

## ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE BRITISH EAST AFRICAN TERRITORIES

THE population of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika has increased in two decades from less than twelve to nearly twenty million, and continues to increase by some three to four hundred thousand a year. Against this background the expenditure of £10 million a year on development under the 1947-56 development programme seems a relatively small sum. These points are brought out by a recent survey of economic conditions in East Africa proper together with Zanzibar, Somaliland, Aden, Mauritius and Seychelles\*. The survey forms part of "An Economic Survey of the Colonial Territories, 1951" which is designed to provide a convenient summary account of conditions in overseas territories similar to those published at roughly annual intervals before the Second World War, and last issued in 1940 ("An Economic Survey of the Colonial Empire (1937)", Col. No. 179). The present survey does not, however, attempt to cover the decade 1937-47. It is concerned mainly with post-war developments, pre-war figures being quoted only as a basis for comparison. Six volumes have so far been published since February 1952: Vol. 1, Central African and High Commission Territories (Col. No. 281-1); Vol. 3, West African Territories (Col. No. 281-3); Vol. 4, West Indian and American Territories (Col. No. 281-4); Vol. 6, Mediterranean and Pacific Territories (Col. No. 281-6); Vol. 7, Products of the Colonial Territories (Col. No. 281-7); and the present volume. A final volume yet to appear, on the Far Eastern territories, will complete the first comprehensive post-war survey. Although referring nominally to 1951, each volume has been kept up to date by the inclusion of relevant statistics available at the time of publication. The whole series will provide an admirable datum from which to assess progress during the second half of the current development programmes at the end of 1956.

In conformity with the general plan, Vol. 2 treats each territory independently under four main headings: general background, productive activities, finance and trade, and development. The first section in each case is more important than the heading suggests and includes a brief description of geographical features, a full discussion of population data and problems, and a summary of the main facts relating to social, political and economic conditions and legislation, transport and communications. The second is not confined to commercial activities but offers much valuable information, supported so far as possible by statistics, on such topics as subsistence agriculture and domestic industries. The work of the East African High Commission and the East African Currency Board which concerns Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika collectively, and the external trade of the three countries, are discussed separately in an appendix.

A large part of the report is devoted to commercial production, trade and finance, but the authors rightly emphasize that the overwhelming majority of the

population of the mainland territories live directly off the land by subsistence cultivation and nomadic pastoralism. Since responsibility for the future stability of East Africa will presumably sooner or later rest with this majority instead of with the sixty thousand or so European settlers, their welfare is a matter of first importance. It is encouraging to find that a substantial proportion of the revenue derived from increased commercial output, Colonial Development and Welfare funds and other sources has been used for combating the various problems resulting from increasing population and consequent shortage of productive land. So far as can be estimated, the total cultivated area amounts to only about 10 per cent of Uganda, 5 per cent of Kenya and 3 per cent of Tanganyika; but owing to pests, deficient or uncertain water supplies and other difficulties, there is little hope of solving the problem by extension of the cultivated area alone. On the contrary, spontaneous attempts by peasant cultivators to achieve this end by keeping temporary plots under cultivation for longer periods at a time, clearance of woodland and encroachment on marginal land have led to loss of fertility and aggravated the menace of soil erosion. Already in Kenya some 600,000 acres of the Highlands are estimated to be in need of protection. It is difficult to judge from the survey how much progress has been made; but there are some indications. In the Central Province of Kenya 81,000 acres are now terraced, and the Forestry Department is undertaking extensive afforestation schemes, the present target being 6,000 acres of new softwood plantations a year. In Uganda 45,000 acres are being developed as a source of commercial softwoods; but these together with protective measures elsewhere will help to mitigate the losses due to soil erosion.

Progress is also reported from all three High Commission Territories in the campaign to encourage Africans to abandon the primitive practices of shifting cultivation and fragmentation of holdings through inheritance, in favour of permanent cultivation of small holdings varying from five to thirty acres, and family group farms. The Kikuyu are settling in increasing numbers; more use is being made of mechanical ploughs and other equipment loaned by government centres in Tanganyika; and strip cultivation is spreading in Uganda. The effects of more elaborate measures for rehabilitation of land (for example, the Sukumuland Scheme in Lake Province, Tanganyika) are cumulative and cannot be fairly assessed at this early stage of development. Before leaving the subject, it is worthy of note that subsistence production of both maize and groundnuts in Uganda is estimated to have increased two and a half times between 1938 and 1951, far in excess of the increase of population even if a considerable margin of error be taken into account.

On the commercial side a net improvement in the balance of visible trade of the High Commission Territories is reported for 1952, Kenya's £29.6 million excess of imports over exports for that year being more than compensated by the surplus exports of Uganda (£23.4 million) and Tanganyika (£10.5

\* Colonial Office. An Economic Survey of the Colonial Territories, 1951: Vol. 2, The East African Territories. (Col. No. 281-2.) Pp. 203. (London: H.M.S.O., 1954.) 32s. 6d. net.

million). Notable increases have been effected in the production and export of tea and wattle-bark from Kenya; sisal, coffee and cotton lint from Tanganyika; cotton (due mainly to the Abyan irrigation scheme in the Western Protectorate) from Aden; and sugar from Mauritius. In the last-named Colony attempts to broaden the basis of the economy have met with little success, sugar production having reached a new peak of 515,000 tons in 1952 compared with the pre-war peak of 320,000 tons in 1938. Industrial development in East Africa has continued to expand for the dual purpose of supplying the home market with consumer goods (capital and producer's goods accounted for more than half the retained imports in 1951) and for social ends—to absorb some of the surplus labour created by the continued drift into the towns. Other developments await improvement of communications. The production of copper at Kilembe in south-west Uganda is due to commence this year, but large-scale output cannot be expected until the 215-mile railway extension from Kampala, already proceeding west of Mityana, has been completed. The importance attached to development of communications may be gauged from the fact that the East African Railways and Harbours Administration ranks as the largest industrial undertaking in the High Commission area, with a staff of more than 32,000, of whom 857 are Europeans.

In the survey as a whole, comparatively little reference has been made to pre-war figures which would have made it easier to review post-war progress in comparative terms. On the other hand, the appendix contains a useful supplement on trade in which an attempt has been made to compare conditions before and after 1949 when trade statistics for the High Commission Territories were placed on a common basis. This includes a detailed analysis of the direction of trade in leading commodities for the three countries, similar to those given for Aden, Zanzibar and Mauritius earlier in the survey.

It would be futile to attempt to summarize the findings of a report of this scope in the brief space of a review. There can be no question that it is a highly competent and valuable basic document for all who are concerned with East African affairs. Such deficiencies as there are mainly arise from the inadequacy of statistical data relating to the activities of 90 per cent of the inhabitants. It seems likely, for example, that the annual rate of natural increase of the African population of Kenya ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 per cent), Uganda ( $1$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent) and Tanganyika ( $1$ –2 per cent) may be under-estimated. According to the present survey and the survey for 1936 (Col. No. 149), the total population of the three territories increased from some twelve million to nearly eighteen million during the twelve-year period 1937–48, corresponding to a natural increase of nearly 5 per cent a year. Allowing for immigration, which at the peak of the post-war influx into Kenya reached 59,000 in 1951, and a higher than average figure for the Indian minority, the overall rate of natural increase among the African population prior to the 1948 census must have been well in excess of 2 per cent. In any event, at least a temporary acceleration rather than a decline in the rate of increase must be expected as current expenditure on the development of medical services takes effect. Without attaching undue importance to figures which can be no more than rough approximations and which are stated in the survey in carefully guarded terms, one hopes that the magnitude of the population problem has not

been under-estimated. The next census will no doubt shed more light on the subject. At present large sums are being spent on what may be termed basic development (hydrological and other surveys, research, training and education), as distinct from more publicized industrial ventures like the Owen Falls scheme, with consequences that remain to be foreseen. Meanwhile, here are food for thought and data for research in abundance.

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## UNESCO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARID ZONE RESEARCH

THE Advisory Committee on Arid Zone Research of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) held its seventh session during May 4–7 in Paris. The meeting was attended by members from Australia, India, Italy, Mexico, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States and, as on previous occasions, by representatives from various Specialized Agencies of the United Nations Organization and from international scientific and engineering bodies, and by French members of the Arid Zone Panel of Honorary Consultants. The principal recommendations made by the Committee were as follows.

*Symposia and reports.* It was proposed that the secretariat should explore the possibility of holding a small symposium in 1955 on human and animal ecology in arid zones, which would enable the proceedings of such a symposium to be published in conjunction with reports on this subject that are being obtained. With regard to the symposium on problems related to arid zone research, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which is to be held in New Mexico during April 27–28, 1955, it was proposed that Unesco should make a grant to assist travel of scientists attending the symposium and also that the Arid Zone Research Committee should hold its ninth session in New Mexico in conjunction with this symposium. It was recommended that review reports should be obtained in 1956 on the formation and erosion of soils in arid zones as affected by climatic factors; these reports could then be published with the proceedings of a symposium on the same subject that is due to be held in the same year.

*Travelling fellowships for senior scientists.* Fellowships should be given to enable senior scientists to visit institutions outside their own country and, when these are given, the recipients should be allowed as much latitude as possible with regard to travel within the country visited.

*Handbook and survey.* At previous meetings it was decided to recommend the production of a handbook to guide in the collection of basic data that would be required when making plans for the development of an arid area, and preparations for writing this handbook are well under way. The Committee considered the advisability of instigating an integrated survey of one or more restricted areas on the lines proposed in such a handbook. It recommended that Dr. B. T. Dickson, who is editor of the handbook, should assemble information on such survey work that has been carried out in Australia and elsewhere, and that the Committee should consider the proposal at its next meeting.