

THE UGANDA RAILWAY:
A STUDY IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITISH IMPERIALISM

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with the British incursion into East Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. It examines the underlying motives: the diplomatic, philanthropic, ideological, religious and economic features and isolates economic motives as the principal incentive behind the actual political decision to declare a British Protectorate over East Africa.

The construction of the railway itself is seen as an attempt to secure a market for British manufacturers in lieu of tariff barriers, which were anathema to the official mentality which still projected the free trade traditions of Victorian England, but which was forced to react to a steadily declining industrial and commercial position among the leading industrial powers in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Finally, the Uganda Railway represents a new cooperative approach between business and government, whereby government took a more aggressive attitude toward securing new markets and sources of raw materials for the increasingly sluggish business community.

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INTRODUCTION

What it will cost no words can express;
Where it will start from no one can guess;
Where it is going to nobody knows.
What is the use of it none can conjecture;
What it will carry there's none can define;
And in spite of George Curzon's superior lecture,
It clearly is naught but a lunatic line.¹

Henry Labouchere's poem is ostensibly aimed at bringing his opposition to the construction of the Uganda Railway squarely before the public, hopefully stimulating national opposition to a scheme which he considered not only expensive, but which would commit Britain to indefinite domination of hundreds of thousands of square miles of territory on a continent that remained, even after some fifty years of extensive exploration, an unknown factor in Europe. In broader terms, however, the railway was representative of the rampant imperialism of the late nineteenth century in Europe, and Labouchere, as chief critic of expansion in the House of Commons in Britain, had selected it as the focal point in his opposition to all schemes of imperial extension.

If we are to understand the part the construction of the Uganda Railway played in the imperialism of the late nineteenth century, then, we are required to consider not only the obvious economic thrust represented by railway enterprise in the empire, but the more opaque

¹ Henry Labouchere, published in Truth Magazine, of which he was editor. Quoted in Zoe Marsh, ed. East Africa Through Contemporary Records, (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1961), p. 141.

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questions of ideology, civilizing mission, diplomacy, and what might be termed 'empire by default.'

It is not our intention, however, to develop or reach a conclusion concerning a definition of the imperialism of the late nineteenth century in Britain. We are more concerned with the part the railway played in that imperialism, and shall attempt to weave it into an overall pattern of British expansion in East Africa without aligning it with any particular 'thrust.' In the long run, however, an examination of all the major factors pertaining to Britain's activities in East Africa may indeed provide us with a broad definition of late nineteenth century British imperialism.

Keeping in mind that there was, in one form or another, an 'ideology' of empire in the late nineteenth century, whether it took its shape from the principles of laissez-faire and free trade, or conversely the decline of that philosophy; whether it was representative of an overriding ideology of 'Social Darwinism' compelling Britain to exercise her mandate as one of the fittest nations to govern;² or whether it was generated by a moral compulsion to disseminate the blessings of 'industrial Protestantism'; it would be a mistake to attribute either or all of these ideologies to the nation as a whole. What does concern us here, with respect to what might be termed an ideological basis for expansion in East Africa, is the anti-slavery

² This concept is ably expressed by William Langer in The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 25. "... they had been called upon to fulfill a certain duty, to carry the White Man's Burden, if we may borrow the name of Kipling's classic formulation of the idea. They are not, they think, imperialists because they want to be, but because they are called upon to be, because they must be."

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movement, which experienced incredible expansion during the nineteenth century. As we shall see, the abolition of slavery was probably the most often used excuse for establishing British influence in East Africa.

Slavery affronted the principles of laissez-faire economics. Men should be free to sell their labour to the highest bidder; slavery was unnatural and wasteful. 3

The movement, however, while advocating the replacement of slavery with 'legitimate commerce,' was more than this, and this is where we may begin to find a trace of ideological thrust in East Africa.

As one might expect, the movement was all but drowned in its own sanctimoniousness -- not for nothing were its leaders called the 'Saints' -- but it was no less right. For the first time in history, an entire people had declared of their own free will that they were indeed their brother's keeper. The loftiest achievement of Victorian England was the example she set in spearheading the world assault on the edifice of slavery. If this meant British Governments poking their noses into affairs that were none of their own, well, then, by Jove, they would make it their business. 4

If the anti-slavery policy was a natural outgrowth of a concept of national superiority, it was not difficult to translate that policy into one that not only satisfied the demands of Christianity, but could also turn a nice tidy profit. At times, it is difficult to determine which took precedence -- Christianity or the search for profits. What must be determined, then, is whether the anti-slavery policy of the nineteenth century, as it was applied to East Africa, resulted in the growth of British influence there, or whether it was used as a tool in a conscious policy of imperial

³John Flint, "The Wider Background to Partition and Colonial Occupation," in volume 1 of History of East Africa, ed. Roland Cliver and Gervase Matthew, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 353.

⁴Charles Miller, The Lunatic Express. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 40.

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expansion along the coast and into the interior.

Another theory that has been generally favoured in most discussions concerning British expansion in East Africa, is that Britain came into the possession of vast expanses of land there largely by mistake. One expression of this view is that

.... the building of the imperial framework in East Africa was anything but a deliberate or even conscious act of British policy.⁵

While it would again be a mistake to attempt to pinpoint a deliberate policy of imperialism in East Africa (given the complexities of British society at the end of the nineteenth century), what we might describe as a 'general trend' toward East African imperial ambitions did exist. Complex factors are involved, to be sure, but they are not as hidden from view as one might normally expect.

The collective mind of government assembled and weighed all the factors making for and against advances. Party leaders and whips anxiously consulted the tone of the Commons and the trend of the by-elections. Secretaries for India, the colonies, and Foreign Affairs, along with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Service Ministers, gauged the pressures: the condition of domestic and European politics, the state of the economy, the expansive demands from India and the white colonies, the risks and crises in Africa and in the whole world. Furnished with intelligence from distant ambassadors, governors and consuls, they took the rival theses of their departments to the Cabinet; and there, the Prime Minister and his colleagues argued out the differences and balanced the considerations of profit and power.⁶

The above quotation tends to characterize government as the moving force behind expansion in the nineteenth century. While government was indeed a major factor, it is our intention to show that government,

⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

⁶ Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher (with Alice Denny), Africa and the Victorians, (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1961), p. 19.

more often than not, formalized a situation that had already been established by several intertwining forces, more often than not of a local character. In the East African experience, we shall attempt to show that economic interests, stimulated on the spot, played the major role.

Nineteenth century Britain may well have represented the marriage of intellectual enlightenment and commercial progress.⁷ If the paramount force of that century was liberalism and laissez-faire economics, then economic expansion must certainly manifest itself in informal empire. In other words, expansion was couched in more abstract terms than direct political annexation. Where the white settler colonies were concerned, this aspect of economic expansion was easy enough; but in the largely undeveloped areas of the world, it became more difficult to justify expansion for market's sake, especially when the 'unsophisticated' native populations evidenced no desire for the industrial beneficence of Europe. We shall examine Britain's connections with East Africa in this respect, tracing the development of empire from informal to formal.

It is in this situation, the expansion of informal empire into undeveloped areas of the world, that the vague concept of 'civilizing mission' comes into play. The replacement, for example, of slavery by legitimate commerce, serves two very obvious ends. What remains to be determined here, is whether or not pressure was brought to bear on the government of the day, and by whom. If philanthropy played the

⁷ For a more thorough discussion of this concept see Robinson and Gallagher, pp. 1-4.

major role in East Africa, as has been cited by many scholars, what was its leverage in Britain that made its objectives important enough to render a government hitherto adamant in its desire to snirk any further territorial ambitions suddenly ravenous enough to gobble up a third of Africa?

It is not as difficult to pinpoint economic motives. In addition, it is easier to identify economic pressure groups in Britain. An attempt will be made to isolate them, if they existed, and to demonstrate their effectiveness on governmental policy. There are some examples, however, of economic historians who have been unable to fit Africa into their pattern of economic imperialism.

Nothing fits the economic interpretation so poorly as the partition of Africa (South Africa and the Congo excepted) -- that frantic scramble of industrial, industrializing and pre-industrial European countries for some of the most unremunerative territory on the globe. ⁸

The economic factor must be distinguished, then, in the face of scepticism. Even more, and this lies at the very heart of this paper, one must identify the economic thrust behind something as outstandingly economic as the building of a railway some six hundred miles through some of the most forbidding territory in the world. If we discover that Britain indeed had no legitimate political or commercial interests in East Africa in the 1880's and thereafter, then our poem at the beginning of this paper will characterize that entire era in East Africa.

Sir Reginald Coupland, one of the early authorities on nineteenth century East African history has given us an impressionistic but hardly insightful description of Europe's intervention there:

⁸ David S. Landes, "Some Thoughts on the Nature of Economic Imperialism," Journal of Economic History, 23:4 (December, 1961): 498.

.... it is a strange, confused, ineffective picture their doings in Africa make -- explorers, gun-runners, concession-hunters, sportsmen -- moving peacefully among people who had never seen a white man or a gun and consummating their work of chastisement and thanking God -- Belgians loyally serving Leopold's good intentions in a desperately unsuitable spot, French and German explorers in danger of their lives at Barawa and Tabora, Debaize blind and dying at Ujiji -- the sniders and the chassapots, the buckshot and explosive bullets, the elephants in procession, the umbrellas, the hurdy-gurdy -- and fluttering over it all the flags of Europe and America, 9

This picture is indeed confusing. Motives for imperial expansion in East Africa are blurred by interlocking diplomatic, ideological, economic and religious factors. In an attempt to bring some order to the confusion, we must, of necessity, concentrate on the cold, hard reality of steel rails, forcing their way into the interior of East Africa.

⁹ Sir Reginald Coupland, The Exploitation of East Africa 1856-1890, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1968), pp. 357-58.

CHAPTER I

PRE-COLONIAL TRADE -- THE GROWTH OF BRITISH INFLUENCE

Local trade in East Africa, while following patterns that had been established by the Arabs and Swahilis on the coast for centuries, underwent a profound change in the nineteenth century. Until the middle of the century, it was the tribes of the interior, collectively known to coastal residents as the 'Nyika' who handled trade between the interior and the coast.

Nyika traders kept many of the Swahili coastal towns supplied with a variety of items including ivory, gum copal, honey, beeswax, grain, foodstuffs, and timber for the building of dhows. In exchange they obtained salt, beads, cloth, iron hoes, and other coastal trade goods, and it would appear that Swahili trade into the interior was, at least by the latter part of the eighteenth century, being carried on for them by the Nyika. ¹⁰

It was essentially the increased world demand for ivory, and ultimately the development of a market for slaves in Zanzibar, that began to undermine these trading patterns. Not only was commercial elephant hunting stimulated among the tribes of the interior, but the use of caravans plying from the rich ivory fields near Uganda, to Mombasa, became the established mode of transport. By mid-century, the pattern was beginning to reverse itself, with Swahili caravans leaving the coast in an attempt to do away with local middlemen. ¹¹ By the 1860's Swahili caravans were penetrating as far inland as Lake Victoria.

¹⁰ John Lamphear, "The Kamba and the Northern Mrimba Coast," in Pre-Colonial African Trade, ed. Richard Gray and David Birmingham, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 77.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

In this manner, the inland kingdom of Buganda came to the attention of established traders on the coast. Given the future infatuation with Uganda, it is difficult, even as late as the 1860's and 1870's to isolate any particular commodity available in Uganda that would be of any significant value to European manufacturing concerns. With the exception of firearms, which were required for purposes of what appears to have been almost constant internal warfare,¹² Bugandans seem to have required little of what Europe had to offer. There was a slight demand, by the nobility, for cotton cloth, and brass and copper ornaments,¹³ but on the whole, the kingdom was largely self-sufficient. Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, although salt was imported in large quantities from the east side of Lake Victoria.¹⁴ Internal trade, rarely reaching the coast, did exist in such articles as bark-cloth (which was worn by the bulk of the Bugandan population), coffee and tobacco, which grew wild, and were not cultivated on an organized basis.¹⁵ It is evident that the economy, being of a barter type, had not reached a level of sophistication sufficient to provide hoarding, the accumulation of wealth in currency (which did not exist), or the securing of the economic services of others.¹⁶

And yet, all the coastal traders went to Buganda, evidently not for purposes of securing local products, but almost exclusively for the purposes of acquiring ivory. Interestingly enough, slavery was

¹² John Tosh, "The Northern Interlacustrine Region," in Pre-Colonial African Trade, p. 114.

¹³ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁶ Ibid.

not an important part of the trading pattern with Uganda.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the constant stream of caravans both to and from Uganda ultimately brought that country to the attention of the world beyond the shores of East Africa, and it was trading elements foreign to the local East African population that eventually destroyed the trade patterns only recently established between the coastal peoples and the tribes of the interior.

The Swahili caravans which by the late 1840's had penetrated to the eastern frontier of the inland ivory supply... were to enjoy only a brief period of booming commerce before the coming of the new era made the whole system of caravan trade, however courageous and enterprising, a relic of the outdated past.¹⁸

.... by 1896 the ringing of the workmen's hammers knocking in the first spikes of the Uganda Railway, sounded the knell of the once great Kamba trade.¹⁹

It remains, however, for us to trace the commercial penetration by Europeans, and especially the British, into East Africa, if a pattern of economic involvement prior to the establishment of colonial rule can be constructed. A brisk overseas trade from the coast of East Africa to Arabia and India had existed for centuries. Principal exports from the coast consisted of ivory, rhino horns, slaves, tortoise shell, ambergris, cinnamon, frankincense and myrrh. Imports were, primarily, cotton cloth, axes, spearheads, knives, flint glass, ghee, wheat, rice, sesame oils, wines, and other manufactured goods.²⁰

The turning point in the East African trading pattern was the rise to predominance of Zanzibar, by the second quarter of the

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁸ Lamphear, p. 100.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

²⁰ Miller, p. 101.

nineteenth century. Within a few short years, the Zanzibaris had seized control of the lion's share of coastal trade, and Zanzibari commercial activity increasingly came to mean British Indian commercial supremacy.

Their activity here (on the East African coast) was part of their wider penetration of all parts of East Africa during this period. This was in part prompted by the extensive trade of African peoples, like the Kamba, who revealed the commercial opportunities lying in the interior, but it was mainly determined by the growing world demand for ivory. The whole enterprise was, at the same time, greatly assisted by Sultan Seyyid Said's nurturing of the commercial base at Zanzibar and along the coast (more especially by the encouragement he gave to Indian merchants, who were, at a critical moment ready to inject capital into the trade), and it was immeasurably strengthened by the industrial revolution in the West, which, by producing manufactured arms and manufactured goods in large quantities and at a low relative cost made cheap trading penetrations both very much safer than before and now potentially profitable. 21

The rise to predominance of Zanzibaris on the coast by the mid-nineteenth century adds a different dimension to the above-mentioned penetration of the interior by Swahili caravans in the 1860's. It was Zanzibari financing that enabled the Swahilis to penetrate the interior, and by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Zanzibari had become synonymous with British Indian.

East Africa, in the early nineteenth century, was the chief market for the blue cotton cloth from Surat and Gujrat, in India,²² and as the basis for what had become extensive trade between the East African coast and India, it was natural for Indian merchants to establish agencies in Zanzibar when it became the chief trading

²¹ D. A. Low, "The Northern Interior 1840-1884," in vol. 1 of History of East Africa, pp. 315-16.

²² J.S. Mangat, A History of the Asians in East Africa, (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 6.

depot for all of East Africa. From Zanzibar, Indian merchants exported ivory, cloves, gum copal, hides, horns and copra, in exchange for cloth, metal ware, grain and beads.²³ Throughout the period under review, trade between East Africa and India overshadowed trade with all other countries.²⁴

By 1860, Indians in Zanzibar had established a sizeable community.

There are about 5,000 British Indian subjects residing in the Zanzibar dominions and nearly the whole of the foreign trade passes through their hands. The ivory is consigned to them from the interior, the Gum Copal is purchased from the diggers by the Indian Banians residing on the coast, and the entire cargoes of American and Hamburg vessels are purchased by them. All the shopkeepers and artisans are natives of India.²⁵

It is evident, then, that British Indians, by 1860, had acquired control of almost all commercial activity in Zanzibar, and as Zanzibari commerce spread to the mainland, so too did Indian activity. British Indians were firmly established on the coast by 1873, and by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the rupee had become the exchange currency all along the coast, with Indians becoming the principal bankers and financiers.²⁶ More important still, the British Indian firm of Jairam Sewji assumed complete control of Zanzibar customs, one of the principal sources of revenue for the Sultanate, from 1855 to 1886, much to the benefit, no doubt, of

²³ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴ In 1892, Zanzibar imported more than twice as much (in merchandise value) from India than from all of Europe combined. In Mangat, p. 8.

²⁵ Zanzibar Archives, Serial F. 28, Outward Letter No. 3 of 1860. Cited in Mangat, p. 7.

²⁶ Mangat, p. 10. In 1873 total Indian capital invested in Zanzibar amounted to £ 1,600,000. Ibid., p. 11.

with such experience of the methods of business in the interior (with respect to the financing of Arab and Swahili caravans), the Indian traders were able to extend valuable services to the European explorers -- by acting as their local bankers, helping to equip their expeditions, and on occasion contracting to forward additional supplies of provisions and trade goods to them into the interior. 28

The British Indians in East Africa, while providing services to Europeans there, were also entitled to a certain measure of protection themselves. As British subjects engaged in legitimate commerce, they were entitled to British protection, a policy which had begun in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Their growing commercial importance warranted more specific attention, however. In 1841, an agency of the Government of Bombay was established in Zanzibar. By 1873, this agency had been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Government of India. A year earlier, in 1872, regular service between Zanzibar and Bombay was established by the British India Steam Navigation Company.

It is evident, then, that the activity of British Indians in East Africa brought into play, certain elements of the Indian empire. What remains to be discussed, in this instance, is the consequence for the entire British empire. Britain's first indirect contact with East Africa arose during the Napoleonic wars by way of providing protection to the Sultanate of Oman (which was later to transfer its capital to Zanzibar) against Napoleon's forces in Egypt. Ultimately, Britain was concerned with a possible threat to the Indian empire by France, and this was but the first in a chain of events that led

²⁷ ibid., p. 17.

²⁸ ibid., p. 11.

Britain into direct involvement in East Africa as a consequence of events directly related to the Indian empire.

Apart from a brief, and officially involuntary flirtation with empire in East Africa in 1824 at Mombasa, and regardless of the strong commercial connections of Oman with East Africa throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Britain evidenced no desire whatsoever in the interior of East Africa.²⁹ However, the removal of the Sultan's capital from Oman to Zanzibar, reflecting his increasing revenues from that part of his empire, would ultimately bring about Britain's involvement there.³⁰ We would submit, as has been discussed above, that Britain's involvement in Zanzibar was principally stimulated by the activities of British subjects there. This is not to say, however, that certain powerful elements in British society did not seek to curtail the slave trade in East Africa through the offices of the British Navy, thus creating a military presence off the coast.

It was widely believed in Britain that slavery would be gradually extinguished by the development of 'legitimate' trade, and the antislavery policy of the government therefore included the promotion of commerce. Naval officers patrolling the coast concluded treaties that provided for freedom of trade, and a subsidy was granted to enable the British India Steam Navigation Company to call at Zanzibar to foster the development of legitimate traffic in East Africa.³¹

The establishment of steamship service from Zanzibar to Aden and thence to Bombay was followed, a year later, by the appointment

²⁹ For full details of the early British experience in Mombasa in 1824 see Sir Reginald Coupland, *passim*.

³⁰ Miller, p. 40.

³¹ Suzanne Miers, "The Brussels Conference of 1889-1890: The Place of the Slave Trade in the Policies of Great Britain and Germany," in Britain and Germany in Africa, ed. P. Gifford and Wm. H. Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 83-4.

of Sir John Kirk as Consul in Zanzibar for the Government of India. Kirk, who remained as Consul from 1873 to 1889, was to see British influence firmly established in East Africa, and was to become one of the chief architects in that process. Kirk was a firm believer in the replacement of slavery by legitimate commerce.

The ends he sought were the elimination of the slave trade throughout east Africa and the development of a prosperous economy under British aegis which would benefit both Africans and European entrepreneurs. This was his passion; to this he devoted his life; and he identified himself personally with the cause. ³²

Another consideration, apart from the abolition of the slave trade and protection of British Indian interests in East Africa included the importance of the coast as a potential station on the route to India. But if this played an important role in drawing Britain into East African involvement, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought East Africa closer to Europe rather than India.

It set it, so to speak, on the map of European politics and economics. ³³

The events of 1872 and 1873 come into sharper focus with the opening of the Suez Canal. If, for example, the slave trade was to be replaced by legitimate commerce, these prospects had improved immeasurably. By 1877, a group of British businessmen under the leadership of William Mackinnon, Chairman of the British India Steam Navigation Company, were organizing a syndicate to exploit the resources of East and Central Africa. Kirk, no doubt, had influenced Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar in his decision to invite legitimate business

³² John S. Galbraith, Mackinnon and East Africa 1878-1890: A Study in the 'New Imperialism', (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1972), p. 58.

³³ Coupland, p. 84.

interests to exploit his territory, on the mainland in East Africa. Barghash was equally stimulated by the threat to his dominions on the mainland in 1875 by the abortive invasion of the coast of Khedive Ismail's Egyptian troops under the direction of General Charles Gordon. Ismail's brief flirtation with East Africa served to outline the importance of that vague area on the map to British commercial and political interests.

Ismail and Gordon had between them underlined as it were, the economic and strategic importance of East Africa -- the potential value, on the one hand, of the natural resources of the equatorial region; the difficulty, on the other hand, of stopping the Nilotic slave trade; and the desirability, in both respects, of opening up communications between the Great Lakes and the Indian Ocean. ³⁴

In any event, Mackinnon and his associates contemplated a company on a scale equal to the British East India Company:

The Company is to exercise all the powers of a colonial government. Its Commissioners, aided by administrative, judicial, financial and technical 'services' are to rule in the fullest sense -- making and executing the law, raising and using an army, controlling the vital matter of land ownership and tenure, raising and spreading revenue, even exercising the treaty power -- and to rule the whole of the Sultan's mainland realm, since it is only Zanzibar and Pemba that are exempted by the last clause of the Concession from its scope. ³⁵

By 1878, negotiations for the concession had broken down, and although the reasons for the breakdown have never been divulged, it is generally considered that Mackinnon and his associates backed down in the face of what they considered overwhelming odds (probably related to the severe climatic conditions, and the absence of a 'suitable' labour supply).

With the prospect of organized British business interests establishing themselves in East Africa remote again, Kirk sought

³⁴ Ibid., p. 301. ³⁵ Ibid., p. 307.

to maintain whatever British interests might be available in the interim. Kirk's main fear was the attempt by another European power to establish hegemony in East Africa. As a result, he proposed the following policy, which was largely followed by the Foreign Office for a decade:

Back the Sultan and do everything possible to strengthen British influence in the Kilimanjaro area. Planters will not go there yet awhile, and capital will not face the risk to life and property. But British missionaries, British scientists, British sportsmen after big game -- why not? All that is needed is to establish a claim for keeping the country neutral and open to all nations. That is the status of the Sultan's dominions on the coast, and so far as they extend inland, it meets all our needs. ³⁶

For a decade after 1873, even with the collapse of the Mackinnon concession, it remained for Britain to choose the vehicle for expansion into East Africa. Britain preferred to leave the status quo intact in East Africa, exercising whatever influence was needed through the Consul of the Government of India in Zanzibar. By the end of that decade, what appeared to be a power vacuum, was suddenly filled.

In the meantime, in the absence of any serious commercial penetration of East Africa by Europeans, their activity continued apace, by way of explorers, and, more especially, missionaries, dedicated to the destruction of the slave trade. In fact, the anti-slavery movement prompted the gradual increase of missionary activity, particularly in Central Africa, and, by the early 1880's, in East Africa. The work of David Livingstone in Central Africa, and the influence he wielded in Britain is well known, and it would not be unfair to suggest that Livingstone, more than anyone else, was

³⁶ Ibid., p. 387.

responsible for the widespread missionary penetration of Africa) during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Just how responsible they were for increasing official British interest in East Africa remains an uncertainty. Initially, however, missionary activity was probably restricted to anti-slavery operations based upon a genuine abhorrence of the practice.

There is little evidence that during the years 1875-1885 any of the missions were consciously trying to draw their governments into Central Africa in their wake. ³⁷

Be that as it may, it is evident that British influence in East Africa, through the agency at Zanzibar, was supreme during this period, and as a preponderance of missionaries in East Africa were British, or more particularly, Scottish, there would have been no reason for any concerted efforts on the part of the missionaries to attract the umbrella of British protection. This situation was bound to change when French and, especially, German penetration of the East African hinterland threatened the missionaries with rival religions and rival nationalities. In other words, rival national and religious penetration of what had been considered an exclusive British and Protestant area, caused the missions to become imperialist enclaves in East Africa. ³⁸

Whether the missionaries were agents of their respective metropolitan governments or were merely instrumental in attracting attention to remote areas on the African map is a moot point. The latter argument appears to be the more acceptable one. Evidence

³⁷ Roland Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1952), p. 86.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

of the former does exist, however. A letter from James Mackay, head of the Church Missionary Society in Uganda, to Emin Pasha, the recently 'rescued' Governor of Equatoria Province in the southern Sudan, dated August 25, 1889, contains the following passage:

I have been requested, through the Consul-General in Zanzibar, as well as through the agents of the Company (Messrs. Smith Mackenzie & Co., and by Mr. Mackinnon himself), to promote the interests of the Company so far as I can. I do not see how I can do this better, from my standpoint, than by making you and the gentlemen at the head of the expedition acquainted with the exact position of things at this time in Uganda, in the belief that there is at present a rare opportunity which might never recur in our lifetime, not only to secure the market in Uganda, but also to acquire the control over the whole country. 39

Mackay is obviously quite prepared to use whatever influence he may have had to secure the trade and even the political control of Uganda for British interests. It should be pointed out, however, that this letter was written during a particularly critical time in East African history, and just prior to the partition of East Africa between Britain and Germany. In August, 1889, the missionaries in Uganda were not at all certain that Britain would retain Uganda within her sphere. In addition, references of this nature are largely infrequent.

What is certain, with respect to missionary activity in the 1880's, is that the missionaries were instrumental in bringing vast portions of East Africa to the attention of Europeans, and that once established there, they exercised enough influence in Britain to become the focal point of British interests in a country that owed neither political nor economic allegiance to the empire.

.... it must be remembered that the missionary societies at home employed powerful propaganda departments to raise their

³⁹ J. V. Wild, The Story of the Uganda Agreement, (London: Macmillan and company Limited, 1957), p. 20.

income: and through these the East African missionaries exercised a direct influence upon the ordinary church-going public. 40

If the missionaries were used by the government, or individuals in the government, at all, it was to serve objectives that warranted popular support of the type that the mission societies could generate. Rather than dragging Britain into East Africa, then, their presence there was used to justify predetermined goals in Africa.

More important still, there grew up at the Foreign Office in London a generation of public officials -- men like Sir Villiers Lister, Sir Percy Anderson, Sir Julian Pauncefote, Sir Edward Hertslet and Sir Clement Hill -- who were well versed in the affairs of Central Africa, and who, when the time for partition came, were able to point, not merely to blank spaces on the map intersected by the itineraries of a few explorers, but to the existence of British interests to be safeguarded and British lives to be protected. 41

As we shall see, East Africa, by the late 1880's, came to play a large part in the policies of the Foreign Office and both Liberal and Conservative governments. While missionary activity in East Africa may not have been actively encouraged by any of these bodies, it was indeed a handy tool when the need arose.

In Kenya and Uganda, where money had to be spent, and where private economic enterprise had already been forced to retreat, public opinion was of far more importance, and every measure of support, economic or religious, idealistic or sentimental, was of consequence. Of the missionary factor in that decision, it is at least symbolic that the flag, so far from following the line of trade from the coast inland, followed the cross from Uganda to the sea. 42

⁴⁰ Oliver, The Missionary Factor, p. 92.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 88. ⁴² Ibid., p. 162.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMY AND IMPERIALISM

It goes without saying that the state of the economy in late nineteenth century Britain had a great impact on the development and growth of the British empire. A brief examination of some facets of the British economy, especially those directed toward the never-ending search for new markets and sources of raw materials will enable us to gain a broader insight into the acquisition and retention of an empire in East Africa.

The period with which we are concerned has generally been characterized as the era of the 'Great Depression' in Europe, and especially in Britain....

.... that great downward sweep of prices which brought with it, as was said in 1888, 'a depression of interest.... a depression of profits' and a certain resultant discouragement and lack of initiative in the world of business. As moreover competition of foreign manufacturers, both in overseas and home markets, was being felt from the eighties onwards in a way to which Englishmen had not been accustomed; while at the same time tariffs were closing doors into markets some of which had been wide, and some half open hitherto, there was complaint whenever the ebb began.... 43

It is not possible here to construct a theory as to why Britain was subjected to a twenty-three year depression at the end of the

⁴³ J. H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1968), pp. 5-6.

century.⁴⁴ However, it is interesting to note that whatever the reasons, Britain, even in the face of foreign penetration of her own domestic market, was hesitant to construct tariffs or modernize her own industrial base by way of trusts, syndicates or cartels.⁴⁵ In addition Britain's industrial structure had undergone a remarkable change since the middle of the nineteenth century, and this was beginning to be reflected in her export patterns. As can be seen in Appendix A at the end of this paper, while cotton goods remained the single largest export item in 1887, coal, manufactured iron and steel, and machinery had reached the level of some twenty per cent of total exports.

Growing industrialization in the rest of the world had provided an incentive for the development of heavy industry for export,⁴⁶ and this was reflected in two principal areas: (1) the export of textile machinery; and (2) the export of railway material, and coal to fire the engines used in the new railways. In the first instance, the export of textile machinery began to undermine the stability of the manufactured cotton goods for export.

.... for it was already obvious to men with vision that the great dependence on cotton exports which had marked the whole Victorian era had its dangers. England could hardly equip the world with cotton machinery, as she did, and also supply it with finished cotton goods indefinitely. 47

⁴⁴ David Landes, in his book, The Unbound Prometheus, (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1969), pp. 33-34, argues that practically the entire century (1817-1896) was one long period of deflation, caused by rapid and increasing productivity without sufficient markets.

⁴⁵ E. J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁴⁷ J. H. Clapham, p. 3.

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As a result, by the end of the 1870's, "The economic condition of the textile industry of Manchester was bleak. This stagnation of trade stimulated the search for new markets and central Africa seemed to offer the promise for profit."⁴⁸

In the second instance, the marriage of iron, steel and coal with the railway had practically run its course in Britain by mid-century, and thereafter had been shifted overseas. In the third quarter of the century, British backed railways were being built everywhere.

The remarkable expansion reflected the twin process of industrialization in the 'advanced' countries and economic opening-up of the undeveloped countries, which transformed the world in these mid-Victorian decades, turning Germany and the USA into major industrial economies soon to be comparable to the British, opening areas like the North American prairies, the South American pampas, the South Russian steppes to export agriculture, breaking down with flotillas of warships the resistance of China and Japan to foreign trade, laying the foundations of tropical and sub tropical economies based on the export of mines and agrarian products. ⁴⁹

The British iron and steel industries came to depend upon this boom in overseas railways, supplying as they did, not only the material for the railways, but also the material to build the ships which transported railway material, and material to build a steam powered navy to protect the merchant marine. In the 1870's, railways accounted for twenty per cent of overseas investment. By 1914, they accounted for forty per cent of a larger foreign investment. ⁵⁰

It was during the 1890's that the depression in Britain

⁴⁸ Galbraith, p. 75.

⁴⁹ Hobsbawm, p. 115.

⁵⁰ W. Ashworth, An Economic History of England 1870-1914, (London: Methuen, Barnes & Noble, 1960), p. 158.

probably reached its lowest level, and this had become obvious to the more astute businessmen in the country. By 1896, coal and steel ingots reached the lowest price levels of the era.⁵¹ The year 1896 also saw the wholesale index reach its lowest point, and interest rates on secure investments overseas fell to two per cent.⁵² And it was in 1896 that construction began on the Uganda Railway.

Thus, in an era of rising productivity, falling prices, increasing foreign competition, the raising of tariff barriers, and increasingly bleak overseas investment opportunities, Britain embarked on a new round of imperial expansion.

This left her with only one major way out -- a traditional one for Britain, though one also now adopted by the competing powers -- the economic (and increasingly the political) conquest of hitherto unexploited areas of the world. In other words, imperialism. 53

When faced with a challenge, it was easier and cheaper to retreat into an as yet unexploited part of one of these favoured zones rather than to meet competition face to face. Thus her cotton industry merely continued its traditional policy when in trouble, of escaping from Europe and North America into Asia and Africa, leaving its former markets to the exporters of British textile machinery.... In so far as they exported, British coal flowed rapidly in the wake of the British steamship and the vast merchant fleet. Iron and steel relied on the Empire and the underdeveloped world.... 54

Another important point must be made here. Retreat into the empire, or the political annexation of what had hitherto been 'spheres of influence,' by the end of the nineteenth century, was tempered by competition from the new industrial powers, who never hesitated to construct tariff barriers around their new colonies. This factor, together with the above-mentioned lethargy of British business in

⁵¹ Clapham, p. 13. ⁵² Ibid., pp. 14-16.

⁵³ Hobson, p. 131. ⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

stimulating new overseas opportunities, brought the government into an odd relationship with business, considering the obstinate retention of laissez-faire principles.

The functions that were unanimously considered appropriate for the central government in the mid-nineteenth century probably did not extend far beyond the conduct of foreign relations, provision for external defence, internal security and the administration of justice, and the preservation of the essential organs of the constitution. 55

By the last quarter of the century, the above description of government no longer applied.

One further consequence of the era of the Great Depression, that is of the emergence of a competing group of industrial and economically advanced powers, must be noted. It is the fusion of political and economic rivalry, the fusion of private enterprise with government backing, which is already visible in the growth of protectionism and imperialist friction. Increasingly, business, in one way or another, called on the state not only to give it a free hand, but to save it. 56

The establishment of empire in east Africa, and, particularly, the construction of the Uganda railway are representative of this whole pattern of economic development in Britain which had begun to crystallize at the end of the nineteenth century. As we shall see, Britain had staked out in East Africa, by the early 1880's, a massive sphere of influence, which could be, and eventually was officially incorporated into the empire. In this way, the cotton industry was presented with what might amount to an important new market. Even more important, however, was the method used to retain and exploit the new empire. In the face of increasing competition from the rising industrial powers of Europe and North America, but refusing

⁵⁵ Ashworth, p. 216.

⁵⁶ Hobsbawm, p. 131.

to construct tariff barriers around the empire, the construction of a railway not only served to secure the new territory, it all but guaranteed exclusive British exploitation of the market. It goes without saying that the railway adequately served the interests of the iron and steel industries in Britain. Finally, and this will become more evident, the above-mentioned alliance of business and government at the end of the century was especially reflected in East Africa.

CHAPTER III

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY, DOMESTIC POLITICS AND EAST AFRICA

An economic base for imperial expansion in East Africa was created by the increasing importance of British Indian subjects in Zanzibar and on the coast, as well as the obvious trend toward imperialism emanating from the state of the British economy at the end of the nineteenth century. Other factors do come into play, however, and they must be included in any effort to produce a comprehensive outline of events in Kenya and Uganda prior to their becoming British Protectorates in 1894 and 1895 respectively.

As important as the economic activities of British Indian subjects in the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions were,⁵⁷ these activities related more to the Government of India than to Westminster. One cannot deny intimate connections between the Government of India and Westminster, as it is obvious that whatever was good and profitable for India was of equal benefit to Britain. At the end of the nineteenth century, Britain had come to rely on India for much of her economic well-being.

Before the First World War the key to Britain's whole payments pattern lay in India, financing as she probably did more than two fifths of Britain's total deficits.... It is not surprising that not even the free traders wished to see this gold-mine escape from British political control, and that a great part of British foreign policy and military or naval policy was

⁵⁷ See Appendix B.

designed essentially to maintain safe control of it.⁵⁸

India not only financed much of Britain's wealth, but provided the means for the expansion of the empire and, as a result, was the critical element in the entire imperial financial structure. India not only paid for half the British army, but contributed sufficient surpluses to pay for her own occupation and ultimately, other wars of colonial occupation.⁵⁹

So throughout the century it seemed imperative to make sure of the communications between the British Isles and India, if the spine of prosperity and security was not to be snapped. British positions and interests in half the world stood or fell upon the safety of the routes eastward. 60

Britain's natural concern with the protection of the Indian empire has become the basis for an outpouring of learned opinion which relegates concern with Egypt and East Africa to an ancillary position in Britain's overall diplomatic and political priorities.

William Langer places Britain's different and aggressive attitude toward the extension of the empire directly at the feet of Benjamin Disraeli and his reaction to events in Europe.

His policy in the years 1874-1880 was essentially concerned with questions of power and security, all pointed at the protection of the routes to India and the safeguarding of the great Indian Empire itself. Disraeli never showed any genuine interest in Britain's self-governing colonies, and revealed no deep understanding of the needs of England in the economic sense. It is probably safe to say that his imperialist attitude was inspired directly by the changes that had taken place on the Continent. The triumph of the principle of nationality and the emergence of a powerful German Empire called forth a corresponding feeling of national pride among the English and resulted in a new appreciation of the Empire which was, at bottom, not at all in keeping with Manchester doctrine. 61

⁵⁸ Hobsbawm, p. 149.

⁵⁹ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Langer, p. 70.

Langer has outlined the two principal diplomatic thrusts that have widely been used as the basis for explaining Britain's interests in East Africa. (1) Political implications on the continent, and (2) safeguarding of the routes to India.

In the diplomatic scheme of things, East Africa was important only for its central position between the two principal routes to India: Egypt and the Cape of Good Hope; and East Africa only came into play when events in the 1880's shook the stability of Suez and the Cape.⁶² Commercial considerations are not only downplayed in the diplomatic schema, they are often viewed as a diplomatic ruse to hide the real strategic objectives.⁶³ Specifically, in this analysis, East Africa assumes importance only as a result of Britain's involvement in Egypt, once the Suez Canal had been opened.

If there was one event more than any other that gave the initial impetus to British imperialism in the last years of the century that event was the occupation of Egypt in 1882....⁶⁴

Consequently, the thesis is presented that Britain only became interested in Zanzibar after the occupation.

Zanzibar was conceived as the natural base for the projection of British diplomacy.⁶⁵

In other words, once Britain had decided to hold Egypt, a chain of events was set in motion which led to the maintenance of British interests in Egypt by securing the Nile, and ultimately, Uganda.

⁶²For a fuller explanation, see, Robinson and Gallagher, pp. 305-6.

⁶³M. P. K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 10.

⁶⁴Langer, p. 101.

⁶⁵G. H. Mungeam, British Rule in Kenya 1895-1912, (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 7.

Generally speaking, then, international diplomacy, Britain's relations with the major European powers, and the overriding question of support of the supply line to India, are promoted as the principal motives behind the awakening of interest in East Africa, and especially, Uganda, in the 1880's, and the decision to establish a recognized sphere of influence there in 1886.

Africa had at last been drawn into the European power struggle, and suspicion of other nations' designs in that part of the world had begun to condition Britain's imperial reflexes. 66

These are important factors that cannot be overlooked in assessing the full implications of the acquisition of two major Protectorates in Africa, but there are other considerations, not the least of which was the pressure of public opinion and the growing strength of the colonial societies in Britain.

By the 1880's, the Imperial Federation League, which, for a decade, had been the embodiment of the imperialist movement in Britain,⁶⁷ had been overshadowed by six types of societies which made it their business to promote increased governmental sponsorship of imperial ventures in Africa.

- 1) The Geographical Societies.
- 2) The Ethnological Societies and the Anthropological Societies.
- 3) The Business and Commercial Societies (e.g. the Society of Arts).
- 4) The British Association for the Advancement of Science.
- 5) The Royal Colonial Institute.
- 6) The Philanthropic Societies (e.g. the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Church Missionary Society). 68

Membership in these societies was characterized by those people who had, for one reason or another, a direct or potential interest

⁶⁶ Miller, p. 168. ⁶⁷ Langer, p. 71.

⁶⁸ Dorothy U. Helly, "Informed Opinion on Tropical Africa in Great Britain 1860-1890," African Affairs, LXVIII:272 (July 1969): 197-203.

in Africa, under the aegis of the British government. But more often than not, membership, especially on the various societies' ruling committees looked very much like interlocking boards of directors.

The Scotsman William Mackinnon and the Manchester merchant James Hutton did not have to meet at any society's lecture to explore each other's thoughts on Leopold II of the Belgians and the Congo or a possible concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar. Mutual economic interests made them partners in such matters. Nonetheless, both belonged to the Royal Geographical Society; and Mackinnon, a member from 1865 was elected to its council in 1877. Both men also joined and held office in their 'local' geographical societies when they were established in 1884: the Scottish Geographical Society and the Manchester Geographical Society. In addition, Mackinnon was at least a dues-paying Fellow of the Society of Arts as well as an office holder of the Royal Colonial Institute. 69

Pertaining to membership of a more general nature:

What is perhaps most striking in an analysis of the professional societies in the period leading to the scramble for empire in Africa is the rather small number of men who were consistently concerned with this topic. The broadest cast of the net comes up with less than 150 men. 70

Dorothy Helly goes on to give a rather interesting breakdown of this small, tight-knit group of men: 44% were connected in some way with government; 20% made up of anthropologists, geographers, explorers, clergymen, and writers on contemporary affairs; 20% with business; 16% concerned with philanthropic or missionary activity. Twelve per cent of this select group were members of parliament.⁷¹ When these societies are connected, as they were, with Chambers of Commerce, members of the local and national press, and select members of the civil service and government, one begins to see a formidable body of individuals joined together in the common objective of furthering empire in Africa.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 196.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 215-16.

⁷¹Ibid.

One of the cardinal methods of exerting pressure on what was often considered an unsympathetic and disinterested government, was the marshalling of public opinion. From time to time, and especially where East Africa was concerned, there were, literally, explosions of public sentiment, generally stimulated by the above-mentioned societies and organizations, church and missionary groups and the press, all urging positive action by the government.

Lugard, the Church Missionary Society, and others contributed to a massive manifestation of public opinion seldom equalled in the nineteenth century. From all over Britain petitions poured into the Foreign Office demanding retention (of Uganda). Newspapers reported the enthusiasm of public meetings attended by all classes for a 'forward' policy in Uganda. ⁷²

Indeed, it appeared that at the height of the Uganda controversy, the nation as a whole rose up in support of empire. In the face of such activity, the 'little England' group in parliament was doomed from the start. Salisbury, Gladstone and Rosebery, leading weak governments throughout this period (1885-1895), could hardly afford to alienate such powerful, albeit small, segments of the population. Even intense dislike for particular individuals (especially Mackinnon and Rhodes), was often translated into grudging negotiation with them on behalf of the societies or enterprises they represented. In fact, the appointment of Lord Rosebery by Gladstone to the portfolio of the Foreign Office in 1892 originally was designed to soothe the public with whom Rosebery was very popular. Rosebery, an outspoken imperialist, managed to implement expansive policies in East Africa in the face of determined opposition by the

⁷² Galbraith, p. 219.

rest of the cabinet, due to his immense following among the public and his subsequent ability, it was hoped, to keep the Liberal government in office.

A combination of men, circumstances and events drew Britain toward East Africa, but what was the crucial factor that determined the direct establishment of political influence and control?

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Britain had enjoyed commercial supremacy over the rest of the world, together with a vast empire, especially India, which buttressed the domestic economic wealth. The economic challenge of the rising industrial powers of Europe and North America, at the end of the nineteenth century, was paralleled by a corresponding bid for colonies, often in those areas that Britain had considered part of her informal economic preserve. For together with a rising industrial capacity, especially in France and Germany, there was a remarkable concept that Britain, the measure of industrial and financial success in the nineteenth century, had accumulated her great wealth by the exploitation of her colonial possessions.⁷³

Germany offered the main challenge to Britain in East Africa, and whether Bismarck sought to exact commercial opportunities for German business by embarking on a course of colonial expansion; whether he sought the promise of national glory; or whether he merely sought to insert an African pawn on the European political chessboard, is not our concern here. We are more concerned with the British problem — and regardless of their motives, increased German activity in East Africa brought about a relatively quick British response.

⁷³Langer, p. 75.

The appointment of Gerhard Rohlfs as German Consul in Zanzibar on October 1, 1884, spelled the beginning of the German incursion into East Africa.⁷⁴ The arrival of Carl Peters a few weeks later sparked the first actual annexations of land in East Africa. Regardless of whether Peters was serving Bismarck or whether he was acting on his own initiative, when five German warships steamed into Zanzibar Harbour on August 7, 1885, to back up Peters' claims, Germany had officially begun a policy of colonial aggrandizement.

Within six days, the Sultan had agreed to all of Germany's demands (regarding what is now Tanganyika), which raises the question of what happened to the supposedly paramount influence of Britain, through her Consul-General, Sir John Kirk, over the Sultan of Zanzibar. That the end result was a British decision to establish a sphere of influence in East Africa has little or no bearing on why Britain made no attempt to limit the German occupation. Diplomatic historians have argued, with a great deal of persuasiveness, that having antagonized France over the Egyptian situation, and fearing Russian pressures on Turkey and Afghanistan, Britain was in no position to challenge Germany, thereby risking all out isolation on the Continent of Europe. This was, no doubt, a major consideration. On a more immediate level, however, while Britain may have exercised a great deal of influence over Zanzibar, and through Zanzibar, over the coastal trade centred in Mombasa, her influence on the mainland was negligible, apart from an already sizeable missionary establishment in Uganda. In addition, Britain had not taken steps to sponsor an economic conquest of the interior for and by private enterprise, and as long as the opponent

⁷⁴ Miller, p. 159.

was a Protestant power who would maintain free trade in the interior for existing or potential British mercantile activity, she really had nothing to lose.⁷⁵ Why, then, should Britain provoke hostilities with Germany over a portion of a continent that, logistically speaking, no longer had any bearing on the empire as a whole? In the long run, it appears that any Anglo-German rivalry during this period was generated by local administrators.⁷⁶

The calm and level-headed delineation of respective German and British spheres of influence in East Africa on December 7, 1886 evidences a rational approach to what probably was not considered a terribly important problem by the Foreign Office, as long as a massive portion of the East African interior could be safeguarded for future exclusive British exploitation. This in itself accentuates an existing and underlying fear in London that Britain could very well lose the entire East African interior to a foreign power.

Uganda was not included in the December 7 agreement, and that country played a much more important role in the British scheme of things in Africa. Strategically speaking, the retention of Uganda could certainly be included in an overall policy of maintaining control of the Nile, Egypt, the Suez Canal and the route to India. But Uganda represented much more than a pivotal force in a stretched out strategic design.

The power-holding Uganda would exercise a paramount influence in the surrounding regions. The interest with which Uganda was regarded was, however, enhanced by other considerations. It was by far the most powerful state in Central Africa, and by far the

⁷⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 159.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 381.

most civilized.⁷⁷

Significantly, anyone interested in maintaining any form of control over the East African coast needed the commerce of the interior to make it worthwhile. When Salisbury referred to a German threat to the Big Lakes Market in 1887, he was not speaking in diplomatic terms.⁷⁸

When a serious German threat to Uganda arose in 1888 and 1889, not only was the newly formed Imperial British East Africa Company urged to go at once to Uganda to establish trade agreements there, but a flurry of diplomatic activity in London and Berlin eventually resulted in a trade-off: Britain ceded the island of Heligoland, in the North Sea, to Germany, in exchange for German recognition of a British sphere of influence over Uganda.

In the case of Uganda, then, while strategic and diplomatic considerations played an important role in Britain's evident desire to maintain her influence there, due to her already established sphere of influence over the coast at Mombasa, there remained the question of the 'Big Lakes Market.' More will be said about this in the next two sections. Commercial considerations in Uganda were clearly a major consideration in the first Uganda question of 1888-1890.

The decision to utilize Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Company to secure and maintain control of Uganda, and access

⁷⁷ M. F. Hill, Permanent Way -- The Story of the Kenya and Uganda Railway, (Nairobi: East Africa Railways and Harbours Commission, 1949), p. 25.

⁷⁸ Wm. Roger Louis, "Great Britain and German Expansion in Africa 1884-1919," in Britain and Germany in Africa, p. 12.

routes to the coast, was quite in keeping with British policy in other parts of Africa,⁷⁹ and reflected a hesitancy on the part of the government to spend any public funds on territory that would be, for many years to come, an administrative and fiscal albatross.

The British government had no intention of committing itself to expenditures in the British sphere and certainly not in the interior, but it recognized the dangers of inactivity. If private enterprise would wish to undertake such responsibilities the governmental attitude would, of course, be benign, provided no commitments were involved. ⁸⁰

Once the step was taken to indirectly sponsor private enterprise in East Africa by way of a royal charter, the symbol of British commercial supremacy in the nineteenth century, the railway, the symbol of nineteenth century industrial sophistication, was quick to assume a position of central importance in all subsequent discussions concerning East Africa.

⁷⁹ Witness Sir George Goldie's royal Niger Company and Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company, both expanding into the African interior, for both strategic and commercial reasons.

⁸⁰ Galbraith, pp. 126-27.

CHAPTER IV

THE I.B.S.A. AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRE

Sir William Mackinnon became involved in East Africa in 1872 when his company, the British India Steam Navigation Company was awarded a mail contract in the amount of £ 1,950 per annum as an incentive to institute regular steamer service from Zanzibar to Aden and thence to Bombay.⁸¹ It was the beginning of a twenty-year experience in Africa which would end only with his death. Mackinnon might be described as the perfect Protestant businessman in the nineteenth century.

His friends thought of him as dedicated, hardworking, kindly, philanthropic -- all complimentary adjectives applying to a good Scottish Presbyterian. But they did not recognize the hunger for power and for fame which he manifested in his African ventures. He undoubtedly did not recognize it in himself.⁸²

Within five years of the Zanzibar contract, Mackinnon was proposing the formation of a chartered company in the Sultan's mainland possessions, under the leadership of Charles Gordon -- a venture which, as outlined above, collapsed -- but the enthusiasm that had been generated in 1877 merely receded slightly where East Africa was concerned until more suitable circumstances would ensure better prospects for success.

A company under his direction, operating with the same magnitude and at the same level as the British East India Company

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 134.

⁸² Ibid., p. 32.

was Mackinnon's fondest dream. While the plans of 1877 had not come to fruition, Mackinnon busied himself in other parts of Africa, becoming at the same time a close friend of King Leopold of the Belgians, and Cecil Rhodes. His ambitious plans for empire not only paralleled theirs, they were designed to become an integral part of them.

Mackinnon had very large ideas. Having helped to create King Leopold's Congo State as, he thought, a free-trading adjunct to the British empire, he gazed across the continent in the hope of establishing British trade routes from east to west. He also looked from north to south, hoping to link the territory of his East Africa Company with that of Cecil Rhodes' South Africa Company. He envisaged a continuous British sphere stretching from the Cape to Cairo. ⁸³

With this objective in mind, Mackinnon, in 1884-85, sought to build a railway from Tanga to Mount Kilimanjaro, ⁸⁴ and in 1885 Mackinnon, together with James Hutton of Manchester attempted to form a syndicate to build a railway in the Congo Basin. ⁸⁵ Both projects failed, but his constant schemes involving Africa kept Mackinnon's name prominently before the Foreign Office as an entrepreneur eager and willing to invest time and money in Africa.

Any plans relating to a 'Cape to Cairo' scheme, of necessity included the area around the Great Lakes of Central Africa which became, eventually, the Protectorate of Uganda. And even though Joseph Thomson did not become the first European to make the round trip from Mombasa to Lake Victoria until 1883-84, within the space of

⁸³ Louis, p. 15.

⁸⁴ Robert O. Collins, "Origins of the Nile Struggle: Anglo-German Negotiations and the Mackinnon Agreement of 1890," in Britain and Germany in Africa, p. 26.

⁸⁵ Galbraith, p. 93.

two years after this event, Mackinnon was again contemplating the formation of a company to seek a concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar that would allow it to administer and exploit his mainland possessions -- but with the ultimate objective of pressing on to the lakes. Consul-General Kirk in Zanzibar, dedicated as he was to the retention of all the Sultan's dominions within the informal structure of the British empire, had been exaggerating the commercial prospects along the coast to Mackinnon for years.⁸⁶ But it was obvious, even in the early 1880's that a company operating on the coast would have to penetrate beyond the Sultan's domains to Lake Victoria if any profits were to be realized at all, even before consideration could be given to massive plans for trade routes across the continent.⁸⁷

It is not clear if the British government made any formal request of Mackinnon and his associates with respect to forming a company to secure the kingdom of Uganda for Britain. Local administrators, including Kirk, and his assistant, Frederick Holmwood reacted strongly to the German threat and while the British government may have paid scant attention to their frantic requests for some form of official reaction, business interests inclined toward the development of a commercial empire in Africa were more amenable.

The initiative came from Consul Frederick Holmwood, Kirk's chief assistant in Zanzibar. In April 1885, whilst on leave in England, he prepared a memorandum designed to arouse the enthusiasm of James Hutton and the Manchester merchants, and to reinvigorate William Mackinnon's earlier interest. In glowing terms he described the prospects of economic development in the regions between Mombasa and the Great Lakes, alleging the existence of an immediately profitable trade, especially in ivory, infinite possibilities for new export crops, and the

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

prospect of a near-paradise in Kenya for European settlers with abundant African labour. 88

Mackinnon's support of the 'Emin Pasha Relief Expedition,' under the leadership of H. M. Stanley in 1887, ostensibly termed a humanitarian expedition was primarily aimed at the establishment of British commerce and influence in East Africa.⁸⁹ By 1888, the German threat to Uganda itself, manifested by Carl Peters' own expedition to rescue Emin Pasha stimulated the British government. It learned of the Peters expedition in June 1888. On September 5, 1888, Mackinnon's British East Africa Association was granted a royal charter and was incorporated as the Imperial British East Africa Company (hereafter referred to as I.B.E.A.) -- its objectives: the securing and retention of Uganda for Britain.

At this point, it should be mentioned that the evidence does not indicate whether the governmental reaction of 1888 was as a result of the official policy of securing the Nile, or whether so much pressure was exerted on the government by business interests who were anxious to safeguard the potential market in Uganda, that the government enacted a royal charter as the only method of satiating business demands without committing itself to 'squandering' public funds. It is more likely that it was a combination of the two -- but given the easy and quick success of the negotiations with Berlin in 1890, it is clear that the events of 1888 reflected more of an economic thrust into East Africa than an official governmental one.

While the agreement between Britain and Germany on July 1, 1890 recognized Uganda as being within the British sphere of influence in

⁸⁸ Flint, p. 372. ⁸⁹ Collins, p. 127.

East Africa, that recognition would lapse immediately should Britain fail to effectively occupy the territory.

To some extent, the I.B.E.A. inadvertently filled this requirement until 1895. The Company was widely regarded as a 'philanthropic' organization, dedicated to spreading the twin blessings of commerce and Christianity in Africa. The ultimate failure of the Company, within seven years, has often been attributed to the precedence given to philanthropic, rather than to sound business interests. In many respects, the board of directors did represent a curious blend of businessmen and philanthropists.⁹⁰ The board was made up of six businessmen, three philanthropists, and five retired or semi-retired army officers or civil servants who had served in India or Africa.⁹¹

The subscribers represented the spectrum of the upper reaches of Anglo-Scottish society. Business interests, philanthropy, independent wealth, distinguished public service were blended into a governing board which could command respectful attention from any government, Conservative or Liberal. Four were members of the House of Commons; Kirk was still influential with the permanent staff of the Foreign Office; Bruce besides being illumined by the aura of Livingstone, was closely connected with his relative, the powerful Balfour of Burleigh; Kemball was able to invoke the influence of the Duke of Sutherland in addition to his own. ⁹²

with a paid up capital of only £ 240,000, the Company was hardly in a position to secure and administer not only Uganda, but the vast area between Uganda and the coast. The Company had been

⁹⁰ I use this word with a great deal of caution, especially with respect to the nineteenth century, when philanthropy was often used as a good excuse for furthering business interests.

⁹¹ Marie de Kiewiet Hemphill, "The British Sphere 1884-1894," in vol. 1 of History of East Africa, p. 395.

⁹² Galbraith, p. 139. See Appendix C for a full list of directors.

granted a charter on the understanding that the routes to Uganda would be firmly established. On paper, the Company received substantial rights from the Sultan of Zanzibar concerning his possessions inland from Mombasa. Besides establishing civil and judicial administration in the territory, the Company could acquire territory from native chiefs; levy taxes and customs duties; construct roads and other public works; and coin money.⁹³

within two years, Frederick Lugard, the company's representative, crossed the Nile and entered Uganda, where, on December 26, 1890, Mwanga, Kabaka of Uganda, signed a treaty with the Company. The agreement, designed as it was to secure Uganda within the recently recognized British sphere of influence, was significantly different from the agreement with the Sultan of Zanzibar. The major items included:

- 1) Acknowledgement of the suzerainty of the Company.
- 2) The Company's resident was to be consulted before any arrangements were made with other European powers.
- 3) The Company was given the right to administer, assess and collect all customs and duties.
- 4) Free trade was to be guaranteed throughout the kingdom.⁹⁴

Without a reliable and cheap method of transportation between Uganda and the coast, trade other than that in ivory, which was fast becoming exhausted, could not meet the import and export charges and still turn a profit. Eight months after the treaty between Mwanga and the Company was signed, the board of directors instructed Lugard to abandon Uganda. Had it not been for the financial support of the Church Missionary Society, which raised funds to contribute toward

⁹³ Ronald Hardy, The Iron Snake, (London: Collins Publishers, 1965), p. 19.

⁹⁴ M. F. Hill, p. 42.

the cost of administering Uganda until the end of 1892, the country would indeed have been abandoned. In fact, by the time Lugard first set out for Uganda, the Company was close to insolvency.

Three-fifths of the company's original subscribed capital had already been devoured by East Africa. Annual expenditures were approaching a 100,000 against yearly earnings of barely one third that figure. It seemed only a matter of time before Mackinnon's venture would founder. 95

Indeed, it was the establishment of Company administration in what was to become the East Africa Protectorate that consumed the Company's meagre capital -- not Uganda. It is difficult to imagine that a Company with a board of directors reflecting wealth in business acumen, should have had to begin thinking of withdrawing from Uganda, its obvious objective, almost as soon as Lugard had secured it, unless there was some tacit agreement with the government for support, and that that support had not been forthcoming. There is no record of this, and we can only assume that the Company strung itself out as far and as quickly as possible in anticipation of some form of government subsidy once it was established in Uganda. It is evident that the Company had not had sufficient time to explore the financial opportunities in Uganda before they were threatening to withdraw. The Company had been eager to proceed to Uganda. Philanthropic reasons or governmental persuasion were not the prime considerations.

In fact, the company had gone forward willingly enough. For, pending the opening up of the country by the construction of a railway, the only commodity which would survive the long journey to the coast by human porters while still offering profit to the trader was ivory, and ivory came from the interior, from Toro, Bunyoro and the Upper Congo. 96

⁹⁵ Miller, p. 251.

⁹⁶ Kenneth Ingham, A History of East Africa. (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1962), p. 151.

The I.B.E.A. failed for commercial reasons. But somewhere in the recesses of the collective corporate mind of the board of directors, it was assumed that the government would undoubtedly come to its assistance once it had performed the function of opening and securing the routes to Uganda.

The I.B.E.A. Company was by all odds the least distinguished of the African chartered companies. Poorly conceived, badly managed, and grossly undercapitalized, the company was destined from the start to a short existence. 97

⁹⁷ Hemphill, p. 393.

CHAPTER V

THE I.B.E.A. AND THE RAILWAY

It is difficult to imagine a late Victorian government willingly coming to the aid of a private company by awarding it a direct annual subsidy -- and it would be safe to assume that the I.B.E.A. never really entertained such notions. On the other hand, indirect subsidies, especially by way of government guarantees of annual interest charges on the borrowed capital for the construction of a railway, were not inconceivable. Overseas railway construction, by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, had become a common vehicle for the absorption of accumulated surplus capital, not only in England, but on the continent.

Railways were being widely touted in the 1880's as the road to riches. The intoxication was international. The French were undertaking a railway from the Senegal toward the Niger; Portugal, nearly bankrupt, was planning another in Angola from Loanda to Ambaca, and both the French and the International Association were planning railways in the Congo. Railways would be the means for the civilization of Africa and for its economic development. That seemed undeniable. But there were also such considerations as capital costs and operating expenses and the question whether the traffic would justify the investment. Unless governments were prepared to subsidize construction and to guarantee profits in order to promote their political objectives, investment in African railways seemed certain to fail. Such guarantees were not in the British imperial tradition. Governmental assistance, it was true, had been offered to Indian railways, but India was *sui generis*, not to be used as a precedent in other areas. 98

In this atmosphere of intoxication with railway construction

⁹⁸ Calbraith, p. 94.

at the end of the nineteenth century, it remains to be determined where the incentive behind the construction of the Uganda Railway came from.

Mackinnon had long been a believer in railways as the essential arteries of commerce. In the 1870's and early 1880's he had advocated the construction of lines in the Congo Free State, hopefully by a syndicate of which he was a member, as a supplement to the river system. His competence as well as his interest had been recognized when the government had commissioned him and Mackenzie in 1886 to devise a plan for Persian railways. 99

indeed, the second time (1885) that Mackinnon began to lay the groundwork for the formation of a company to operate in East Africa, railways were a prominent part of the overall plan, and it has been said that the railway proposal was the trump card that resulted in Mackinnon's company being granted a royal charter.¹⁰⁰ Railways were an integral part of the Company's plans from the beginning, then, and one begins to wonder exactly how much the Company hoped to accomplish with an initial capital of £ 240,000. Nevertheless, one of the first projects, once the Company began operations, was to begin railway construction.

.... the Directors sent out from England materials and rolling-stock sufficient for the construction and working equipment of a very straight line, 65 miles in length, at a cost of £ 50,000. The Company reinforced the local native labour by a gang of imported Indian coolies, and laid some 7 miles of the line from Mombasa. 101

There is no evidence that the government attempted to persuade the Company to begin construction of a railway -- and it would not be the first time that a private company had attempted to present the government with a fait accompli. In return for the 'securing' of East Africa for the empire, the Company now proposed that they be

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁰ Flint, p. 380.

¹⁰¹ Hill, p. 48.

rewarded by government backing of a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria.

.... Sir William Mackinnon declared that Her Majesty's Government should no longer hesitate to assume a share of the national responsibilities in East Africa. Accordingly he proposed to Lord Salisbury (the Prime Minister) that the Treasury should guarantee a moderate rate of interest on the capital required to build a railway from Mombasa to the Lake. 102

As the Company's financial position worsened, its calls for government backing of a railway began to become more frantic. The Company first attempted to use the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference of 1889-1890 to convince the government that its responsibility toward the suppression of the slave trade in East Africa could be most effectively served by backing a railway. Specific reference was made to Article 3, which called for the construction of railways as a means of replacing the caravan trade which was the vehicle and the backbone of the slave trade.¹⁰³ When the government did not react immediately, the Company threatened to withdraw from Uganda. As discussed above, this threat occurred only eight months after the Company had signed a treaty with Mwanga, and one can only conclude that as the government did not have any tacit arrangement with the Company to back the construction of the railway, under extreme financial pressure, the Company would not hesitate to threaten the government with the abandonment of Uganda, which was assuming increasing importance in the Salisbury government's policy of retaining Egypt, and was generally accepted as one of the best potential markets in Africa. Since any attempts to raise additional capital in London would have

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁰³ See Appendix D for the articles of the Brussels Conference.

met with no success whatsoever, the Company's only hope of attracting more capital was to be able to point to government involvement by way of railway guarantees.

The court believe, notwithstanding the manifest disadvantages under which they labour as compared with their German neighbours, that if Her Majesty's Government had carried through the expected guarantee for the construction of the railway to Lake Victoria, the situation would have been so ameliorated as to have enabled the Company to proceed with its work of organizing and developing the interior, as sufficient additional capital would then have been forthcoming.

.... In carrying out this policy of retrenchment, which has become necessary, it is deeply to be regretted that the first step must be the withdrawal of Captain Lugard, and his entire force, from the distant post of Uganda, the upkeep of which is estimated at about £ 30,000 to £ 40,000 a year, owing to the excessive cost of and want of, any facilities for transport. 104

As a last resort, the Company decided to begin a massive publicity campaign in England, under the direction of Frederick Lugard.

If the withdrawal of the Company from Uganda could be publicized as a sacrifice of Protestantism in Uganda and perhaps even the lives of the missionaries and their adherents, there was certain to be an outcry not only from the missionary movement but from the general public, which no government could ignore. 105

We shall return to the publicity campaign, and its relevance to the government's decision concerning the railway. Suffice it to say, at this point, that regardless of the impact of public opinion on the government, the Company's position remained basically unaltered. Regardless of whether or not the government decided to undertake guarantees for the construction of the railway in East Africa, by the early 1890's, it was evident that the Company was in such dire financial straits that nothing short of a massive infusion of funds would save it, and from all indications there was no prospect of this from either the government or from private sources.

¹⁰⁴Hill, p. 58.

¹⁰⁵Galbraith, pp. 211-12.

By 1892, the end was in sight for the Company, and by the end of 1894, negotiations had begun to remove the Company from East Africa. When all was said and done, the Company received £ 250,000, broken down as follows: £ 150,000 from the Sultan of Zanzibar for the relinquishment of the concession; £ 50,000 from the British government for the relinquishment of the royal charter; and £ 50,000 from the Sultan for the purchase of the Company's assets in his dominions.¹⁰⁶ The Sultan's arrangements for paying the £ 200,000 are not within the scope of this paper, but were representative of many similar arrangements typical of countries that owed allegiance to a superior European power.¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, the Company showed a deficit of £ 193,757.¹⁰⁸

A unique situation had arisen in the annals of British imperial history. When the I.B.E.A. vacated East Africa, it was replaced by the Foreign Office -- this was certainly not unique in itself, but hand in hand with the government takeover went its decision to build the Uganda Railway itself.

¹⁰⁶ Sorrenson, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ For full details see: James W. Robertson, Report of the Commissioner -- The Kenya Coastal Strip, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Colonies, December, 1961. p. 30 ff.

¹⁰⁸ Hill, p. 127.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNMENT AND UGANDA: SUPPORT FOR A RAILWAY

In general, the main support for the construction of a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria came from humanitarian and philanthropic interests, and business interests in search of profits. Men on the spot, Kirk and Holmwood in Zanzibar; Mackay and Lugard in Uganda, added their support. Railway construction in Africa was being undertaken by the French, the Italians, the Belgians, the Portuguese and the Germans, all contributing to an increasing awareness among the British in Africa that railways were indeed a viable method of transportation on the continent.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time when the government began to look favourably upon the prospects of railway construction in East Africa, and even more difficult to establish whether business stimulated the government or vice versa. Given that government involvement in private enterprise in late Victorian England was unusual to say the least, one would suspect that business concerns were the first to attempt to arouse interest in a railway. As early as 1885, there were references by the Foreign Office to the prospect of railway enterprise in East Africa.

4. Lord Granville instructed the British Ambassador to inform the German Government that some British capitalists had originated a plan for a British settlement in the country between the coast and the lakes, which are the sources of the White Nile, and for its connection with the coast by a railway. 109

The capitalists referred to were the group led by Sir William Mackinnon, and Lord Granville may have only been paying lip service to the project as part of the overall policy of maintaining a specific sphere of influence in East Africa in the face of German competition. In any event, while there is some evidence that Mackinnon was granted a charter on the strength of promises to construct a railway, there is no evidence that the government either stimulated the project or made any promises of official backing.

German competition in the mid-1880's, while a serious threat to the British, and especially British Indian interests in East Africa, could probably be contained by organized commercial interests, especially those that dangled the prospect of a railway -- and it is probably safe to conclude that the government considered that British interests in East Africa could adequately be protected by the I.B.E.A. after broadly outlining the spheres of influence in East Africa with Germany in 1886. By the end of the decade, events had changed. Whereas in 1886, Britain was probably reacting to business pressures to retain for them a portion of East Africa, following this up in 1888 with the granting of a charter to the I.B.E.A., the Salisbury government had, by this time, made a commitment to Egypt, and East Africa could very easily be shown to play a major role in the retention of that strategic country.

It is difficult to imagine that any reasonable group of men determining foreign policy for an empire as large as the British, would reach down into the heart of Africa to protect Egypt. More realistically, Egypt, rather than being the stimulant to the course of aggrandizement in East Africa, was a handy excuse for politicians concerned with the protection of existing and future markets in Africa.

Be that as it may, British access to Uganda along the Nile was blocked, for the time being, by the Mahdist forces in the Sudan. If the potentially rich market of Uganda was going to be secured at all, it would have to be by way of a drive from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. If the construction of a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria also served military interests by providing Britain with a two-way approach to the Sudan, should it become necessary to quickly conquer that country, so much the better.

Yet, Salisbury was not content with a southward drive alone, regardless of the military sinew. Not only the mahdists, but more than a thousand miles of desert blocked the path to the upper Nile regions. A slightly shorter route ran northwest from Mombasa. The pace of British troops marching along that route would obviously be accelerated by the railway, and, as he had made plain, Salisbury regarded that very function as the line's *raison d'être*. 110

Ultimately, the Sudan was invaded from Egypt, at Egypt's expense, and since this occurred in 1898, when the railway had been under construction for less than two years, and had reached only 130 miles into the interior, the viability of the railway, as a means of transporting troops to the Sudan is highly questionable. Amid the swirl of diplomatic and political maneuvering, one constant factor remains -- the commercial promise of East Africa, and the means of accomplishing the exploitation of that promise.

.... Salisbury, who was Prime Minister till August 1892, and also Foreign Secretary in which capacity he dealt with East Africa, had long since decided that his policy would be to help the Company to build a railway, which by cheapening the otherwise extremely costly communications, would keep the Company afloat. 111

¹¹⁰ Miller, pp. 303-04.

¹¹¹ Anthony Low, "British Public Opinion and the Uganda Question: October-December 1892," *Uganda Journal*, 18:1 (March 1954), p. 82.

A railway subsidy, then, would disguise the government's desire to provide economic support for the beleaguered I.B.E.A., by improving its credit rating in the City.¹¹² Whether Salisbury formulated a policy concerning the retention of East Africa for commercial reasons, which would entail some form of subsidy for the I.B.E.A., or whether Uganda figured prominently in the overall strategic consideration of Egypt and the Suez Canal, the Prime Minister would be faced with a parliament basically hostile to further growth of the empire. The policy of protecting the route to India by holding Egypt and backing up that retention with control over the sources of the Nile, could be effectively used to cloak imperial designs in East Africa. Furthermore, strong public support would be required for any parliamentary debate, and Salisbury made use of the anti-slavery movement in Britain to stimulate that support.

.... it is well known that Salisbury supported the application of the Imperial British East Africa Company for help in building a railway to Uganda on the grounds that Britain was committed by this act to take action against the slave trade on the land.¹¹³

The Brussels Anti-Slavery Convention of November 1889-

July 1890 provided the Salisbury government with the opportunity to officially bind Britain to an international agreement. It is not surprising, then, that the British representative in Brussels was none other than Sir John Kirk, former Consul-General in Zanzibar, and well known at the Foreign Office as a champion of official British involvement in the interior. Kirk was instrumental in persuading the representatives at the conference to include railways

¹¹² Robinson and Gallagher, p. 308.

¹¹³ Meirs, p. 107.

as a means of replacing human portage, one of the mainstays of slavery -- but his ultimate objective was specifically, parliamentary support of a railway in East Africa.¹¹⁴ Under Salisbury's guidance, the country was becoming committed to a course that would result in a railway subsidy for the I.B.E.A. Using the Brussels Conference as the basis for its argument,

.... the Foreign Office put itself on record of support in December 1890 in a letter to the Treasury which portrayed the Company's services in as flattering terms as had Mackinnon himself. 115

On December 20, 1890, the Foreign Office called on the Treasury to assist the I.B.E.A. in the construction of a railway.

It is believed that there is only one mode of action which would have practical effect -- the construction of a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria Nyanza. The Company is prepared to make this railway, but the expenditure is far beyond its means. 116

In January 1891, Salisbury added his own influence to the official Foreign Office request to the Treasury for a government guarantee of interest on the capital required for the railway.¹¹⁷ This was followed up by another Foreign Office memorandum on February 9, 1891, stressing that only a railway could smash the slave trade in East Africa.¹¹⁸ On February 10, 1891, the Treasury agreed to the proposal.¹¹⁹ The agreement amounted to a guarantee of up to five per cent on a total capital requirement of £ 1,250,000.¹²⁰

Salisbury followed up the basic understanding between the

¹¹⁴ Galbraith, p. 201. ¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 202.

¹¹⁶ Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, (House of Commons), Volume LVI, Africa no. 2(1892).

¹¹⁷ Salisbury, Memorandum, 13 January 1891: F.O. 84/2156, P.R.O. Quoted in Galbraith, p. 203.

¹¹⁸ Sessional Papers, Idem. ¹¹⁹ Ibid. ¹²⁰ Hill, p. 50.

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Foreign Office and the Treasury with a personal campaign for support of the measure in parliament. A speech he gave in Glasgow on May, 20, 1891 included the two principal motives for government backing of the railway:

It costs two or three hundred times as much to bring goods by caravan as it would cost to bring them by railway. Of course, when once a railway existed, caravans would become a matter of antiquity, and if no caravans existed, there would be no means of carrying slaves from the interior to the coast. 121

At the same time, the I.B.E.A. had begun negotiations with Rothschilds to raise the necessary £ 1,250,000.

With events proceeding so obviously in the Company's favour in the spring of 1891, it is a little surprising that in July 1891, the Company gave notice of its intention to abandon Uganda. It is evident that by 1891, the Company was on the verge of bankruptcy, and without quick passage by parliament of a bill guaranteeing interest, the Company was in no position to seek additional funds on the money market in London. Even though the Church Missionary Society provided the Company with sufficient funds to maintain itself in Uganda until the end of 1892, the appointment by the Treasury and the Foreign Office of Captain R. E. Macdonald to head a railway survey from Mombasa to Lake Victoria on August 26, 1891 was a sure sign that a lengthy delay was unavoidable before the matter could be placed before parliament. On the other hand, it is obvious that the government was not about to provide a substantial subsidy for a railway in East Africa without some professional recommendations.

As the survey proceeded, and further adding to the overall delay, was the defeat of the Salisbury government in the spring of 1892.

121 Ibid., p. 54.

In July 1892, Gladstone formed his last cabinet -- one that, generally speaking, remained true to the Liberal principles of free trade and no further physical extension of the empire.

There was, however, one exception. Lord Rosebery, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was perhaps the most popular politician in England, in addition to having strong influence with the Queen.

In many respects, this man would have been a welcome adornment to any Victorian cabinet. His erudition, personal charm, patrician background, marriage to a Rothschild and stable of Derby winners made him something of a dream prince in the eyes of the public. 122

A strong imperialist, popular with the rank and file Liberals and supported by the public and the press, Rosebery was determined to maintain Salisbury's policy in the Foreign Office. His overriding concern with the maintenance of Britain's empire and his unwavering position concerning it set him on a collision course with the rest of the cabinet, and placed Gladstone himself in a profound quandary: how could he deny a measure that was aimed at the destruction of the slave trade, but which also threatened to associate him with a policy of imperial expansion? Rosebery seized upon this situation to bolster his position by way of a huge national campaign in England for re-ception of Uganda and the construction of the railway. The arrival of Frederick Lugard in England in September 1892, marked the beginning of the campaign.

Lugard addressed chambers of commerce, colonial and geographical societies, political clubs, university students, church groups and missionary societies, concentrating on the abolition of

122 Miller, p. 257.

the slave trade and the prospect of a market for British manufacturers in Africa. The results were immediate.

No fewer than 174 petitions came in, largely from chambers of commerce and church groups, the very bodies of opinion among whom Lugard had sought to excite active interest. 123

By the end of October, the campaign had reached national proportions.

In September several newspapers started a campaign in favour of a Uganda railway and Protectorate (the Liberal press as a whole was still strongly against them both), while Stanley and later Lugard stumped the country in the cause. On 20 October Rosebery encouraged a deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society to agitate for retention, admitting that he himself could not say what the government would choose to do about Uganda. 124

The rising voice of public opinion,¹²⁵ together with Rosebery's threat to resign from the cabinet in November 1892, resulted in the cabinet's decision to appoint a Commission of Enquiry into the question of whether Uganda should be incorporated into the empire. Sir Gerald Portal, Consul-General in Zanzibar, an outspoken defender of British interests in East Africa, and a political protege of Rosebery, was appointed to head the Commission on November 24, 1892. While Rosebery could have instructed him as to what conclusions he should arrive at, given Portal's obviously imperialist inclinations, he really had no need to.

Not that Portal required manipulation. To be sure, his instructions gave him limited powers of decision; essentially he was to recommend rather than to formulate policy. But the report he wrote could only be expected to reflect his known views, and, as Miss Perham has observed, "Rosebery.... knew his

¹²³ Ibid., p. 265.

¹²⁴ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 317.

¹²⁵ Lugard and Rosebery collaborated on the publicity campaign (see: Ronald Hardy, p. 57.), and once the Commission of Enquiry was appointed, especially under the leadership of Portal, Lugard immediately broke off his tour.

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man, one after his own heart and mind."¹²⁶

Portal's report, released on April 10 1894, summarized the general motives behind the decision to remain in Uganda: emphasis was placed upon the prospect of the creation of a profitable British trade, which rested upon the suppression of religious wars in Uganda (between Catholic, Protestant and Muslim), threatening the security of the European trader and explorer. Securing the headwaters of the Nile and the suppression of the slave trade were of secondary importance. Abandoning Uganda, Portal argued, would leave the area open to German, Belgian, French and even Italian exploitation.

Any one of these countries, and more especially the first-named (Germany), would be fully justified, in their own self-defence, in insisting that on our withdrawal, our place should be at once taken by some other European power. In the present condition of African evolution, it is hardly possible that Uganda, the natural key to the whole of the Nile valley, and to the richest parts of Central Africa, and the only country which offers any hope of profitable commerce, should be left unprotected and unnoticed by other powers, because an English Company has been unable to hold it, and because Her Majesty's Government has been unwilling to interfere. ¹²⁷

Portal went on to reject the governing of Uganda from Zanzibar or the establishment of direct British control. Given Uganda's organized political base, and paying due notice to the need for economy, Portal recommended the establishment of a British Protectorate, and the abolition of the I.B.S.A.'s charter, thereby opening the country to universal British commercial exploitation. ¹²⁸

On March 6 1894, Rosebery replaced Gladstone as Prime Minister; on April 10, Portal's report was released; and on April 12 1894, a British Protectorate was declared over Uganda. Once that decision

¹²⁶ Miller, p. 266.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Hill, p. 114.

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 115-118.

had been taken, the construction of the railway was practically a foregone conclusion -- but for very different purposes. While it had previously been argued that a railway would effectively replace the slave trade and would firmly tie Uganda to the British sphere of influence and secure the headwaters of the Nile, once the Uganda question was settled, and the entire lakes market was secured, the big question concerning the railway, and the main problem of how it was to be built, and by whom, became an economic one.

It is significant that from now onwards the argument for the construction of the railway is based, not so much on the suppression of the slave-trade, or the protection of the missionaries, as on economic prospects, administrative necessity and international rivalry. 129

129 Ibid., p. 125.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKES TO BUILD A RAILWAY

When Lugard wrote that England's hesitancy in building a railway to Uganda meant 'allowing ourselves to be outstripped in the race for commercial expansion,' he was appealing to what may have been the most powerful motivation behind the growth of the British Empire. 130

It is becoming clearer that economic motives were the prime force behind the growth of the empire at the end of the nineteenth century, and that the government of the day reflected the general demand throughout commercial circles for new markets and sources of raw materials. Furthermore, the relationship between business and government was ~~rarely~~ antagonistic during the nineteenth century, but had undergone a profound change as the international economic situation at the end of the century saw increasing challenges to Britain's dominance of world trade, resulting in disenchantment with the principle of free trade. If free trade was no longer the ruling economic philosophy of Britain, then there was nothing to block the increasing use of government diplomacy and ultimately, public funds, to secure trade on behalf of private enterprise.

Throughout this period (1895-1900), British Indians still dominated the trade of East Africa. The German penetration, however, had brought about an awareness in Britain that she could very well be losing what might amount to a very lucrative market. It was not

¹³⁰ Miller, p. 248.

until Captain Macdonald led the survey party across East Africa in 1891-92, that any serious attempt was made to evaluate commercial prospects there. Macdonald concentrated on basic imports and exports as they existed, and estimated railway charges in order to present a realistic picture of what the railway would cost on an annual basis. While Macdonald's report did not speculate on what type of market might be available for British manufacturers,¹³¹ he did provide a basic description of what type of agricultural exports existed at that time.¹³²

Portal's report, presented a year later, gave not only clearer prospects for trade, but raised the spectre of German commercial competition.

In this connection, I would remark that in Uganda there does exist already a distinct demand for European commodities, more especially for such articles as cotton cloths of the best qualities, boots and articles of clothing. The presumption, under existing circumstances, is that, if the present system of transport is continued, these articles will be supplied by German sources and by the German route. To put a stop to this system, to effect any real improvement in prosperity or commerce, efficiently to check the slave trade, and for ourselves to reap the benefit of the material progress that may be made, there is but one course open. This system of transport by the 'English road,' already the shortest in actual distance, must be made the safest, cheapest and quickest. It would then drain the commerce, not only of Uganda, Usoga and Unyoro, but of all the other countries lying around Lake Victoria. The only means of effectively doing this is by a railway. 133

Indeed, Portal was not incorrect in foreseeing a drain through German

¹³¹ Refer to Appendix E.

¹³² Macdonald reported as follows: (1) ivory (2) wheat (3) maize (4) millet (5) mwimbi (6) rice (7) simsim (8) salt (9) coffee (10) India rubber (11) fibres (12) hides (13) timber (14) livestock. In Sessional Papers, Volume LIII, Africa, No. 4 (1893), pp. 89-91.

¹³³ Hill, p. 121.

territory. Even at caravan rates the German route cost £ 4.10s per sixty-five pounds carried, as opposed to £ 8 per sixty-five pounds on the British route.¹³⁴ George Curzon, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in presenting the government's case for undertaking the financing and construction of the Uganda Railway outlined not only the existing prospects for trade: cotton, indiarubber, cereals and coffee; but reiterated that the prospects for trade would be lost if Germany were allowed to complete a railway to Lake Victoria first.¹³⁵

Even if the commercial prospects were not promising in the early 1880's, there was a great deal of speculation concerning the future potential of trade and profit in East Africa. Prior to 1890, there did not appear to be any indication that the government would assist in any manner in the construction of a railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. By 1895, the government had undertaken to build the railway itself. Indeed, the general consensus of opinion is that the whole question of railway subsidies was a departure from imperial policy. But even as early as the 1840's, in Britain, it was evident that railways, no matter who built and owned them, were coming under increasing state control.¹³⁶ As far as overseas railways were concerned, India was, of necessity, the yardstick against which other railway enterprises in the empire were measured. In 1849, the agreement between the East India Company, the East India Railway and the Great

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, volume LXIII, Uganda Railway Bill, quoted in Marsh, pp. 140-41.

¹³⁶ Daniel Thorner, Investment in Empire, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), p. 12.

Indian Peninsular Railway Companies heralded a new era of ~~of~~ necessary cooperation between private and public enterprise in the empire.¹³⁷

Successful lobbying by private enterprise prior to the agreement of 1849 had dissuaded the British government from undertaking to build the Indian railways itself.¹³⁸

The chief argument against governmental assumption of the task of railway building was not the merely negative one derived from the inadequacies of the East India Company. Rather it was a proud assertion of the positive value of introducing and expanding the principle of private enterprise in India. Private enterprise was associated with laissez faire among the battle cries of the Manchester school, which scored its greatest victory in 1846, with the repeal of the Corn Laws.¹³⁹

This successful campaign, embodying as it did the influential forces of Lancashire, City financiers, railway entrepreneurs, eastern trading houses and various M.P.'s, established the principle of government guarantees of interest on private capital raised for the purpose of building railways in the empire.

The subsidy guaranteeing interest on £1,250,000 for twenty-five years, and whereby all profits over five per cent (to pay the interest) were to be divided equally between the government and the private company until all government interest payments were recovered,¹⁴⁰ was modelled, then, on the previous railway agreements in India. Within two years however, the results of Captain Macdonald's survey

¹³⁷ See Appendix F for details of the agreement.

¹³⁸ Thorner, pp. 175-76.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum, 10 February, 1891, P.O. 84/2156. P.R.O. Quoted in Galbraith, p. 205.

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party estimated a minimum of \$240,000 to build the railway.¹⁴¹

Throughout the 1890's, investment in railway construction overseas had plummeted. The great American railway collapse of 1893 hit many British investors hard, and the increase in estimated costs of the Uganda Railway would have been hard to finance. In addition, capital surpluses were low during this period, and overseas investments were hovering at a rate of one to two per cent on capital invested.¹⁴²

This generally unpropitious investment market which held out no promise of quick return, meant that the government was prepared to guarantee interest on non-existent capital.

This placed the government in an odd position. Having committed itself to maintaining control over Uganda, and establishing a new Protectorate over the Sultan of Zanzibar's mainland possessions between Uganda and the coast, the government was now faced with administering these vast territories. In addition, there can be no doubt that business interests, especially the iron and steel industries and the cotton industry, undergoing disastrous slumps, while not prepared to supply the capital for building the railway, were nonetheless pressuring the government to establish new markets on their behalf. A railway would satisfy all demands, opening up and securing new markets and rendering the administration of the Uganda and East Africa Protectorates easier and cheaper.¹⁴³

Robinson and Gallagher have stated that the Uganda Railway was

¹⁴¹ Hill, pp. 82-83.

¹⁴² Clapham, p. 27.

¹⁴³ Sorrenson, p. 19.

financed out of Treasury surplus s at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴

Bill 305, presented 3 July 1895, whereby the Uganda Railway was approved by parliament outlines a different method of financing. In stating that £ 5,000,000 was to be borrowed by the Treasury by way of terminable annuities for a period not exceeding thirty years, the Bill goes on to read:

The said annuities shall be paid out of the moneys annually provided by Parliament for the foreign services; and, if those moneys are insufficient, shall be charged on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof, but shall not be payable as part of the permanent annual charge for the National Debt. 145

The Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the Question of Railway Communication with Uganda, presented to parliament in August, 1895, officially stated the reasons why the government had undertaken to finance and build the railway itself.¹⁴⁶ The report immediately stated that guaranteed interest agreements, similar to those extended in the Indian situation would not work in Uganda, conditions there being the reverse of India, where large populations and a well established agricultural base allowed quick use of the line, immediate profits and the absence of any need to utilize the government's guarantee. The probability that the line to Uganda would be years in turning a profit led the Committee to suggest that a private company would probably not be able to service the interest, and, in fact, might enter into such a loss position that more government support would be required. By raising the capital itself, the

¹⁴⁴ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 368.

¹⁴⁵ Sessional Papers, Bill 305, Volume VII (1896).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Volume LXXI, Africa, No. 8 (1895).

government would be in a position to exercise its influence in acquiring the best rates and would borrow only those funds that were strictly required.

The Government would, in this way, profit to the full by its high financial credit; it would not raise one penny of capital beyond that required for the work; it would be able to exercise complete control over the working of the line; it would have at its command men of the highest experience in such matters, actuated by the sole idea of doing the best they can in the interests of the Government, and, above all, it would have a more free hand in respect of rates and fares; it would be in a position to profit by the sources of the line, instead of merely taking the risk of losses without the chance of profit. 147

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, we are presented with a government that not only appears to be seeking profits, but is convinced that it can do a better job in this instance than private enterprise, a remarkable variation from the course of governmental policy throughout the century. The elaborate wording of the Report was probably designed to rationalize the government's determination to build a railway in the absence of private capital, which, if it had existed, would probably not have done as good a job in constructing the railway as the government felt it could. Oddly enough, in 1905, there arose the question in the House of Commons as to why the government had spurned the offer of Messrs. Pauling and Company, a reputable engineering firm, to build the railway in East Africa. In replying, Lord Cranborne, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs stated:

The offer of the contractors had been mentioned. Had the right honorable gentleman always found that contractors completed a job for the price they offered? If so, he must be happily circumstanced. The contractors could not have secured the coolie labour without which it would have been

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Volume LXXI, Africa, No. 8 (1895).

impossible to construct the railway. The Government of India would not have allowed them to have it. Justice had not been done to the Government case as against the propositions of contractors, one of which required the Government to guarantee interest and to grant land with mining rights on alternative sections of one square mile along the line. 148

The government had come full circle, back to its original inclination in the mid-1840's to finance and construct the Indian railways itself. The shaky position of private investors in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the reluctance of many to become involved again in railway enterprise, coupled with the government's determination to build a railway over which it could have full control; contributed largely to this decision.

¹⁴⁸ Kenya National Archives, The African Standard, (Mombasa Times and Uganda Argus), January 15, 1903.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAILWAY AND THE AFRICANS

Up until this point we have reviewed the steady growth of British influence in East Africa, culminating in the decision by the government to build a railway some six hundred miles into the interior. Surprisingly enough, very little attention was paid to the native tribes of East Africa and the possible resistance they might present to the railway gangs. Even though a Protectorate was declared over East Africa in 1895, the British authorities had scant knowledge of what or who they were protecting.¹⁴⁹

The two prominent tribes in East Africa throughout the nineteenth century were the Ganda and the Masai. The Ganda lived around Lake Victoria in what was to become the Protectorate of Uganda. In this respect, they were not affected by the construction of the railway. The Masai, on the other hand, lived in a large area of what is now Kenya, and were the tribe that would be most affected by the intrusion into their territory of the railway. Unbeknownst to Europeans, the Masai had reached the apex of their power at mid-century, and by the time the European incursion began, they were in a state of serious decline. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, the Masai were involved in almost constant civil warfare, mainly between the agricultural and pastoral segments of the

¹⁴⁹Mungeam, pp. 2-3.

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tribe.¹⁵⁰ The civil war reached its peak when the Uganda Railway was pushing its way through the northern part of Masailand, and made the task immeasurably easier for British engineers.¹⁵¹

Even so, the British approached the situation cautiously, bearing in mind the legends of Masai ferocity and antagonism toward Europeans. The Masai were indeed considered the only serious threat to British penetration of the interior.

As early as 1897 Hardinge (British Commissioner in East Africa) had forecast that the Masai would cause trouble when the railway reached Kikuyu and would have to be taught obedience in a 'short, sharp struggle.' The reason for his fears lay in the past history of the Masai tribe. The Masai had two overriding passions -- cattle and warfare. For cattle they had raided and fought from Mount Elgon in the North to the outskirts of Mombasa in the South. 152

Hardinge's fears were unfounded. Captain Macdonald on his survey caravan through Masai country in 1891-92 wrote:

It is believed that the Masai are ready and willing to make peace and alliance with the Europeans and they have the reputation of keeping such treaties as they voluntarily make.... as regards the action of the Masai with respect to the construction of the projected railway, I do not think that they would offer any opposition to it. 153

As an aside, Macdonald commented on the prospects of introducing an invaluable commodity into Masai country:

The dannels, of course, would have been without fault if they had discarded clay and grease and used Pears' soap. Certainly there is as fine an opportunity for the introduction of that

¹⁵⁰Low, "The Northern Interior," p. 305.

¹⁵¹D. A. Low, "British East Africa: The Establishment of British Rule 1895-1912," in volume 2 of History of East Africa, ed. Vincent Harlow and E. M. Chilver, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 13.

¹⁵²Mungeam, p. 39.

¹⁵³Sessional Papers, Volume LXII, Africa, No. 4 (1893).

invaluable article into the Masai country as there is of Manchester cottons into the Congo. 154

The civil wars, fought principally for the possession of cattle, the symbol of wealth for the Masai, were more than likely caused by the human and animal diseases that plagued them throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was essentially cholera and smallpox among the people, and pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest among their cattle that had served to decimate both people and herds, reducing the Masai from a warrior nation to a small, ineffective tribe by the end of the century.¹⁵⁵ As early as 1892, a section of the tribe was seeking protection from the white men at Fort Smith,¹⁵⁶ and in 1896, a thousand of them were employed by the administration to help suppress the troublesome Kikuyu.¹⁵⁷

All in all, the railway passed through Masai country with relative ease. By the late 1890's, the remnants of the Masai were looking to the Europeans for protection, and especially, the support they might provide against intra-tribal opponents. Apparently, there was no basis for resistance to the superior strength of the European, and, generally speaking, the Masai fully realized the futility of raising opposition. After the railway had been completed, the lands formerly controlled by the Masai were classified as 'unoccupied' and in 1904, Sir Donald Stewart, British Commissioner in the East Africa Protectorate arranged for the Masai to be placed on two reserves and

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Miller, p. 107.

¹⁵⁵ Sidney Langford Hinde, The Last of the Masai, (London: William Heinemann, 1901), p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 6. ¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. XI.

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for their land to be thrown open to European settlement.¹⁵⁸

The two other principal tribes offering potential resistance to the construction of the railway were the Kikuyu and the Nandi. The Kikuyu had gathered strength in the forested areas some three hundred miles inland, where they were protected from the Masai. In 1892, Macdonald had commented:

The Wa-Kikuyu are allied to the Wa-Kamba, but present many differences of character. They are generally treacherous, unreliable and intriguing, extremely fond of native liquor and very excitable under its influence. 159

The Kikuyu had also suffered from the ravages of the smallpox epidemics at the end of the century, and had been weakened somewhat. But as an agricultural and trading tribe, occupying territory through which the slave caravans had passed for several decades, they were used to traders and did not at first consider the Europeans as permanent intruders.¹⁶⁰ The I.B.E.A. had maintained posts in Kikuyu country from 1890, and the two European administrators, Colonel Hall at Fort Smith and Ainsworth at Fort Machakos were instrumental in maintaining peaceful relations with the Kikuyu.

As the railway approached, the administration determined upon a policy of maintaining the peace with the surrounding tribes at all costs, and Francis Hall in particular approached the Kikuyu gingerly, taking care never to make the European presence too obtrusive.

So great was his influence around Fort Smith that by the time of the arrival of the railway in 1899 he had ensured that local opposition to its transit would be reduced to a minimum.

¹⁵⁸ Ingham, p. 214.

¹⁵⁹ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII, Africa, No. 4 (1893).

¹⁶⁰ Mungam, p. 45.

Although the district was disturbed.... early in 1900, the railway passed through Kikuyu country with comparatively little trouble; when at last it reached the Uganda border, at the Kedong River, it was to Hall that the chief credit was due for the stable conditions that assisted in its speedy transit. 161

The only real problem posed by Africans to railway construction were the Nandi. The Nandi had risen to prominence between the Kenya Highlands and Lake Victoria during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and remained a hindrance to the construction of the railway until it was completed. Prior to 1902, the Nandi were the responsibility of the Uganda Protectorate and preparations had to be made by the administration of that province in anticipation of the arrival of the railway. Even before the actual construction of the railway had begun, the Nandi were reacting sharply to the European penetration of their territory.

In 1896 the whole Nandi region was up in arms. A mail party was attacked and the caravan route became unsafe for travellers. Considerable damage was inflicted upon the tribesmen by a military expedition and a post was established in Nandi country to try to maintain order. The Nandi were not subdued, however, and although friendly relations were established between the British administrators and the headmen, the behaviour of the warriors remained unpredictable. 162

At the turn of the century, when the railway was approaching the lake, the Nandi, attracted by the railway hardware which was used to adorn their women and was a sign of wealth, began to loot railway property, fiercely resisting punitive expeditions sent against them. Following established policy, the British sued for peace in order to keep the railway going, but, considering themselves victorious, the young

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 38-9.

¹⁶² Ingham, p. 186.

warriors continued to pillage the line.⁷⁴ 163 All in all, seven expeditions were sent against the Nandi between 1895 and 1905, and, after the railway was completed, the superior strength of British arms finally subdued them, and in 1906, they were removed from their country and on to reserves.¹⁶⁴

It remains to be seen in what capacity the native tribes of East Africa were used in the actual construction of the railway. Even before construction began, it had been decided, in London, to use imported coolie labour from India to build the railway, supported wherever possible by native labour gangs. There was, however, a seeming predisposition toward regarding the Africans as relatively useless. As construction on the railway progressed, various reports concerning the East African tribes seemed to concur with the initial observations.

The native labour was shiftless: it could not even use a spade: it worked badly in the heat: it would not take payment in coin. 165

In fact, when they were used at all, Africans were employed on simple jobs like water-carrying, wood cutting, bush clearance, and earth-works. The Africans were considered, however, an invaluable source for mules and donkeys, used as transport animals on the railway.

Throughout the five years of construction, it was reported that continuing efforts were being made to employ Africans on the line, but apparently, without success.

¹⁶³Hill, p. 205.

¹⁶⁴Sorenson, pp. 21-22.

¹⁶⁵Attributed to George Whitehouse, Chief Engineer of the Uganda Railway. In Hardy, p. 64.

In regard to the labour supply.... strenuous efforts had been made, and were still being made, to induce the natives to work on the line. But the idea of organized labour was 'utterly foreign to most of the tribesmen,' and they disliked work at any distance from their own district. 166

And the administration did not see much hope for the African population as significant contributors to the economy of the East Africa Protectorate, a major factor in the development of the colony during the twentieth century.

It is true that the last three hundred miles of the railway passes through a rich country with a good rainfall, but it is very sparsely populated, and where there are inhabitants, they are absolutely naked savages that have now no wants or desires except to steal cattle and stick spears into each other, and who have therefore, nothing to export or import. 167

On May 10 1897, all "unappropriated land within a zone of one mile on each side of the railway, from the boundary of the Sultan's dominions to Lake Victoria, was reserved by Her Majesty's Government for public purposes."¹⁶⁸ The policy of regarding huge sections of land throughout the East Africa Protectorate as public property, was instrumental in opening up the country to European settlement, which was considered the only viable way of making the country pay in the face of a projected negative contribution from the Africans. In 1904, the removal of native populations to reserves began.

It seemed to have created a pattern which would at all times favour the claims of European settlers at the expense of the needs of the African population. In 1906 four reserves were

¹⁶⁶ Report by Sir Guildford Molesworth on the Progress of the Uganda Railway, quoted in Hill, p. 182.

¹⁶⁷ Sessional Papers, 'Gracey Report,' Volume XLVIII, Africa, No. 6 (1901).

¹⁶⁸ Hill, p. 150.

established for the Kikuyu, Kitui, Kikumbului and Ulu tribes in addition to the two created for the Masai, but this did not act as a protection for the tribes concerned as it was said to do. For occupied as well as unoccupied land within the reserves might still be alienated if the Governor obtained the consent of the Secretary of State. 169

169 Ingham, p. 97.

CHAPTER IX

THE UGANDA RAILWAY

From the beginning of construction, it took some five years and five months for the rails of the Uganda Railway to stretch in a continuous line from Mombasa to the shores of Lake Victoria.¹⁷⁰ In the long run, the railway did not contribute to the conquest of the Sudan, nor did it assist the British in maintaining control of the Nile and meeting the French threat at Fashoda. The railway had provided quicker movement of troops to Uganda to quell the mutiny of Sudanese troops there in 1897, and during the period of construction, this was the only imperial advantage the railway displayed. If the railway was not to play a major role in the international ramifications of British imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, its profound impact on the East Africa Protectorate and the securing of Uganda and trade prospects there place it squarely at the centre of the relentless drive for new markets in Africa.

The Uganda Railway Bill received third reading in the House of Lords on August 13 1895, and four months later, George Whitehouse arrived in Mombasa as Chief Engineer and General Manager of the railway. Whitehouse was responsible for all operations in East Africa connected with the railway, and reported, not to the Commissioner of the East

¹⁷⁰ Construction began on August 5 1896, and the first locomotive reached Lake Victoria on December 20 1901. In Hill, p. 216.

Africa Protectorate, but to a special Foreign Office committee, which was ultimately responsible to parliament for the progress and cost of the railway. The committee was made up of the following members:

Sir Percy Anderson	- African expert at the Foreign Office.
Sir Montagu F. Ommaney	- Crown Agent for the Colonies.
Sir Alexander M. Rendel	- Consulting engineer to the Secretary of State for India.
Sir John Kirk	- Former Consul-General in Zanzibar.
Colonel Colville	- Her Majesty's Acting Commissioner for Uganda. 171

Upon the death of Sir Percy Anderson in July 1896, Francis Bertie, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs became Chairman of the committee. Sir Clement Hill, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and the new expert on Africa also joined the committee at this time. 172

While the committee acted principally as a financial watchdog, it was also concerned with seeing that the railway was completed as quickly as possible. Whitehouse, on the other hand, was faced with the harsh reality of pushing six hundred miles of steel rails through largely unknown and difficult terrain. It is not our intention to discuss at length here the physical problems facing the railway engineers and construction gangs. Suffice it to say that the longer it took to build the railway, the more expensive it became.

From the first to the last, the story of the building of the Uganda Railway was a tale of hopes deferred, of disappointment, of estimated unfulfilled, of coping with unpredicted and unpredictable difficulties. Factors physical, climatic and political, and such extraneous matters as the engineering strike in England which deferred the delivery of equipment and material, and an outbreak of plague in Bombay, which checked the recruitment of Indian coolies, all delayed the

¹⁷¹ Sessional Papers, Volume LXXI, Africa, No. 8 (1895).

¹⁷² Ibid., Volume LXII (1897).

advance of the railway from the coast to the lake.¹⁷³

While the Uganda Mutiny, occurring as it did so soon after the commencement of construction convinced the government that the railway should be completed as quickly as possible, this decision did not result in satisfactory action.

Through a series of annual reports, the committee reported an alarmingly slow progress of the rails,¹⁷⁴ and even though they were able to sweeten the prospects by reporting the opening of the line at successive stages to both freight and passenger traffic,¹⁷⁵ on two separate occasions the government commissioned special reports on the progress of the railway by men considered experts in the field of overseas railway construction: Sir Guildford Molesworth and Colonel G. Gracey. Notwithstanding the welcome news in 1899 that the survey indicated a reduction of 100 miles in the estimated length of the railway,¹⁷⁶ and the creation of Nairobi as the administrative and commercial centre of the Protectorate in May 1899, both occasions providing evidence that the Protectorate was slowly being transformed from an unknown entity into an exploitable colony, the committee could not downplay the slow pace of construction.

The only practical method of quickening the pace of construction was to increase the recruitment of indentured labour into East Africa.

¹⁷³ Hill, p. 152.

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix J for a breakdown of the annual reports.

¹⁷⁵ In December 1897, the first 100 miles was opened to passenger traffic. (Sessional Papers, Volume LX, Africa, No. 8 (1898).) By November 1898, 227 miles were open to goods and 207 miles to passenger traffic. (Ibid., Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 6 (1899).)

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Britain turned once again to the time-worn experience of India to assist in the construction of the Uganda Railway and the securing of yet another piece of territory for the empire. India provided not only a vast pool of skilled and unskilled labour, but a work force conditioned to a climatic environment that was considered parallel to that of East Africa. Added to the already strong influence of Indian businessmen in East Africa, the influx of thousands of Indian labourers guaranteed the overwhelming impact of India on the early commercial and administrative development of the Protectorate once the railway was completed.

On January 24 1896, 350 Indian labourers arrived in Mombasa at a cost to the government of forty shillings per month, which included the cost of importation and repatriation, wages, rations and medical expenses.¹⁷⁷ Within two years, their numbers had increased and outstripped even the largest estimates made in London concerning the potential use of indentured labour. By 1898, there were 13,000 coolies in East Africa,¹⁷⁸ the numbers increasing to 18,030 at the end of 1899,¹⁷⁹ and reaching a high point of 19,747 in the spring of 1901, when importation ceased.¹⁸⁰ This massive importation of Indian labour can be directly attributed to the slow progress of construction, and to the inherent disaffection with indigenous African labour. It is evident that even at the low rate of forty shillings per month per labourer, the cost of constructing the railway would rise astronomically as the number of imported labourers swelled, not to

¹⁷⁷ Hill, p. 147. ¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 183. ¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁸⁰ Sessional Papers, Volume XLVIII, Africa, No. 6 (1901).

mention the strain placed upon the administration, and particularly, the health services. Working conditions were less than ideal, and the abundance of labour, regardless of the cost, probably caused railway officials to display little concern over health conditions, and the increasing number of accidents and deaths occasioned by conditions in the construction gangs. Indeed, there were some who were impressed with what they considered the low rate of accidents and deaths.

Although there is much sickness at times, the mortality rate has been remarkably small. From the returns of the chief medical officer, which I obtained, I find that the total number of deaths in three years has been only 480, viz. 51 in 1896; 261 in 1897; and 160 in 1898.

Taking the average number of coolies at 8,000, this represents a death-rate of 20 per thousand per annum, a wonderfully low average considering the climate and conditions. Of these, 30 per cent have been caused by fever, 25 per cent from diseases of the respiratory organs, 30 per cent from dysentery and diarrhoea, and 15 per cent from other causes. This does not include 28 men killed by lions. 181

Nevertheless, the accident rate increased far in excess of the proportion of labourers in East Africa at the time of Sir Guildford's report. 182

The Uganda Railway took a heavy toll of injured and dead among the Indian coolies. But of the 31,983 labourers imported, 6,724 remained, 2,000 of whom remained in the employ of the railway (largely in the capacity of clerks and station attendants). 183 By 1904, the number of Indians involved in actual construction work on the railway had sunk to a small proportion of the total African labour supply. 184

181 Sessional Papers, Volume LXIII, Africa No. 5 (1899), "Report on the Uganda Railway by Sir Guildford Molesworth."

182 See Appendix K.

183 Hill, p. 240.

184 Ibid., p. 242. Africans numbered 3,600 compared to 757 Indians.

Increased labour costs and the slowness of construction

ultimately destroyed all hopes of keeping expenditures on the railway within the original £ 3,000,000 voted by parliament in 1895. While initial costs appeared to be kept within the budgetary estimates, once the railway began to enter the difficult terrain beyond Nairobi, budget forecasts collapsed. Expenditures rose steadily in the early years, from £ 390,838 at the end of March 1897,¹⁸⁵ to £ 1,038,600 at the end of October 1898, when the rails had reached the 225th mile,¹⁸⁶ and reached £ 1,945,281 at the end of March 1899, when the railway was nearly half completed.¹⁸⁷ By March 31 1900, expenditures had passed £ 3,000,000, and the committee was forced to seek supplementary funds from parliament.¹⁸⁸ In submitting their report, the committee members blamed the excess on the heavy use of imported labour, and the decision to complete the line on a permanent basis.¹⁸⁹

The expectations of the earlier estimates in regard to local labour have not been realized; even the pressure of famine has not brought more than 2,000 natives at any time on to the works, while their stay on them is at all times fitful and uncertain. It was therefore found imperative to import Indian workmen, who now number over 16,000, raising the cost of labour to nearly double the forecast in 1893. This accounts for the major portion of the increase in cost. 190

The committee requested an increase of nearly £ 2,000,000, to

¹⁸⁵ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII (1897).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 5 (1899).

¹⁸⁷ Hill, p. 189.

¹⁸⁸ For a full breakdown of estimates and expenditures from 1896 to 1902 see Appendix G.

¹⁸⁹ Sessional Papers, Volume LXI, Africa No. 4 (1900).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

£ 4,950,000, and in support of their arguments, they submitted a comparison of their own figures with those of Captain Macdonald in 1893, the original basis for the £ 3,000,000 grant.¹⁹¹ Passage of the new grant was a simple matter, with a certain amount of discontent, and when the committee sought another £ 600,000 in 1902 to finish the line, it was passed without any formal opposition by a parliament resigned to the completion of the railway. The eventual total outlay for the railway authorized by parliament amounted to £ 5,550,000,¹⁹² of which £ 5,502,000 was actually spent.¹⁹³

To meet the charges, funds were borrowed from the National Debt Commissioners, on the security of terminable annuities and paid from the annual parliamentary grant for the colonies. Of the total amount, £ 2,466,000 was borrowed at 2 3/4 per cent and £ 3,036,592 at 3 per cent, the annuities all terminating on November 15 1925. In addition, parliament granted, each year, £ 319,112 for the service of these annuities, and the repayment of the annuities, together with the interest charges, brought the total cost of the Uganda Railway to £ 7,909,244.12s.6d.¹⁹⁴ Of the amount expended, the countries benefitting from the construction of the railway stand as follows:

England	-	£ 2,555,000	
East Africa	-	1,901,288	
India	-	374,000	
U.S.A.	-	187,000	195

¹⁹¹ See Appendix H.

¹⁹² Hill, p. 242. ¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 242-43. For a breakdown of drawings and annuity issues in connection with the Uganda Railway, see Appendix I.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

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There is no evidence that any particular company was favoured with the bulk of the orders for the railway, stores being obtained by advertisement for tenders, with the committee making its selection on the advice of the Crown Agent for the Colonies.¹⁹⁶

The Uganda Railway was officially opened in September 1904. It was an unusual hybrid creation, fashioned as it was, by Indian engineers and labourers while it was being built, financed by the imperial government in Britain, and creating an instant British enclave in East Africa that left only the exploitation of the country wanting, but providing the means of exploiting it.

¹⁹⁶ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII (1897).

CHAPTER X

THE EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE -- THE EARLY YEARS

When Britain declared a Protectorate over East Africa in 1895, she acquired an Islamized coast, resentful at best of foreign rule, and a vast stretch of largely unknown territory over which the government had undertaken to build a railway to Lake Victoria. The Protectorate was of secondary importance in the eyes of the Foreign Office, to both Uganda and the railway, and the initial attempts to govern the territory through the Consulate in Zanzibar reflected this opinion.

Sir Arthur Hardinge, the first Commissioner in the East Africa Protectorate and Consul-General in Zanzibar, was faced with administering the new Protectorate with as little drain on the British Treasury as possible, but at the same time, maintaining a situation whereby the railway could pass through to Lake Victoria as quickly and as peacefully as possible. Some use could be made of the staff of the defunct I.B.E.A., most of whom transferred to the colonial administration,¹⁹⁷ and the 1,120 troops maintained by the I.B.E.A. became part of the colonial police force.

If Hardinge hoped to establish a system of indirect rule in the Protectorate, the rebellion of Mazrui Arabs on the coast in 1895--

¹⁹⁷ We have already referred to the important role played by Ainsworth and Hall, both former Company officials who transferred to the colonial administration. (see p. 72 supra).

96 which was only put down at considerable expense and with the help of Indian troops, clarified the British position in East Africa. The first years would have to be spent securing the coast before any thought could be given to the spread of British influence and government into the interior. In the absence of any organized Arab penetration of the interior, and in the aftermath of a serious rebellion, the new administration could hardly entertain any prospects of riding into the interior on Arab administrative coattails. And the interior tribes themselves evidenced no organized chiefdoms or councils with widespread influence over which British rule could be superimposed.¹⁹⁸

The only viable method of establishing British rule, then, was to consolidate their influence on the coast and wait until the railway had penetrated the interior, making the movement of administrators, and more especially, troops, easier and more effective. The policy of the Foreign Office, to build the railway without any concurrent political expansion, was followed as closely as possible, with only two or three new administrative posts established in the interior, and these primarily to offset any potential threat to the construction of the railway.

Of far more importance during the first five years of the Protectorate's administration was the spread of Indian traders and clerks in the wake of the railway, and the massive influx of Indian labourers into the territory. The Foreign Office made little use of India as a model for the development of effective colonial administration

¹⁹⁸ Ingham, p. 206.

in East Africa, requests for assistance being limited to military aid (as in the case of the Mazrui rebellion), and Indian trained engineers and labourers for the railway. The sheer physical presence of so many Indians, however, necessitated the incorporation of many Indian procedures into the administration.¹⁹⁹

There were other examples of the influence of Indians or Indian models on the Protectorate. Most of the clerical posts in the administration were filled by Indians, usually Goans, who were also appointed as station masters at the small stations on the line. The rupee currency, which had long been in use on the coast, was introduced in the interior and in Uganda. The Indian legal codes were applied to the Protectorate by the East Africa Order-in-Council, 1897. Indian troops were used in all important military campaigns in the two protectorates...²⁰⁰

Indeed, the Indian presence in East Africa set the tone of British administration in the early years.

The important part played by the Indian administrative staff in the establishment and extension of British administration can hardly be overestimated. German officials commented to Hardinge on one occasion: 'We envy you your subordinate staff of Indian Baboo clerks, whether custom officers or tax collectors, who.... have enough experience.... to avoid incurring the distrust which so many of our men inspire.'²⁰¹

But even though the new administration was able to draw upon the massive resources of India for labour and administrative assistance, the absence of any indigenous trade, and hence the lack of local revenue, combined with the heavy cost of military expeditions, saw the Protectorate's financial deficit worsen between 1895 and 1900.

¹⁹⁹ Disputes between Indians working on the railway and local Africans resulted in a judicial system being established whereby disputes outside a five mile radius of European control were to be settled by local customary law -- disputes within a five mile radius, by Indian law. In Mungeam, pp. 56-62.

²⁰⁰ Sorrenson, p. 24.

²⁰¹ Mangat, p. 46.

Sir Arthur Hardinge had entertained the idea of establishing a hut tax, but this prospect could not be made effective unless the African populations could first become conditioned to a cash economy.

In the early years of the century economic development became a matter of urgency, for the Protectorate's finances were in a critical condition. In 1896-97 the grant-in-aid had been £ 100,700; by 1902-03 it had risen to £ 313,600.... 202

On the other hand, trade between East Africa, and Britain and India had increased remarkably,²⁰³ while revenue had remained basically static.

In its issue of April 7 1903, the Mombasa Times reported that the following debate had occurred in the House of Commons in Britain:

The grants-in-aid in the six years up to March 31, 1900, had amounted to £ 566,000, while, in that period, our import and export trade with British East Africa was £ 540,000.

Making all deductions for the Uganda Railway, for government stores and for specie -- which was a large item -- he (Lord Cranborne) still could show a considerable volume of trade, 29 per cent of which belonged to the United Kingdom and 34 per cent to the Indian Empire. 204

Revenue could only be stimulated by taxation, and taxation depended upon a thriving local economy. If the British taxpayer was to be relieved of the burden of East Africa, the government would have to seize upon the first feasible opportunity for economic development in East Africa. At no time was consideration given to encouraging native Africans to participate in the development of a cash crop economy.

²⁰² Sorrenson, p. 30.

²⁰³ See Appendix L for a comparison of trade and revenue figures between 1895 and 1904.

²⁰⁴ Kenya National Archives, The African Standard (Mombasa Times), April 7, 1903.

To the early Protectorate officials the African tribes appeared as amorphous, leaderless societies. They saw no prospect of ruling indirectly through an existing bureaucracy and of using this to promote economic development, as was to happen with the cultivation of cotton in Buganda in the early years of the century. There was no apparent alternative to relying on immigrants to promote economic development. 205

Sir Charles Eliot succeeded Sir Arthur Hardinge as Commissioner in December 1900, and immediately set his sights on the development of an agricultural economy in East Africa by European immigrants. Whereas the existing large numbers of Indians in East Africa had led many to consider the Protectorate as a natural object of Indian emigration, Eliot was determined to reserve the best parts of the Protectorate (i.e. the Kikuyu Highlands) for European settlement.

Settlers must somehow be found, attracted, encouraged, started off. There was no other alternative but economic stagnation and a perpetual bleeding of the British Treasury. East Africa could be transformed from a liability into an asset only if the Government could succeed in getting a thriving white population established to add to the wealth that the world still wanted and was prepared to pay for; to feed the railway; to buy goods from Britain's factories; to provide the outlet of employment for the surplus energies of idle young tribesmen whose only occupations of raiding and fighting were being barred to them by the spread of law and order; to start the wheels of trade by employing natives and so circulating among them money with which they could buy imported goods and pay hut-tax; to bring capital into the country; to pay taxes; to improve now useless land by watering, draining, grazing, cultivating, to give permanence to British rule in East Africa -- in short to build by their efforts a self-supporting colony. 206

When Joseph Chamberlain offered the Highlands to Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe as their new Zionist homeland, and they accepted, the existing European population banded together behind Sir Charles Eliot and Lord Delamare (the leading European settler in the

²⁰⁵ Sorrenson, p. 29 .

²⁰⁶ Elspeth Huxley, White Man's Country -- Lord Delamare and the Making of Kenya, (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1965), pp. 78-9.

Protectorate), and using the power of the local press, voiced strong opposition to any settlement in the Highlands which was not white and Christian. Chamberlain had offered the land to the Zionists in recognition of the important Jewish contribution to the empire (and especially to the Rand Mines in South Africa),²⁰⁷ and was probably not prepared to rescind his offer, but was also relieved of any decision when the Zionists rejected East Africa as a potential homeland in 1904, and decided to concentrate on Palestine.

The threat of European settlement of a non-Christian nature had served to organize the existing traders, sportsmen, missionaries, concession-hunters and settlers in East Africa into a forceful body demanding, through the Commissioner, that the Highlands be opened to white, Christian, and preferably English-speaking settlers only. It is difficult to say what impact this group had on the imperial government, if any, other than representing a somewhat organized body which might prove economically viable and eventually contribute toward making the railway pay and lighten the burden on the British Treasury. It is evident, however, that the administration of the Protectorate, by 1902, had committed itself to a policy of maintaining the Highlands for the exclusive use of European settlers, dedicated to the cultivation of cash crops (in the absence of any valuable mineral deposits),²⁰⁸ of European rather than of a tropical nature. Tropical agriculture at that time was in a depressed condition on the world

²⁰⁷ Sorrenson, p. 38.

²⁰⁸ A survey by the East Africa Syndicate in 1902-03 had shown that there were no mineral deposits of any value within reasonable distance of the railway line. In C. C. Wrigley, "Kenya: The Patterns of Economic Life 1902-1945," in vol. 2 of History of East Africa, p. 211.

market, and wheat in Canada and sheep in Australia were making immense fortunes for established European settlers in those British dominions.²⁰⁹

The turning point in the history of the East Africa Protectorate was probably the transfer of Uganda's Eastern Province, on the east side of Lake Victoria to the East Africa Protectorate in 1902, to ensure that the railway came under the supervision of only one colonial administration, but which also brought all the Highlands under the control of the East Africa Protectorate. Within a year, Aliot had begun to entice settlers from South Africa, and they represented the first wave of European immigration into East Africa, and set the course of the colony's development for the next fifty years.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

CHAPTER XI

THE IMPACT OF THE RAILWAY

It remains to be seen what effect the Uganda Railway had on the early development of the East Africa Protectorate. Even as the British government expended massive sums of money on the construction of the railway, the administration of the Protectorate was being encouraged to consider ways of making the railway pay. As we have seen, however, the administration was in no position to directly stimulate economic growth in the early years, prior to the turn of the century, and to some extent, there was little hope of the railway turning a profit before the resources of Uganda could be effectively tapped and European goods transported to the 'sophisticated' market there at reasonable rates. The exploitation of the Uganda market awaited the completion of the railway.

But even as the railway was being built, it began to have a profound economic and social impact on the country through which it passed. In the long run, the railway necessarily became the economic backbone of the East Africa Protectorate. Initially, of course, there was no evidence of any real development in the wake of the railway.

The railway, which has advanced 175 miles into the interior, has not had any appreciable effect on trade, as regards exports, nor is it likely to before it reaches Aikuyu, a distance of 300 miles, where it is expected next May (1909). It remains to be seen whether the rich agricultural land around Aikuyu will be utilized for the raising of cattle and wheat for

dispatch to the coast.²¹⁰

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Within a few short months, and with only fifty more miles of track laid, Sir Guildford Molesworth was able to report back to the Uganda Railway Committee:

The civilizing influence of the railway is most marked, even on the unpromising region which it has hitherto traversed. The tribes in contact with it have already commenced to trade, and a demand for European goods is springing up among them. Traders are beginning to settle around the different stations, and at Voi there is quite a flourishing bazaar. ²¹¹

As was to be expected, the trade consisted almost entirely of goods shipped from the coast, with relatively few articles or raw materials making their way from the interior.²¹² In addition, the early trade along the steadily advancing railway was controlled almost completely by Indian merchants. Already long established on the coast, where they enjoyed a near monopoly of trade and financial activities, the railway enabled them to advance into the interior, and as the commercial importance of East Africa began to increase, so conversely, Zanzibar was finally abandoned by the Indian merchants as the trading centre of East Africa.²¹³

The thousands of Indian labourers on the railway provided a guaranteed market for goods imported from India by the merchants in Mombasa, and this was the initial attraction for Indian merchants in the interior. But an automatic consequence of the arrival of the

²¹⁰ Sessional Papers, Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 3 (1899), Report by Sir Arthur Hardinge on the British East Africa Protectorate for the Year 1897-98.

²¹¹ Ibid., Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 5 (1899), Report on the Uganda Railway by Sir Guildford Molesworth.

²¹² Ibid. ²¹³ Mangat, p. 50.

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Indian merchant into the interior was the beginning of serious trade with the Africans themselves. Gradually, the Africans were exposed to imported merchandise and became familiar with the rupee as a means of exchange. In return, the Indian merchants began to purchase locally grown produce for shipment to the coast.

From the vicinity of the railway and the administrative posts, some of these traders spread into the countryside to purchase a variety of local produce -- ivory, rubber, grain, gum copal, hides, horns and copra -- in exchange for their trade goods, consisting of the 'americani' and 'kaniki' cotton cloths, blankets, beads, and brass wire, etc.... 214

As trading patterns were established, so too, invariably, were the governmental institutions that protected these patterns, and as the trade was largely Indian, so too were the laws, postal and currency systems that were established.

This entire process smoothed the way for the penetration of the interior by the British administrators, the railway permitting not only easy access to the interior of the first groups of colonial bureaucrats, but also placing demands on the local population for men and materials as it passed through, bringing Africans into contact with British officialdom, and making them familiar with it. And as the railway progressed, so too did the European and Indian police forces, protecting at first the railway from local thievery, but ultimately establishing an atmosphere of permanent British rule.

If the railway was meant to secure Uganda for the British, then the mutiny of Sudanese troops there in 1897 certainly put it to the test, and even though railhead had barely reached 125 miles, the railway eminently served its purpose.

By the end of January (1898) the 700 riflemen of an Indian infantry regiment had reached Kampala. They were followed only a few weeks later by a 400-man Swahili battalion and an additional 400 Sikhs and Punjabis. Throughout the year, the railway continued to shovel reinforcements into Uganda -- for a total of more than 28,000 troops and porters, 1,200 baggage animals and nearly 2,500 tons of military equipment. 215

If nothing else, the sheer physical impression made upon Africans of so massive a display of military supremacy, convinced them that the European had established his rule, and that there was nothing that could be done about it.

The railway also brought, in increasing numbers, Europeans. Initially, the European penetration was represented by traders, sportsmen and missionaries. But as the line neared completion, they were joined and eventually overwhelmed by the European settler, who came last, but was to have the most impact. Once the railway reached Nairobi, and established it as the transportation and communications nerve centre of the Protectorate, the waves of European settlers followed each other closely, Nairobi becoming the springboard for the penetration of the Kikuyu Highlands. By the time the railway was nearing completion in 1901, encouraged by Sir Charles Eliot and Lord Delamare, the Europeans had begun a serious penetration of East Africa, and in this respect, the railway provided the means for real economic and social change in the Protectorate. As the I.B.E.A. had correctly predicted, once communication with the coast was assured, the economic development of the interior was almost a foregone conclusion. And the country surrounding the line was marked with the European presence and the remarkable changes inherent in their incursion.

The solitude of the Rift Valley has gone. Thousands of bearded Indians, hundreds of Europeans and Eurasians, Negroes of every African type (from the handsome Somali to the ugly Mudigo), Arabs and Persians trudge to and fro on foot, ride donkeys, mules and horses, pack the carriages like herrings, set up booths, and diverge far and wide a hundred miles in each direction from the railway line, trafficking with shy and astonished natives, who had scarcely realized the existence of a world outside their own jungle, for beef, mutton, fowls, eggs, and vegetable foodstuffs which are to assist in feeding this invasion. ²¹⁶

Once the railway was completed, freight rates from Nairobi to Mombasa plunged from £ 250 per ton to between £ 1.4s and £ 2.2s per ton, ²¹⁷ affecting not so much the export of produce to the coast (which was still negligible), but enabling European goods to be imported, for the first time, at a healthy profit for the importing merchant. Within months, trading firms were spreading throughout the Protectorate.

As a result of the completion of the railway, great commercial development is taking place. Italian, German and Indian firms are opening up branches in East Africa and Uganda, and both Indians and Italians are placing trading vessels on Lake Victoria, on which a German trading schooner also plies. Round Nairobi, the headquarters of the Uganda Railway, great progress is being made in the cultivation of potatoes, 40 to 50 tons of which are exported to South Africa every month. Hitherto these were obtained in South Africa from Portugal and Central America. ²¹⁸

By 1903, the earnings of the railway were up sharply, and its deficit had begun to shrink, with the prospects for profits becoming increasingly evident, as the country surrounding the line was opened up. ²¹⁹

The completion of the Uganda Railway, originally conceived as the lifeline to Uganda, and designed to guarantee exclusive British

²¹⁶ H. H. Johnston, "The Uganda Protectorate," in Marsh, p. 150.

²¹⁷ Wrigley, p. 210.

²¹⁸ Kenya National Archives, Mombasa Times, March 24 1903.

²¹⁹ See Appendix M for a comparison of railway earnings from 1901 to 1903.

exploitation of the market and resources in Uganda, was probably felt more in East Africa than in Uganda, as the railway had a direct impact on the land through which it passed, but did not and could not seriously alter the social, economic and demographic patterns in Uganda, which it did not enter. The expense incurred by the British government in constructing the line was the primary incentive toward making the railway pay for itself and ultimately turn a profit, stimulating in its turn, hopefully, the economic exploitation of the entire Protectorate.

But the dominant feature of the East Africa Protectorate is the Railway. Without it progress was impossible. With this great artery running through the country the task of government is lightened, the dangers of the pioneer are lessened, the possibility of profitable investment of capital is opened up, the hopes of revenue legitimately increased. 220

CONCLUSION

We have considered the several and varied motives which prompted the British government to take an aggressive stand in East Africa. If a thread can be drawn through the entire process, we must briefly re-examine the factors and attempt to draw a conclusion concerning the acquisition of the two large protectorates in Africa and the securing of these territories by a railway, built and owned by the government.

Britain's 'civilizing mission,' for example, was not the reflection of universal national sentiment in the nineteenth century, but was evident, in its various aspects, in several different types of organizations and societies. It is not possible here to enter into a discussion of what the average Englishman may have considered his country's mission, although one might suspect that there did exist an intangible element of national pride in Britain's enormous empire, and that that national pride was becoming more evident at the end of the century.

On the other hand, it is more difficult to identify a 'sense of national fitness' to govern the rest of the world as the drive shaft of late Victorian imperialism, even though William Langer attributes British imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century to the ultimate extension of Social Darwinism.

The circle is closed, and the line of argumentation complete, from the theory of evolution through the doctrine of the Divine mission back again to the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. There we may leave the discussion of British

In many respects, the anti-slavery movement of the nineteenth century embodied elements of Social Darwinism, and in this sense may be considered the epitome of the British civilizing mission. Indeed, it would be unfair to label all the anti-slavery spokesmen in Britain as hypocrites. Many thousands of men and women expressed genuine horror at the practice of slavery as it existed in East Africa. On the other hand, it is equally impossible to divorce the anti-slavery movement from the concept that only legitimate commerce could effectively replace it — and in Britain, this was a reflection of the overwhelming dedication to the success of the industrial revolution and a widespread belief that Britain, as the supreme industrial power in the world, was committed to spreading the blessings of that revolution everywhere. Thus, the anti-slavery movement and the laissez-faire philosophy are inseparable, and it is difficult to determine which stimulated the growth of the other, although the results of the anti-slavery movement would lead us to accept the latter as the stimulant. We have seen how Section 3 of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Act was used to press for the construction of the railway in Uganda. At the same time, however, the Act did represent a victory, and a genuine one, for the anti-slavery groups in Britain.

The Act was a triumph for the humanitarian pressure groups who had long urged governments to take such action, and who could no longer be ignored in an age when Europeans, with a profound belief in their civilizing mission, sought to justify their invasion of Africa on the grounds that they were promoting the moral and material welfare of its inhabitants. 222

221 Langer, p. 95.

222 Meirs, p. 118.

But again, it was Britain's anti-slavery policy which had allowed her navy, which during the greater part of the nineteenth century exercised almost total control over the world's sea lanes, to closely watch the activities of those countries not formally attached to the empire. As a result, the anti-slavery movement, backed as it was by the navy, played a major role in the extension of Britain's informal empire.²²³ The anti-slavery movement, then, more often than not cloaked the watchdog tactics of the imperial navy, and rather than being the moving force behind the imperialism of the late nineteenth century, it served as an effective excuse for keeping open Britain's international avenues of trade.

On a more local level, the anti-slavery movement also prompted the spread of missionary societies throughout the length and breadth of Africa. As the sole representatives of Britain in Africa throughout much of the nineteenth century, even though they could not anticipate official government backing, the missionaries were responsible for the dissemination of the first evidence of commercial prospects in East Africa among businessmen in Britain, even though the information was often incorrect and exaggerated. As their numbers increased, the missionaries invariably became a matter of concern for the local representatives of the Crown in East Africa (in Zanzibar), and eventually in London itself.²²⁴ While there is scant evidence of direct appeals by the missionaries for government support in those areas over which Britain exercised no direct political control, it is evident

²²³ Ibid., p. 85.

²²⁴ Oliver, The Missionary Factor, p. 81.

that operating as they did in a political vacuum, the missionaries were eager for their own country to fill that vacuum, and with this objective in mind, they did not hesitate to exert indirect pressure on the government from the pulpit.²²⁵

We are again faced with a confusing picture when we consider the impact of public opinion as a manifestation of the national concern over Britain's role in the world. It has been argued that the Salisbury and Rosebery governments were forced to take positive action in East Africa in the face of overwhelming public support for the retention of Uganda. Being cognizant of the absence of business initiative there and the refusal of British investors to back the I.B.E.A. or provide financing for a railway without a government guarantee of interest and profits, we could indeed gratefully accept the force of public opinion as the solution, in an attempt to clarify the situation. The evidence in this case is inconclusive. Indeed, there probably was a general distaste for the practice of slavery, and a concomitant movement, sponsored by the mission societies and the churches in general, which pressured the government to exercise its influence in ridding the world of the practice. But how important was public opinion to that select group of inner sanctum officials who determined British foreign policy?

Of the resolutions and petitions (concerning the retention of Uganda), 95 per cent were seen and initialled by Lord Rosebery in the Foreign Office, but judging by the minuted dates, by the time he wrote his decisive memorandum for the cabinet on 5 November (1892), though he had probably heard of some more recent public meetings, he cannot have seen more than twelve of the resolutions and petitions and there were over 160 more before the movement was finished. By 7 November, when the

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 161.

cabinet made its decision to send a Commissioner to Uganda, ²²⁶ he had seen fourteen more, but there were still 148 to come.

Given this evidence, Rosebery can hardly have been stimulated directly by public opinion, especially when we consider that he was one of the strongest forces behind the stimulation of the public opinion campaign. Rosebery had already made up his mind, and he was, no doubt, aware of his own power over the cabinet and the Liberal party as a whole. He was prepared to use the division and weakness of the Liberal party in 1892 to promote his own ends, ²²⁷ and he was farsighted enough to stimulate public opinion for the inevitable debate in parliament, influencing the votes of the back benchers who were more swayed by what appeared to be a massive outpouring of public sentiment.

If public opinion had no appreciable impact on the formulation of cabinet opinions, then we must ask what factors had come into play which were of more immediate concern to government officials, forcing them to adopt policies relative to the East African situation.

By the 1890's, probably as a result of the Great Depression, the lethargy and lack of initiative on the part of the business community was everywhere evident. Britain's industrial and economic decline in the face of rising commercial challenges from Germany and America presented the government, which had evolved as the embodiment of Britain's technical, industrial and commercial supremacy, with a challenge that demanded initiative from the business community -- a challenge which it was not willing to meet. When it became clear that

²²⁶ Low, "British Public Opinion," p. 98.

²²⁷ Robinson and Gallagher, p. 327.

business was relying on the government to protect its interests, the government itself was forced to accept that challenge. The British government can hardly be represented as a body antagonistic to the maintenance and extension of Britain's commercial well-being, and in this situation, it is not surprising that government, rather than business, undertook to safeguard the health of the whole British economy. By the end of the century, Britain's economic foundations were as much embedded in the empire as they were in the industrial and manufacturing complex of Britain herself, and rather than embark on a programme of government sponsorship of industrial rejuvenation in Britain (a policy which late nineteenth century British governments probably could not even have conceived), it was logical for the government to look to the empire to provide the continued growth of Britain's industrial and financial complex. And if the existing empire held no promise of bigger markets, then the informal empire could easily be brought into the imperial fold.

Outwardly, however, the government maintained a great many vestiges of the mid-century body that had been the servant of the principles of laissez-faire and liberalism. In other words, the government had not, on previous occasions, taken the initiative when it came to the expansion of the imperial structure, and when the Conservative and more especially the Liberal governments of the late 1880's and 1890's were urged to safeguard British business interests by creating new markets for them and maintaining those markets by incorporating them into the empire, they could hardly plunge in without a second thought.

The British parliaments of the eighteen-eighties and nineties were parochial, uninformed and, by modern standards, incredibly

parsimonious of the public money. Events had to be allowed to take their course, until it could be shown that the country's interests had already become so deeply involved, that it would very likely be more expensive to turn back than to go on. 228

Men like Lord Rosebery were bound to face stiff opposition from parliament in general, a body which had not yet begun to reflect the underlying changes in the economy as a whole, and even from his own party, which maintained its traditional dedication to the liberal principles it formalized during the middle years of the century.

In East Africa, events had already begun to draw Britain into a more active role. Generally speaking, the government reacted to an existing situation in East Africa, and as a result, an empire was formalized -- it was not created from nothing. Explorers and missionaries in East Africa from mid-century onwards were anxious to bring that area under exclusive British control and did not hesitate to make their opinions known, through publications and the press in Britain. Local officials, Sir John Kirk and Frederick Holmwood, and British commercial elements represented by Sir William Mackinnon also brought East Africa increasingly to the attention of select members of the government and civil service, who they considered might be more sympathetic to their cause in Africa.

The character of the European impact overseas, however, was not primarily determined by the predilections of prime ministers and foreign secretaries. They rarely initiated policy; rather, they were required to react to rapidly changing events arising from the activities of missionaries, traders and soldiers over whom they exercised little control. 229

²²⁸ Oliver, "Some Factors in the British Occupation," p. 50.

²²⁹ Galbraith, p. 11.

The ~~Salisburys and Roseberys~~, then, may have not initiated policy, but their quick reaction to overseas situations, and, especially in the East African situation, is representative of their being more in tune with the changing demands of the social forces which they represented.

The traditional trade between East Africa and India had not originally been a major factor in Britain's concern with East Africa, which, before the opening of the Suez Canal, figured prominently as a potential way station on the route to India. But when Britain's ally, the imam of Muscat, began to encourage British Indians to settle in Zanzibar, and when the Indians assumed almost total economic control over East African trade and financial affairs, the Government of India paid formal recognition to the commercial importance of Zanzibar. In fact, the empire figured prominently in Indian economic success in Zanzibar.

The revival of Indian commercial enterprise was encouraged both by the recovery of their former influence in Zanzibar by the imams of Muscat -- a process completed during the reign of Seyyid Said (1806-1856) -- and by the establishment of British rule in India and the emergence of British naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean after the Napoleonic Wars. While the former led to the establishment of a Zanzibar sultanate committed in some respects to an enlightened commercial policy by Said, the latter ensured direct British political support for the Indian merchants now trading under the British flag. 230

By a slow and painstaking process, the Indian merchants, occupied in trade that would probably have been ignored by the European capitalist, gradually developed Zanzibar into an important trading and commercial centre, controlling as it did all the trade of East Africa, and over which the Indians themselves exercised almost total influence. In

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this manner, at the end of the process (roughly the late 1860's and early 1870's), Zanzibar began to figure prominently as a trading and commercial centre, and became a more important consideration in the overall policy of the Government of India, and ultimately, in the decisions of the Foreign Office. The Agency in Zanzibar, originally established by the Government of Bombay in 1841, was transferred to the Government of India in 1873, a year after Mackinnon had established steamship links between Zanzibar and Bombay; and ultimately, in 1883, passed into the control of the Foreign Office. These developments, occurring as they did within the brief span of forty years give credit to the increasing commercial importance of Zanzibar in the eyes of the British government.

It was the commercial and not the strategic importance of Zanzibar that initially drew Britain into East Africa. The importance of the Indian empire to Britain had resulted in Britain being as much influenced by that empire as she exerted influence over it. The value of India was unquestioned by almost all elements of British society, and as all foreign policy deferred to India, government officials in Britain came under the influence of conservative elements, administrators and officials, engaged in active administration in India, or living in England in retirement, who demanded the protection of India and Indian interests, even to the point of requesting formal extension of the empire. East Africa figured prominently in these policies concerning India. The stagnation of British industry and the demands for new markets, together with the loss of commercial supremacy and the concurrent decline of laissez-faire as a practical philosophy,

considered in the light of an existing, albeit indirect commercial base there, makes Britain's political incursion into East Africa an almost predetermined decision.

The acquisition of formal empire in East Africa was not a spontaneous act. The remnants of *laissez-faire* and the belief that Britain was still the unchallenged industrial power in the world led government officials to attempt to retain informal control of East Africa, with outright political annexation to be used only as a last resort. At the outset, Indian economic control of Zanzibar made it easy for British officials to exercise strong influence over the Sultan, and through the Sultan the East African mainland where they anticipated strong indirect control through the Indian merchants established on the coast -- the interior being left to explorers and missionaries.

Britain refused to interfere politically, but was prepared to use enlightened states as a springboard for economic and religious penetration.

Zanzibar was now ready, as the British saw it, to go forward as a respectable, enlightened state, and to expand its authority over the East African mainland, maintaining law and order in favour of British explorers, missionaries and traders. 231

It was the German occupation of Tanganyika that prompted the British government to cast the net of official empire over East Africa. While informal empire was still the goal, with Britain indirectly sponsoring the I.B.A.'s attempts to secure a portion of the mainland, the ineffectiveness of the chartered company drove home the stark reality that business was not prepared to make the heavy investment necessary to secure East Africa and Uganda for future British commercial

²³¹ Flint, p. 357.

exploitation. Within a decade, the informal empire in East Africa had been replaced by direct political annexation. The outlining of spheres of influence in 1886 and again in 1890, followed by the declaration of Protectorates over Zanzibar in 1890, Uganda in 1894 and British East Africa in 1895 were the final stages of a process that had begun in 1841.

The concern that was shown over British interests in East Africa by bringing Zanzibar under Foreign Office control in 1883 and then outlining spheres of influence with Germany in 1886, occurred long before the Salisbury government had reached any firm decision regarding the retention of Egypt. It is clear that the momentum for retaining Uganda and East Africa initially came from the commercial thrust begun in the middle of the century by British Indians, which by the 1880's had received the formal recognition of the British government. By the time that Portal recommended the dismantling of the I.B.E.A., it was obvious that Britain would have to impose some form of direct political control over East Africa. If this action was taken to secure the Uganda market in the face of the increasing threat from the Germans, then Uganda's role as one of the major factors in the retention of Egypt and hence the route to India is of secondary importance to its potential as a market for British manufacturers, and the whole question of protecting the Nile can be seen as an argument designed to effectively cloak imperial designs in East Africa.

It was only when informal empire failed in East Africa that the British government evolved a policy of direct and outright political annexation. It was the maintenance of that imperial control, and the potential of the East African and especially the Ugandan

markets that prompted the next logical step -- the construction of a railway. At the height of a great depression, a railway would not only provide new and practically guaranteed markets (without, incidentally, the necessity of constructing tariff barriers), thus alleviating the stiff competition facing the British merchant and manufacturer in other parts of the world, and even in Britain's own domestic market; and it would provide a stimulus to the beleaguered iron, steel and coal industries in Britain who had come to rely on the empire for their very solvency.

The railway seemed to satisfy all the economic and ideological demands of late Victorian England. Railways were generally accepted as the symbol of progress in the nineteenth century. They were the means of bringing civilization into the darkest corners of the world, while at the same time opening up new markets, permitting the exploitation of local raw materials, and providing an outlet for iron, steel and coal.

The process that had begun fifty years earlier with the Indian railways, the initial inclination toward government ownership of railways in the empire, was complete. In 1895, the resistance by private industry to government ownership of railways had disintegrated in the face of a general business collapse and rising competition from the new industrial powers. Even the promise of a government guarantee of interest did not entice financiers or businessmen to back the railway venture in East Africa, and government, which had become indistinguishable from the economic forces it represented, boldly arose to the task, floating annuities, maintaining a board of control to pay strict attention to expenditures, and happily anticipating

profits, as any sound business would do.

In the process, a railway was built in East Africa to open up markets, to maintain control of those markets and to provide the incentive for business. In 1895, the British government made a heavy commitment to empire and in the process, the Uganda Railway became nothing less than the focal point of British imperialism and the economic exploitation of East Africa. In 1927, Sir Edward Grigg, the Governor of Kenya, in a speech at Falmouth could proudly assert:

Kenya was, ... not conquered by force of arms. It was conquered by one of the greatest forces of our modern civilization; it was conquered by a railway. 232

²³² Quoted in Hill, p. 244.

APPENDIX A

1987 EXPORTS PICTURE (IN POUNDS STERLING)²³³

Coal	10,000,000.
Manufactured iron and steel	22,000,000.
Machinery	11,000,000.
Manufactured yarns and wool	28,500,000.
Cotton goods	71,000,000.
Part-manufactured goods	70,000,000.
	<u>212,500,000.</u>
Raw agricultural produce and raw wool	8,500,000.
Total:	<u>221,000,000.</u>

²³³ Clapham, p. 3.

APPENDIX B

ZANZIBAR TRADE PATTERN: 1887 ²³⁴

Imports from:

India	\$ 1,500,000.
England	800,000.
USA	450,000.
Germany	400,000.
France	250,000.

Exports to:

India	2,000,000.
England	1,500,000.
USA	700,000.
Germany	550,000.
France	300,000.

²³⁴ Galbraith, p. 26.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF DIRECTORS OF THE I.B.E.A.²³⁵

Sir William Mackinnon

Sir Lewis Pelly

Sir Frederick Holmwood (Consul-General in Zanzibar)

Thomas Powell Buxton

William Burdett-Coutts

Alexander L. Bruce (son-in-law of Livingstone)

James P. Hutton (concurrent director of the Royal Niger Company)

Lord Brassey (Civil Lord of the Admiralty in the former Gladstone cabinet and former director of the British North Borneo Company)

James M. Hall

Henry J. Younger (Bruce's partner in an Edinburgh brewery)

Robert Rylie

George S. Mackenzie (director of Mackinnon's steamship company)

General Sir Donald Stewart (recently retired Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army)

General Sir Arnold G. Kemball

Sir Francis de Winton (recent Administrator of the Congo Free State)

²³⁵Galbraith, p. 139.

APPENDIX D

GENERAL ACT OF BRUSSELS: MAY 9, 1890 --

ARTICLES SUPPRESSING THE SLAVE TRADE²³⁶

1. Progressive organization of the administrative, judicial, religious and military services in the African territories placed under the sovereignty or protectorate of civilized nations.

2. The gradual establishment in the interior, by the Powers to which the territories are subject, of strongly occupied stations, in such a way as to make their protective or repressive action effectively felt in the territories devastated by slave-hunting.

3. The construction of roads, and, in particular, of railways, connecting the advanced stations with the coast, and permitting easy access to inland waters, and to such of the upper courses of the rivers and streams as are broken by rapids and cataracts, in view of substituting economical and rapid means of transport for the present means of carriage by men.

4. Establishment of steam-boats on the inland navigable waters and on the lakes, supported by fortified posts established on the banks.

5. Establishment of telegraphic lines ensuring the communication of the ports and stations with the coast and the administrative centres.

6. Organization of expeditions and flying columns to keep up the communications of the stations with each other and with the coast, to support repressive action, and to ensure the security of the high-roads.

7. Restriction of the importation of firearms, at least of modern pattern, and of ammunition, throughout the entire extent of the territories infected by the slave-trade.

²³⁶Hill, pp. 46-47.

APPENDIX E

ESTIMATE OF IMPORTS, EXPORTS AND REVENUE
AT THE OPENING OF THE LINE

(in pounds sterling)²³⁷

Exports (lake districts):

Ivory	50 tons @ 2s per ton-mile	3,250.
Wheat	100 tons @ 1d per ton-mile	275.
Cheap grains	500 tons @ 0.5d per ton-mile	3,750.
Coffee, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, hides, fibre, timber, & miscellaneous	500 tons @ 2d per ton-mile	2,750.
	Total Exports:	<u>10,025.</u>
	Total Export Revenue from Sultan's lands:	6,550.
	<u>GRAND TOTAL:</u>	<u>16,575.</u>

Imports (lake districts):

Ammunition	10 tons @ 5s per ton-mile	1,600.
European stores, etc.	450 tons @ 6d per ton-mile	7,400.
Trade goods, etc.	300 tons @ 6d per ton-mile	4,950.
Railway stores	300 tons @ 1d per ton-mile	825.
Miscellaneous	50 tons @ 6d per ton-mile	825.
	Total imports:	<u>15,600.</u>
	Total Import Revenue from Sultan's lands:	3,475.
	<u>GRAND TOTAL:</u>	<u>19,075.</u>

Estimated income from passenger traffic: 25,375.

Estimated income from mail subsidy : 11,690.

Total: 37,065.

Total Revenue: 16,575.
19,075.
37,065.
72,715.

Total Expenses: 65,345. (working expenses of the line).
66,000. *(3% interest on guarantee)
131,345.

Estimated Deficit : 58,630.

²³⁷ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII, Africa, No. 4 (1893).

*Based upon projected total capital cost of £ 2,240,000.

Terms of the Contract between the East India Company, East India Railway and the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Companies -- Signed August 17 1849. 238

1. Private companies had to place privately raised capital in the hands of the East India Company and only draw on it with the Company's consent. Interest on the capital was granted at 5% for 99 years.

2. Land was provided by the East India Company for 99 years at no charge, with the Company having the right to choose the routes for the railways.

3. Rolling stock, schedules, rates and fares were subject to E.I.C. approval. Government mail was to be carried free. Army personnel and government goods were to be carried at reduced rates.

4. After operating and maintenance costs were deducted, net receipts were to be used firstly to pay the 5% interest; any surpluses beyond this amount were to be divided between the E.I.C. (to pay for guaranteed interest payments previously drawn down) and the private company. If no interest charges were outstanding, the full surplus over 5% was to go to the private company. Anything over 10% profit was to be used to reduce rates and fares.

5. After 99 years, the railway, works and buildings, would revert to the Government of India without compensation. Compensation would be received, however, for rolling stock. Private companies could, up until 6 months before the 99 year lease expired, turn the railway over to the Government for full compensation.

238 Thorne, pp. 169-172.

APPENDIX G

The following are tables giving the official expenditures and estimates on an annual basis for the construction of the Uganda Railway, presented to parliament by the Uganda Railway Committee each year from 1897 to 1902. (all figures in pounds sterling).

A. Original and Revised Estimates, 1896-97; and Estimate, 1897-98.²³⁹

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Original Estimate 1896-97.</u>	<u>Revised Estimate 1896-97.</u>	<u>Estimate 1897-98.</u>
Administration	17,000	30,000	45,000
Survey	15,000	17,000	25,000
Land	5,500	8,000	2,000
Construction	392,500	210,500	364,000
Equipment	55,000	37,000	31,500
Plant	15,000	18,500	10,500
London Invoices	-	68,500	225,000
Landing Charges	-	-	11,000
Total	500,000	387,500	714,000

B. Original and Revised Estimates, 1897-98; and Estimate, 1898-99.²⁴⁰

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Original Estimate 1897-98.</u>	<u>Revised Estimate 1897-98.</u>	<u>Estimate 1898-99.</u>
Administration	45,000	41,200	55,000
Survey	25,000	14,700	35,000
Land	2,000	4,200	2,000
Construction	364,000	312,500	392,000
Equipment	31,500	61,900	75,000
Plant	10,500	12,700	17,000
Suspense	236,000	142,600	49,000
Total	714,000	589,600	625,000

²³⁹ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII (1897), Report on the Progress of the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway, 1896-97.

²⁴⁰ Sessional Papers, Volume LX, Africa No. 6 (1898), Report on the Progress of the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway, 1898-99.

APPENDIX C
(continued)

C. Expenditure to the end of 1897-98; Original and Revised Estimates, 1898-99, and Estimate for 1899-1900. 241

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Expenditures</u> <u>Mar. 31, 1898.</u>	<u>Original</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>1898-99.</u>	<u>Revised</u> <u>Estimate</u> <u>1898-99.</u>
Administration	89,281	55,000	73,694
Survey	28,529	35,000	50,111
Land	8,961	2,000	6,026
Construction	507,843	392,000	545,000
Equipment	60,934	75,000	155,525
Plant	25,980	17,000	18,366
Suspense	267,234	49,000	149,650
Total	988,768	625,000	973,432
	<u>Probable Total</u> <u>Expenditure</u> <u>Mar. 31, 1899.</u>	<u>Estimate</u> <u>1899-1900.</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>Total to</u> <u>Mar. 31, 1900.</u>
Administration	162,981	85,000	247,981
Survey	58,640	25,000	83,640
Land	10,017	14,000	24,017
Construction	1,052,843	620,000	1,677,843
Equipment	216,489	250,000	466,489
Plant	44,346	35,000	79,346
Suspense	416,884	260,000	156,881
Total	1,962,200	769,000	2,731,200

241 Sessional Papers, Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 6 (1899), Report by the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway Committee on the Progress of the Works, 1898-99.

APPENDIX G
(continued)

D. Expenditures to March 31, 1900; Estimate for 1900-1901, and Probable Total Expenditures to March 31, 1901. 242

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1899.</u>	<u>Expenditures during 1899-1900.</u>	<u>Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1900.</u>
Administration	175,119	67,581	242,700
Survey	55,656	20,979	74,635
Land	10,910	1,227	12,137
Construction	1,193,474	779,786	1,973,260
Equipment	220,641	186,923	407,534
Plant	45,195	18,288	63,483
Suspense	511,467	42,264	269,203
Total	2,010,492	1,032,520	3,043,012

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Estimate for 1900-1901.</u>	<u>Probable Total Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1901.</u>
Administration	110,545	353,245
Survey	15,871	90,504
Land	66	12,263
Construction	809,483	2,782,743
Equipment	20,050	427,534
Plant	13,354	76,817
Suspense	26,333	243,070
Total	915,166	3,986,178

242 Sessional Papers, Volume LVI, Africa, No. 7 (1900). Report by the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway Committee on the Progress of the Works, 1899-1900.

APPENDIX C
(continued)

E. Expenditures to March 31, 1901; Estimate for 1901-1902, and Probable Total Expenditures to March 31, 1902. 243

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1900.</u>	<u>Expenditures during 1900-1901.</u>	<u>Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1901.</u>
Administration	284,780	73,790	358,570
Survey	75,432	7,221	82,653
Land	12,162	4,003	16,165
Construction	1,971,656	888,172	2,859,828
Equipment	105,151	64,862	470,013
Plant	50,289	52,006	102,295
Jetties	13,232	946	14,078
Suspense	272,108	- 60,708	211,400
TOTAL	3,084,710	1,030,292	4,115,002

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Estimate for 1901-1902.</u>	<u>Probable Total Expenditures to Mar. 31, 1902.</u>
Administration	7,000	445,570
Survey	NIL	82,653
Land	16,000	32,165
Construction	723,000	3,582,828
Equipment	4,000	474,013
Plant	6,000	108,295
Jetties	7,000	21,078
Suspense	- 142,400	69,000
TOTAL	700,600	4,815,600

²⁴³ Sessional Papers, Volume XLVIII, Africa, No. 8 (1901), Report by the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway Committee, on the Progress of the Works, 1900-1901.

APPENDIX H

Comparison of Estimates Between Captain Macdonald's Expedition of 1893 and those of the Uganda Railway Committee in 1900. 244
(all figures in pounds sterling)

<u>Heads</u>	<u>Captain Macdonald's Estimate -- 1893.</u>	<u>Railway Committee Estimate -- 1900.</u>
Surveys	39,130	80,747
Land	6,570	26,211
Formation	445,308	844,607
Bridgework	194,214	669,670
Local Crossings	-	11,710
Telegraph	32,850	57,977
Permanent Way	856,964	1,379,690
Ballast	24,183	349,199
Stations and Buildings	165,150	371,458
Plant	6,570	195,300
Rolling-Stock	131,400	400,000
Jetties	-	28,000
Lake Steamers	12,677	-
General Charges	304,984	283,431
Contingencies	-	252,000
TOTAL	2,240,000	4,950,000
	<u>per mile :</u> 5,409	<u>per mile :</u> 8,505

²⁴⁴Sessional Papers, Volume LVI, Africa, No. 4 (1900), Memoranda Relating to the Uganda Railway.

APPENDIX I

UGANDA RAILWAY FINANCING

A. Sums Issued from the Consolidated Fund for the Construction of the Uganda Railway. (figures in pounds sterling). 245.

1896-97	366,000
1897-98	595,000
1898-99	1,005,000
1899-00	1,034,000
1900-01	1,060,000
1901-02	870,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>4,930,000</u>

B. Statement Indicating Money Borrowed and Securities Created in Connection with the Construction of the Uganda Railway. 246

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Money Borrowed</u>	<u>Securities Created</u>
£ 4,930,000	1896	Annuity: £ 7,162.10s
	September 147,000	Payments: 15 Nov. 1897-15 Nov. 1925
	1899	
	January 1,549,000	Annuity: 128,322.10s
	March 270,000	Payments: 15 Nov. 1900-15 Nov. 1925
	June 290,000	
	September 240,000	
	1900	
	January 320,000	
	March 214,000	
	July 255,000	Annuity: 79,263.10s
	September 300,000	Payments: 15 Nov. 1901-15 Nov. 1925
	October 120,000	
	November 150,000	
	December 5,000	
	1901	
	January 100,000	
	February 50,000	
	March 80,000	Annuity: 46,044.4s
	May 100,000	Payments: 15 Nov. 1902-15 Nov. 1925
	July 280,000	
	October 160,000	
	1902	
	January 170,000	
<u>4,930,000</u>	<u>4,770,000</u>	

²⁴⁵ Sessional Papers, Volume XXXVI (1903), Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General Upon the Account Prepared Under the Provisions of the Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 and 1900.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

APPENDIX J

PROGRESS OF THE RAILWAY²⁴⁷

<u>Year</u>	<u>Survey Completed to Mile:</u>	<u>Rails Completed to Mile:</u>
1897	65	60
1898	263	139
1899	418	279
1900	complete	362
1901	complete	483

²⁴⁷ Sessional Papers, Volume LXII (1897).
 Volume LX, Africa, No. 8 (1898).
 Volume LXIII, Africa, No. 6 (1899).
 Volume LVI, Africa, No. 7 (1900).
 Volume XLVIII, Africa, No. 8 (1901).

Annual Reports by the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway Committee, on the Progress of the Works.

* Railhead reached the lake on December 20 1901 (a total distance from Mombasa of 583 miles), and in 1902, the Committee was able to report that both the survey and the tracks were complete.

APPENDIX K

DEATH AND ACCIDENT RATE

A. Hospital Returns to March 31 1900.²⁴⁸

<u>No. of Men Employed.</u> AVG. of 17,335	<u>Hospital Admissions</u> 22,532	<u>Discharges</u> 17,449
<u>No. Invalided</u> 3,424	<u>No. of Deaths</u> 1,164	

B. Rates as at September 30 1903.²⁴⁹

Total Number of Coolies Imported from India	-	31,983
Total Number Repatriated to India	-	16,312
Total Number Invalided and Returned to India	-	6,454
Total Number of Deaths		2,493

C. Of the European officers sent from India and Britain, one died a natural death; two were killed by wild beasts; one by natives; and one in a trolley accident. ²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Sessional Papers, Volume LVI, Africa, No. 7 (1900), Report by the Mombasa-Victoria (Uganda) Railway Committee on the Progress of the Works, 1899-1900.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in Hill, p. 240.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

APPENDIX L

Trade and Revenue Figures for the East Africa Protectorate: 1895-1905. (figures in pounds sterling) 251.

<u>Imports</u>		<u>Exports</u>	
<u>1895-96</u>	<u>1902-03</u>	<u>1896-96</u>	<u>1902-03</u>
176,933	447,032	73,764	165,080
<u>Revenue (estimated)</u>		<u>Expenditure (estimated)</u>	
<u>1902-03</u>	<u>1903-04</u>	<u>1902-03</u>	<u>1903-04</u>
92,184	99,461	337,459	355,958

251 Sessional Papers, Volume XLV, Africa, No. 9 (1903),
Memorandum Showing Position of the Four African Protectorates
Administered by the Foreign Office in June, 1904.

APPENDIX M

A. Earnings and Expenditures of the Uganda Railway for the month of March 1903. (figures in pounds sterling) ²⁵²

Coaching traffic	584 miles open	2,541
Goods traffic	584 miles open	5,109
	<u>Total:</u>	<u>7,650</u>

Corresponding Month of the Previous Year (1902).

Coaching traffic	584 miles open	1,919
Goods traffic	584 miles open	4,028
	<u>Total:</u>	<u>5,947</u>

Increase: 1,703

B. Operation of the Uganda Railway for the Year Ending March 31 1903. (figures in pounds sterling) ²⁵³

	<u>1903</u>	<u>1902</u>	<u>1901</u>
Earnings	115,313	80,799	65,805
Expenses	325,574		
Deficit	<u>210,261</u>		
Less	161,261	(representing costs incurred by the railway for its own construction and maintenance).	
Net Deficit	<u>49,000</u>		

²⁵² Kenya National Archives, The African Standard (Mombasa Times), April 21 1903.

²⁵³ Ibid., September 16 1903, and October 31 1903.

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