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East Africa High Commission:  
(19) Literature Bureau and  
Inter-Territorial Languages  
Committee

Washington, D.C.  
November 24, 1954

Mr. Walter S. Rogers  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The East African Literature Bureau was established in 1948 as one of the scheduled services administered by the High Commission. It was formed as the result of an investigation of the needs of Africans for literature which was undertaken by Mrs. Elspeth Huxley at the direction of the East African Governors' Conference in 1945-1946. Mrs. Huxley felt that though the building up of an indigenous school of literature was the ultimate answer, the major immediate requirements were books on natural resources, processes of government and health; books for the education of the child and the adult since primary schools suffered from a lack of text and supplementary reading books and the books previously published for adults had lacked variety and local appeal and had not covered many technical subjects; books to encourage an interest in reading for other than immediate practical purposes; assistance to the indigenous authors; the development of periodical literature including its distribution; and the building up of a service for libraries which had suffered from lack of trained staff and regular supplies of books. Some work had been done in all these fields by the governments, missions and commercial publishers, but none of these agencies had the staff required to devote to any particular problem for sufficient periods and no attempt had been made to handle the problem as a whole. There was broad agreement with Mrs. Huxley's main proposals, and, following investigations and discussions, the Bureau was formed to meet the increasing demand for books of all kinds which was not being met by normal methods of publishing and distribution. It was to provide - in cooperation and not in competition with commercial publishers - an integrated organization to attack the problems of making available general literature, of preparing textbooks for schools and textbooks for adults on agricultural and technical subjects; of publishing magazines in selected vernaculars; of giving assistance to African authors; and of providing a libraries service. The first priority was African needs, but the question of the provision of literature for Asians was included in the Bureau's terms of reference. The work of the Bureau was to be carried out by a headquarters staff in Nairobi and branches in Kampala and Dar es Salaam.

The complete organization was not brought into operation until 1951. The Uganda branch was set up in April 1948, but the establishment of the Tanganyika-Zanzibar branch was delayed by shortage of accommodation in Dar es Salaam; the Officer in Charge was not appointed until November 1950 and the office was not established until May 1951. The original scheme for the editorial, publishing and distributing activities apparently went into effect at the beginning of 1948 and ran through December 1952. The libraries scheme was not accepted until late in 1950; services were begun in Uganda and Kenya in 1951 and in Tanganyika early in 1952. The magazine scheme was not finally approved until September 1951,

and publication was not begun until spring 1952. The libraries and magazines schemes were to run until March 31, 1956. A scheme for the continuance of the whole Bureau until March 31, 1956 with C.D.&W. funds was approved by the Advisory Council of the Bureau in January 1950 and subsequently ratified by the East African Governments and the High Commission. In 1952 a scheme for a further grant to December 31, 1955 was submitted to the Colonial Office.

In conformity with the tasks assigned to it, the Bureau was divided into five sections: general literature and African authorship under the Director; textbooks for schools and translation work under a Textbooks Editor; Libraries under a qualified Librarian; Magazines under a Managing Editor; and Publishing and Distribution under the Director. The headquarters staff in Nairobi at the end of 1951 consisted of five professional persons - the Director, a Magazine Editor, a Librarian, a Textbook Editor, and an Artist - as well as a number of translators. A reorganization of the headquarters staff, including the replacing of a Secretary to the Bureau by a Deputy Director and the replacing of the Textbooks Editor by a Production Secretary, was approved in 1952.

There are two branch offices, one in Kampala for Uganda, and one in Dar es Salaam for Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Originally each of these branches had an Officer-in-Charge and a librarian. The Kampala branch has been supervised by a Muganda who had been sent by the Uganda Government to work in publishing houses in England, and the Dar es Salaam branch by a man with more than twenty years of experience in book publishing and distribution in West Africa. In 1952 a plan to combine the duties of the Branch Officer with those of Branch Librarian in Dar es Salaam was approved. The Libraries Service like the Bureau is organized in three territorial branches with general supervision and advice from Nairobi.

The Advisory Council of the East African Literature Bureau was set up in January 1949 to "advise the Director on general policy regarding the provision of literature for Africans and the relationship between the Bureau and the Public; and to advise on any matters referred to it by the High Commission or the Director."<sup>1</sup> In 1951 and 1952 it consisted of the Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly as Chairman, five members each from Kenya and Uganda, four from Tanganyika and one from Zanzibar. Among the members were nominees of the Governors of the three territories and the Resident, Zanzibar, representatives of the Education Departments of Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, the Commissioner for Community Development of Kenya, the Commissioner for Social Development of Tanganyika, and also unofficials representing mission organizations and Makerere College. The Council holds annual meetings. There are also Advisory Committees in Kenya and Uganda to advise on the policy of the libraries service and the siting of libraries. Further local advice is obtained from provincial and district literature committees composed of persons with local knowledge, who suggest ideas for manuscripts, assist in the acquisition, and advise on publication or rejection of manuscripts.

From 1948 through 1951 the headquarters offices (and Kenya Branch) were in temporary wooden buildings four miles outside Nairobi. At the end of 1951, when a more convenient site for the promotion of book selling and a better store for the increased publishing stock became necessary, the headquarters staff moved to offices in the center of Nairobi and the stock was moved to a more permanent block of stores shared with the East African Statistical Department nearer to Nairobi. The Uganda Branch Office is in the buildings of the Department of Public Relations and Social Welfare in Kampala, and the Tanganyika-Zanzibar branch has accommodation in Dar es Salaam provided by the Tanganyika Government.

Expenditures of the East African Literature Bureau during the period 1948-1950 were as follows:

	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>
Recurrent	£6,365	£8,346	£14,593
Extraordinary			
Offices and housing	9,702	3,886	556
Publishing Fund	25,000		
Libraries Service	_____	_____	<u>1,502</u>
TOTAL	£41,067	£12,232	£16,651

In 1951 recurrent expenditure was £24,109 and extraordinary expenditure was £4,513. Estimates of expenditure for 1952 included £33,180 recurrent and £21,500 extraordinary expenditure. Revenue of the Literature Bureau was £260 in 1949 and £442 in 1950. All of the net recurrent and extraordinary expenditures of the Literature Bureau - except for the publishing fund of £25,000 - have been met from C.D.&W. funds. The Publishing Fund was established entirely through contributions from the East African territories, £8,000 from each of the three mainland territories and £1,000 from Zanzibar.

Since there was little experience to indicate the kind of literature for which there would be African demand, the first phase of the Bureau's work was the exploratory publication of a variety of books covering different types of subject matter in vernaculars and English. In this way demand could be tested and increased production of popular works planned. From 1952 on the emphasis has been on selective publication and bookselling.

By the end of 1952 281 different books in 16 languages had been published. These included much "general literature," that is books needed to supplement governments' educational work on agriculture, health and other matters connected with improvement of African welfare and living conditions, and also books to stimulate reading, provide a store of knowledge and understanding, and to test reading tastes. These books have been written in the Bureau or by outside authors. On agriculture and natural resources the Bureau has produced three series of books: a series of seven books entitled "Africans and their Land" (in English, Swahili and Luganda) including a simple ecological study of land, its use and preservation; a second series known as Mali (Wealth) Series including books on trees, water supplies, hides and skins, grass, cattle; and a series of handbooks, "How to Become a Modern Farmer." Publications on health and hygiene include an "Aim at Healthy Living" series covering diet, care of land and money, avoidance of parasitic diseases, etc., and a book "How to Teach Hygiene, Home Nursing and First Aid," for teachers and welfare workers. A technical training series of handbooks was prepared by outside teachers in 1950. Other books were prepared on the work of government - among them How Kenya is Governed, The Police and the Public, and Africans and the Law.

To stimulate interest in reading the Bureau has produced two history series, "Early Travellers in East Africa," and "Treasury of East African History," and several biographical books. For the same purpose it has brought out a fiction series, mainly by African authors, called "The Eagle Press Fiction Library", and another series, "A Treasury of East African Literature", which includes traditional and modern tales, proverbs, songs and poems.

The Textbooks Section has procured, edited and also written manuscripts for textbooks and supplementary reading to carry out the work of the Education Departments' syllabi; has made or checked translations in Swahili, Luo and Kikuyu and has arranged for similar work in other languages to be done outside the Bureau; and has advised publishers on manuscripts. Among the works written in the Bureau were books on geography, history, civics and English teaching, seven vernacular readers, and a supplementary reading series on civics and general knowledge which was approved by school principals and translated into several East African languages. The Textbooks Editor has attended meetings of the Kenya Languages Board, the Committee for the Revision of Place Names and the Kenya Syllabus Revision Committee. The work of the unit was delayed in 1950 and 1951 by the revision of the Kenya and Tanganyika syllabi.

There have been a number of publications for special adult education projects. A large edition (20,000) of the Swahili Adult Primer, written by the Social Welfare Organization, was published for the Tanganyika Commissioner for Social Development. Two other primers of the same type, for Meru and Gishu, were prepared in 1951. For Kenya four illustrated books based on African Information Services films were prepared for sale at film showings by the end of 1951. Cheap "follow-ups" on soil, water, hygiene were prepared for Uganda. In October 1951 the Bureau initiated discussions of a program to coordinate visual aids requirements of the territories, its part of the work being to publish "visual aid to education" material for sale to schools or departments of government.

The Bureau has assisted a number of African authors to write books, through correspondence and a series of "Authorship" leaflets, and has secured the publication of a large number of their works, which have included fiction and thoughts on topics of current interest. The Bureau as a publishing concern has had more facilities for getting manuscripts to press than the East African Swahili Committee and other language committees which in the past had also encouraged indigenous authorship. By the end of 1951 the capital available was not sufficient to produce all manuscripts contributed and it therefore became necessary to delay or refuse acceptance of many of them.

The Bureau publishes both through commercial firms and under its own imprint - "The Eagle Press" - from its own Publishing Fund. The commercial firms either assume the entire responsibility of publishing and distributing the books, paying the author direct or the Bureau (if the Bureau owns the copyright), or require the Bureau to purchase all or part of an edition at an agreed price. This method is used in the case of books of an experimental kind for the general market, which require high quality production but for which there is no urgent demand. Books are published under the Bureau's own imprint from the Fund when they are required quickly for local educational programs and when only a small number, which could not be produced for a low price by commercial firms, are required. One-fifth of the £25,000 Publishing Fund is set aside for subsidizing booklets or literacy primers for adult education programs, and the remaining £20,000 is the capital sum for publishing - at a profit adequate to allow for distributors' discounts and to return a small profit to the Fund - books supplementary to the commercial firms' programs. By the end of 1952 915,949 volumes of 154 titles had been published from the Bureau's Fund under the imprint of the Eagle Press, and the Bureau had obtained, or assisted in, the publication of several hundred thousand volumes of 127 titles by commercial firms.

Steady improvement has been made in book-selling. Much of the Bureau's selling has been through the Mission and Church Bookshops at Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, which have a wide network of distribution through branch bookshops in other centers. These were the "existing channels" that the Bureau, by its terms of reference, was to use as far as possible. The Bureau has also opened other channels through the help of administrative and Social Welfare and Community Development officers and by contacting directly African, Indian and European bookshops. "Book News Sheets" including details of new publications and an order sheet, are sent to a list of addresses. As a result of these efforts the Bureau's publications were sold from 84 points in 1951 and sales increased from 88,000 volumes during 1948-1950 to 113,000 during 1951. The promotion of the bookselling trade among small shopkeepers over the widest area was given first priority in the Bureau's work in 1952, a limited publishing program being approved to allow greater concentration on this aspect of literature development, which is closely connected with the distribution of the Bureau's magazines. At the end of 1952 366,613 volumes of 154 titles published by the Eagle Press and nearly 300,000 volumes of 127 titles published by commercial firms had been sold.

The Magazine Scheme provides for the publication of two editions of a low-priced 32 page weekly magazine - one edition in Swahili for Kenya and Tanganyika and the other in Luganda for Uganda. Containing educational and entertaining articles in the vernacular and some English articles and lessons, they are designed to provide continuation reading and instruction for the post-primary school child. The scheme, submitted in January 1950, three months after the Editor was appointed, was approved by the East African Governments and the Central Legislative Assembly in 1950 and by the Secretary of State in September 1951, but production, scheduled to begin in January 1952, was delayed by "unforeseen staff difficulties." A revised plan for production was devised and approved by the Advisory Council, and the Swahili magazine "Tazama" appeared in April, 1952. The production and distribution were carried out for the Bureau by the East African Standard, Ltd. Until the Emergency, when sales slumped, only about 12,000 copies of each issue were printed and sold, indicating that Africans in large numbers were not yet prepared to pay for magazine material of an entertainment and instructive type as a change from straight news or purely political propaganda material. More recently the Bureau, in an attempt to increase circulation, has increased the amount of "popular" material in the magazine. For this and pin-up covers it has been severely criticized by European commentators.

The first issue of an East African Teachers' Journal was published in September 1950. It was intended to appear twice a year under an Editorial Committee including representatives from all the territories which was set up by the Director of Education, Kenya.

A scheme for an African Libraries Service was submitted by the Bureau's Librarian in 1948; it was revised at the end of 1949 as required by one government and presented to the East African Governments in January and February, 1950; funds were made available in October, 1950, when the scheme was approved by the Secretary of State; and the Service - organized into three territorial branches - was initiated in 1951. The scheme provided for setting up libraries in selected centers of the three territories. Each library was to have a static stock of reference books and ultimately a complete collection of books in the language of the area to be served, as well as an element of circulating stock. The basic units of service are mobile bookboxes, each containing 150 to 200 books

in English, Swahili and the vernacular, which can easily be sent from place to place. In Kenya by the end of 1952 39 library centers were established - in African schools, locations, social centers and clubs - and about 15,000 books were issued during the year. A special postal service for Africans in small or isolated places was initiated in 1951 and has had unexpected success; 500 Africans joined in 1952 and 7,814 books were sent out during the year. In Uganda prior to the establishment of the Libraries Service 53 libraries and a postal service had been established by the Department of Public Relations and Social Welfare, with books given by the British Council. The Service's branch librarian, after her arrival in July 1951, reorganized the libraries where necessary and integrated the new with the old stock. Some of the old centers were closed and new ones opened. At the end of 1952 there were 50 centers regularly participating in the Service. The use of the libraries has improved as a result of the reorganization and corresponded in 1952 rather closely with the use in Kenya. The stock and service of the postal service was also improved, resulting in an increase in issues, but to a smaller extent than in Kenya. Libraries work in Tanganyika was delayed by the late establishment of the Bureau's branch office (May 1951) and the arrival of the Librarian (August 1951) and by the Tanganyika Government's recommendation that the original order of bookstock, placed in 1950, be postponed until the Government was ready to cooperate in the establishment of the service in Tanganyika. Books were finally received and processed late in 1951, and, following receipt of advice from the Provincial Administrations, 28 libraries were established by November 1952. The Tanganyika Government decided the libraries established in 1952 were to be in the nature of an experiment and that until the results had been seen no large development should take place. By the end of the year success of the scheme appeared assured - with 2,150 readers and 9,158 books borrowed - and arrangements were being made for further expansion.

The Librarian stated that it has been found that the majority of Africans anxious to improve themselves are English-speaking, so that the language problem has not proved as difficult as expected and it has not been a drawback to base the library service on the English language. It has also been found that the Africans' interests are wider than commonly supposed; the order of popularity, revealed by an analysis of books borrowed, had been fiction first, history, geography, biography second, technical subjects, the social sciences, language study, and last reasoning and psychology. However, the 1952 annual report stated that few Africans as yet read for pleasure and that the demand for educational books, especially on the English language, mathematics, economics, etc., is considerable.

Working in very close association with the East African Literature Bureau is the East African Inter-Territorial Languages Committee. From 1930 through 1947 the Committee, with a membership of 22, had been attached to the East African Governors' Conference. It came under the High Commission at the beginning of 1948.

At this time, in order to make the work more efficient and speedier, the membership of the Committee was reduced to nine persons - two each from Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Kenya and Uganda and an Organizing Secretary - all of them experts in Swahili and its relation to other Bantu languages. The Committee itself meets only once a year. Day to day operations are carried on by the Organizing Secretary, who is the executive officer, an Assistant Secretary who was appointed in 1948 to release the Organizing Secretary from increasing routine office work, and a staff of full-time readers which was increased in 1948. From 1949, when the Organizing Secretary resigned, until mid-1951, when

an Acting Secretary was appointed in a temporary capacity, the Director and Textbooks Editor of the Literature Bureau were responsible for the Committee's activities. The office of the Committee since 1949 has been on the premises occupied by the Literature Bureau.

Expenditures of the Committee were £1,666 in 1948, £2,769 in 1949, and £2,042 in 1950. Revenue was £199 in 1949 and £186 in 1950. The expenditures of the Committee in 1948-1950 were met by contributions from the four East African territories, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika contributing equal amounts which together constituted about 94 percent of total contributions each year, and Zanzibar contributing the remaining 6 percent.

The main task of the Committee is "to act as the authoritative source of advice on questions affecting literary publications in Swahili and kindred languages in East Africa."<sup>2</sup> During 1948-1951 advice was given to authors and publishers on 223 manuscripts. The Committee also collects and considers material for revisions of or additions to the standard vernacular dictionaries; standardizes technical terms; assists in various Swahili examinations; publishes a bulletin; and, since late 1951, does research in Swahili dialects. The Committee has maintained contact with persons in the Belgian Congo interested in the coordination of Swahili dialects; a senior official of the Belgian Congo came to Nairobi in 1950 to study the work of the Committee and the Literature Bureau.

In connection with the Literature Bureau and the Inter-Territorial Languages Committee, the two High Commission agencies with primarily educational functions,\* it should be noted that the Central Legislative Assembly may enact legislation relating to two interterritorial educational institutions in East Africa, Makerere College and the Royal Technical College of East Africa.\*\*These institutions, however, are not services of the High Commission nor in any way subject to its control. The functions of the High Commission in relation to Makerere College are limited to the appointment of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Makerere College Council.

Makerere has full autonomy in all respects, this being a prerequisite to the receipt of a C.D.&W. grant. It is now administered under the Makerere College Act passed by the Central Legislative Assembly and effective March 11, 1949, which repealed the Makerere College Ordinance, 1938 and the Makerere College (Amendment) Ordinance, 1941 of Uganda. Under the Act the College is administered in all except purely academic matters by the Makerere College Council which consists of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman appointed by the High Commission, two ex-officio members (the Principal and Vice-Principal), two members each appointed by the Governors of the three mainland territories and one member appointed by the British Resident, Zanzibar, and three members appointed by the Academic Board, which is responsible to the Council for the academic management of the College.

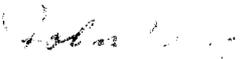
The new Royal Technical College of East Africa was established by Charter issued by the Governor of Kenya at Nairobi in September 1951 to provide higher technical education for all races in the East African area. Construction is expected to be completed by mid-1955. The College will be financed by C.D.&W. funds and contributions from the three East African governments, and its governing body will include representatives of the three territories.

\* These two agencies are usually referred to in High Commission publications as the "Social Services" of the High Commission.

\*\* Under the Third Schedule to the East African (High Commission) Order in Council, 1947 as amended in 1952.

The special arrangement for these educational institutions, whereby the Central Legislative Assembly is empowered to legislate with respect to them while they are directed by autonomous bodies, with small territorial representation, has raised the question of the means by which the territorial governments which provide the finance can be given adequate voice in their management. Mr. Maini, an unofficial member, said in Uganda Legislative Council, during discussion of the resolution to place the Royal Technical College on the Third Schedule of the High Commission Order in Council, "in the context of the various legislatures of the three East African territories there are some doubts in people's minds as to the policy to be adopted in relation to these educational institutions ... It has been felt in some quarters that, since the various territories find the capital and to some extent contribute moneys for their running, the territorial legislatures should have more active say in the working of these institutions. ... In the background of East Africa, conditions and the fact that the major part of the funds necessary for these institutions come from public or quasi-public revenue and sources, there is ... a case for consideration as to how the territorial legislatures can be brought in." He pointed out that Members of Legislative Council can, when considering the Budget, raise points regarding Makerere but no official member is able to give answers or make the Legislative Council's wishes effective in the running of Makerere or similar institutions. Since the managing bodies of Makerere were made small in the interests of efficiency the representation of Unofficial Members from the territories could of necessity be only very small. Mr. S.W. Kulubya, an African member, associated himself with these remarks. The Chief Secretary in reply stated: "I would not like it to go on record by inference that this Council accepted the view that territorial governments should have a greater control over superior educational institutions of this kind than they have. ...it is certainly true that there are very strong arguments on the other side which suggest that ... , generally speaking, with institutions of higher education such as this is, that if they are to give the best service to the countries they are planning to serve, they should be made as autonomous, or as nearly autonomous, as circumstances permit."<sup>3</sup>

Sincerely,

  
John B. George

P.S.

Footnotes

1. East Africa High Commission, East African Literature Bureau Annual Report 1952, p. 2.
2. High Commission Despatch 1/52, par. 41.
3. Uganda Protectorate, Proceedings Legislative Council, 31st Session, 11th Meeting, 17 July 1952, pp. 18-19.

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