

1924

KENYA

523

C.O.
30773
30 JUN 24

FROM

Watcham
P. C.

DATE

29th June 1924

FOR CIRCULATION :-

Mr.
Mr.
Mr.

SKEN

development of
Coastal Hinterland

Inst. U.S. of S.

S. W. ...
8/VI/24

Part U.S. of S.

Part U.S. of S.

Sec. of State.

Submits proposals
for ... area by
means of a ...
the ... and ...

Previous Paper

See
See 10/1/24
Memo ...

MINUTES

Mr. Watcham is one of the pioneers of Kenya
Settlement (1897) and a very interesting man,
though I fear his scheme is beyond realisation.

Two preliminary points:-

(1) Development of the Coast Strip proper.

Mr. Watcham says that the natives are leaving the
coast strip for the more attractive conditions
the highlands. Press cutting 302 in Gov/1690
shows that there has been a report, which was
published considerably before February; but we
have not got it yet. I am afraid we must again
ask the Governor to supply us with copies of local
Government publications in advance of his sending
his comments. *Have written to Mr. ... 26/7*

(2) Indians Lowlands Settlement.

The maps which accompanied the scheme are
with the India Office. I have marked roughly the
position of the two areas on the large map below.

Subsequent Paper

See Govt
49

The

report is not altogether clear, as he ^{that} says "there is infinitely more land than water so that concessions already given out are hardly likely to be disturbed." He means, no doubt, that there is more water than existing concessions require, and so much land that it is not a question of what is available but of what can be watered.

The ~~above~~ ^{whole} matter is one of very great interest, and one would like to get an engineer's views right away, but we are up against our usual question of population. Mr. Watcham's solution is Indian agriculturists, working on their own account, to which I personally have no objection if they would come. The business side he would run on Sudan Plantations Syndicate lines (Mr. Harrison instances the ~~Uganda~~ ^{Kapsara} Cotton Company, which is much the same thing). Something of the kind would be essential, but it is impossible to forget the Parliamentary criticism in the cases quoted.

We must wait for the progress of the Indian scheme? There are large (will be larger) irrigation tracts in India itself and we should have to organize on the lines found suitable there.

I have received with some

irritation

The Teavo area is outside the benefit of Mr. Watcham's scheme. The Tana area would benefit by his idea of controlling the flooding of the river districts.

As regards irrigation, Mr. Watcham claims too much in his second paragraph. The position of his dam rules out all land above the 300 metre contour on the map. But ~~it~~ ^{it} is big enough in all conscience. It is useless for amateurs to consider how much land, apart from the flood area, could be served by the Tana water, but from Hameye to the Uganda Railway would be more than 200 miles and the loss by percolation and evaporation would be enormous.

As regards control of flood water, a dam is required. Even Mr. Watcham says on page (2)

"(2). At present it is said is that it is never flooded and does not get enough water." It is one thing to turn excess water out of the river; it is quite another to store water against scarcity.

The question has been dealt with by Mr. Harrison, Deputy Director of Agriculture, in the last enclosure to Gov. 1909 (Tana area), in which ~~he~~ ^{he} says he will water "impounding wells near (Mount) Kenya" but his report

Mr. Waltham; departure has
removed the possibility of
app. 325

Mr. Calder's case, in view that he
may know

Noted
JH
7.8.24

- (1) that if the Commission wish
to consider the development of the
Love Lane, Mr. Waltham is
available.
- (2) that if he may volunteer his help.
- (3) that his desire to help is not
diminished.

Yours truly
G.A.
26.7.24. am

Citation

London
 c/o The Standard Bank
 of S. Africa
 10. Clements Lane
 17/7/24

cc Mr^r Bottomley.

Dear Sir,
 I beg to say many thanks for your
 letter of the 14th July in reply to mine of the
 1st July. My only chance then lies with
 your assistance & I can render the
 mission about to be sent to Kenya
 Colony; in connection with the postal
 affairs of that country, to bring before them
 the possibilities of the Zava river scheme.
 I would from you to them that my
 services will be at all times available
 & of all charges to the best of my
 power, would pave the way & am
 to some recognition.

I leave London on the 24th of this month
 to Kenia via South Africa;

I remain with best wishes

Yours sincerely
 J. Bottomley

R

ack^d 47 527

111, Cromwell Road,
LONDON

S.W.

29th June, 1924.

W. C. Bottomley Esq., C.B.E.,
Colonial Office,
DOWNING STREET
S.W.

C.O.
30773
30 JUN 24

Dear Sir,

Referring to our conversation concerning the development of the coastal belt of Kenya Colony, I have the honour to submit my suggestion in writing for your consideration with a few details regarding locality, area, people etc.

I suggest using the Tana River flood water to irrigate the area extending from the Tana Valley on the North as far as the Uganda Railway or further on the south and from the sea shore on the East to as far as Voi railway station or further on the West.

The Tana river is really the only stream in Kenya that flows into the sea. It is navigable for light draught steamers drawing two feet of water for nearly 400 miles all the year round. Twice a year the river floods its banks, rising as much as 13 feet.

During these floods a huge quantity of decayed leaf mould is brought down by the river and deposited on the land for (on a rough estimate) an average width of five miles on either bank.

The river before the floods has about 8 feet of water; in some places more, in others less according to the width and a current of

about 5 knots an hour.

I would erect a dam somewhere about Hameye where the rapids start and have gates to control the water flowing both into the old channel and the proposed canal which would lead from this dam.

The rainfall over the area which it is proposed to irrigate is about 26 inches a year. The heaviest fall being in the month of May. The controlling of the floods would serve a double purpose:

(1) The flood water would be utilized to irrigate a very large area of land which to-day although suitable in many ways for the production of rice, cotton and sugar cane on a large scale is lying dormant for the want of water.

(2) It would ensure the natives now on the river reaping what they planted. At present if a crop is planted it is either flooded out or does not get enough water.

Inhabitants. The whole of this vast area is to-day uninhabited, the few wandering Gallas are not taken into consideration; the natives living along the coast have such a hard time with bad water to drink and poor soil to cultivate that they are fast leaving the coast and settling down in more suitable land for them to cultivate. Thousands of these people would I am convinced return and take up land along the canal to cultivate if sufficient inducement were offered to them. Indians of the farming communities of India would also be available under certain conditions. I would suggest that the land on either side of the canal be reserved entirely for natives and Indians. Companies and private individuals if they wanted it could be given areas along the banks of the Tana river where, when the dam is erected,

and the floods controlled large areas will become available for sugar cultivation.

Climate. The only month when it is really warm is February before the heavy rains start. The rest of the year is pleasant and during July, August and September it is delightful and it is certainly not unhealthy. Five years' residence under very trying circumstances with no quinine and no fever should be sufficient - as a test. The natives living on the river never suffer from fever and are physically a most magnificent lot of men. The area approximately to be irrigated will be a million acres and the area along the banks of the Tana river where with the controlling of the floods planting will be a surer thing, probably double this figure.

Any further information you may require I shall be very glad to supply.

Yours faithfully,

J. B. Matheson

*Yours
L. B.*

If they do then they can easily satisfy me by giving me back the area I claimed adjacent to my own farm and which case I took to Court and lost. The Judge (Sir Robert Hamilton) who tried the case, stated that although I had no legal right to the land he thought I had a moral one, as I had cultivated it for years, built a house on it and made roads, etc. under the firm conviction that it belonged to me. If the land today was in other hands, but the Government's or if it was in any way utilized I would not ask for it, but it is not. It is today just a piece of waste land occupied by a handful of the worst characters in and around Nairobi who are a constant source of trouble to the Police.

After being the first man to take up land for the sole purpose of making a home in Kenya all I possess today is 150 acres there. The thought is not pleasant. I could say very much more, but no good is served by referring to the old bad days - and I leave my case in your hands to help me as I know you will if you can.

Yours truly,

P. E. M. K. K. K.

If they do then they can easily satisfy me by giving me back the area I claimed adjacent to my own farm and which case I took to Court and lost. The Judge (Sir Robert Hamilton) who tried the case, stated that although I had no legal right to the land he thought I had a moral one, as I had cultivated it for years, built a house on it and made roads, etc. under the firm conviction that it belonged to me. If the land today was in other hands, but the Government's or if it was in any way utilized I would not ask for it, but it is not. It is today just a piece of waste land occupied by a handful of the worst characters in and around Nairobi who are a constant source of trouble to the Police.

After being the first man to take up land for the sole purpose of making a home in Kenia all I possess today is 180 acres there. The thought is not pleasant. I could say very much more, but no good is served by referring to the old bad days - and I leave my case in your hands to help me as I know you will if you can.

Yours truly,

P. E. K. K. K.

of Mr. Bottomley
design.

W. 30773/24 Kenya.

DRAFT.



~~14~~ 14 July 1924

Witcham, Esqre.

Dear Mr. Witcham

MINUTE.

Mr. Peet 10.7.24

Mr. Bottomley 14.7

Mr.

Sir G. Davis

Sir G. Grindle

Sir H. Read

Sir J. Masterton Smith

Lord Arnold

Mr. Thomas

I have received your
further letter of July 3rd in

continuation of your earlier

letter about the utilization

of Tana flood water.

I see you refer to the water
possibility of re-opening

the question of your claim

to land adjacent to your
^{near Nairobi}
farm; but I am afraid