

THE HISTORY OF
COLUMBIA
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There are two Kenyas: on the one hand, the Kenya of white settlement, actual and prospective; on the other, the Kenya of the native reserves. Both at present form part of a single system of government; but their interests are in many respects dissimilar, and the ultimate aims of government in the two parts are not merely different but irreconcilable.

Look first at the forces of white settlement. Here are men and women of our best type, who have for the most part staked their all in the country. They believe in it, they are devoted to it, and they intend to make it their own for ever. They are there, many of them, by the direct act of British Governors or of the British Government. That is a title whatever theorists may say, which no British Government can repudiate. They have given themselves wholeheartedly, with all the means they command to a great colonising enterprise. It has thriven, on the whole, amazingly; the credit of the Empire is engaged in making it stable and complete. Being British, the settlers have one central political aim, self-government. There is no power on earth that will

turn a vigorous British community from the vigorous pursuit of that goal.

The proper line of progress for the African native population is, in essentials, equally clear. It cannot be provided for solely in areas open to white settlement. There must be native reserves, secure for native habitation beyond any peradventure and suited for native production or for native pastoral pursuits. Natives must also be given some real title to their land in the areas reserved for them. The transition to a new policy such as this has its dangers. So, for instance, that the stimulation of native education and production in the reserves may produce for a time at least, a serious shortage of native labour in the white settlements. These dangers have to be met and the immediate needs of the white settlements cannot be brushed aside any more than the ultimate welfare of the native races. But while compromise between the two is absolutely necessary it remains broadly true that the whole future of white colonisation is dependent upon the education and increase of the native races. If a short-sighted policy were pursued towards the natives, the ultimate result would be as

disastrous for the white as for the native community.

There arise from these conditions two facts which are axiomatic in the government of the Colony. In the first place, white opinion in the Colony cannot be ignored or overridden. It is entitled to a very powerful voice, which must ultimately become a decisive voice, in the government of the areas of white colonization; and its interests must be duly considered in the policy pursued for the native reserves. But in the second place, the policy of government in the native reserves cannot be made wholly subservient to the needs and opinions of the white settlers. They are deeply interested parties, and there is no human community, however well-meaning and however high-minded, which can rule a subject race disinterestedly, when it holds power as an autocratic oligarchy outnumbered by its subjects in the ratio of 200 to 1.

These considerations are so evident that they are in point of fact, already enshrined in unmistakable official declarations. The White Paper of July, 1923 (Cmd. 1923) stated that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if and when, these interests and the

interests of the immigrant races conflict, the former should prevail." It also declared that "His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population," and that "they are unable to delegate and share this trust." But in spite of these declarations, the government of the natives is still profoundly affected by the character and powers of the Legislative Council, and His Majesty's Government does in fact qualify and share its trusteeship with elements in the Colony which are not, and cannot be, disinterested.

The criticisms to which the present system in the Colony is exposed are disagreeably familiar - excessive taxation of natives, inadequate expenditure on native welfare, thinly disguised compulsion of native labour, administration inspired by European to the exclusion of native interests. It does not suffice to answer that this strain of comment is, as a rule, unfair and greatly exaggerated. It is. But under the present system it cannot be disarmed or effectively countered. For the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, who represent the white settlers, are just as suspicious of the administration of the native

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reserves from their own standpoint as the so-called
 "unapproachable" from theirs. Inquiries are demanded, officers
are pilloried, discipline is undermined. This is bad enough
 for Government, but it is worse still for the native. Like
 all backward peoples he likes to feel, if freedom to live his
 life in his own way is denied him, that his affairs are at
least subject to a clear and definite authority. He knows
 instinctively when his rulers are called in question of lack
 self-confidence. He will never make progress except under
 an impartial, steady and sympathetic administration, which
 knows its mind towards him, supports its representatives, and
 pursues a far-sighted policy with firmness and continuity.
 But under the present system such an administration and such
 a policy are unattainable. A system of trusteeship, thus
administered, can never escape a damaging stream of criticism.

It may be asked why, since the broad lines of a
 progressive native policy are marked out by experience else
 where, the Government cannot pursue them in Kenya. In
 theory that may seem an easy course, but in fact, under the
 present system, I believe it to be impracticable because of
 a vice inherent in all representative systems dominated by

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an official and automatic majority. In such systems the unofficial members have no adequate raison d'être unless they constitute themselves critics of the Government. The bureaucracy is always in power; the elected members therefore are always in opposition. It is their business to hammer continually on the same note, the interest of the white settlers; and Government, though it has the power to controvert them, is in practice bound to show deference to their opinion. Government is therefore for ever accepting enquiries, justifying what should need no justification, and providing this or that amendment of its actions. The result is not a steady policy, holding a just balance between European and native interests; it is a see-saw, which is bewildering to the native, favourable to Government officers and bad alike for the population and general welfare of the Colony. If native labour controlled by Government were essential to industry in England and if the Treasury Bench of Westminster were tenanted solely by permanent officials under the leadership of Mr. Speaker with a permanent majority, while the representatives of industry and in a permanent minority upon the benches opposite, the result

would not be dissimilar. Industry would be restive; the Government, whatever it did, would be unpopular, and the natives would be bewildered. Sound, continuous and progressive native administration is impossible under such a system.

If this system is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of native government, it is equally unsatisfactory, for several reasons, from the standpoint of the European Colony.

In the first place, whatever faults are found in the native policy of the Colony, those faults, real, exaggerated or purely imaginary, are attributed to the selfishness or short-sightedness of the European settlers and to their influence over Government. Suspicion has been inflamed by books and articles. The Colony has been most unfairly pilloried. But the Government of the Colony cannot ignore outside opinion altogether, and still less can the Imperial Government do so. The native races of Africa are in the limelight just now, and there is little appreciation of the perfectly legitimate interests of the European settlers who have, in many cases under the direct inspiration

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of Government, made the Colony their home. There is a very real danger in these circumstances that outside opinion may concentrate on a policy which would be ruinous to the Colony.

In the second place, it is inevitable in such a situation that the less far-seeing amongst the white settlers should take short and narrow views. Men and women who have sunk their all in the Colony and are struggling to make good cannot be expected to concern themselves over-much with the future. Such people are naturally afraid of accommodation and compromise. They will not give an inch for fear an ell should be taken from them. They see no safety except in fighting with all their strength against modifications of the existing system.

Nor is this the worst effect of the system. Even more serious is the fact that while the administration of the native reserves is part of the general government of the Colony, the European Colony can never concentrate on its own problems and develop a stronger claim to representative institutions. Nevertheless that claim will be pressed with increasing vigour, and can only add another element of unrest

and instability to the life of the Colony.

The constitution of the Colony is, in fact, a hybrid with the worst faults of hybrids. It is, amongst political systems, what the mule is amongst domesticated animals. As the mule lacks the finer qualities of the horse, this system neutralises the practical political sense of the British population; and it makes the worst of the native races, just as the mule exhibits the worst qualities of its other parent. Like the mule, moreover, it is doomed to complete sterility.

I submit that the only remedy for this situation is to divide the two functions of government in the Colony, to separate the area alienated to European settlers from the rest of the Colony, to confine the present system of government to the European area, and to place the rest of the Colony under the direct administration of the Governor as High Commissioner.

The advantages of making this change immediately appear to be very substantial. In the first place Government would be free to work out and apply a long-sighted policy of

native education in the reserves: the natives would know where they were, and so would the officers entrusted with the duty of carrying out the official policy. There would be an end to the dual control which does arise, in fact if not in theory, from the present system of official administration tempered by continuous enquiry and debate. The taxation of the ~~native areas~~ ^{European Colony} could also be separated from general taxation in the rest of the Colony, the European Colony making some contribution proportionate to its wealth and population to the general expenses of the Colony and keeping the remainder of its revenue for its own requirements. There will never, as it seems to me, be any satisfactory balance established between native and non-native taxation until this division is made between the finance of the European area and the general finance of the Colony

In the second place, if the administration of the alienated areas were thus detached from the politics of the European Colony, the latter could be given much more latitude in legislation regarding natives in the areas of white settlement. Natives could retire to their own areas if they preferred life there to life in the Colony.

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Settlers, on the other hand, would be free to recruit in the native areas, and their success in such recruiting would be governed entirely by the conditions offered to natives in the European settlements. It would thus be possible in a reasonably close future to modify the present system under which the elected members of the Legislative Council are always overshadowed by a bureaucratic majority; for the check on the more short-sighted element amongst the elected members would be, not the artificial and irritating control of the Government Lobby, but the natural and salutary realization that they themselves must maintain conditions satisfactory to native labour. The constitutional development of the Colony would, moreover, no longer be overshadowed by the question of native franchise and native representation in the Legislative Council, and would thus be released of once from what is now recognized in the United States as an insoluble problem. If the natives were free at will to live in their own areas, and entered the white areas or lived there merely because they preferred them or found they earned a better living there than at home, there would be no argument for advancing them to any share of political res-

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possibility outside their own communities. As things are, this demand is certain to be made, sooner or later, by outside opinion. To exercise it for ever would be a really priceless boon to the natives themselves, to the European settlers, and to the whole future of the Colony.

If the change is to be made successfully, and with immediate advantage to the Colony, it must be supported by a real measure of agreement on the part of the European settlers. I should not despair of securing this, on the following conditions:-

In the first place, the European reserve to be formed out of the alienated lands and their inhabitants - a total, I think, of less than half a million souls concentrated in the central highlands - would have to be assured of adequate financial resources for its development. It would be necessary for this purpose that its contribution to the general expenditure of the Colony should be very small, at any rate in the early stages, and that Government should undertake to assist its claims by all legitimate means. I do not know whether

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the Government would consider a small grant in aid - say, of £100,000 annually over a period of ten years. That sum, a total of £1,000,000, if it could be secured from Parliament, would be a small price to pay for a solution of the Kenya problem and for the fulfilment of the Government's pledges to the settlers, which are at present being defrayed by the native population. It would be hardly just that the Imperial Government should call the tune, and leave the settlers entirely unassisted in paying the piper. Failing such a grant, the contribution of the Enclave to the general expenditure of the Colony would have to be reduced to very small proportions for a considerable period.

In the second place, the European Colony should be given some assurance in regard to Government policy on the supply of labour. All that Government could do in this respect would be to promise no abrupt change in the present regulations, while sparing no effort to increase the efficiency of labour and hasten the introduction of labour-saving devices. There is, I fear, no practicable source from which fresh supplies of labour can be drawn

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outside the Colony, and the Government is in honour bound not to take any sudden action which would injure the settlers.

On both the question of finance and that of labour supply, there would have, in fact, to be a considerable measure of compromise and accommodation. Every form of consideration shown to the interests of the European Colony in the first years of separation would no doubt be met by violent criticism by visionary reformers; but the Government could afford to ignore such criticism if only it could escape from the vice of the present system and feel that its course was set upon progressive lines of equal benefit to the long run both to the European Colony and to the native races.

The third condition which would play an important part in changing the relation of the European Colony behind the proposed change of system would be some definite assurance - reinforced if possible by some practical measure - regarding the security of our position as Mandatory of the League of Nations in Tanganyika. The Mandatory position is widely regarded as

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uncertain and as liable to changes totally unconnected with the interests of East Africa. It spreads fear lest the Imperial Government should be moved by high political considerations to sacrifice the legitimate interests of its own people in East Africa to new policies or even new territorial arrangements. Attention is called to this aspect of the present situation in the Crosby-Sore Report (page 11a). While it prevails, we must reckon with a wide-spread anxiety lest our position in Tanganyika should place the other British East African Territories and the development of our East African Empire as a whole at the mercy of a distant and incalculable international force. It is suggested that something may be done to allay this uncertainty by two measures affecting the administration of the Rusizi Reserve and of the Rusizi and Arusha Districts in Tanganyika Territory which I discuss in an accompanying Memorandum on the continuation of policy in East Africa. But the assurance suggested in the next paragraph that the headquarters of Government will not be taken from Entebbe would go some way also to meet the fear that

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that Africa as a whole may come too much under the influence of international bodies.

This fourth condition is, indeed, of peculiar importance. The European Colony in Kenya regards with great suspicion any proposals which may tend to shift the headquarters of Government from Nairobi. They are not unnaturally afraid that if they are set apart as a white enclave in the Kenya Highlands, they will lose all voice in the general policy of the Governments outside their own area, and so become a helpless white island in a vast ocean of backward races, whose interests have become the exclusive preoccupation of all the other East African administrations. There is real substance in this fear, for remoteness is largely a question of atmosphere, and Government is always bound to be more susceptible to the influence of the European Colony if Nairobi remains the headquarters for Government Conferences and other measures of co-ordination embracing all East African possessions. On the other hand, if the headquarters passed elsewhere, to be reached only by despatches and far-flung deputations, the European Colony

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would feel as remote from the Power which brought it into being as the original gentlemen-settlers in the Plantation of Virginia. I am convinced that if any change of system is to be introduced with a general measure of concurrence from the European Colony, this anxiety regarding the position of Nairobi must be allayed. I therefore attach great importance to the proposals on this subject submitted in my Memorandum on the co-ordination of East African policy.

I would return, in conclusion, to the immediate need of a change of system and to the advantages which would, I think, flow from it.

The need seems to me urgent for a special reason. The Report of the Ormsby-Gore Commission recommends the establishment without further delay of a Trust Board, in which all native lands should be vested. It does not seem to me constitutionally sound to set up a new body in the Colony which directly represents the Crown but is separate from and independent of the Governor. If the Crown is to remain the ultimate owner of the unalienated lands in the

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Colony, including the native reserves, its title should be vested in the representative of the Crown, and the Governor's responsibility as Trustee for the Crown should be clearly distinguished from his responsibility as head of the Colony in other respects. If the Trust Board or Boards are to be established under the existing system of government in the Colony, there will be much controversy of a very undesirable character as to their composition. The "negrophiles" in this country will demand such representation of their standpoint as will colour the Boards entirely to their pleasure; and many strange innovations may creep into our constitutional practice, such as the establishment of Missionaries as Crown Agents, sharing the trusteeship of lands on behalf of the natives. The more new departures like these are pressed from England, the more will the European settlers urge their own claims to effective representation. It will be a pull-devil pull-baker business and the Board will become a congeries of discordant and irreconcilable opinions. Everything, moreover, which it says or does will be further debated in the Legislative Council, and this will lead to still more protests and representations from the protectors of the native races.

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I see no way out of these difficulties except to vest all unalienated land, including the native reserves, in the Governor as the representative of the Crown, to make him directly responsible for the government of the whole of the unalienated territory, the assignment of land to the natives, and native policy generally, and to put all his actions and responsibilities in this capacity outside the range of the Legislative Council - outside, in fact, the politics of the Colony. This would not absolve him from the necessity of consulting European opinion and securing the concurrence of its more responsible elements, such concurrence would be essential. But it would lift his responsibilities as High Commissioner and the actions of his officers out of the normal scope of controversial politics in the Colony and would thus enable native administration to be carried on with new confidence in a clearer atmosphere. It would also prevent as nothing else could, the growth and exposure of fundamental differences between native policy in Kenya and native policy in the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika.

It may be said, I know, that to do this is to

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deprive the European Colony of all real responsibility for the future of the native races and to make it a white enclave which must stand separate for ever from the main political tasks and problems of the East African Empire. If I thought this would be the result of what I propose, I would not propose it. But I do not think it would. I am convinced, on the contrary, that the result would be the very opposite. Let me briefly give the reason.

It is not possible to learn to feel responsibility as an opposition, and the vice of the present system is, I repeat, that the elected representatives of the white settlers are of necessity in perpetual opposition. They cannot be given more power in the government of the whole Colony as now constituted until they have shown themselves more fitted for it. They can never show themselves more fitted for that broader responsibility until they have learnt by responsibility in some narrower sphere of native government. As Aristotle remarks somewhere, the only way of learning to play the flute is to play the flute. I would add that no one is given the freedom of a great organ until he has done some exercises on a harmonium.

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The present system, then, is like a ship in irons. It can never get steering way. But if the European Colony is set on its own base and given the largest possible measure of responsibility, it will show a change of spirit at once. It will have to face, with some necessary help, the problem of finance. It will have to face the problem of government over something like half-a-million natives now living in alienated territory. Its present welfare and its whole future development will depend on the success with which it carries out these tasks. And it will certainly succeed. The stock is British, and much too good to fail when real responsibility in its own area is placed upon it.

I do not, however, look upon this division between the European Colony and the rest of Kenya as the last word. Far from it. It is to my mind the shortest road, and the only road, to a new synthesis. The European Colony in its own sphere, and the other Governments of East Africa in theirs, must keep in close and continuous touch, and by those means, if they are pursued with mutual loyalty, a wise balance will be struck between European and native development.

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beneficial, indeed essential, to both. When that balance is assured, the time will have come for a new co-ordination of government throughout East Africa, and in it the European Colonists will take their rightful place as the leaders of the great community of diverse races of which the East African Empire consists.

This Memorandum does not deal with the third distinctive element in the population of Kenya, the Indian community. I have omitted it, not because I underrate its importance, but because the future of the Colony turns upon production, and production depends primarily on the white settlers, the native races, and the relations existing between these two. I think, however, that the Indian question itself would also be more tractable if the government of the European enclave were entirely detached from the government of the rest of the Colony, and that some might then be found of providing for the needs and claims of the Indian community without in any way compromising or impairing the progress of the European Colony.

To summarize, I propose that the Government should

be divided into two separate administrations, namely:-

- (a) The lands alienated to European settlers, administered by the Governor as Governor with the aid of the Executive and Legislative Councils.
- (b) The rest of the Colony, including the native reserves, administered by the Governor as High Commissioner with the aid of an Advisory Council.

If the Secretary of State is prepared to consider this proposal, I will submit some further suggestions as to the necessary machinery and the best means of bringing the new system into operation.

Edward Gigg.

Jan. 19th,
1925.