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NAIROBI STREET LIGHTING

The Nairobi Municipal Committee have requested that the Govt will make an annual contribution towards the cost. Executive Council consider some contribution should be made. Is making enquiries before making any recommendation as to amount. Raises question of interest on the advance of £1600 made to the Municipality and asks also if decision to treat this amount as an advance cannot be reconsidered.

W. Soutter

I do not think that we can look at this proposal. I have never heard of any municipality where such a thing is done. The usual practice is for the Government to pay to the municipality a lump sum in lieu of rates in consideration for services rendered. It is now proposed, see Minutes on 19768 - 11 *(in bundle files)* that the Government of the East Africa Protectorate should make to the Municipality of Nairobi a fixed annual grant proportionate to the financial burdens of which the Government is relieved by the Municipality. In fixing the amount of the annual grant such service as lighting the streets in the front of Government buildings should be taken into account, but I submit that no separate subsidy should be made on account of lighting.

As regards the repayment of the cost of lighting generally, I should have thought that this should have been met out of the general rates (which should be increased if necessary

subsequent Paper

Read

I have printed these papers for you had no opportunity of discussing the in Gria with Sir P. Girouard. It would seem that distribution of these papers will have to wait until the arrangements have been completed. As to them, Mr. Tannock may be able to give you some information on Thursday.

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C. O.
17/113
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

May 6th 1912.

No. 120

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have been approached by the Nairobi Municipal Committee with a request that the Government will make some annual contribution to the cost of lighting the streets of the township.

2. The total cost for lighting is at present £864 per annum, and the proportion payable by us, based on the frontage of Government property abutting on the lighted streets, would amount to £240 per annum.

3. The Executive Council, to whom I have referred the matter, is unanimously of the opinion that it is only right and proper that some contribution should be made in respect of such property.

4. At present nothing is paid directly towards the cost of lighting by any residents, the cost being partly defrayed from Municipal revenue and partly from accumulated balances in the hands of the Committee. The latter have

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

now

LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

now represented that they can no longer afford to draw on their balances in order to make good the deficit on their annual budget, caused to a great extent by the cost of lighting the town, and wish to impose a lighting rate on all non-official landowners or residents. They do not however feel justified in calling upon the non-officials to contribute unless some grant is made by Government in respect of the large amount of property which it owns within the township limits.

5. I am not satisfied that the figure of £240, which has been suggested by an inter-departmental committee as a fair subsidy from Government, is justified, and I am therefore calling for additional information before submitting a definite recommendation as to the amount to be contributed. This information, which will in all probability lead to a recommendation based on the assessment of the town after deducting the value of Government offices and land reserved for similar purposes, may take some little time to elucidate, and I am therefore submitting for your consideration the general question as to whether or not Government should find part of the cost of lighting Nairobi.

6. In connection with this question I have the honour to refer to your despatch No. 632 of October 28th 1911 in which reference is made to the £1,600 originally advanced by the Government for the cost of installation. I note that the Treasury

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Treasury request that interest may be paid by the Municipality on any outstanding portion of this £1,600 advance. I would point out that no previous reference was made to the payment of interest by the Municipality and when the proposal was submitted to that body it was merely stated that the £1,600 would be considered to be an advance to them. I trust therefore that the question of interest may be waived.

7. With reference to the capital outlay also it appears to me that the £1,600 referred to represents a very small proportion of the capital expenditure undertaken by Government within the township of Nairobi. Roads, drainage and other public works have hitherto been defrayed from the Public Works Vote, and there has been no question of the expenditure involved being refunded when the Municipality becomes self-supporting. I would ^{ask} therefore whether the decision to treat the cost of installation as an advance cannot be re-considered.

8. The township cannot at present be deemed self-supporting, although it receives no direct contribution from Government. The Police, Town Magistrate, Medical Officer of Health, and other officials whose salaries might fairly be considered a charge upon Municipal funds, are, and must for some time continue to be, paid by Government. Similarly, the maintenance of roads and other public works are charged against the Protectorate Budget as a whole.

9. I do not think it will be possible in the near

near future to impose rates within the township which would be sufficient to cover all legitimate Municipal expenditure. The township is, as you are aware, scattered over a very large area in proportion to the number of the inhabitants, and the cost of administration is therefore very high. I think that for some years to come the best we can hope for is that inhabitants of the township will be able to contribute to a certain extent, in the form of rates or special assessments, to the cost of the Municipality, and that the Government to some extent will contribute a portion of the cost of the same, in a different manner. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Yours truly,
 J. H. B. B. B.

Your humble, obedient servant,

ACTING GOVERNOR.

