

A LAST CHANCE IN KENYA

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AUTHOR OF "KENYA"

"The African, of course, has no views at all."

(Sir Edward Grigg, recently Governor of Kenya, in answer, in the Joint Select Committee, to the question what were the opinions on Closer Union of the various sections of the community in Kenya.)



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PREFACE

IN my earlier book *Kenya* I made a serious blunder. Misled by a crease in a newspaper cutting, I failed to see where a quotation ended, and attributed to Sir Edward Northey, at one time Governor of Kenya, words that were part of an anonymous leading article. I take this opportunity of making public apology to Sir Edward.

Great pains have been taken to avoid such blunders in this book. Two men who happened to be on leave from Kenya while it was being written read and criticised drafts of the chapters that contain statements of fact. Drafts of most of the chapters were read and criticised by two other men with longer and more recent experience of Eastern Africa than my own. Of these four, the only one whom I may thus publicly thank is the Venerable Archdeacon Owen, to whom the Africans of Kenya owe more than to any other person.

As with my earlier book, my brother, Kenneth Leys, of University College, Oxford, and with him my sister, Mary Leys, of the Oxford Society of Home Students, spared no pains in giving invaluable criticism and suggestion. I owe the tables in the Appendix and other statistical matter of great value to Mr. Charles Speller, formerly of Merton College, and at one time a resident in Kenya. I owe much to the help of my wife, my brother Dr. Duncan Leys, formerly of Balliol, and my old college friend the

Rev. Thomas Rook, of Derby. I am grateful both for criticism and for reading the proofs to Miss Winifred Holtby, formerly of Somerville, and to my daughter Agnes, formerly of St. Hilda's.

The introduction may be ignored by readers already familiar with the subject.

The book was practically finished when the Labour Government went out of office in August 1931.

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INTRODUCTION

GRANTS of land have been made to Europeans in all the British Dependencies in East Africa, the largest and most numerous of them in Kenya. Hence the existence in that country of a European colony of by this time about 16,500 men, women and children, of whom some 2100 are landholders, who, together with an unknown but large number of absentees, own about 11,000 square miles of land. There are also more than 30,000 Indians and about 3,000,000 Africans in Kenya. In the other East African countries European residents are less numerous and influential.

Sir Joseph Byrne went to Kenya as Governor early in 1931. His four immediate predecessors governed the country in close co-operation with the leaders of the settlers, as the European residents are called. The settlers elect, under adult suffrage confined to Europeans, eleven out of the thirty members of the Legislature, and are represented on the small Executive Council. For more than twenty years Kenya has been governed, as to both legislation and administration, in accordance with what the settlers consider the right policy, despite frequent protests from the Indians and, during the last few years, a fast-growing tide of dissatisfaction among the African population, now emerging from the tribal stage of society. But the position of the settlers was felt to be insecure. Constitutionally, the Legislature has merely the function of advising the Governor, whose duty it is to carry out, with the help of the

official majority, the policy approved by Imperial Parliament, as expressed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Neither Parliament nor Colonial Office has ever publicly disowned the traditional British policy of equal rights and opportunities for all, although wide inroads have been made upon it in practice in a number of Dependencies under Imperial control. Nowhere have these inroads been so large as in Kenya. Further, the Labour Party was known to be deeply committed to the resumption of that traditional British policy. And, in the last year or two, its partial resumption by Sir Donald Cameron in the neighbouring Territory of Tanganyika, in spite of protests by the settlers, had won a popularity that contrasted with the poverty and unrest prevailing among the Africans of Kenya.

The settlers proposed to meet these dangers to their position, first, by persuading the Imperial Government to abolish the official majority in the Kenya Legislature, that makes it possible for a Governor to restore the policy that our country has always professed to follow, and second, by the creation of a Federation of all the countries in British East Africa, through which they might exercise over the whole area the control over policy that hitherto has mainly been confined to Kenya. While this situation was developing, a series of Commissions were appointed to investigate the problem. Until the appointment in 1931 of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, the only one of these Commissions that was properly representative was the large Royal Commission of 1924, which was dissolved in the following year, for a reason that has never been publicly explained. While the reports of all except one of these Commissions contain long accounts of what their authors considered were the needs of the Africans, who in Kenya are 98 per cent of the population, and are an even larger proportion in the other East African countries, none of them explained at all adequately their wishes, especially

those of the peasantry. This book contains an account of their situation and their desires.

But there is a far more urgent reason for its being written. The policy pursued for five years by the last Governor, Sir Edward Grigg, which was really Lord Delamere's, which in turn, though this is denied, was an adaptation of the South African policy, has dangerously ripened unrest in Kenya. He was not the first Governor to believe that the key to every door to prosperity was the encouragement of "white settlement", by building up, by means of privileges and subsidies of many kinds, a European colony large enough to be entrusted with the responsibility for governing the country. But he carried out that policy with unprecedented completeness. Before his time each Government Department had an executive head who was responsible solely to the Governor. Sir Edward provided the different departments with boards or committees, dealing with education, roads and so forth, composed of settlers, which, though like the Legislature they had only advisory functions, found that their advice was generally decisive. He instituted a system of committing local affairs to bodies similarly composed, which are entrusted with the expenditure of public funds, though they raise no money locally. Sir Edward greatly extended the system of subsidies to the European colony which, as we shall see in detail, is so remarkable a feature of Kenya society.

Sir Edward Grigg's confidence in the ability of the resident European minority in Kenya to govern their African employees wisely and justly was closely related to his lack of confidence in the capacity of Africans. The reader will see no small way into the problem of Kenya if he grasps the fact that the man who has been governing Kenya for the last five years was so misinformed by his principal advisers as to be capable of using the words quoted on the title-page. The author will be abundantly

content if he can persuade some of the public of the falsity of this view of Africans half as successfully as the African delegates themselves convinced the Select Committee of its falsity.¹

Apart from the causes of long continuance that are described in the chapters of this book, several incidental causes have contributed to make the next two years a period of special danger in Kenya. Every economic injustice has been aggravated by the fall in the world level of prices. A less calculable influence is that of the Africans who recently visited this country, who were almost the first from Kenya to do so. The courtesy with which the chairman and members of the Select Committee treated the official delegates, so different from the treatment they habitually get in Kenya, and the close attention with which they were heard, made a deep impression. The author thought it best to say to them no word except of friendly greeting. But he knows they went back to Africa on tiptoe with expectation, and greatly encouraged by the discovery of the fact that a large and important body of men and women in this country advocates the measures that would result in the complete redress of their grievances.

The deplorable decision of the Select Committee to refuse to hear the delegates chosen and sent, at the cost of great sacrifices, by Africans themselves, though it had listened to the delegates chosen by the Government, must have added many to the number of those in Kenya who suspect that our promises are not intended to be fulfilled. But, more than all else, it is the knowledge that their Government was directed, in the White Paper on Native Policy published in June 1930, to do some of the things they most ardently wish, and yet has done nothing to fulfil these directions, that has done so much to silence those who

¹ The Joint Select Committee of Parliament held its sittings during the first half of 1931. Its report had not been made public when this book was finished.

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advocate patience and to encourage those who advocate resistance.

These are the factors that go to make up the situation of the moment in Kenya. For a more general account of society in that country the reader is referred to the author's *Kenya*, and to Mr. MacGregor Ross's *Kenya from Within*.

APPENDIX¹

POPULATION AND ITS RATIO TO TOTAL ACREAGE IN CERTAIN NATIVE DISTRICTS OF KENYA COLONY

	Population.	Acres per head.
KAVIRONDO PROVINCE.²		
<i>Districts:</i>		
N. Kavirondo . . .	332,835	4·6
C. Kavirondo . . .	370,046	3·1
S. Kavirondo . . .	320,514	5·9
KIKUYU PROVINCE.		
<i>Districts:</i>		
<i>Meru—</i>		
Igembe . . .	35,238	6·0
Tigania . . .	35,652	4·5
Imendi . . .	80,097	2·2
Tharaka . . .	10,937	14·0
<i>Embu—</i>		
Muthambi . . .	3,784	3·3
Mwimba . . .	14,099	5·8
Chuka . . .	13,448	5·6
Embu . . .	38,594	3·4
Mbere . . .	23,071	17·2
<i>Nyeri—</i>		
Nyeri . . .	107,155	2·0
Keruguya . . .	83,738	3·1
<i>Fort Hall—</i>		
N. Maragua . . .	86,279	2·2
S. Maragua . . .	86,540	2·2
<i>Kiambu—</i>		
Mukinyi . . .	24,523	3·3
Kiambu . . .	24,293	2·5
Dagoreti . . .	31,306	1·3
<i>Total</i>		912

¹ Compiled from information given in the House of Commons, June 10, 1931.

² Compiled from Report on *Kikuyu Land Tenure*, November 1929.

NATIVE SQUATTERS RESIDENT UPON EUROPEAN
HOLDINGS IN KENYA COLONY ON JULY 30, 1930

Province.	Total.	Per cent.	Acres occupied.	
			Total.	Per Head.
Coast	503	0.5	2,806	5.3
Ukamba	5,943	5.4	79,680	13.4
Kikuyu	27,096	24.6	209,123	7.7
Naivasha	16,083	14.6	133,642	8.3
Rift Valley	11,940	10.8	85,365	7.1
Nzoia	29,195	26.5	388,338	13.3
Nyanza	19,396	17.6	162,929	8.4
Total	110,156	100.0	1,061,883	9.6

NATIVE SQUATTERS IN THE KIKUYU PROVINCE

District.	Total.	Per cent.	Acres occupied.	
			Total.	Per Head.
Nairobi	1,330	5.0	21,330	16.0
Kiambu	11,479	42.4	63,745	5.5
Fort Hall	10,674	39.4	79,581	7.4
Nyeri, North	3,567	13.1	44,467	12.5
Embu and Meru	46	0.1	...	...
Total	27,096	100.0	209,123	7.7

NATIVE SQUATTERS IN THE NYANZA PROVINCE

District.	Total.	Per cent.	Acres occupied.	
			Total.	Per Head.
Kavirondo, Central . . . .	...	...	...	...
„ North	432	2.2	678	1.6
„ South . . . .	...	...	...	...
Ksu Ldi	9,026	46.5	84,081	9.3
Kericho	9,938	51.3	78,170	7.8
Total	19,396	100.0	162,929	8.4

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND AND LIVESTOCK IN CERTAIN
NATIVE DISTRICTS OF KENYA COLONY AS AT JULY 31, 1930

District.	Each Head of Population.					Per 100 acres of Pasture.	
	Acres.			Number of		Cattle.	Sheep.
	Total.	Arable.	Stock.	Cattle.	Sheep.		
<i>Coast:</i>							
Nyika, North . . .	15.80	0.40	15.40	0.22	0.57	1.45	3.74
„ South . . .	22.65	0.56	22.09	0.51	0.97	2.29	4.39
Average . . .	18.12	0.46	17.66	0.32	0.71	1.81	4.00
<i>Ukamba:</i>							
Machakos . . .	4.75	0.17	4.58	1.10	1.38	24.10	30.30
Kitui . . .	27.40	1.06	26.34	1.58	2.63	6.00	10.00
Teita . . .	5.40	0.30	5.10	0.23	0.68	4.50	13.50
Average . . .	12.59	0.59	12.00	1.20	1.75	9.80	14.45
<i>Kikuyu:</i>							
Kiambu . . .	2.87	1.82	1.05	0.35	0.56	33.50	53.20
Fort Hall . . .	2.15	1.28	0.87	0.11	0.81	13.00	92.40
Nyeri South . . .	2.38	0.73	1.65	1.17	3.73	71.06	225.80
Embu . . .	7.50	1.00	6.50	0.18	0.76	2.50	11.70
Meru . . .	9.70	0.70	9.00	0.68	0.62	7.50	6.90
Average . . .	4.72	1.03	3.69	0.57	1.54	15.58	41.72
<i>Nzoia:</i>							
Nandi . . .	11.20	0.20	11.00	4.40	3.80	39.40	34.60
Elgeyo } . . .	21.91	1.10	20.80	0.96	3.76	4.65	18.00
Marakwet }							
Average . . .	16.00	0.60	15.40	2.87	3.79	18.61	24.56
<i>Nyanza:</i>							
Kavirondo, Central	3.34	0.64	2.70	0.99	1.12	36.60	41.50
„ North	4.64	0.82	3.82	1.34	0.23	35.20	6.10
„ South	6.11	0.62	5.49	3.08	2.44	56.14	44.50
Average . . .	4.66	0.70	3.96	1.77	1.24	44.69	31.30
Masai . . .	198.04	0.02	198.02	18.58*	17.08	9.38†	8.63
General Average . . .	10.42	0.73	9.69	1.59	1.79	16.45	18.52

All Goats are included with sheep.

Land is the gross area and includes cultivatable, semi-arid and desert land watered and waterless.

* Includes Donkeys 3.58.

† Includes Donkeys 1.80.