after the coming of Europeans in East Africa. By this time some young Africans had been educated and had developed a taste for western civilization. They had reached a stage where they were anxious to imitate many European actions. With this in mind, they reacted more favourably to the Scheme than their elders. They accepted employment with the Scheme, earned money and bought clothing for themselves and their families, bought shoes that they had never worn before and some other modern things like bicycles which enabled them to move from place to place with ease. On the basis of this, they thought the Scheme was good for the country.

Quite different was the relationship between the African workers and the English employers. Some of them had never had personal confrontation with a white man. The Scheme made this possible and allowed him to evaluate the Englishman. The English naturally appeared to them as impatient--they wanted to get things done in a hurry, which was unnatural to the Africans. The Englishmen shouted orders and displayed quick tempers. The Africans thought these were signs of illbreeding. On the other hand, they were very much impressed with the willingness of the Englishmen to do manual work with them--something which they thought Englishmen never did. They had formed their impression from government officers and company managers who had developed a practice of having manual work done by the Africans while they performed supervisory tasks. The Africans also became critical of some Englishmen who made no attempt to learn Swahili, and relied on interpreters whose efficiency was doubted, and thus dangerous to proper understanding and performance. It was also dangerous to the workers in the sense that they would bear the blame for failure to understand the orders.

It can be pointed out that the Englishman failed to realize the fact that sound means of communication which should have been achieved through their mastery of Swahili language, was the key for making Africans understand the broader objective of the Scheme.

It is claimed that the Scheme will produce a revolution in African Agriculture by replacing the hoe with a tractor. But, as an educated African put it: "How does that help me? I cannot afford to buy a tractor and, even if I had one, I could not afford to maintain it. I must either give up farming altogether or else stick to my hoe." Unless we are to say that

agriculture in Africa is a job for only the skilled, he is right.⁵

"These strangers have organized a dance in our village" one teacher said, "and it is a good dance, but they ought first to have asked the permission of the village elders, according to our custom."⁶

Such remarks were a sign of prejudice against change. It also proved that the conservative element was predominant among the elders. They had other complaints too. They complained of a breakdown in family life. Young men left their homes and were not heard of for many days. "It is worse than war when every man had at least a number."⁷ Worse still was the spread of prostitution. Before the coming of the Europeans, prostitution did not exist in most African communities. The Englishmen working with the Scheme introduced it and in doing so only strengthened the conservative element among the Africans. Finally, there were further complaints. Tilling of the native small farms was a heavy burden for the women and the old men who were left to do this at home for an indefinite period. Among the African wage earners in general, there was a complaint that the influx of Europeans was causing a rise in the cost of living. The Africans were unable to cope with such drastic and rapid change.⁸

⁵Bishop of Masasi, "African Reactions to the Groundnut Scheme," Commonwealth and Empire Review, April, 1949, p. 58. Masasi diocese included the Southern Province of Tanganyika in which the largest groundnut area was situated.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

Looking at it from the positive side, the Scheme should not bear the entire blame for tribal and family breakdown. This had started fifty years before; the Scheme merely speeded it up.

African life was always based on local loyalties; each village, clan or tribe being a close-knit unit with a strong social and moral consciousness. The bosses were village chiefs and the elders. The change had come; the young men were going out to work in areas beyond the chief's control. They came back with money and new ideas which caused them to resist the orders of the chiefs. This certainly was the first stage of a gradual transition of power from the traditional chiefs to young men with new ideas. At the same time, the community sense of the village was passing away.⁹

The history of East Africa reveals that this transfer of power is now complete. The traditional chief is gone. The word "chief" is not even used in many parts of East Africa because, historically, it refers to a primitive way of establishing authority. This is because the young men who are now in power have a different approach. They are struggling to take from tradition what they think is good and combine it with what they think is good in the new. The Scheme has not only been of historical significance in East Africa, but has been of economic and cultural significance in this transitional period from a traditional to an industrialized society.

⁹Ibid.

Conclusion

The collapse of the Scheme raises one important question. Many acres of virgin forests had been cleared and planted with crops. Medical, educational, and recreational facilities had been established. The doctors, nurses and workers were trained to serve the Scheme. Transportation systems had been added to the entire East African System. "What happened to these establishments?"

For Britain, it was a big loss; for East Africa, it was a gain. The land that had been cleared was not left to grow back into brush. It was turned over to the Tanganyika government which used part of it for experimental purposes. The rest was given to interested Africans to farm. The medical, educational and recreational facilities were also handed over to the Tanganyika government to serve the African people who decided to settle in the areas. As the history of East Africa and Africa as a whole indicates, there has been and there is still a shortage of trained personnel. Some of the doctors and nurses of the O.F.C. left for England; others joined medical departments of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. This was a contribution to the trained staff of these governments. The trained African workers also joined the civil service or private corporation. The transportation services became a part of the East African transportation system. Other facilities--educational, recreational, and offices--were left to the Tanganyika government to utilize in the way it considered fit. The transference was carried on in accordance with provisions laid down in the O.F.C. "Tanganyika Ordinance" of 1954.

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BRITISH GROUNDNUT SCHEME IN EAST AFRICA
LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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British Groundnuts Scheme in East Africa: Labour Government's Dilemma 1946-1951 examines the development of the Groundnut (peanut) Scheme in certain East African areas and its effects on the Labour Government in England. The thesis is as follows: While the future of the Groundnut Scheme contributed to the collapse of the Labour Government in 1951, the Scheme brought about certain long range benefits for East Africa.

Although the Groundnut Scheme was a post World War II development, it was based on a continuation of British Colonial policy throughout the twentieth century. Preceding programs and policies had been defined in "Development and Welfare in the Empire" in 1921 and extended in a series of Colonial Development Acts in 1929, 1940, 1945 and 1948. The 1948 Act established the Overseas Food Corporation which was solely responsible for the operation of the Scheme. The Scheme itself was a "project designed to grow rapidly the large-scale, mechanized production of groundnuts (peanuts) in East and Central Africa."

The reasons for starting the Scheme were economic, social, political as well as climatic. Economically, Great Britain wanted to improve her situation as well as that of East Africa. For herself, she aimed at selling the surplus to needy countries whereas for East Africa, she aimed at revolutionizing African agriculture and provide employment to the African people. Socially, she wanted to raise the welfare of her own people by recovering from the scarcity of oils and fats which was a result of the war, and to improve that of the African people through educational, medical and social welfare programs. Politically, the Labour Government approved the enterprise as a part of its entire or

extensive social programs which started when it took office late in 1945. Climatically, East Africa had been found to be suitable.

The idea was conceived by Frank Samuel, Managing Director of the United Africa Company. He presented the idea to the Minister of Food, John Strachey, who informed the House of Commons about it. The Government thought it was a sound idea and authorized an investigation. The latter was undertaken by A. J. Wakefield and a team of three in 1946. The group submitted a comprehensive report which was printed in the "White Paper" entitled A Plan for the Mechanized Production of Groundnuts in East and Central Africa. Meanwhile, the Government authorized the United Africa Company to carry on preliminary preparations until a government agency was formed to take over the responsibilities.

Prior to the formation of the O.F.C. in 1948, it was found that there were miscalculations in the original plan, most of which led to the impracticability of the plan and consequently slow progress throughout 1947. Problems realized were related to transportation, technical aspects, financial and manpower. An effort was to be made to review all transportation facilities--railways, airways, roads, and shipping. Regarding technical aspects, studies were carried on in vegetation, clearing, rooting and stumping, finding out soil types and their fertility, crop research to find out which crops would possibly grow in the selected regions--Kongwa, Urambo, and Southern Province--was carried on; protection of the crops from various diseases and pests was also examined.

In 1948, the O.F.C. after assuming direction of the Scheme developed a new plan for the purpose of reducing the original plan to a smaller workable size. Number of acres to be cleared and planted were reduced,

new financial estimates were drawn up, and reorganization of staff were all revised.

Apart from the problems facing the O.F.C. to make the Scheme a productive one, there were problems relating to employees. One of the objectives of the Scheme was to provide opportunities for social and economic advancement for Africans, and Europeans living in the selected areas. To this end, the O.F.C. cared for the educational, medical, and social opportunities for its employees.

The year 1949-1950 can be looked at as a period of controversy. The Scheme was now in its fifth year and even under the revised plan, no constructive results had been achieved. It was a disappointing year resulting from improper functioning of the new plan. Natural factors like famine contributed to the failure. Failure, apparent in 1950, became one of the political issues that dominated the campaigns of 1950 and 1951 in Britain contributing to the fall of Clement Atlee's Government in 1951.

Regarding the Africans, some especially the young, reacted favorably to the Scheme, others, particularly the old, reacted negatively. The educated youth thought that it was a contribution to the development of East Africa. They evaluated it in terms of its agricultural contributions, moneywise, educational, medical, and social developments. The conservative old on the other hand viewed it as one of the factors that led to the destruction of their tradition.