

1937

38344

KENYA

CO533/486

38344

SUPPLY OF BOOKS + PAINTINGS FOR GOV^T HOUSE

Previous

28166/34

Subsequent

R. 297	1/2	1/2
R. 80		10/12
R. 298		1/12
297		

38344

FILE A.

Mr. Flood

Admission

Mr. Flood

Sir. Parkinson
Mr Flood

8/4/37

I attach a copy of a letter from Lady Brooke-Popham in which she asks whether anything can be done to supply some books and pictures for Government House, Nairobi. I should have imagined myself that the supply of a certain amount of books, especially standard books dealing with Kenya and things in it, would fall within the proper furnishing of Government House, and surely the Legislative Council would be willing to include a small sum of money in their annual estimates for the purpose. As it is, they provide £500 a year for the upkeep of Government House grounds, and £400 a year for the upkeep of Government House furniture, and they could easily devote some of that to the purchase of books. Of course, the trouble would be that the distinguished visitors who infest Kenya would probably pick up the more interesting books by mistake and the upkeep would largely take the form of replacements. However, that has to be faced.

Such an annual vote would ^{not} be enough to make a start and a sum of a couple of hundred pounds could easily be spent in getting together a library, and not by any means an exhaustive library, about Kenya, its history and its game, and so forth. This would require a special vote of Council and I expect that Council would be quite ready to provide it, though they would add it into the emoluments of the Governor for propaganda purposes.

As regards pictures, I am more at a loss. I don't think the trustees of the National Gallery would agree to let any of their spares go out of this country, especially to a place in the middle of Africa where paintings would deteriorate, and if you are to

Mr. [unclear] Mr. Flood

action
Mr. [unclear]

8/14/37
Sir. [unclear]
Mr. Flood

I attach a copy of a letter from Lady Broeke-Popham in which she asks whether anything can be done to supply some books and pictures for Government House, Nairobi. I should have imagined myself that the supply of a certain amount of books, especially standard books dealing with Kenya and things in it, would fall within the proper furnishing of Government House, and surely the Legislative Council would be willing to include a small sum of money in their annual estimates for the purpose. As it is, they provide £500 a year for the upkeep of Government House grounds, and £400 a year for the upkeep of Government House furniture, and they could easily devote some of that to the purchase of books. Of course, the trouble would be that the distinguished visitors who infest Kenya would probably pick up the more interesting books by mistake and the upkeep would largely take the form of replacements. However, that has to be faced.

Such an annual vote would ^{not} be enough to make a start and a sum of a couple of hundred pounds could easily be spent in getting together a library, and not by any means an exhaustive library, about Kenya, its history and its game, and so forth. This would require a special vote of Council and I expect that Council would be quite ready to provide it, though they would add it into the emoluments of the Governor for propaganda purposes.

As regards pictures, I am more at a loss. I don't think the trustees of the National Gallery would agree to let any of their spares go out of this country, especially to a place in the middle of Africa where paintings would deteriorate, and if you are to get

get good pictures, the Legislative Council would very properly object to voting the necessary money. The only thing I can see as a solution is voluntary gifts, and perhaps the artistic element in the population of Kenya would contribute selected pictures for the beautification of Government House. Perhaps, also, retiring Governors might be willing to present odd bits of picture or odd books to Government House in the same way as the retiring Lord Mayor presents a piece of gold plate to the City. But that perhaps is too much to expect.

J.S.W. Flood
1.11.37.

I can add nothing.

W. B. Fisher
6/11

hr 9

J. J. J. J.
4/11

2 To Lady Brooke-Popham (Amsd) - - - 1.11.37

I told Lady Brooke-Popham that I would consult authority and let her have a further reply in due course. In my letter I suggested that Council might agree to providing a sum for the purchase of books, and as regards the pictures, I also undertook to find out whether anything can be done. So far as I can see there is no way of finding a collection of books which we could send out and the only thing to do is to get a vote provided for the purchase

of the necessary volumes which perhaps Lady Brooke-Popham could supervise when she comes to England next year. As regards getting any spare pictures I suggest that perhaps the Secretary of State would be willing to explore the possibility in a personal talk with the First Commissioner of Works or by a semi-official letter. I am fairly sure, however, that nothing will come of it, since it is one thing to lend pictures to hang on the walls of this Office, and quite another to let them go abroad.

J.S.W. Flood

5.11.1937

W. B. Fisher
5.11.37

Subject to this last point, I can see nothing but a vote of Council for pictures - all in books. But it is a serious responsibility to have pictures for other people to look at.

Dr. G. J. J. J.

Sec. of State

If books are wanted, they will have to be bought. A large number in Kenya will have to provide the money in one way or another as to pictures, if anyone can help with cash or book suggestions, it will be yourself. I have no

useful suggestion to make.

and

5.11.37

I am afraid the Act
that received the Royal
Assent in April 1935
limits the power of
Trustees of Galleries &
Museums in this country
to lending to "Embassies".
It does not even include
legations, and the question
of that clause was raised
in committee but with
no hope of getting
such permission through
Parliament. I regret
that I can do nothing
on account of this statutory bar.

274 8.11.37

3. To Lady Brooke-Poplar (2/0) (further) (19/11/37)

700
120/23

Downing Street,

November, 1937.

Dear Lady Brooke-Popham,

In continuance of my letter of the 1st of ^{Nov} September about books and pictures for Government House I now write to say that I have consulted everybody whom I can and, as regards books, the only thing we can think of is that the Legislative Council should be invited to make some provision for the purchase of books in their annual vote for the upkeep of Government House. If they do and if they put in a reasonably substantial sum to start it (say £200 or so), you can take it that there will be no objection on the part of the Secretary of State from this end. Then a small annual vote for books which could go into the ordinary upkeep would be quite in order. Books could then be purchased through the Crown Agents like other stores and our Librarian would be ready to assist in any way possible. I am afraid I can suggest nothing better as regards books unless you are able to get

hold

LADY BROOKE-POPHAM.

hold of some private benefactions. Sometimes when a Governor or ex-Governor departs this world his representatives turn over the library to the Colonies where he has served. Unfortunately, I don't think any of your predecessors in Kenya would have much of a library except Sir Edward Grigg and there is no use waiting for his departure to try to get his books. Sir Hugh Clifford used to go from colony to colony with enough books of his own to fill the walls of two good-sized rooms, but then he was an exception to all rules.

As regards pictures I thought the best thing I could do would be to consult the Secretary of State himself, as he knows more about it personally than anyone else. He tells me that under the Act of Parliament which allows pictures to be loaned by Trustees of Galleries in this country to embassies abroad, the power of loan is very confined. It does not include legations or ministries, but only embassies. The question of including Government Houses was raised when the

Bill

Bill was in Committee and rejected, and

Mr. Ormsby Gore says there is absolutely no hope of getting an amendment through Parliament which would be necessary. He very greatly regrets this state of affairs, but says that he can do absolutely nothing in face of what happened when the Bill was under discussion. So I am afraid that we are broken reeds in this connection. It has occurred to me that Lord Francis Scott might be able to get his royal niece, the Duchess of Gloucester, to produce one or two of her paintings of Kenya about which so much is written, which could be put on the walls of Government House, but that suggestion is perhaps more mischievous than practical.

With regard to Mr. East's pictures, I have a sort of notion that I saw in the paper the other day that some of his, which had been thought highly of a few years ago, were put up for sale at Christie's and went for about £5 each, but that is only

7

only a vague recollection and it may have been some other artist and it may not have been Christie's. Anyhow, you are quite right not to think of buying them.

I had little Mrs. Martin Johnson in to see me the other day and I can say that you and your husband have certainly acquired one devoted follower if you never get another. She was full of delight at the kindness which she had received from both of you and could not say too much.

Yours sincerely,

DOWNING STREET.

1st November, 1937.

Dear Lady Brooke-Popham.

Thank you very much for your letter of the 22nd of October, from which I am glad to see that you and your husband are happy in Kenya though I fear that you have about as much work as is good for any two people, if not for any six.

You have set me a fearful puzzle with regard to books and pictures for Government House, and I will have to consult various authorities and see what can happen. I quite agree that Government House, Nairobi, should be furnished with something in the nature of a good library of standard books of reference about Kenya, but the difficulty is where to get them from and who is to pay. If the Legislative Council agreed to provide a small sum annually for the purchase of some books as part of the furniture of Government House, I do not think there would be any objection. Indeed, I should regard it as just

88

LADY BROOKE-POPHAM.

as much a necessity as the usual crockery. However, there is an enormous library about Venys and it will be an expensive matter to get a good lot together.

As regards pictures, I do not know what to say.

It is the case that some pictures are lent from the National Gallery to various Government departments. We have got quite a lot in this office on loan, but they are of a dullness and badness and foul taste that has to be seen to be believed. I am not sure, however, whether the trustees of the Galleries would agree to letting any pictures go out of England. Apart from other difficulties, there is always the risk of deterioration in foreign climates. We have had a lot of trouble over the State portraits of our Kings and Queens which have required a lot of expensive restoration in various parts of the world, and it would be risky to let a valuable old master escape into the tropics. However, I will see what we can do about that, though I fear it will not be too encouraging. You can trust Mr. Ormsby Gore to do the best he can, so it won't be for want of trying.

I will write further when I am able to
find something out.

Yours sincerely,

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
KENYA.

22nd October, 1937.

Dear Mr. Flood,

Sir John Maffey, who was staying with us a little while ago, suggested that I wrote to you for help and advice. He told me that you would not be taking up your new appointment just yet and would still be at the Colonial Office.

We are most anxious to collect a few books for Government House here. There is not a book in the place and so many people come to stay here for a few days before going up country ask for books on game and fishing and the country generally. I feel sure that there must be libraries in other Government Houses, but I do not know to whom to apply or where to write and I feel that perhaps you may be able to tell me.

It seems to me that we ought to have all the latest books on Kenya itself, on fishing, shooting and big game, as well as on the more serious problems of the Colony. Government House at Mombasa is also devoid of books, but I don't feel that for the moment it matters so much there. I am more keen that we should get a few standard works here.

Another point. - In this colossal house there are three pictures (landscapes) which were lent to Government House by the artist (Mr. Alfred East) - He is now deceased and his widow demands the return of the pictures or the purchase of same for £700 each. We have refused to buy them as they are incredibly bad!! I feel that there should be a few pictures as part of the furnishing of Government House and for its general dignity and I have written to Sir Philip Sassoon about this, hoping that he may be able to unearth a few from the archives of the Tate or National Gallery! If you can think of anyone else who might possibly help over this, perhaps you would advise me about this too.

We are both happy beyond words, loving the country, and finding the job intensely interesting which makes/

I saw that some of his letters about £5 each at a sale!

J.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
KENYA.

- 2 -

makes for a full life. I only hope that H.E. will stay the course. He is working much too hard.

I do hope you are pleased with your new appointment, but it is sad to think that I shall not be able to bombard you when I come home next year.

Yours sincerely,

Spencer Brooke-Pollock