

1925

KENYA

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G. DENHAM.

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DATE

27th June 1925.

CIRCULATION:—

Mr.

Mr.

*Mr. G. Denham 11.8.25*

Asst. U.S. of S.

*W. Stanley*

Perm. U.S. of S.

Part. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

NATIVE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DEPOT, KABETE.

Fwd report on - by Director of Public Works. Cost of permanent buildings and further development estimated at £15,000 and proposals will be put before Leg. Council allocating this amount from £125,000 earmarked in future Col. Loan for educational objects.

Previous Paper

*Gov. 37308/24*

MINUTES

*pl see para: 5 "item 1" of Gov/18894/25. There is no difficulty in complying, and we are not used for reply.*

*The question is whether the Education Com. should be told (see on 37308/24) and whether they would wish to see plans before the work is put in hand.*

*W.S. 7.8.25*

Subsequent Paper

*Gov 5289 (Amis) 26 W/X 1925 (Principal)*

*Put by ✓*

Mr. Bokorley.

I do not think the Committee can  
advise on this matter. As far as 'staff' is  
concerned the Ctu has not yet come to  
definite conclusions and has no doubt  
the Kenya Govt. can find the right man.  
As far as the program concerned the  
Committee stated that they do not feel  
competent to advise on this point (ref.  
Acornota College).

I should like to have the for union dispute  
804 20 from 1928 and the most interesting  
enclosure duplicated for circulation.

Hammisch.

11. 8. 25

Relat  
enclosure  
page

1. 27  
Hammisch

Dispatch duplicated and circulation  
to members of Advisory Ctu

Hammisch  
26. 9. 25

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C. O.  
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GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
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KENYA

KENYA  
No.804.



27th June, 1925.

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No.876 of the 8th July, 1924, and your acknowledgement No.1193 of the 24th November, 1924, I have the honour to forward for your information a Report which was made at my request on the Kabete Industrial Training Depot by the Director of Public Works. I specially selected Mr. Sikes to make these investigations as he has always interested himself in the industrial training of natives and has been critical of the methods hitherto adopted in this Colony for such training.

2. As you will see from the Report, the Director of Public Works has formed a distinctly favourable opinion of the work being done at Kabete. The East Africa Commission visited this Training school and I am glad to note from their Report, page 176, that they considered that it "seemed to be proceeding upon the soundest possible lines". I feel sure they will be glad to learn that their opinion appears to be confirmed by the work now being done at this Depot. I have visited this school on many occasions and it has been the object of the Director of Education and myself to ensure that the work done there is of the most practical nature. It is therefore a matter of satisfaction to find that the opinion expressed by the Commission and by the Director of Public Works justifies the hope that this institution when it has been

Report.  
37308

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL L. C. M. S. AMERY, P.C., M.P.,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,  
DOWNING STREET - LONDON, S.W.

74A

been further developed and when permanent buildings have been erected will serve as a model Training School for the African in industrial work.

3. The cost of buildings and equipment adequate for such a School, capable of accommodating 300 pupils, is estimated approximately at £15,000, and in accordance with my despatch No.291 of the 9th March last, it is my intention to cause to be introduced into Legislative Council at its next Session, a resolution allocating for the Kabete Depot that amount from the £125,000 earmarked in the future Colonial Loan for educational objects (vide your Confidential despatch of 26th January, 1925). In regard to the remainder, £30,000, I am awaiting the recommendations of the Indian and Arab Advisory Committees before submitting my proposals.

11 CA  
1-2894/25

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

ACTING GOVERNOR.

6th June, 1925.

Ref.No.1737

The Hon.the Ag.Colonial Secretary,

Nairobi.

174

NATIVE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DEPOT, KABETE.  
 Ref:year No.S/A.21202/12/102 dated 5-5-25.  
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I visited Kabete Industrial Training Depot on the morning of 22-5-25 in company with the Hon.the Director of Education. ~~Mr. Col Watkins was not present.~~

2. Native industrial education in this Colony is a matter of supreme importance. I visited the institution prepared to criticize as I had not been there before, and I believed that the methods of training which were in operation, and which were proposed for the future, were not ones which I could support. I was agreeably surprised to note from my conversation with the Director of Education and Mr. Stubbs and from my observation on site that the methods of training now in operation and those proposed for the future were ones which were almost entirely in accord with my opinions.

3. Before proceeding to deal with certain details on which I propose to make recommendations it may be as well to allude to certain fundamental principles which past experience indicates are liable to be lost sight of in the industrial training of Natives in this Colony.

- (1) In England a youth who desires to become a craftsman has to undergo an apprenticeship of five years as a minimum. Very frequently the youth has to serve a further period up to 2 or 3 years as "improver" after his apprenticeship is finished and during his last

year would receive some 75% of the wages of a skilled artisan. During the whole of his training, the youth is working by the side of skilled artisans. The necessity for working against time and turning out work accurately, efficiently and rapidly is learnt from the beginning. It is this workshop "atmosphere" which is so important, and the more this "atmosphere" can be engendered in a school the more likely will the apprentices be skilled craftsmen on completion of their indentures. Up to recently the maximum period of apprenticeship was 3 years. This is entirely inadequate even for an European who naturally starts better equipped. Whether 5 years will be sufficient for an African remains to be seen and will be largely dependent on the nature of the training and the degree to which the conditions approximate to those prevailing in workshops and on works. The best "school" for an artisan is the workshop, and a training establishment in this Colony is only justifiable because adequate facilities for proper workshop training do not exist. The artisans turned out in the past after only a 3 years course cannot be regarded in any way as skilled craftsmen although they have probably all been able to obtain employment on farms, etc., where even partially trained carpenters are in demand.

- (2) What is required is skilled journeymen - not master craftsmen. Continuous training in the use of tools so that rapid and proficient execution of work can be performed automatically is the requirement. It is not necessary for the journeyman to be able to read, write, calculate, draw and set out work. This is the

province of the master craftsman or foreman. The only ~~essential~~ for the journeyman in this respect is ability to read the feet rule and tape with precision. A knowledge of simple arithmetic and of orthographic and perspective drawing will help him, but the all-important thing is ability to use his tools rapidly and efficiently. The master craftsmen who are only required in small numbers will materialise as men of superior intelligence amongst the trained and skilled workmen who equip themselves for this function by further training. Consequently all the hours of the working day should be spent in acquiring knowledge of the craft and proficiency in the use of the various tools, for it is only by continuous practice that this can be achieved.

- (3) It is unfortunate that efforts made to produce skilled Native artisans in this Colony have been unsuccessful in the past. The result of this has been that the cost of the execution of work by artisan labour is extremely high and the work executed is indifferent; for the majority of Indian artisans in the labour market of this Colony cannot be regarded as skilled craftsmen, although they can command the wages <sup>approaching those</sup> which skilled craftsmen obtain in England. The chief reasons why efforts made in the past have been unsuccessful are three in number, namely:- (1) the inadequacy of the period of training (2) the attempt to teach a number of extraneous subjects at the same time instead of concentrating on the acquisition of proficiency in the craft (3) the presence of the "school atmosphere" in contradistinction to the "workshop or works atmosphere". I understand that in Nyasaland Native carpenters (who have largely been

trained in the F.W.D. workshops in Zomba and have not had school training) are more efficient than the majority of Indian carpenters of this Colony and receive wages at the rate of Sh.35/- per month as against Sh.200/- to Sh.250/-<sup>per month</sup> paid to Indian carpenters here.

4. (1) I understand that the object of the Training Establishment at Mabele is to turn out skilled craftsmen in the various trades. I understand that there are 57 apprentices now (22 carpenters, 9 smiths, 26 masons), of whom 12 have had previous training, some at Mission Schools and some at Education Department Technical Schools. I am informed that a total number of 300 is aimed at in the future. I learn that the term of indenture will ordinarily be 5 years, but that if an applicant has had previous training this may be reduced by a period, of not more than one year, which is determined by a practical examination in the craft to which he is about to be apprenticed. I note that the existing buildings are of temporary type and the carpenter's shop and smithy are even now badly crowded. I see that it is the intention to construct permanent buildings and that a lay out plan has been prepared together with a working plan for a dormitory. I observe that the wages paid to apprentices are proposed to be Sh.5/- per month less Sh.1/- hut tax for the first year, varying up to Sh.11/- per month less Sh.1/- hut tax in the fifth year and that the cost of training appears to be working out at about 2.25 per apprentice per annum at present. I note that the apprentices are chiefly employed on making joinery <sup>and</sup> fittings,



dressing stone, etc., for a few new buildings which are urgently required and that it is intended to employ them on all the new structures. I am told that no syllabus has been prepared as it is realized that the best training will be the actual construction of the buildings and afterwards the manufacture of articles of utility and the construction of buildings for other purposes, so as to approximate as closely as possible to the conditions under which they will work when they become craftsmen. I visited the workshops and inspected the work. I formed the opinion that a start had been made on sound lines and that if carried on in accordance with the intentions expressed to me the institution had every prospect of success.

- (2) I understand that the area of the present plot is 12½ acres and that 2½ acres in addition are being procured. I inspected the layout plan for the permanent establishment and learn that a contour survey is now about to be made. The layout appears to have been carefully thought out, but requires reexamination after the contour plan has been prepared. The contour survey should have been done before the final layout plan was prepared.

#### Recommendations.

- (1) I note that the stone being used is a lava much harder than the Nairobi freestone, similar to (though not identical with) the one used in the Kisumu buildings. It is also certainly the only easily accessible stone fact of its being harder than the building material most used in this country is probably not advantageous, as the very important practical

tools must be kept sharp and be properly tempered will receive more prominence. Execution will, however, be slower. It will be advantageous to procure occasionally some of the Nairobi freestone from the quarry on the road between the Laboratory and Reformatory in order that the apprentices may have diversity in training and realise the differences in the dressing qualities of stone.

(2) Painting and Plumbing.

It is observed that it is intended to construct three workshops, each 60' x 30', for carpentry (and joinery), masonry and smithy respectively. I am of the opinion that apprentices should be trained in painting and plumbing also. In respect of painting, the ordinary Indian "painter" is notoriously indifferent. A few who are usually designated "signwriters" are good, but the ordinary painter knows neither how to mix nor apply his paint, much less to practice the more refined expressions of the craft. In consequence most decorative work in this Colony is exceptionally bad. The ordinary Native "painter" is usually much worse, but some very good Native painters have been trained by Mr. George Blowers. There is a great demand for good painters. With the advance of improved sanitation in the towns the demand for proficient plumbers will increase; there is much plumbing work in connection with buildings with regard to flashings, gutters, lead or zinc flats, etc., apart altogether from water and sanitary fittings. I therefore advocate either the provision of facilities at Kabete for teaching these trades or alternatively the

encouragement of apprenticeship to approved contractors. A combination of both methods might prove the most satisfactory. It is very important, however, that an effort should be made to produce good African painters and plumbers.

(3) The construction of the permanent buildings will form an excellent training for the apprentices now indentured. It is considered that as much variety as possible should be introduced in respect of the different units. For instance in one building a 2 inch concrete slab floor might be used, in another a tiled floor, in a third a concrete mass floor. In one the walls might be built of masonry, in another of mass concrete, in a third of concrete blocks, and in a fourth of brickwork. In the same way the roof of one might be of wood and iron, of another wood and asbestos tiles, in another wood and fibrous tiles, in another wood and local tiles, while another might have steel trusses instead of wood trusses. The layout plan and drawings of buildings should receive the approval of the Director of Public Works and the Chief Sanitation Officer before work is undertaken.

(4) As far as possible the institution should buy business lines and articles such as furniture at a price which will cover the cost of purchase plus all administrative and overhead charges (inclusive of interest on capital, as well as of premises and land, depreciation, and other charges therewith, plus 10% profit. Gangs of workers should be available under Native supervision for the execution of work in the neighbourhood for Government or private persons.

similar lines. It is only by the adoption of such methods that the "atmosphere" of works and workshops can be engendered.

(5) It is considered that there should be one European instructor for each trade and that his chief duty should be to work with the apprentices. By this means the environment of the workshop and of works (as apart from the scholastic atmosphere), where the apprentices are continually working beside skilled men, could be approached. Store, accounts and correspondence clerks will be required eventually. The Chief Technical Instructor should be left as free as possible for organisation and administration, evening lectures, etc.

) It is thought that all the working hours of the week should be occupied by instruction (which would include explanations of reasons) and practice in the trade. Instruction in simple arithmetic and elementary drawing may be desirable, but it is thought that not more than a couple of hours a week at most should be spared for this out of working hours. Instruction in such subjects as hygiene should, it is considered, take the form of evening lectures.

) It is questionable whether industrial training should be carried on in the English or the Swahili language. They are both foreign languages to the Native, and of the two English is the more comprehensive. Africans will learn English to a considerable extent whether taught it or not. The English language has to be used for expressing technical terms and processes. All detribalised Natives pick up the upcountry variety of the

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11  
Swahili language without being taught it, but  
precise Swahili is as foreign to them as English.

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(Sd) J. L. SIKES.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.

No. 1738

The Hon. the Director of Education,  
Nairobi.

Copy for information.

J. L. SIKES.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.  
6th June, 1925.

/MH.