

1925

KENYA

C.O.
55296
9 Dec 25
497

FROM

DATE

Mr. V'S DEP DENHAM.

1405

12th November 1925.

FOR CIRCULATION :-

Mr.
Mr.
Mr. *[Signature]*
Asst: U.S. of S.

DEVELOPMENT OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS.

Refers to recommendations of E.A. Commn., and trs. copies of corres with Uganda, T.T. and the Postmaster General, relating to inter-state communication. Will report further after discussion at Governors' Conference.

Perm' U.S. of S.
Parb. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

1) O.A.C. 38430
(1) Lyr. 35468 T.T.

It is unfortunate that departs departs so advising both the form of trying best use of surplus stock.

It had not occurred before that the union of Isoband covered the whole then the four decisions surplus being arrangements - where the envelope - I do not know.

So far as I can judge the set for 200 is Salaam will be more powerful than those 200 such range sets.

As regards 35468, you will notice that no technical conference appears to be contemplated - at least until we report to the Governor's Conference.

[Signature]

XEA

Subsequent Paper

Lyr. 269/26 20 in cipher T.T.

[Signature]

KENYA.

No. 1405.



C.O.
55296
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI.
KENYA.

12th November, 1925.

493

Sir,

*gm. 35468
T.T.*

despatch to
Gov. Uganda,
17-3-1925.

from Governor
of 20-7-1925.

despatch to
Gov. Tanganyika,
17-3-1925.

from Chief Secre-
Dar-es-Salaam,
1-5-1925.

Postmaster General
558/24A of 29-8-25.

ditto No. B558/24A
31-10-1925.

ditto No. B558/24/A
31-10-1925.

With reference to your despatch No. 871 of the 8th September, relative to pages 126-127 of the Report of the East Africa Commission with regard to the development of wireless communication in East Africa, I have the honour to transmit copies of the marginally noted correspondence upon the subject.

2. It will be seen that this Government has been in communication with the Governments of Uganda and the Tanganyika Territory with regard to an inter-state scheme of wireless telegraphy and with particular reference to the disposal of three 1½ Kilowatt Marconi Standard Wireless Sets which are lying in store in Nairobi.

3. The subject is one which it is proposed to place upon the Agenda of the forthcoming Governor's Conference and a further communication will be addressed to you in the matter after that discussion.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

GOVERNOR'S DEPUTY.

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

KENYA.

No. S/B. 10707/9/9.

7th March, 1925.

499

Sir,

With reference to Your Excellency's despatch No. 7166 of the 30th October, and to the question of an Inter-State Wireless Scheme, I have the honour to state that this Government has in store in Nairobi three 1½ Kilowatt Marconi Standard Wireless sets in consequence of the curtailment of the wireless scheme for the Northern Frontier District in connection with which they were obtained.

2. Both the Postmaster General and the Officer Commanding Troops are of opinion that the ideal use to which these spare stations could be put is the establishment of an Inter-State wireless system linking up Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi, Entebbe and probably the Sudan through its Mongalla Station. In its political and strategical aspects such a scheme appears to have much to recommend it.

3. The first cost of the spare Stations averages approximately £2000 each and with an additional expenditure of say £500 on supplementary gear these Stations normally would be sufficiently powerful to maintain direct Inter-Station communication and a guarantee to that effect could be given.

4. It is understood that the East African Parliamentary Commission interested itself in the question of the extended use of wireless in this Colony, the Uganda Protectorate and the Tanganyika Territory and it appears advisable therefore to await the Commission's Reports before anything definite is undertaken.

EXCELLENCY
THE ACTING GOVERNOR,
UGANDA PROTECTORATE,
ENTEBBE.

The results of certain experiments in transmission and reception which are being carried out between the Mombasa and Kisumu Stations will also be of material interest in this connection.

In the meantime I should be glad of Your Excellency's views and I have no doubt that financial arrangements could be made which would be advantageous to Your Excellency's Government.

The Government of the Tanganyika Territory has also been approached in the matter of an Inter-State Scheme.

I have etc.,

Sd/- G. A. S. NORTHCOTE.

GOVERNOR'S DEPUTY.

No. 7166.

20th July, 1925.

Sir,

501

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's despatches, Nos.S/B. 10707/9/9 and 10707/9/14 of the 17th March and 1st July respectively, regarding the establishment of an Inter-State Wireless system.

2. In so far as this Protectorate is concerned it is not clear that the advantages which would be derived are commensurate with the expense involved, and I regret I am not prepared at present to recommend that Uganda should participate in the scheme.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

(Sd) W.F. GOWERS.

GOVERNOR.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR,

COLONY AND PROTECTORATE OF KENYA,

N A I R O B I.

17th March, 1925.

502

Sir,

With reference to Tanganyika Territory despatch No. 466/113 of the 25th July, paragraph 5, relative to a suggestion made that wireless communication should be adopted as an alternative to the telegraph line along the Voi-Kahia Railway line, I have the honour to state that this Government has in store in Nairobi three $1\frac{1}{2}$ Kilowatt Marconi Standard Wireless Sets in consequence of the curtailment of the Wireless Scheme for the Northern Frontier Province, in connection with which they were obtained.

2. Both the Postmaster General and the Officer Commanding Troops are of opinion that the ideal use to which these spare stations could be put is the establishment of an Inter-State wireless system linking up Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi, Entebbe and probably the Sudan through its Mongalla Station. In its political and strategical aspects such a scheme appears to have much to recommend it.

3. The first cost of the spare Stations averages approximately £2000 each and with an additional expenditure of say £500 on supplementary gear these Stations normally would be sufficiently powerful to maintain direct Inter-Station communication and a guarantee to that effect could be given.

4.

AGENCY

THE ACTING GOVERNOR,

TANGANYIKA TERRITORY,

DAR-ES-SALAAM.

4. It is understood that the East African Parliamentary Commission interested itself in the question of the extended use of wireless in this Colony, the Uganda Protectorate and the Tanganyika Territory and it appears advisable therefore to await the Commission's Reports before anything definite is undertaken. The results of certain experiments in transmission and reception which are being carried out between the Mombasa and Khartoum Stations will also be of material interest.

5. Apart, however, from the general question of an Inter-State Wireless Scheme representations have been made by the Association of the East African Chambers of Commerce requesting the re-opening of the direct telegraphic line between Mombasa and Tanga and the Association has been informed that the old military coast line was closely surveyed some time ago and that, as a result, it has been decided that the cost of reconstructing and subsequently maintaining it would not be warranted in view of the fact that there is an alternative land line route available.

6. The question of utilising the old coast line was last considered in 1925, and during the negotiations which ensued it was proposed that a system of wireless communication should be adopted as an alternative to restoring this line and it was suggested that one of the spare wireless sets under reference might be utilised. The proposal made was not favourably received by the Tanganyika Territory Government and it was stated that the wireless set in question would not be sufficiently powerful. The matter then dropped as it had been decided to retain the Voi-Kahe line.

7. Now that the question of direct communication between Mombasa and the Tanganyika Territory along the Coast has again been raised Your Excellency's Government may wish to reconsider in that connection, the establishment of a wireless station at Dar-es-Salaam in which case there appears to be no reason why it should not proceed independently of the Inter-State Scheme outlined above.

Sir Horace Byatt in 1923 was clearly under a misapprehension in believing that the sets available would not be sufficiently powerful for communication between Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa or Nairobi, for, supplemented by modern auxiliary apparatus at a relatively small cost, these stations are capable of maintaining commercial communication over much longer distances than those between any of the points named. As an instance of the power and capacity of these sets I may mention that the Mombasa - Zanzibar cable is down at the moment and that diverted traffic is being successfully dealt with by the respective wireless stations.

8. I should be grateful to receive an expression of Your Excellency's views upon both the question of an Inter-State Scheme and the considerations raised in paragraphs 5 - 7 of this despatch, and I have little doubt that financial arrangements would be made which would be advantageous to Your Excellency's Government.

The Government of Uganda has been approached in the matter of the Inter-State Scheme.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

G. C. ...

1st May, 1925.

505

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Northcote's despatch No.S/B.10707/9/10 of the 17th March, regarding a suggestion that wireless communication should be adopted between Kenya and Tanganyika Territory, I am directed by His Excellency to inform you that in view of the fact that this Government has more urgent demands to meet in regard to telegraphic routes between Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam already exist, it is regretted that it is not possible to incur expenditure at present in providing further inter-colonial routes.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Sgd. *John Scott*

CHIEF SECRETARY.

HONOURABLE,
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
COLONY AND PROTECTORATE OF KENYA,
N A I R O B I.

29th August, 5

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary,

506

Nairobi.

RE: WIRELESS STATIONS - INTER-STATE SCHEME.

Ref. your No. B.10707/9/16 of the 29th July.

As Tanganyika's reply was despatched prior to the receipt by it of the Commission's report, that Government may possibly be disposed to modify its attitude on the question of erecting a wireless station at Dar-es-Salaam. Such a station could be made to serve the dual purpose of a Coast station to meet shipping requirements and a unit in an inter-State scheme such as that suggested in my minute of the 30th January.

I would, therefore, suggest that Tanganyika be asked if, as a result of the Commission's report, the question of establishing a station at Dar-es-Salaam is under consideration and, if so, that it may be noted that this Government has in store and available for disposal stations of a type thought to be suitable for use at Dar-es-Salaam.

2. Uganda's reply is not encouraging as it has to be assumed that the decision arrived at was taken after due consideration of the Commission's observations, particularly with regard to the desirability of establishing a wireless link with ^{the} Sudan. I am, however, proceeding to Uganda shortly and hope to discuss the matter with the Governor. It is possible that all the advantages of the suggested inter-State scheme are not realized.

29th August, 5

506

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary,
Nairobi.

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The Honourable

506

The Colonial Secretary,

N a i r o b i .

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3. With regard to the general observations of the Commission regarding wireless in these territories, I would explain that I am totally unaware of the information on which these observations are founded. No enquiry of any kind was made of this Department, the only one, I may mention, with any practical experience of wireless working in the territories covered by the report.

4. My comments on the various points raised by the Commission are:

(1). Under normal typographical conditions and over relatively short distances (say, up to 100 miles) the advantage lies with land lines as compared with wireless and this advantage becomes greater according to the degree of continuous reliable communication required.

(2). There is no necessity whatever to call on an expert from outside in connection with any local wireless services that may be deemed necessary. In a despatch to the Secretary of State the former Governor of Uganda (Sir G. Archer) suggested that an expert be sent out from Home in connection with a small wireless scheme which he proposed for serving the outlying districts in the Eastern and Northern Provinces. This Department's view that this was not at all necessary and would be a needless expense has, I believe, now been accepted.

(3). A very wrong impression is likely to be caused by the statement that it took 3 days for a telegram from Mwanza to reach Bukoba, as the inference is that this is the normal time owing to the circuitous route which has to be followed. There is

in fact, no reason why normally such a message should take more than a few hours in transmission. A 3 days delay could only have been due to line interruptions.

- (4). There appears to be no necessity to refer to the Congo for any information regarding the running or maintenance of wireless stations in these territories. This service has maintained 2 stations for a period of over 6 years and from its records has full information regarding working costs under local conditions. On the purely technical side it has conducted fairly extensive experiments both seaward and inland, and it is improbable that the Congo service can add anything to the information already in the possession of the Department regarding wireless transmission in East Africa.

(Sd.) T. FITZGERALD.

POSTMASTER GENERAL.

31st October,

5

The Honourable

509A

The Colonial Secretary, *

N a i r o b i.

RE: WIRELESS STATIONS - INTER-STATE SCHEME.

Ref. your No. 10707/9/19 of the 15th September 1925.

During my discussions in Uganda on the 1926 estimates, it became evident that no funds could at the time be spared for a wireless station at Entebbe or Kampala to form a part of an inter-State wireless scheme, and that being the case I did not consider any good purpose would be served by re-opening the subject with His Excellency. I may mention that I did, however, discuss with him a proposal which originated with his predecessor to establish a wireless system in the more remote parts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and as a result of that discussion the proposal has been abandoned.

2. A very suitable occasion for re-considering the scheme, both as regards Tanganyika and Uganda, will arise at the Conference of Governors to be held at Nairobi early next year. It is one of the questions I propose submitting for discussion.

(Sd.) T. FITZGERALD.

POSTMASTER GENERAL.

to H.

31st October, 1916

509

The Honourable

The Colonial Secretary,

N a i r o b i.

RE: DEVELOPMENT OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION IN
EAST AFRICA.

Ref. your No. B.10707/7/24 of 8th October.

So far as comment of a general character is concerned, I have little to add to paragraphs 3 and 4 of my minute of the 28th August dealing with the observations of the East Africa Commission concerning wireless in these territories.

2. The Commission's observations had to do almost entirely with Tanganyika and Uganda. In regard to the former, the enclosure to the despatch under reference shows that Tanganyika is now prepared to proceed with the establishment of a station at Dar-es-Salaam, and in this connection I would suggest that Tanganyika Government be asked to give consideration to the fact that this Colony has in store spare stations of a type suitable for erection at Dar-es-Salaam. In regard to local communication between administrative stations in Tanganyika, I am not at present in a position to express an opinion owing to want of knowledge of local conditions, but the experience of this service is at Tanganyika's disposal in regard to establishing purely local wireless systems of communication between administrative districts or in connection with any scheme for linking up such local systems with this Colony. On the whole I think it very desirable that an officer from the

the Tanganyika Post Office should visit Nairobi before the Governors' Conference so that the whole position may be carefully examined, and perhaps this also can be suggested to the Tanganyika Government.

3. There is practically no scope in Uganda for a local wireless system of communication between administrative centres. The present Governor concurs in this view, and it has been agreed to abandon the scheme for the Northern and Eastern Provinces originated by Sir Geoffrey Archer.

4. My opinion still is that the only direction which wireless development can usefully take in these territories is

(1) an inter-State scheme such as outlined in your file under reference; and

(2) establishment in Nairobi of a station capable of maintaining a commercial service with England.

This is under discussion with the Colonial Office.

5. The inter-State scheme referred to would provide for inter-communication between the capitals of Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda, and this system could be linked up with the Sudan on the north and Rhodesia on the south, should the station which is contemplated there be erected.

(Sd.) FITZGERALD.

POSTMASTER GENERAL.

1ctd. to H.