

1936

38086

9

C0533/466  
KENYA

38086

PETITIONS

MRS. EDNA YIATT

Previous

23293/34

Subsequent

1937

R. 297

12/1/36

R. 309

15/12

Mr Parker re

Mr. Ford

24

Mr C. Bottomley

24

R. 303

1/1/37

R. 299

14/1

R. 297

Requests assistance to enable her to return to Kenya.

*See 20292/34*  
*10-4*

It is difficult to see what can be done for this poor woman. Her story is this. In 1934 she was committed to prison in Kenya for a total of approximately seven months in default of payment of fines imposed in connection with the withholding of wages from native employees. Her eight children were left destitute. Temporary arrangements were made at Government expense for the maintenance of her five daughters, the eldest of whom was 9 years old at the time; and her three sons, who were then between the age of 10 and 15, were provided for by the League of Mercy. In October, 1934, we managed to get in touch with the husband, George Stuart Watt, in this country with a view to finding out what he proposed to do about his children's maintenance. His solicitors wrote a long letter to show that the imprisonment of Mrs. Watt was a miscarriage of justice.

It appears that Mr. Watt was in this country in the early part of 1934 and entered into a partnership agreement with two others in regard to the working of a farm in Kenya. Under the agreement he was to receive £1,000 for his own use, payable by instalments at various dates, and a further £1,000, working capital, to be paid when required. Mr. Watt undertook to pay all debts and liabilities in respect of the farm up to the 31st of March, 1934, the date when the partnership was to start. On the strength of this agreement Mr. Watt sent instructions to his wife in Kenya and to a Mr. Bateman to engage native labour for the farm.

Requests assistance to enable her to return to Kenya.

It is difficult to see what can be done for this poor woman. Her story is this. In 1934 she was committed to prison in Kenya for a total of approximately seven months in default of payment of fines imposed in connection with the withholding of wages from native employees. Her eight children were left destitute. Temporary arrangements were made at Government expense for the maintenance of her five daughters, the eldest of whom was 9 years old at the time; and her three sons, who were then between the age of 10 and 15, were provided for by the League of Mercy. In October, 1934, we managed to get in touch with the husband, George Stuart Watt, in this country with a view to finding out what he proposed to do about his children's maintenance. His solicitors wrote a long letter to show that the imprisonment of Mrs. Watt was a miscarriage of justice.

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*Rec  
23297/36*

*Not in*

In due course Mr. Watt returned to Kenya. Apparently he received £525 only in respect of the amount due under the agreement when the other two partners declined to proceed further. Mr. Watt came back to this country to look into the matter and in the meantime Mrs. Watt and Mr. Bateman were summoned for the non-payment of native wages. Mr. Bateman appears to have paid up, but Mrs. Watt was committed to prison in default of payment. Mr. Watt's solicitors hoped this explanation would move the Governor to exercise his clemency and direct Mrs. Watt's release on payment of the outstanding wages, the money for which the solicitors would try to find.

We now have Mrs. Watt's letter in which she states that her husband guaranteed to the Salvation Army in Kenya that he would find a home in this country for her and their children. Mrs. Watt then applied for and obtained a "Government-assisted passage" to this country for herself and the children, only to find on her arrival that no home had been prepared with the result that they soon became dependent on parish relief. Mr. Watt began to make an allowance of 25/- a week to his wife who <sup>had</sup> ~~went~~ to live with her mother, the mother being in receipt of a pension from the Crown Agents. Three of <sup>Paul Watt's</sup> ~~the~~ daughters have been sent to Princess Louise's Home, Esher; one son is working and one (now 15½ years) is in the Merchant Service.

Mr.

Mr. Watt is said to be living with another woman and has started a new family. He wants his wife to set him free and promises to continue the allowance of 25/- a week.

Mrs. Watt's object in writing, as far as I can see, is

(i) to enable her to return to Kenya where she has the promise of a house on Lord Kitchener's estate:

(ii) to remove the liability for the repayment of the passage granted to her:

(iii) to secure that the deposit required under the Kenya immigration regulations for persons entering the Colony be waived in her case:

or

(iv) to ascertain whether there is a Colony in which she could find a new home, new hope and work.

This is a fairly hopeless business. Apparently Mrs. Watt has no capital and it is not clear whether she could even find the money for a passage back to Kenya. The Kenya Government will not feel called upon to do anything for her, but as a start we might ask the Governor's views on (i), (ii) and (iii) above, and tell Mrs. Watt what we are doing.

*A. H. ...*  
15.12.30.

A very distressing case, but I do not see what the Govt. of Kenya can be expected to do about it. If she returned to Kenya she could hardly keep her family on 25/- a week — even if her husband kept her

agreement to pay her this allowance,  
wh. - on the face of it - seems unlikely.  
However I do not see that we  
can do less than to send a  
your letter to her for  
reply.

J. J. Bacon  
24/12

Sent on as a memorial but Kenya can't afford to keep  
from the Watt & her family & I'll be very surprised if  
anything comes of it.

J. J. Bacon  
24/12

As proposed. ~~It is very hard luck.~~

(As I remember E. J. Turner her  
senior cannot be relied on for  
much longer, nor should I say  
that her society is kind of a  
congrat. In I may be comparing  
her with Mrs Stewart Watt, senior.)

No - the 1957 to have  
settles that

W. S. B.  
24/12

J. J. Watt (Aunt) - 15 JAN 1937

3 To Kenya - 47 (Vic 1) - cons - 14/1/37

4 Mrs Stewart

Supplies refer as omitted from 1937

J. J. Bacon  
R 297

16/1/37 enclosed

Petition

38086/9/36

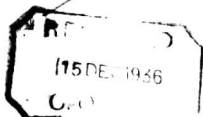
1/2

4  
H.

45. Stads in veld

H. J. The

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 1936.



To: Under Secretary of State for the Colonies

Dear Sir,

1/ Further to my letter of the  
11<sup>th</sup> inst. I forward file &  
reference numbers which I omitted -

Your file No. 23293/34 - of Oct  
1934. In letter from Matheson <sup>sublin</sup> Ormsby  
& Prender to yourself.

Yours faithfully

H. J. The

Petition

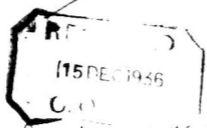
38086/9/36

Page 44

45. Stadi...

Hythe.

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 1936.



To: Under Secretary of State for the Colonies

Dear Sir,

Further to my letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. I forward file & reference number which I mention -

Your file No. 23293/34 - of Oct. 1934. A letter from Matheson <sup>Smith</sup> & Partners to yourself

Yours faithfully,

Arthur Hill

C. O.

Mr. Whitehead 1/1/37.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

38086/9/36

Kenya

Js. and (1) - 1937 file

3

Jan., 1937.

Sir,

With reference to the

DRAFT.

Kenya.

No: 47

800.

~~11. 12. 36.~~

(1)  
6  
(23293/34)  
Kya.

cases, ending with the ref.

from Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister

(now Lord Sumner) No. 9.6 of the

2nd. of Nov., 1934, I have etc.

tr. to you, for your cousin,

a copy of a letter which has

been received from Mrs. Edna

Watt in which she appeals

for assistance to enable her

to return to Kenya.

2 of 6.

FURTHER ACTION.



2. It will be seen that Mrs.

Watt claims that a house would  
be made available for her in the  
event of her returning to the Colony;  
and it appears that she desires,  
in particular, that the liability for  
repayment of the <sup>cost of the</sup> ~~cost of the~~ passage to  
the United Kingdom which  
she was provided should be removed,  
and that the deposit required under  
the immigration regulations should be  
waived in her case. ~~You will, no doubt,~~  
find ~~as~~ your obvious. On these points  
in your reply. I have etc.

(Signed) W. OPMSBY GORE.

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the immigration regulations should be  
waived in her case. ~~You will~~  
You will, no doubt,  
furnish ~~me~~ your observations on these points  
in your reply. I have etc.

(Signed) W. ORMSBY GORE.

Adm.  
re  
12/12

45. St. George Street

4y 1/2

Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 1936

2/6

The Undersecretary of State for the Colonies  
Whitehall

RECEIVED  
12 DEC 1936

(2)  
J. D. (2)  
By Kenya (3)

Sir.

I have been exceedingly troubled since coming to England from Kenya in May 1935. I love Kenya like South Africa. I could seek the advice of the Commissioner, not having that recourse however may I address myself to you as representing the Brown Colonies. I can think call myself a Colonial. I was born in India, lived in Kenya from 1905 to 1935. I may therefore ask your advice & help in this exceedingly difficult position in which I find myself.

I went to India as a very small girl, from India with my parents Mr & Mrs H. J. Turner, who went there in 1905 to be headmaster & miss reeve of the European School Nairobi & Nairobi



he died in 1917, my father was still headmaster of the  
Government School - After my father's death I married  
Mr George Stuart Wall a settler, my husband left  
Kenya in 1934, after what I since have had  
cause to know a rather extraordinary transaction  
the only thing which concerned me about it, is that  
I had to pay the penalty, & considering that I  
was in no way to blame, beyond doing as I was  
told by my husband, I think you will agree that  
the penalty was rather a severe one. I refer you  
to a letter sent to your department in 1934  
ref No. which will recall the circumstances  
My husband was in England & wrote to the head of  
the Salvation Army in Nairobi & guaranteed a home for  
myself & my children, I did not want to come, but  
believing it to be my Christian duty, I agreed to seeking  
a Government Assisted passage for myself and my family  
& to obtain which I had to sign away my rights as a  
"Resident" in Kenya & came to England, only to find  
that there was no home for me - after two or three  
months I had to depend on Parish relief here, & naturally

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 months I had to depend on Parish relief here, & naturally

The Council here resented a family from abroad being  
dumped on them - After a time my husband supported  
us, but only allows me 20/- a week, I have two  
sons who are working, the younger is only now  
15 $\frac{1}{2}$  and is in the Merchant Service ~~now~~ -  
and six younger children from 12 to 6. It is  
now nearly a year since my husband spent  
a night here. It has recently come to my  
knowledge that my husband both before I  
arrived in England and since has been living  
with a young girl of 24 (who has a child of now  
nearly a year), & for whom he got employment  
in his firm - Beatty Bros. manufacturers  
of electrical washing machines etc.

My husband wants me to set him free & says  
he will continue to pay this 20/- because it  
was quite impossible to keep my family & pay  
debts incurred really by my husband i.e.  
rent for this house, rates etc. I have had to  
allow 3 of my little girls to go to the Princess Louise  
Home, Loker Place - My mother, who has a pension

9  
through the Crown Agents lives with me, or  
I should not be able to live at all.

I have had a letter from Lord Mitchener, to  
whom I wrote asking him if the offer he made me  
in Kenya, that I could live on his farm rent free  
still held, & he replied that should I return any  
house he had empty (and he has several) could be  
at my disposal. I am well acquainted with  
farming duties in Africa, ~~the~~ coffee, fruit & maize  
and drive any make of car or lorry, spoke the  
~~foreign~~ native language fluently, & shot & hunted.  
Unfortunately, I am a colonial & do not know  
anything about English life, beyond the year  
I spent at Gheltenham Ladies College & afterwards  
in Belgium. I have no relations here or friends  
beyond a few made recently, and am so I  
can not hope to find employment.

I do not ask for Charity, Sir, but I would  
ask for <sup>Justice</sup> ~~Charity~~, as before in Kenya I am left  
with all the responsibilities, & as you so trust  
know, things come out, and some people



know I was in prison, without troubling themselves to ascertain why, & it is a great drawback to myself & my children. It seems rather extraordinary that I am responsible for the repayment of our passages before I could return to Kenya, & would have to enter ~~us~~ by the usual deposit system instead of as a Resident, while my husband, by leaving me to it & leaving the country has none of these disabilities. He has a good position & no stigma of prison against him.

Could your department not consider this case of a most unhappy woman, who finds she has no country, no home & no husband, and considering my qualifications is there no colony in which we could find a new home & a new hope & work that I could do.

To give the length of my letter, I have tried to be as brief as possible.

I am Sir

Yours faithfully,  
Edna Loatt