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Council & Committee

P.O. Marangu
Moshi, Tanganyika
East Africa
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

During my first year in East Africa I went on several short foot safaris. Not then knowing the rather simple tricks[1] of making native porters and guides obey, I sometimes found myself immobilized by a sort of talking sit-down strike. Having been ordered to precede or follow me to the next village, my porters would set down their loads on the path, squat in a circle on their haunches, and begin to chatter like hens. As my Swahili improved I could hear them lengthily appraising the relative wisdom of obeying or disobeying the Bwana's orders. How many days walk away was this next village? Was the beer cheap there? How were the women there? Would it be, generally, more comfortable there than here? In short, despite the fact that I was generously paying them all, they were not accepting my authority without due debate. I was witnessing the most primal form of what I have since labelled the Parliamentary Instinct of the East African native. It may be exaggerating to call it instinct, but the desire to talk at great length about practically everything, and especially to discuss at great length the details of each bit of work before it is done, tediously questioning the authority of anyone who may say "go ahead now", is at least firmly ingrained in at least nine-tenths of the natives I have known.

I have seen this "democratic" defiance of authority exerted against tribal leaders as well as outsiders, even in areas where the tribal structure remains fairly intact. Within the traditional tribal organization in many areas of East Africa authority often rested on the consent of the community. The native scale of values holds that many important decisions must be approved by the people - often by debate, deliberation, and even vote. Authority will be obeyed or flouted, depending upon its accordance with the popular will.[2] Where to move is considered an important decision. Those who wish to go in one or another direction simply get up and move; those who wish to remain remain. Minorities thus designated then conveniently change their minds, and join the larger groups.

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1. Such as marching ahead and shooting an antelope near the site selected for a new camp. I then could depend on their love of red meat to bring them on, at the speed of at least thirty miles per day.

2. Karl Popper, in his The Open Society and Its Enemies, often leads the reader to accept that his "closed" or "tribal" society is a system tending to curb parliamentary discussion and to eliminate the prerequisite of popular acceptance to the making of a community decision. This does not hold among East African tribes.

At a much higher level, councils and committees of Africans are being given more and more material for debate and decision. In line with pronounced policy, the Administration of Tanganyika is handing over increasing authority to native deliberative groups of tribal and sometimes inter-tribal composition. From time to time I have been invited to sit in on these meetings, and though they are seldom as entertaining as the safari porters bickering over women and beer, they are an essential experience in the study of colonial government problems and they provide an important insight into tribal politics. The capacities of African councils and committees for useful discussion and debate, too, may decide how quickly the ultimate of responsible self-government may be reached.

During the past month my wife and I have sat in on two meetings of members of the Native Authority of the Chagga tribe, which is often acknowledged to be the most progressive of all Tanganyika. The first of these meetings, convened on July 30th, was an administrative meeting of the Mangis (chiefs) of the Vunjo Division[1] of Moshi District (one of the three Divisions into which the Chagga area of Moshi District was divided in 1946). This meeting normally is held every two months at the Vunjo Division Native Authority Headquarters in Marangu Mangiate, located on the southeast slope of Kilimanjaro. This, however, was the first since a Mangi Mkuu or single Paramount Chief was installed over the whole tribe in January, 1952.

Chief Petro Marealle, half-uncle of the Paramount Chief Thomas Marealle, in his capacity of Division Chief of Vunjo, presided. The others present were the Division Clerk, the Chiefs of the Mangiates (Chiefdoms) of Marangu, Kirua Vunjo, Mamba, Kilema, Mwika, and the headman of the minor non-Chagga area of Kahe. They were all wearing European style trousers and coats, half conservatively colored, and the other half disporting the bright greens, reds, and plaid patterns which Africans often prefer. The discussion was in Swahili, with occasional lapses into English, especially when Chief Petro was reading some of the agenda which was partly in English. All listened carefully, taking notes from time to time. There was no formal requesting the floor from the chairman; by mutual restraint only one person spoke at a time. An agenda had been typed in advance and was passed around the table to be scanned.

When the meeting convened at 10 a.m. the first action was the recording of a census, which the Chagga Council had ordered taken of all aliens (mainly of the Pare and Kamba tribes) currently resident in the Division. As Petro explained, the Chagga, overcrowded on the upper slopes, now wished to extend down into the lowlands. To avoid crowding the Chagga Council wanted to limit the number of aliens in the lowlands, and particularly to exclude those strangers who grazed their cattle instead of stall feeding in the Chagga manner. Uncontrolled grazing already had caused serious soil erosion. The Council did not wish to remove old residents who had adopted the ways of the Chagga, but it intended after the completion of the census to tighten up its immigration permit system.

Each chief was called on to report the number of aliens in his mangiate. In Marangu this number was three; in Kilema twenty-five were there with permits

1. Not to be confused with the Vunjo Division Council, which includes elected commoners as well as chiefs.

to remain, though some had temporarily returned to Pare and would need to be counted later. The Mwika chief referred to a written report, which he had submitted, listing 55 "strangers" who had come in in the past ten years. The Kirua Vunjo chief had not gotten around to counting yet, and would start in August. The discussion which followed, despite the efforts of Chief Augustine of Marangu, was not confined to the form which the report should take and the categories under which aliens should be listed, but ranged over the entire problem of immigration. Augustine suggested that names as well as numbers should be included, and that there should be a note of those who owned land and those who were simply grazing. There was a long discussion of the status of children of a man with a permit and of surviving children of a deceased permit holder. (The original permits contained no reference to the rights of the children; they simply granted that a man and one or two wives could reside in a particular chiefdom.) Finally the Chiefs conceded that it was for the central Chagga Council to determine rights of children to remain, and were led by Augustine to agree that their business was simply to report the facts. There was some discussion of the different character of the foreigners - the Pare with their many cattle grazing the ground bare, the Kamba, the most troublesome, according to the Chief of Kirua Vunjo, shooting and trapping all the game and refusing to pay taxes, and the Dukuma and Nyamwezi, who, like the Chagga, own land. The Chief of Kirua-Vunjo felt that in the future no more aliens would come in to graze their cattle because there was no room; the only immigrants would be trouble-makers, the poor and outcast from other tribes, and the chiefs should therefore be on the lookout. One of the Chiefs, Mwika, expressed concern that established families of other tribes might be thrown out. The Headman of Kahe had a special problem. In 1950 the Vunjo Division Council had enacted an order that strangers should not graze in the lower areas, but (in the openly admitted hope that cattle disease would solve the problem) they did not include in the prohibited area Kahe, which had proved poisonous to other herds. As a result strangers in the other mangiates had moved into Kahe to graze, although they paid taxes in other areas, where their wives and children remained. Kahe was told to list his "strangers" as aliens resident in the other mangiates. Throughout the discussion there was a hint of Xenophobia, not unlike the more extreme American attitude towards immigration from southern Europe.

The next item concerned the preservation of traditional sites of tribal ritual, and the stimulation and revival of tribal craftsmanship. The Chagga Council wanted old sites of ancient sacrifice, of current circumcision rites, the burial places of chiefs to be identified and preserved. The Mangi Mkuu had promised to find markets for the village manufactured items if the chiefs could revive the traditional crafts. One by one (for the benefit of the European visitors, I suspect) the chiefs enumerated traditional sites in their areas - the big tree of Kirua Vunjo whose limbs in falling always meant the impending death of a member of the chiefly family, the big tree in Mwika, which grew from the staff of the leader who first brought the Mwika people to their present territory, and burial and ceremonial sites. Then the crafts, such as the carving of wooden dishes and trays (now re-styled from the native pattern to suit the European market) by Marangu and Mamba natives, the bellows and charcoal smelting of iron for spears and hoes by the Mamba and Mwika natives, and the pottery and baskets of Kahe, were enumerated. Finally the matter was dropped with the consensus that it was unfortunate that changing Chagga customs and the availability

of cheap European trade goods had caused much of Chagga craftsmanship to die out. The only crafts remaining now were those imitating European production (pulping machines for coffee in Kirua Vunjo and copies of hoes and European implements in Mamba) or those catering to the European market.

Roads were the next subject. The Chagga Council is responsible for the maintenance of Grade "B" roads while the Tanganyika Territory Government maintains the (Grade "A") main trunk roads and the chiefs the village roads. The Chagga Council, because of a shortage of funds was unable to maintain the Grade "B" roads and had asked the chiefs to do so until the Council had additional funds. The District Commissioner had written to the Provincial Commissioner requesting supplementary funds for this purpose. The Mwika Chief immediately protested that he had talked to his people and they had refused. The other chiefs said the people refused to believe that the Chagga Treasury was low; let government pay for work on the roads. Petro said that since the handling of financial matters was new to the Chagga, fund expenditures had to be controlled, and he assured the chiefs that in time money would come for the Grade "B" and village roads. The chiefs decided to await the Provincial Commissioner's reply before taking up the matter again.

Travel allowances for chiefs were the next subject. All agreed that the present allowances were not enough. Finally, after some twenty minutes of deprecating this stinginess, they decided to lay the problem before the Division Council and, if it agreed, refer the matter to the Mangi Mkuu. Possibly they would present a petition next year before the estimates were drawn up.

Then a discussion of the cleverness of the unofficial (elected) members of the council - an item which was not on the agenda - was initiated by Chief Petro. The chiefs spoke of themselves as official executive officers and the unofficials as a kind of politician-opposition. They said the unofficial members were clever, glib and well-organized. Because they had no direct executive responsibilities, they had more time to visit groups of people and keep abreast of popular ideas. And they would informally gather in advance, and plan each meeting. They were a very vocal lot, occupying the council floor for more than their share of the time. Chief Petro cautioned the chiefs in future to speak more often, not to be bluffed into silence.

At this point my wife and I excused ourselves, with appropriate thanks for having been invited. It was then 1:00 p.m., and in our absence the meeting continued without a break, until 4:00.

Later, on August 13, by joint invitation of Mr. Thomas Marealle and Mr. Donald Bowie, respectively the Paramount Chief of the Chagga (Mangi Mkuu) and a District Officer friend, we attended a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Chagga Council, which convened in the office of the Mangi Mkuu at the Chagga Council and Treasury Headquarters near Moshi, Tanganyika. The meeting was attended by the members of the Committee, the Mangi Mkuu, who presided, the three Division Chiefs, four educated commoners (all members of the Chagga Council), and the Head Clerk, Vunjo (representative of the native authority staff), and also by the District Commissioner, Mr. Stubbings, and the District Officer responsible for the Chagga Treasury affairs. All sat round a long table, the top of which is normally covered with negro magazines, including Ebony, mailed

in from various parts of the world, and carried on the discussion in English.

Shortly after the opening of the meeting the minutes of the last meeting were voted accepted unread (they having been multigraphed and sent to the members); but one of the old-business items, the matter of travel allowances for Division Chiefs, was revived and heavily discussed. Two hundred shillings were not enough, said Chief Abdiel Shangali of Hai Division, with the concurrence of Chief Petro. They did not enable a chief to travel round all his barazas. The Mangi Mkuu laughingly remarked that Abdiel's reports did not confirm this amount of travel and suggested that he raise the question again when he had a better case. The District Commissioner, sitting away from the table with his football-fractured leg extended outward in a cast, then interjected that the distance of the circuit round the barazas of Abdiel was exactly 168 miles, by the speedometer of his own car. Therefore the allowance of 200 shillings should be adequate. Abdiel said yes, but one does not just travel to the barazas, one has to branch out to minor areas too. The D.C. agreed, said that travels of his own officers were restricted by niggardly allowances, and that he was not without sympathy for the chiefs on this account. But this matter had been taken up before; had absorbed much time at the last meeting; had become the point of an impassioned appeal for further funds. Until the next treasury vote these funds could not possibly be increased. He suggested the matter be discussed at a later date, perhaps in the form of a proposal for a greater share of treasury funds when the funds are to be voted. Mr. Bowie suggested the possibility of using other funds of the Treasury when additional travel funds were absolutely necessary. The Mangi Mkuu insisted the "human element" would make this impractical; chiefs would just go on driving around the countryside and submitting expense accounts.

It was some fifteen minutes later, however, that the discussion was shifted to the first item on the agenda, the matter of pensions for the recently dismissed Division Chiefs' Deputies.[1] The Deputies, upon relinquishing their offices, had been paid lump sum gratuities based on years of service and amount of salary. Chief Petro Marealle said he felt these men should be paid continuing pensions. They had served "their country." Stubbings interrupted and said that the Provincial Commissioner, after having dealt for years with the bookkeeping and financial headaches of continuing pensions had given "strong administrative advice" that gratuities instead of pensions be used. Petro replied that such advice was cheap, and the District Commissioner retorted that he agreed, it was much cheaper than paying pensions. Since pensions were inadvisable, Chief Abdiel spoke out strongly for increasing the gratuities, insisting that men who had contributed so much to their country should not be forgotten. The Mangi Mkuu agreed in principle, but called attention to the reality that the Native Treasury was not rich. The D.C. added that a bill was up before Tanganyika Legislative Council which would permit chiefs to contribute to a provident fund, and thus solve the problem of pensions more painlessly for the future. At the suggestion of the Mangi Mkuu, the matter of possible gratuity increases was left for him to take up outside the council room with the D.C.

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1. The Deputies were dismissed as part of a scheme of reorganization which came into effect at the beginning of 1952.

Divisional Magistrates, the judicial authority of each Division setup, were discussed next, with particular reference to their request for advances of money to purchase automobiles. After some discussion it was agreed that this was a question of policy only and that the Finance Committee could do nothing now since the newly-appointed magistrates were still on a year's probation. The Committee would consider the requests after the magistrates had completed their one year's probation and had contributed to the provident fund.

An increase of salary for messengers and sweepers employed by native authority was the next item. The present salaries of 32 shillings per month, as compared with 42.50 for central government messengers, was claimed to be inadequate. This was shelved for the time being, though preliminary approval was given in principle to an increase of the basic rate to 40 shillings per month. In the special case of six messengers now being especially trained, there would be an increase of 10 shillings if they should do well in the course.

Attention next turned to the need for greater cooperation between native authority and the European representatives of Tanganyika Territory Government veterinary, agricultural and forestry departments. Mr. Bowie and the chiefs agreed completely that departmental representatives should inform the chiefs more punctiliously of their activities in the mangiates.

Then there was a switch back to chiefly affairs, with official entertainment allowances for mangis and Division Chiefs being discussed. Mr. Stubbings suggested that an entertainment fund be set up for reimbursing chiefs for entertainment expenditures, the chiefs being informed beforehand how much they could claim for each occasion. Chief Abdiel argued at length that the chiefs should each receive an entertainment allowance. He also insisted that when the Mangi Mkuu brought a guest to Abdiel's division this was a matter which concerned the two chiefs.[1] Abdiel was much displeased but he agreed, with protests, when the others decided in principle on an entertainment fund of about 2,000 shillings.

The next problem was to decide on the punishment of a Chagga Council guard who had left the offices unlocked and thus permitted the theft of a typewriter in January 1951. After a long discussion of whether this was a case of simple negligence or criminal complicity, of the man's ability to pay, and of the need to impress others that punishment would follow such negligence, the majority of the committee decided to fine the man the amount of two months' pay, although the Mangi Mkuu had recommended one month's only.

The next item was the request of Semali Tarawia, an orphaned school boy, for 100 shillings to reimburse his sister for an earlier loan to pay his school fees. After the District Commissioner had spoken negatively, it was agreed that there could be no repayment of amounts already received, and that any request from this boy for future aid would have to be considered along with other such requests. The Mangi Mkuu (because he missed the point completely or pretended to in an attempt to change the decision) said "It's agreed we'll stand by the boy." Stubbings immediately corrected him, firmly reiterating

1. The Mangi Mkuu receives a generous entertainment allowance. This airing of a "private" matter at the council was a bid, on the part of Abdiel, for a handout from the paramount chief's funds.

the decision. The Mangi Mkuu said "yes, that is what I was getting around to saying."

The following subject was increased allowances for Chagga Council Appeal Court assessors who must remain in Moshi away from their homes during court sessions. The Mangi Mkuu suggested that after the first seven days, during which the allowances were regulated at 5 shillings, they should be increased to 8 shillings, and this was agreed. (According to the members it costs an African 3 shillings for a bed in Moshi and 5 shillings for one day's food.)

The next item - requests from the Clerks of Mwika and Marangu for an increase in salaries - was immediately settled. The administrative officers said firmly the answer was no because there were no funds, and the subject was dropped. A request of clerk Joachim of Hai Division for an advance of 1,000 shillings, with which to purchase a motor cycle, followed. The D.C. stated that this was a matter of principle; if he had 1,000 shillings in the provident fund he could be given the advance. The clerk came back with the information that he had only 119 shillings.

The last item was a request for aid from the widow of a man who had been employed as a hospital dresser by the native authority and had been killed in an accident not in the course of duty. This woman had rejected the traditional solution of her problem, returning to her father's shamba, and instead clung to her husband's home because she feared her brother-in-law would seize it and not return it to her children. The D.C. pointedout that local government could not afford to take out an insurance policy on its employees: it had decided to take the risk and pay expenses involved for accidents occurring in the execution of duty. No aid could be extended to this woman.

The meeting was adjourned, and we did not return to the afternoon session.

No second viewing is needed to see that the higher representatives have the same enthusiasm for discussion as the simpler African peasants. Even in the unfamiliar medium of English their arguments are uninhibited and enthusiastic. The educated and administratively experienced chiefs also frequently add a cleverness, and several are fairly devious in their methods. When Chief Abdiel was discussing the matter of expenses for official entertainment (page 6), repeatedly, he was really bringing pressure to bear on the Mangi Mkuu to hand out to other chiefs some of his own allotment for entertainment of official visitors. The educated Africans not only like parliamentary discussion, but some quickly pick up the tricks of the politician.

From the large amount of time spent in discussing their own monetary allowances for travel and entertainment, and from the tendency of the permanent chiefs to identify themselves as executives, apart from the term-serving unofficial councillors, one can smell the rise of a bureaucracy. An ordinary citizen, once sensitized by education, could see in the two meetings a conspiracy to divide up the treasury amongst the councillors. There was a significant cynicism in Mr. Thomas Marealle's statement about human nature. The sky, he said, would be the limit on automobile travel expenditures unless a legal ceiling on allotments was continued. The bureaucratic notion that treasury funds were

for the use of the civil servants alone would prevail. Here there is ammunition for European critics who argue that representative government cannot thrive in East Africa where Christian values of honesty and service are seldom accepted.

The tendency of the chiefs and councillors to feather their own nests is complicated by the dual standards introduced through contact with Europeans. A chief or councillor feels obliged to slant his standard of living upward, to own an automobile and to have a house with European furniture. In order to do this without strain he must be paid a good deal more money than he would in an ordinary native enterprise, more than would be regarded as generous by ordinary natives. When he gets an automobile its operation alone might cost him more than all his household expenses together. A society composed primarily of peasants earning African incomes and officials demanding incomes of European standard appears intolerably top heavy; and an individual who feels he must live in two worlds at once is handicapped as a leader.

Another point was brought out at the meetings. Less than half of the chiefs at the Vunjo meeting (page 2) had satisfactorily carried out the order of the paramount chief that they should take a census of foreigners in their areas. The others had qualified or questioned the order, and one had said simply that he had not yet begun the count and would get around to it in August. And at a lower level, as shown by the refusal of the people of Mwika to work on the roads (page 4), a similar tendency towards disobedience is displayed by the peasants.

This very deliberate form of insubordination, which I have witnessed often in the more primitive areas, prevails as a serious obstacle to action (though at the same time as a defiance of "the tyrrany of the petty official") in many of the newly organized local government setups. A white official of considerable experience (though of the younger and less patient sort) once confided his exasperation to me. "You can get things done here, without heart-break, only by means that the natives understand and accept. If you could empower a chief to hang, flog, and cut off hands and feet, as was done only a few years back, the sub-chiefs and natives would obey. As things are now they do as they are told only when it suits their whim - and when it does not conflict with their hopeless laziness."

Related to this general tendency towards nonconformity was the manner of the District Commissioner and the interplay between the Africans and Europeans at the Financial Committee meeting. Mr. Stubbings at times was firm and authoritative and at times ingratiating and friendly - depending, I think, on whether he felt he was correcting the Africans on facts or dealing with matters of opinion. His advice, however, did not go unchallenged, as in the instance of Petro's open distaste with Mr. Stubbings' idea of gratuities instead of pensions (page 5). At times the Mangi Mkuu outrightly opposed the suggestions of Mr. Bowie; and in atmosphere as well as by the spoken word the meeting, obviously, was not a puppet show.

Another impression which I could not escape at these meetings was of the great expense of the British experiment of training Africans to govern themselves through actual participation in the process. The time and money necessary to permit many highly paid councillors to deliberate in such detail over minor

and sometimes irrelevant matters and the inefficiency of a system in which the idea of persuasion and consent prevails means a considerable sacrifice in terms of economic development. Even in the comparatively wealthy Chagga area there is not enough money to go around to support the native government structure and all the necessary economic developments. No remedy, of course, is at hand. The alternatives of direct executive control or control through puppet chiefs are not palatable to the British home government.

The picture is not hopeless, though, if viewed in an East African context. There are grounds for believing that native officials are learning - through this expensive system of trial and error - to make their meetings effective and even more disciplined. Many of the Chagga leaders can express themselves well, even in English. They all seem very interested in their work, eager to learn, and several have gained a basic knowledge of the economics of their area. The Mangi Mkuu, for example, is clever, quick-minded and energetic. Apparently he has not yet picked up the finesse of chairmanship (for instance he failed to use the device of quickly taking up the next subject to halt the unscheduled discussion of travel allowances), and Petro, with his greater calm and patience, is the more competent moderator. But both are competent.

Another gleam of hope comes out of the earnest Chagga ambition to achieve a genuine tribal integrity and identity. The striving to create a tribal unity and revive a tribal tradition, evident in the recent election of a Paramount Chief and in the preservation of ceremonial sites, symbols, and crafts, bears this out. Chief Petro made a great point of taking us through a small artificial cave, allegedly dug more than 100 years ago and used by the villagers to hide themselves and their cattle from raids. Chief Petro told us the raids were intra-tribal, by other Chagga, and objected when I asked whether the Masai, dreaded by all other tribes before the East African Pax Britannia, were perhaps the cause of the digging. No, it was the Chagga then fighting amongst themselves. That Petro, a living descendent of one less warlike tribes, is hesitant to admit his tribe's historical dread of the pastoral raider is an index of the degree of tribal sensitivity among the Chagga. A related hint was given by the negro magazines on the Mangi Mkuu's desk, and by his broad acquaintance with black and white members of racial equality groups throughout the world. For better or worse, some of the Chagga leaders are becoming more conscious of tribal and racial identities and complaints. And this, though a serious deterrent to broader territorial cooperation (and of course to cooperation with British administrators) is a definite spur to economic and political improvement within the more practical limits of the tribe.

Though all East African tribal councils still neglect what we would regard as main issues, and waste time on trivia, some have - perhaps as much through missionary influence as by means of government tutelage - cast aside a number of conversational pre-occupations which make the meetings of the less progressive tribal councils seem almost farcical. I think I can underline the relative progress of the Chagga with a third account, of a council meeting which I attended some twenty months ago in one of the more backward areas.

This meeting took place at the Lukiko Nyarabungo on the southwest shores of Lake Victoria on December 30, 1950. The council was a group of "commoners" from non-chiefly families but representative of the Rusubi tribe, the largest in Biharamulo District. The Lukiko building was a large open air courtroom, roofed against the rain but with no walls. The meeting was nominally presided over by Ntare, the Chief of the Rusubi and Paramount Chief of Biharamulo District, but in fact the discussions were led by a native clerk and by one of the more outspoken representatives. Ntare, after he had arrived half an hour late, sat silent, the D.C. venturing that he was drunk. He occupied the throne-like chair, carved Rusubi across the back, and had to be aroused from torpor and prompted to open and close the meeting. The meeting was supposed to have been conducted in Swahili, but it lapsed during more heated moments into the tribal dialect.

A roll was called before the opening. Four of the expected council members were not present. The Chief told me later they were ill, although the clerk said they had not been notified of the meeting by Ntare. (This was a first meeting of the Council. Later on the D.C. made himself responsible for notifying the members.)

After the opening the D.C. spoke briefly, explained in broad terms the purposes of the council of commoners (to make the wishes of the people felt by the chiefs and by Government). He then explained that this would be an opening meeting, with no agendas, and would discuss whatever issues the members had brought with them. A number of current problems - such as the low balance of the Native Treasury, and some tobacco-seeding instructions from the agricultural officer - had been listed by the clerk, had been typed, and a copy had been despatched in advance to each member.

The first question broached, by one of the minority of members who had come barefooted and clad in a dhoti instead of trousers, was that of baboon poison. He said that the baboons were bad, eating half the maize and bananas, but that the poison now being used was worse. The local witchdoctors, he said, were picking it up and using it on people. This statement brought out a murmer of agreement, and also the view of another man - younger, and dressed in khaki with a bright red throat scarf and a purple plastic belt - that some people, unknowing, would steal the bait and eat it and die. The remedy proposed was that guards should be posted to watch the baboon bait. The matter then was dropped, though the Clerk and the D.C. were interested in the question of who would be responsible for the posting, pay, feeding of the guards.

The next matter taken up was the desire of the people on the west side of Biharamulo hill that they be excused from soil erosion prevention duties - contour plowing and terrace planting. The agricultural officer was demanding too much of their time, and besides was telling them when and where to graze their goats. Then a warning that locusts may come in April and that cassava and sweet potatoes should be dug early; then an allegation that a sub-chief had embezzled 100 shillings intended for road building and a request by village messengers that they be issued two raincoats a year. Then, in turn, no cassava seed in Lusahunga, too much money charged by the ferry to the Congo, and a plaintive, henpecked protest, addressed to the District Commissioner, that

wives go back at harvest time to work on the shambas of their fathers, leaving the husbands to till their own fields. Then water supply, the matter of the recent failure of the pump and the mile long carry in gourds and old gasoline tins from the bottom of the hill.

Inevitably this brought up the matter of adultery. The women, going down to the stream for water, thus had an excuse for straying far from their husband's huts - and often into the bushes with one of the younger men. It was proposed the fines for adultery be increased, and that whipping be introduced for guilty young men.

This led to the proposal that women be forbidden by law to leave the district since some of them, if beaten by their husbands for having committed adultery, would go to Bukoba and join the prostitutes there. The clerk at this point said that in Bukoba the Profession was held in contempt. Why not here? Ntare, the Chief, continued to maintain his neutral silence, perhaps with more reason now because several women, popularly alleged to be his natural daughters, were practicing prostitutes in Biharamulo itself.

In an effort to veer the discussion, the Clerk again brought up witchcraft. One complaint then arose that a witchdoctor had demanded money from one of the members, and had threatened that a snake would invade his hut if he did not shell out. Some weeks later a snake had come - apparently a snake with a good appetite - and had eaten six of his chickens. The D.C. spoke up, said he would be ready to try the witchdoctor under the witchcraft ordinance, but the complainer then clammed, and refused to give the name of the offender.

Rain making was the next subject. The council was unanimous in its desire for a Government endorsed rainmaker. There were too many private rainmakers around, blaming one another for counteracting one another's power. Their separate appeals were criss-crossing, and confusing the skies. It was proposed (1) that a well known rainmaker, now practicing in eastern Lake Province, be paid by Government and brought to Biharamulo at once and (2) that all fake rainmakers be punished by whipping and imprisonment, the absence of rain after due rites to be accepted as prima facie evidence of charlatanry.

Sincerely,

John B. George

John B. George

Received New York 9/8/52.