

1936

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38242

CO 533/474
KENYA

38242

AIR SURVEY-

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Mr. Perkins

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Sir J. Campbell

30.8.36

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C.I. SURVEY.

1. A. de V. Wade. (s.o.)

12th, March, 1936.

Refers to the need for an aerial survey and enquires the possibility of obtaining a grant from the Colonial Development Fund to cover the cost of this work.

Apparently Mr. Wade has no doubt as to the value of aerial surveys for the purposes mentioned. The particular question of value of aerial surveys has been considered by the Air Survey Committee (composed of War Office and Air Ministry representatives) and I understand from Mr. Bigg that the Committee's report may shortly be expected.

There is an interesting memorandum on 6433/35 General, by the Commissioner of Lands and Settlement in Palestine, in which he criticises the value of air surveys carried out by private companies. The Palestine Govt. is fortunate in that it gets help from the R.A.F. I imagine there is no chance of Kenya's getting assistance from the R.A.F. Squadron now in the Colony. The Squadron is fully occupied in watching the Northern Frontier.

There is proof, however, that the Aircraft Operating Company has produced excellent air survey maps of some 2,500 square miles of the mining areas (see page 9 of the Kenya Mining Report for 1934) and ~~they~~ ^{could} ~~no doubt~~ do the work now required. But before expressing any views regarding the possibility of assistance from the C.D.F. it would be as well to await the impending report of the Air Survey Committee.

C. H. Ross

27.3.36.

This is an echo of No 4 on 6433/35 Gen.
The visit of Capt Robbin to the I. & G. Govt.
was in fact forecast in para. 21 of that letter
? Explain to Mr Wade as at X 2

Say that before considering whether
an approach to the C.D.A.C. and
be justified, it is proposed to
insert in report of the Committee.

J.J. Fanning
27/3

I can very well believe that the Aircraft Operating Company has been very convincing. They always are, but they have a habit of opening their mouths rather wide. In the case of Kenya, I am not at all sure that an air survey would not be a complete waste of money for the reason that Kenya has not done any proper ground work and therefore has not got the necessary frame on which an air survey could be fitted. Of course, it would be easy to take a whole lot of photographs of the forests, but as far as I know, the science of seeing from an air photograph what kind of trees are in the picture is one which is in its infancy. The Operating Company have always made a great point of this (I understand, because there was a man in Burma who could interpret photographs in that way, but he happens to be unique). Similarly, a geological set of photographs are not much good unless you have somebody to read them and unless you have a ground map to fit it on.

If a scheme were put up it would have to be a scheme for an air survey out of the blue, not connected with anything. From a scientific point of view it would be a waste of money because it would all have to be done over again when Kenya gets a proper framework

framework and, from an immediate point of view, I think it would probably cost more than the £20,000.

I think then that I can reply at once that this kind of proposal would not interest the Committee at present and that the Air Survey Committee has been considering this question and will report in due course, and when they do, we shall know more about it. I might also get in a whack at Kenya on the ground that they have starved their ground survey for so long that air survey would be no use.

J. R. de Planhol

28.3.1936.

It is largely a technical matter on which the Survey Office (not the Air Survey Office) would have to advise. If the idea was likely to be accepted by the C.D.A.C. it would have to go to that Office first before reference to the C.D.A.C. for the necessary technical advice. But is there any chance that the C.D.A.C. would ever look at it?

If the C.D.A.C. were convinced that this was really a sound and fructuous scheme, I think they'd consider it sympathetically. They are anxious to get reasonably big--and above all "developmental"--projects, and too few of these have been coming forward. They all wish to get away from the "West Indian" type of application--petty "health" works, drains, minor "settlement" plans, and ~~minor~~ electrical installations.

2. But they would not assist unless satisfied that the thing was sound, and of permanent value. That seems to be the crux. First of all, there is the "framework" question. Isolated ad hoc surveys are of little use; they lack the permanent framework which can alone give them value and permanency. That seems the first point to clear up. If the facts are such that this grant suggested would merely lead to a partial survey, unconnected with a permanent framework, I think the Comm: would rule it out at once.

3. "Spotting" different types of forest trees from aerial photos: is I believe quite simple. I gather that anyone, with a little experience, can do it. It is I believe common practice now:--for mahogany, teak, and other valuable trees.

4. "Geological" ⁱⁿ survey is I understand useful, broadly, as "survey work" of a general type only, except in special localities. It shows where strata are exposed--and saves much time that way; but that merely facilitates ordinary geological work. It is I believe very unusual for an aerial survey to give any direct geological results. It may show, by changing vegetation, that ~~axia~~ the top strata have changed over a well-marked area; but that may be due to non-geological (or non-useful geological) causes. It may show extensive forest denudation--amounting to complete disappearance; and that may in turn point to old workings. (Burma supplies a very notable case in point.)

5. I'd try to settle point 2 above first. That may I think be decisive. And, before saying anything which would lead to a formal application, I'd arrange to have Sir Alan ~~Reg~~ Smith consulted s.o.

The Act does of course refer specifically to "forestry", "surveys", and "the development of mineral resources."

The 30-3-36.

*with
20/3/36*

*I am rather sceptical about the
noting in the very mixed ~~large~~ forest--
it is quite different from ~~of~~ reasoning
from the appearance or ~~the~~ texture of
a known ~~large~~ teak forest.*

*And I think the ~~the~~ geologists aim at
a rough map on which to base their
ground work ~~the~~ rather than at
deducing geological ~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~photos~~.*

*To Mr. Wade as proposed,
mentioning the matter of the
framework. But I should
like Col. Boulenger to see
before it goes to ~~the~~ A.C.*

W. L. 30.3.36 at 11

AIR MAIL 2

*G. A. de V. Wade (No. 1. 2nd) 3/20. 2. 4. 36
Cons.*

W. L. Boulenger

C. O.

Mr. Flood 1/4 gpa

Mr.

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shackburgh

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

AIR MAIL

2 April, 1946

Dear Wade

Your letter of the 12th of

March about Air Surveys to the C.D.A.C.

First of all, there is an Air Survey Committee of War Office and Air Ministry incubating a report. Till that report comes out there is not much that can be said or done, beyond what follows which is as far as I can go.

The Committee would be quite ready to consider an application for assistance towards an air survey if they could be convinced that it would be of permanent value. In the connection isolated bits of survey of a piece of forest or a mineral area would be of little use because they could not be fitted into a general framework which Kenya lacks. Uganda has got such a framework but you haven't. If an application was made for a grant for a partial

DRAFT.

A. de V. Wade Esq. C.M.G., O.B.E.

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FURTHER ACTION.

survey unconnected with an accurate framework the Committee would be more likely than not to rule it out of court.

I gather that you do not envisage an air survey of the whole of Kenya the cost of which would be very much more than £20,000 but only bits for forest work, geology, & soil erosion (really I suppose to get the contours right). The Committee would probably argue that such ad hoc things should be done direct without any assistance from them.

So, at present, I think the answer to your question is that the Committee would not be likely to help but it may be altered when we have the Air Survey report.

The Aircraft Operators Co. are very plausible and very convincing. I know, because I had dealings with them ten years ago when they wanted to survey a chunk of Nigeria for £250,000. It was no use saying that Nigeria hadn't got the money and didn't want that chunk surveyed particularly anyhow. They used to turn up every other day with a new use for the aeroplanes: counting trees, finding unknown villages to tax them (at about 1^p a head!), settling boundaries, discovery of waterways, quelling riots, and so on. The last effort was that if a man got blackwater a plane would take him rapidly to "the healthy hills". I had to say that (a) there weren't any hills & (b) even if there were you can't move a blackwater case.

This is by the way. The upshot is that we must wait for the forthcoming report which was originally expected last autumn (probably the experts are differing)

C. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir C. Parkinson.

Sir G. Tomlinson

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DRAFT.

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but that if Kenya can put up a scheme for a piece of air survey work which could be (a) sound and (b) of permanent value as distinct from a temporary purpose, the Committee would give it very serious consideration. In this an important factor would be the ground framework because if you haven't got that an air survey can have little lasting value. If, however, it is a case of small isolated bits of air survey the Committee is not likely to be favourable.

Even so, one can't tell: we should want to consult our survey people before putting anything to the Committee and if the Ordnance Survey & the War Office experts backed it that would be a very weighty factor.

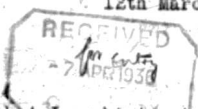
Sorry to be so vague but it's a case of "not knowing can't say". The Committee might welcome the idea and might support it fully: or they might not or might give half support. If, without going to too much bother, you could let me have more information as to the exact nature of what you have in mind, we could consult the Chairman of the Committee and the experts and see what they think.

Yours sincerely,

The Secretariat,

Nairobi

12th March, 1936



Dear Flood,

I feel that I ought to start with an apology for bothering you with so many letters by one air mail.

This one is a tentative inquiry as to whether the Colonial Development Fund Committee would be likely to consider favourably an application for assistance of any sort for an aerial survey.

Gardner wants some of his forests surveyed by air because, although he knows where they are and what their boundaries are, he does not know what is inside the boundaries.

Hosking badly wants some aerial survey work done in connection with a geological survey for mining purposes.

We all want an aerial survey to provide us with information in connection with our pressing problem of soil erosion, particularly in native reserves.

Robbins, of the Aircraft Operating Co., Ltd., has been to see me and H.E. this morning, and is very convincing.

If there is any chance of getting help from the Colonial Development Fund Committee, preferably by way of a free grant, I will have a scheme worked out in detail showing exactly what we want done and where and what the cost would be. I have a sort of idea that we could do a good deal of what we want for about £20,000. Some of the work, e.g. the erosion work, would, I think, be only photography, the mining work would mean mapping as well as photography. I do not want to waste a lot of time getting an application made out in detail if it is certain to be turned down, but if you can tell me that there is a reasonable chance of getting anything out of the Colonial Development Fund and I will get on with the business.

Yours sincerely,