

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JBG-15
Caledonian Society
Dinner

c/o District Commissioner
Biharamulo
Tanganyika
1 January 1951

Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 18, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Saturday December 2nd I went to the St. Andrews Night dinner given by the Caledonian Society of Uganda. Some 150 European males attended, mostly Scots and their guests resident in or living near Kampala. The greater part of Uganda Commerce was represented, as were Government and the Clergy. Speeches were given by the Governor Sir John Hathorn Hall and the Chief Justice Mr. Edwards; and a series of toasts were proposed by Bishop C. E. Stewart of the Church of England, Reverend David Steel of the Church of Scotland, the General Manager of the Uganda Company, and others.

The main room of the Kampala Club had been especially decorated for the occasion, and a huge kitchen staff had been engaged to prepare and serve the drinks and meal. The invitations had stated that full dress with decorations was advisable but not compulsory; and the crowd was resplendent. Kilts, velvet jackets, ribbons, medals and orders were all over; the Bishop was wearing short pants and stockings and the Church of Scotland Pastor was clad in a peculiar brocaded jacket, with black silk breast bands crossing beneath the usual reversed collar. Black-and-gold programs, bound with tartan ribbons and with wisps of heather pinned through the covers, were at each table-place.

The dinner started off with broth and fish (with apologies on the menu for the latter not being "salmon from the Dee"). Haggis, roast turkey, and ham followed. A Scots pudding was last; and Scotch, soda, and water bottles were handy by each elbow. The drinking had started before dinner and continued through and after it. The haggis was 'properly piped in' carried on silver platters by a special guard, kilted of course, with a kilted escort playing bagpipes and carrying silver libation cups. The bagpipers played "Scotland the Brave." When they reached the speakers table the guard halted, the bagpipes shut up, and members of the escort drank whisky from the silver cups while the Chief Justice intoned Gaelic formalities. The end of the ceremony signaled the beginning of the speeches and toasts.

The Governor's speech, normally on this occasion of a political nature, was this time devoted entirely to whimsy. He railed the Scots, here, for having failed to secure all the ranking government positions throughout Uganda (including the post of Governor) but said this was no doubt due to the recent succession of Welshmen as Colonial Secretaries. Then he gave an account of how an enter-

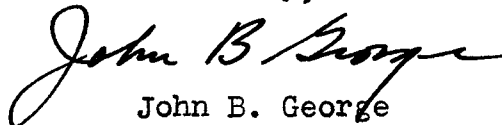
prising young veterinary officer had solved the meat preserving problem without refrigeration - refrigerators being a constant domestic concern in Uganda. The young officer went through a whole herd of sheep, amputating the limbs one at a time as required. He devised clever artificial limbs and as the wounds healed almost overnight due to penicillin the herd was kept fine and healthy. When all the sheep had four artificial limbs each, an animal would be slaughtered for its trunk - thus freeing four artificial limbs for use in other herds. The officer was cited, promoted, knighted; and the demand for refrigerators - especially dollar-area types - dropped at once to almost nothing. He made nearly every branch of the administration have a part in the affair of the sheep amputations, poking fun at nearly every aspect of government and government policy.

Toasts were proposed to the King, the Pious Memory of St. Andrew, the Land We Live In, the Land o' Cakes, the Kirk, the Imperial Forces, the Guests, and the Lassies. A good deal of whisky went down in the meantime, but each of the proposers - with an eye on the clergymen - kept his toast clean. The exception to the rule was provided by a Mr. A. P. H. Oliver, who made the toast to the Lassies. He brought down the house with a Scots version of the general officer's classic remark after inspecting a battalion of WACs. The clergymen both laughed.

The organized portion of the evening was closed by crossing arms, clasping hands, and singing Auld Lang Syne. At 2:30 a.m. I managed to persuade my host to come out to the car and drive home, but the main body of the party remained at Scotch and song until daybreak.

I expect to be present at a number of tribal celebrations before I leave Africa this trip, but the Baganda, the Sukuma, and even the Masai will have to put on a real show to beat the Scots.

Sincerely,



John B. George

Received New York 1/12/51.