

1925

E. AFRICA  
UGANDA

C O  
48963

FROM  
GOVERNOR, GOVERNORS

408

DATE

1st October 1925.

REC  
PL 30 OCT 25

FOR CIRCULATION

Mr.  
Mr.  
Mr.  
Asst. U.S. of S.  
Perm. U.S. of S.  
U.S. of S.  
Secretary of S.

DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES IN E.A. 303

Has suggested to Kenya and T.F. that Min. of Agriculture be approached with a view to survey of Lake Victoria being made, cost to be borne proportionately. Protective Legislation may be necessary. Attaches memo. by Mr Fiske, who has studied the matter.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

NY 3915/25

Kenya referred to the East Africa  
32287/25 - but it was put back to  
him as that ~~number~~ was written  
before the Top Sec Dept in 32289-25.  
The East Africa Newspaper  
Main Author Dept from  
Kenya & a dep. from T.F.  
The ... .. Coast

Jointly  
by ... ..  
to ... ..  
to ... ..  
S.D.P. / East Africa has better be kept separate  
& from the  
& come near ... ..

L.H.A.C.

2/11/25 - at ...

Subsequent Paper

Gov. 50322 90  
T.F.

See also a 50432

IM.



48963

301

Uganda Protectorate,

30 OCT 25  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
UGANDA

408.

1st October, 1925.

Sir,

*Co*  
*33919*  
*E.C.*

With reference to your despatch No. 297 of the 7th August, regarding the possibility of developing the Inland Fisheries of East Africa, I have the honour to inform you that I have been in communication with the Governors of Kenya and Tanganyika Territory with a view to securing the services of a trained Zoologist who has specialised in Lake fish, to undertake a survey of Lake Victoria.

2. I have suggested that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries be approached with a view to this survey being carried out by one of the scientific staff attached to the Ministry. The cost of the survey should, in my opinion, be borne proportionally by the Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda Governments who are all equally interested in the problems relating to the fish supply of the Lake.

3. It will probably be found necessary to introduce protective legislation in Lake Victoria, owing to the limited area of the fishing grounds, and the destructive methods at present employed by fishermen. In this connection I attach a memorandum by Mr. W. F. Fiske, who, in the course of his work on Lake Victoria in connexion with Sleeping Sickness control, has had especially good opportunities of making observation on this question and has devoted particular attention to it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

*W. F. Fiske*

Right Honourable

SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR THE COLONIES,  
&c., &c., &c.

GOVERNOR.

Honourable Chief Secretary.

The fishing industry in Lake Victoria needs and is worthy of protection. Two sorts of protection are needed:- of the fish against destructive methods of the fishermen and of the fishermen against the fly which infests the lake shore and islands.

Kenya Colony has a Fish Protection Ordinance designed to protect fish:- It is inoperative to any useful end except as it brings in a little revenue. Uganda has regulations under the Sleeping Sickness Ordinance designed to protect the fishermen: It is operating successfully in the Lake west of Busamru peninsular in Busoga; ineffectually to the eastward of Busamru. Uganda has no fish protection ordinance; Kenya has no regulations for protection of fishermen; it is an anomalous situation. One system of licencing and control could undoubtedly be devised to meet both requirements.

Only one species of fish requires protection; the sort known in Uganda as "ngege", and generally accounted the best table fish in the lake. It requires protection from a single sort of net; the drift or gill net of five inch mesh which was first employed in the lake about 15 years ago. This net catches 'ngege of an average weight of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds; a fish of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  pounds or less will slip through the mesh one of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  pounds or more will not be able to pass his head through it to become entangled. The 'ngege is a vegetable feeder, and may only be caught in places where the water is so shallow as to support a weedy growth upon the bottom; doubtfully in more than 14 feet of water.

The fishing grounds are therefore of limited area and rather curious distribution. Kavirondo Gulf is incomparably the best; Speke gulf is good; some of the Uganda bays and channels are very good, but the good areas are in no case extensive. The destructive type of net is imported from Belfast. When set in the water it measures about 65 yards long by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  yards deep. In 1921 the cost in Belfast was about 19 shillings; at Uganda Post Office after paying all charges, about 28 shillings; at the Uganda shops about 32 to 36 shillings. Between 15,000 and 20,000 were employed in Uganda in 1921; I doubt if nearly as many are being imported now owing to their destructiveness.

In 1920 I desired to place restrictions upon the use of this net and the proposal was bitterly opposed by European and Indian fishermen, who denied that the net was so destructive as to justify restrictions proposed. At that time I had not sufficient evidence to make a good case. Therefore careful notes and observations were kept.

The best example of its destructiveness was in Buka bay. This was opened for fishing about August, 1920. Two months later I found a fishing colony established consisting of 3 Indians; about 60 natives; 2 small fishing dhows; 11 canoes and about 120 nets. The fishing grounds in this bay are certainly of less than 15 square miles. The nets alone represented an outlay of at least 3600 shillings, and since no net lasts more than 20 days use the colony was

consuming

consuming imported goods to the value of at least 180 shillings per day or approximately 65,000 shillings per year. The native market was taking all the fish it could produce at prices equal to or higher than paid in Entebbe. (The price had been fixed by Government in Entebbe slightly less than in native markets).

This represented about 4 miles of net nightly in about 15 square miles of fishing area. At this ratio it required less than a year to destroy the industry; and when I re-visited the locality in the autumn of 1921 I found only 2 canoes and about 8 natives at work with no nets.

In my opinion there is only one practical remedy; restrictions upon the number of nets which may be used in a given area of fishing grounds. I would say about two nets per mile which would have meant 30 in Buka Bay instead of 120. I believe that this would have resulted in perpetuating the industry indefinitely, and with very large profit to the limited number of men employed.

It would be much better than a "close season" --- for it would permit the men to work the year around, and would assure a regular supply of fish the year around.

I have made a very large number of experiments with nets of different size mesh. With any ordinary sort of fish it would be sufficient to forbid use of nets of mesh that destroyed the smaller sizes, but the 'ngege' is not an ordinary sort of fish. It appears to grow rapidly up to the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  pound size, and

to

to commence breeding at about that time, and virtually to stop growing when it commences to breed. A net with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh is no good; it will catch a very few of the largest fish, but not enough to pay for itself, even in the better grounds. It would be better to charge a very high licence fee for a limited number of 5 inch nets; the fishermen would make larger profits and so would Government.

Admittedly it would be a costly matter to enforce regulations for restriction of the number of nets in limited areas, but the identical system of licencing and patrol would serve equally to protect the fish and to protect the fishermen. In Uganda we have been able to protect the fishermen successfully, so that all the fishing areas west of Busamwa are open. In Kenya there are some fishing areas which are "naturally" closed on account of fly, but which could be opened under the Uganda system of licencing. The major difficulty is with respect to patrol; I think that one vessel and two European Officers would be required, but it would serve equally for Uganda and Kenya. I should consider it a thoroughly sound proposition to establish a uniform system of licencing in Uganda and Kenya, on the general lines now followed in Uganda, and with the double object of protecting the fishermen against fly and the fish against the fishermen: -- i. e. with the single object of protecting and promoting the fishing industry. Under proper protection there should be no danger of sleeping sickness amongst the fishermen, and I am sure that the annual production of fish in such an area as Buka Bay could be at least

doubled

doubled over what will otherwise be produced. The Bays at Entebbe and Bwala are good examples of fishing out; they were immensely productive when nets were first used in them, but are now and in large part entirely abandoned; the Entebbe fish supply which was formerly secured from these grounds is now from grounds at a distance. I am sure that if they had been properly fished we would have a regular and sufficient supply the year around. I am also sure that under a reasonable and strict system of protection we could bring them back to productive condition.

In short I think that the 'ngege' grounds of Uganda ought to produce around about 10,000 pounds of fresh fish per mile per year, worth about 3,500 shillings in the local markets, but doubt if they will average to produce half that quantity unless strict protection is undertaken. I have only a very vague idea of their actual extent; they are possibly 2,000 square miles.

I have always maintained that a co-operative arrangement between Kenya and Uganda with the idea of protecting the fishing industry offers the best and most practical basis for a co-operative arrangement with respect to the control of sleeping sickness. The industry would be virtually destroyed in Uganda if it were not for s.s. control, and it can be promoted in Kenya through s.s. control.

(Sd) W.F. Fiske.

14th July, 1925.