

1925

KENYA

561

15407

REC'D
REC 3 APR 25

FROM
A. G. DENHAM.

249

DATE

26th February 1925.

FOR CIRCULATION

Mr. *Bush*

Mr.

Mr. *Bellamy*

Col. U.S. of S.

Mr. Strickland

Perm. U.S. of S.

Part. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State

NAIROBI RATING ORDINANCE.

Refer to his tel No 83 of 21st February and now fwsd copy of judgment of Supreme Court. Is advised that further legislation is unnecessary. Hopeful that reconstitution of Municipal Council will result in abandonment by Indians of their refusal to pay rates.

Previous Paper

Staff 9022

MINUTES

I spoke to you. The minutes are not yet complete.

The Supreme Court has held that an order under section 9 cannot be made ex parte & without proof. We may welcome this decision since the possibility of a calmer interpretation must have been viewed with some concern.

The Court's decision shows the Indian grievance makes it unnecessary to take up the point at all. It is my minute in 8253. I think this seems reasonable by the

22 APR 1925
Mem. d. Conf.

Subsequent Paper

O.C. 26212

Ordinance should not now be sanctioned.

It is in my minute (second page)

in 8733 because the question of the provisions
but no appeals shall be from the High Courts
but the Supreme Court has however made it clear
that if legislative act without jurisdiction the
proceedings will be quashed: & the Court might
not be left - a power of appeal might be allowed
in the civil cases & endless cases.

Instead of the action for

8733

act 8733, 8490

in this interpretation in section 2(1) - the words
in 8733f) observe act at A - the words
page say that in these cases the Court has no
reason why, in the absence of any decision
of the Court, amendments are not desirable, the
order should not be allowed to remain in operation
that accordingly the bill will not be advised
financially to pass & disallowance.

JNT 73/4/12

Don't know how
printed all the
have printed
over papers
sent 6/4

KENYA

No 249.



15407

565 J.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
KENYA

3 APR 25

26th February, 1925.

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 83 of 21st February on the subject of the Nairobi (Rating of Unimproved Site Values Tax) Amendment Ordinance, No. XIII of 1924, I have the honour to transmit for your information, a copy of the judgment of the Supreme Court, as reported in the Press, to which reference was made in my above quoted telegram.

2. I am advised that further legislation as a result of this judgment is unnecessary as the Supreme Court has only held that the Nairobi Corporation cannot proceed without proof and ex parte; and I consider that no further action should be taken by Government until the Corporation has brought in proper manner another suit for recovery of rates and the attitude of the Courts is further tested. I enclose for your information, a copy of the Attorney General's minute of 17th February. I am, however, hopeful that the arrangements regarding the reconstitution of the Nairobi Municipal Council which are now in progress in view of your approval of the late Governor's recommendations will result in the abandonment by the Indians of their refusal to pay Municipal rates.

3. As regards the second item in the Defence dealt with in the Supreme Court judgment, viz: that the necessary

quorum -

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL

R. P. M. S. MERY, P.C., M.F.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S. W.,

Copy
8482
24
 Judgment:
 Minute:
 Opinion by the
 Attorney General:

quorum of the Municipality was not present when the rate was fixed, I should state that pending the receipt of your approval of the recommended re-constitution of the Council the late Governor requested the existing members of the Council to carry on the work of the Council. Sir Robert Goryndon did not wish at that time to make new appointments and as by reason of resignation the number of the Councillors had been reduced to ten, these ten Councillors were appointed until further notice under Government Notice No.156 of April 30th, 1924, and on June 4th, a further appointment in similar terms was made in the case of one Councillor who had then returned to the country after an absence in England. Two Councillors subsequently resigned their appointments and the present membership of the Council is therefore nine. I enclose, for your information, a copy of an opinion by the Attorney General in which he advises that all subsequent Government Notices notifying appointments to the Municipal Council may be held to have superseded Government Notice No.67 of February 25th, 1920, and that the quorum required under Section 15 of the Municipal Corporations Ordinance, 1922, may be computed on a basis of the actual number of the appointed Councillors from time to time.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,


ACTING GOVERNOR.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE,
 RAIPUR,
 17th February, 1925.

The Hon'ble Ag. Colonial Secretary.

R a i p u r .

RE THE RAIPUR (PAYING OF UNIMPROVED SITE VALUES)
 ORDINANCE, 1924.

Ref. No. L. 20222/6/136 of the 12th Inst.

In regard to the reply to be sent to the Secretary of State on the points raised in Indian Ratepayers Association's telegram I would suggest an answer in the following sense:-

(1) Section 3 (a) does not bear the construction placed upon it by the Indian Association. It merely allows a rate to be fixed during the year to which it is applicable.

(2) Arrears are a charge on lands by Section 26 of the 1921 Ordinance.

(3) The Magistrate's decision has been reversed by the Supreme Court which held that Section 14 of the 1924 Ordinance did not apply to the test case.

(4) I am averse to further legislation until the Municipal Council has exhausted all means of recovering the rates under the existing ordinance. At present the Court has only held that the Council cannot proceed without proof and EX PARTE.

2. It must be noted that the Indian Ratepayers Association is out to raise every possible difficulty. If the Ordinance follows ordinary lines as e.g. the 1921 one the law will be evaded and in practice rates will be difficult and expensive to collect. If it adopts extraordinary procedure it is argued that the Ordinance itself is unconstitutional.

PROCEEDINGS

N. 27215.

TOWN Y. G. ...
17th February, 1935.

The Hon'ble Mr. Colonial Secretary,
N. A. I. R. O. B. I.

re: THE MICHOL (MICHOL) ...
D. I. R. O. B. I.

ref. No. ... of the 12th inst.

In regard to the reply to be sent to the Secretary of State on the points raised in Indian taxpayers' association's telegram I must suggest an answer in the following manner:-

(1) Section 4 (a) does not bear the construction placed upon it by the Indian Association. It merely allows a rate to be fixed during the year to which it is applicable.

(2) Arrangements for a change on lands by section 26 of the 1921 ordinance.

(3) The magistrate's decision has been reversed by the District Court which held that section 14 of the 1921 ordinance did not apply to the test case.

(4) I am averse to further legislation until the Municipal Council has exhausted all means of recovering the rates under the existing ordinance. I regret the Court has only held that the Council cannot proceed without a roof over its head.

3. It must be said that the Government's legislation is not to raise every possible difficulty. If the ordinance follows ordinary lines (e.g. the 1921 one) the law will be applied and the question raised will be difficult and unsatisfactory. If it adopts extraordinary measures it is not clear that the ordinance itself is unconstitutional.

for the election of directors and filling vacancies etc. Held that the act does not require that there shall be at all times twelve directors, its provisions in that respect being directory only.

Reverting to Section 7 (1) that section does not prescribe the method of determination, it does not for instance say the Governor is to state the numerical complement of the Council, only that the Council shall consist of so many Councillors as the Governor shall determine to be appointed by him.

In my view if the Governor appoints, as he did in Government Notice No. 457 of 1923, ten Councillors by name that is a proper determination of the number and constitution of the Council, and if at a later date he appoints two more councillors that would be a fresh determination fixing the number at 12 and of course the converse would apply. In my view, therefore, an amending notice is not necessary, and this view appears to be supported by the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Jeevanjee vs Nairobi Town Council decided yesterday.

R. W. G. G. G.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

NAIROBI RATES CASE**Lower Court Proceedings "Irregular and Illegal."****SUPREME COURT RULING****Corporation to Pay Mr. Jeevanjee's Costs of Appeal.****NO PROOF OF DEBT.**

His Honour The Chief Justice and Acting Judge Cress issued the following judgment yesterday in the application made by Messrs. A. M. Jeevanjee and Co. to the Supreme Court to interfere in the litigation between that firm and the Nairobi Town Council on the subject of arrears of site value taxation.

THE JUDGMENT

In Civil Case No. 2944 the Nairobi Corporation on the 29th November 1924 applied to the Resident Magistrate, Nairobi to proceed against Plot No. 116 Ngara Road, Nairobi under Section 9 (a) of Ordinance No. 13 of 1924. This application was grounded on a letter written to the Resident Magistrate by the advocates for the Corporation on the 29th November 1924 wherein it was stated that Mr. A. M. Jeevanjee trading as A. M. Jeevanjee and Co. was indebted to the Nairobi Corporation in the sum of 253/38 for Unimproved Site Value Tax for the years 1922, 1923 and 1924 in respect of the above plots. An attachment issued out of the Resident Magistrate's Court on the 9th day of December 1924 with a direction to the Court Broker to sell by public auction the property described in the said warrant of attachment at the expiration of 30 days from the date of the warrant unless the above sum of 253/38 plus interest and costs be paid. This warrant of attachment was received by the Court Broker on the 10th December 1924 and on the 12th December 1924 two days later Mr. Daly and Mr. Phadke advocates for A. M. Jeevanjee and Co. appeared before the Resident Magistrate with a view to showing cause why the warrant of attachment should not issue and they asked leave to appear and defend the proceedings.

In the ruling of the Resident Magistrate on this point, it is set out that the Nairobi Corporation sued A. M. Jeevanjee for 253/45 being arrears of rates interest and costs alleged to be due on Plot 116 Ngara Road and after giving reasons it is held by him that the defendants have no locus standi and that the arguments they wish to put forward cannot be then heard.

Having been refused a hearing the defendants applied to this Court for (1) a Mandamus to issue to the learned Magistrate directing him to raise the attachment on Plot No. 116 or (2) for a writ of Certiorari to issue to the Resident Magistrate calling upon him to transfer all proceedings in Civil Case No. 2944 of 1924 to this Court that justice may be done according to law and that the order of attachment and sale made by the learned Magistrate and all proceedings therein be quashed, or (3) for a writ of prohibition to issue to the Resident Magistrate and the Nairobi Corporation prohibiting the Magistrate and Corporation from taking proceedings under the Nairobi (Rating of Unimproved Sites Value) Amending Ordinance 1924 (No. 13 of 1924). On this application a writ of Certiorari was issued to the Resident Magistrate commanding him to send to this Court all proceedings in Civil Case 2944 of 1924 with all things touching the same together with the said writ. A prohibition order was also made directing the Resident Magistrate and the Nairobi Corporation from further proceeding in the said matter until this order be made absolute or discharged and the Nairobi Corporation were directed to appear before this Court on the 19th day of January 1925 to show cause why this order should not be made absolute.

NAIROBI RATES CASE JUDGMENT

(Continued from page 1)

Before dealing with the arguments put forward by Counsel for the above application, it might simplify matters to set out that Section 2 of Ordinance No. 13 of 1924 under which the defendant's appeal was attached reads as follows:— "If any sum payable in respect of any rate remains unpaid after the date on which it became due, the Council may apply to the Court for the attachment and sale of the land charged with the rate, or of any movable property found thereon, or of any movable property whosoever found belonging to the person liable to pay such rate. Thereupon the Court shall attach such property and by notice enforce its intention of selling any such land or movable property at the expiration of 30 days from the date of such attachment, or if of the expiration of such period such rate has not been paid or satisfied the Court shall sell by public auction any such property as shall have been attached as aforesaid." Section 2 (b) sets out that "The Court shall, except where otherwise specially provided, hear the Resident Magistrate at a Court Nairobi, which shall be a Court of special jurisdiction for the purposes of this Ordinance."

In showing cause why the application should not be made, it is contended by Mr. Kaplan that the Court has not power to inquire into the matter by way of argument, proceedings and in support of the application he quotes in the above Section 2 (b) and Section 14 and says that he further has the effect of ousting the jurisdiction of this Court. He further argues that Certiorari does not lie to quash the judgments of inferior Courts of Civil Jurisdiction.

There seems to be no doubt that this Court has power to make any order that conforms to the common law of England, viz. The Kenya Order-in-Council, 1921, article 4 (2) and The Colonial Laws of Australia and John R. Thorpe & Robert Willan (1914) L.R.P.C. & C. 417. As to the argument that Section 2 (b) has the effect of ousting the jurisdiction of this Court by way of Certiorari there is abundant authority for saying that unless express words are used in the Ordinance to take away the right of Certiorari the jurisdiction of the superior Court is not taken away.

The cases Rex against Morley, 97 English Reports and Smith v. The Commissioners of Sewers, 80 English Reports, support this view and in Rex v. Joe, Jukes and 2 others, 101 English Reports it was held, that Certiorari being a beneficial writ in the subject could not be taken away without express words.

The Ordinance of 1921 and amendments thereof in 1922 and 1925 disclose no remedy whatever to a defendant by way of appeal or otherwise, and in such circumstances that the superior

has power to impose taxation, there being no express power given to them by the Legislature. It is of course in their behalf (2) that the necessary quorum of the Municipal Council was not present when the rate was fixed and that there was the striking of such was in fact. (3) That it is ultra vires inasmuch as no provision is made as to how the Magistrate is to try the case, that no provision is made to allow of hearing a defence or showing cause, and that as the power given is a highly partial one, it is contrary to fundamental justice to allow that course to be taken without giving the other party any right of property should not be sold and why he should not be imprisoned. In addition to the above grounds for quashing the judgment it is contended that the Magistrate established his jurisdiction by proceeding upon a fact which he assumed to be in existence without any evidence being before him of such fact.

To deal first with the argument that the Legislature of the Colony has no power to impose taxation without such power being given them by express words we give the opinion for the reasons which we wish to set out in the judgment in Civil Case 3461, of 1921 Resident Magistrate's Court Nairobi that the right of the Legislature to impose taxes is well established.

The next point for consideration is the constitution of the Nairobi Corporation when the rate sued for was levied. By the Municipal Corporation Ordinance 1909 it is said that the Council of any Municipality shall consist of so many Councillors as the Government shall from time to time by notice in the Gazette determine in respect of such Municipality not being less than eight, and to be appointed by the Governor and to hold office during the Governor's pleasure. In a period not exceeding 6 months after the Government Notice No. 240 of 1918 it was determined that the Nairobi Municipal Council should consist for the time being of 14 Councillors and 12 Councillors were thereby appointed to hold office for a period not exceeding two years and as a further Government Notice No. 50 of 1920 the above notice was cancelled and it was determined that the Nairobi Municipal Council should for the time being and until further notice consist of 15 Councillors and 15 Councillors were therein named and appointed to hold office. Notice No. 46 was subsequently issued by No. 67 which substituted the figure 15 therefore from the 25th February 1920 the date of No. 67 Notice the Nairobi Municipal Council consisted of 16 Councillors and by Section 7 of the Municipal Corporation Ordinance 1922 the Council of any Municipality shall consist of so many Councillors as the Governor shall from time to time by notice in the Gazette determine, with no restriction as to a

the issuing of a summons or notice to him, therefore it came before the Court for the purpose of interfering with it. And in interpreting the words of the fundamental principle that a writ is to be granted according to the intent of them that made it. The obvious intention of the Legislature in framing Section 2 was to give payment of the Municipal rates for Unimproved Sites with an immediate duty as possible. It is expressed in the Ordinance that the defendant has proposed to appear before the Court at a date named in Section 2 of the Court's summons and the Court is named in Section 2 as the Court to have jurisdiction in applications under Section 2. It seems certain that any order be made under the Ordinance is done judicially. By Section 2 it is provided that the appearance of a third party whose property is attached to apply for the removal of the attachment, but the person who is not given such opportunity, in fact to a sale of movable property sold under the above Section 2, not realising the amount of the rate with interest and costs. The case of Painter v. The Liverpool & Old Light Co., is very much on all fours with this one, there, in a trustee establishment the Light Company it was enacted that if any person should refuse or neglect for 10 days after demand, to pay any rate due from him to the Company for the supply of gas, such rate should be recovered by the company, their clerk by warrant of any Justice of the Peace for the town and it should be lawful for the Company or their clerk, with such warrant to levy the sum so due by distress and sale of the goods of the party so neglecting or refusing to pay. It was held in this case that a warrant so issued by a Justice, without previously summoning and hearing the party, is a legal debt, and hearing was not required. Where a Magistrate grants a warrant in the nature of execution to be issued to a constable and hear the party, unless the Statute under which he acts clearly renders the discharge of that function ministerial only, or in some other manner dispenses with the summons and hearing. This case frequently laid principle of law frequently laid down that a warrant must be issued before a writ of distress and damages can be issued and Lord Diplock O.J. in his judgment referred to the case of Harper & Gurr v. F.B. 599, where Lord Kenyon said: "It is an essential rule in the administration of justice that no man shall be punished without being heard in his defence."

It has also been argued that the remedy sought is only against the property charged with the rate, but the argument cannot hold good in view of Section 13 which provides for the issue of a warrant of personal attachment of the person or persons liable to pay such rate. From the wording of the Magistrate as to how judicially you are ordered to attach property on the application of the Corporation and on the argument of Mr. Kaplan he

with by a refusal of the proceeding in Civil Case 2944 of 1924. As stated above the attachment was issued on the 10th December 1924, and on the 12th December Mr. Day and Mr. Pucke asked leave to show cause and defend, such leave was refused and the Magistrate in his ruling probably meaning that no proof of the Corporation's debt had been submitted to the Magistrate, as the said summons appeared to have been made and served on the 10th of the 12th 1924, at 2. Now the Section reads "If any sum payable in respect of any rate remains unpaid after the date on which it became due," and of the 10th December, 1924 the learned Resident Magistrate was obviously not satisfied that a debt had been proved to be due, when he issued the writ of attachment, his findings therefore on the 10th December, 1924 would be of no effect if attachment was issued by the Court on the 12th of the 10th of December. In such a case the jurisdiction of the Court of Certiorari to see that the lower court has not exceeded its own jurisdiction and for that reason the Court is bound not to interfere with what has been done within that jurisdiction. In such the jurisdiction of a Superior Court is supervision, and that supervision goes to two points: one is the area of the inferior jurisdiction, and the qualifications and conditions of its exercise; the other is the observance of the law in the course of its exercise. (The King v. Nat. Bells Liquors (limited) A.C. 1922, Vol. 2). On the above interpretation which we have given to Section 2 that the Resident Magistrate's Court is intended to sit judicially it follows that it is illegal that it will not give a judgment without notice to show cause in Civil Case 2944 of 1924 a warrant of attachment was issued when there was no evidence on the file of proceedings of a debt due to the Corporation. It was outside the area of the Resident Magistrate's Court's jurisdiction to make the order as it established its jurisdiction by proceeding upon an assumed fact and is therefore in our opinion illegal, and for this reason and the reasons given above the Order of Attachment and sale in Civil Case 2944 of 1924 and all proceedings thereunder are hereby quashed, and the costs of these proceedings are laid out and the same are ordered to be paid by the defendant. Two Courts were asked to be set aside.

By J. W. HARRIS
S. R. A. CRENSHAW

made down; that Certiorari being a beneficial writ for the subject could not be taken away without express words.

The Ordinance of 1921 and amendments thereof in 1922 and 1924 disclose no remedy whatever to a defendant by way of appeal or otherwise, and in such circumstances it is clear that the superior Court has always jurisdiction to grant a writ of Certiorari. There is no doubt that the subject cannot be deprived of this remedy unless by express words in the Ordinance under which the notice arises and in a case such as this where the jurisdiction of the lower Court is impugned we are of opinion, following the decision in *Re J. J. Justice of the Peace*, that even express words in the Statute cannot take away this right.

The further argument that Certiorari does not lie to quash the judgments of inferior Courts of Civil Jurisdiction does not appear to us to be sound, for, when it is alleged, as it is in this case, that there was no jurisdiction to grant judgment it seems to be an established rule of law that it is always open to the superior Court to examine the evidence to ascertain, or whether the Court below reached the proper conclusion on the evidence; but to ascertain if factually the existence of jurisdiction in the lower Court were shown.

Being of opinion that Certiorari is the proper procedure, we have to consider the grounds on which we are asked to make the writs and quash the judgments.

The defendant says the Ordinance is ultra vires and the reasons which he grounds this statement are as follows:—(1) That the Legislature of this Colony has

for the issue of a warrant of personal attachment of the person or persons liable to pay such rates. From the wording of Section 6e it must be inferred that the Magistrate is to act judicially yet he is ordered to attach property on the application of the Corporation and on the argument of Mr. Kaplan he is bound to do so, without any evidence before him of the rate being due. This method of procedure surely could not have been intended by the Legislature, for, it names a Court wherein proceedings under the Ordinance are to be instituted, in naming a Court, it must intend that the Court will act judicially with all questions coming before it for determination and if Mr. Kaplan's interpretation of the Section is correct it seems to us impossible for the Court to act judicially and that it is bound to take its orders from one of the parties to the proceedings.

This Ordinance expresses no intention on this question and yet some intention must necessarily be imputed to the Legislature regarding it and it would seem to us the duty of this Court to interpret it by inference grounded on certain legal principles, and on considering the legal principles quoted above we are of opinion that the Legislature intended that a party to the proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court should be given an opportunity of showing cause and that therefore the proceedings before the learned Resident Magistrate were irregular and illegal.

The argument of Counsel for the defendant that the Magistrate in issuing the warrant of attachment acted without jurisdiction is an important one, and can be dealt with on this question and yet some intention must necessarily be imputed to the Legislature regarding it and it would seem to us the duty of this Court to interpret it by inference grounded on certain legal principles, and on considering the legal principles quoted above we are of opinion that the Legislature intended that a party to the proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court should be given an opportunity of showing cause and that therefore the proceedings before the learned Resident Magistrate were irregular and illegal.

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Jan 13407/25

Kenya

571

31 APR 1925
02

22 April 1925.

Sir,

DRAFT.

I have to ack. the recd of
late Mr Robert Cozram's draft
desp No 6 of the 10th of Jan, your

MINUTE.

Mr. Pinn April 17

Mr. ~~James~~ Hill 20/4

Mr. ~~W. B. Bush~~ Bush 20/4

Sir J. Shuckburgh

Sir C. Davis

Sir G. Grindle

Sir J. Masterton Smith

Lord Arnold

Mr Thomas

tel. No 83 of the 20th of Feb &
your desp No 249 of the 26th

of Feb, regarding the Nairobi
(Rate of Unimproved Site
Values Tax) Amendment Ord

No XIII of 1924, and to
inform you that I concur in
your interpretation of Section

2. As regards the points
raised in the let from the
Indian Ratepayers Assn
the 30 Dec last I concur in the

as merely allowing the rate to be paid ^{during} in the the
3 (c) of the ~~Boarding Order~~
for which it is applicable & as not imposing a rate to be
~~levied~~ levied retrospectively. I
I ~~do not~~ think that the Supreme
Court has held that an order
under Section 9 cannot be
made ex parte and without
proof; a decision may be regarded with
satisfactory ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ~~view~~ the
possibility of a contrary
interpretation must have
been viewed with some
concern.

observe from the copy
his instrument enclosed
Tax Ord. No 249 of
the 26 Feb

3. In these circumstances I see no reason

why, ~~in the absence of any decision of~~
~~the Courts making invalidment decrees,~~
the Ordⁿ should not be allowed to remain in
operation, & accordingly H.M. will not be advised
to exercise his power of disallowance in respect
of the Ordⁿ.

for the Secretary of State
(Signed) W. ORMSBY