

## NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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East Africa High Commission;  
(21) East African Posts and  
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

As with other services, the overall task of the postal services of East Africa has been complicated by the vast size, sparse population and primitive state of the area. The population centers are far apart and irregularly distributed, with small administrative headquarters lying hundreds of miles from the territorial capitals. Rail services reach only a fraction of these points, and many of the connecting roads are not motorable during much of the rainy season. Traffic to the smaller points, insufficient in volume to be economic, is rendered even more costly by poor roads and, for telecommunications, by the long length of lines having to be maintained through long stretches of steppeland and bush inaccessible to motor travel during part of each year. Telegraph lines are subject to breakage by elephant, giraffe, or theft by natives who use the copper wire for ornamentation; and in some outstations radio telegraphy and telephony has provided a partial solution to the problem of small traffic and great distances. The remoteness of East Africa from the sources of manufactured equipment, replacement parts and wire, and even of skilled personnel is a further difficulty. The maintenance of services in East Africa even at a subnormal level - using available equipment and operative personnel educated only to the level of a twelve year old schoolboy in England - becomes under such circumstances a praiseworthy achievement.

In the period following the 1939-1945 war, with development moving quickly along, and with the conversion of the old East African Posts and Telegraphs Department into the self financing East African Posts and Telecommunications Administration, the services have faced simultaneous problems of expansion, reorganization, and the particularly difficult task of financial consolidation. The earlier role of the services as an appendage of government and a facility for territorial administrations continues, but they are more and more becoming the known utility of a widening European, Asiatic, and African commercial community and a vastly enlarged literate population.

In 1929, nearly two decades before the inception of the East Africa High Commission in 1948, the Ormsby Gore Report mentioned that the Kenya and Uganda Posts and Telegraphs services already were unified, and argued the desirability that Tanganyika should become more closely associated in transport and communications systems. It was also noted that the Kenya and Uganda services suffered from the fact that their head remained answerable to the two senior authorities. The two posts and telegraphs systems were amalgamated in 1934, but the revenue collected in each territory was paid into that territory's treasury and the expenditure in each territory was financed by that territory's Government. Development in each territory depended on the availability of funds in that territory.

In 1945 the white paper on Inter-Territorial Organization in East Africa (Colonial No. 191) proposed that the combined services of the three territories be converted into a self accounting Department on the general plan of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours Administration. Under these proposals the assets would be valued at a self containment date, and would be regarded as initial capital loans, on which the new self contained department would make redemption and interest payments. It was to be considered whether the Department should make, after meeting its obligations and building up a renewals fund, any annual payments from its revenue to the three territorial governments. It was proposed further that an advisory board consisting of two members to be nominated by each of the territorial Governors be set up, with the expenses of the board and of any committees borne by the Department. In 1947, in the Revised Proposals (Colonial No. 210) it was more specifically proposed that annual and supplementary estimates should be submitted to the Central Legislative Assembly, which body, after approval of a scheme for converting the services into a self-contained department, would bear the same relationship to the self-contained Posts and Telegraphs as a territorial legislative Council to a territorial department.

At the beginning of 1948 the Posts and Telegraphs Department of East Africa came under the administration of the High Commission, and throughout 1948 the Department remained non-self-contained, its annual estimates of expenditure being confirmed by the territorial legislative Councils. In the meanwhile, however, proposals for the conversion of the P&T Department into a self-contained department were made by the Posts and Telegraphs Advisory Board set up as recommended in Papers 191 and 210. These proposals, as modified by the territorial governments and presented as Sessional Paper No. 9 of 1948, were approved by the three territorial Legislative Councils by the end of 1948 and were legally applied beginning 1 January 1949 under the provisions of the East African Posts and Telegraphs (Conversion) Order 1949, under authority of Paragraph (a) Subsection (1) of the East Africa (High Commission) Order in Council, 1947.

The switchover from the status of an interterritorial department having unaccountable reciprocal financial relationships with the separate territorial governments to status of an interterritorial service with its own self contained accounting system created considerable legal and fiscal difficulties. These were clarified by a lengthy East African Posts and Telecommunications Act passed by Central Legislative Assembly, which became effective from October 1, 1951. The Act created the Postmaster General a corporation sole, able to sue and be sued, and outlined his corporate duties, responsibilities, and powers, including those in respect of real property. The right to refuse to provide uneconomic services for any of the three territories was specified.

Thus, the East African Posts and Telecommunications Administration is a self contained, self financing interterritorial service administered by the East Africa High Commission. As such it has its own capital and renewals fund. Its head, the Postmaster General, is one of the four principal executive officers of the High Commission and is answerable directly to the High Commission. Legally, since the passage of the Posts and Telecommunications Act of 1951, it bears approximately the relationship to the High Commission and the Central Assembly that a territorial government department would bear towards its Governor and Legislative Council.

The Administration is divided functionally under five separate heads, which are coordinated and directed by the Postmaster General. The Accounting Department

operates centrally from Nairobi; the Engineering Department has its personnel and equipment dispersed throughout the system but policy is centrally controlled; the Servicing Department, encompassing both postal and telephone servicing, operates on a similar basis; the Buildings Department, which includes an architectural branch, also has a central headquarters; and a Personnel Department serves the usual staff establishment purposes. Geographically the Administration is divided into three regions, each corresponding to one of the participating territories, with offices in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Entebbe, each under a Regional Director.

The Postmaster General as a corporation sole under the Posts and Telecommunications Act of 1951 is vested with all the property of the Administration. He can sue and be sued. His indicated duties, subject to consultation with the Advisory Board in specified matters, include (1) the provision of posts and telecommunications services, (2) the regulation and control of radio communication, (3) the higher control and management of the Administration subject to directions of the East Africa High Commission, and (4) The fixing of rates and conditions of posts and telecommunications services. He can refuse to provide any uneconomic services. In respect of individual property he has power to enter into any land for survey purposes or in order to prevent accidents, and he can erect or remove lines over or across any land. He has discretionary powers as regards the opening of mails; he can open, inspect and detain any suspect letter or parcel. In his control over the savings banks he answers to the various Governors instead of to the High Commission.

The Posts and Telecommunications Advisory Board was reconstituted from the one appointed under Colonial 210 and the East Africa High Commission Order in Council, 1947, by the E.A. Posts and Telecommunications Act, 1951. Its new fourteen man membership was made up of:

The Postmaster General (ex officio)

Four members appointed by the High Commission for periods up to two years

Three members appointed by the Governor of Kenya for periods up to two years

Three members appointed by the Governor of Uganda for periods up to two years

Three members appointed by the Governor of Tanganyika for periods up to two years.

The explanation for increasing the number of territorial appointees (the older Board had two instead of three members to represent each of the three territories) is that it was felt that the Administration's status as an interterritorial monopoly free of competition called for a more direct representation of the commercial community.

The Postmaster General is required to consult the Board before exercising certain of his powers. The actions requiring consultation are (1) rate changes, (2) estimates of revenue and expenditures, including loan services, (3) proposed legislation, (4) any expenditure of more than £2,500 for any project not covered by an estimate or a program, (5) any major salary scale change or change in employment conditions, (6) any substantial reduction of staff, (7) any substantial change in the organization. In 1951 the Board met five times.

The Posts and Telecommunications Administration was employing at the end of 1952 some 5,349 of all races, of whom 554 were Europeans, 1,297 were Asians, and the remainder nearly all Africans. The staff, at the end of 1951, was considered by the Postmaster General to be inadequate, having increased by only

50 percent since 1938 while during the same period overall traffic increased by some 300 percent. Though the roll was augmented by the end of 1952 - some 5 percent at the European level - the staff situation was still regarded as unsatisfactory. Even telecommunications, where equipment shortages rather than staff limitations have been adjudged the greatest impediment, newly installed gear could not be fully used because of inadequate and inexperienced personnel. Telegraphic operators qualified to send and receive 12 words per minute, for example, were being put to work in 1950 and earlier when the staff shortage was particularly acute.

Top supervisory staff are chiefly obtained from the British Post Office. In 1950 it was complained that many Europeans on secondment from UK were finding East Africa unsatisfactory for long residence and wished to be returned. Though the situation generally improved during 1951, several important positions in engineering calling for experience in cable planning remained unfilled, even after a long search in United Kingdom and elsewhere including South Africa. The difficulty was said to be due in part to the preference of British Post Office employees, in the years following the war after much enforced residence abroad, to remain in United Kingdom. Some improvement was noted in 1952, when 16 new postmasters arrived from England, but a number of posts remained vacant. Asian staff recruitment has also been difficult, with a sufficient quantity of qualified personnel not available in East Africa. African recruits have always been available in quantity, but the quality - even in terms of basic education prerequisite to special training - was expected to remain seriously deficient for some years to come. Thus at all levels - of the senior posts occupied by Europeans, of the intermediate and more skilled positions generally held by Asians, and of the laborer and minor clerical posts usually taken by Africans - the Post Office has remained understaffed since World War II. The European understaffing has been largely due to the hesitancy of personnel from UK to take up permanent residence in East Africa; at the Asiatic and African levels the deterrent has been the low standard of education throughout the territories, described by the Postmaster General as forcing acceptance of Asian and African recruits whose educational background would rank them with the average 12-year-old in United Kingdom. European recruiting difficulties were increased in 1952 by the Emergency in Kenya, and shortage of experienced staff was cited as a chief deterrent to operations.

A partial answer to the local educational deficiencies has been provided by the setting up of a training program. A combined training school at Mbagathi was opened in March of 1949 and gradually increased its enrollment. By 1952 it had Engineering, Traffic, Radio and Automatic Sections, each in the charge of a European senior instructor and about 20 African assistants. During the year 1951 some 342 African trainees had been in residence for periods up to 12 months, with 186 being trained in engineering, 126 in postal work, and 30 as radio operators. Of the trainees - 134 from Kenya, 82 from Uganda, 126 from Tanganyika - most had completed eight years schooling (Preliminary Examination Standard). During 1952 some 476 of all races received training with 22 percent failing to pass. In addition, some 53 members of the Kenya Police Staff were passed as radio operators during 1951.

The school alone could not provide sufficient replacements and additional personnel for enlargement of services. In 1953 the program was to be examined to find out if a higher degree of specialization could be introduced and the training periods thereby shortened to increase the turnout. Another difficulty was the preference of Africans for clerical work. Despite the 2,000 - 3,000 applications each year, it was difficult to find enough qualified trainees willing to undertake engineering courses.

The combined school is designated for all races, but in effect it has been almost exclusively for Africans, with only one European present for training in mid 1952 and Asian training proceeding in the larger post offices. A projected Royal Technical College is hoped ultimately to supply further trained personnel. In 1952 a scheme for qualifying pupil engineers for professional grade appointments by training under working conditions was introduced. This indicated an improvement over the preceeding year when the Postmaster General reported that training facilities for Europeans were non-existent, and the on-the-job and Eastleigh school provisions for Asians "very sketchy".<sup>1</sup>

The combined effects of understaffing and overwork were reported to have caused a decline in the promptness and quality of service since 1938. Though careful observers are often surprised that under the circumstances the service is as reliable and prompt as it is, the popular reaction to delays and mistakes sometimes has been vociferous. The service is sometimes condemned as poor and careless, and the staff is accused often of discourtesy. A "drive for courtesy" was inaugurated in 1953, with letters being franked "courtesy begets courtesy" and booklets and cards and posters were circulated pleading for greater consideration and patience in dealing with the public.

When the Department assumed control on 1 January 1949 the current valuation of existing assets was roughly £1,000,000; at the end of 1952 the excess of assets over liabilities was listed as £8,829,162. An idea of its extent of physical plant can be given by listing the departmental post offices, which numbered 172 in 1948, 193 in 1951, 198 in 1952. Further properties were located at outlying agency offices which numbered 209 in 1952. In addition there is the network of telephone and telegraph facilities. The increase in plant, though not keeping pace with the commercial expansion of East Africa, did ease the situation somewhat by 1952. For some years after World War II the plant was deemed highly inadequate and was said to be carrying a triple load, but by the end of 1952, even in the critically under-equipped telephone services, the Administration had begun to catch up. The new post office building in Nairobi, fully opened in early 1953, and the office space in the telephone buildings there and in Dar es Salaam alleviated but did not solve the problem of floor space shortage.

The Postmaster General has cited the East African Posts and Telecommunications Administration as the only such organization in the world which is self financing. In the process of making it so, and in the earlier process of hand-over to be administered by the High Commission, a considerable amount of fiscal confusion, inherent from its earlier relationships with the separate territorial governments, had to be cleared up. Under these earlier relationships the maintenance of buildings had been borne by the territorial Public Works Departments, pensions for postal employees were paid through the Accountant Generals of the Governments, and the territorial medical departments attended staff medical needs. The extent to which these assistances were reciprocated by the provision of uneconomic services in the respective territories could not accurately be determined. In 1946 Sir Wilfred Woods included in a Fiscal Report on Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika a statement that neither the estimates nor the accounts could provide "any idea" of whether the Posts, Telegraphs and Telephone services "considered as separate services in each territory or as one service in each territory, or, again, as separate services in all three territories were worked at a profit or a loss."<sup>2</sup>

With the introduction of self-contained financing the very unfavorable financial position of the services became obvious and, formerly hidden expenses were revealed. Though rid of the obligation of providing free services to Government departments from 1949, the switch to self finance at first appeared disadvantageous. By the end of 1952, however, with operating profits sufficient to cover several earlier deficits and yet leave £15,000 for the reserve fund, the ability of the Administration to finance itself seemed greater.

For the three years immediately following amalgamation the P&T operated at a loss. Expenditures by the services increased and were not compensated for by additional profits resulting from the steadily greater volume of traffic. In 1949 the services were operated on a narrow cash margin. The budget of that year was some £2,000,000, and the expectation of revenue some £1,250,000. Loan moneys and reimbursements were needed to fill the discrepancy. Bank balances were low because money paid out before 1949 by the Department for the territorial governments had not yet been recovered, a situation which was aggravated, as explained in the P&T annual report, by a shortage of £310,000 on a loan promised by the Kenya Government. Ends were met only through higher receipts and lower expenditures than were expected and planned. In 1950 the telephone and telegraph services, already being operated uneconomically, were considerably expanded, the trend of increased costs continued, and the annual loss was resultingly increased. In the Central Legislative Assembly in January 1951 the Postmaster General listed rising staff, conveyance costs of mails and equipments costs for the telephone and telegraph services as factors. The cash position had been so severe in 1950 that only by use of the money taken in on money orders (not due to be handed out of the country for three months time) were services able to meet immediate cash obligations. During 1951, increases of the previous year notwithstanding, the overall annual operating profit was reduced more than £20,000. In this year the telegraph services, continually <sup>un</sup>economic, doubled their operating deficit - partly the result of further enlargement.

By the end of 1952 the financial position was greatly improved. Despite increased expenses due to increased internal expenses and to shipping charges outside East Africa, and an unexpected staff expense of £200,000 to cover temporary cost-of-living allowances adopted by the East African Governments, an operating profit of £456,544 had been achieved, enough to make good the 1950 and 1951 shortages of renewals funds and to place £15,000 in reserve. This was accomplished partly through rate increases on telegrams of some 25 percent on January 1, 1952, and an increase of some 30 percent on international telegrams (following similar increases in UK) as of October 1, 1952; an increase on local telephone calls by 100 percent and of trunk calls by some 50 percent; and various smaller changes in charges and procedures such as the revision of demurrage rates to reduce parcel congestion and delay. Though the Postmaster General estimated in January 1953 that at least several years would be required to wipe out the existing deficits, the overall situation at that time obviously had been improved.

The P&T since the amalgamation has had sizeable interest payments to meet. From its inception as a self-accounting department it had to pay interest on a short term loan of £460,000 of working capital (of which £220,000 was met by Uganda, £220,000 by Tanganyika and £20,000 by the Kenya Government) and on a debt of almost £1,000,000 of more or less worn out assets from the three territorial governments. When the Department was amalgamated under the High Commission in 1949, approval was given for loans of £380,000, £200,000 and £220,000 respectively from Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. Later on the Advisory Board, having assessed its further needs, had authorized Mr. German, the Postmaster General, to negotiate directly with the Governments for help. Without such

help an increase of rates and/or a curtailment of development would become necessary. The Postmaster General corresponded with the various territorial governments and also made presentations at a meeting of their representatives at Entebbe (while the Central Legislative Assembly was meeting at Kampala), and received commitments that the territorial governments would suspend the redemption payments on the initial interterritorial loans and accept only nominal amounts of interest. This meant a saving on loan charges of about £47,000 per year. At the end of 1952, inclusive of the initial conversion loans, the Administration listed £1,246,078 from the territories and £4,750,000 in High Commission  $3\frac{1}{2}$  percent stock as liabilities.

The need for additional plant and working capital was urgent at the time of conversion. Before the P&T became a self-accounting department all revenue had gone into general revenue and it has often been said on authority that very small amounts were spent by the territorial governments on P&T. The Administration started off with only £460,000 of working capital and £1,000,000 of more or less worn out assets. With an operating loss and interest payments to meet, the P&T, as the Post master General explained in Legislative Assembly in 1951, was not putting away sufficient cash in renewals funds for development and was living off its fat. It had therefore to seek loans from the territorial governments for capital development. The minimum working capital required then, according to the Chief Accountant, was in the amount of £500,000. A Renewals Fund of £1,116,000 badly needed at the start was arranged for. Uganda paid £213,000 towards it; Tanganyika agreed to pay ten equal installments amounting to £293,500; Kenya agreed to pay £588,100 in eight years commencing with 1951. In 1950 the territorial governments guaranteed a loan of £4,500,000 to be raised by the High Commission for the P&T. The funds raised were to be used for new post offices, telephone exchanges, extension and improvement of trunk telephone lines. In early 1953 further relief was promised through the passage of the East Africa (Posts and Telecommunications) loan Act, authorizing the raising of a £6,000,000 loan for a development program to continue to 1958. It was planned to spend £2,861,000 in Kenya, £1,103,000 in Uganda and £2,036,000 in Tanganyika, £100,000 going for telegraph and radio improvements, and the remaining £5,900,000 on telephone improvements. As new equipment became more available in the years after conversion capital expenditures increased. The capital assets as per capital account for the years 1951 and 1952 were £2,996,012 and £3,817,003.

In the operation of the postal services inadequacy of staff has been the principal problem. In early 1951 the Postmaster General protested that since 1938 letter and money order traffic had increased three and one half times, but the overall staff increase for the same period had been only 50 percent. The betterment of plant and increase of space could help and would be necessary, but the basic means of restoring the 1938 standards of service would have to be through staff increases.

In 1952 an estimated total of 91,363,700 postal items other than parcels were handled including 2,936,774 registered articles, representing an increase of some 20 percent over the previous year. Internal parcels shipped during 1952 numbered 372,318 and international shipments totalled 164,275. As in earlier years, the letter traffic estimate was based on a two-weeks count, with possibility of error. The trend of increase, though interrupted by an abnormally overall High figure in 1949 and a decrease in international parcel traffic in 1952, has continued from 1947 through 1952. The apportionment of traffic among the three territories places Kenya far out in front, Tanganyika following with something more than half this volume, and Uganda with a little more than half of Tanganyika's total.

Postal order business in 1952 included 860,000 orders, an increase of some 40 percent over 1948; money orders including telegraphic money orders numbered 380,000 with a similar increase. The value of money orders totalled nearly £2,000,000 in 1952, of which £791,476 was addressed to India. Again a steady rise was indicated each year from 1947, with an artificial enhancement of traffic in 1951 due to "chain letter" promoters in Uganda and Tanganyika. As with letter traffic, the volume in the three territories is distributed unevenly, Kenya's share approaching that of Tanganyika and Uganda combined. Internal C.O.D. parcel services are afforded and registration and insurance of both internal and international traffic are provided; in 1949 1,419,000 internally shipped articles and 275,000 international articles were registered or insured in East Africa, while 439,000 items were received from abroad.

Various improvements and extensions of services have been effected since the High Commission takeover. In 1950 second class airmail services were extended to all international destinations, and an air parcel service to UK was arranged. A special Christmas greeting airletter form was designed and was well received. The pre-war overland service across Europe was restored to save several days delay along the sea route. In 1951 an interterritorial parcel service between Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda was effected, and as a further convenience to the public an agreement was reached with East African Customs to allow clearance of parcels at seven points far inland. Parcel post services were restored with the Azores, Balearic Islands, Corsica, Cyrenaica, French Guinea, French West Indies, Madeira, Tunisia and Spain early in 1951, and the small packet services were extended to all British Commonwealth and a few foreign countries as of December 1, 1952. Direct parcel mails were opened between East Africa and France in September of 1951. In 1952 a "Box Holders Circular" service was introduced to provide for the unaddressed delivery of circulars marked "The Box Holder" and prepaid at the printed rate.

Mail services, like other public facilities, are characterized by the remoteness, the uneven development and the multi-lingual character of East Africa. Undue use of the parcel services has been made by shippers abroad. The Postmaster General has told of ingenious adaptation of articles never intended to be shipped by parcel post, such as bicycles, which have glutted parcel handling facilities. The often low standard of literacy and language differences in East Africa and resultant illegible addressing have caused considerable inconvenience to staff and considerable delays in service; some 202,000 undelivered items were handled in 1951 alone.

Telegraph services, like the telephone network, reach over wide distances between the widely scattered, populated pinpoints. Because there is no equivalent layout of telephone lines the telegraphic services operate in the more outlying areas without telephonic competition; and where parallel trunk telephone services do exist their slow and often unreliable service persuades a greater proportionate use of telegraph lines than would be normal in England or the United States. In recent years much telegraphic contact has been effected by radio, which has minimized the expensive stringing of wire to remote administrative headquarters. The variety of telegraph service problems is probably as great as anywhere, one extreme being represented by Nairobi, with the refinements of teletype and telephoto services, and the other by small administrative outposts where personnel and equipment sometimes require protection from wild animals.

In 1952 some 2,000,000 inland messages were handled, a decline from the 2,226,000 of the previous year, which resulted from increased rates. In international traffic for 1952 some 610,000 messages were handled, about the same as



the previous year. Including Agency Offices a total of 424 stations were operating in 1952. Of these 214 were in Kenya, 150 in Tanganyika, and 60 in Uganda. As of 1951 the wireless stations (included in the above figures) were 22 in Tanganyika, 16 in Kenya, and 9 in Uganda, reflecting the greater distances between more remote points in Tanganyika.

The volume of telegraph business is roughly related to the distribution of European population throughout the three territories. In 1949 the inland telegraph traffic of Kenya was some two-fifths greater than Tanganyika and more than three times that of Uganda. The overseas telegraph traffic of Kenya was more than three times the combined traffic originating in the other two territories.

Improvements and augmentations in service have been claimed in recent annual reports. In 1948 it was decided to replace all single wire ground return circuits throughout Kenya with metallic circuits and this work was underway on the Nairobi-Mombasa route during that year. The height of wires was increased over five stretches along the Mombasa-Makinnon Road, some lines were retransposed for greater efficiency, and modifications were made of lines passing near airfields. In all three territories some 315 miles of poles were painted during the year, though in Kenya shortage of staff kept the figure below that required for an adequate painting cycle. Improvements during 1949 included the building of new routes along the realigned railway line between Gilgil and Nakuru, an extension of the Nyeri F.O. circuit. Maintenance efforts involved overhauls of the Masaka-Kampala and Kampala-Jinja routes including replacement of burnt copper wire. An ex military spare route was recovered and 108.96 miles of copper wire were erected from Dar es Salaam to Mikese to provide trunk services for Ruvu and Ngerengere. In Tanganyika eight new departmental radio stations were opened, bringing the total in Tanganyika to 20. Test work was begun in 1949 on the high speed automatic radio telegraph circuit between Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. In 1950 motorcycle delivery of telegrams was introduced in Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Tanga; several additional circuits were added including a high speed radio link between Dar es Salaam and Tabora; and two new radio stations were opened at Lake Katwe and Mwanza. The high speed radio link between Dar es Salaam and Tabora, along with the Nairobi-Dar es Salaam link which came into full operation during 1950, served to lighten loads on extant circuits. In 1951 experiments were made with radio teleprinter operation beamed on Dar es Salaam and Tabora from the Nairobi control station. Teleprinter facilities were improved by the addition of a new circuit-between Mombasa and Nairobi and by the replacement of old equipment at Kampala. Carrier channels were installed along the main lines Kampala-Nairobi, Kampala-Mombasa, and Jinja-Nairobi, and a standby and relief high speed radio circuit was opened between Kampala and Nairobi. Improvements in international services during 1951 included a direct radio link with Nyasaland and the shifting of the international link with Northern Rhodesia to a more central position to improve traffic clearance. In 1952 the program of improvements continued to be implemented on an increasing scale. A total of 15 high frequency duplex channels and 15 voice frequency channels were opened that year between main points in Kenya and Tanganyika.

To the visitor from the UK or the United States the telegraph services of East Africa seem slow and erratic, even when urgent rates are paid. Official admissions of the unsatisfactory state of slowness and inaccuracy have been made. Staff of very low educational qualifications must be employed to deal in a second or third language which they then use only during working hours. And there are obvious difficulties which arise from the necessity of carrying on business in an area where so many different standards of living and also of morality must be taken into account, necessitating such measures as the practice of issuing receipts for the fees paid for telegrams.

The remoteness and wide dispersal of civilized populations affects telephone services as they do the telegraph services. Maintenance effort is often incommensurate with the small amount of traffic carried on certain lines to the administrative outposts. Problems of procurement and installation of equipment and of hiring staff are worsened - more so than with the more simply equipped telegraph services - by the great distance from manufacturers and from sources of skilled personnel. Leading up to 1952 telephone services were unable to keep pace with the rapid commercial development of the three territories, and the waiting list prospective subscribers grew continuously. At the end of 1952 new installations were slightly outpacing the increase in the applications list.

However, considerable additions have been made to the service since the High Commission takeover in 1948. Direct exchange line telephones were increased from 8,164 in 1949 to 9,288 in 1950. Some 4,000 new telephones representing some 2,000 new subscribers were connected during 1951, bringing the total telephones in the three territories, including party and extension phones, to some 24,000. In 1951 some 28,800,000 local calls and 1,710,723 trunk calls were handled, an increase of 10.4 and 11.3 percent over the previous year. This was a continuation of a trend evident in the years following the 1939-1945 war, to be altered only by increased tariffs in 1952, which reduced the volume of calls though more telephones were in service. In 1952 a new Telephone House was erected in Nairobi, and was serving some 3,600 subscribers as of January 1, 1953, with space adequate for some 6,000 more. An early expansion of overall services to 5,000 was planned in an attempt to assuage the waiting list which stood at 9,000 in early 1952, and some 4,000 new connections were made, keeping pace with the constantly increased waiting list. The heaviest demands were in central Nairobi and in the adjacent light industrial area where special cable laying programs were underway during 1951-1953. Some 40 miles of telephone cable had been laid in the city during 1951 and 1952. By the beginning of 1953 the total number of telephones in use was nearly 30,000, soon to be augmented by improvements in Uganda, where a 6,400 line exchange was due to be opened in November. The number of telephones in service had been doubled since the initial High Commission year of 1948.

The replacement of lengthy physical trunk circuits with multi channel repeater equipment and subsequent superposing of additional channels was effected to increase the capacity of the trunk system. A total of 23 new circuits were added - mostly by these means - during 1951; and after 1950 VHF equipment described in the section on radio communication had provided several additional trunk-circuits. Particular difficulties were experienced because of the very narrow tolerance allowable in stringing transposed multi channel lines. Metal poles were unobtainable, and the creosoted wooden poles purchased in South Africa tended to warp and affect their spacing, limited in 12 channel carriers to a tolerance of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch between poles. A further harassment to trunk maintenance was the organized theft of wire in some localities. On a single night 6 miles of wire was stolen between Thika and Nairobi, and a total of 105 miles was stolen in Kenya during 1952.

Overseas radio telephone service has been in operation, and in 1950 was extended to Mozambique, Vatican City, Portugal and Spain via UK. Direct dealing service between Entebbe and Kampala was installed in June 1950. The compilation, printing and distribution of sectional telephone directories for populous areas as well as the routine territorial directories was undertaken in 1950. More of the settled area manual exchanges have been replaced by automatic equipment. During 1951 automatic exchanges were installed at Marlborough and Eastleigh (Nairobi) and at Kerasini, Oyster Bay and Fugu Road in Dar es Salaam. The East African Railways lines services continued to be maintained and augmented by the Administration through 1951.

Like so many of the modern devices introduced into East Africa, telephones have been wanted since 1947 in ever increasing quantity, and the pressure for further service has affected the quality of services in existence. To a new user the present inadequacy of both settled area and exchange services becomes immediately apparent. The writer has waited hours for the busy signals of dial phones in Nairobi to cease. The increase in waiting lists which persisted until 1952 has been a deterrent to commercial development. In 1952, when more than 26 million calls were handled despite recently increased prices, and when trunk calls exceeded the total of any previous year, the services appeared to be catching up.

Besides operating and maintaining the radio installations supplementing public telegraph and telephone services, the Administration is continuing to provide various radio facilities for other purposes. In 1948 responsibility for all maintenance and operations undertaken by the Administration had been vested in the Radio Section of the Engineering Branch, which carried on such work as the installation of VHF stations and repeater stations, experimentation in high speed radio telegraphy, the setting up of ship-to-shore equipment at Dar es Salaam, the fitting out of mobile radio units for the Desert Locust Survey, and the fitting of special directional radio equipment into a vehicle for tracing sources of electrical radio interference in Nairobi.

In 1948 plans for the provision of a radio net for the Kenya Police were approved and implementation started. A VHF fixed station was set up in Nairobi during 1949 and work was begun on mobile installation. In 1950 the maintenance of the entire Kenya Police radio services was reported fully taken over, and installations or renovations of seven stations were claimed completed during the year. Twenty two police vehicles and aircraft were fitted with mobile equipment.

In 1951 the radio services which had been provided by the Department for civil aviation were handed over, with most of their staff, to the control of the Director of Civil Aviation. During the three years preceeding the Administration (or Department) had done much airadio maintenance and installation work. In 1948 the installation of R/T air ground facilities was completed at Nairobi West. A temporary station which had been installed by East African Airways Corporation was taken over and made permanent, and the setting up of an airadio station was begun in the control tower at Dar es Salaam. The Mombasa radio and direction finding service for aircraft was maintained at Likoni, and the R/T air ground service was moved from there to the control tower at Fort Reitz, where installation of VHF RT was commenced in hopes it would be ready early in 1949. The Department took over the control from Aeradio, Ltd., of former RAF and SAAF Aeradio Stations at Kisumu and Tabora respectively, and continued to provide aeradio facilities at Entebbe, Kisumu, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Lindi, Moshi, Dodoma, Mbeya and Tanga. In 1949 further improvements were effected at Nairobi, Entebbe, Mombasa, Kisumu and Dar es Salaam. A naval transmitting station at Changamwe was taken over for maintenance and care. Most of these facilities were continued through 1950, with further augmentations. Some training of staff was effected in East Africa; in 1948 fairly good progress was reported in using African staff to operate inter aerodrome point-to-point circuits.

Some radio services for the Meteorological Department, managed earlier by that Department and the RAF, were taken over on September 1, 1948. In 1949, at Mtwara, Nyangamara and Noli, special VHF radiotelephone stations were set up to provide communication between the inland terminal and the pumping and the

boosting stations of the oil pipe line belonging to the Overseas Food Corporation.

Various works of construction have been advised or undertaken by the Administration in recent years. In 1948 these included work on the renovation of a derelict military camp north of Nairobi to provide the "Thika Road House," a hostel for High Commission personnel. A new G.P.O. parcels office was completed the same year. In 1949 about one half of the staff required for a special section under an architect was acquired, and work done by departmental staff included the addition of 2,300 private boxes, additional counter and sorting space, extension of the parcels office and remodelling of Customs facilities at Nairobi. The Nairobi central telephone exchange was altered, the entire Nairobi post office was redecorated and a two story extension was added in rear to provide space for headquarters expansion. Five new automatic exchange buildings were erected in the Nairobi area and a radio station in the Ngong Hills. Contract operations included designing and starting the construction of the new Telephone House, Nairobi, to provide space for a new central exchange and space for administrative offices. A new post office at Naivasha was another contract work, as were European Staff houses. Planning was done on a new telephone exchange, stores and workshops for Kampala, and a post office at Kongwa. More staff houses were projected for the Nairobi area. In 1950 and 1951 work continued with a total of 26 new offices being opened and mail handling and other facilities being improved and enlarged. A five year expansion program was outlined for Tanganyika in 1952, calling for a new automatic telephone exchange, office and housing facilities at Dar es Salaam, for extension of facilities at points inland and for the setting up of at least five new radio stations.

Outlying post offices often are the only points for miles around where clerical records can be kept or where collections of government funds can be properly receipted. Besides the more obvious service of Postal Savings facilities they handle a number of sales and collections services which otherwise could not be performed. Customs duty, poll, income, and education tax is sometimes collected; game licenses, special newspapers stamps, and suppressive drugs for malaria are sold. Gross collections and sales for other departments were £127,343 in 1949, £174,785 in 1949, £144,031 in 1950, £234,307 in 1951, and £304,926 in 1952. In relation to the other postal facilities used, Tanganyika generally made greater use of these special collection services, mainly because of the greater distances and more sparse distribution of other government clerical facilities.

Procurement of equipment and supplies has been a problem much discussed in Central Legislative Assembly. While staff shortages were mentioned as the paramount bottleneck in the letter and parcel services, the slow delivery of equipment from UK manufacturers was reported the chief holdup in telecommunications as of 1950. The rate of delivery of telephone equipment in 1949 was described as constantly disappointing, and has been similarly slow since, necessitating the adaption to use of ex-service and obsolescent equipment, and stimulating a wide search for ex military communications supplies in India and elsewhere. By the end of 1952 this difficulty had eased somewhat but could still be regarded as a major impediment.

Since the telecommunications services were already unified in an operational sense, no serious political issue arose over the question of physical amalgamation, but the financial and administrative difficulties of consolidating the department into a self-contained, self-financing administration financially independent of

the separate territories have been discussed in the various legislatures. Also the quality of posts and telecommunications services has been the subject of considerable criticism in both legislatures and the press.

In late 1950 during the Budget debate the unofficial members of Kenya Legislative Council expressed dissatisfaction with the service, and proposed to make their criticism felt by moving an amendment to cut the Kenya budget contribution to the Office of the Administrator of the High Commission by £996. After assurances by the Chief Secretary that their complaint would be passed on to the Postmaster General, and also because the complaint could be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the Kenya Unofficial Members of the Central Legislative Assembly, the amendment - embodying a deliberate demonstration of the Colony's power of the purse strings over the High Commission - was finally withdrawn. Parts of the discussion preceeding the withdrawal are significant in that they reveal the nature of the criticism and the feelings behind it.

Mr. Michael Blundell:

"... the great dissatisfaction which is held up-country over these services should be voiced in this Council ... In rural areas - I believe especially in regard to the telephone facilities - that the increase in charge is absolutely unwarranted. If anybody lives, as I do, on a party line in a rural area twenty miles from a town, they will then realize the absolute - what I would call the acme of frustration which anybody suffers when they attempt to use the Postal Telephones system. There has been recently, I believe, a deterioration in it ... although the officials themselves in the Posts and Telegraphs in my experience are courteous and have done their best to give me service, nevertheless the general service provided up-country in rural areas more particularly, and especially on telephones, is steadily deteriorating."

Mr. Ibrahim Nathoo:

"... the same inefficiency is obtained in towns ..."

Major Keyser:

"... I entirely agree with the criticism that has been made of the Post Office so far, and to add also, not only to the criticism of the Telephone Department, but of the actual letter services. The time taken for delivery from, say, a country town to Nairobi is unbelievable ... Telegrams come mutilated, there is delay in delivering them, there is delay in putting them into post boxes even. Letters, telephones and telegrams are handled in a most casual manner in this country. I think it is quite the most inefficient service we have in this Colony today."

Mr. Usher:

"The loss of letters is a very serious matter, and it is frequently occurring and those letters do not come back through the Dead Letter Office ... I have sent postal packages in the normal way and they have not been delivered. I am told that it is necessary to register them. Is that reasonable in a properly conducted department?"

Lady Shaw:

"... one of the most notable things in this country is the amount you

pay for the postal services in this country and the wretched, rotten service you get for it."

Mr. Havelock:

"... I want to make it quite obvious that I think the great majority of hon. Members on this side feel very strongly indeed on this matter."<sup>3</sup>

To a considerable extent these complaints were quieted by the Administration, and by early 1951 the explanations and protestations of the Postmaster General had gained some sympathy among the Legislative Council members. In some quarters, as illustrated by a comment of Mr. S.V. Cooke, European Elected Member for the Coast in the Kenya Legislative Council, the difficulties were rationalized.

"With regard to the Post Office Advisory Board ... it inherited a legacy from the past and for that legacy, people on this side of the Council were to a great extent responsible and I think it is unfair to judge its work before it has cleaned up - I would not say 'mess' but - the chaos which it inherited."<sup>4</sup>

The comments of African members of Kenya Legislative Council - there being relatively few African paying users of telephones and yet fewer subscribers - have been largely confined to the affairs of African employees of the Administration. Mr. Mathu has referred to "quite substantial dissatisfaction obtaining among Africans serving in the Post Office for a long time. Quite a number of them have actually resigned because they are not satisfied with the terms of service, and all the constant representations they make do not meet with their satisfaction ..."<sup>5</sup>

In Uganda, particularly in Kampala, criticisms regarding the telephone and other services, had been voiced, sometimes including allegations that the needs of Uganda were being neglected by the Nairobi located headquarters and that Kenya was profiting by this. But by early 1951, after the difficulties had been explained by the Postmaster General, expressions of sympathy and appreciation of the efforts of the Department had become frequent. After citing a recent "long, sustained and fiercely acrimonious hate against the Posts and Telegraphs Department", Mr. C. Handley Bird went on to list the difficulties which the service had had to overcome.

"... as a result of the non-development during the war years there was a flood of demand immediately the war ended at a time when the Posts and Telegraphs itself was at the very bottom of its equipment and staff. It might have been possible to restrict all services to the standard of those existing on VJ Day, until the Department had built up its staff, its equipment, its buildings, and then tried to introduce an excellent service after three or four years, but I think rightly they have endeavoured to cope with the increasing demand day by day."

"... there have been and will always be complaints as to inefficient service. A very large number of those complaints are justified. But what is not justified ... is the failure to appreciate the proportion of faulty incidence to the total of good service that is rendered by this Department ... What is not realised is that over the last two years 800 premises in Kampala alone have been given telephone facilities, and I venture to say that if every one of those 800 who had received telephone facilities had taken the trouble to write a letter to the local Press or even such members of the

Uganda Chamber of Commerce who had received telephones had taken the trouble to come along and express their appreciation the volume of thanks given would have drowned completely the volume of criticism. Now, the figures of telephone development in view of the difficulties of obtaining material, which was placed on order as long ago as 1945, have been quite extraordinary. But at last we are beginning to get this material, and the measure of increase is from a quarter-of-a-million pounds worth of plant received in East Africa during 1947 and one million, one hundred thousand pounds worth of plant received in the year just ended, with an anticipated arrival of over a million pounds again this year."<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Bird also insisted that in the past the profits of the Posts and Telegraphs had gone into general revenue and the Department had continued to operate on whatever amounts it "could screw out of the government with extreme difficulty year by year." More recently it had been forced to operate upon a very small working capital amounting to only £460,000 which had been borrowed from the three territories. He plead that more recognition be given to "this hard working body of public servants ..."

Correlary endorsements of the diligence and integrity of the services were made by Messrs. Jaffer and Maini, recognizing the difficulties arising out of limited capital, post war unavailability of trained personnel, replacement equipment, housing and other impediments.

In Tanganyika the criticism has not been so obvious but in general the public attitude is similar. Europeans and Asians object to the slowness and undependability of the services; Africans occasionally object to the conditions of employment in the service and more often to the shortage of postal services in tribal areas away from the main roads. The European view was given pointedly in a representation by "an association" recorded by the Revenue Advisory Board during their hearing of public advice regarding the East African Income Tax (Management) Act, 1952. Reference was made to a section of the draft act which read "where a notice is served by ordinary or registered post it shall be deemed to have been served not later than the seventh day succeeding the day on which the notice would have been served in the ordinary course by post ..." The association protested that this was "not appropriate to these territories where the postal service is notoriously inadequate and dates of receipt of postal matter (if received at all) may and sometimes does extend to weeks."<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely,



John B. George

P.S.

### Footnotes

1. Postmaster General, Proceedings Central Legislative Assembly, Vol. III, 17 January 1951, p. 266.
2. Quoted by Mr. German, the Postmaster General, ibid., p. 253.
3. Excerpts from statements quoted in Kenya, Legislative Council Debates, 3rd Session, 1st Sitting, 30 November 1950, 539-543.
4. Kenya, Legislative Council Debates, 3rd Session, 3rd Sitting, 11 May 1951, 102.
5. Ibid., 30 November 1950, 559.
6. Uganda Protectorate, Proceedings Legislative Council, 30th Session, 3rd Meeting, 10 January 1951, p. 63.
7. East Africa High Commission, East African Revenue Advisory Board, Report on the East African Income Tax (Management) Act 1952, p. 21.

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