
by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis considers the state of trade and society in Malawi and eastern Zambia in the early years of the nineteenth century with special reference to the organisation of long distance trade, and the involvement of different peoples with it. It considers the mechanics of the trades in slaves and ivory which were at that time, owing to the difficulties of transport, the only two important commodities which could be carried from the far interior and exchanged at the coast for the western and eastern goods, such as cloths and beads, and later guns, for which there was an undoubted demand.

It considers the impact on British public opinion of David Livingstone's descriptions of the effects of the east African slave trade, and of the consequences of the attacks by the Yao and Ngoni on the people of Malawi. It considers the impact of the Great Depression, and the combination of commercial and religious motives which led to the despatch in the years following Livingstone's death of a number of missionary expeditions to the African interior, among them the Livingstone Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which was established at the south end of Lake Malawi. It is concerned with the foundation by the lay supporters of that mission of the Livingstone Central Africa Company, later the African Lakes Company, which was intended to carry on the trading and transport side of the mission, and to put into effect Livingstone's theory that the slave trade could be undermined if it was made possible for the people to satisfy their material wants by the production for the world market of commodities such as cotton and sugar.

It considers the efforts by the first managers of the Company, John and Frederick Heir, to put these ideas into practice, and the diplomatic, political, and commercial problems with which they had to deal. It attempts to explain why the limitations of their capital, staff, and steamers, as well as the weaknesses of their diplomatic and political position, made it impossible for them to succeed in their first objective, and led them to concentrate their efforts on the hunting of elephants and the buying of ivory, and on the cultivation of crops such as coffee which, because of their relatively high ratio of value to weight, were more likely to be profitably exported. It considers the Company's relations with the people with whom it came.
in contact along the line of communications which was opened up between the Indian Ocean and the south end of Lake Tanganyika, and their efforts to obtain the declaration of a British protectorate over the area in order to forestall the claims of Portugal and Germany.

It considers the origins, course and effects of the war which the Company fought at the north end of Lake Malawi between 1887 and 1889 with Arab traders who had attacked the Ngonde people. It analyses the commercial and diplomatic consequences of this war which led the Company to the verge of bankruptcy, into a complex involvement with Rhodes' British South Africa Company, and which, by arousing public interest in Britain, finally secured the protectorate which the Company had long sought.

It considers the way in which the establishment of Harry Johnston's Administration in 1891 ended the independent political role of the Company, and it contrasts the aggressive policy which he pursued with the policies which might have been pursued if the Moires had been in his position, and points to the damage which was done to the interests of the people by the premature attempt to raise direct taxation, and by the Administration's involvement with labour recruiting.

It considers the great increase in the scale of the Company's trading and transport operations which was made possible by the existence of the Administration, and the increased business which it generated, and the way in which this increased business, and the competition of new transport companies made possible a reduction in the cost and an improvement in the efficiency of the steamer service. It attempts to show the competition for labour between the transport companies and the planting interest, and the proven inadequacy of head-porterage, together with the gradual fall in the water level of the Shire and the Zambesi led to the campaign for the building of a railway. The completion of the first section of this line in 1908 marked the beginning of the end of the Company as a transport business, and of the era of the steamer, and water communication, as agents of economic and social change in central Africa.

The thesis concludes that there had been in the thirty years since the founding of the Company in 1878 revolutionary changes in the nature of trade and society in the area, but that for a variety of
reasons development had not progressed in the way that Livingstone, the promoters of the Company, or the Heirs had intended, and that to a large extent the problem which they faced, of how to enable the people of the area to pay for imports through the produce of their own labour, without leaving their homes, remains to be solved.
'When I thought of going out to Africa first... I had a course to choose. A life work to fix upon. I thought it a good field for enterprise, as well as a good field for missionary work. And it seemed a place where a merchant might be most useful, so we came.'

John Moir to Bessie Tod, 14th June, 1880.

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'A more rotten commercial concern which contrives to make a big noise and cackle in the world I have never seen. It has been on the verge of an utter breakdown and even now it is little better than a creaking piece of machinery without fuel to drive the engines. On all hands within and without there is one bitter outcry against it. From no person have I heard a good thing said in its favour—beyond that it is recognised that its intentions have been good... that so much has been accomplished under the circumstances is a marvel.'

Joseph Thomson to Cecil Rhodes, 18th August, 1890.

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'The long reaches which were like one and the same reach, monotonous bends that were exactly alike, slipped past the steamer... this grimy fragment of another world, the forerunner of change, of conquest, of trade, of massacres, of blessings.'

Joseph Conrad, The Heart of Darkness, 1898
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My greatest debt is to my parents to whom I dedicate this work, in the knowledge that it can not come up to their high standard.

Edinburgh, 17th June, 1970.
ABBREVIATIONS.

B.C.A. British Central Africa.
B.C.A.C. British Central Africa Gazette.
B.L. Blantyre Mission.
B.S.A.C. British South Africa Company.
C.A. Central Africa.
C.C.A.P. Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian.
C.E. Civil Engineer.
C.O. Colonial Office.
E.U.L. Edinburgh University Library.
F. Frederick Neish.
F.M.C. Foreign Missions Committee.
F.O. Foreign Office.
H.M.G. Her Majesty's Government.
I.B.E.A. The Imperial British East Africa Company.
J.N. John Neish.
J.S. James Stewart.
L.C.A. The Livingstone Central Africa Company.
L.D. David Livingstone, Last Journals, see bibliography.
L.M. Livingstone Mission.
L.M.M. Livingstonia Mission Minutes.
L.M.S. London Missionary Society.
M. Prefix to manuscript in the National Library of Scotland.
M. No date.
N.A. The Nyasaland Journal.
N.S. New serice.
D.L. David Livingstone, The Zambezi Expedition, see bibliography.
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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN BACKGROUND

The object of the founders of the African Lakes Company was to change the nature of trade and society in central Africa by the substitution of what was known as 'legitimate commerce' for the trade in slaves which was thought to be prevalent. Before considering the impact of the Company it is therefore necessary to examine the state of trade and society in the area before the arrival of the Company and the Missions with which it was associated.

The sphere of operations of the Company was eventually extended to cover the whole of what is now Malawi, and parts of Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. It formed an approximate rectangle bounded on the south by the river Zambesi flowing down to its delta on the Indian Ocean, on the west by the Luapula river and a line drawn from its source to the Zambesi, on the north by a line drawn from Lake Mweru across the south end of Lake Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Malawi, and on the east by the eastern shores of Lake Malawi and a line south from there including Lake Shirwa and the Shire Highlands.

This area forms neither a geographical nor a political unit, but it does have one feature which gave it a fleeting unity in the latter years of the nineteenth century. It is the area which, before the construction of roads and railways, was most easily and painlessly accessible by the water route up the Zambesi and Shire rivers and along Lakes Malawi and Tanganyika. It was therefore the area which was first opened up to western commerce by the African Lakes Company and the steamers which were its technological base.

Physically and climatically the area is very varied. The most significant feature is Lake Malawi which is drained by the Shire and the Zambesi from a height of 1,500 feet south to the sea. Altitude varies from sea-level on the Zambesi delta to almost 10,000 feet at the summit of Mount Mulanje, and to almost as great a height on the Nyika plateau north-west of the lake, and in the Livingstone Mountains on the north-east. Away to the west of the lake, and of the present
Malawi-Zambia border, stretches the great plateau of Zambia 'like a succession of enormous waves' intersected by the Luangwa and the Kafue flowing south to the Zambezi; and the Luapula flowing north through Lake Mweru to the Congo. In the north the plateau breaks and falls abruptly from 5,000 feet to Lake Tanganyika at 2,500 feet.

Rainfall and fertility are as varied as altitude. These ecological factors played a major part in determining the distribution of population. Many of the political struggles referred to later on were in reality struggles for territory, arising from competition over scarce resources such as fertile and easily worked soils, or perennial streams. Figures for population density at any time are rare and unreliable. The populations of Malawi and Zambia are thought to have multiplied over four times since 1900; there is little evidence of population growth before then. It is reasonable to guess a population of 2,000,000 for the area at the end of the nineteenth century by comparison with a population of 8,000,000 now. This would indicate an average density of eight to the square mile over 300,000 square miles. Malawi would have contained a disproportionate half of this population in about one tenth of the area; the present southern region of Malawi would have been the most densely populated part of the area with about a quarter of the total population. Livingstone thought the south end of the lake to be the most thickly settled area which he had seen anywhere in Africa.

Some generalisations must be made at the outset about the state

1. D. Livingstone, Last Journals, ed. H. Waller, London, 1874, Vol.I, p172. This work is later referred to by the abbreviation, 'L.J.'
3. According to the Malawi Population Census, 1966, Zomba, p iv, the population of Malawi in 1901 was 737,353, this is almost certainly an underestimate and the figure of 1,000,000 given by The Central African Times, 21st June, 1902, is probably more nearly correct. The population in 1966 was said to be 4,305,583. At the then rate of increase it is likely that the population is now in the region of 5,000,000. See also R.R. Kuczynski, Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire, Vol.II, London, 1949, pp 522-639.
4. David and Charles Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries, London, 1865, p 510. This work is later referred to by the abbreviation, 'S.E.'
of agriculture and technology. Methods of cultivation were certainly not uniform, on the other hand they were not spectacularly varied. In general the people were iron age cultivators, and where the absence of tsetse permitted, pastoralists. They tended to have one of a variety of staples: maize, cassava, finger-millet, sorghum, or among the Ngonde, bananas. Cassava was most popular in the north among Casembe's Lunda, and among the lake-side Tonga where it came to be grown as the crop which was least vulnerable to Ngoni raids. Sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkins, and ground-nuts were widely grown and eaten. Rice was introduced in the middle of the nineteenth century at Nkhota Khota by the Arabs who settled there. All cultivation was done by hoes of iron or wood. The plough, draught animals, and the wheel were unknown. Shifting cultivation was the general rule, villages moved frequently, though they did not usually move very far. The 'citerene' or slash and burn system was prevalent; only the Ngonde rotated their crops.¹

There was a division of labour between men and women. Men generally built houses, made fishing nets and baskets, grain stores, game traps, and bark and cotton cloths; and cultivated tobacco, cut down trees, helped with hoeing and harvesting, hunted, and were ready to defend their families. Women tended children, cooked, did housework, hoed the gardens, collected fire wood, drew water, brewed beer, and made pots.²

In so far as people tended to produce most of what they consumed and consumed most of what they produced these were, and have to a large extent remained, subsistence economies. It would, however, be very misleading to imply by this that there was no division of labour outside the home. There were a number of fields in which


specialised production was common or necessary. Iron smelting and working was carried on by all the Malawi peoples, the Manganja, the Cewa and the Tumbuka. It was also practised by the Yao, the Mambwe and others. Because of the occult magical powers which were commonly thought to be necessary for the production of iron it was usually made by specialist craftsmen who often lived in separate villages and formed an exclusive sect. Copper wire drawing, as among the Bemba, was another specialised craft. Pottery was sometimes traded over long distances as between the Ngonde and the people who lived on the east of Lake Malawi. Some people were noted for their skill in making mats, baskets or nets. Fishing often became a specialised activity, giving rise to trade as in dried fish between Lake Shirwa and the Shire Highlands, or between Lake Mweru and distant parts of the Lunda Empire. Salt was another commodity which was, owing to natural deficiencies in some places, produced on a commercial basis as at Nponda's at the south end of Lake Malawi. Other commodities which were often traded locally were home-woven cloths as manufactured in the Shire Highlands, bark cloths, as produced by the Bisa, and tobacco often used as snuff.

Specialisation implies trade, one cannot exist without the other. The moment the division of labour is extended beyond the home some sort of commercial transactions become necessary. Until recently it has been commonly thought that even the most elementary economic principles were unknown in the predominantly subsistence pre-colonial economies, or in the rural areas of contemporary Africa. This view was largely due to the absence of the cash transactions which seemed to western eyes to be a necessary part of commercial activity. In fact the prevalence of these small-scale local trades ensured that almost everyone must have had some knowledge of the working of the market. The conduct of a barter trade can call for quite as sophisticated bargaining as any cash transactions. Where exchanges of

several commodities are concerned it becomes if anything more complex.

The tendency to underestimate the amount of economic activity carried on in these societies led also to the widespread belief that the world economy was something to which most of Africa had been suddenly introduced in the colonial era. For centuries large quantities of goods, cloths, beads, glass and pottery, and later guns and gun powder had been imported into the region. Commensurate quantities of ivory, slaves, gold and copper were exported. There were, it is true, no reliable trade statistics but that did not make the trade any less real. It may be thought that the world price would have had difficulty in penetrating to 'darkest Africa' in advance of the most intrepid explorers, but it can be shown that the Yao, for instance, in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries altered the destination of their caravans between the Portuguese and Arab coasts according to the quantity, quality and variety of goods which were offered.

While the local trades could be carried on as a part-time activity, the long distance trade which brought goods from the west or the east to the interior called for specialisation and for professional porters. All goods had to be carried on someone's head, and journeys to the coast were likely to take at least six months and often longer. Caravans called for a high degree of organisation and often for defence; they consequently tended to be organised by political leaders. Owing to the need to negotiate with political authorities, trade of this type was almost as much a political and diplomatic activity as a commercial one. The long distance trade seems to have been carried on by a few peoples, in particular the Bisa and the Yao; the absence from home of many men for long periods made necessary adjustments in the societies similar to those which were later caused by labour migration.

The fact that some people were prepared to travel such large
distances in the pursuit of trade is some indication of the strength
of the demand for the goods which could be obtained at the coast.
A further indication is, perhaps, the fact that people were prepared
to sell each other in exchange for these goods. It should however
be pointed out that the status of slavery was an accepted norm in
every one of the societies in this area. It did not occur to most
people to question whether this was right or wrong. While the status
of domestic slavery was accepted, it was equally accepted that a
freeman had the right to sell his slaves and had the power of life
and death over them.¹

Little research has been done into the way in which social
organisation and the differing goals of different societies influenced
their reaction or response to trading opportunities in the pre-
colonial era, though clearly there was a considerable variety in the
attitudes to trade which were prevalent. When considering demand
for imported goods, and consequently participation in trade, the way
in which prestige was acquired, and the directions in which ambition
was channelled are useful indicators. It is also useful to consider
the attitude of societies to ostentation as this must have influenced
the demand for two of the most widely imported of trade goods, cloth
and beads. It is necessary to try and explain the apparent craving
of most of the peoples in this area for cloth, especially for terikani',
the coarse grey calico which is noted neither for its decorative nor
its warmth producing qualities, but which was for the first twenty-
five years of the Lake Company's existence, the cash of the country.²

Evidence for the economy of this part of Africa in the first
three-quarters of the nineteenth century is scanty. It is hoped in
the rest of this chapter to give some account of the state of trade,
and the economic attitudes of the people in the earlier years of the
century, and then to give an impression of the complex economic and

¹. Tew, op. cit., pp 9, 44, 60, 84. See also below on Ngoni and
Yao.
². 'Terikani' = American sheeting, grey calico of coarse almost
canvas texture. There is a useful note on beads in demand
in East Africa by H. Waller in Livingstone's Last Journals,
political changes which occurred in the middle years of the century and largely determined the character of the situation with which the Company had to deal.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the Malawi peoples do not appear to have played a very active part in the long distance trades; caravans passed through their territories but they did not initiate caravans to the coast themselves. This was in marked contrast to their historical role as enterprising travellers. Following the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast early in the sixteenth century there had grown up a confederation now known as the Maravi Empire which was based on the trades in ivory and gold. The leaders of this Empire were known as wealthy potentates who were able to entertain visitors with considerable style. In the course of the seventeenth century the trades changed their direction from the Portuguese coast in Mosambik to the Arab coast at Kilwa. This change which was due to a decline in Portuguese enterprise seems to have led to the dominant position in the trade passing to the Yao people who lived to the east of Lake Malawi on the Ruvuma and Lujenda rivers and who were in a position to control the trade to the north and east. The decline of the Maravi Empire may also have been caused or accompanied by internal political differences. Whatever the cause the descendants of their powerful chiefs were still known and recognised in the nineteenth century, though they had virtually no wealth or power.

In the years between the collapse of the Maravi Empire and the period under discussion a new element had been introduced into the trading pattern, this was an international demand for slaves from the

east coast. There had probably always been a trade in slaves between societies in east Africa but it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that the sale of slaves at the coast became a means of acquiring trade goods from the rest of the world. There were three major destinations for this trade: Arabia and the Persian Gulf, the French islands of Réunion and Bourbon where plantations were being developed at this time, and Brazil, then a Portuguese colony. Figures for this trade are notoriously hard to find and unreliable. It seems likely, however, that it had expanded by the early years of the nineteenth century to a point where it had become more profitable than the trade in ivory. By 1820 it is thought that at least 10,000 slaves were being exported annually from Mozambique. For the 1820's and 1830's a figure of 15,000 is thought reasonable. Probably about 10,000 a year were being exported at the same time from Kilwa which was supplied from the same catchment area. By the 1840's the Portuguese part of the trade had moved its centre from Mozambique to Quelimane and Ibo which grew up with the trade. These figures should not be thought of as precise though they do perhaps indicate the direction of a trend. The east coast slave trade probably reached its peak in the decade from 1850 to 1860.¹

But the Malawi peoples did not, according to the accounts of the Portuguese travellers who passed through their country in 1798 and 1831-2, play a leading part in either this or any other long distance trade conducted at the time. They were notorious for the constant "mirandus" or disputes which they engineered in order, so it was said, "to mulct the trader in cloth to the great injury of commerce."

Their porters were thought to be unreliable especially near home when they had a tendency to abscond with their loads. The area was also noted for its lack of central authority, for its large number of independent headmen and small chiefs, and for their inclination towards feuds, especially over succession questions.²

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² Lacerda, op. cit., pp 61-68.
They were, however, also noted for their industry. Iron smelting and smithing were very widespread. Ivory turners and gold smiths were also seen, the latter in the vicinity of the Portuguese settlement of Tete. Cotton was widely grown and coarse cloths were made. The usual dress of the people, among the southern Malawi peoples at least, was a skin, or machila (cotton cloth). They were said to have a special love of imported red cloths, but these could only be worn publicly by chiefs and their families. It was said that when a commoner got hold of a piece of red cloth he would put it in a pot and only wear it at night. There was clearly demand for cloth which had a function in terms of prestige, but prestige could not be obtained through the possession of cloth alone. Those who had attained prestige through birth or the social processes of founding a village or breeding a large family were permitted to use cloth as an expression of their status. Wealthy men were those who had large families, not those who had large wardrobes. It should be remembered that none of the societies discussed here were in any sense egalitarian. Conspicuous consumption and ostentation as an indication of prestige and status were common, but the fact that attempts were made to preserve the social hierarchy by what amounted to a 'sumptuary' law is significant; so long as the prescription was observed, as it seems at this stage to have been, the incentive to engage in long distance trade must have been reduced. Ambition was directed towards the acquisition of family and followers, it is probable that it was this that caused the frequent succession disputes on which Gammitto commented.

The long distance trade in the area was mainly in the hands of four peoples, the Yao, the Bisa, the Lunda, and to a lesser extent the Portuguese. Cazembe's Lunda kingdom on the shores of Lake Mweru was of great importance as an entrepôt between the east coast trade to Zanzibar, Kilwa, and Quelimane, and the trade to the west coast which passed through the territory of the Mwata Yamvo, the senior chief of the Lunda. The first Cazembe had been sent there in the early years of the eighteenth century for the specific purpose

2. Ibid pp 81-4.
4. Ibid p 89.
5. Ibid pp 63-70.
of making contact with the east coast. Casembe himself, and his Lunda subjects, acted as the link between the Katanga copper mines (which were controlled by his 'father' the Mwata Yamvo), and the east. The trade in the region between Casembe's and the south end of Lake Malawi seems to have been mainly in the hands of the Bisa, while the Yao carried on most of the trade between there and the coast. Some Bisa went direct to the coast at Kilwa and Lindi, passing to the north of Lake Malawi. The pattern of the long distance trade at this time was one of overlapping spheres. Certainly no trader would have made the whole journey from west to east or east to west. It is unlikely that many made the whole journey from Casembe's to either coast. Goods such as ivory reached the coast after changing hands several times. Similarly cloth or beads would reach Casembe's or anywhere else in the far interior after a number of transactions.

The role of the Bisa in this pattern was important. On the eastern approaches to Casembe's town in 1798 they were frequently to be seen carrying ivory, copper and malachite on what was described as a well-trodden road. At this date some of the Bisa appear to have been clients of Casembe while others were independent. In the later 1820's they came under pressure from the invading Bemba and many moved east into Sena and Cewa country while those who remained in their home area in the northern province of Zambia have tended to become merged with the Bemba. Perhaps for this reason they have remained something of a mysterious phenomenon. It is necessary to explain why this small people whose home area seems to have been noted especially for its poverty should have become one of

3. Ibid pp 89-95.
4. Garmitto, op. cit., Vol.I, pp 151-165, Vol.II, p 169. The Bemba attack on the Bisa began in 1826. The Bemba were said to be jealous of the wealth of the Bisa. The Bisa have not been completely overwhelmed by the Bemba but they have no strong chiefs.
the most active, successful and well known trading groups in the area in the first two thirds of the nineteenth century. It may be that the poverty of their country in which Lacerda, Gammitto and Livingstone all came close to starvation, and which was said to lack salt, and iron, had compelled them to trade in the first place, possibly even for food, and that proximity to Casembe’s led them into involvement with the long distance trades.¹

In their social organisation the Bisa show what must be one of the first examples of the effects of large scale labour migration. They were said to be divided into two classes, cultivators and traders. The cultivators were the old men, women and children and those who did not trade. The traders were usually on the move but tended to be at home for three months from December to February at the height of the rains and the planting season, but sometimes they were away even then.²

Their attitude to cloth is curious. There were no restrictions on what cloths they should wear but they generally wore bark cloth which they continued to make in spite of the fact that as merchants they always had Indian and European cloths.³ These they apparently seldom wore, and were of little use for barter in their country. They were however interested in beads.⁴ Famed for their astuteness and acumen it is possible that they considered it extravagant to wear cloths which were their stock in trade. It may be that they used part of their profits for the purchase of necessities such as salt and hoes, and preferred to use any surplus for the purchase of beads for ornament after allowing enough cloth to finance the next venture. Clearly they had a sound grasp of the principles of commerce, buying cheap and selling dear. It was said that they were able to judge the value of a tusk in Zanzibar prices by volume and quality. They had no scales but they were so skilful that they were not easy to delude.⁵

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⁴ Lacerda had noted the frugality of the Bisa; his porters worked in the evenings to make bark cloths which they exchanged for food. Op. cit. p 71, pp 88-9.
⁵ Gammitto, op. cit., Vol.I., pp 204-5.
The Bisa were thought of as being in a trading partnership with the Yao, who they were said to meet at the south end of Lake Malawi. The Yao were at this time living to the east of the lake between the Ruvuma and the Lujenda. Owing to their having maintained their political independence, much more is known about them than about the less numerous Bisa. Recorded oral tradition explains the development of the Yao involvement in long distance trade in terms of four stages: first, local trade in which the Wachisi, a sect of smiths, peddled their wares within the Yao community; second, the 'discovery' of white calico and the organisation of caravans to the coast to buy it with hoes, skins and tobacco; third, the beginning of the trade in ivory and slaves owing to demand at the coast for these commodities; fourth, the arrival in the interior of Arab traders from the coast who gave better prices, had a better selection of cloths and beads, and 'opened our eyes and sharpened our wits.'

This account, recorded by Yohann bin Abdullah, is closer to myth than history but it does attempt to show how the Yao had moved from a state of near autarky and had become a people of traders and entrepreneurs. The decisive factor had been the discovery and introduction of calico. It was the desire for these goods which had encouraged people to go on long journeys to the coast. The Yao had to satisfy the demand which was passed on to them there if they were to acquire the goods that they desired. They, in turn, passed on this demand to the interior.

Abdullah also has something to say on the effects of trade on the social values of the Yao. To have been on a journey conferred prestige. For carrying a truss of calico from the coast a man received a length of cloth and a yard of red calico. He would tie this round his waist and go home preening himself and saying:

"I have been to the coast and look how wealthy I am." Travelling was the great topic of conversation among the men in which stay-at-homes could not join. A Yao song compared the traveller's

2. Ibid, p 12.
child dressed in calico and the stay-at-home's child dressed in bark cloth. There was social pressure on a man to go on journeys and to venture in trade. Cloth gave prestige, but its use was not entirely unregulated. Abdullah names twenty-five different cloths regularly imported, of these seven were reserved for the use of chiefs and their families. Only the women folk of chiefs were permitted to decorate themselves with brass wire. From other sources it is certain that the Yao, no less than the Maravi or Cewa, set great store by the accumulation of a large household. Slavery was very significant in this. No doubt success in business was an advantage in the acquisition of a following. The Yao seem to have produced more leaders who could be described as self-made men than most of their neighbours. Their more active roles, first as traders, and then as pirates, called for more agility in their leaders than was necessary among the more pacific Malawi peoples.

In the south of the region the long distance trade was in the hands of the Portuguese settlers on the Zambesi at Tete and Senna. Their sphere of influence did not extend far beyond the river valleys of the Zambesi, the lower Luangwa and the lower Shire but they had some dealings with the Yao, the Bisa and the Malawi peoples. The Portuguese of the rivers can be directly compared with any other of the peoples in the region as they enjoyed no technological advantages over the rest of the population, were dependent on the local people for their survival, and used the same agricultural techniques. Many of the old established prazo holding families had become through inter-marriage and isolation chiefs in a recognisably African style. It has been shown that some of the so-called 'tribes' of the Zambesi valley such as the Chicunda and the Macanga came into existence as the followers of Portuguese leaders of this type. Tete and Senna were centres for the ivory and slave trades; the Chicundas were particularly well known as energetic slave traders, making expeditions

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in the middle years of the century towards the Shire Highlands, and coming into conflict with the Makololo as will be recorded below. The Portuguese and their associates do not appear to have developed the same level of organisation of large caravans over long distances as did the Bisa or the Yao. This was presumably because they survived only in small numbers, could use the rivers for transport, and were occupied with plantations and small-scale mining operations. 1

Of the northern Malawi peoples, the Cewa, the Tumbuka and Tonga, and of the people at the north end of Lake Malawi, the Ngonde and the Nyakusa, little can be said with certainty before the arrival of the missions and the Company in the 1870's. It seems likely that they were in contact with the coast trade but as suppliers of ivory and slaves rather than as active entrepreneurs. There is a little evidence that the Cewa under Mwase Kasungu may have been becoming involved directly with the ivory trade in the early 1830's and that they may have been brought into active participation as a result of the influence of Bisa who had been forced to flee by the advancing Bemba. 2 It was not however until the opening of the Junbe of Nhota Khota's ferry across the lake in the 1840's that Kasungu became a staging post on an important route between Cazembe's and the coast. 3

The historian of the Tumbuka thought that they had first come into contact with the world economy at the close of the eighteenth century when there arrived in the country from across the lake two traders who were able within a short time to use the profits made from a cheap buyer's market for ivory to establish centralised chief-taincies in place of the previously scattered and acephalous groups of clans. By 1850 the name of one of these, Nkamanga, was known at Zanzibar. It seems probable that the most powerful of the two chiefs, Chikulamayembe, levied tribute from his people in the form of iron hoes which he may then have used in the furtherance of his own trade, perhaps exchanging them for cloth with Yao or Bisa or buying ivory with them. It is not thought that the slave trade had reached the Tumbuka before the 1830's; its arrival coincided with the introduction

3. See later in chapter.
of guns. 1 This trade was probably carried on to the south through Cewa country. The Tumbuka were close to good elephant grounds; Mwase Kasungu in 1863 guarded his route to the north from where he was said to get his supplies of ivory. 2 A history of a Tumbuka clan gives a revealing account of the realisation by the people that tusks of ivory which they had previously used as door posts and as props for pots beside the fire were in fact valuable and that they had been selling them cheap to the first of the traders. 3 Owing to the fact that the Tumbuka were shattered by the arrival of the Ngoni in the 1850's it is not possible to say how the beginning of trade affected their social structure.

To the east of the Tumbuka and along the western shore of the lake between the Bua and the south Rukuru rivers the Tonga people are even more of a mystery. Ethnically and linguistically they appear to be a cross between the Tumbuka and the Cewa. It is not clear to which they have a stronger affinity. It is not even certain that they can be said to have existed as a separate entity before the Ngoni invasions. 4

To the north of the Tumbuka across the north Rukuru river and south of the Songwe there were and still are the Ngonde. To the west they had influence in the foot hills of the Tanganyika plateau, but their largest concentration was in the fertile plains at the mouths of the rivers which enter the lake opposite the Lingingstone mountains and towards the north end. To the north of them across the Songwe and spreading east round the head of the lake were their cousins, the Nyakusa. Ethnically and linguistically these peoples were quite distinct from any of their neighbours.

The Ngonde were the only people in this area who seem to have

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3. Young, op. cit., pp 167-8; E.H. Lane Poole, The Native Tribes of the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia, Lusaka, 1949, p 24. He gives a very similar account of the introduction to trade of the Senga people who lived to the west of the Tumbuka.
been almost completely unmoved by the lure of cloth. They were also the people who came closest to the European traveller's ideal of the 'noble savage'. Joseph Thomson described their country as an Arcadia, and Consul Elton thought their country 'the finest tract of Africa I have yet seen.' He commented on their intensive cultivation, their cattle and their scattered hamlets:

"They want nothing, their houses and fences are well built, their paths good. Cloth they appreciate, but, unused to labour for hire, estimate it below its value and grudge to give work for it, though ready to sell produce...."

He had great difficulty in getting porters for the people 'being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any service whatever to strangers.'

The Ngonde country contained in the 1870's and early 1880's the largest reserves of elephants known. The people were said to be grateful for their extermination by Herbert Rhodes (brother of Cecil Rhodes) and by hunters working for the Lakes Company. There was no evidence that they had sold much ivory themselves. It has, however, been suggested that they had earlier been involved with the trade but that they had been cut off from it by the Ngoni invasion which closed the route to the south. Their oral tradition seems to deny this. Whether or not they had ever been involved with trade

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4. G. Wilson, The Constitution of Ngonde, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No.3, 1939, passim. Wilson's interpretation of Ngonde history is almost impossible to reconcile with either the impressions of early travellers or other recorded oral tradition. He stresses the importance of trade and cloth in the development of the Ngonde political system. The only explanation of his view must be that the Ngonde had been engaged in trade, but that their commercial contacts had been broken by the Ngoni invasions.
5. T.C. Young, op. cit., 'The Ngonde point of view'. A reply by the Rev. Amon Mwakasungula, the Rev. Patrick Mwamlima and others to Young's account of their history which they considered to show a bias towards the Tumbuka peoples.
they were certainly very slow to be drawn into wage labour. It was difficult to persuade them to carry loads for more than a few miles. Porters on the Stevenson road were almost invariably drawn from among the people living on the plateau, the Mambwe, Mwamwanga and Lungu, also from the Tonga who came up from the south. The Ngonde were said to regard cloth and clothes as 'immaterial to prestige' and saw 'nothing but folly in working for what they do not want'. It was claimed that part of the resistance to the wearing of clothes was due to the fear that they would be bewitched.

They were industrious cultivators and cattle raisers, and were remarkable for the number of different crops that they produced; wealth was measured, and to some extent still is, in terms of the number of wives that a man had and the number of his cattle. Of all the people in the area the Ngonde come closest to being 'cattle-mad', and it may be that their own society provided quite sufficient scope for the pursuit of ambition and prestige without having to rely on such things as imported cloth.

The thirty years which separate Gammitt's journey through the western section of this area in 1831 and Livingstone's journeys between 1859 and 1867 were among the most decisive in the whole of the nineteenth century. There are four features of the situation which stand out most clearly as new. One is the growth in, and the very destructive effects of, the slave trade; second is the introduction of the gun, coinciding with the penetration into the interior for the first time of large numbers of Arabs and coast men; third is the eruption of the Yao from their traditional home in what is now the middle north of Mozambique to the south end of Lake Malawi and the Shire Highlands; fourth is the even more shattering impact of the three or four hordes of Ngoni who passed through in the early 1840's, and returned to settle more permanently in the 1850's establishing themselves to the east of the lake at Songea, and to the

west in Tumbuka country, and among the Cewa.

It should be useful to examine the impressions of Livingstone in some detail because his writings give the best published account of the state of the area at this date, and because they were largely available to the founders of the missions to central Africa and to the promoters of what was originally known as the Livingstone Central Africa Company. No-one was more influential in the creation of 'informed opinion' on Africa in the 1870's than Livingstone.¹

He visited the Shire Highlands for the first time in 1859, almost simultaneously with the arrival of the first of the invading Yao. He was most impressed with the beauty, fertility and comparative healthiness of the area, and by the industriousness of the people. He noted the wide variety of crops under cultivation, the numerous iron smelters and smiths. It is, however, the impression of continuity, of people living and working in a place where they had apparently lived for centuries that is most striking about Livingstone's account. He met one man who was thought to be ninety and who had never moved far from his home in his life.² This is in contrast to the accounts of people who visited the area for the first time in the 1870's from whom it would be possible to get the impression that its history had been one of almost perpetual anarchy. Of course violent change was already beginning to occur during the period of Livingstone's stay. The Manganja admitted that they sold their own people into slavery but claimed: 'We do not sell many and only those who have committed crimes.'³ The temptation to sell was great; the Yao traders offered cloth, brass rings, pottery and even 'handsome young women'. It was noted that the Manganja had no natural cohesion and tended to be glad when their neighbours were discomfited.⁴

This picture of the weakness of the Manganja confirms Lacerda and Gammittto's accounts of the Maravi peoples and is confirmed by Henry Rowley of the Universities' Mission, who had a longer and closer

¹ See below, Chapter II.
² David and Charles Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries, London, 1865, p 119.
connection with the Manganja people at this time. Centralised authority was more of a memory than a reality. The Manganja do not seem to have been able to organise themselves on anything more than a village basis. There were two exceptions to this statement, both in the Shire valley. Tengani was chief on the lower Shire below the Ruu and stopped Livingstone on his way up river in his steamer, the Ma Robert, with five hundred armed followers. He was said to act as a barrier against the Portuguese slave traders. He, or his predecessor in the name, was the leader of a Manganja colonisation movement which had settled south from Mboewa between 1810 and 1840. This may have necessitated a more active leadership than was common in the highlands. The second exception was Chibisa who had two bases, one on Dakahamoaio island in the Shire, near present day Chikwawa, and the other at the confluence of the Shire and the Zambezi. He held no position in the traditional hierarchy and was said to have started life as a slave at Tete. The traditional ruler of the area north of the Ruu and of much of the Shire Highlands was Mankoloe, heir through Kaphwiti of the former paramount Unde, but he admitted that he had very little power. In Rowley's words: 'Mankoloe might be the Rondo (chief) but Chibisa was the hero' and 'the great men of this part of Africa.' He was said to have a powerful medicine for disarming guns. Refugees from early Yao raids in the highlands came down to enlist his support in order that he might bewitch the Yao guns. It is probable that he owed his wealth and power to an involvement with the Tete slave trade. It was through this that he met his end.

There were no such leaders in the Shire Highlands. Chibisa's rise from obscurity illustrates two phenomena which were common to all Malawi peoples at this time. Though the traditional political structures provided no cohesion, the people could in emergency be welded into a unit. They were equally prey to any more strongly organised group that had the will to subject them. In the first

1. Rowley, op. cit., passim.
In the first category were the Cowa at Kasungu, with Arab or Bisa support, able to organise his people against the Ngoni, as was the Jumbe of Mchoka, The Universities Mission at Magomero formed a focus for the Manganja resistance to the Yao, and the Makololo in the lower Shire were finally able to organise the subjects of Nankokwe, Chibisa and Tengani against the Portuguese threat from the south and the Ngoni from the north. In the case of both the Jumbe and the Makololo, the provision of leadership and protection itself involved forceful subordination and to some extent enslavement, but it is now accepted that the Makololo provided an umbrella beneath which Manganja culture remained remarkably unchanged.\(^1\)

In the second category are the Yao and the Ngoni. Their aim was not to lead but to subordinate. For the Ngoni the supreme object was to increase the power of their fighting machine by adding manpower; for the Yao an increase in dependents was one important goal, but the satisfaction of the coast demand for slaves and their own demand for material goods led them to view the Manganja as much in a commercial as a political light.

The Makololo provide an example of the way in which a few well-armed and organised men could achieve political and economic supremacy over a vital strategic area in a very short time. They consisted of a remnant of sixteen men left behind on the lower Shire, after accompanying Livingstone on several of his journeys. They came from Sekelletu's Kalolo Kingdom in what is now Barotseland. Only two, Ramakukan and Holoka, were true Kalolo; the rest came from various peoples who had been subordinated to them. Rather than return to their homes where the Kalolo Kingdom was on the point of collapse they decided to remain on the Shire and to seek their fortunes there.\(^2\) They had several advantages over the indigenous population. They had the will to dominate, they had a connection with the English which gave them prestige and wealth, but more important they had guns.

During the life of the Universities Mission they had made themselves useful as market gardeners, selling their produce to the Mission.\(^3\)

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In order to acquire good plots for cultivation they had to displace the Manganja. The moment that the missionaries turned their backs, they began to operate 'as free-booters......nothing more, nothing less.' They made war on the Chicundas; they released their captives and took the plunder,

"the women thus released they took as wives, the men and boys they took as slaves......as in their own country the possession of cattle by a neighbour is regarded as a good casus belli, they were prepared to make war on the Manganja for their flocks and corn if they did not yield them without resistance."

Rowley regretted that Livingstone had left them on the Shire unprovided with anything but arms. Stewart lamented:

"They call themselves the English and cause the English name to stink in the nostrils of the people who cannot distinguish between white English and black."

Mankokwe threatened to drive them out but Rowley feared that they would have driven out five times the number of Manganja that he could muster, and that among such as the Manganja:

"they would never be less than paramount....they will, I have no doubt, inaugurate a more masculine state of things in the valley above and below Chibisa's than that which existed under Manganja rule."

After the withdrawal of the Zambesi Expedition in 1864, (the mission had left Chibisa's in 1862) they proceeded to do just that, first driving out Mankokwe and taking over his village; then with Manganja assistance, driving out Landu, chief at Mbeze. Tengani and Chibisa had been earlier dealt with by the Portuguese slavers of Tete. After the death of Holoka, Ramakukan emerged as Paramount and organised sub-chieftaincies on the Shire from the confluence of the Ruo to the head of the Murchison cataracts. He seems to have had an understanding with his Yao neighbours in the Highlands, they had assisted the Mekololo to establish their position and did not raid into their sphere of influence. During the 1870's Ramakukan organised the defence of the Highlands against the Ngoni in the west

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3. Ibid., p 331.
ensuring that the few fords on the Shire were garrisoned. In the south the Makololo formed an effective barrier against Portuguese expansion and, although the Makololo themselves kept domestic slaves, they did not permit slave raiding or selling in their dominions. 1

The nature of the Yao incursion into the Shire Highlands was very different. Although their languages were not mutually intelligible, the Yao and the Manganja were culturally very similar peoples, being both matrilineal, uxorilocal, sharing clan names and certain common beliefs about sorcery and disease. 2 They entered the Shire Highlands from the late 1850's in large numbers; in contrast to the Makololo they came not as individual free-booters, but as families and village groups (usually the same thing) seeking a new home. They were refugees, but unlike most refugees they had an advantage over the indigenous population, they had guns and gun-powder which enabled them to dominate. They saw the Manganja firstly as an impediment to settlement and secondly as a source of slaves. Slaves fulfilled for them a number of functions. They were useful as manpower, they increased the prestige of their owner as wealth tended to be judged by the number of dependents that a man had; and they provided a quickly realisable and moveable asset. They could be sent to the coast and exchanged for cloth at any time, or they could be used for the payment of fines and indemnities. A distinction is usually drawn between 'domestic' slaves, who lived in the family, and slaves who were traded, but any slave was almost certain to have spent some time in both of these categories. Slave wives were particularly desirable for the matrilineal Yao in that their children were tied to the village of their father, and would not move away to the village of his wife's brother. A man might be reluctant to sell his slave wives, but they remained a saleable commodity. There was no doubt about the inferior status of slaves; the penalty for attempted escape was death. 3

The Yao themselves had been victims of the slave trade. During the 1840's and 1850's thousands of Yao were said to arrive annually

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at Zanzibar. From their homes on the Ruvuma and Lujenda they were driven by the Makua (or Aloio) who had the initial advantage over them of possessing guns. Other contributory factors were famine and internal dissensions. Like the Manganja they lacked a centralised political system, the most important units were the villages. Chiefs did have some economic significance in that only they were able to organise and defend the caravans to the coast on which the people depended for the satisfaction of their comparatively sophisticated wants, but the chiefly hierarchy does not seem to have been fixed.

Because of their close connection with long distance trade, and because certain qualities of leadership and enterprise, and at times, military ability were necessary for the successful organisation of caravans to the coast, leaders tended to emerge among the Yao in a way which was not common among neighbouring peoples. Several of the most important of the chiefs built up their own following, for instance, Mponda and Makanjila. A successful trader tended also to be a successful soldier and slave-owner. The more slaves he owned, and the larger his stock of ammunition, the more dependents he would attract. 'A man of some military ability could build up his stock fairly rapidly and then set out on an expedition into foreign parts.' But a leader's following was always uncertain, his free dependents could and did 'vote with their feet' and leave an unpopular or unsuccessful man.

The claim that the Yao were driven out by Makua who had guns, while they did not, may be merely an excuse for military defeat. It is certain that on their arrival in the Shire Highlands they had guns in large numbers. The Yao in their home area were divided into a number of sections, or sub-tribes. Most of those who entered what is now Malawi came from two sections, the Mangoche and Machinga.

Although more vigorous, these groups were quite as lacking in cohesion as the Manganja. The history of the Shire Highlands in the period from 1860 to 1880 is, so far as it can at present be reconstructed at all, the story of the competition for territory between different groups of Yao, often from the same section but under different leaders. In this struggle the Manganja played a mainly passive role. It is probable that their numbers were much reduced in the disastrous famine of 1862, which was caused partly by drought and partly by war. Others fled to the valley or to the shores of lake Shirwa, many others, mainly women and children must have been sold into slavery or incorporated into Yao families and villages. The Yao succeeded in taking over virtually the whole of the Shire Highlands; at the present time the only substantial historical concentrations of Manganja population are at Liwonde's, and to the north of lake Shirwa in Kavinga's area. The process of occupation is difficult to analyse. Livingstone and Rowley were witnesses in the early stages, and Bishop Mackenzie of the U.M.C.A., which was trying to establish itself at the same time, attempted for a short time to play an active military and political role, defending the under-dog Manganja against the invading Yao. It soon became clear, however, that the situation was extremely complex and right was not exclusive to one side. Persuaded to launch expeditions against the invaders, the missionaries found that these became Manganja slave raiding ventures, the raided became with European support the raiders. A visit to a Yao camp ten miles west of Magomero (August 1861) revealed that these Yao (probably Kumpama's of the Mangoche section) had been settled for some time and had been living on friendly terms with the Manganja. Marriages had taken place between them, there was no evidence of war.

The first of the Yao to move into the Shire Highlands were all of the Mangoche section, the furthest south in their home area. Of these the most significant were Kumpama, Kapeni, Mlomba and Matapwiri. All these were driven south by the later arrival of the Machinga

section with whom they had previously fought. Two Mangoche, Mpemba and Tambala, were driven west of the lake.\(^1\) The Machinga were a more war-like group and were also more actively involved in the slave trade, but although more assertive, they were not much more numerous if present day figures are any guide. The Mangoche and the Machinga's descendants are almost equal in numbers.\(^2\) Rowley, writing of the Mangoche, felt that they fell into two categories, those who like Kumpama were tired of war and wanted to settle peacefully, to build and to plant; and those like 'Nunkajowa', 'a devil', who were never tired of war and never planted, so that they had to plunder to live. This Nunkajowa allied himself with Kawinga, one of the first of the Machinga, and together they organised raids in the Zomba area.\(^3\)

Rowley was convinced that a good deal of the raiding was being instigated by Portuguese slave traders from Tete who were able to profit from the anarchic situation in the highlands.\(^4\) He was certain that they were supplying guns and ammunition to the Yao, and were receiving in exchange slaves who they traded inland for ivory with the 'Banyai', elephant hunters, who had themselves lost women and children as a result of M'bele raids. He had seen at Chikala a 'barracoon', capable of holding 300 slaves, in which 'according to the testimony of those who were released, Nunkajowa kept those he sold to the Portuguese slavers.' On the slave trade in general he commented:

"It is a mistake to suppose that the natives...were hostile to the slavers;...they (the slavers) themselves rarely took slaves by force though they incited others to violence in order to get the market supplied. They entered a place quietly, offered their cloth, brass rings, or beads for people...headmen sold those they had made captive or who were objectionable to them." \(^5\)

By early 1862, according to Rowley, the Manganja were gone, the people 'on the hills' had died out, leaving their crops planted but unreaped. The Shire was 'literally the river of death.' \(^6\)

\(^3\) Rowley, op. cit., pp 129, 219.
\(^4\) Ibid., p 112.
\(^5\) Ibid., pp 218, 352.
\(^6\) Ibid., pp 367, 404.
population had certainly been much reduced and the way was open to the Yao to settle and make the area their own, something which they had done by the time of the establishment of the Blantyre Mission in 1876. To detail the feuds and movements of the various Yao sections in the intervening years would be difficult and tedious, and from the economic point of view irrelevant, but the journal of Livingstone's last passage through the area in 1866 is informative about the state of trade.

Livingstone travelled to Lake Malawi in 1866 along the Ruvuma route from Kilwa, passing through the traditional homeland of the Yao. He found much evidence of population which was presumably both the cause and the result of the movement into the Shire Highlands. An area to the north east of Mwembe was uninhabited for fifty miles, though there was much evidence of recent habitation. From seventy miles north east to thirty miles south west of Mtaka’s there was similar depopulation. Mtaka himself had recently moved from the west after an inconclusive four day battle with the Songea Ngoni. Various reasons were suggested for these movements, Makua and Ngoni raids, internal dissensions and famine.

To the south east of the lake he noted the devastation which had hit what is now known as the Fort Maguire promontory. Here the victims were Manganja, not Yao. Depopulation here had been caused by Yao ‘of the Masaninga tribe’ which means almost certainly Makanjila’s people who occupy the site to the present day. Livingstone believed that the main suppliers of the slave trade on this route were Nkata (Zarafi), Kabinga (Kawinga) and Nponda. Their source was the ‘Maravi country’ to the west of the lake where the inhabitants, impoverished by Ngoni raids, were reduced to selling each other. The Ngoni almost certainly profited from the trade also. He spoke to Nkata, at his base three hours south of the lake in the mountains, about the slave trade. Nkata asked: ‘What would we do

without Arab cloth?’, Livingstone replied: ‘Do what you did before the Arabs came into the country’. He feared that at the then rate of depopulation the whole country would soon be a desert. At Mponda’s, already established near his present site, he was impressed by the standard of agriculture, but saw eighty-five slaves in a pen and spoke to six Arabs from Zanzibar who complained that after feeding their slaves and allowing for losses on the route they made little profit. Livingstone suspected that the main profit would be made in Arabia.

Although Arabs were known at Casembe’s in the 1830’s they were not commonly seen around the lake until the 1840’s. Their penetration inland was a consequence of increased demand at the coast for slaves, and then for ivory. The coast Arabs played an increasingly active part in the slave trade from about 1830, acting as suppliers of arms and as ‘agents provocateurs’. All the evidence seems to point to the years from 1830 to 1860 as being decisive so far as the import of guns is concerned. The Yao claim that they did not have guns when they came under pressure from the Makua, but they did have them in the early 1860’s. The Bisa and Cewa lacked guns in the 1830’s but had them in the 1860’s. It cannot be coincidence that the first people to acquire guns were those whose contacts with the coast Arabs were closest.

Reference to Arabs poses a definitional problem. Who were the ‘Arabs’ and should they be so called? Low Monteith Fotheringham divided ‘Arabs’ in central Africa into three categories: ‘...the Muscat, or white Arab, who is the true species...the Mswahili, or coast Arab, who is black, but is

2. Ibid., p 104.
   For the ivory trade, see R.W. Beachey, ‘The East African Ivory Trade in the 19th Century’, J.A.H., Vol.VIII, p 269. The movement of Arabs into the interior at this date was related to the development of Zanzibar as a commercial centre, and to the provision of capital to traders by British Indian merchants there. See also: P.L. Simmonds, ‘Ivory and the teeth of commerce,’ J.R.S.A., December 1856.
strictly Mohammedan in religion...and third, any upcountry native who adopts the manners and customs of the Moslem..."

Most of the Arabs referred to here would be more correctly called Swahilis, but it is usually impossible to distinguish, and it would be pedantic to insist on this.

The most successful of the Arabs in this area in this period were the Jumbes of Nkhota Khotan, the first of whom established himself on the western side of Lake Malawi at some time around the mid 1840's. Their wealth was founded on an entrepreneurial stroke of genius, the founding of a ferry between their base on the west coast and Losewa on the east coast. They were the first people to build dhows for use on the lake. There were at least two in use ferrying slaves across the lake when Livingstone first visited the Jumbe's town in 1863. The advantage of this was that it considerably shortened the routes from Cazembe's and Katanga to the Portuguese coast which would otherwise have to go round the south end of the lake, it was also competitive with the northern routes to Kilwa. The route which may once have been used via the north end of the lake had almost certainly been closed by the Ngoni by this date. There was also a route which went due east from Cazembe's to Bagamoyo, but this route does not seem to have been very well-known or much used at this time. To the west of Nkhota Khotan the route climbed the escarpment, crossed the Bua, passed through Mwase Kasungu's and to the north of the area settled by Mpeseni's Ngoni at some time in the early 1860's. It then joined the route to Cazembe's which had been used by Lacerda.

   Fred Moir gave a similar definition: "The so-called 'Arab' may be divided into three classes:-- the true Arab, the Mwahili, and lastly any wild up country native who may have willingly, or unwillingly, joined the Moslem caravan, particularly if he can sport a garment and tie a dirty bit of calico around his head by way of turban." F. Moir, 'Englishmen and Arabs in East Africa', Murray's Magazine, London, November, 1888, p 627.
3. Z.E., op. cit., p 511, and see also L.I., op. cit., p 91.
4. Z.E., op. cit., p 125.
and Gamitto.  

The Jumbe's success in trade had also brought him political power. At an early stage he had succeeded in subordinating Malenga Chanzu, the traditional Cewa ruler. Livingstone felt that his influence had increased between their first meeting in 1861 on the river Kazembe some distance to the north of Nkota Khota and his first visit to the Jumbe's town in 1863 when he estimated that he had 1,500 followers, and that 'there were tens of thousands of people in the vicinity who had fled thither for protection.' Livingstone attributed his influence to the power of guns and gunpowder; his following had been undoubtedly swelled by refugees from the Ngoni who were beginning to raid in the district. The Jumbe himself was an assiduous slaver, and Livingstone feared that the place would soon be depopulated. The Jumbes certainly continued to engage in and to profit from the slave trade but they were shrewder than to decimate the population which was directly dependent on them. By 1888 it was estimated that there was a population of 8,000 to 10,000 within their stockade and that there were villages surrounding it 'as far as the eye could see.' To this day Nkota Khota claims to be the 'largest traditional town in southern Africa.'

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If the Jumbe of Nkota Khota had established or was establishing a colony which, though on a small scale, was recognisably a colony in the western sense, being an attempt to establish an outpost of the Sultanate of Zanzibar, not far away a very different form of imperial-

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1. Z.E., op. cit., p 516.
2. Oral communication from the present Malenga Chanzu, 21st November, 1968.
6. Promotional literature of the Malawi Tourist Board. The claim may well be dubious in view of the size of such towns as Serowe, but it must be one of the largest in southern Africa.
ism or colonialism was being perpetrated on the until recently independent Cewa, Tonga and Tumbuka peoples.

The history of the Ngoni kingdoms begins in Zululand between 1821 and 1825 with the flight from the wrath of Chaka of a group of people, thought to be not more than a thousand strong, under the leadership of Zwangendaba. They are known to have travelled north crossing the Zambesi at the time of an eclipse of the sun on the 20th November 1835. They passed along the western borders of Malawi reaching the shores of Lake Tanganyika where Zwangendaba died circa 1842. It was not until the early 1850's that most of his followers were united in the Tumbuka country where some of them still live under the leadership of Mbelwa. Some, under Mpeseni, broke away and settled among the Cewa near Chipata in present day Zambia. Another section under Zulu Gama had split off in about 1845 and moved round the south end of Lake Malawi where they joined the Maseko Ngoni, themselves a break away from Mzilikazi's Ndebele. Later these split again and a mixed group of Zulu Gama's and Maseko Ngoni settled near Mcheu where they form the third major section of the Ngoni in this area under Gomani. The remnant whom they left to the east of the lake was the nucleus of the Songea Ngoni, also known as the Gwangwara.

Of greater relevance to this enquiry, though, is their organisation, the goals of their society, and their impact on the people whom they defeated in war. Here they make an illuminating comparison with the Yao. The object of Ngoni raids was not the enrichment of individual Ngoni but the increase of the power of the Ngoni state. There was little room for individual enterprise other than heroism which brought its own rewards. Captured cattle became the property of the paramount chief who might 'lend' them to his subjects. Captives similarly became the property of the nation. The political structure composed of agnatic lineages, regiments, and age sets,

4. J.A. Barnes, op. cit., pp 30-67, and especially Chapter II, 'The snowball state', pp 29-63, on which most of this section is based.
provided a framework into which an infinite number of men, women and children could be fitted. These additions were not kept permanently subservient but were expected to become Ngoni, and to raid with the army. They could and did rise to important positions in the military hierarchy. The regiments seem to have been very efficient schools for instilling Ngoni virtues and mores. In the case of each of the Ngoni kingdoms the language of the majority of the incorporated people eventually became dominant, but in terms of dress, goals, marriage customs, and culture in general the impact of the Ngoni, who must always have been a very small minority, was remarkable.

Because of the all-pervading nature of the Ngoni state, ambition was channelled towards military success and office within the state which followed from it. Status acquired in this way brought wives and children who also conferred prestige. Cattle were highly prized, but they were eaten much more frequently than was common in 'cattle-mad' societies. Cloth and beads were sought after but there was little opportunity for the individual to venture in trade, and these too were more likely to go to those who had achieved status in other ways. The Ngoni tended to be contemptuous of the 'Tower' muskets which were generally used by their opponents, if they had guns at all, because these would not penetrate their shields. Such guns as they later came to possess themselves they used mainly for their sound effect.¹

The existence of the Ngoni state demanded very great concentrations of population and consequently very intensive agriculture.² This necessitated frequent movement. As the whole basis of the social and political organisation was military, and as raiding was essential to the working of this system, it was equally necessary that there should be fresh fields of conquest open to it. Each of the Ngoni kingdoms was an unusually dense centre of population from

¹ Barnes, op. cit., p 59.
² Ibid., pp 30, 67. The Ngoni were not themselves keen agriculturists and tended to rely on subject peoples for cultivation. There is a proverb among Ngoni: 'My spear is my hoe.' They not infrequently raided for food. E.g. R. Laws, 'Journey along part of the western shore of Lake Nyassa in 1878,' P.R.G.S., N.S., Vol.I, p 313.
which there radiated in all directions warrior bands. Within the boundaries of the Ngoni state there was considerable security, and little fear of attack. The states tended to be surrounded by a depopulated 'no-man's land', and beyond that were the people who were the object of intermittent raiding. J.A. Barnes has written:

"The Ngoni did not trade with their neighbours, or send ambassadors to them, or enter into alliances with them; they merely killed or captured them." 1

This is not an historical statement as each point could be contradicted in fact, but it is perhaps, a statement of an Ngoni ideal. 'Ngoni should not trade with their neighbours or send ambassadors to them...' It is probably most true of the period until the later 1860's by which time they were becoming established on the sites that they continue to occupy to the present day. Certainly during the early and middle 1860's when Livingstone was passing through the area the Ngoni were avoided by traders and by trade routes. Travellers tended to pass through the outer rim of the circle which surrounded their settlements and saw the disruption which their raids caused without seeing the states from which the raiders had come. None of the Ngoni kingdoms was visited by a European traveller until 1878. 2 By that time there had been changes in the nature of the Ngoni. As the founding fathers became old and died the 'snowball' states, as they have been called, lost momentum, raids continued but the headquarters remained static. The surviving Ngoni families began to feel threatened by their subject peoples not all of whom had been properly assimilated. Mbelwa's kingdom, for instance, suffered a successful Tonga revolt in 1875, and feared similar moves by the Tumbuka and Henga peoples. 3 From this time the Ngoni chiefs, feeling

3. T.C. Young, op. cit., p 120.
for the first time their weakness, seem to have begun to enter into commercial and diplomatic relationships. Simultaneously the Ngoni appear to have begun to see captives in a more mercenary light than had previously been the case. By the later 1870's Chikusu was in regular commercial contact with Mpondi's slave trading caravans. There is evidence that Mbelwa and Mpezeni also had contact with traders. Mbelwa had also entered into some kind of diplomatic understanding with Mwase Kasungu the Gowa chief, whose assistance he sent for at the time of a rebellion in 1879.

Some of the Cowa and Tonga peoples seem to have been more successful in organising their defence against the Ngoni than were the Manganja against the Mwase Kasungu, who was the only Gowa chief to maintain his independence throughout this period almost certainly owed his success to his strategic position on an important trade route, and to his links with Arab and Bisa traders from whom he obtained guns and gun-powder, and who may have helped him in his defence. Livingstone in 1866 recorded a rumour that forty-four Arabs had been killed by the Ngoni at Kasungu. In September 1863 he had visited Mwase's and found it surrounded by a stockade and 'embowered in euphorbia trees.' The place seemed to him to have been inhabited for at least a generation. There were said to be many other stockades or 'lingas' scattered over Mwase's domain, which extended to the Luangwa.

1. Hawes to Salisbury, 7th July, 1886. F.O. 84/1751; John Moir in discussion following a paper by W.M. Kerr described the contacts of Chikusu with Arab traders. P.R.O., N.S. Vol.VIII, 1886, p 86.
2. T.C. Young, op. cit., p 124-5.
3. Mbelwa claimed that he did not sell slaves but admitted that some of his Tumbuka people sold them to the Arabs for guns and powder. He was afraid that the Tumbuka would use the guns obtained in this way against him and said that he tried to discourage slave traders from passing through his country by levying heavy fines on them. Goodrich to Granville, 24th April, 1885, F.O. 84/1702. 'S' in 'A visit to an African slaving chief', press cutting from unknown paper, January 1889, in MS 7900, described the arrival of an embassy from Mpezeni at Khota Khota to see the Jumbe in 1888. The present Malenga Chansi who is about 80 years old, and one of whose wives is a daughter of the present Mpezeni, said that his father, who met Livingstone, had been a friend of Mpezeni. He was certain that there had been much trade in ivory and slaves between Mpezeni and the Jumbe, though on one occasion the Jumbe had led an unsuccessful expedition against Mpezeni. Oral communication, 21st November, 1968.
Among the Tonga on the lake shore he found that Marenga and Mankambira had built stockades and had been able to hold out, although to the north of Mankambira’s all the Tonga villages had been destroyed. It seems probable that trading contacts had played a part in preserving these people also. Marenga asked: ‘Have you come to buy slaves?’ Further south near the Linthipe river he found many people living in stockades. A chief, Chinsamba, had recently driven off an Ngoni attack with the help of the guns of his Bisa allies. As many as 3,000 people were thought to be living in a single stockade in this area.  

In spite of the unpredictable nature of Ngoni raiding, the long distance trade continued. The Arabs and the Bisa who continued to be among the most active promoters of the trade had a strong interest in the keeping open of their major routes and it is not therefore surprising to find that they were among the leading organisers of resistance to the Ngoni. Livingstone found much evidence of the activities of the Bisa whose earlier history has been considered above. He met some who were trading in copper bars from Katanga, and others who were dealing in tobacco and slaves. He noted that the south end of Lake Malawi marked the limit of the Tete trade. They could not compete with the Bisa who were said to pay twenty fathoms of cloth and some gun-powder for a tusk which the Tete traders would pay ten fathoms. The Bisa continued to be well known far from their homes. ‘Bisha’ ivory was a bye-word at Zanzibar. According to Burton ‘the citizens welcome them as they sell their stores more cheaply than the Wahiao (Yao) who have become adept in coast arts.’ They were easily distinguishable by their filed teeth and bark cloths. In January 1849 an American merchant at Zanzibar reported the arrival of a Bisa caravan at Kilwa with 3,000 frasilahs, or over 100,000 lbs. weight of ivory. He had despatched 110,000 dollars of goods for the purchase

of this immense quantity which represented about 2,000 man loads.\(^1\) Their home area through which Livingstone passed in 1866 had by this time fallen under Bemba influence.\(^2\) For some reason, which cannot at the moment be explained, the Bisa who were evidently so active in the 1860's are rarely met with in the literature of the later 1870's and 1880's.

The Ngoni were remarkable for the distances over which they were prepared to raid. Livingstone found evidence of their raids far to the west of the Luangwa where a Bemba chief had some of their heads decorating his stockade. They were said to have been ferried across the river by the 'Atomboka' which indicates that they came from the northern Ngoni and that the Tumbuka people at this date retained their separate identity, though the fact that they went raiding together shows that the process of assimilation had already begun.\(^3\) They were also raiding the Lungu at the south end of Lake Tanganyika and in July 1867 came very close to Casembe's town where the Arabs combined with Casembe to turn them away.\(^4\) This Casembe was said to be very poor but his town remained impressively large and well provided with food and fish. The trade routes to Katanga in the west and to Kilwa in the east seem to have been well used, the main trades being as before in copper bars, malachite, ivory and slaves. Large numbers of Nyamwezi, and men from Garenganze (Katanga) and Zanzibar were in evidence. Livingstone was impressed by the comparatively humane way in which these Zanzibari traders, especially Tipoo Tib, conducted the slave trade.\(^5\)

He makes it clear that the long distance trade continued to be conducted as a series of exchanges from one commodity to another, rather than as a simple exchange of one commodity for another. One trader, for instance, was going from Casembe's to Katanga to buy copper, probably with cloth and ivory, he would then go to Uvira, west of Lake Tanganyika, to exchange the copper for ivory which could be bought more cheaply there.\(^6\) Traders might spend years travelling,
exchanging commodities and gradually, if they were successful, increasing their stock. Some of those that Livingstone met had been able to mass very large quantities of goods. One man had 5,250 lbs. of ivory and 10,500 lbs. of copper which he was attempting to move to the coast.¹

The limitations of head porterage were, and continued to be, the greatest impediments to the development of trade in this area. Ivory, copper and slaves were practically the only commodities which were valuable enough to be taken to the coast with hope of profit. Slaves had the advantage from this point of view that they did not have to be carried though they did have to be fed. They could also be used sometimes as porters. It would seem from the evidence available that the use of slaves as porters was the exception rather than the rule. There were various reasons for this; the greatest demand in the slave markets was for women and children who could not be very useful as porters. Even men slaves would be likely to be very much less efficient than professionals such as the Nyamwezi, the Yao and the Bisa. It is probable that some domestic slaves worked as porters on repeated journeys, but their status would be very different from that of a slave, who was being taken to the coast for sale. Some Arab traders who were unable to command the services of free porters, as a Yao chief could, or as the richer Zanzibar merchants could, certainly did raid for slaves in order to transport their accumulated stock to the coast. But when compared with the volume of goods being carried by free men their contribution was probably small.

It became an article of faith, however, in anti-slavery circles in Britain that most ivory was carried to the coast by slave porters and that the slave and ivory trades were consequently interdependent. Livingstone was probably most responsible for the propagation of this

view, though his writing contains evidence to support both sides. The view being simple and comprehensive made good propaganda. It was, however, an oversimplification. It led people in Europe to underestimate the extent to which the people as a whole were involved in the trade, and had a vested interest in its continuance. If it was assumed that all trade goods were carried by presumably unwilling slaves, it was easy to imagine that the trade could have very little staying power if the alternative of 'legitimate commerce' could be provided. Missionaries and traders working with them were sometimes surprised in their first years in Africa that the people showed little gratitude for their efforts to change the nature of the trade. They were also surprised at the strength of the existing commercial system. For most of the Yao, the Bisa, Mwase's Cewa, the Lunda, the Jumbe of Nkota Nkota and other Arabs, for the Tonga, the Ngoni and the Bemba, the slave trade was an accepted part of the system, and any changes in it would affect not just the pattern of trade, but their way of life. The strength of the system lay in the number of people who were involved with it.

1. On the one hand he argued that a steamer on Lake Nyassa buying ivory and giving the same as coast prices would cut out the slave trade 'for it is only by the ivory being carried by the slaves that the latter do not eat up all the profits of a trip.' Z.E., op. cit., p 128–9. On the other hand he later observed that professional Nyamwezi porters did most of the carrying of goods to the east coast. L.J., op. cit., Vol.II, p 180. There was of course a great deal of variety in the organisation of porterage to the coast, and there could be no comprehensive theory to cover all methods. But the notion that 'white ivory' (tusks) was invariably carried to the coast by 'black ivory' (slaves), came to be widely believed. Another improbable statement of Livingstone's which had great propaganda impact was his view that for every slave who reached the coast ten died on the way. As he believed that 19,000 slaves from the Malawi region passed through Zanzibar per annum, a figure which he had obtained from Consul Righy and which was not itself improbable, it would be logical on his estimate to assume that 190,000 people either died in the region every year as a result of slave raiding or were removed towards the coast. As it is unlikely that the total population of the area was more than 2,000,000 his estimate would be incredible. See, Z.E., op. cit., pp 391–2.
It can be concluded that both local and long distance trades were central features of the life of most of the people in this area in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century; that the area was as much a part of the world economy in 1800 as in 1900, though the nature of that economy had changed in the interim. Although commercial transactions may not have been a daily occurrence for the average man, and although he would not be familiar with the use of all-purpose money, he would be familiar with the principles of barter, and could be expected to maximise his profit. Different peoples responded in different ways to the commercial opportunities put before them, and some of this variety can be attributed to the goals and norms of their respective societies.

The commodities most commonly exported were ivory and slaves, and those most commonly imported were cloth and beads. Demand for imported goods was a function of knowledge of them. The most significant new demand in this period was for guns which seem to have become popular in the years between 1830 and 1860. The introduction of guns marked the beginning of a technological revolution which had far reaching political implications, but predated the arrival of Europeans.

Because of the nature of the trades, the need for man-power, and for defence, it was impossible to separate the commercial sphere from the political and diplomatic. Success in trade was likely to increase a man's political following and influence, while it would be difficult to maintain an inherited position without participation in it.

Before 1840 the area had enjoyed a period of comparative stability. Between 1840 and 1860 this was ended by imperialist thrusts from four distinct sources. They were all imperialist in that they aimed to subject the indigenous population and exploit their economic resources of land and man-power. The Yao came in large numbers and settled on land previously occupied by the Manganja who they absorbed as domestic slaves, drove out, or sold. The Ngoni came in smaller numbers, and imposed themselves on the inhabitants, inoculating into them as far as possible their own mores and philosophy of life. Arab traders aimed at commercial success above all, but sought to exploit political situations to their own profit, and in some cases established
colonies of a western type. They introduced the gun, and brought with them one of the great world religions, Islam. The fourth thrust was at this time the least successful, that of British missions represented by the attempt to establish the Universities' Mission in the Shire Highlands. Its objects were in its own terms philanthropic in that it aimed to improve the standard of life in central Africa by education and the substitution of legitimate commerce for the slave trade. It found that the forces of 'evil' were too strong for it and had to withdraw after having become involved in wars between the Manganja and the Yao. Ironically the Makololo, its African servants, proved more successful, ruthlessly subjecting a section of the Manganja population, and organising their defence.

It was the ravages of the slave trade which impressed Livingstone most on his travels, and led him to call down blessings on any man American, English or Turk who would heal 'this open sore of the world'. It was his belief that the slave trade was maintained by the demand in the interior for imported goods which led him to examine ways in which this demand could be satisfied by the export of other commodities. The sight of cotton being grown, spun and woven in the Shire Highlands led him to hope that this area might come to replace the United States as the major supplier of the raw material to the manufacturers of Lancashire. Commerce and Christianity were the weapons which he thought should be used to combat the slave trade. In the next chapter the formation of the body of opinion in Britain which aimed to put his dreams into practice will be considered. This chapter should have shown that the commercial system which they wished to change, of which the slave trade formed only a part, was a system which worked, which had deep roots, and which involved most of the population. By continuing to function in spite of the far-reaching political changes of the middle years of the century it had shown considerable strength and resilience. The task which commerce and Christianity were called on to perform was not an easy one.

When Lacerda set out for Cazembe's in 1798 Great Britain was primarily interested in tropical Africa as a source of slaves for the West Indian sugar plantations. It is true that Lacerda's expedition was at least partly inspired by the fear that Britain's recent occupation of the Cape of Good Hope would lead her to cast covetous eyes on the lands to the north, but it is unlikely that British officials saw the Cape as anything more than a vital refreshment station on the route to India. At the opposite end of the continent the same pre-occupation with the route to India together with Napoleon's imperial dreams led to a temporary involvement with Egypt, but in the tropical zone the only lasting interests were a few trading posts in the Gulf of Guinea and the Bight of Benin. The east coast slave-trade, which was at this time much less significant than that on the west, was in the hands of Portuguese, French, Brazilian and Indian merchants. Britain was not directly involved.  

In the course of the nineteenth century British attitudes to tropical Africa underwent major changes, but by 1870 the area was almost certainly less important commercially than it had been at the beginning of the century, and Britain was no more and possibly less involved in a colonial or imperial sense. In the intervening years the Empire in India had been extended and consolidated; Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had been effectively colonised; the Cape Colony had been expanded to the east and was beginning to be extended to the north; and in addition Britain had become deeply involved in the economies of China, the United States and of Latin America. But Africa remained for the most part the Dark Continent.  


2. This was less true of some parts of the continent than of others, see P. Curtin, The Image of Africa, British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850, London, 1965, but it was certainly still true of the part of east Africa with which this study is concerned.
British interest in Africa in the nineteenth century can be divided into a number of constituent parts which varied in their importance from person to person, and from year to year. The most important of these were the scientific and geographical; the philanthropic and the religious or evangelical; and the commercial and imperial.

For people with an interest in science, African exploration fulfilled much the same role as lunar exploration does today. The interior was unknown and unmapped, its penetration was accompanied by very real risks to health and by less serious, but more romantic, dangers from the local inhabitants. In so far as Africa was on the frontier of geographical knowledge the parallel is exact. Where it breaks down is in the response of the non-participant public. In the first place the public was a very small one confined to those who regularly bought books or read newspapers and periodicals; in the second place the degree of enthusiasm engendered in this public seems to have been greater than can now be aroused. This was perhaps due to the individualist character of African exploration, and to its gladiatorial appeal. ¹ Great Exploratory expeditions (e.g. to the Niger in 1841, or to the Zambesi, 1859-1865) were notoriously unsuccessful; it was the work of a few individuals which did most to solve the problems of African geography, and to stimulate popular interest. There can be little doubt as to the degree of this interest among the book-buying middle and upper classes; from the time of James Bruce of Kinnaird until the end of the nineteenth century any traveller in tropical Africa who cared to publish his reminiscences was assured of a market. While India was vastly more important commercially and attracted many more to the service of the Company, and later the Empire, it was Africa which had a greater appeal to the imagination and became a breeding ground for heroes, Mungo Park, Clapperton, the Landers, Moffat, Livingstone, Stanley, Gordon, Speke,

¹ E.g. Gwendolen Harleth in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, first published in 1876, (Penguin edition, 1967, p 171): "We women can't go in search of adventures - to find out the North West Passage or the source of the Nile, or to hunt tigers in the east."
Burton, Grant and others.

If the scientific interest in Africa was satisfied by the exploits of a few adventurers who became at least temporarily heroes, the philanthropic and religious interest was more complicated in its workings. Even Dr. Eric Williams, a by no means uncritical historian of the anti-slavery campaign, has admitted that it was one of the most brilliant propaganda exercises of all time. The genesis of this movement has never been satisfactorily explained. The fact that it coincided with the decline of the relative importance of the trade to the British economy is not in itself an explanation. The movement must surely be seen as a genuinely philanthropic one which had its roots in the 'Enlightenment' and which drew heavily on a sense of guilt in that section of the middle and upper classes which came under the contemporary influence of the Evangelicals. The personnel of these two movements were very similar.

The prophets of the anti-slavery movement were Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson. Sharp's attentions had been devoted to demonstrating the illegality of slavery on British soil; he was responsible for the case that led to Mansfield's Judgement. Thomas Clarkson in his essay on Slavery which won the Chancellor's Latin Essay Prize at Cambridge in 1785 turned his attention to the West Indies, and to Africa. Echoing Rousseau he maintained that all men were born free and that they had a right to an equal share in the soil and its produce. He refuted all justifications of slavery based on the innate inferiority of the Negro. He condemned colonial slavery as 'contrary to justice, nature, the principles of law and government, the whole doctrine in short of natural religion, and the revealed voice of God.' He was also convinced that the slave-trade was misguided in purely economic terms. He was certain that an 'inexhaust-

ible mine of wealth is neglected in Africa, for the prosecution of this impious traffic. 1 Greater profits would be made if the trade in slaves was given up and a legitimate trade substituted in its place. 2 Adam Smith, whose most influential work, The Wealth of Nations, had been published in 1776, supplied support for this view.

On the inefficiency of slave labour he remarked:

"A person who can have no property can have no other interest but to eat as much and to labour as little as possible...the work done by slaves is in the end the dearest of any."  2

He felt that only the sugar and tobacco industries whose profits were very high could afford the luxury of slave labour. 3

William Wilberforce was encouraged by William Pitt to introduce legislation for the abolition of the slave-trade, which he did for the first time in 1789. In all the discussions on abolition which filled numerous columns of the Parliamentary Reports and the newspapers between then and the passing of the Act in 1807, the emphasis was not unnaturally on the West Indies in which many had vested interests and which were generally better known than the African source of the slaves. It was consequently remarkable that William Pitt should in the debate on the Abolition Bill of 1792 have directed the attention of the House to Africa, and in doing so, have foreshadowed some of the arguments that were to be widely canvassed in the course of the ensuing century:

"But now, Sir, I come to Africa. That is the ground on which I rest....Do you think nothing of the ruin and the miseries in which so many individuals in Africa are involved in carrying off so many millions of people? Do you think nothing of the families left behind? What do you know of the internal state of Africa?"

He compared the barbarism of Africa with the barbarism of Britain in Roman times and went on...

"I trust that we shall not think ourselves too liberal, if by abolishing the slave trade, we give them the

1. An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African, op. cit., pp 56, 185-228, pp 256 and ix
same common chance of civilisation with other parts of the world, and that we shall now allow to Africa the opportunity, the hope, the prospect of attaining to the same blessings which we ourselves...at a much more early period have been permitted to enjoy...we may live to behold the natives of Africa engaged in the calm occupation of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land which at some happy period in still later times may blaze with full lustre; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illumine and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then may we hope that even Africa, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also will Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness (if kindness it can be called) of no longer hindering that continent from extricating herself out of the darkness which, in other more fortunate regions, has been so much more speedily dispelled."

It is the whole of Africa of which he is thinking:

"The great and happy change to be expected in the state of her inhabitants is, of all the various and important benefits of the abolition, in my estimation incomparably the most extensive and important." 1

The anti-slavery movement was remarkable firstly for its success, and secondly, for its longevity. The latter could be attributed at least in part to its initial promotion by an inter-related coterie of Quaker and Evangelical families, the most outstanding of whom were the Wilberforces and Burtons. As an example of a highly placed and effective sense of pressure group it must be without equal in the history of British politics. As well as achieving the emancipation of slaves in the British dominions in 1833 at a cost of £20,000,000, this group ensured that through relentless diplomatic pressure and through the provision of naval squadrons on the coasts of Africa, the war against the slave-trade was continued. Significantly, for most of the nineteenth century, the Foreign Office had no department devoted to the affairs of Africa as such, but almost all business concerning the continent was directed to the Slave-Trade department.

It is not possible to estimate the extent to which this movement had popular support. The refusal of Lancashire workers to use Southern-grown cotton at the time of the American Civil War is some indication of how deep-rooted the movement had become at that date.

It was as a consequence of the anti-slavery movement and of the need for a naval blockade of the east coast that Britain first became permanently involved in that area. It is true that the protection of the increasing British Indian trade on the coast was also an argument for a naval presence, but the memoirs of men on the coast squadron make it clear that their primary concern was with attempts to control the slave-trade.

After Emancipation in 1833 the attentions of the anti-slavery activities were turned once again to the slave-trade itself. This led to a renewed interest in Africa. Among the first fruits of this interest was the publication in 1840 of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's two part work, 'The African Slave Trade and its Remedy'. This elaborated suggestions earlier made by James MacQueen who had argued that 'it is Africa herself that is the root of the evil.' Following this line Buxton argued that increased naval and diplomatic pressure could not be the remedy, they might reduce the evil but they could not eradicate it. The true remedy lay in Africa which possessed 'within herself vast, though as yet undeveloped, resources.' These resources must be mobilised; the people must be taught that 'the wealth to be obtained from peaceful industry, surpasses the slender and precarious profits of rapine'. The importance of Africa as a vast field for European commerce had not been fully realised.

"Legitimate commerce would put down the slave-trade by demonstrating the superior value of man as a labourer on the soil, to man as an object of merchandise." The merchant, the philanthropist, the patriot and the Christian should unite to pursue this goal. Initially there would be a need for large

investment without the hope of an immediate return. Buxton entirely
disclaimed 'any disposition to create a new Empire in Africa.' The
guiding principles were to be Free Trade and Free Labour. There
were teeming millions of customers in Africa who could be taught to
grow raw materials for British industry in return for British manu-
factures. It cannot be said that Buxton's schemes were practical
or realistic. The Niger expedition of 1841, which was a government-
sponsored attempt to put his ideas into practice ended in disaster.
Of a total complement of one hundred and forty five Europeans, forty-
eight had died within two months of entering the river. The expedi-
tion was withdrawn in 1842 and Buxton himself died three years later,
a broken man.

The failure of this expedition set back interest in the commer-
cial exploitation of Africa for a decade. MacGregor Laird's Niger
expedition of 1853 was on a much smaller scale and was in terms of
health much more successful; of twelve Europeans, none died. Buxton
had under-estimated the malarial barrier to the exploration or
exploitation of the interior; only with the regular use of quinine
were the losses reduced to tolerable proportions, though even then
they continued to be heavy throughout the century, so much so that
travel in tropical Africa tended to be undertaken only by those of
great dedication, desperation or strong religious conviction.

One man who had heard Buxton speak and who had been much
influenced by his ideas was David Livingstone. Livingstone was
the African traveller of the Victorian age whose personality had the
greatest impact on his contemporaries, and he is of fundamental
importance to this history as being the direct inspiration behind
the missionary and commercial enterprise with which it is concerned.
The reason for his enormous appeal can be at least partly explained
by the fact that he united in himself the varied strands which inter-
ested British opinion in Africa. A missionary by vocation, he saw

2. Ibid., pp 441-2.  
3. Ibid., p 454.  
it as his destiny that he should blaze the trail for future workers rather than settle and work patiently in one place. But in all his travelling he remained conscious that "the end of the geographical feat is the beginning of the missionary enterprise."  Apart from his geographical work his greatest achievement was to make known to the European world the effects on the interior of the east coast slave-trade, information on which was almost totally lacking before his journeys. In all his writing on the slave-trade he emphasises that it can only be effectively combated by the substitution of a legitimate commerce.

He expressed his own views quite clearly in a letter to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society in 1855:

"Commerce has the effect of speedily letting the tribes see their mutual dependence. It breaks up the sullen isolation of heathenism. It is so far so good. But Christianity alone reaches the very centre of the wants of Africa and of the world...I appreciate the effects of commerce much, but of Christianity much more."

Elsewhere he wrote that he hoped that he might live to see the 'double influence of commerce and Christianity employed to stay the bitter fountain of African misery.' In his first Cambridge lecture he referred to commerce and Christianity as these 'two pioneers of civilisation'.

Throughout his writings this interdependence and the necessity that the missionary and the trader should work together is repeated. His practical experience of mission work among the Tswana and the Makololo had taught him that the material wants of a people had to be ministered to quite as much as the spiritual, and that in many cases the material want was the most pressing. His first great journey across Africa was prompted by the desire to gain access to the western market for Makololo ivory. He had encouraged European traders to come up from the Cape, but the prices that they could afford to pay after the long journey by waggon were not high. He hoped that

2. To A. Tidman, 12th October, 1856, ibid pp 30-32.
3. Ibid., 8th October, 1853, ibid, pp 256-7.
the stimulation of legitimate commerce amongst the Makololo would discourage them from dealing with the Nambari who traded in slaves up the Zambesi from Tete.1 His Makololo companions were certainly impressed by the prices which they obtained for ivory at Luanda and on the west coast trade route, but whether his journey opened the way to further trade is unknown; it seems unlikely.2

He applied the lessons drawn from this experience to his analysis of the role of the missionary in Africa. His concentration on the exploration of the continent was based on the conviction that only when the continent was made known would legitimate commerce penetrate to the interior. While he regarded the introduction of Christianity as an essential prerequisite for the moral advance of a people he regarded Christian commerce as essential to their material progress. Born himself into the very worst conditions of the industrial revolution, he was acutely conscious of the suffering engendered by material poverty; but he did not react against this system. He accepted it. He had faith in capital as an agent for good; he spoke of it as making the world one, and finding its own level.3 He was a free trader and believed that while trade within Africa would by causing interdependence breed trust, the same would be true on the world scale. If Britain became dependent on Africa for raw materials and for markets she would, as an inevitable consequence, take an interest in the prosperity and well-being of the African population. Conversely he strongly attacked Lancashire's dependence on Southern-grown cotton as the condonement of slavery.4

Livingstone believed in Progress under divine providence. He believed that things would improve and that Christian enlightenment and commerce would be the agents of this improvement. He should not be judged as an economist. His economic ideas were naive and unoriginal. He believed that good trade would drive out bad, legitimate commerce would undercut the slaver. His faith here was

stronger than his reason. He was first and foremost a propagandist. His goal in secular terms was to involve Europe with Africa because he believed that only such an involvement could solve the problems which he saw confronting the continent. His enthusiasm prompted him to give an often misleading account of immediate prospects. There was no more acute observer of the details of the country through which he passed, but when it came to generalisation he could be dangerously optimistic. His own immense strength of body and character led him to underestimate the barriers in the way of African development.

One can suspect that he realised full well that the situation was not quite as simple as he sometimes made it out to be. He did realise that trade was not inevitably beneficial in its consequences. When exasperated by the difficulties which he had suffered in Bisa country where he had found it almost impossible to obtain food, he wrote: 'If this is the enlargement of mind produced by commerce, commend me to the untrading African.' But when it was a matter of winning recruits or money for Africa, he took a less gloomy view. At least one of his disciples, Dr. James Stewart, was reduced to despondency by the contrast between the hopes inspired by Livingstone's writings and the reality. Such was Livingstone's own faith, and humour, that he was incapable of sustained gloom.

His reception in Britain on his return from his crossing of Africa and the discovery of Mosi-oa-tunya, the Victoria Falls, was phenomenal. Few can have caused such a near hysterical response; one thinks of Garibaldi and, perhaps, Kossuth. That a hitherto unknown missionary could overnight become a national hero is surprising and can only be explained by a previously unsatisfied need. The combination of missionary, explorer, philanthropist, struck many cords in the emergent Victorian character.

1. To A. Tidman, 12th December, 1855, in Schapera, op. cit., pp 30–32: 'The Arabs are great in commerce, but few would say that they are as amiable as the uncivilised natives in consequence.'
All over the country he addressed enraptured audiences. Through the pressure of the powerful Manchester cotton lobby he was appointed H.M. Consul to Quelimane, and the government was persuaded to finance an expedition to the Zambesi under his leadership. Simultaneously the English Universities, acting in response to his Cambridge appeal, organised an attempt to establish a mission in the Shire Highlands, which he had selected as a most promising site from which to begin the evangelisation of Central Africa. Both the expedition and the mission were ill-fated. An attempt to put a steamer, the Lady Nyassa, on to the lake was a failure. There were difficulties with the steamers on the Zambesi. The mission had the misfortune to coincide with the invasion of the Yao and the collapse of the Manganja. The death of its leader, Bishop Mackenzie, led to its recall first to Mount Morambala and then to Zanzibar.

For Livingstone this was a bitter personal defeat. He had been responsible for the establishment of the mission and he had hoped that it would be the beginning of a forward movement into the interior. Like many men of immense physical strength and moral courage he was unsympathetic to the less well-endowed. He never forgave Bishop Toser and the U.M.C.A. for what he thought to be their betrayal of his schemes.2

The exploration of Africa continued. After Speke and Grant's discovery of the source of the White Nile in 1862, the mapping of the great lakes and the tracing of the Congo remained to be completed. Livingstone returned to Africa in 1866 and went on travelling alone until his death in May 1873. It was this event at Chitambo's, together with the romantic story of the carrying of his remains from the shores of Lake Bangweolo to the east coast by his faithful servants, followed by his funeral in Westminster Abbey, that gave the new impetus to African evangelisation which was required to overcome the discouragement of the previous failure.

In the next three years seven missionary expeditions were

1. Z.E., pp 84, 352, 408, 423, 458 et seq. Livingstone's difficulties with his steamers foreshadowed some of the later experiences of the managers of the African Lakes Company who were similarly troubled by rust and perished plates.
2. Z.E., op. cit., pp 585-95.
despatched from Great Britain to the African interior; three to Lake Malawi; two to the Congo; one to Uganda and one to Lake Tanganyika. Two bore Livingstone's name, two were despatched by missions with whom he had been closely involved. All owed their inspiration to his work and their occasion to the event of his death.

If Livingstone's death can be seen as the signal which led to a missionary scramble towards the interior of Africa, it must be remembered that behind each of the missions there were laymen who had subscribed between £10,000 and £20,000 for their support. Livingstone himself was so insistent on the commercial role of missionary enterprise that it is essential to see these missions and Africa as a continent in the light of the contemporary commercial and economic scene. In the ten years since the withdrawal of the Zambesi Expedition and the Universities Mission, conditions in Africa had not changed. Knowledge of the Lake Malawi region, for instance, had not been significantly increased. There was no indication that the political situation was any more stable than it had been. No advances had been made in the understanding or control of malarial fever. The inauguration of these missions could only be attributed to a change of mood. This could partly be explained by a wish to commemorate a great Christian hero and martyr, but there were economic factors that made the opening up of new markets and sources of raw materials seen a more pressing need than it had done a few years earlier; and these factors may have played a part in insuring that the pious hopes expressed on Livingstone's death were translated into action.

The years from 1850-73 were years of prosperity. The years

1. The Universities Mission to Central Africa; The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland; The Blantyre Mission of the Established Church of Scotland.
2. The Baptist Missionary Society; and the Livingstone Inland Mission.
3. The Church Missionary Society; and the London Missionary Society.
4. It is as well to remember that the purchasing power of money in the 1870's and for most of the period considered in this study was about ten times its present face value.
from 1868 were years of boom. This began with the railway building mania and the recovery of the raw cotton supply from the Southern states which followed the end of the American Civil War. It was increased by a simultaneous railway building enthusiasm in Russia, and by large orders for steamships which followed the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. It was further increased by replenishment after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the stimulus to world trade which was provided by the payment of the French indemnity which had been raised on the London market. By 1872-3 prices had reached unprecedented levels, a state of full employment was followed by wage increases and improvements in the hours and conditions of work; so much so that The Economist later commented that 'more expenditure and less work took the place of frugality and diligence.' Retribution followed. In September 1873, the American railway mania gave way to panic. The fall in prices and decline in world trade which then began continued until the autumn of 1879. The recession was worldwide and affected all classes of overseas investment, the level of which from Britain was closely related to the quantity of exports and to prosperity in general. Exports were to a large extent financed by simultaneous exports of capital from Britain. American railways would both provide work for British industry and be financed by British capital. The collapse of the railway boom shattered confidence in overseas investment and so caused a decline in world trade. This was the beginning of the Great Depression; it has recently been described as a 'myth'. In the long view of history this may be so, but there was nothing mythical about its impact on the manufacturing and investing public in Britain in its first and most violent phase from 1873-9. It was all too real.

A good impression of this can be gleaned from the Economist and Statist reviews of the year. Of 1875 The Economist observed:

"The commercial difficulties, failures and fall of prices which marked 1874, have been still more severe in 1875. It has been, almost without exception, a bad year in every trade and for every interest...all over Europe in north and south America."

Failed companies had liabilities of £40-50,000,000; the list was 'one of the longest and darkest ever compiled for a single year.' Confidence in overseas investment was further shaken by the repudiation of the Turkish debt and fears for the Egyptian one. The cotton industry had been hit by 'an unprecedented succession of failures.' Reduced production had failed to remedy stagnation.

1876 was the 'third year in the cycle of reaction and adjustment.' It was characterised by "dull and limited trade, restricted confidence, vigorous application of reduction and economies, lessened wages, failure of numberless commercial and manufacturing concerns, unable by the capital, credit and skill at their command to bear the pressure of adverse times."

The cotton industry had a less unsatisfactory year but iron suffered 'extreme adversity and depression.' Wages had returned to the levels of 1868, but it was thought that it would be necessary to restore the old hours of work too.

1877 was 'a worse year commercially than 1876'. It had been shown that 'a longer and more severe depression was required to cure the evils consequent on the extravagant heights' to which costs of production had soared in 1871-3. The year had been notable for political instability in France, famine in south India which adversely affected the cotton trade, the failure of railway companies in America, the Balkan situation which threatened a European war, and the third or fourth bad harvest in Britain. The iron industry, already badly hit by the shrinking demand for rails, was beginning to feel the effects of competition from steel. The coal industry had also been affected.

1878 was a year of

"disappointed hopes, shrinking trade, of falling prices, of lowered wages, and of financial disasters ending. in serious distress among a portion of the population." 1

At the beginning of the year things seemed to have reached a point beyond which they could not go.

"Enterprise was suspended, for no-one knew what turn events might take. There was scarce any demand for money, which accumulated in the deposit banks." Bank rate was reduced to £2. The cotton industry had reached a crisis more severe than has been known to the present generation of manufacturers. 2 A second wage reduction of 10% was pushed through at the end of the year. Iron prices were half what they had been in 1872. 3 Only ship-builders had any confidence in the future.

The greatest disaster of the year came on the 1st October when the City of Glasgow Bank closed its doors. There had been no previous alarm, its shares stood almost as high as those of the Bank of England. This failure "gave a shock to credit throughout the length and breadth of the land." 4

The bank's liabilities amounted to £12,000,000 and four more large banks were brought down with it. Bank rate was raised for £2% to £6%. It was not until the autumn of 1879 that the first signs of recovery began to relieve the gloom. 5 This was attributed to new orders from the United States; and to the recovery of southern India from famine. 1880 was not sensational but comparatively prosperous. 6 1881 was better than the previous year and the Clyde ship-building beat the production record that had been set up in 1874. 7

This then was the commercial and industrial background to the seventies, the years in which the first tentative moves were made
towards the foundation of a British Empire in tropical Africa, and the years in which Europe as a whole began to think seriously of this region as a source of raw materials and as a market for manufactured goods. What evidence is there to link the depression, just described, with the awakening of interest in Africa?

Investment is always a question of confidence in the future, and a pre-condition of this is the expectation that a situation will, at worst, be constant, but preferably improve. In those pre-Keynsian times it was not unreasonable to argue that prosperity had reached an all-time peak in 1873 and that the future could only be one of stagnation. Some French economists argued that there was a finite length of railway that could be built in Europe, and that this total having been achieved, decline in that sector of the economy was inevitable. Others feared that foreign competition, especially import substitution by the French, Belgian, German and American iron and steel industries, was dooming the British industry to contraction. There was already emerging the danger of more rapid mechanisation in the United States owing to their more expensive labour. The cotton industry seemed to be threatened by the great multiplication of spindles that had occurred in the boom years. Steam mills were beginning to be established in India and China, which took over a third of all Lancashire's production, and it seemed possible that, through industrialisation, they might recapture those markets that

1. There can be no doubt as to the seriousness of the situation. The average prices of 22 commodities fell between 1873 and 1879 by 24%. Scotch pig iron fell by 66% and raw cotton by 46%. See R. Giffen, 'On the Fall of Prices of Commodities in Recent Years', 21st January, 1879, J.R.S.S., Vol.XLII, p 39. Between 1872 and 1878 there was a fall of 42% in the total value of all classes of exports; ibid., pp 71-3. Unemployment of unionised labour had increased from 1.2% in 1873 to 10.7% in 1879; Rostow, op. cit., p 80. It is true that wages probably did not fall as rapidly as prices and so those working people who were still in employment may have become better off, but this was no consolation to the investing classes.

2. A.J. Mundell, 'What are the conditions in which the commercial and manufacturing supremacy of Great Britain depend, and is there any reason to think that they have been, or may be endangered?', J.R.S.S., Vol.XLI, p 88.

3. Ibid., p 94.
had been the basis of Manchester's prosperity. The increased cultivation of cotton all over the world, which had been stimulated by the 'famine', had reduced the price of the raw material, but also the size of the manufacturers' profit margin. The declaration of the Empire of India in 1874 could not disguise fears that a preserved market might be in danger.

The years from 1873 saw the beginning of a period of great doubt, uncertainty, and self-questioning on the part of economists and businessmen. The first serious concern about the balance of trade, the fear that the national wealth was being drained by an excess of imports over exports, investigation of the role of invisible exports and an attempt to calculate their value, together with the value of income from overseas investments - all these were symptoms of anxiety. One seems to be witnessing in the 1870's the birth of a national neurosis which has survived in much the same terms for most of a century.

Stephen Bourne, a civil servant in the statistical department of the Customs, started the controversy over the balance of trade. He warned of Britain's increasing dependence on imported food and of the fact that 'the products of our industry are becoming less necessary' to the countries from which food was imported. He warned that 'our labourers must learn that...the costs of production must be limited.... Britain stands tottering on the eminence which she has attained.' He argued that the country was being drained of wealth by a persistent and growing trade gap. His views gained wide currency. Robert Giffen, in The Economist, thought them exaggerated and argued that no true picture of the trade balance could be obtained without more

1. See The Statist, Review, 1878, op. cit., cotton goods were the largest single export. In 1876 textiles were more than half of exports.
2. The progress of our foreign trade. Imports and exports over the last 20 years, J.R.S.S., 1875, Vol.XXVIII, p 288; The preponderance of imports over exports in the foreign and colonial trade of the United Kingdom, J.R.S.S., 1877, Vol.XI, delivered on 19th December, 1876; On the decay in the export trade of the United Kingdom, British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of Proceedings, 1879, p 470.
4. Ibid., pp 33-4.
information on invisible earnings. As a result of this controversy the year 1877-3 was the first in which income from abroad was distinguished. In an attempt to refute Bourne's suggestions, and those who favoured the re-introduction of protection under the slogan 'fair trade', William Newmarch, a leading economist, produced a massive paper on 'The Progress of the Foreign Trade of the United Kingdom since 1856.' He could not demonstrate that there was no trade deficit and could only assert that it was paid for by a surplus on invisible account.

This concern with the trade balance led to detailed analysis of the direction of trade. It was discovered that with the decline in exports to Europe and the United States, the relative importance of India and the Colonies had been increased. While in 1869 the three largest importers of British goods had been the United States, Germany and India, by 1876 India was the largest market and Australia had replaced the United States as the second largest. In 1876 the British colonies had taken 40% more exports than in 1869, but exports to the United States had fallen from £41,000,000 in 1872 to £17,000,000 in 1876.

The increase in the importance of the Empire in trade was reflected also in capital exports. Recent writers have noticed that there was an increase in interest in the later 1870's in the Empire as a field for investment. Sir Alec Cairncross, discussing the nineteenth century as a whole, notes a difference in the character of investment after 1875, especially a tendency away from Europe and loans to foreign governments, and towards private investment or loans to Colonial governments which were guaranteed by the Treasury.

So far as investment was concerned, the consequence of the Great Depression was to shaken confidence in the classes of investment which had been popular for several decades. The collapse of American rail-

way companies and the repudiation of national debts by foreign
governments, together with the evidence of the advantages of trade
and investment within the Empire made people look on it as the most
likely place for safe investment in the future. Gloom and despond-
ency were not confined to a lunatic fringe of Jeremiahs. At the
beginning of 1879 Robert Giffen felt that the decline of prices and
the depression of trade might prove to be of a permanent character
unless 'some great change in the conditions of business should occur
at an early date.'

Given that these feelings of doubt and uncertainty were shared
by some of those professional economists who should have been most
competent to judge, it is not surprising that business should have
looked for new markets to replace those whose future appeared to be
so doubtful. At a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, Stephen
Bourne spoke of the colonies as the best field for investment and as
the best market for manufactures, and of Colonisation as a duty.
Then he turned his attention to Africa:

"A new continent opens to us in Africa, teeming with sources
of wealth and lands with large populations who only want
a portion of our capital, our products and our strength
to go forth and make them adjuncts to our own, the raisers
of food for our support, the purchasers of the manufactures
which we should create for them." 2

Propagandists habitually compared Africa to India and spoke of
it as a market of potentially Indian proportions. The old East India
Company was seen as a model for a new chartered company which would
open up the Dark Continent to the forces of European capital and enter-
prise. There were at least four proposals which made use of this
comparison. H.M. Stanley proposed 'an East African Company similar
to the old East Indian Company.' 3 The British Empire, in his opinion,
'had not yet begun to demonstrate what it was capable of. If they
once reached Karagwe... they would soon annex 6,000,000 square miles
of territory.' 3 Verney Lovett Cameron, fresh from his walk across
Africa, had made the same proposal at the Royal Colonial Institute.

1. J.R.S.S., Vol.XLI, 1879, "On the Fall of Prices of Commodities
   in Recent Years", p 36.
3. At a meeting of the R.G.S., 25th March 1878, in R.G.S., 1878,
   p 251.
He saw the colonisation of Africa not in the sense of mass emigration, but in the Roman sense of administration – a chartered company was to be the instrument of this. Africa was a 'country which I hope will some day be British.' He later made the same recommendation to the British Association. 'Africa', he believed, 'had been purposefully kept in this condition until this present time in order to supply the growing wants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.'

William Mackinnon's scheme for a concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar and an East African chartered company was the one which came closest to fruition. Mackinnon's friend, the Rev. Horace Waller, described General Gordon's reaction to this scheme which had 'as its historical type the East India Company of old. He (Gordon) jumped at the word and said it expressed exactly all he felt.'

The most grandiose of all the schemes and proposals mooted at this time for the exploitation of East Africa was that of James Bradshaw, a Lancashire cotton manufacturer and spokesman for the Manchester cotton lobby. Speaking at the low point of the depression, he had little if any knowledge of the practical side of the question, but he was alarmed at the prospects before the cotton industry. He recalled that Livingstone had prophesied that Africa 'would become a nearer India to England.' He reckoned that Africa's population was between two hundred and four hundred millions and that its 'trade would ensure the future of English industries for at least a hundred years.' Exports of cotton cloth to India averaged five yards per head of the population, and this was only half of Indian consumption, although many went naked and working men wore as much cloth 'as is in a pocket handkerchief.' In Africa where there was no competition from local manufacturers the potential market must be enormous. 'No Englishman, be he peer or peasant, can say, 'Africa does not concern me.' He proposed to 'commercially invade the country' by steamers.

on the Congo, the Niger and the Zambesi, and by railway to Lake Victoria. There was to be an African Corporation with the powers of the East India Company, with a nominal capital of £10,000,000 and a first call of £2,000,000. This was not too great a sum to rescue a whole continent from darkness; to provide employment for a century to hundreds of thousands of our working men...1

In the end nothing came of this scheme, it was still under discussion later in the year when the first signs of a recovery in the commercial situation may have damped the ardour of the prime-mover. The remarkable thing about the proposal is that it was made at all. It was not a proposal that could have been made before 1874, nor was it one which could have been made in precisely the same terms after 1880. It was a product of the business mood at the lowest point of the depression. However unrealistic the scheme may have been it was an attempt to do something to end the depression by almost Keynesian means.2 Capital was to be expended to create new markets to bring recovery to the British economy. The two largest exporting interests were to be concerned, the cotton manufacturers, and the iron manufacturers who were to be called upon to supply hundreds of miles of railway line, as well as plates for steamers.3

There could be no doubt as to Bradshaw's motivation. In the opinion of the Manchester Exchange, which 'could be taken as reflecting the feeling of the whole country' commercial England was:

"moribund with the lethagy of despair. Why this despair? Because nothing pays and it is tacitly felt present and prospective loss, ending in penury are inevitable...The pinch of decreasing incomes is intensifying...and absolute

2. Very similar arguments were used by J.H. Thomas, when introducing the Colonial Development Fund Bill in the Commons in 1929. He admitted that its main purpose was to provide unemployment relief in Britain. He had first looked to see 'what works could be done at home' and then 'looking at the problem broadly, I concluded that not only could much be done for the development of the colonies but that by doing it now and generally speeding up, much useful work could be done for the people in this country.' 12th July, 1929, Hansard, 5th Series, Vol.CXXXIX, col.1225.
intent on making a fortune. An exception to this generalisation is King Leopold of the Belgians, but his dreams of Empire must at the outset have obscured his business sense. The fact that in the end he did make a fortune in Africa was due more to luck than judgement. For the more rational investor, it was clear that much unremunerative spade work had to be done in the way of exploration and what was termed 'civilisation', before there could be much hope of a reasonable return. In modern jargon an infra-structure had to be created first, only then could any real development of a commercial or industrial type take place.

This being the case, almost the only investment made in Africa during these years was made by missionary societies. It may be argued that to talk of missionary work in such materialist terms is to belittle the religious motives of the promoters. That is not the intention, and to do so would be quite unjust and unhistorical. Livingstone, when he spoke of Christianity and commerce, was always at pains to stress the subordination of the latter to the former and his use of capital letters was significant. But in spite of this subordination the two were seen as inseparable, one was to be the agent of the other. Money spent on the establishment of missions could be expected to bring an eventual financial reward. Livingstone was quite explicit about this. Horace Waller, a supporter of the U.M.C.A., and a friend of the other missions to Malawi, clearly thought in this way. One of his strongest arguments against allowing the Portuguese claims to Lake Malawi was the amount of British capital which had been invested in the area. In calculating this he added up all the money spent by the three missions and added to it the investment made by the African Lakes Company and the Buchanan brothers, planters at Zomba. He made no distinction between overtly commercial organisations and missions; both were seen as British capital investments which gave a claim to territory. Of course there was a difference in the nature

1. J. Stevenson, The Civilisation of East Africa, Glasgow, 1877. The word civilisation is clearly intended here in the active rather than the passive mood.


3. E.g. The Title-Deeds of Nyassa-Land, London, 1887, pp 27-32; the same point was frequently made in period from 1886-1890.
want of the necessaries of life is now being experienced in the homes of working men, while capital and labour, in the struggle for existence, present the sad spectacle of destroying each other."

Various panaceas had been suggested: change of government, emigration, protection, lowering wages, curtailing production, and return to a simpler style of living, but what was wanted was a new continent to trade with.

While some of the Africanists present at the meeting were sceptical of the immediate prospects of such a company, none quarrelled with his analysis of the economic situation. 1

Sir Thomas Pownell Buxton, the Chairman of the meeting, observed that there had been a change in the character of interest in Africa. While previously it had been felt that Europe owed a debt to Africa and that something should be done to atone for the slave-trade, a new reason was now being found "in our own condition." 2 This was the crux. It was in the years between 1873 and 1879 that businessmen first began to think seriously about Africa as a source of wealth, but there was more talk than action. It was thought that Africa had great potential, but so little was known about the interior that it did not make an attractive area for investment for anyone who was

1. Among those present were: H.B. Cotterill: son of the Bishop of Edinburgh, went with the second Livingstonia expedition in 1876, returned from the north end of Malawi to the east coast in 1878 with Consul J.F. Elton who died on the journey, and Herbert Rhodes who returned to the lake in 1879 and died at Ramafukan's in September of that year. He was a brother of Cecil Rhodes; Captain Foot, then of H.M.S. London, on the east coast slave-trade patrol, appointed Consul to Nyassa in October, 1883, died at Blantyre in August, 1884; James Stevenson, born 1822, died 1903, a chemical manufacturer, partner in the firm of Stevenson and Carlile, of Glasgow, founding Convenor of the Glasgow Livingstonia Committee, and founding Chairman of the Livingstonia Central Africa Company, later the African Lakes Company; and Horace Waller, born 1833, died 1896, lay member of the U.M.C.A. at Magonero, 1861-2, Rector of Twywell, Thrapston, Northants from 1874, leading organiser of the U.M.C.A. and anti-slavery propagandist.

2. J.R.S.A.A., op. cit., p 36; Sir Thomas Pownell Buxton, the 3rd Baronet, grandson of the 1st Baronet, who was author of The African Slave-Trade and its Remedy, and promoter of the Niger Expedition. The 3rd Baronet was later a founding Director of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and a share-holder in the African Lakes Company from 1887.
of these two classes of investment. Money given to a mission was an outright gift from which there was no prospect of a direct return, money invested in a commercial company was expected to bring an eventual dividend. As a general rule it can be said that missions were despatched in the 1870's to those parts of the interior of Africa where no commercial enterprise could have been undertaken with a real prospect of reward. In what are now Malawi, Uganda, Tanganyka, Zambia and the Congo, missionaries went first and traders followed. In the more accessible coastal regions of east and west Africa the opposite was the case. But although there was little prospect of immediate commercial success, it does not follow that there was no hope or expectation of a return in the long run.

'Civilisation' was a work which should be shared by religious and commercial agencies; the men who were responsible for the first missions to Malawi were also responsible for the African Lakes Company and the Imperial British East Africa Company. These two companies were very different in their conception and mode of operation, but they had behind them the same faith in the role that could be played by legitimate commerce in the development of Africa. It is difficult now to appreciate the deep religious conviction and the faith in the capitalist system as an instrument of improvement that was shared by men like William Mackinnon, James Stevenson, John Stephen, James Stewart, Horace Waller, and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. The crucial point was that they knew of no alternative to this system.1

The missions sent into the interior of central Africa in the later seventies should be seen as a preliminary to that 'commercial invasion' which James Bradshaw had planned, and as a first essay in the economic development of underdeveloped countries. If they had not been followed up by commercial ventures their promoters would have considered them to be failures. 'Philanthropy' might do the work that 'enterprise' was unable to do but it was expected that enterprise would follow where the path had been blazed. The process might be a slow one but there can be little doubt about the desired end.

1. Karl Marx had published the first volume of Kapital in 1867, but it is unlikely that any of these capitalists had read his work, and it may be doubted whether they would ever have heard of him.
James Stewart of Lovedale summed the position up admirably. Commenting on Cameron's scheme for African development he wrote:

"(Cameron) thinks little else is needed but the expenditure of a certain amount of capital moderately estimated at one or two million pounds - and the short space of three years to connect Central Africa with the rest of the world. It has justly enough been remarked that his views are not visionary but premature. Instead of three years we may safely speak of thirty years as an early date, and as for capital, that will flow into Central Africa when it becomes a safe field for investments. The characteristics of capital are three-fold. It is first cautious, second greedy, third never sentimental. The second characteristic sometimes overmasters the first, and hence with all its caution it takes Turkish stocks, and Honduras loans, and worked-out mines, but it is never led astray by sentimentality or philanthropy. Therefore we can not say we see much hope for Central Africa in this direction. The work will be one of slow steady perseverance, and the workers will not attract notice in the eyes of the world...the two millions required for connecting the lakes and for the establishment of extensive inland water communications are not likely to be got at present. The proposed Lake Nyassa Trading Company with the capital of £50,000 is more likely to be set afloat, but in both cases the effort is premature. The money in both may be immediately spent, but we can be sure that in neither will the gains be immediately reaped. Africa is not the country for great commercial coups of this sort. The people are not ready for such gigantic processes of improvement. The products of the country can not yet be massed together at given points in sufficient quantities to fill large numbers of ships; some little time and patience and intervening labour are necessary...Africa is proverbially a slow country. The wants of the people and their power to produce articles of commerce must both grow, they can not be made in a day."

At the funeral of David Livingstone in Westminster Abbey on 18th April 1874, there met together four men who had been present twelve years earlier at the funeral of Mrs. Livingstone at Shupanga on the

1. This must be a reference to a proposal which was made in connection with the sending out of H.B. Cotterill as a trader with the first Livingstonia party; this will be considered later in this chapter.

2. The Christian Express, Lovedale, 1st March, 1876. The article is not signed but judging by the date, style and content, it must be by James Stewart.
Zambesi. They were James Stewart of Lovedale, Horace Waller, John Kirk, and Edward Young, R.N. It was in conversation between these four men of African experience that the subject of a Memorial Mission to the region of Lake Malawi was first mooted. It was soon afterwards at the Glasgow home, Shield Hall, of James Stewart’s brother-in-law, John Stephen, that the name Livingstonia was first uttered. ‘He was sitting on one side of the fire, and I on the other, and it was somewhat late as usual!'  

The Free Church of Scotland, already committed in South Africa with its missions to the Fingoos, Xhosa and Zulu, was contemplating an extension of its activities in Africa and had under consideration a plan for the establishment of a mission to the Somalis. James Stewart, at the General Assembly in May 1874, made a strong plea for the diversion of this mission: ‘Plant the Mission at Nyassa,’ he said, ‘and call it Livingstonia.’ He proposed the establishment of an institution at once industrial and educational, to teach the natives of the country; which shall be placed on a carefully selected and commanding spot in Central Africa, where...it might grow into a town and afterwards a city, and become a great centre of commerce, civilisation, and Christianity. And this I would call LIVINGSTONIA.’  

This was not James Stewart’s first attempt to persuade his church to do something in Africa along the lines that Livingstone had suggested. He had first begun to canvass the scheme in 1860, shortly after Livingstone’s departure on the Zambesi Expedition. At that date the Foreign Missions Committee could not see their way to

1. James Stewart, born 1831, died 1905, on the Zambesi and in the Shire Highlands, 1862-3, at Lovedale Institution, from 1867, Principal, 1870-90, at Livingstonia 1876-7, founded East African Mission, 1891.
2. John Kirk, born 1832, died 1922, naturalist on the Zambesi Expedition, 1858-63, at Zanzibar from 1866-88. Director of I.B.E.A.
3. Naval officer, on east coast slave-trade patrol, led Livingstone Search Expedition, 1866, leader of the Livingstonia Mission Expedition, 1875-6.
4. James Stewart, Livingstonia, its Origins, privately printed, Edinburgh, 1894, p 44.
5. J. Stewart to Mina Stephen, (his sister,) 17th August, 1876, Salisbury.
finance such a project, but suggested that Stewart communicate with Livingstone on the subject. Meanwhile Stewart organised a Committee which, without waiting for a reply, despatched him to make an on the spot reconnaissance, and to interview the great man in person. On arrival he was warmly welcomed by the Doctor, but he found his stay in Africa a sadly disillusioning experience. On the 1st February 1863 he became so dejected that he hurled his copy of Livingstone's 'Missionary Travels' into the Zambesi with the cry: 'So perish all that is false in me and in others.' Stewart was compelled to report that the time was not ripe for the mission which Livingstone had proposed. The reasons were not far to see. The invasion by the Yao and the resulting and simultaneous famine made the work of the Universities Mission impossible and the prospects were poor. Even Livingstone seems to have been almost convinced of this. He wrote to Stewart:

"It is a desert and dead bodies lie everywhere. I fear that your friends may find, in the deaths and disorders, reason for declining all share in the work, but it will be done by those who are to do it, and the devil's reign must cease." 2

The death of Bishop Mackenzie had marked in Stewart's words the 'ebb in the tide of popular enthusiasm which for the seven previous years had steadily supported and encouraged schemes directed to Central Africa.' 3 There was a distinct falling off in public interest; 'the enthusiasm for the new continent which had suddenly blazed up as suddenly blazed down.'

No-one felt this more deeply than Livingstone. He particularly regretted that Scotch 'perseverance and energy' had not taken up the work after the withdrawal of the U.M.C.A. 4 After Stewart's return to Scotland his committee was dissolved and in 1866 he was sent to take charge of the Lovedale Institution which was to become synonymous with his name. His plans for Central Africa were thus 'baffled' but they were not abandoned. 5

5. Stewart, op. cit., p 38.
When the time came to raise the question again in 1874, he met a more enthusiastic response. The change can only be explained by a change in mood, nothing in Africa had altered, except that Livingstone had died. One factor, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had brought the east coast of Africa a little nearer, as had the inauguration in 1872 of a regular service to Aden, Zanzibar and the east coast by the British India Steam Navigation Company. This service had been recommended by Sir Bartle Frere as a result of his investigation of the Slave Trade; it had a subsidy of £10,000 per annum. Apart from this quite small step there was nothing that could make the establishment of a mission in 1874 any easier than it had been in 1863.

That the mission came to be founded at all was due to the exertions of James Stewart and to the great impact of the example of Livingstone's life and death, especially in Scotland. There is a distinct streak of nationalism underlying the Scottish missions in Central Africa. Livingstone himself was singularly free of this, thinking of himself as a member of an Anglo-American race, but the intention of the promoters of the two Scottish missions seems to have been the creation of a distinctly Scottish colony. Stevenson offered £1,000 for a fund to finance the mission. Stewart began a newspaper campaign and raised support all over the country. The financial base of the movement lay in Glasgow with a group of powerful businessmen and adherents of the Free Church.

Those who played the most prominent part in the launching of the

2. Much evidence could be cited to support this view though there was at the same time a surprising tendency for Scotsmen to refer to themselves as 'Englishmen'. The first volume of the Scottish Geographical Magazine, published by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1885, included a map of 'The Scottish Colony on the Shire Highlands.'
4. E.g., The Glasgow Herald, 10th June 1874.
mission were James Stevenson, James White of Overtoun, John Stephen, James Young of Kelly, William Mackinnon, and his brother Peter, and John Cowan of Beeslack. At a private meeting in Glasgow on 3rd November 1874, at which most of these were present, together with James Stewart, and other leaders of the Church, the finances of the mission were discussed. It was decided that a minimum of £10,000 must be raised, in addition to the recurrent expenditure that would be involved. At the public meeting in Glasgow which officially launched the mission on the 8th January 1875, subscriptions of £5,000 were announced, almost all given by the above. After well attended meetings in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee the required sum was raised independently, and without appealing to the church as a whole.

While the Scotland of the mid-nineteenth century has always been thought of as marked by a high degree of religiosity, this was marred by an even more remarkable fissiparous tendency. The initiative for

1. James White of Overtoun, chemical manufacturer, died 1884; his son John Campbell White, born 1843, died 1908, was Convener of the Livingstone Mission Committee from 1884 until his death, the largest share-holder in the African Lakes Company, though never a Director. Was a supporter of the Liberal party, created Lord Overtoun, 1893, for philanthropic and political work. Was attacked by Keir Hardie for the poor conditions of work in his factories.

2. John Stephen, born 1835, died 1917, ship-builder, partner in the firm of Alexander Stephen and Sons, Linthouse, Chairman, 1899-1911. His sister, Mina, was married to James Stewart of Lovedale. He was a founding member of the Glasgow Livingstone Committee, was a leading supporter of the Lovedale Institution, and was a founding Director of the Livingstone Central Africa Company, later the African Lakes Company. He was executive Chairman of the Company from 1879, and Chairman of the African Lakes Corporation from 1903-1916.


the establishment of the Nyassa mission was taken by the Free Church, the most dynamic of the post-disruption fragments of the old Church of Scotland. The other sections, the Established Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the United Presbyterian Church were not to be outdone. The latter two merged their effort with the Free Church, the U.P.C., providing on long loan, Robert Laws, who was to become after the departure of Stewart the prime-mover of the mission. It was not possible to arrange for a combined mission from the Free and the Established Churches but it was agreed that their two missions, though separate, should not be so far apart as to be unable to render each other assistance in case of emergency. The Established Church was unable to organise an expedition in time for the departure of the Livingstonia party and sent instead as a scout to select a site, Henry Henderson, a layman with ranching experience in Australia.

The Livingstonia expedition, which left London on 21st May 1875, was led, much to the chagrin of James Stewart, who was incapable of concealing disappointment, by E.D. Young. Robert Laws was the only ordained missionary or doctor in the party of eight which included five artisans, a carpenter, a blacksmith, an engineer, an agriculturalist and a seaman. They were provided with a steamer, the *Ilala*, which was to be placed on Lake Malawi. The party reached the Kongone mouth of the Zambesi on 23rd July 1875, and after sailing to the foot of the Murchison Cataracts, dismantling the steamer, and having it carried to the upper Shire river, they sailed onto Lake Malawi on the 12th October. A year later this party was joined at Cape Maclear by Dr. Stewart, a medical missionary, Dr. Black, three artisans and four African evangelists from Lovedale. At the same time the Established Church party consisting of Dr. Macklin and five artisans arrived to establish their mission on the Blantyre site which Henderson had selected for them.¹

This is not the place to give an account of the history of either or both of the missions, although, inevitably, an outline of their

². Ibid., p 53 and pp 84-6.
James Stewart had spoken of an 'educational and industrial mission.' The preponderance of artisans in both parties was evidence that his intentions were to be put into effect. Self-supporting colonies were to be established which would act as magnets and examples to the local population. It was agreed that there was no point in going to Africa to stand under a tree and declaim the Gospel. A more practical approach was to be adopted.

In the words of Laws:

"the man who implants the ideas of a straight line and a right angle in the native's mind has caused a great stride to be made towards civilisation." 2

The original members of the Livingstonia Mission were well equipped to carry on four sides of the mission work: the evangelical, the educational, the medical and the industrial; but there was one element of Livingstone's scheme that had been left out, the commercial.

Although he had written: 'wherever a missionary lives traders are sure to come; they are mutually dependent, and each aids the work of the other,' there was still some doubt as to the propriety of missionaries themselves taking part in commercial operations. Livingstone had recognised that 'experience shows that the two employments can not very well be combined in the same person,' but felt that only the existing system of missions rendered it inexpedient for time to be spent in this way. He saw no reason why a man who devoted his time to the spiritual welfare of a people should not also derive temporal advantage from 'upright' commerce. But the promoters of Livingstonia, though almost all successful businessmen and merchants, were not so advanced in their notions as he had been. They did not contemplate the sending out of traders as missionaries but they did consider from an early date various schemes for trade to be carried on independently of the mission, though in co-operation with it.

There were, however, considerable difficulties in the way of these schemes which were political in their nature and stemmed from the position of the Portuguese. The greatest advantage of Lake Malawi as a field for missionary work lay in the fact that it was accessible by a river route. With the exception of the portage of between thirty-five and sixty miles around the Murchison Cataracts, the journey from the Indian Ocean to the north end of the lake could be made by steamer. This reduced the time spent by passengers on the journey through the most malarial areas, and the dangers of fatigue and illness consequent on walking long distances in these conditions. The example of the London Missionary Society's attempts to establish a mission on Lake Tanganyika after a walk from the coast of six hundred miles showed the inestimable advantages of the river route, which also made the carriage of goods much quicker, easier and cheaper. But these advantages appeared at the outset to be threatened by the commercial policies of the Portuguese.

They levied a tariff of 30% on all goods imported into Mozambique. By special dispensation Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition were allowed in duty-free, and the same exemption was granted to the Livingstonia expedition through the application of William Mackinnon to the Portuguese ambassador in London, Viscount Duprat. But this was only an

1. This road was longer if it went via Blantyre. James Stevenson, with a parsimony which would have delighted H.H. Johnston, was said to grudge the fact that the road was diverted to suit the Established Church who, in his opinion, have been left to 'sink or swim by their own exertions.' J. Stephen to J. Stewart, 6th November 1877, Salisbury. In practice there was a second short portage from the Kwakwa to the Zambesi, but this was only made necessary because there was no Customs post at the Kongone mouth of the Zambesi and ocean going ships did not call there but at Quelimane.


5. Morier to Derby, 27th February, 1877, F.O. 541/21, quotes Baron Corvo, the Colonial Minister speaking in the Cortes, 16th February 1877; Duprat to Lisbon, 25th January 1875, reports Mackinnon's request whether if an expedition were fitted out for Lake Nyassa it would receive assistance and support from the Portuguese government.
exception; a further dispensation was allowed in 1876 on account of the trade goods which were to be taken in by H.B. Cotterill, but his request was only granted after months of negotiations at the highest level which fill a thick volume of the Foreign Office records.1 Sadly, these protracted negotiations were ineffective, the instructions for an exemption on his goods either did not reach or were misunderstood at Quelinane and he was charged 25% ad valorem on them all. Morier, the British Minister at Lisbon, was convinced that there was no bad faith in the matter and attributed the confusion to a pedantic attempt to circumvent the letter of the law, which forbid exemptions to existing duties.2 The members of the Livingstonia party who were affected did not take such a charitable view. Cotterill was convinced that 'no permanent good can be effected until the region of Lake Nyassa is placed under British jurisdiction.'3 B.D. Young 'did not know how to speak of them (the Portuguese) in sufficiently strong language, but when he came home he would show them up in their proper light.'4 Dr. Kirk strongly advised Cotterill 'to attempt the land route from Zanzibar, by which the Portuguese exactions might be evaded.'5

The point at issue was not simply one of tariff rates; it concerned the extent of Portuguese sovereignty in east Africa, and the question of whether an import or a transit duty should be charged on goods destined for Lake Malawi. If the implicit Portuguese claim to the lake was allowed then an import duty would clearly be justified. If it was not, a transit duty would be in order, but if that was accepted, where was the boundary of Portuguese influence to be fixed, and where were the transit duties to be collected? The British Government was not anxious to bring to a head 'the vexed question of the interior frontier of the Portuguese dominions.'6 The fear was that even the slightest diplomatic pressure could endanger the precarious balance of the Portuguese Monarchy. This sensitivity complicated

1. F.O. 84/1468 is devoted to this application.
2. Morier to Derby, 31st December 1876, F.O. 541/21, and Morier to Salisbury, 14th May 1878, F.O. 541/22.
3. Cotterill to Derby, 30th October 1876, F.O. 541/21.
4. Quoted in Morier to Salisbury, 14th May 1878, F.O. 541/22.
5. Cotterill to Derby, 28th February 1877, F.O. 541/22.
and lengthened negotiations aimed at the rationalisation of the position, but the manoeuvres provide an entertaining display of diplomatic shadow-boxing with an amusing commentary by Morier whose sarcastic despatches doubtless earned him promotion to St. Petersburg. Colonial questions loomed large in Portuguese politics at this date and the need for delicate handling was emphasised when a bellicose speech at Cape Town by E.D. Young caused the resignation of an anglophile Colonial Minister, endangered a government and imperilled Morier's negotiations. The Nyassa settlements had become the "red flag of Portuguese Colonial politics, sure to excite the blatant rhetoric of Cortes orators and newspaper writers, the only people in this country who still retain the power of exertion." 2

In spite of such hazards the British ambassador was eventually able to strangle the claim to sovereignty over the whole course of the Shire and the Zambesi to the lake; there was in his opinion, by May 1878, no serious claim to the lake; there was no British claim to it either, it had become a no-man's land in which the missions were free to operate. He succeeded in persuading the government that the only hope for the development of the Portuguese possessions on the east coast was the development of the interior by British capital; and that the transit duty should be levied at the lowest possible level so as not to discourage this development or to encourage the opening up of an overland route from Zanzibar, where the transit duty was only 5%. 3 A commission was set up to enquire into the Mozambique Tariff, it eventually recommended a transit duty of 3% and average import duties of from 6 to 10% in place of the previous 26 to 30%. 4

The report held that the tariff should be seen as an instrument for

1. Morier to Salisbury, 14th May 1878, F.O. 541/22.
2. Ibid.
3. See Morier to Corvo, 28th February 1877, F.O. 541/21. Morier warns that a higher tariff at Quelimane than at Zanzibar 'would doom the Zambesi route to an early death.' This statement was hardly true but was used to put pressure on Portugal. See also Morier to Salisbury, 14th May 1878, F.O. 541/22.
4. Morier to Derby, 27th April, 1877, F.O. 541/22.
for the development of the resources of the colony rather than as a source of revenue, but it was some time before these recommendations became effective. The transit duty could not be levied until there was a customs post in the interior to collect it. It was not until 21st September 1878 that Morier was able to report that instructions had been sent out for the establishment of a customs post for this purpose at the confluence of the Shire and the Zambesi rivers.\textsuperscript{1} As Morier had remarked 'those who know the spiritless and desultory methods which characterise all public business in this country' would agree that 'exceptional alacrity' had been shown in this cause.\textsuperscript{2}

But there had been a further barrier in the way of any projected commercial enterprise on the Zambesi. In October 1875, the month in which the first Livingstoneia expedition had reached Lake Malawi, a monopoly for thirty years of the steam navigation of the Shire and the Zambesi had been granted to two merchants of mysterious origins, Messrs. Anahory and Zagury.

The monopoly was to be taken up within two years, at least £20,000 capital was to be raised and twelve annual voyages were to be made on the Zambesi and the Shire.\textsuperscript{3} In August 1877 the time limit for the implementation of the monopoly was extended by a year to 2nd August 1878.\textsuperscript{4} Clearly if this monopoly was sustained it would preclude the establishment of any British company to operate on these rivers and could force the missions to choose between patronising a monopolistic and possibly unreliable steamer service, relying on canoes at great risk to the health of the missionaries, or seeking a land route to the lake which would by-pass Portuguese territory. Morier devoted a great deal of time and energy to an effort to persuade the Portuguese that such a monopoly would be against the free trade principles which alone could develop Mozambique. An element of farce

\textsuperscript{1} Morier to Salisbury, 21st September 1878. Quoted Corvo to Morier, 30th August 1878, F.0. 541/22.

\textsuperscript{2} Morier to Salisbury, 14th May 1878, F.0. 541/22. There is an account of some of these negotiations in A.J. Hanna, Nyasaland and North Eastern Rhodesia, Oxford, 1955, pp 110-114.

\textsuperscript{3} Quotation from Diario do Governo, 9th October 1875, in Vignoles to Pauncefote, 5th April 1877, F.0. 541/21.

\textsuperscript{4} Gould to Derby, 12th August, 1877, F.0. 541/21.
had been introduced into the negotiations when it was discovered that the concession had been acquired by a Liverpool capitalist, Hutton Vignoles, M.I.C.E. who sought British government support for the monopoly while Morier was working hard to end it. It is not clear what interests Vignoles represented though Morier assured Derby that he ‘could vouch for the capitalists behind him.’ At one point Derby admitted that he had encouraged Vignoles because he thought that the concession was binding and that it would be a gain to have it in British hands. In April 1877 he predicted that the concession would come to nothing, but it was not until September 1878 that he was able to report its final demise. So at last the Zambesi and Shire were opened to steam-ships of all nations.

From the first inception of the Livingstonia Mission in 1874 until the end of 1878 there was then doubt and uncertainty as to the Portuguese claims to sovereignty in the region of Lake Malawi, the tariff which they could levy, and their right to restrict the free navigation of the Zambesi and Shire. During this time there was much discussion of the form which any commercial enterprise in association with the mission should take, and as to where it should operate. In all of these discussions the position of the Portuguese was a primary consideration. The most significant consequence of this uncertainty was the diversion of energy and resources into the investigation and eventual undertaking of a land route to Lake Malawi through the territory nominally under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Zanzibar, who thanks to the presence of Dr. Kirk, and of a British naval squadron, was more amenable to British pressure than the touchy Portuguese.

The people who were most closely involved with these schemes were those who had given most generously to the Livingstonia Mission itself. These were William Mackinnon, James Stevenson, John Stephen, and James

1. Vignoles to Derby, 27th February, 1877, and further correspondence in F.O. 541/21.
2. Morier to Derby, 21st April, 1877, ibid.
3. Derby to Morier, 10th May, 1877, ibid.
4. Morier to Derby, 12th April, 1877, F.O. 541/21, and 21st September 1878, F.O. 541/22.
Young of Kelly. The first two were the prime-movers and acted on the advice of three who had direct African experience, James Stewart, John Kirk and Horace Waller. All were agreed that the principles that underlay any venture with which they were associated must be the substitution of legitimate commerce for the slave-trade, and the opening up of new markets and sources of raw materials. They agreed too that their schemes should be 'free from all that is Quixotic and impracticable.'

However, their notions of what was practicable sometimes differed, and were often unrealistic. Even Horace Waller, who had started life as a stock-broker, and who had been a member of the ill-fated Universities Mission could commit himself to the prediction that after the establishment of trading stations at each end of the lake, 'so intense is their apprehension that not an Arab will resort to Nyassa with any idea of slaving after the first twelve months.' In his opinion the ivory and slave-trades were mutually dependent, 'without the slave-trade, the ivory trade, as far as Arabs are concerned must come to a stop.' A vacuum would thus be created which should be filled by Christian commerce. E.D. Young, who was present at the same meeting, was even more sanguine. He was certain that 'half a dozen Englishmen on the lake, with a good boat, would be sufficient to put down the (slave) trade.' On the same occasion Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who was later to co-operate with William Mackinnon in the scheme for a road from Dar-es-Salaam to Lake Malawi, asserted that 'legitimate trade and the slave-trade could not exist side by side.' The implication was that the slave-trade was doomed as soon as an honest trader appeared on the scene. This view was an article of faith in Livingstonia and anti-slavery circles; it cannot be said to have been based on any empirical evidence. If the record of the Universities

1. Consul Elton, of Mozambique, to Lord Derby, 1st March 1877, in F.O. 541/22, describing the Mackinnon road plan and almost certainly quoting Kirk.
3. Ibid., pp 364-5.
4. Ibid., p 367.
Mission and the Zambesi Expedition were remembered and analysed impartially, it must have been clear that there was no certainty about this view and much good evidence to the contrary. It must be presumed that public pronouncements such as these were intended as propaganda rather than as statements of fact, but they were made by those men who were best informed on the subject to audiences which were almost as well informed, and one cannot help suspecting that they came to believe their own propaganda, for some of the time, at least.

In private Horace Waller showed that he was able to take a more realistic view. He warned against the adoption of the land route to the interior and advocated the Kongone mouth of the Zambesi as the best point of entry. Kirk had just secured the banning of overland slave-trading caravans setting out from or returning to Zanzibar. Waller believed that Kirk's action had caused Makanjila and Matakata to make a total loss on two very big caravans, and he suspected that 'just now a very bitter feeling is being carried back into the country from the coast in consequence.' It was 'just the moment to appear on the lake with goods in exchange for lawful produce,' but it was 'not the time for a handful of men to appear on the direct slave-path from the coast.'

Although he recognised that an overland party might meet hostility from those who had suffered a loss owing to European influence, and so by implication admitted that legitimate trade might not have all its own way, he wrote simultaneously to James Stewart that the time had come

"when honest traders will fill up just the vacuum which (Kirk) has caused and so enable the natives to procure the goods which they want for their own products." 2

Here again is the notion that a vacuum has been created by the discomfiture of the slave-traders into which legitimate trade must be put. Examples could be quoted almost ad nauseam to demonstrate that this way of thinking was very widespread.

1. H. Waller to Dr. Mitchell, 17th October 1876, MS 7872.
2. H. Waller to J. Stewart, 24th October 1876, in custody of Mrs. S. Brock.
James Stewart's view that Africa was not ripe for large-scale development, that progress must be gradual and beginnings small, has already been quoted. His view was probably shared by the rest of this group. They were also convinced that 'philanthropy' should not be an excuse for the encouragement of unsound projects. Kirk summed this up:

"My doctrine always has been that no philanthropic scheme can do good to Africa or to ourselves unless it has in it the elements of commercial success."

He had earlier expressed the view that 'Africa has been cursed with Philanthropy.'

James Stevenson was cautious about the prospects of James Bradshaw's scheme for the investment of £10,000,000 in Africa, he commented to James Stewart: 'The Manchester people seem to be going wild about development.'

James Young, of Kelly, remarked of it that 'ten millions would buy a large piece of Africa,' and feared that 'their scheme will end in talk.'

James Stevenson, referring to £150 that he had advanced to H.B. Cotterill to buy trade goods, complained that he did not see how any light could be thrown upon 'the question of trading unless the little capital was to be dealt with as a sum that was to be reproductive.'

Kirk was especially keen to emphasise the necessity for practicality and realism. While lamenting the difficulty of finding any export other than ivory that could stand the cost of freight to the coast he was not afraid to criticise Livingstone himself for talking 'wildly of cotton and sugar.'

"Ecce!" he exclaimed,

"The thousand things that we have known and spoken of long ago and the sugar mill, cotton press etc. that we went dropping along the Zambesi as monuments that will some day come to be looked on and kept as relics of a primitive age."

1. J. Kirk to W. Mackinnon, 17th January, 1888, S.O.A.S.
2. Kirk to Mackinnon, 25th November, 1884. He later wrote of I.B.E.A of which he was a director: 'There is too much philanthropy and imperialism and far too little regard for finance in that company.' Kirk to G. Cawston, 16th December, 1891, Cawston papers, Vol.IV, Rhodes House.
4. Quoted in G. Waller to Mackinnon, 7th June, 1879, S.O.A.S.
5. J. Stevenson to H.B. Cotterill, 28th August 1877, (copy) Salisbury.
James Stewart repeated his view of what was required:

"while it would be of great benefit to have a small store here I hope that none of my friends will have anything to do with big trading schemes for Lake Nyassa at present... trade must grow little by little and a large expenditure at first means certainly a large loss." 1

It is clear that the prevailing view was in favour of small-scale, gradual development as opposed to the 'big push' theories of some of the Africanists who have been quoted above. But how far did the deeds of these promoters fulfil their stated opinions? Were they as realistic in their approach as they evidently thought that they should be?

The first specifically trading venture associated with the Livingstonia Mission was that of H.B. Cotterill. He applied to Livingstonia in October 1875 on the recommendation of Horace Waller. 2 He contemplated 'the introduction of a legitimate trade which may serve to extend and secure connections with the natives and help them towards the suppression of the slave-trade.' The Livingstonia Committee were prepared to attach him to their expedition, but left him to organise his own finances. He found at first general sympathy but little in particular for his plans which were considered 'too hazardous...not only as a mercantile enterprise but even as a philanthropic project.' He hoped, however, to get support in Leeds and Liverpool. 3 There was some question of founding a trading company to work along side the mission. James Stevenson was very keen to do this but everything depended on the attitude of the Portuguese, and it was decided that a company should be set up provided that they charged no more than a 2½ transit duty. 4 This hope was premature, and the scheme was shelved; at one point it was feared that the Portuguese would make it impossible for Cotterill to go by the Zambesi route and

1. J. Stewart to J. White, 28th February, 1877, MS 7672.
2. H. Waller to Dr. Mitchell, 18th October, 1875, Stewart papers, Salisbury, and H.B. Cotterill to Mitchell, and Bishop Cotterill to J. Stewart, 27th February, 1875, Stewart papers, Salisbury.
3. H.B. Cotterill to Mitchell, 17th December 1875, MS 7870.
4. J. Stephen to James Stewart, 23rd February, 1876, Salisbury.
and he spoke of going inland by Zanzibar. However an exemption was eventually secured and Cotterill set off with the second Livingstonia party in 1876. He had £500 worth of Manchester goods provided by James Stevenson, William Mackinnon, and James Young of Kelly. The venture was to be regarded as an experimental one and was to be so managed as to indicate what course to pursue in conducting the trade in future. It was also hoped that he would investigate the relative merits of the Zambesi and the Zanzibar routes. He was provided with a steel boat, the Herga, worth £400, by the boys of Harrow School where he had been a master.

It might be thought that a venture on this scale would appeal to those, like James Stewart, who counselled a slow and cautious approach. But Stewart was certain that Cotterill was bound to fail. Writing from Livingstonia (which he had reached in October 1876), he reckoned Cotterill's expenses at £2,500 including the cost of the boat, and that he would need to collect 8,000 lbs. of ivory to pay his way. Stewart's figures are suspect: he was making out a case for a store dependent on the mission in preference to an independent trader who he felt sure would always have larger overheads and charge more for his goods to the detriment of the mission and the African population. His real objection to Cotterill was that he spent most of his time travelling on the lake, visiting chiefs, and making attempts to buy ivory. He did little or nothing for the needs of the mission. They were faced with a serious rations problem, they could not, in his opinion, continue to subsist on native food; they had run out of

1. Jack, op. cit., p 86; see also H.E. Cotterill, 'On the Nyassa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', P.R.G.S., 1878, p 233; also articles on the same subject in J.R.S.A., 1878, Vol.XXVI, p 676, and Vol.XXVII, 1879, p 246; and J.F. Elton, Travels and Researches on the Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa, ed. H.E. Cotterill. In fulfilment of his undertaking to investigate the Zanzibar route he returned from the north end by the overland route to the east coast.

2. J. Stevenson to H.E. Cotterill, 16th March, 1876, (copy) Stewart papers, Salisbury.


4. J. Stewart to Dr. Mitchell, 4th December, 1876, MS 7372; and J. Stewart to J. White, 28th February, 1877, MS 7372.
groundnut oil and had no alternative but to send to Quelimane for petroleum. They were also in need of calico to pay native labour. All this seemed to highlight the need for a store on the mission site. Stewart suggested that twenty men put up £100 each for this purpose. They could be assured of 10-12% return on their investment. He was certain that there would be many objections and a great deal of squeamishness felt about this proposal, but he pointed that there was a great deal of difference between a mission doing this and a missionary trading on his own account. "The latter is an offence and a scandal and is simply professional suicide."1

His arguments for a store were various, but it seems certain that he was mainly concerned with supplying the missionaries themselves. The journey to Quelimane was long and time-consuming and it was therefore necessary that the mission's supply should be undertaken on a full-time basis. He also argued that it was necessary to compete with the Arabs who he was sure 'were doing all they can against us.'2 If the Glasgow merchants who were supporting Cotterill wanted to benefit a large number of human beings and 'literally clothe the naked', they could not do better than support his scheme. £2-3,000 capital would be sufficient. The danger to be avoided was that independent traders might establish themselves, securing a monopoly, putting up the price of labour, and introducing the sale of gun-power and spirits.

On 6th December 1876, at Mpimbe above the Murchison cataracts, Stewart sat on a rock, while Laws went off to hunt, and wrote a letter of 'inordinate length and detail' which he himself regarded as the germ from which the African Lakes Company sprang. It was addressed to James White, of Overton, Chairman of the Glasgow Livingstonia Committee and was clearly intended for publication. In spite of the difficulties under which it was composed, it is both a long and an

1. J. Stewart to Dr. Mitchell, 4th November, 1876, MS 7876. He referred doubters to Bishop Patteson's Life, by Charlotte M. Yonge, London, 1874, Vol. I, p 174, for a justification of missionary trading. The convention on trading was generally adhered to, viz.: H. Waller to J. Stewart, 24th October 1876, (in custody of Mrs. S. Brock) 'acquit me of mixing religion and business... on principle; nothing can be more contrary to my taste, but this I always protest is a special and peculiar case.'
2. J. Stewart to Dr. Mitchell, 4th December 1876, MS 7976.
eloquent exposition of Livingstone’s themes. The Christianising of the district would be accelerated by the provision of a variety of agencies other than preaching and school work. ‘A good store... would be a great civiliser’:

"No sermons or daily lectures on the benefits of industry
and the sin of idleness would accomplish one twentieth
part of the good that would be achieved by a single
depot of goods, where people could get what they
want in return for what they have...the Natives here
are mad for calico, and miserable for the want of it;
as most other people would be with nothing to wear, but
a rough piece of bark fraying their legs from one year’s
end to the other. What is the use of talking to a man
in this state about things utterly beyond his compre¬
hension at first; and assuring him that you are his friend,
and that you seek his good, when you can not supply him
with the very simplest means of raising him above the
state in which you find him? If a man is naked the best
thing you can do to convince him that you are his friend
is to clothe him - to give him calico and not words. If
he wants to cultivate to induce him to buy tools. If he
wants to build a house...to give him in return for his
labour or for anything he has already produced, a suitable
weapon, that will give him heart and result in the success
of his struggle."

Like Livingstone, he saw the essential role of legitimate commerce in the struggle against the slave trade:

"The natives say ‘We can get anything from the Arabs we want.
We can get nothing from you. They are our friends even;
they sometimes take away our people’...if Arab influence,
with its devastating effects has become dominant on the
Lake by means of bales of calico, hatchets, knives, and
looking-glasses, common-sense and philanthropy would say:
make Christian civilisation dominant by the same means.”

This appeal reached Glasgow in April 1877, and brought a sense of added urgency to various plans that were already under discussion. Meanwhile it was replied that the Committee approved the establishment of a store to be kept by a weaver who had been sent out for the mission but who had not had any opportunity to ply his craft. They also sent out goods to stock the store. But they insisted that the missionaries must not trade and they promised that something would be done as soon as possible to ‘send out staff and goods to put the trade on a proper basis.’

2. Ibid.
Something had already been done but the efforts of the promoters had been directed to the north and the territories of Zanzibar. John Kirk, as H. N. Consul at Zanzibar and William Mackinnon, as the owner of a company which for some years had been running a shipping service to the island, had an interest in its commercial prospects long before the Livingstone Mission was thought of, but their interest in the Sultanate, and especially in its claims on the mainland, was increased by the apparently negative attitude of the Portuguese on the Zambesi. The major argument in Mackinnon's view, for the port on the mainland and a road from it into the interior, for which he wanted a concession was that 'if a good highway could be made from the north end of Nyassa to Kilwa or a port near there, it would take all the trade of the lake basin to the Zanzibar territory instead of having it as it is at present (pass) through Portuguese territory.'

The genesis of this scheme is obscure. According to James Stevenson, serious consideration had been given as long ago as 1874 to the possibility of a land route from Lake Malawi to Cape Delgado. In a memorandum 'On Commercial Enterprise in East Central Africa', he wrote that in view of the position of the Portuguese on the Zambesi,

"the importance of a second access to Lake Nyassa from Zanzibar...had presented itself at an early period... and the several friends of the Mission contemplated a survey with a view to a waggon road being established if it should be found practicable between the coast and the head of Lake Nyassa."

In the same month he outlined a plan for a 'Commercial Adventure in Central Africa', which was to be supported by Mackinnon, Young, and 'other friends of Africa'. It would be conducted on

'strict business principles; would be in connection with no particular church and would be in no degree ecclesiastical; as a first step they were getting a correct survey of the territory over which they proposed to operate; and were making enquiries as to the best point

1. Mackinnon to Kirk, 9th January, 1877, S.O.A.S.
2. The Civilisation of East Central Africa, op. cit., pp 29-30. Includes the substance of an address delivered to the British Association at Glasgow, September, 1876.
3. Livingstone Minutes, 16th October, 1876, MS 7872.
on the eastern sea-board at which to begin their line of traffic; and as to the best means of keeping it open permanently and economically." 1

So there was in existence in September 1876 a plan agreed between Stevenson, Mackinnon and Young for a road to the lake and a company to support it.

By coincidence King Leopold II of the Belgians, who had been thwarted in an attempt to buy the Philippine, and whose bid to take over the Transvaal had been rejected, turned his attention to tropical Africa.2 His motives were mixed; on the one hand he regarded the civilisation of Africa as 'une croisade digne de cet siecle de progres', on the other hand he wanted to secure for Belgium in spite of the apathy of most Belgians 'une part de ce magnifique gateau africaine.'3 His 'Geographical' Conference was held in Brussels in September 1876 at the end of which an International African Association for the exploration of the continent and the suppression of the slave-trade was set up under his presidency. Among the British delegates to the conference were Sir Bartle Frere, the explorers Cameron and Grant, Sir Thomas Powell Buxton and William Mackinnon. From Brussels Mackinnon wrote to Kirk making serious proposals on a port and road to the lake.5 Presumably he was already thinking of making the Livingstonia road scheme a part of the Association's work. But, if so, he cannot have consulted Stevenson or Young of Kelly; by October they had not been informed.6 In November, however, Sir Bartle Frere addressed a meeting in the hall of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the proposed Association and the King of the Belgian's plans. A resolution was passed calling on the Foreign Secretary to communicate with the Scottish missions and Dr. Kirk with

1. Livingstonia Minutes, 17th October, 1876, minutes of an address to the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church, MS 7872.
5. This letter does not exist, but is acknowledged in Kirk to Mackinnon, 17th October, 1876, S.O.A.A.
6. There was no mention of any such plan at the meeting of the Foreign Missions Committee referred to above.
"especially... as to the practicability of making a road from the north end of Lake Nyassa to the south end of Lake Tanganyika, also from the north end of Lake Nyassa to the sea coast, at a point north of Cape Delgado..."

The motion was proposed by Mr. John Ramsay M.P. and seconded by James Stevenson. The road between the two lakes, later to be known as the Stevenson Road, was his speciality and had been proposed in his address to the British Association two months earlier. William Mackinnon who was present at the meeting did not speak. Stevenson assured the gathering that he had heard (from Dr. Price of the London Missionary Society), that a good road to the coast 'suitable for Scotch carts' could be made for a very small sum indeed. £20,000 should be enough and that was not 'too great a sum to be aimed at by the second city of the Empire, assisted by the whole of Scotland.' A large committee was formed to supervise this project; it was to represent the Scottish section of the International Association.¹

So a scheme which had originated with the Free Church of Scotland assumed an international guise, and perhaps more importantly a Scottish and national one. The International Association never received the same degree of support in England, in spite of the advocacy of Sir Bartle Frere and Horace Waller.² It may be that the 'international' umbrella offered an opportunity for a distinctively Scottish enterprise to flourish, while a 'British' organisation was unlikely to be free from English influence. But so far as British participation was concerned, and so far as the Association ever had a chance of being anything more than Leopold's poodle, it was killed by the legal counsel at the Foreign Office who could not permit the Prince of Wales to be President.³ The only official consequence was the establishment in March 1877 by the Royal Geographical Society of the African Exploration Fund which sent Keith Johnston, and Joseph Thomson as his assistant, to survey the road to the north end of Lake Malawi and to discover its position relative to Lake Tanganyika.

¹. Meeting, 10th November, 1876, report in the Glasgow Herald, 11th November 1876.
². See The Times, 18th November, 1876.
There was then only a brief flirtation between Leopold and Livingstonia but it was probably as a consequence of this flirtation that Mackinnon, Stevenson and Buxton took steps to implement the long projected road. For Mackinnon the road had become only a part, though the most important part, of a wider scheme which involved the application for a concession to farm the revenues of Zanzibar and to exercise the Sultan's jurisdiction on the mainland. He wrote to Kirk that together with Buxton and some others he had got together £3,000 for the purpose and hoped to send out a couple of pioneers by the next mail. In promoting the road, he had not forgotten the 'other and larger schemes' of which they had spoken. He still thought that they might be useful 'to Africa and the world.' Sir Bartle Frere was interested, as was the Duke of Sutherland, he thought there would be no difficulty in finding twenty men to subscribe £200,000 - £250,000 'a sum which with good and energetic men to direct its expenditure would do a great work in Africa.' The news that the Sultan welcomed the idea of the road and that Colonel Gordon was prepared to take command of a scheme modelled on the East India Company led to the drafting of a formal application for a concession, plans to raise £400,000 for its development, and the despatch of Gerald Waller (Horace Waller's brother) to Zanzibar to negotiate with the Sultan. Nothing came of this venture. In the next year the concession idea was shelved, to be revived ten years later with the foundation of Mackinnon and Buxton of I.B.E.A.

It has been said that the scheme was sabotaged by Lord Salisbury who considered it premature. Certainly neither he nor his predecessor, Lord Derby, was enthusiastic, but it is more likely that the decisive factor was the uncertainty of the commercial prospects. To say, though, in this context that 'in commercial as in political terms there was still no impulse towards expansion in east Africa,'

2. Mackinnon to Kirk, 9th January, 1877, S.O.A.S.
3. Sultan Barghash to Derby, 13th December, 1876, F.O. 84/1454; H. Waller to Mackinnon, 14th January, 1877, S.O.A.S.
is false. It is true that what impulse there was in this direction
was felt only within a small circle, but that circle had not much
widened by 1888. The major subscribers to I.B.E.A. were the same
people who would have subscribed in 1873. The difference between
these two years was not one of inclination, but of information.

It has already been noticed that this group of Africanists
prided themselves above all on their practicality and were scornful
of what they considered to be quixotic or visionary schemes. It
could be argued that in taking up the road and concession plans they
had fallen into the error which they had condemned in others. Kirk's
position is curious in this context. He was vociferous in his con¬
demnation of philanthropic and unrealistic ventures and yet he
encouraged Mackinnon and was almost his only informant. There
seems to have been something of a split between his public and private
personas. As Consul Kirk he could write that

"it is very evident that the promoters of the company
possess only the most imperfect information on the
actual conditions here and on the coast." 1

As Dr. Kirk he had been the purveyor of that information. He may
have felt that Mackinnon had taken his approval of a road scheme too
seriously. He advised him in February 1877 that there was no known
route from Kilwa to the north end of Nyassa, that all the present
caravans reached the lake around the middle and the south end; and
that any expedition would have to take the form of a geographical
exploration of an unknown land. He felt that if it were not for the
Portuguese duties, a land route would never compete with the Zambezi.
He concluded:

"A road to Nyassa by the Zanzibar line will do more to
devolve trade and stop slavery than anything else but
if I were to invest money in a scheme that aimed at
doing good and making money it would be to open a road
to the Victoria Nyanza at the south end facing Zanzibar." 2

In spite of this frank statement he seems to have remained ambivalent
about the whole venture; in one letter he said both that he was
against the land route to Livingstonia and that he was expecting

1. Kirk to Derby, 10th April, 1877, F.O. 84/1485.
2. Kirk to Mackinnon, 5th February, 1877, S.O.A.S.
Mackinnon’s road party soon who ‘may make the land route...a really practicable undertaking.’ He said the same to James Stewart, but then pointed out that the road could be used as an argument against Portuguese claims and to show that their interests were threatened. His attitude had become even more obscure by the 3rd May 1879 where he says that he has warned the Sultan to get on with the road or he will lose all the Nyassa trade to the Portuguese.

Whatever his doubts about the project, Kirk did not dissuade Mackinnon from attempting it; work began in June 1877 from the mainland opposite Dar-es-Salaam. By August the road had progressed eleven miles; one of the party of four Europeans, Edmund Buxton (brother of Sir. T.F. Buxton), had been invalided, and Kirk was pressing the Sultan to go ahead with it as he could make it pay, the road ‘passing all the way through lands known to be rich in articles of commerce.’ When Mackinnon heard that the road had started from Dar-es-Salaam he cabled that it should begin at Kilwa, at which stage the superintendent resigned and left for home. Kirk favoured Dar-es-Salaam as he feared that Kilwa would fall to Portugal in any division of the coast with Zanzibar. By the end of 1877 £1,500 had already been spent, exclusive of European salaries and expenses. By May 1879 half a lak (50,000 rupees) had been spent; earlier in the year it had been reported that ‘if the promoters think they have a road immediately suitable for wheeled traffic they are under a delusion.’ But Kirk was apparently still hopeful and spoke of the road taking the Katanga trade. It was not until February 1881 that he conceded that as a route to Nyassa the road would never be

1. Kirk to Mitchell, 18th May, 1877, MS 7872.
2. Kirk to Stewart, 13th May, 1877, Salisbury.
4. Ibid., 24th August, 1877.
5. H. Waller to J. Stewart, 17th October, 1877, in custody of Mrs. S. Brock.
6. Kirk to Mackinnon, 18th September, 1877, S.O.A.S.
7. G. Waller to Mackinnon, 11th December, 1877, ibid.
8. Kirk to Sultan Barghash, 30th May, 1879, F.O. 541/22.
of much use. After forty miles it became impassable to oxen owing to tsetse fly. Mackinnon and Burton were to be congratulated on their effort but their hopes of reaching Nyassa were 'doomed to failure.' He did not announce the abandonment of this line of road to Mackinnon until July 1881. It seems difficult to explain how the practical Kirk could have continued to encourage Mackinnon to invest money in a scheme about which he must have had considerable doubts from the start. It may be that Kirk and Mackinnon were agreed that it was worth keeping the road project going for political reasons, as it could be used as 'a foot in the door' and as an argument against the granting of a concession on the mainland to some other party.

The episode of the Mackinnon road is not without significance. It was the first essay in direct African development since the Niger Expedition, and as such, it proved to be an object lesson in how not to develop the continent. If the objects of the promoters were 'to do good and to make money', this was not the way to set about it. There is no evidence that Kirk himself ever visited the project for which he was at least partly responsible. Although he had experience of travel in central Africa and was certain that the road was a second best to the water route it is amazing that he can ever have been so sanguine as to the chances of any road over long distances through virgin bush at this date. The road was to be suitable for ox-carts, but it was never said what was to be carried in the carts. Due to his exertions the slave-trade to Zanzibar was coming to an end. He was able to tell Mackinnon that 'all the ivory that passes from Nyamwezi is carried by free men, and the goods used in barter taken up by free labour.' He must have known that the only export from the interior to Zanzibar was ivory and that its carriage was highly

1. Kirk to Granville, 28th February, 1881, F.O. 541/49.
2. Kirk to Mackinnon, 2nd July, 1881, S.O.A.S.
3. There is a hint of this in Kirk to Sultan Barghash, 30th May, 1879, op. cit.
4. E.g. he quotes O’Neill on it, February 1879, see above.
5. Kirk to Mackinnon, 11th November 1879, S.O.A.S. 'Slave-trade almost at an end.'
organised on a professional basis. He cannot have expected that ox-carts would have been able to compete in the ivory trade in the very unlikely event of a sufficient number of oxen surviving to do the work. He cannot have expected that the mere existence of a road would of itself stimulate the production of some 'legitimate' export in large enough quantities to make the upkeep of a road, which would if completed have been more than five hundred miles long, an economic or commercial proposition; and yet it seems probable that he did have some such view. It is difficult to see how else he can have justified Mackinnon's expenditure. But if he did believe that the plan was feasible, he is guilty of an error, and a very surprising one. He simply cannot have thought out what the road entailed. If a sum of £5,000 to £10,000 was to be spent on African development it would have been more usefully directed towards the establishment of a plantation of some commodity in demand in Europe at a place near the coast and convenient for export by Mackinnon's steamers. To the promoters in Britain the notion of a waggon route to the great African Lakes may have sounded very grand, and given that they had no African experience, very feasible. But for the man on the spot there was little excuse for such a view. James Stewart, when he heard the report of the Glasgow meeting at which the resolution on the road was passed, wrote from Livingstone that he hoped that the Scottish section would not 'pledge itself to a six hundred mile road to Ujiji, but begin cautiously with a sixty mile road here.'

Although Kirk and Mackinnon persisted with the road for four years, two of the pioneers who Mackinnon had sent out lasted only six months, they were John and Frederick Moir, the sons of an eminent Edinburgh doctor and member of the Free Church Foreign Missions Committee. They had been recruited in December 1876 by James Stevenson.

1. See Kirk to Mackinnon, 24th August, 1877, op. cit.
2. Of the other two pioneers one lasted two months and the other three months, see Kirk to Mackinnon, 24th August, 1877, op. cit., and H. Waller to J. Stewart, 19th October, 1877, in the custody of Mrs. S. Brock.
left Britain in April 1877, and began work in June. By October they were alone and in charge of the work but they soon afterwards decided that to continue the road would be futile. There were difficulties with the workers; they suffered from fever, dysentery, and shortage of food; and after they had taken the road for twenty-seven miles they found that with the coming of the rains the earlier sections were already becoming overgrown. They finally abandoned the work in January 1878 and returned to Britain. This was their first experience of pioneering work and it had taught them above all that to think in terms of waggon communication in Africa at this date was unrealistic. They had learned the hard way the advantages of water communication. The same point was made by the deaths of Consul Elton, and of Keith Johnston in attempts to open up a route from and to the north end of Lake Malawi, and by the disastrous record of the attempts of the London Missionary Society to establish itself on Lake Tanganyika.

The point was taken by James Stevenson who had joined with Mackinnon and Buxton in the road project. His interest had always been primarily in the Zambesi approach, but he had hoped that a road from the coast would persuade the Portuguese

"that their continuous obstructive courses will throw trade into the direction of Zanzibar." At the time of the Moirs recruitment it was not certain whether they were to go to survey the land route, or to go to the Zambesi. John Moir suggested that a legal opinion should be obtained

"as to the character of the Portuguese occupation and rights on the east coast... (and) how far their claims

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1. J. Moir to J. Stevenson, 9th December, 1876, (copy), University of Johannesburg Library.
2. Kirk to Derby, 12th December, 1877, F.O. 541/22.
3. See MSS diary of John Moir, April, 1877, to January, 1878, formerly in the possession of Miss L.M. Moir of Edinburgh, and recently given by her to Edinburgh University Library. There is also a fragment of a diary kept by the Moir brothers in the Mackinnon papers, S.O.A.S.
to hinder the free navigation of the Zambesi by duties and other restrictions are supported by international law." 1

Although Stevenson co-operated with Mackinnon over the road, he seems to have continued to make plans independently for a trading company to operate on the Zambesi. 2 He became involved in negotiations with the Union Steamship Company who sent an envoy (Mr. Hoste) to investigate the commercial possibilities of central Africa. 3 They may have been considering the running of a steamer service on the Zambesi, though it is more likely that there was a possibility of Union Company ships calling at Quelimane, or the Zambesi mouth.

A sense of urgency was added to the search for a solution by the impassioned appeals from Livingstonia of James Stewart. Stevenson was pleased with reports from Cotterill that he had been able to buy enough ivory to pay his expenses, and by the signs of progress on the diplomatic front. 4 He read a paper in August 1877 to the Foreign Missions Committee on communications and trade in central Africa, this was remitted to the newly formed Livingstonia Mission Sub-committee (composed of members of the F.M.C. and the old Glasgow Livingstonia Committee) which had its first meeting on or before the 20th November 1877. At this meeting it was felt that until an understanding was arrived at between the British and Portuguese governments on the Shire-Zambesi navigation, it would be 'unlikely and perhaps undesirable that any considerable outlay of British capital in permanent work should take place;' however there were signs of a softening in the Portuguese

1. J. Moir to J. Stevenson, 9th December, 1876, op. cit., Johannesburg. He enclosed a table of duties which might help in determining which route was to be preferred. He had also written to Dr. Zagury, the Zambesi monopolist, but had heard nothing as he was in Africa.

2. E.g. R. Howie to J. Stewart, 2nd April, 1877, Salisbury. 'I saw Mr. Stevenson to-day and he is full of enthusiasm about the proposed trading company and he assures me that there will be no difficulty so far as obtaining funds is concerned. The real difficulty will be with the Portuguese Governments who...are negotiating with some French Company, (a reference to the Zagury concession). Mr. Stevenson through Mr. Waller and otherwise is seeking to influence our own government.'

3. J. Stevenson to Dr. Mitchell, 28th August, 1877, MS 7872. Hoste accompanied Cotterill and Elton on their journey from the north end to the coast.

view, agreement had been reached in principle on transit duties, and it was hoped that when the question of the route had been settled the mission would be relieved of trade and one of the Natal houses would take up the whole supply.' If this could not be arranged, the mission would have to fend for itself, and Stevenson explained that according to Cotterill 'there was every likelihood of prosperous trade being opened up with the interior.'

The Committee was sufficiently optimistic about the prospects on the Zambesi to appoint John Stephen, James Stevenson, James Young of Kelly, John Muir, and Dr. Moir to see to the ordering of a shallow draught paddle-steamer to ply between Mazaro at the head of the KwaKwa and the Murchison cataracts on the Shire. John Stephen reported to his brother-in-law, James Stewart that two offers for suitable vessels of about 70 ft. length and £1,000 cost were being considered, and that James Stevenson thought that a company should be got up at once with £5,000 or more capital, and that 'either or both the Moirs who are tired of road-making would make good merchants.' On the 4th December he was able to report that he had heard from Dr. Moir that his sons (then at Bar-es-Salaam) were prepared to carry on the trade and to supply the capital. It was then resolved to order from Yarrow's a steamer, of 60 ft. by 10 ft. 6 ins. which was to be ready by 30th May 1878.

The Moirs returned to Scotland and were reported to be anxious to start at once 'under countenance of the Mission though distinctly separate from it.' On the 19th March Stevenson wrote to the Foreign Office asking for a clarification of the position with regard to the Mozambique Tariff and the Anahory-Zagury concession.

1. L.M.M., November, 1877, MS 7912.
2. John Muir, born 1828, 1st Baronet, 1892, Lord Provost of Glasgow, 1890–92, partner and later Chairman of the firm of James Finlay and Co., merchants. He was also one of the founders of the Clan Line which was established in 1878, and in which the Stephen family had an interest.
4. L.M.M., 4th December, 1877, MS 7912.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 12th March, 1878.
7. J. Stevenson to Salisbury.
April it was learned that the Moirs were anxious not to be left alone in their efforts to open up trade in the Nyassa district, but that they should be assisted 'by some gentlemen in this country interested in the success of the Mission.' They had originally intended to provide the capital from their own savings which amounted to £2,000 but this was not readily available, and their father had dissuaded them from taking the entire risk. They were concerned to preserve their independence of action, they would not be prepared to work in a general company in such an undertaking, but they would be happy to work 'with such gentlemen as would afford us much liberty of action and would have a higher aim than a pure speculation.' Accordingly Stevenson told the Committee that 'he had prepared a draft prospectus with the object of forming a limited company and had little doubt that the necessary funds would be forthcoming.' This plan was heartily approved and it was recommended that the same privileges which had been promised to the Moirs should be given to the Company, 'care being taken that the Mission should receive their goods on the most advantageous terms.'

Lord Salisbury was sufficiently encouraging in his reply to Stevenson's enquiries on the Zambesi navigation for preparations to continue. The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the new company were signed on the 21st June 1878, and the Article of Incorporation was granted on the 2nd July. It was originally intended that the company should be known simply as the Central Africa Company, but this was rejected by the Companies Registrar and the Company was renamed the Livingstonia Central Africa Company. The Memorandum was a remarkably comprehensive and indeed imaginative piece of work, covering every possible eventuality. The primary object of the Company was said to be:

"The navigation of the Rivers and Lakes of Central Africa, and especially of those rivers and lakes which communicate with the Zambesi, and of the river Zambesi itself, with a view to develop the trade and the resources of the country, and to encourage legitimate traffic among Natives."
Provision was also made for the 'building, purchasing, chartering, leasing, sailing, managing, reselling, etc.' of ships of every description; for the construction of 'Houses, Mills, Manufactories, Machines, Plant, Wharves, Stages, Warehouses, Sheds, Stores or other premises'; for the acquisition and selling of land; for dealing as merchants 'in every species of manufacture and produce'; for the introduction and cultivation of trees, grains, shrubs, plants; for the rearing and importing of domesticated animals; for the arrangement of defence against hostile attack; and numerous other activities. Significant for the future was provision for amalgamation with any other company having similar objects. The seven initial subscribers were James Stevenson; John Stephen; James Young; James White, of Overtoun; James S. Hapier, of the Clydeside ship-building and engineering firm; Dr. Hugh Miller and Robert Hess, about whom little information is available. By October 1878 five more subscribers had taken two shares of £250 each. These were Walter Neilson, of the pioneering iron manufacturing family; John Cowan, paper manufacturer of Beeslack; and the three Moirs, father and two sons. It is perhaps surprising that William Mackinnon was not a subscriber. The share issue was not advertised, the only notice of the company's formation seems to have appeared in the Anti-Slavery Reporter. All the initial subscribers were drawn from the small circle of Livingstonia supporters, most of whom were members of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church. A clause in the Articles of Association of the company allowed its directors to veto the transfer of shares, thus preventing the subversion of the company by those who were more willing to serve Mammon than God.

1. L.C.A.C. file in the Companies Registry, op. cit.
Mandala is the present location of the British Consulate. Mails leave London once a fortnight for Quillimane. The passage from London to Quillimane occupies about 40 days. Letters for up country should be addressed "Via Dar es Salaam" or "Via Brindisi," care of the African Lakes Company, Limited, Quillimane, East Africa. Passengers proceeding from Quillimane to the interior are subject to a charge for passports of 360 Reis if they are Portuguese subjects, or of 600 Reis if they belong to other nationalities. 1000 Reis is equal to about 4s. 6d.

"Jungle steamer" or other steamer connects with the monthly mail from England on its arrival at Quillimane. "Jungle steamer" or other steamer carries the monthly mail from Matope to Livingstonia, Bandawe, and Chitipa, and, every second month, to Mlanje and Karongas.

It is stated that during the dry season a caravan should leave Karongas for Lake Tanganyika, returning in time for the next north steamer.
CHAPTER III

Section I

John and Frederick Moir, the first managers of the newly formed Company were born in 1851 and 1852 respectively. Their father was a distinguished physician and one time President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. An uncle, Sir Frederick Maitland, had received the surrender of Napoleon on his ship, the Bellerephon. The Moirs might have chosen to make their careers in one of the services, but felt that commerce provided a more promising opening in peace time. After leaving school they spent two years in Switzerland and Germany, learning languages before returning to the University of Edinburgh where they took classes in Botany and Natural History, but did not take degrees. They then underwent a business training in a Chartered Accountant's office, and worked for a time in businesses in Leith. John then proceeded to London and took a job in the Union Insurance Society of Canton, and Fred worked for a time in an East India merchant's before starting what he described as the first large cycle agency in the city of London, and later a factory. In 1877, at the ages of twenty-five and twenty-six, they gave up these ventures to go to Africa to work on the Mackinnon road. The reasons for this decision were primarily religious. Both brothers, but especially John, had been affected by the evangelical movement of Moody and Sankey which had had a profound impact within the Free Church. This, together with the effect of the death of Livingstone, and love of adventure would have been sufficient to explain their decision, however it seems probable that there were also commercial reasons. The brothers were undoubtedly ambitious and the extremely depressed and depressing

1. He had been born in France in 1809, his father, a naval surgeon, having been wrecked on the French coast was kept a prisoner on parole in Verdun and was there joined by his wife.

commercial situation of the 1870's may have helped to persuade them to look overseas for new fields to conquer. Fred Moir's early involvement in the cycle industry was a shrewd move into what was to be one of the most rapidly expanding industries of the 1880's, but the business suffered severely in the depression of the '70's and in 1882 he was still trying to extricate the £2,000 which he had invested in it. While both the brothers were, by any standard, deeply religious men, it seems that John was the more passionately committed as a missionary, and that Fred was more concerned with the commercial success of the enterprise. John was, however, the acknowledged leader, and Fred on his own admission took second place. In both brothers there was undeniable mixture of motive. This was nowhere more frankly stated than by John in a letter to the girl whom he married in 1882:—

"...when I thought of going out to Africa first (and please don't think it was 'burning love to my saviour' that was the sole motive power that induced me to go) I wish it had been. It did help. But I had a course to choose. A life work to fix upon. I thought it a good field for enterprise, as well as a good field for missionary work. And it seemed a place where a merchant might be most useful, so we came."

Fred's philosophy was summed up in a letter of 1879:—

"Fortunes are not easily made nowadays either by Co's or individuals: and we have not made fortunes yet, or I suppose, paid our expenses. But Rome was not built in a day...and I hope that we shall in a year or so make ends meet and benefit the country into the bargain."  

It has been suggested that on the inauguration of the Company it was stated that any profit would be paid to the Livingstonia Mission, but there is no evidence of this in the Memorandum or Articles of Association. It is true that none of the early share-holders in the Company can have

2. F. Moir op. cit., p 3.
3. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 14th June, 1880, Shepperson collection.
4. F. Moir to Mr. Findlay, 1st October, 1879, L.B. (1).
expected an immediate return on their investment, but all hoped that after some years the Company would provide a reasonable dividend. At an early meeting of the Directors it was resolved that:--

"While the object in view is the civilisation of Africa, that end is to be promoted by doing business on principles strictly commercial, which there is every reason to be believed can be accomplished with a good pecuniary result." 1

The Livingstonia Central Africa Company was not to be one of those 'Quixotic' ventures which Kirk, Stewart, Waller and Stevenson had earlier condemned. The promoters may have liked to think that their Company was a philanthropic organisation, but they felt that no commercial activity should be embarked upon in which profitability was not the most significant criterion of success. It was unthinkable that money could be well spent without yielding a good rate of interest. It was not until 1940 that the British Government began to make provision for development schemes which were not based on this premise. 2 The Moirs themselves had two good reasons for seeking to make the Company profitable: in the first place they and their father were among the first share-holders; 3 and in the second place their contract was linked to the profit which was made. 4 The fact that both the Managers and the Directors of the Company were intent on making a profit from the very commencement of the Company's activities is of profound importance. It had a significant influence on the way in which the always slender resources of the Company were employed. As has been shown elsewhere the higher or philanthropic objects of the Company and of the missions were not based upon any great degree of knowledge of the situation on the ground, nor were they especially

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3. L.C.A.C. and A.L.C. file in Companies Register House, George Street, Edinburgh, No. 833. In October 1878 Dr. Moir, J. Moir and F. Moir each held two shares of £250, of which £150 on each share had been called. They later increased their holding.
4. They were to be employed for five years at a salary of £200 each and an additional 10% each of the net profit. The contract was to be reviewed if at the end of the third year this profit did not amount to £100 each. As the profit had not reached the required level by 1882 the contracts were broken and the Moirs were re-employed at the rate of £300 p.a. and the first £100 each of net profit, in addition to 10% each of any further profit. Contract dated 23rd June 1878 in L.C.A.C. minutes. A.L.C. minute 15th November 1882.
realistic in economic terms. It is extremely unlikely that a Company which had devoted all its resources to the finding of a way to put these ideals into practice could have been said to be running its affairs according to 'sound business principles.' Although the Company was a missionary trading venture, and as such is not easily comparable with the average trading company, it should not be thought of as a charitable organisation. In refusing to trade in guns, gunpowder, or alcohol on principle, it did voluntarily cut itself off from a possibly lucrative source of profit. But in every other respect it sought to maximise its return from the operations which it carried on. 'Philanthropy at 5%' would have admirably summarised the hopes, if not the expectations, of the promoters.

Before proceeding to investigate the activities of the Company in Africa some idea of its capital structure and financial history should be given. Founded with a nominal capital of £20,000 divided into eighty shares of £250 each, the nominal capital was increased to £100,000 on the 18th March 1880. This was divided into four hundred shares of £250 each. In June 1881 the capital was altered to 2,000 shares of £50. This made possible the purchase of shares by those with less funds at their disposal. The structure then remained unaltered until the liquidation of the African Lakes Company in 1893.

The issue of shares and the expenditure of capital can be seen from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Called at</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25th Oct. '78</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>£3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th March '80</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st Dec. '82</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Nov. '83</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Jan. '85</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th March '86</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Jan. '87</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Aug. '87</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>30,712</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th Nov. '88</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30,712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. These figures are derived from the annual returns in the L.C.A.C.-A.L.C. file in the Companies Registry op. cit.
These figures give an accurate account of the capital which was raised for the Company from share-holders. They do not take any account of various sums, such as profits re-invested in the Company, and sums set aside for depreciation and insurance, which were used for the expansion of the Company's stocks, nor do they take into account various sums raised from the bank as overdrafts. These considerations made it possible for the Company to expand the scale of its operations, for instance, between 1882 and 1886 when there was no significant increase in the amount of capital employed in the business. But the figures do make plain the basic weakness of the Company which was a shortage of capital. At no time was the capital available to the Managers sufficient to finance the full range of operations which they had in mind. The Company was run on a shoestring, and it is largely due to this that it was never able, in the first period of its existence, to provide a wholly satisfactory service. At the same time it should be pointed out that in only one of its first fifteen years was it able to pay a dividend, and that was of a meagre 2\%.

It is an open question, to which it is hoped that an answer may emerge below, whether a higher capital investment would have led to a better return or to a greater loss. In the course of the chapter various factors will be noted which impeded investment in the Company and so made the job of the Managers more difficult.

John and Frederick Noir were asked to do the impossible.

It is only necessary to compare the declared objects of the Company with the resources available to them in order to prove this contention. When the Noirs landed at Quelimane on the east coast of Africa near the delta of the Zambesi in September 1878 they had with them the parts of a small flat-bottomed steamer with paddle wheels; three Scots artisans; and £1,500 worth of Manchester goods. According to their contract they were to superintend the line of navigation from Quelimane on the Indian Ocean coast to Livingstonia, the Free Church of Scotland Mission which was at that time situated on Cape Maclear, a peninsula at the south end of Lake Malawi. This was about four hundred miles from the coast. In addition they were to organise a

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1. A.L.C. Minutes, Annual report, 1887.
2. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 9th July 1878.
service to Tete, a Portuguese settlement some three hundred miles up the Zambesi; and to run in co-operation with the mission a steamer service on the lake itself; to carry on trade with the people and to establish depots at convenient points in connection with this trade. They were also to assist in the geographical exploration of the region in so far as this was thought to be conducive to the Company's interests.  

In justice to the Directors it should be said that throughout the first few years of the Company's existence they were engaged in negotiations with various groups with a similar interest in the opening up of east and central Africa with a view to co-operation with them; the expansion of the Company's activities; and the strengthening of its financial position. The people to whom they looked for support were mainly the lay supporters of the other British missions interested in the area. They were especially anxious to gain the co-operation of the promoters of the Established Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission, and, if possible to prevent the establishment of an Established Church Company in competition with the Livingstonia Company on the same route.  

Both the Directors and the Managers felt, not without reason, that the missions did not provide enough business to employ two companies. The Established Church did not have the same body of active, commercially-minded lay supporters as did the Free Church. It was probably for this reason that nothing came of the scheme for an independent enterprise. Significantly the great majority of the Livingstonia Committee were laymen while the majority of the Established Church's Foreign Mission Committee were ministers. Though relations between the Established Church and the Company were strained by the Blantyre Scandal of 1880-81, a prominent Established Church layman, John Cuthbertson, did join the board of the Company in the latter year and served as an unofficial representative of his Church. The Directors were also anxious to secure

1. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 9th July, 1878.
2. F. Moir to parents, 20th October, 1879, 22nd April, 1880, L.B. (1); and L.C.A.C. Minutes, 16th September, 14th November, 1879.
3. See below, Chapter IV.
the co-operation of the group of Manchester businessmen who, led by James Bradshaw, produced the grandiose scheme for African development referred to above. James Stevenson felt that the basis of their scheme was erroneous and went, with the consent of the other Directors, to Manchester to tell them so. He had two reasons for objecting to their plans for a tramway from the coast opposite Zanzibar to the interior; firstly that it was impracticable, and secondly, that if it was successful it would compete with the lake and river route that the Company was pioneering. He hoped either that they could be dissuaded from their scheme and induced to join with the Company in the extension of its operations towards Lake Tanganyika, or that they would 'start trade in the C.M.S. country to the north of Tanganyika.'

Stevenson was very anxious to extend the operations of the Company to Tanganyika. He had for some time been convinced of the superiority of water over land routes, and he also felt that the bridging of the 'isthmus' between Malawi and Tanganyika by a road for the carrying of 'legitimate traffic' would both strike a blow at the slave-trade and facilitate access by missionaries to the interior. It was with this object in mind that the Directors devoted much time in 1879 and 1880 to the finding of new subscribers to the Company. Meetings were held with supporters of the London Missionary Society, who were attempting to found a mission on Tanganyika; with supporters of the Established and United Presbyterian Churches in Scotland; with the Church Missionary Society; and with other prospective share-holders in Manchester and London. By September 1879 they had sufficient confidence in the response from these various sources to plan the increase of the nominal capital to £100,000 and the issuing of £19,000 of shares which would bring the total subscribed capital up to £25,000, four times the then total. A prospectus was issued giving an optimistic

4. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 16th September, 1879.
5. Ibid.
account of the progress of the Company and of the future before it. It was pointed out that the Company had facilities

"for conducting an extensive trade with the natives, who are now rapidly becoming alive to the advantages of a system of trade based upon sound principles. A business so conducted cannot fail to promote the civilisation of the races among whom it is carried on—assisting to a great extent in the suppression of the slave trade, and materially furthering the efforts now being made to open up the continent of Africa."

There was 'every expectation of its being a pecuniary success.'

It was thought that the Company and its route to the interior would even be of use to the Church Missionary Society in Uganda, 'if the collapse in Egypt should render the Nile route more difficult.'

But in spite of this optimism and of the preparations that had been made, the share issue was not a success. Only £2,000 instead of the expected £19,000 was subscribed. James Stevenson attributed this failure to the publication in England of the details of a concession which had been granted by the Portuguese government to a former Military Attaché in Paris, Captain J.C. Paiva d'Andrade. This granted a monopoly of minerals, coal and woods, together with 100,000 hectares of land, in an area which appeared to include Blantyre and the southern Shire Highlands. According to Stevenson:

"Other information confirmed the impression that the Portuguese were inclined to appropriate the results of our labours."

The Company would if its position were secured be well able to develop the country, but before issuing £20,000 of new shares to 'influential mercantile men interested in the Missions both in England and Scotland', it was thought desirable to ascertain the true state of affairs. Lord Salisbury, to whom Stevenson was writing, had been aware of the

1. L.C.A.C. prospectus in MS 9021. It is not dated but was probably printed in November, 1879. See L.C.A.C. Minutes, 20th November 1879. This copy bears an unsigned note by H.D. Moir:—'My sons write home that they expect the Co. to be successful and say they wish to have their holdings doubled if the Co. is to be enlarged.'
2. See L.C.A.C. file, op. cit., Companies Registry.
3. J. Stevenson to Lord Salisbury, 25th September, 1879, F.O. 84/1557; encloses a copy of an unsigned article on the concession in Engineering, April, 1879.
concession since February and had expressed his regret at its promulgation so soon after the demise of the Anahory-Sagury concession. According to Morier d'Andrada was an enthusiast who was confident of raising £50,000,000 once he had been out to Africa and could show the value of his concession. In October 1879 Fred Moir was hearing stories that he had 2,000 English supporters, and was to be made Governor of the whole district up to the lake. In December O'Neill reported from Mozambique that d'Andrada had been forced to abandon his preliminary survey of the territory owing to fever and the death of his companions. The Foreign Office did not answer Stevenson's letter until March 1880 and then were not very informative. The time limit on the taking up of the concession was extended in July 1880 and d'Andrada himself returned to Africa in 1881, but he was unable to find the £20,000 starting capital needed and the concession lapsed in 1883. His claims were revived in 1884 in the name of an Anglo-Portuguese 'Companha Africana' in which Sir Donald Currie and Sir William Mackinnon were interested. Although Stevenson in his letter suggested that it was the d'Andrada concession which had prevented the full realisation of the Company's plan for development, his fellow Directors do not seem to have given up hope so soon. As late as March 1880 John Stephen wrote that in two or three weeks time the Company was to beextended to £100,000; that some new shareholders were already booked; and that it would then be possible to pay off the overdraft.

3. F. Moir to parents, 20th October, 1879, L.B. (1).
4. H. O'Neill to Salisbury, 14th December, 1884, F.O. 541/47.
5. MS 7912, L.H.M., 9th March, 1880.
6. Petre to Lord Granville, 17th December, 1884, F.O. 84/1669; W. Mackinnon to Granville, 3rd January, 1885, F.O. 84/1731; see also below, Chapter IV.
7. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 28th November, 1879, and note 1. on preceding page
It was not until the 18th March 1880 that the increase in the nominal capital was formally registered. However, premature though Stevenson's remarks may have been, he was probably right that it was uncertainty as to the Portuguese position, and fear that the operations of the Company could be seriously interfered with or stopped altogether, that discouraged potential investors.

So long as the question of sovereignty over the Portuguese hinterland remained unanswered, as it did until 1890, there was a serious risk added to the already abundant hazards of investment in the area. It is very significant that the Mackinnon brothers, with whom Stevenson had collaborated on the Tanganyika Road, were among those who were approached to support the Company, but they declined. William Mackinnon was never a share-holder and Peter Mackinnon waited until November 1888 before investing £1,000 in the Company. They evidently preferred to operate through Portuguese companies and contributed largely to d'Andrada's Companha Africanas. If one remembers that William Mackinnon was a contemporary millionaire, Free Church man, and noted philanthropist it is very surprising that he did not contribute even a £1,000 which he could well have afforded to lose. He may have felt that the Company competed with the road in which he had invested so much, but his willingness to invest in a very hollow sounding Portuguese concession, which if successful, would almost certainly have made it impossible for the Company to continue in business, suggests that he had no confidence in the security of its position. It may also cast a slight shadow over his philanthropic motives.

If the Mackinnons were reluctant to invest it is not surprising that the Company found it difficult to raise the capital that it required. Until 1886 the increase was, as the table shows, insignificant. The few new share-holders were almost all members of the group of Free Church supporters who had founded the Livingstonia Mission and the Company. They included members of the Stevenson

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2. Ibid. W. Mackinnon certainly considered subscribing. F. Moir welcomed the news that he was 'thinking of taking a share in the Co.' F.M. to A. Hart, 12th January, 1860, L.B.(1).
3. See above and below, Chapter IV.
and Cowan families, Henry Tod, W.S., a cousin of the Moirs, Erskine Beveridge, a Dunfermline textile manufacturer, and John Cuthbertson, referred to above. The expansion of 1887, which followed the declaration of the Company's first, and last, dividend, brought in nearly eighty new share-holders bringing the total up to one hundred and ten. This expansion was required to finance the purchase of the new large steamers for the Zambesi and for Lake Malawi. Among those who subscribed at this time were Gilbert Beith, Fred Moir's father-in-law; Alexander Mitchell, who became a Director; Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and eight others of that great abolitionist clan who subscribed between them £1,500; A.L. Bruce, son-in-law of Livingstone and a Director of William Younger's Brewery, who was like Buxton, a founder of I.B.E.A., and was from 1889 a Director of the Lakes Company; and George Cadbury and two Reckitts of the Quaker and Anti-Slavery Society connection. It was only at this stage after it had been shown that the Company could with very limited resources prosper sufficiently to pay a small dividend that there was any significant investment from outside Scotland, and even then the subscribers were almost all drawn from wealthy missionary and philanthropic circles.²

While the Directors in Scotland were thus engaged in an abortive attempt to widen the basis of the Company in preparation for an extension of its activities, especially in the direction of Tanganyika, the brothers Moir were attempting to establish themselves and the Company on the coast and in the interior of Africa. Certain arrangements for their activities had been made with the Livingstonia Mission

1. Gilbert Beith, born 1827, Liberal M.P. Glasgow (Central) 1885-6, and Inverness Burghs, 1892-5. Partner in the firm of Beith, Stevenson, and Co., export merchants, Glasgow and Manchester. John Hay Beith, the novelist 'Ian Hay', who contributed a foreword to Fred Moir's book, After Livingstone, was a close relation, possibly a grand-son.

2. All the information in this paragraph is drawn from the lists of share-holders annually filed at the Companies Registry in Edinburgh. L.C.A.C. and A.L.C. file No.833.
before their departure. The Company was to purchase from the mission the shallow-draft, flat-bottomed, side-wheel steamer for use on the Shire and Zambesi which they had ordered at the end of 1877. The steamer was named the Lady Nyassa in memory of the steamer that Livingstone had tried but failed to put on the lake at the time of the Zambesi Expedition. An arrangement was also made for the use of the mission steamer, the Ilala, on the upper Shire and Lake Malawi for not more than six months in the year at a rent of £45 per month. As a general principle it was laid down that the Mission and the Company shall given every facility to the operation of each other as working in different forms towards the same object.'

It was at first presumed that the Company would make its headquarters at Livingstonia, then on Cape Maclean. The Blantyre Mission were notified of the Company's inauguration, and sent instructions to their agents that they were to assist the Company and to order goods as for as possible through it, rather than through the Army and Navy Co-operative Society which had hitherto been their major supplier. James Stevenson drew up a detailed programme of exploration which they were to undertake. One of the Moirs was to arrange with James Stewart C.E. for a journey across the Tanganyika plateau to the south end of that lake. Stewart was to be in command and to survey the route while one of the Moirs investigated the trading possibilities. They were also to purchase land and make a station for the Ilala at the Kambwe inlet (three miles north of present-day Karonga) and to visit the Mbashe river at the north end of the lake which had earlier been visited by Dr. James Stewart; to investigate the coal seam which

2. L.M.M., 12th March, 1878, MS 7912.
4. J. McLagan to D. MacDonald, 23rd, October, 1878, MS 7543.
5. James Stewart, Civil Engineer, cousin of Dr. James Stewart, born 1845. Employed in the I.C.S. Came to Livingstonia on furlough in 1877. Laid out Blantyre Mission. Engineered the road between Katunga's on the lower Shire and Matopo on the upper Shire, via Blantyre. Resigned from I.C.S. and took up full time employment with the Livingstonia Mission, as from 18th September, 1879. (L.M.M., MS 7912). Responsible for the early work on the Stevenson road, but died before its completion in August 1883. Buried at Karonga. See L.M.M., 8th January 1884.
Herbert Rhodes had discovered at Florence Bay; and to visit the Gwangwaras, (the Songea Ngoni on the east coast of the lake) who were thought to be keen traders. Meanwhile the other Moir was to develop trade on the Shire with the help of the Lady Nyassa, and to establish a store at Blantyre. When these projects were accomplished they could turn their attention to the country to the west of Livingstonia, to the upper Zambesi and the Kafue.

The Moirs arrived at Quelimane in September 1878. Their first problem was simple but difficult. How were they to get their steamer built and launched on the Zambesi? There was only one mouth of the Zambesi which was known to be navigable, this was the Kongone whose dangerous bar made it unsuitable for regular use by ocean-going vessels. There was no steamer service and no Portuguese Customs House. It was therefore necessary to land the parts of the steamer at Quelimane together with the goods which had been brought with it. Quelimane was situated some miles in from the sea on a fast-flowing tidal river, the Kwakwa, which had once been a mouth of the Zambesi, but which by 1878 was only joined to the Zambesi by the Balambwanda channel at the highest point of the annual floods in March - in years of low rainfall there was no connection. The steamer was launched on the 26th October and had steam up for the first time on the 15th November. The next day it made its maiden voyage for the benefit of the Portuguese population of Quelimane, during which dinner was served on board and seven toasts were drunk.

The alternatives now were to sail the steamer round to the Kongone bar which was thought to be too dangerous owing to the unsuitability of a shallow draft steamer for ocean-going; or to sail it up the Kwakwa, dismantle it, carry it across the three mile proterage to the Zambesi, and rebuild it. This proved to be impossible owing to a rebellion or civil war which was going on at the time in the vicinity of Nazaro. It was thought too dangerous

3. F. Moir to father, 22nd September 1878, and 30th October, 16th November 1878. F. Moir to A. Hart, Secretary, L.C.A.C., 4th July, 1879. L.B.(I). The Moirs were total abstainers. Sr. Nunes drank champagne.
to risk losing parts of the steamer, as the loss of one case could make the vessel unusable. In addition the Portuguese officials would not take any responsibility for life or property if they made the attempt. It was not until the middle of March 1879 that John Moir was able to get the Lady Nyassa on to the Zambezi by the flooded Balambwanda channel. With the water level more than 15 ft. above normal he had to contend with floating islands, and the difficulty of finding the proper channels in a vast expanse of water. If he had not had a plentiful supply of coal on board he would have run out of fuel as it was impossible to cut wood.

Meanwhile Fred Moir had begun the work of exploration. Leaving Quelimane in early December he had made his way by canoe and boat up the Zambezi and Shire to Blantyre which he reached on New Year's Day 1879. The country was in a very disturbed state, many villages had been deserted and burnt. At Mazaro the soldiers were plundering 'ad lib' and it seemed that 'all up the river one set of men have been beaten and in turn attacked another set higher up.' Where possible he introduced himself to the local people and made arrangements for the provision of cut wood for the steamer. He met various Portuguese settlers on the way up, and Matakenya, the Goan-Portuguese-Negro who controlled the area below the confluence of the Shire and the Ruo which marked the furthest limit of tenuous Portuguese influence. Beyond him were the first of the Makololo villages which were controlled by the most southerly of their Chiefs, Chipatula. At Katunga's village some miles below the first of the Murchison cataracts he found what he described as a natural dock at what was to be the terminus of the steam navigation of the lower Shire and the beginning of the road which, passing through Blantyre, linked the two navigable sections of the river. The northern section of this road which was laid out by James Stewart, C.E., was completed by the beginning of July 1878; John Buchanan with two hundred and sixty men was working on the southern section in that month, it was almost certainly completed by the

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2. F. Moir to father, 29th March, 1879; also, After Livingstone, op. cit., pp 30-31.
3. F. Moir to father, 18th December, 1879, in letter of 4th January, 1879, L.B.(1).
4. Ibid., 30th December, 1879.
The southern section included the most difficult part, the steep climb from Katunga's on the Shire, less than 100 ft. above sea-level to over 3,000 ft. in the Shire Highlands; most of the ascent was accomplished within six miles of the river.

Fred Moir took up to Blantyre a large quantity of goods both for the missions and for the Company. While there he made arrangements for the use by the Company of the Blantyre store and for the supervision of goods left there by artisan members of the mission.

He went on via Matope, the terminus of the junction road, where he boarded the Ilala, to Livingstonia. On the way he called at the village which Herbert Rhodes had established on the upper Shire, and met Ramakukan, the most powerful Makololo chief who was hunting elephants in the vicinity. He also called on Mponda, the wealthy Yao chief at the point where the Shire leaves the lake. At Livingstonia he was agreeably surprised to find fifteen 'substantial looking' houses in a row set back 100 yards from the shore, and gravel walks laid out in the shape of two Union Jacks. This was the work of James Stewart, C.E. who he found at Marenga's, the experimental station later known as Bandawe, two hundred miles up the lake.

There and at Kaningina, fifteen miles inland, surveys were being made as part of the search for a site for the Livingstonia Mission which would be more fertile, more healthy, and more populous than the Cape Maclear site which had been chosen for its nautical advantages rather than for its suitability as a mission station. It was five miles from the nearest village. The selection of the two experimental sites was reported to the missions by the Company.

2. The present road from Chikwawa to Blantyre follows almost exactly the line chosen by James Stewart, C.E. The present Katunga's village is on the opposite side of the river to the old one; owing to the changing course of the river there.
3. F. Moir to father, 17th February, 1879, L.B.(l); H. O'Neill to Granville, 8th November, 1880, encloses affidavit by J. Moir, 13th October, 1880, and copy of agreement between the Blantyre Mission and the L.C.A.C. dated 16th July, 1879, and signed by both the Moirs and Duff MacDonald, F.C. 84/1565.
5. W. Black to Dr. G. Smith, 3rd March, 1877, MS 7876.
stations had been the result of detailed exploration of the western side of the lake by Dr. Laws and J. Stewart, C.B., between August and November 1878.¹

Fred Moir travelled north from Blantyre to Livingstonia and Bandawe with Laws himself, and it was in company with him that he went on the first visit by Europeans to Mbelwa, the Paramount Chief of the northern Ngoni, who had requested a visit from Laws some months previously.² Laws introduced Moir "as one who was ready to trade with them if they desired to do so; and who loved God as we did."³ They also met Mtwalo, the rival of Mbelwa, and the leader of the hard-line Ngoni who opposed close contact with the mission.⁴ Fred attempted to buy ivory at Mbelwa's but as he did not have the preferred pattern of cloth he was unable to induce the people to sell. This was a lesson in the first principle of barter that to have cloth or beads is not enough, they must be of the locally popular style and colour. He planned a journey to Bisa country,⁵ but hearing that Mpemba, a Yao chief further south on the lake, had recently received a large stock of ivory, he took the Herga, the sailing boat brought out by Cotterill, and went in search of him. He was able to make contact with his sons but Mpemba himself refused to be seen and the sons would not trade. Moir suspected that he was under the influence of Arabs, who were in the area.⁶ On the way north they had visited the Junbe of Nkhota Khota who had ivory for sale, but demanded coast prices which obviously could not be paid. He had been much taken with a painted teapot, but not enough to make him come to terms.⁷

Moir had returned to Quelimane by the middle of March, having travelled about 1,000 miles in three months. The journey had been in the nature of a reconnaissance during which he had been able to see much of the country in which the Company was to operate and he had met a selection of the chiefs who had control of the ivory trade.

³. R. Laws to T. Main, February, 1879, MS 7876.
⁴. F. Moir to father, 17th February, 1879, L.B.(l).
⁵. Ibid., 8th - 9th February, 1879.
⁶. Ibid.
⁷. Ibid., 16th January, 1879.
He had also been able to make some arrangements with a view to the organisation of the transport and supply service for the missions which was the first priority. The inauguration of this service was delayed first by the difficulty of getting the steamer on to the Zambesi and then by her state when they had managed to get her there. Late in March they took her with the flood stream down to the Kongone mouth where they beached her on an island and spent the whole of April with two assistants working on repairs. At the end of that month Fred went down to Quelimane to organise boats and canoes on the KwaKwa for the carriage of mails and cargoes to the head of the river, whence they had to be carried across to the Zambesi; he also arranged for the use of a store at Maruru where they could be left while waiting for the steamer to return from the up-river voyage. The boat service on the KwaKwa was to be run by men who had been brought down from Blantyre and who were paid a monthly wage for the work. The Lady Nyanza was taken up to Katunga's for the first time in May; John Moir was in charge, and went on himself to Blantyre. After formalising relations between the Mission and the Company by an agreement of the 16th June he went on to the lake to do his share of the exploratory work.

His travels fell into two parts, the first was a pioneering journey west from Mkata Bay towards the Luangwa in the Sena country; and the second was a journey in company with James Stewart, C.E., towards Lake Tanganyika, according to James Stevenson's instructions. Little is known of this first journey. Leaving Mkata Bay early in July, he travelled west by-passing Mbelwa's and reached Tembwe, a Sena chief, on the 20th of the month. This chief complained that he was a peaceable man caught between two lions, Mbelwa and Kambombo. William Koyi, the evangelist from Lovedale, told Tembwe

‘of the English nation and its greatness; of its cause - the Word of God; and of our coming to his nation to teach.’

Tembwe offered a 7 ft. tusk for the Bible. Moir pointed out that it was not the Bible that was the medicine but the truths in it.

1. F. Moir to parents, 10th May, 1879. L.B.(1).
2. Ibid., 11th May, 1879.
3. Ibid.
They passed on to Kambombo, who, they found to be an amiable old man, but they did not stay long, there was a large party of Arabs in the vicinity who had raised prices 'to ridiculous heights.' It was another twenty years before the Senga country was visited by members of the Livingstonia Mission. On his return to the lake he met James Stewart, C.E., at Mkata Bay, and they went on overland to Karonga, climbing Mount Maller on the way. They left there for Tanganyika on the 14th October, but after climbing to Nteniwanda's at 3,900 ft., the beginning of the plateau, Moir had to abandon the journey owing to an abscess on his foot which confined him to his tent for three weeks. Stewart went on with Kayi to the south end of Lake Tanganyika where he met Joseph Thomson, the youthful Scots survivor of Keith Johnson's Royal Geographical Society Expedition. Stewart reached Tanganyika in seventeen days which was remarkable for an unmapped journey of almost two hundred and fifty miles. He and Thomson between them were able to supply the missing data which was needed to plot the relative positions of the two lakes, and although these proved to be somewhat further apart than had been hoped the feasibility of what came to be known as the 'Lakes route to Central Africa' was demonstrated. Although John Moir had not reached Tanganyika he had travelled over four hundred miles, many of them over

1. MS 7906, Diary of John Gunn, agriculturist at Livingstonia Mission, cutting from the Northern Ensign, Wick, reports the arrival of J.M. at Livingstonia, 23rd June, and at Mkata Bay, 5th July, 1879. An account of the journey taken from J.M.'s letters to his parents was printed in The Family Treasury and Christian Monthly, and reprinted in the Christian Express, Lovedale, June, 1880. The quotations are taken from that article.

2. Donald Fraser visited them in 1898, and found they remembered J.M.'s visit well. Agnes Fraser, Donald Fraser of Livingstonia, London, 1934, pp 55-63.


snapped country, he had paid the first visit by a member of the Company to the north end area which was to be so important to its later development and had sent down to Mlanje 450 lbs. of ivory that he had bought on route.  

He probably returned to the south late in December, 1879.

Meanwhile Fred Moir had been engaged in the organisation of the store at Mlanje; of the steamer service on the Shire; and of porters for the carriage of goods between the two sections of the river.  

He also had to see to the Quelimane business which had been left in the hands of José Nunes, a friend of Livingstone and British Vice-Consul, but not a man of great commercial efficiency. Fred made one quick journey down to Quelimane at the end of July 1879, and on his return in August became seriously ill with fever and jaundice, he was nursed back to health by Dr. Laws who was fortunately travelling up river on the steamer at the time.  

By October he had recovered sufficiently to make a thirty mile overnight cross-country dash to the scene of the tragic death of Herbert Rhodes at Chirala.  

By the end of November he had returned once again to Quelimane where he remained until March or April 1880, clearing up the Company's accounts there and investigating the trading possibilities of the lower Zambesi area, especially the Kongone mouth which he re-visited.  

In April 1880 the two brothers were reunited at Mlanje. They got on very well with Duff MacDonald and his wife, and had their meals with them while staying in one of the houses on the Mission Square.  

Fred Moir was left in charge of the Mission School when MacDonald and Fenwick went to investigate thefts thought to have been made by Mitoché's men between Mlanje and Zomba.  

The brothers wanted to make a permanent establishment and store at Mlanje which was the obvious depot for goods in transit between the upper and lower rivers. However MacDonald pointed out that he had instructions from the Home

1. F. Moir to James Stewart, 30th September, 1879, Salisbury.  
2. F. Moir to mother, 6th July, 1879, L.B.(1).  
3. R. Laws to James Stewart, 22nd September, 1879, Salisbury.  
4. F. Moir to father, 8th September, 1879, L.B.(1); F.M. to parents 20th-28th October, 1879, ibid.  
5. F.M. to mother, 24-26 July, 1879, ibid.  
Committee that the Company was not to be permitted to make a permanent establishment on mission property. This was probably because of their plans for an Established Church Trading Company which it was hoped, according to MacDonald, would 'manage all civil affairs.'¹ Fred Moir hoped, as the Directors did, that the foundation of this Company would be checked. He felt that two Companies would cut each others' throats, and that a situation similar to that on the west coast would arise where firms paid a 2½% dividend or made a loss.² He also hoped that pressure could be exerted at home to persuade the mission to allow them to set up at Blantyre rather than be forced to look for a site a few miles away.³ Nothing came of this request and by the time it reached Scotland relations between the Company and the mission were strained by the reaction to the news of incidents concerning civil jurisdiction in which the Company was indirectly involved. These will be considered in the next chapter. Relations in Africa remained cordial but the Company nevertheless had to look for a home of its own.⁴ On the 22nd April John Moir reported that they thought they had got a very pretty place 'on a forest covered ridge just over the stream from Blantyre.'⁵

Early in May, 1880, an estate was bought from Kapeni, the Yao Chief from whom the Blantyre estate had earlier been bought. Fred Moir reported that it might extend for as much as thirty miles depending upon the course of the streams, the Madi and the Naperi, which determined its boundaries.⁶ He was over-optimistic as it was later found to cover 7,000 acres or eleven square miles; John was however able to walk for five miles 'through our own land.'⁷ The purchase was confirmed by a deed of 15th July 1885, and finally ratified by

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2. F. Moir to A. Hart, 7th September, 1879, L.B.(1).
3. Ibid.
4. F. Moir to father, 16th January, 1881, L.B.(1).
5. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 22nd April, 1880, Shepperson collection.
6. F. Moir to father, 14th May, 1880, L.B.(1).
7. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 14th June, 1880, Shepperson collection.
Harry Johnston in 1893. The brothers, who had been kept busy with accounts, mails and store-keeping, now set to work on plans for their house and store, and experimented with brick and tile making. They also began to clear the bush for the site and to prepare timbers for the verandahs of the two-storey house and for internal beams. The doors and windows were ordered ready-made from the United States.

Both the Moirs left Blantyre in June when the work was supervised by John Buchanan. Fred went north to Karonga and the Mashe to shoot elephant and, if possible, to catch a young elephant to be brought down south for experiments in domestication in which William Mackinnon and King Leopold of the Belgians were interested. John Moir went south but had returned to Blantyre by the 3rd August when the first sod for what was intended to be called 'Mudi House' was cut.

Later in the month he passed through Livingstonia on his way north to join his brother in the hunting field. He returned to the south in September, and was followed by Fred early in November; they worked hard at brick-laying in an attempt to finish their house before the rains.

1. Certificate of Claim, number 23, Blantyre Land Registry. See also an affidavit by John Buchanan, dated 11th April, 1892, witnessed by Alfred Sharpe, in A.L.C. papers at Mandala, Blantyre. Buchanan declares that he was a witness when the Moirs on behalf of the A.L.C. entered into negotiations with Kapeni, acquiring by purchase from Kapeni the said estate for one piece white and one piece of blue calico of 96 yds and one piece of 98 yds respectively in consideration of and as payment for the said land.


3. F. Moir to parents, 3rd October, 1880, L.B.(1); see also correspondence on the subject in the Mackinnon papers, S.O.A.S. F.M. arrived at the north end late in June or early in July, he succeeded in catching 4 young elephants but 3 of them died.

4. Life and Work in British Central Africa, July, 1905, J. McIlwain reminiscences on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his arrival at Blantyre; he came out as a carpenter for the Company in 1880 and joined the Mission in 1884.

5. R. Laws to Dr. J. Stewart, 14th October, 1880, Salisbury. J.M. had gone north with Robert Laws arriving at the Mashe on 24th August. He went south again with a young elephant on the steamer in mid-September, arriving at Blantyre in time to give evidence to the Established Church Commissioners, Dr. J. Rankin and A. Pringle, Esq., which he did on the 13th October, 1880; see J.M. to Dr. J. Stewart, 25th October, 1880, Salisbury.
Because of the shortage of trained brick-layers the bricks were made of an exceptional size in order to reduce the labour of construction.\(^1\) John Moir described how on one occasion he worked all day to finish the walls, and was just about to eat his dinner 'with supreme satisfaction' when he heard a roar, turned round and saw that the walls had collapsed. 'Something had been too weak for the enormous weight and had given way.' Some of the bricks near the foundation had got badly wet in the rains which had by then broken. Nothing daunted he cleared away the rubble and started again.\(^2\) On June 27th 1881, Fred Moir wrote the first letter headed 'Madi House,' which was by then completed except for some internal fittings.\(^3\) Earlier in the same month the Directors had written asking that the new store at Mantyre should be given a 'distinctive name'; on the 2nd October Fred referred for the first time to 'Mandala'. This was not a choice but a recognition of the usage of the local people who, according to John McLlwain, had refused to call the building anything but Mandala, the nick-name of John Moir.\(^4\) It was the word used for the effect of sunlight on his spectacles, and has continued to this day to be the usual name both for the African Lakes Corporation, and for spectacles. The house still stands as a monument to the energy and, despite set-backs, the skill of the brothers Moir, and of John McLlwain and John Buchanan who also played a part in its construction. It is the oldest building in Malawi or Zambia; the upright supports of the verandahs are made of a wood so hard as to be resistant not only to white ants but to nails. Experts find it difficult to imagine how they were hewn.

The selection of a site and the building of the Company's first headquarters had taken up only a small part of the Managers' energy and time. While at the north end of the lake in October 1880 Fred Moir had made an exploratory journey in the mountainous country due north of the Mashe. This took him close to what are now Tukuyu and Mbuya, and at 7,500 ft. to the headquarters of the Sangu Chief, Merere,

\(^1\) After Livingstone, op. cit., pp 46-53.
\(^2\) J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 4th January, 1881, Shepperson collection.
\(^3\) F. Moir to Directors, 27th June, 1881, L.B.(1).
who had been visited three years earlier on his ill-fated journey to the coast by Consul Elton. There were a large number of Arabs at Merero's court, and as was usual this made business difficult. Fred spent several days in negotiations but was only able to buy a few tusks at reasonable prices after he had packed his tent and was about to depart. The brothers were at Blantyre together for three months at the turn of the year, but had reached Quelimane on the coast by the 22nd February, 1881. They remained there until they had completed the work of making up the accounts for the first eighteen months of the Company's existence. They also began the establishment of the Company's first agency there to take over the business which had been expensively and inefficiently done by José Nunes.

In April, 1881, Fred Moir took a trip to Lourenço Marques for the sake of his health which had suffered as a result of a journey down the Shire, Zambezi, and KwaKwa in open boats at the height of the rains. It was expected that John would leave for Britain in May to report on the progress of the Company, and to encourage the Directors to raise more capital. In fact he went in that month to Mozambique to buy a small steamer which had been left there by one of King Leopold's International Association expeditions. This purchase had been made necessary by the sinking of the Lady Nyassa and the loss of her hull. The next month found him back at Mandala. On his way up river he had done his best to prevent Chipatula, who had a quarrel with Matakenya, from becoming involved in a war with the Portuguese who were prepared to take the opportunity of his attack to move against the Makololo. The river was closed for a time but by October John was back at Quelimane and was about to return up river to Masaro to attempt to launch the newly repaired Lady Nyassa. He left for

1. F. Moir to parents, 7th December, 1880, L.E.(1).
2. Ibid., 20th October, 1880.
3. Ibid., 22nd February, 1881.
5. Ibid., 6th July, 1881. The new steamer was renamed Livingstone. J.M. spent some time repairing it and succeeded in getting it to work but it does not appear to have been much used after the re-launching of the Lady Nyassa.
7. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 11th October, 1881, Shepperson collection.
Britain in November, 1881, and did not return to Quelimane until July, 1882, bringing with him his bride, Bessie Tod, a daughter of a neighbour of Dr. Moir's in Castle Street, Edinburgh. Throughout this period Fred Moir was in sole charge in Africa, returning to Mandala in June 1881, he reached the north end late in July. He spent the next months in the area, shooting elephant and trading. He reported to his father that he had injured his nose when the stock of his two bore broke when firing 9\% ox. shot, but this did not prevent him from shooting nine elephant in the first few weeks of his stay. At the end of the year he had to break off from the hunting field to go to the assistance of James Stewart, C.E., who had lost nineteen of his workers as a result of a raid by a Nyamwanga Chief, Nesevera, within a short time of beginning work on what was to be the Stevenson road. Fred returned to Mandala in February where he became seriously ill and was forbidden to proceed to Quelimane. He had however reached the coast by 21st March, he was to remain there for over a year, establishing the Company's office, and running the lower river steamer service from below.

It seemed necessary to give this detail of the movements of the managers in the early years in order to demonstrate their energy and the scale of the operation which they were determined to found whatever the limitations of capital, manpower or resources. They took no narrow view of the functions of the Company; they may have been asked to do the impossible, but they were determined that failure should not be attributable to want of initiative on their part. They may be accused of dissipating their energies in too many directions, but this was in response to the brief which they had been given before they set out. It is probable that the service to the missions which the Company was intended to provide suffered as a consequence of the

2. F. Moir to father, 29th July, 1881, E.E., (1).
3. F.M. to Miss E. Tod, 14th August, 1881, ibid.
4. F.M. to W. Swing, 10th February, 1882, ibid.
5. Ibid., 24th March, 1882.
wide range of the Managers' activities, but they regarded this service as only a part of the job which they were to do in Africa. In the three years that John Moir spent in the area before going on leave he travelled over 5,000 miles, including two return journeys from Mandela to Karonga and three from Quelimane to Mandela. This total makes no provision for distance covered on short journeys from Mandela or on hunting expeditions. Of his time less than a year was spent at Mandela and less than a year at Quelimane, the remainder was spent on the move. Fred Moir had been in Africa for six years when he went on leave for the first time in September 1834. During this period he had made long journeys totalling over 10,000 miles. He had made four return journeys from Mandela to the north end, two from there to the south end of Lake Tanganyika and no less than seven from Quelimane to Mandela. He had spent a total of fourteen months at Mandela, sixteen months at the north end of the lake and on the way to Tanganyika, and twenty-two months at Quelimane. All the time spent at the north end was passed in hunting for which no estimate of the distance he travelled can be made, though twenty miles a day was usual. Over half his time was spent in travel, and for six months of the period that he was static his inactivity was due to his being too ill to move. It was, of course, only possible for the Moirs to keep up these enormous distances year after year by the use of water transport on the Zambesi, Shire and the lake. Probably 75% of the distance covered on long journeys was travelled by steamer or boat. This made it possible to average 30-50 miles a day for long periods; going on foot with a caravan of porters it was almost impossible to average as much as ten miles a day, though greater distances could be covered for a few days at a time.

1. All the information in this paragraph can be checked against Reports of the Manager, 1870-1892.

2. The lower river steamer tended to average 40 miles a day, or less, up stream, and 50 miles, or more down stream. The lake steamer generally averaged 50 miles a day but its speed could be halved by adverse winds, and it was occasionally stopped by storms. Travellers often had to wait weeks for the steamer to arrive. The Moirs had the advantage of knowing more accurately than most when they were due, and so spent less time waiting.
This incessant travelling did enable the Managers to see most of the area which was made open by the water route; though they may not have had the depth of acquaintance with small areas which was acquired by men like Duff McDonald, Clement Scott, and Robert Laws, they did get a superficial knowledge of the region as a whole which the others never acquired. It is, for instance, certain that Duff MacDonald never saw the lake and it is unlikely that Clement Scott ever did. The Miers were attempting to satisfy the certainly pre-existing demand for western products, especially cloth and beads, on the assumption that if these demands could be satisfied through the sale of other commodities, the sale of slaves would be made unnecessary and so redundant. As the slave-trade acted as a link between societies, and was not confined to a few, it was natural that they should seek to make contact with as many of the people in the area as possible. As has been pointed out above, the premises on which this theory of commercial change was based were naive and oversimplistic. Nevertheless the Miers had gone to Africa with the intention of putting it into practice, and a great deal of their time and thought at this stage was devoted to an attempt to see how it could be done. Two further assumptions underlay the analysis of the situation that the Miers made: these were that two of the known demands of the population, those for guns, and for alcoholic spirits, where they had been introduced, should not be satisfied by the Company; and that the trade must be run on a profit-making basis. There could be no question of the Company offering an artificially high price in order to grab trade from the established trading powers.

Given these assumptions their major preoccupation was with the cost of transport, and with ease of access to the interior. For a long time the only two exports of any significance from this area had been ivory and slaves; the reason for this being that these were the only two commodities which could be carried to the coast with hope of profit. In order to make the export of other commodities possible and profitable the first necessity was to reduce the freight rate per ton from the interior to the coast, and from there to London, or, in

1. See above Chapter II.
the ease of some products, to South Africa. There were at the outset various barriers to the achievement of this reduction.

In the first place there was the problem of access to the Zambesi which had caused the brothers so much difficulty at the very beginning when they had to wait months to get the Lady Nyassa on to the river. Quelimane had developed as a town of sorts in the earlier years of the century when it was on a mouth of the Zambesi; by the 1870's it had ceased to be this, but the Customs House and administration was situated there and many merchants and officials had a vested interest in its continued importance. The Kongone mouth of the Zambesi was navigable though difficult; if it could be opened to ocean-going vessels, and if a Customs House could be established, there would be an immediate improvement in the accessibility of the Zambesi and a consequent reduction in the cost of freight to the coast. It would no longer be necessary to carry all goods and passengers up or down the difficult Kwanza river, or to store goods at Maruru at the head of that river where it came nearest to the Zambesi. Travel on the Kwanza was never a pleasant experience; because of the combination of tide and current which caused the water level to fluctuate between 8-10 ft. below the banks at low tide and the level of the branches of trees at high tide, progress on the river was very slow; it usually took five to six days, and sometimes longer, to cover the seventy miles between Quelimane and Maruru. As the river was not suitable for steamers the journey had to be made in boats with a team of half a dozen paddlers, the passengers lay in grass covered shelters in the stern. The down journey could be made much more rapidly, but the limited capacity of the boats made the export of a bulky commodity by this route impracticable. Fred Moir was clear about this from an early date. In May 1879 he wrote:

"All developments depend on the question: are we to have

1. J. Buchanan, The Shire Highlands, Edinburgh, 1885, pp 7, 75-77. At low tide there was mud two feet deep between the boats and the bank making it almost impossible to disembark, as the bank was in any case very difficult to climb. The porterage between the Kwanza and the Zambesi was usually from 4-5 miles long. In the rainy season two of these were under water and had to be waded through.
free communication with the sea at the Kongo? We are most anxious on this point."

He pointed to the length, expense, and uncertainty of the KwaKwa route and to the difficulty of arranging for the security of the goods which had inevitably to be left at Naruru. A few months later he wrote to his father that

"Until it is settled that we can ship to the Kongo (from the interior, H.W.M.) — it is hardly worth having a store for the natives. There is so little to be had, merely food for daily wants and in small quantities."

There was clearly no point in encouraging people to grow a cash crop, which he intended to do, if the crop could not be exported, and it could not so long as the sole exit from the country was via the Kwa-Kwa.

"So soon as we are in a position to buy things if they were brought," he went on

"we shall try and make their mouths water for umbrellas, tin goods, musical boxes etc. etc."

There was an additional problem connected with the Kongo. There was no regular steamer connection with it and the world, and so long as the official port continued to be Quelimane it was unlikely that there would be. The steamer service to Quelimane was in any case quite bad enough. The monthly service by the Castle line to Durban and the Cape ports which had begun in 1877 came to an end in the course of 1879 because the liners being used on the route to Mozambique from that date were too large to enter the Quelimane river. The only service from then on was the British India Steam Navigation Company's small steamer to the north. In order to overcome this difficulty Fred Moir suggested that the Company could buy and operate a small steamer of 300-400 tons which could call at the Kongo, and collect produce from up river. The alternative to this would be to persuade the British India line to allow their steamer to call at the Kongo. As it was thought likely at this date that William Mackinnon, the owner of the line, was about to become a share-holder in the Company,

2. F.M. to father, 8th September, 1879, ibid.
3. F.M. to Dr. James Stewart, 7th May, 1879, ibid.
this did not seem to be impossible. \(^1\) In any case he stressed to the Directors that the two priorities should be to get Mackinnon to start a service to the Kongone, and to get the Portuguese to open a Customs House there. It would, he thought, be worthwhile for one of the Directors to go to Lisbon to press this point. If the Company failed to achieve either of these objectives, then the Company's own steamer, or schooner, could be used to collect goods from the Kongone and take them to Quelimane to be cleared. \(^1\) He was certain that a profitable trade from the Kongone could be done in rice, oil-seeds and groundnuts, and possibly in other products such as sugar and maize. \(^2\)

Remembering the importance of immediate profitability, and bearing in mind that the production of cash crops in the Livingstonia-Mantyre area was not likely for some years, Moir made some detailed investigations of the state of the lower river trade. There were already fairly large export trades from Quelimane in groundnuts, and copra; there was also an export trade in oil-seeds from Senna and Tete. \(^3\) These trades were in the hands of one Dutch and two French companies; Fred Moir thought that the Company should go into these trades at least until exports from the interior could be developed.

He presumably also thought that profits from this sort of trade could be used to finance developments in the interior and, perhaps more important, to subsidise freight rates on down-going goods from there. \(^4\)

He pointed out that the French House, which exported groundnuts, crushed them at Marseilles; and that if the Company brought out a crusher it could not only save much freight but benefit from the cheaper labour available on the coast. He had found that the price of rice at the Kongone was one quarter the price at Quelimane; it could be bought there at the equivalent of £3 a ton, the price at Durban was about £9 a ton, there must be scope for profit. He suggested that rice cleaners should be investigated and one sent out as the only drawback to the trade was the time spent and damage done

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1. F. Moir to father, 14th January, 1880, L.B.(1).
2. F.M. to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879, ibid.
3. F.M. to Directors, 1st May, 1881, ibid.
4. F.M. to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879, ibid.
in hand cleaning. He was also certain that there were great possibilities for the cultivation of sugar at the Kongone and on the Zambezi, he noticed that as it grew almost wild the soil must be suitable. He suggested a mill on a boat to process the cane on the spot or a stationary water-mill; he saw no reason why a large trade should not be developed though a small mill would probably be able to crush more than could be collected.

In proposing that the Company should begin its trading activities near to the coast and work inwards, at least so far as bulky agricultural products were concerned, Fred Moir was basing his argument on sound business sense. At the then prevailing prices for these commodities, the largest item in the cost of getting a product on to the London market from East Africa was freight. In all his calculations he assumed that the cost of carrying goods from the coast to London would be £4 a ton. Even with barges capable of carrying much larger quantities than the steamer, the cost of freight from the lower Shire or the Shire Highlands, to the coast would be higher than that. If a profitable business could be built up on the lower river or at the Kongone itself it would be possible to extend the business inland, using the profit on the low-freight coastal produce to pay the overheads on the upkeep of a store at the Kongone, and, if necessary, the running of an ocean-going steamer; and to subsidise the upper river freights. While he argued that a profitable business could be run on the coast through the purchase of products which were already available, he went on to suggest that more could be made by the inauguration of a plantation at the Kongone itself where produce could be loaded directly into ocean-going vessels. With this end in view he selected an island between the Kongone channel and the Zambezi about ten miles in from the sea; it was about 50 square miles in area and apparently almost uninhabited. He was confident that coconuts could be grown there with great hope of profit. He made enquiries with the Portuguese Governor of Quelimane and discovered that the whole island could be bought for £500 or rented for £25 per annum. He calculated that if coconuts yielded half the quantity produced by trees at Mozambique a plantation

of 640 acres would after six years yield £8,000 per annum. He thought that cotton, rice, groundnuts, and possibly even coffee could be cultivated there also. 1 Moir was prepared to take the island in his own name as a speculation and Henry Henderson of Blantyre, who was said not to be happy there, was willing to join the Company and manage the plantation; he had farming experience in Australia. 2 It is difficult at this point in time to estimate how realistic this particular scheme was; there are now enormous coconut plantations on the Mozambique coast, and so it can be presumed that the trees would have grown, and it is probable that his assessment of their profitability was correct. The problem which he did not face very squarely was that of finding the labour to work the plantation. He seems to have thought that it would be practicable to bring labourers down from the Shire Highlands. 3 It is likely that he emphasised the possibilities of cultivation at the Kongone mouth in the hope that it would stimulate the Directors to seek a solution to the inter-related problems of the steamer and the Customs House.

Continuing along the route to the interior, the third problem after ocean freights and access to the Zambesi was the question of the river steamer and freights. Quite apart from the structural weaknesses of the steamer which will be considered later, it became apparent very soon that the Lady Nyassa was too small and under-powered to be able to cope with a worth-while export trade from the interior. She was intended to carry six tons of cargo, in fact on the up-river journey on the Shire she had to carry two or three tons of wood to guarantee getting from one woading station to another; this left room for only four to five tons of cargo. Coming down stream she did not require so much wood but even if she made the maximum possible number of journeys between Katunga’s and Maruru – two a month – she could not carry down more than 144 tons in a year which was, as Fred Moir, remarked, not enough to load a very small

1. F. Moir to A. Hart, 3rd and 6th December, 1879, L.B.(1).
2. F.M. to father, 13th January, 6th February, 1880, Salisbury.
3. F.M. to A. Hart, 6th December, 1879, L.B.(1).
sailing vessel. If she had been able to tow barges the situation
would not have been quite so bad but going upstream it was necessary
to put the dinghy on board; she was not large enough to deal with
the import requirements of the missions and the Company, let alone
with a large-scale export trade. What was needed was a strong
tug-steamer capable of pulling two 14 ton barges against a 5 knot
current. So long as the Company was compelled to rely on the Lady
Nyassa and on paddled boats there was no possibility of starting the
export of cash crops from the Shire Highlands, but on the assumption
that the Company had the powerful tug that he hoped for, and a fleet
of barges which were in common use on the Zambesi, Fred was prepared
to make estimates for the profitability of certain exports from the
Highlands.

He reckoned, for instance, that groundnuts could be bought at
Blantyre for twenty-five shillings a ton (at the standard rate of 4d.
a yard for calico in the Shire Highlands at this date this would be
a price of 75 yards of calico per ton); that they could be carried
from Blantyre to Katunga's for 2 yards per load of 56 lbs., or £1 6s. 8d.
per ton; that they could with barges be taken down river for 19s. 4d.
a ton; and shipped to London for £4 a ton. Allowing for extra charges
he thought that it would be possible to get a ton of groundnuts on
to the London market for less than £10 a ton, the going price was £14
a ton. If rice was bought on the river for the same price as ground-
nuts in the Highlands, the cost of carriage would be saved and it
could be sold in Natal for the same price as groundnuts in London,
and so with a higher margin of profit. He considered the possibility
of exporting maize, but in spite of an estimated purchase price of
21 yards a ton the figures that he produced show that it was very
unlikely that this could have been sold with a profit at Natal which
was the most favourable market. All these calculations were based
on the assumption that the prices of products for which there was at
the time almost no market in the Shire Highlands, such as groundnuts

1. F. Moir to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879, and F.M. to Directors, A.L.C.,
14th March, 1883, L.B.(l).
2. F.M. to Directors, 14th March, 1883, ibid.
3. F.M. to Directors, 24th May, 1879; also, 11th February, 1882.
would remain constant once a market had been provided.¹ The question he did not ask was whether the demand for goods would be sufficiently strong to induce people to plant and tend crops solely for sale. Meanwhile he was already noticing the effects of a probable falling away in the demand for cloth.

That is, at any rate, the most likely explanation of the difficulty of finding carriers from Katunga's to Blantyre which he remarked upon in July 1879.² To speak of a fall in demand for cloth is perhaps to put the position the wrong way round; it would be more true to say that there had been a fall in the actual want of, or need for, cloth which made the Makololo less inclined to do the carriage for the two yards which they had been paid since 1876. At a later date there was a strike of porters which was organised by the chief, Katunga;³ there does not seem to be any evidence of a strike at this stage but there was a noticeable reluctance to volunteer for the work. This had made it impossible for James Stewart to get up a new boiler for the Ilala which had lain at Katunga's for some months. There was the additional factor in this case that the people were afraid of the boiler which was reputed to be an oven for cooking human flesh which many believed to be a specially favoured delicacy among white men. In any event Fred Moir rightly concluded that head porterage would not be adequate to support a large export trade. As well as the difficulty of getting carriers, there was the problem of controlling them when they had been mustered.

Fred Moir felt that the answer to the problem of porterage was to import a traction engine capable of pulling three to five tons up the Katunga's road where there was a gradient of 1 in 10 which continued for two miles. He believed that a few months work on the road would make it usable, some strong bridges would have to be built, and the road altered in some places; the engine should burn wood, and be fitted with very strong brakes which would enable it to haul much larger loads down the hill than it brought up thus providing for bulk exports. It could be maintained by a steamer engineer at Katunga's or Hatope, and they might take it in turns to run, making a

¹. F. Moir to father, 6th September, 1879, L.B. (1).
². F.M. to A. Hart, 4th July, 1879, ibid.
³. See below Chapter IV.
healthy change from the lake or river. For the interim period before an engine could be got out an ox cart and a donkey cart were ordered from Dr. Stewart of Lovedale; after several reminders these did arrive and were used, though they did not provide the final solution. It was nearly twenty years before a traction engine was imported, it did not prove capable of negotiating the Katunga’s hill and could only be used successfully on the more gentle Matope road, even on this it was doubtfully economic, but this should not detract from the fact that Fred Moir had identified at a very early date what was to be the greatest single impediment to the development of agricultural exports from the area—the inadequacy of ‘tenga-tenga’, head porterage—and had made a suggestion which had to be tried before it could be found wanting. It was not the traction engine which was at fault, but the road, which at places on the Katunga’s hill looks remarkably similar to-day to pictures of James Stewart’s prototype. If the problem of porterage could have been solved it would have made much easier the development of cash-cropping by peasant farmers which the Moirs clearly envisaged as being the best means of satisfying the demand for western goods which undoubtedly existed, and which they felt to be at the basis of the slave-trade. Because the cost of porterage and river freights remained high it proved impossible to buy in the Shire Highlands for export crops such as groundnuts which were already grown; the first agricultural export from the area was to be coffee which because of the high capital input and specialised tending required for its successful cultivation had in the first instance to be a plantation crop. The demand for plantation workers, and for ‘tenga-tenga’ men to carry the crop to the river then set up a conflict between the interests of peasant farmers and plantation owners which might never have arisen if the problem of transport had

1. F. Moir to Dr. J. Stewart, 14th January, 1880; J. Moir to Dr. J Stewart, 10th April, 1880; J. M. to Dr. J. S. 25th October, 1880; all in Salisbury; F. M. to Directors, 11th February, 1882, L.E.(1).

2. The first traction engine was introduced into the Shire Highlands in 1898; it was able to manage the run to Matope but not that to Katunga’s, see Central African Times, 19th November, 1898.
been solved before the plantations became established.

After dealing with the problems of ocean freights, access, river freights, and road transport the next was that of trade on the lake. There was no question of it being possible to start exporting anything from the lake except the most valuable commodity in terms of weight, price and volume — ivory. Even with improvements in the river freights nothing else could be carried down from the lake with hope of profit; rubber was the only agricultural product which it was worth attempting to cultivate, there was not much to be had on the lake growing wild, though Fred Moir did manage to start a small trade from Bandawe, half a ton was exported from there in 1881.1 His quick reconnaissance of the region in 1879 had been enough to impress on him the difficulty of breaking into the monopoly or near monopoly of the ivory trade which the Yao and Arabs, had acquired. Part of the difficulty was that the Company by refusing to trade in guns and powder was cutting itself off from a large part of the trade, another problem was that the small size of the Ilala and the demands of the Livingstonia Mission which still controlled the steamer reduced the quantity of goods which the Company could get on to the lake; and they had to compete with a large number of professional traders with a detailed knowledge of the local market and of the political situation. Moir proposed that 'as many trustworthy natives' as possible should be employed to travel along the lake coast and into the interior to pre-empt the sources of supply. A store was established at Kapingina behind Bandawe and it was hoped that this would demonstrate whether people would bring ivory to the store or whether the trader had to go to them.2

It can fairly be said that within a short time of his arrival in Africa Fred Moir had isolated most of the major barriers to the development of export trade from the Shire Highlands and had made proposals for their solution which, if implemented, might have had a profound impact not only on the activities of the Company but also

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1. F. Moir to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879 and F.M. to Directors, 11th February, 1882, L.B.(1).
2. F.M. to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879, ibid.
on the economic development of what is now Malawi. The problem of carriage and freight is the one factor which has dominated the economic history of the country until the present day. The campaign for the building of the railway, the problem of paying for it when it had been built, the extension of the road system, the opening up of the Central Region, all these are facets of the fundamental question of how a country situated some distance from the coast, with no wealth other than her agriculture, can get her products profitably to market. His proposals were however premature; James Stewart had warned the Moirs in December 1878 that:

"The state of matters commercial at home is about as bad as it is possible for them to be - as applied to the operations of the L.C. this might be kept in mind. It appears in two ways:
(i) it is a good time to buy but
(ii) it is not advisable to make more calls than is absolutely necessary...I should be disposed to hold in." 2

It is true that Horace Waller, the former stock-broker, was able to write less than a year later that

"the revival of trade in the last two months is almost magical, and this is much felt at Glasgow. One lives in hope that your Missions will reap the benefit of the improved state of things..." 3

but as has been shown capital was not forthcoming.

- iv -

Nothing came of the Moirs' schemes; the island at the Kongone was not bought, though a small plot was, and a store was built there, but not much used; the Portuguese were not persuaded to establish a Customs House there, nor did the British India line start a regular

1. The fact that almost all the references in this section are to letters from Fred Moir is due to, "Historical accident that some of his letters of this period have survived while none of John Moir's to the Directors at this date have. It does not follow that John Moir had no ideas of his own on the future activities of the Company, or the development of the area.


3. H. Waller to R. Laws, 11th November, 1879, MS 7902."
steamer service, although Consul Foot later took soundings and
proved that the mouth could with buoys be navigated by ships of 12 ft.
draft. 1 John Buchanan writing in 1885, when he had been working as
a planter on his own account for four years, made precisely the same
points as Moir had done:

"Without more direct communication (with the sea H.W.M.)
it is difficult to see how produce other than what is
high in value and small in bulk can be made to pay." 2

He felt that with direct freight there was no reason why maize and
beans should not be exported to South Africa at times of high prices.
Until there was direct communication to the sea, trade on the Zambesi
and Shire could only be spasmodic. 2

In principle the Directors were favourably disposed to plans
for development, 3 in practice they were cautious. James White, an
important share-holder, thought that it was imprudent to spend much
money on schemes until additional capital was secure. 4 John Stephen
was in favour of the Kongone island scheme, but was afraid that it
might bring the Company too much into the power of the Portuguese.
He consulted James Stewart, his brother-in-law, who was against the
purchase of land but thought that a lease would be acceptable. 5

Because of the uncertainty about finance the Directors were slow to
answer the Moirs' letters and gave no conclusive answers. Fred Moir,
frustrated by the apparent neglect of the Directors, and by a proposal
that one of the Managers should return to Scotland to manage the
Glasgow side of the business, summed up his views on their position:

"Give two men at home a small steam launch, not of strongest
make with a single engineer in it, let them have one
more assistant in the shape of a weaver and a choice of
black men who know how to steal and get drunk better
than most things, give them a district larger than G.B.
with one port of exit - tell them to manage the trade of
the country. Ask them to do it on £200 p.a. with pros-
pect of increase - add the dangers of life, from men and
fever, climate, mosquitoes, and it may help us (you, H.W.M.)
to realise our position here." 6

1. Foot to Granville, 18th January, 1884, P.O. 541/21. Oil seeds
brought down from the Tete and Senna districts were exported
from there by the Dutch and French Houses.
5. Ibid., 29th June, 1880.
John Stephen commented that Fred Moir's last letter seemed to be written in 'rather bad temper' and that nothing could be done while the Company was £2,000 overdrawn. As something of a reprimand the Secretary wrote to inform them:

"of the financial position of the Company and of its inability to undertake extensive outlays, such as maintaining a vessel, conducting a large export trade and erecting heavy machinery for the purpose of manufactures and suggesting to Moirs to confine themselves to planting stations around the Lake and to employ in the meantime the existing means of transit."

The Directors approved this letter 'considering the proposals premature.'

The Moirs were naturally disappointed at the check that their plans had received. Fred had told his father 'we want to be a large Co. and to occupy a large field. There is no use trying to do this without expense.' He was, he said, disgusted that the Company had decided against going in for the lower river trade, as he was sure that with a little zeal it could be made to pay. He felt that 'If the Company don't intend to push trade we had better stop altogether. We could do better on our own book.' They had been led to believe that the capital of the Company was about to be increased, the news that it was not forced them to reconsider their whole line of policy. They were told that they were not to enter the probably profitable lower river trade; the lack of transport facilities made it impossible to start the export of produce from the Shire Highlands; they were confined to the transport business for the missions and the exploitation of the ivory trade from the lake. Fred Moir considered this to be a dying trade and they would not have prosecuted it so vigorously if they had been able to do anything else in the way of trade and if they had not been compelled to rely on it for profit, and for generating the flow of cash back to Glasgow that the Directors repeatedly demanded in order to reduce the Company's overdraft which had grown to £2,400 by September 1880 in spite of a subscription of

3. F. Moir to father, 14th January, 1880, L.13.(1).
4. F.M. to A. Hart, 12th January, 1880, ibid.
5. F.M. to mother, 29th December, 1879, ibid.
a similar sum earlier in the year.¹

Even with these limited objectives, the resources available to the Managers were inadequate to the job in hand. Fred Moir in his protest referred to above, did not greatly exaggerate the difficulty of their position. The shortage of capital deprived them of the two things which they most needed to run an effective river service, and without which it was impossible to contemplate any expansion; a good steamer for the lower river; and men to run it. The Lady Nyassa was no more fortunate than her ill-fated predecessor on the Zambesi Expedition. In addition to the difficulty with which she was put on to the river, and her inadequacy with regard to capacity and power, she was also structurally weak. Like Livingstone’s steamers the Pioneer, and the Ma Robert, her plates proved unable to stand up to the battering that she sustained from frequently running aground and into submerged snags, rocks, and branches, first on the Kwakwa and then on the Zambesi and Shire.² There appeared also to be something about the water of the rivers which corroded the paint-work and then the thin metal plates.³ When she was first taken down to the Kongone in April 1879 and docked there, hundreds of her rivets and plates had to be replaced.⁴ In April 1880 the engineer wrote that she was unfit for more trips,⁵ but it was not until October that Laws reported that she had ‘sunk at last’ in the Morambala Marsh.⁶

1. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 23rd September, 19th October, 1880. Demands for accounts and remittances were frequently made, i.e. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 25th March, 29th June, 1880; 10th March, 1881. A telegram received in Glasgow before the 5th April, 1881, informed the Directors that there were stocks of goods including ivory in Africa valued at £3,000.

2. F.M. to parents, 10th May, 1879, L.B.(1); F.M. to Dr. J. Stewart, 8th May, 1879, ibid; F.M. to A. Hart, 24th May, 1879, ibid; R. Henderson (L.C.A.C. engineer) to Dr. J. Stewart, 4th January, 1880, Salisbury.


4. R. Henderson to Dr. J. Stewart, 8th January, 1880, Salisbury; Henderson was then working on the Lady at Katunga’s ‘after nearly losing her by so many leaks breaking out all over, and working all day and night to keep her afloat.’

5. F.M. To A. Hart, 22nd April, 1880, L.B.(1).

6. R. Laws to Dr. J. Stewart, 14th October, 1880, Salisbury. James Stewart, C.E., was said to have been on board at the time of the accident.
The hull was said to have been lost completely, £1,360 was written off her value leaving only £600 for the engines which were salvaged, it was later decided that the damage was not quite so bad as had been feared and she was relaunched at Manaro in October 1881. She was at this stage sheathed in wood as a precaution against rust which had previously ruined her hull. She had to be docked again in February 1882, but from the middle of that year was able to run a regular service taking an average of sixteen to eighteen days for the return journey from Maruru to Katunga's - a distance of about two hundred miles each way. She tended to take seven to eight days on the up-journey and four to five on the way down, barring accidents which were frequent owing to the unreliable state of the river, its shifting sand-banks, variable current and increasing tendency to become too shallow for navigation. In 1884 she was sunk at Mbeue during the disturbances which followed the murder of Chipatula, and owing to this and to the Machinjiri rising she paid only one visit to Katunga's between February and September. In 1883 she was out of commission for some months owing to Fred Moir's having taken her down to Quelimane across the Balambwanda channel at the height of an exceptional flood. He claimed to have left Maruru at 7 a.m. and to have reached Quelimane at 9 a.m. which for a distance usually reckoned as seventy miles is difficult to believe. When the flood had subsided, which it did with great rapidity, he was left in the situation in which the brothers had found themselves in 1878, with no obvious way of getting the steamer back on to the Zambesi. In the end she was taken by sea to the Kongone in very calm conditions. He had been returning from an exploratory journey up the Zambesi to Tete. This was only the second visit by a steamer to Tete, Livingston's
Ma Robert had been the first; the journey involved the difficult and dangerous passage of the Lupata gorge.

When Fred Morrison, the Company's most efficient engineer, went down river to repair her boiler in August 1885, he found the engines in a terrible mess and remarked that he would have been ashamed to take the Lady down river in her then condition. A London Missionary Society engineer travelling to Lake Tanganyika in 1886, commented on the 'wretched state of her engines' and her 'very dilapidated appearance from want of repair.' She had taken five weeks to come down river owing to the Morombola Marsh being blocked by floating islands, and took thirteen days to get up for similar reasons, though Carson attributed part of the delay to the state of the engines and to the fact that there was no-one on board who was competent to repair them. The Company was, he said, aware of this deficiency but was unable to obtain the services of a suitable man. Morrison, who was usually employed on the lake steamer came down to repair the engines after this trip but his occasional attentions were not a substitute for constant maintenance.

The L.M.S. engineer had pin-pointed a major weakness of the Company in its earlier years — a shortage of man-power. But even with ample man-power it would have been impossible for the Company to have run a satisfactory service on the lower river with the Lady Nyassa as the only steamer. Because of its small capacity and its inability to tow barges it could not cope with all the freight which was consigned to the interior. The quantity to be transported increased year by year with the expansion of the Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions; the opening of the U.M.C.A. on Lake Malawi; the diversion of goods for the L.M.S. on Lake Tanganyika to the Zambesi route; the establishment of the British Government's Lakes Consulate; and the expansion of the scope of the Company's own trade. But until late in 1887 there was no increase in the carrying capacity of the steamer on the lower river; during the long periods between

1. Morrison diaries, op. cit., 7th August, 1885.
3. At this date the new large steamer, the James Stevenson, came into service.
1879 and 1882 when there was no steamer running at all, the Company had to rely on boats and canoes propelled by paddlers; even when the steamer was running it had to be supplemented by these means. 1 This did not prevent delays on the river, and large accumulations of goods naturally incensed the expectant recipients; on at least one occasion the Universities Mission sent down a man to Maruru to bring up their goods by any means. 2

The small pay-load of the steamer also made it impossible for the river service to be run at a profit. Because of the broken-up nature of the route it was necessary for the freight charge to cover not only the cost of the maintenance and running of the steamer but also a share of the expenses of an office at Quelimane; the provision of boats on the Kwakwa; the cost of the short porterage there, which involved the permanent posting of a Company agent; and the cost of the Katunga porterage, and the keeping of an agent there. The Company was prevented from charging an economic rate for this service because there was always the possibility that the missions might consider it worth their while to organise their own service with boats. It was originally intended that the charge for freight from Quelimane to Mandala should be £15 a ton, and the Livingstonia Mission appear to have paid this rate. However the Blantyre Mission arranged to pay £12 a ton from the date of their agreement in 1879 which was negotiated between John Moir and Duff MacDonald. In 1883 they refused to contemplate an increase to £15 though James Stewart held that £20 a ton would be a reasonable rate. 3 They were still holding out against an increase in 1887 when Livingstonia and the L.M.S. had agreed to increased rates. 4 They were of course quite right to demand a better service than the one which they generally got, but they do not appear to have given much thought to the difficulties

2. F. Moir to A. Hart, 29th March, 1881, L.B. 1(1); J. Moir to Directors, 5th November, 1883, ibid; in this letter he complains that the Company could carry ten times her capacity in freight.
3. J. Moir to Dr. J. Stewart, 24th August, 1883, Salisbury; J. Maclagan to D.C. Scott, 1st February, 24th August, 1883; MS7546.
4. J. Maclagan to D.C. Scott, 13th April, 1887, MS 7548.
of the Moirs or to the fact that the carriage of their goods was subsidised by the other missions and the Company itself.

The extent to which the Company subsidised all lower river freights can be seen from the profit and loss accounts. In the accounts to 1890 there was a heavy loss which was almost entirely attributable to the depreciation of the steamer; there are no accounts extant for 1881, but as the steamer hardly ran at all in this year there was almost certainly a loss. In 1882 the first year in which the steamer ran a full year there was a loss of £400. The figure for 1893 is obscure but large losses were made in every subsequent year until 1898 which was the first full year in which the larger steamer, the James Stevenson, was operating. These losses were almost entirely due to the uneconomic size of the steamer; they were increased by exceptional events like the burning of the Morumbala store in 1894 and the stoppage of that year, and in 1897 by delays due to the shortage of water.

The fact that a profit was made for the first time on the river freights when the larger steamer was brought into service is ample confirmation of Fred Moir's original contention that with increased capital expenditure the Company could be made to pay. The small size of the original steamer meant that the heavy overheads had to be divided into an inadequate tonnage, and energy and resources had to be diverted into the organisation of a supplementary boat service which should never have been necessary. With the larger steamer there was an improvement of the service and the possibility of a reduction in the cost per ton of freight. This made competition from boats and canoes no longer a real danger. In the early 1880's John Buchanan and George Fenwick had both been able on occasions to bring up goods more cheaply than the Company could, though Buchanan had more often relied upon the Company's service and recommended it in his book. The existence of this alternative should, in theory, have helped to keep the Company on its toes, and did, as has been shown, help to keep the rates down to an unprofitable level. The

1. J. Moir to father, 12th March, 1881, Shepperson collection.
2. J.M. to Directors, 24th August, 1883, L.B. (1).
3. Losses on lower river freights, 1887, 4240, 1888, 21,249, 1889, 81,325, 1890, 6381, 1891, 21,383, 1892, 1893, 12,290, 1894, 21,249, 1895, 81,325, 1896, 6381, 1897, 21,383.
limitations of the steamer were such that no amount of competition could have improved the service, and there was a real danger that it would lead to there being no service at all.

If the failure of the Company to raise capital in 1880 appeared to put an end to the Koos' own schemes for expansion and for putting the Company on to a profitable footing, it did not damp the enthusiasm of one of the Directors for a scheme upon which he had set his heart. If the Company had been successful in its share issue it would have gone ahead to build the road between Lakes Malawi and Tanganyika which James Stevenson had for long had in mind, and would have placed a steamer on the latter lake. James Stevenson was forced to reconsider the means of attaining his objective but did not allow this set-back to deflect him from the end. Early in 1879 it had been anticipated that the London Missionary Society who were attempting to establish themselves on Lake Tanganyika would move the centre of their operations to the south end of the lake in order to benefit from the communications which the Company and the Livingstonia Mission were to set up. Stevenson was convinced that the water route was likely to be quicker and more healthy than the eight hundred mile overland route from Zanzibar, and his conviction was reinforced by the reports which he received from James Stewart, C.E., after his successful journey to Tanganyika. There was nothing in Stewart's opinion, to hinder the mission and the Company putting a steamer on the lake. He was certain that the mission possessed the best water route into the heart of Africa and that 'No better service to Africa could be done than by opening up this route...'. In July 1880 Stevenson proposed that he, the Livingstonia Mission, the Company, and the London Missionary Society should each contribute £250 towards

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1. L.M.M., 17th January, 1879, MS 7912.
the building of the road between the lakes; the L.M.S. declined and so the matter was dropped. James Stewart, C.E. returned to Britain later in the year and Stevenson then promised to contribute £4,000, which Stewart reckoned to be the cost of the road, if suitable arrangements could be made with the two missions and the Company. Stevenson wrote to the various interested parties giving his conditions which were that the L.M.S. should give an undertaking to use the Nyassa route for the carriage of the steamer and for all subsequent shipments of goods, and should make their headquarters at the south end of the lake; that the Livingstonia Mission should establish a station at Mweniwanda's on the eastern edge of the Tanganyika plateau; and that the Company should extend its operations to Tanganyika and maintain the road. Of the £4,000 to be spent, £1,000 was to be for the salaries of Stewart himself for one year, and of two European assistants for two years; £2,000 was to be for the wages of the labour employed in the building of the road; and £1,000 was to be in the form of a subscription for shares in the Company which was to be used in the development of wheeled traffic on the road when it had been built. As an indication of the extension of the Company's interests it was to be given a 'neutral' name such as the 'Livingstonia African Lakes Company'.

James Stevenson was still nominally the Chairman of the Company but he had ceased to attend meetings in November 1879, pleading ill-health; a cousin William Stevenson was appointed to the Board as his representative but from then on the effective Chairman and supervisor of the business was John Stephen. The other Directors were at

1. L.M.M., 22nd July, 1880, MS 7912; J. Stewart, C.E., to Dr. James Stewart, 7th May, 1881, Salisbury. Robert Arthington, an eccentric millionaire, Quaker recluse had promised £5,000 to pay for a steamer for Lake Tanganyika.
2. L.M.M., 15th February, 1881, quotes letters from J. Stevenson to the Livingstonia Mission, the L.C.A.C., and the L.M.S., MS 7912.
3. J. Stewart, C.E., to Dr. J. Stewart, 7th May, 1881, Salisbury.
4. Note 2 above.
5. L.C.A.C. Minutes.
first disposed to 'keep name and push ahead rather than to change
name and start again,' but later decided that in the event of a satis-
factory arrangement for the use of the steamer being made with the
L.M.S. they would agree to the plan. The Livingstonia Mission were
in favour and so the only stumbling block remained the L.M.S. They
were reluctant to commit themselves to total dependence on the Malawi
route; at one stage the deal appeared to be off. Finally Stevenson
agreed to give the money without the guarantee he had demanded
on this point, and the L.M.S. agreed to send their steamer at a rate
of £125 a ton if the road was ready within two years. On the 2nd
June 1881 an extraordinary meeting of the Livingstonia Central
Africa Company was called at which it was agreed to change its name
to 'The African Lakes Company'. The first meeting of the Directors
of the 'new' Company took place on the 8th June 1881.

The expansion in the sphere of operations of the Company implied
by the change of name was not matched by an extension of the capital
and resources available to the Managers in Africa. Stevenson's
£1,000 subscribed for the road could do little to meet the deficiencies
of the steamer on the Zambesi, or the chronic shortage of staff.
James Stewart and his two assistants who left for Africa in May 1881
were not directly employed by the Company but by the Livingstonia
Mission; however they relied for their supplies and equipment on the
Company, and in so far as the road was to be maintained by the Company
they were its employees in fact, if not in name. Stewart was to
direct the surveying and building of the road, and the carriage of
the L.M.S. steamer, but this was to be the responsibility of the
Company. The Moirs were not consulted as to this arrangement or the
change of name which they heard of first in October. If they had
been consulted they might have insisted that the conditions of the
river transport should be improved before taking on greatly extended
responsibilities.

1. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 21st February, 14th April, 20th April, 1881.
2. L.M.M., 26th April, 1881, MSW 7912, and note 3 above.
4. A.L.C. Minutes, 8th June, 1881.
5. F. Moir to A. Hart, October, 1881, L.B.(l).
6. F.M. to father, 27th March, 1881, ibid.
Stewart had decided that the best route from Lake Malawi on to the plateau was from the extreme north and along the line of the Songwe river. He was probably influenced in his decision by the fact that the Moirs had established a base for their ivory hunting expeditions on the Mbashe river which also provided a sheltered harbour for the steamer. Work began from this point in the latter half of 1881; the path up the escarpment was found to be difficult and rocky and Stewart decided to move the base of his operations on to the plateau at Chwinda's village about ninety miles from the lake. He employed Tonga labour from Bandawe for the road-making and as porters between his base and the lake, they made frequent journeys usually under the supervision or protection of an armed European. Late in November a party which included some of Chwinda's men was travelling to the lake unaccompanied when it was attacked by a party of men belonging to a chief of unspecified origins, Mwembera. Nineteen men were either killed or captured including eleven Tonga and four men from Chwinda's. This chief insisted that either Stewart must help him against Mwembera or he would attack Stewart himself; an expedition was organised with the help of Fred Moir and the support of the leading (Nyakusa) chief at the Mbashe, and they went in pursuit of Mwembera who they were relieved to find had left his villages. Relations with Chwinda were not however restored and it became necessary to abandon this line of road; Stewart withdrew to the lake and made preparations to begin again from Karonga. In April 1882, after completing his survey of the eastern side of the lake, he went to Karonga, explained his intentions to Mwakasungula, then the Regent.

2. Quotation from letter of J. Stewart, C.E., 2nd January, 1882, printed in the Edinburgh Courant, 2nd May, 1882, cuttag in MS 7906. J.W. Jack, op. cit., p 230, gives a slightly different account. According to him, of the nineteen murdered men one was from Blantyre, one from Bandawe, eight from Cape Maclear, eight from Chwinda's, and one from Mazaro on the lower Zambesi. If his account is correct it gives a striking example of the way in which the activities of the Company brought together, probably for the first time, people from widely scattered areas.
for the young Kyungu; and built the house and store which was the nucleus of the Company station and fort. Tonga workers came up from Bandawe, and Ngondo were recruited by the 'exhibition of fancy prints'; road work began on 1st June. The new line followed the Rukuru river along the south side until the end of the plains, and then crossed to the north for the ascent up the escarpment, and onto the plateau near Mweniwanda's. This was by far the most difficult part of the whole undertaking, involving a climb of 3,000 ft. through extremely rocky and mountainous terrain. The road of today follows Stewart's route very closely, but is closed to most vehicles throughout the rainy season. Stewart began his work with over one hundred labourers and continued until the breaking of the rains late in 1882. He began again in the next season, but before he can have made much progress the first load of the parts of the L.M.S. steamer, the Good News, had arrived at Karonga.

This raises the issue of whether or not a road of this sort was a practicable proposition. The Moirs' own experience in Tanganyika had given them a vivid impression of the difficulties of road work. This was reflected in a letter of Fred Moir to his father in March 1881 in which he said that he did not think that the Company should go in for road-making 'to any great extent.' All that was necessary, in his opinion, was that the 'best direction and the best passes over the hills should be settled. By clearing such a path and levelling a little we would have all the advantages of a large road and keeping it clear would cost much less.'

When a telegram from John Moir saying 'Send the steamer' reached Glasgow in January 1883, only fifteen miles of what came to be known as the Stevenson road had been completed. Almost the whole of the steamer with the exception of the boiler came in parts which were suitable for carriage by tanga-tenga, and so, provided that a path could

3. F. Moir to father, 27th March, 1881.
be cleared for the boiler and porters could be recruited there, was no need for the elaborate cuttings which Stewart had made in his first season's work. It was doubtful, as Stewart himself had pointed out, whether there was anything other than ivory which could be profitably exported from the region until a great deal of work had been done to develop cash crops. It is difficult to justify the time and money spent on this road in economic or commercial terms. James Stevenson had a higher motive; he gave the money for the road as

"a contribution to the civilisation of south east Africa, believing that the accomplishment of the whole scheme will be for the glory of God and for the good of the natives of these countries."

James Stewart, C.E., doubtless shared this ideal. He believed that the construction alone would act as a 'powerful civilising agency - It will accustom the people to the use of calico and other European articles.' It is not fanciful to suggest that the man who had laid out both Blantyre and Livingstonia in the pattern of the Union Jack may have had some notion that the road would stake out a claim to a part of the African interior which appeared in the age of steam to be of crucial strategic importance. In so far as the Stevenson road became the boundary between the British and German spheres of influence in east Africa, now the boundary between Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, it did serve a strategic role even in its uncompleted state. In the period under consideration in this chapter the Stevenson road never became a road in any accepted sense of that word. It would more accurately be described as a route, and might with more justice have been named after James Stewart who pioneered it, and who died on the 30th August 1883 at Marramarra, fifteen miles from Karonga. He was buried under a baobab tree at Karonga, the site of his grave has now been covered by the lake. Stewart had completed twenty-six

2. L.M.S., 15th February, 1881, MS 7912.
4. J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 31st August, 1883, L.M.S., C.A. 5/2/2; J.M. to Dr. J. Stewart, 7th November, 1883, Salisbury; L.M.S., 8th January, 1884, MS 7912; Jack, op. cit., p 231. The Fathers of the Free Church found an epitaph for Stewart in the 62nd Chapter of Isaiah: 'Prepare ye the way of the people; cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.'
Miles of the road; the work was continued by a twenty-one year old civil engineer, William McEwen, who reached Karonga in August 1884 and died there on 24th May 1885 after adding a further seventeen miles on the way to the plateau. When the last of the assistants withdrew soon afterwards the whole of this section had been completed.¹

Meanwhile the whole responsibility of getting the seventeen tons,² or eight hundred loads of the steamer to Tanganyika had fallen to the Moirs and their already overworked and under-capitalised African Lakes Company. If the conception of the Stevenson road was more religious and strategic than commercial, the problems of getting this large quantity of material to the south end of Lake Tanganyika were strictly practical. The journey entailed a distance of about 1,000 miles of which seven hundred were by water. It involved three separate porterages, totalling about twenty-five stages. All loads had to be loaded or unloaded from steamers and boats seven times. The capacity of the river steamer was such that if no other goods were carried at all the whole consignment could be carried in five trips.

In preparation for the carriage of the Good News the Company took over from the Livingstonia Mission the lake steamer, the Ilala.³ By an agreement of June 1882 she was sold to the Company for £400; arrangements were to be made for the mission to have use of her when necessary; the expenses of running and maintenance were to be shared between the mission and the Company.⁴ The Company were to carry all mission passengers and freight on this basis. The Ilala, a single screw, light draft steamer built of steel and something over 50 ft. in length suffered from the same deficiency as the Lady Nyassa — she was too small.⁵ This had two effects: she could be extremely alarming in the storms which periodically roused the lake, and she

¹. Jack, op. cit., p 231, McEwen is also buried at Karonga. He died soon after a pioneering expedition to the Luangwa valley.
². J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 12th May, 1883, L.M.S., C.A. 5/1/A.
³. L.M.S., 27th December, 1881, 7th February, 1882, 11th April, 1882, MS 7912; A.L.C. Minutes, 17th November, 1881, 12th January, 1882, 10th April, 1882, 6th May, 1882.
⁴. L.M.S., 19th June, 1882, MS 7912.
could not adequately deal with the demands of the Livingstonia Mission, the Company and the U.M.C.A. let alone the L.M.S.¹ There was according to John Moir 'a distinct current of opinion against her carrying more than three tons of cargo'; in fact she usually carried about one hundred and fifty loads or just under four tons. She could carry as much as one hundred and seventy loads on short distances when she did not have to carry the forty loads of wood which she required for twenty-four hours steaming.²

The problems posed by the broken-up nature of the route and the incapacity of the steamers were exacerbated first by shortages of staff and then by political disturbances on the lower Shire and Zambezi. In July 1883 while taking the second load of parts to Karonga the Captain of the Ilala died, the steamer was away for eight weeks and was only brought back to the south end of the lake by James Stewart, C.E., himself.³ He, who should have supervised the porterage across the plateau, died at the end of the next month. Fred Moir who had been hunting and trading at the north end for some months, reached the south end of Tanganyika late in September with the first consignment of fifty-four loads of the steamer, just under six months after their arrival at Quelimane.⁴ The first part of the keel was laid at Liendwe on 22nd October by the L.M.S. engineer James Roxburgh who had accompanied the parts from the coast.⁵ Fred Moir returned to Tanganyika in February 1884 with a 'very good selection of parts'; on his return to Karonga he had walked 1,000 miles between the lakes in six months, and had spent half of that time hunting.⁶ The movement of the steamer through its various stages had meanwhile been interrupted by the threat of war on the lower Shire between Chipatula

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¹ Morrison diaries, op. cit., 31st March, 1883.
² Ibid., 9th March, 1886.
⁴ J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 23rd September, 1883, L.M.S., C.A. 5/3/A; E.C. Hore, ibid., 14th October, 1883.
⁵ E.C. Hore, ibid., 11th November, 1883.
⁶ J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 10th March, 1884, L.M.S., C.A. 5/4/B.
and the Portuguese and by disturbances between the Portuguese and the Machingiri in the latter months of 1883. This was followed by the almost total blockage on the lower river between February and September 1884 and the related attack on the store at Matape where some of the parts were stolen or damaged.\(^1\) Two further consignments of the steamer reached Tanganyika in October and December 1884, and the boat was launched on the 3rd March, 1885.\(^2\) She had been designed as a sailing boat and so could be used without the engines, the parts of which had not yet arrived. Hore and Roxburgh sailed her to Kavala island, the then headquarters of the L.M.S., Roxburgh died there on the 25th May.\(^3\) The bulk of the parts had reached their destination by August 1885, and the last caravan which arrived in September 1886 consisted of replacements for parts which had either been lost or damaged on route.\(^4\) It was only on the 12th September, 1887 that the Good News made her maiden voyage under steam from Kavala island to Kigoma. The final delay had been caused by the non-arrival of some missing parts which had been despatched at Hore's insistence overland from Zanzibar.\(^5\)

The combination of war, shortage of steamer space, illness, death and paucity of staff had caused the Company to take three years to complete their contract. The effort of getting the Good News to Tanganyika had severely strained the already overtaxed resources of the Company and had caused long delays to all the others who depended

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3. E.C. Hore to Secretary, L.M.S., 23rd May, 1885, L.M.S., C.A., 6/1/C.
5. A. Carson to Secretary, L.M.S., 5th January, 1887, C.A. 7/1/A; E.C. Hore to same, 6th January, 1887, ibid.; A. Carson to same, 4th April, 1887, C.A. 7/1/C; E.C. Hore, 30th June, 28th July, 1887, C.A. 7/2/A; A. Carson to same, 17th September, C.A. 7/2/C.
on it for their supplies.\textsuperscript{1} James Stewart had estimated a minimum time for the delivery of the steamer as eighteen months;\textsuperscript{2} if he had lived, the burden on the Company’s staff would not have been so great and progress would have been more rapid, but even so the Company was never in a state to deal adequately with this added task. E.C. Hore of the L.M.S. was convinced that he could have transported the steamer overland with much greater success. He had in 1883 carried the parts of a three ton steel boat, the\textit{Morning Star}, from the coast;\textsuperscript{3} whether he could have dealt with seventeen tons is questionable. The delay of a year in the completion of the steamer due to the non-arrival of Charles Stokes with a steam gauge and some boiler tubes was evidence that the Zambezi route did not have a monopoly of snags.\textsuperscript{4} Hore, who was the only one of the original L.M.S. party to survive in Africa, was a strong believer in the comparative healthiness of the land route, and insisted in 1886 on taking his wife and son back to the coast that way in spite of all advice.\textsuperscript{5} He was, however, the only member of the mission to use this route after 1884 from which date all other L.M.S. members went by the Company route from Quelimane. Their doctor who reported on his journey of 1886-7 was convinced of the superiority of the river route. According to him:

"you are landed at the north end... without the slightest anxiety or over-exertion and the march from Karonga’s to Miamkolo is enough to set anyone up."

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\textsuperscript{1} E.C. Hore to Secretary, L.M.S., 25th August, 1884, L.M.S., C.A. 5/5/A. In the same letter Hore had some strong words on the A.L.C. staff, some of whom were in his opinion ‘unfit to be entrusted with care, comfort or safety of missionaries.’ Some, he said, had been dismissed from missions for immoral conduct, others from ships at Quelimane, ‘as incorrigible ruffians.’ He accused them of ‘vulgar rudeness and neglect’ and added that unless the Moirs themselves assisted passengers the route was fit only for ‘some tough able-bodied young fellow who delights in roughing it.’ These charges were exaggerated, see below.

\textsuperscript{2} J. Roxburgh to L.M.S., 5th August, 1883, L.M.S., 5/2/C.


\textsuperscript{4} E.C. Hore to L.M.S., 6th January, 1887, C.A. 7/1/A; A. Carson, 4th April, 1887, C.A. 7/1/C; Ibid., 30th June, 1887, C.A. 7/2/A.

\textsuperscript{5} E.C. Hore,\textit{Tanganyika}, op. cit., pp 271-287; Dr. Tomory to L.M.S., 30th May, 1887, C.A. 7/2/A.
The Nyasa route could not protect travellers from the inevitable attacks of malaria but its advantage was that it did not make the same physical demands. There were only twenty days walking as opposed to the average of over ninety on the other route. As a doctor, Tomory protested against the Zanzibar route, and against Hore's use of it.¹

When the river and lake bottle-necks had been eased in the 1890's by the provision of more steamers the Stevenson route became the standard means of access for passengers and goods to the eastern Congo, northern Zambia and western Tanzania, and continued to be this until the building of competitive railways. Late in 1886 there was a possibility that the Company might undertake the transport of the Emin Relief Expedition to Lake Albert, but the tender which the Company put in of £5,000 to £7,000 for two tons suggests that they were not seriously interested except at a rate which would have enabled them to employ many extra staff.² The Stevenson route had by 1887 been accepted by almost all European travellers and by the Directors of the L.M.S. as superior to the overland route; it cannot be said that its superiority for goods had been proved but its failure on this count was due to the inherent weaknesses of the African Lakes Company rather than to the limitations of the route itself.

- vi -

These weaknesses have already been made clear; the failure of the Company to exert the diplomatic pressure necessary to open the Kongone mouth; its failure to find the capital required for the improvement of its river and lake steamer services, and their consequent inadequacy. A further weakness which has been alluded to but not considered in detail was the inadequacy of the staff. This was a serious problem but was a secondary one. If the Company had been supplied with a large body of perfectly fit and able men, and with

1. Tomory to L.M.S., 30th December, 1886, C.A. 6/4/D; Tomory, 30th May, 1887, C.A. 7/2/A. It should be pointed out that in the period from 1878-1887 only two passengers of the A.L.C. died in circumstances in any way connected with their journey.
2. A.L.C. Minutes, 21st December, 1886, 30th December, 1886.
Managers of administrative genius, they could not have run a satisfactory service with the facilities that were available to them. In fact the Managers were probably not men of administrative genius and they certainly never had an adequate staff. The following table gives an impression of the staff situation between 1878 and 1887. The information in it is derived from a variety of sources, especially the A.L.C. Minutes, the Moir Letter-books and the Morrison Diaries. It is not perfect but is probably accurate to within 10%.

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<th>DISMISSED</th>
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<td>25*</td>
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* 5 left, uncertain for what reason.

These figures exclude the Moirs themselves, ivory hunters employed on contract, and the four men who were employed between 1881 and 1885 on the Stevenson road who could be included as Company employees though they were paid through the Livingstonia Mission. John Moir gave the total employed at 1st January, 1884 as seventeen, this must have included himself, his brother, and an ivory hunter. Of these fifty-two men recruited by the Company in these years all but eight were recruited in Scotland and sent out to Africa on five year contracts. John Stephen the active Chairman of the Company was responsible for finding and interviewing most of them. A large proportion

1. J. Moir to Captain Foot, 5th March, 1884, L.B. (1).
were drawn from among the engineering and other apprentices of the Clyde side ship-building firms. They came from the class of people who made Scotsman and engineer synonymous in the steam-ships of the world in the late nineteenth century. They were expected to be Christians and it was preferred that they should be total abstainers; most of them had had some contact with the Free Church in Scotland. Low Montieith Fotheringham, one of the most outstanding of them had been President of the Govan branch of the Y.M.C.A. Many of them had passed through Govan at some time and were known to each other before their arrival in Africa. Many of them would have thought of themselves as missionaries, and several of them had either been or became missionary artisans. Fred Morrison’s diary was that of a deeply religious man; his religion was of a simple evangelical type. Both he and Fotheringham combined missionary and Company work. At least two of the Company’s employees left to become full-time missionaries, and another would have done if he had not been invalided. One of these, John McLlwain, after four years with the Company joined the Blantyre Mission and served it as a much-loved carpenter and teacher for over forty years. Morrison’s diary describes the departure of himself and three others for the Company from Glasgow in 1882, it is typical of any missionary send-off of the period with hymn-singing on the platform. In London they stayed at Exeter Hall before boarding the ship at Tilbury.

They were paid on a similar scale to that of missionary artisans. At the foundation of the Company there were two grades: from £90-£120 for an engineer and from £80-90 for a sailor. Most of the employees were on the former scale. From 1883 they were paid an additional £30 in lieu of rations which had previously been supplied; as the cost of local food was very low and as there was no charge for rent the main expenditure of most employees was on imported tinned food.

1. Testimonial on the death of L.N. Fotheringham by the Deacon’s Court of Free St. Mary’s Church, Govan. In author’s possession.
2. See below, Chapter IV.
5. Morrison diaries, op. cit., 16th April, 1882.
Fred Morrison was able to save money to send back to his mother. There was apparently no difficulty in recruiting men in Scotland at these rates, and from the fact that there were in 1891 twenty-five men on the staff with combined service averaging more than five years it must be assumed that the pay and conditions were not very much worse than could be obtained elsewhere, though Fred Moir admitted that they were "not such as to lay by fortunes on."  

There was a considerable variety in the quality of men who were recruited. In 1882, for instance, two came over from the Livingstonia Mission with the Ilala, of these, one, Captain Cowans, was a middle-aged man who died in the next year of a liver complaint—according to Morrison he was in the habit of drinking a bottle of brandy a day. The other, Harkess, supervised the old Livingstonia Mission at Cape Maclear and would probably have re-joined the mission's staff if he had not been invalided in 1885. Another, J. Smith, came out from Scotland for the Company as a trader but immediately joined the Livingstonia Mission as a teacher. Fred Morrison was one of the best men ever to join the Company's service and was, until he was invalided in 1890, their most efficient engineer. He built the lake steamer, the Domira, helped with the construction of the U.M.C.A. steamer, the Charles Jansen, maintained both the Ilala and the Lady Nyassa, raising the latter after it had been totally submerged in the Morambara Marsh. He also made parts of the Matope road, planted coffee and did part-time mission work at Mandala, Livingstonia and Bandawe. His diary shows him to have been a man without much formal education but with great practical ability and integrity. Low Monteith Fotheringham was another of the Company's outstanding recruits who built up a considerable trade at the north end, organised the defence of Karonga and stayed eight years in Africa without leave. He became Manager of the Company in 1891 and died at Chinde in 1895.

1. F. Moir to Dr. J. Stewart, 13th July, 1886, Salisbury.
2. Ibid., and article by J. Moir in the British Central Africa Gazette, August, 1896.
4. L.N.N., 7th October, 1884, NSS 7912.
5. Ibid., 10th October, 1882.
6. Morrison diaries, passim.
A.C. Simpson was a member of the first Livingstonia Mission party; he was the Company's agent at Masaro throughout this period; he was not very efficient but he had the capacity to survive in the lower Zambesi area at the most unhealthy of all the Company's stations. Gouk who stayed with the Company until 1889 was doubtfully efficient, he was able to run the lower river steamer but not to maintain it, he also worked as carpenter at Mandlea. Colledge was employed as a clerk at Quelimane until he, in the words of John Moir, 'went off to Natal in a panic about his heart' in 1883. Shearer was recruited in Quelimane and ran the Quelimane business successfully until he left in 1886 or 1887. He had replaced a shipping Manager who had been recruited in Scotland to run the British India Agency but who was said to have developed delirium tremens within a week of the Moirs leaving him to run the business at Quelimane in 1881. This is probably a fair sample of the staff of this period. There were some outstanding failures of whom the most notable was George Fenwick; he was recruited by Fred Moir in 1881 when the Company was desperately short of staff. He had been dismissed from the Blantyre Mission together with Duff MacDonald and John Buchanan and was on his way home. His wife, who later married A. Hetherwick of the Blantyre Mission, was a teacher at Blantyre. Fenwick was employed as a hunter until he was dismissed from the Company early in 1883 after having threatened to shoot John Moir and Robert Laws. He then set up as a free-lance trader, in competition with the Company, importing the spirits that the Company refused to handle, and was killed in 1884 after he had himself shot and killed the Makololo chief, Chipatula. This had unfortunate political repercussions for the Company which will be considered in the next chapter. In contrast J.L. Nicholl who also joined the Company after he had been dismissed by the

1. E.g. J. Moir to Directors, 21st January, 1884, L.B.,(1).
2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid.
4. F. Moir to Ewing, 16th September, 1882, L.B.,(1).
5. L.C.A.C. Minutes, 29th December, 1880; A.L.C. Minutes, 12th January, 1882; F.M. to Directors, 1st April, 1882, L.B.,(1).
6. F.M. to G. Fenwick, 7th June, 1881, L.B.,(1); Morrison diaries 24th December, 1882, 1st February, 1883; John Buchanan diaries, 22nd February, 1884, private collection, England.
Blantyre Mission in 1883 was one of the Company's best men and later joined the Administration. 1

It was not until 1887 that the Company had even the minimum staff needed to run the service on the river and lake and to Tanganyika. Until then there were not enough staff to run anything more than a skeleton service; at times, for instance in 1884, the staff was diminished by death, illness and resignation to a level at which it was almost impossible to do even that. John Moir himself had to run the Lady Nyassa; and the Ilala was run by one white man which was thought to be dangerous owing to the frequency of storms on the lake. 2 In circumstances such as these the Moirs were compelled to recruit some men at Quelima who would not have passed the tests applied by John Stephen in Glasgow. Morrison complained that one of them would not allow him to hold services on the Lady Nyassa for the crew and that another was 'destitute of grace'. Only five men of this type were recruited; one of them was a useful book-keeper who died in 1884 while running the Ilala, another died at Quelima in 1885, after leaving the Company, and the rest stayed only a few months. 3

The Moirs were anxious to employ educated Africans in a supervisory capacity. They wrote repeatedly to Dr. James Stewart asking him to send them Lovedale graduates. 4 They were prepared to pay them £40 - £50 per annum with board in addition; Stewart never sent any; he may have thought that the salary offered was insufficient as William Koyi and the other Lovedale men employed by the Livingstonia Mission were paid at the same rate as the Company's white employees. 5 In 1884 the Company employed four 'English speaking natives'; 6 there

1. J. Moir to J.L. Micholl, 1st November, 1883, L.B.(1); Morrison diaries, 9th December, 1883; L.M. Fotheringham, Adventures in Nyassaland, op. cit., passim.
2. Morrison diaries, 14th January, 1885.
3. Ibid., 30th June, 1882, 21st August, 1882, 29th February, 1884, 19th April, 1885.
4. F. Moir to Dr. J. Stewart, 29th September, 1879, L.B.(1); F.M. to parents, 20th October, 1879, ibid; F.M. to Dr. J. Stewart, 14th January, 1880, Salisbury; J.M. to Dr. J. Stewart, 10th April, 1880, ibid.
5. L.M.M., 26th June, 1883, MS 7912.
6. J.M. to Consul Foot, 24th March, 1884, L.B.(1). African employment will be considered more fully in Chapter IV, below.
were also about sixty local Africans in regular employment with the Company as semi-skilled carpenters and steamer assistants.\(^1\)

The problems caused by the shortage of staff were increased by the very high sickness rate that was prevalent. No-one who went to tropical Africa from Europe at this date escaped intermittent attacks of malarial fever, these were often accompanied by dysentery and jaundice. Peter Moore after fifteen months in the country congratulated himself on not having had an attack of fever for five weeks; previously he had at least one attack every fortnight.\(^2\)

In May 1883 Mrs. Laws told Mrs. John Moir that Dr. Laws had "generally two and sometimes three distinct attacks of fever a day."\(^3\) Fred Morrison's diary records numerous attacks of fever though after he had been in the country for some time they seem to have become so much of a matter of course that he does not record the details so carefully as he did at first.\(^4\) John and Fred Moir were both exceptionally tough and lived to the ages of eighty-nine and eighty-seven respectively, but Fred was seriously ill for about six months of his first six years in Africa, and John Moir was very ill for most of the period from 1887-9 when the Arab war was in progress, and he was travelling thousands of miles between Quelimane and Karonga in pursuit of it.\(^5\)

Those who have experienced an attack of malarial fever with the benefit of modern prophylactics and remedies can guess at the depressing and debilitating effects of recurrent fever relieved only by uncertain doses of quinine. Much of the bad temper and bitterness which is so common in the letters of all the European residents of Central Africa, missionaries no less than laymen, can be attributed to this cause. The African Lakes Company came in for more than its fair share of the venting of the literally enlarged spleens of members of the various missions, and the Moirs had to endure the slings of their employees as well. A fine example of the genre is a letter of Robert Henderson to Dr. James Stewart written early in 1880 after Henderson had suffered a prolonged attack of fever.

"I cannot say but I like the Moirs well enough and

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1. J. Moir to Consul Foot, 23th March, 1884, L.B.(1).
2. Extract from the diary of Peter Moore, 3rd September, 1882, N.S. 1882, 3rd 4th 5th.
4. Morrison diaries, passim.
5. J.M. to Directors, 4th February, 1889, 24th May, 1889, 5th June, 1889, L.B.(2).
really wish them well - but the idea of them succeeding in doing anything I have no hopes for. How soon for my own health's sake I am clear of them I don't care...I can imagine you say that fellow Henderson is not a suitable one for this country, well indeed I am not, I am not twenty-five yet and...I have a pain in my right shoulder, the result of a long unnecessary stay down here, hard work, little food, roasting and drowning. From enquiries you should make which I hope you will, you will find that Mr. Moir's dogs are better attended to than his engineer, of course engineers are plenty...For a long time after coming here I was weak in health and at the same time had a good deal of depression in spirits but I trust both are on the way of healthy recovery. The climate I think and living alone were the causes." I

The Moirs' side of this picture was that of the four engineers who had come out to the Company in 1878-9 one had deserted from Maruru and two were ill at Katunga's; of the Company's two other employees one was trading at Kapingina in the hills behind Bandawe and the other was working on the Ilala which was not then officially in the Company's service. 2 In fact the effective staff had been reduced to nil. Similar situations often arose in the later years though as the number of the staff increased they were never quite so desperate. One of the added difficulties was that people were often so dangerously ill that someone else who was fit had to spend their whole time attending them. In this way illness could have a double effect on the availability of man-power. For instance at Blantyre-Mandala in December 1883 Dr. Peden and Hetherwick were seriously ill at Blantyre with Clement Scott and John Buchanan taking turns to sit with them, meanwhile at Mandala John Moir was delirious and John Moir relieved Morrison at his bed-side at 2 a.m. 3 In April of that year Mrs. John Moir was ill for three weeks and when she had recovered John Moir and the Doctor had to spend most of the day with the L.M.S. engineer who was delirious. 4 June 1883 was a catastrophic month even by Central African standards with the death in child-birth of Mrs. Nickoll who

1. R. Henderson to Dr. J. Stewart, 4th January, 1880, Salisbury.
2. F. Moir to A. Hart, 29th September, 1879, L.B.(1).
3. Morrison diaries, 1st December, 1883.
4. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 28th April, 30th April, 1883, Shepperson collection.
had just arrived in the country, the death of the wife of the Blantyre gardener, and the birth of a still-born child to Mrs. Clement Scott. Scott himself was too lame to leave the house. The impact of all this on the mainly young employees of the Company can be imagined. It was reinforced in July by the death of Captain Gowans of the Ilala, and in August by the death of the much younger James Stewart, C.B. It would be tedious to catalogue much further the history of the ailments of the Company's employees but in case it be thought that 1883 was an exceptionally bad year, February 1884 saw the death of Oftedahl who had been taken off the steamer at Bandawe, and the death of Fenwick in circumstances to be described. In May Mrs. Moir's life was despaired of after she had given birth to a daughter, but she lived. In August the British Consul, Captain Foot, died. The list could be extended indefinitely.

In these circumstances it is remarkable that so many people were prepared to risk their lives in Africa for very insignificant gain. It is also not in the least surprising that there were a minority who broke down mentally, morally as well as physically. The loneliness of those who spent long periods at places such as Karonga, Maruru or Katunga's, often with very little knowledge at first of an African language, must have been very great. Only two employees appear to have been dismissed for what were regarded as offences with native women; and one died of and another was dismissed for excessive drinking. If one excludes Fenwick only one seems to have become mentally ill. In addition to these about 10% were invalided and about 5% died, about half of those who resigned probably did so for health reasons. By comparison with any other group of Europeans in tropical Africa at this date the sickness rate for Company employees

1. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 12th June, 24th June, 1883.
3. Ibid., 29th February, 1884. In the same month Captain Berry, employed by the Company as an elephant hunter was seised by a crocodile in the Mbashe river at the north end, and was never seen again. J.M. to R. Laws, 8th February, 1884, L.B.(l).
4. Morrison diaries, 15th June, 1884.
5. Ibid., 16th August, 1884.
6. R. Bent, J.M. to J. Nunez, 6th September, 1879, L.B.(l); A.C. Miller, Morrison diaries, 19th October, 1884.
7. Captain Gowans, referred to above, and Donaldson, agent at Quelimane, 1881-2, dismissed 1st April, 1882, F.M. to A. Hart, L.B.(1).
was in fact remarkably good. Of the twenty-four men who went to Lake Tanganyika for the London Missionary Society between 1878 and 1890 ten died, ten were invalided and only four were able to continue their work in Africa.¹ Of thirty-one people who were employed by the Livingstonia Mission between 1878 and 1887, (including South African Africans but excluding people who were also employed by the Company) ten died and nine were invalided.² The figure of three deaths for the African Lakes Company does exclude two and possibly three people who died accidentally shortly after leaving the service,³ a hunter who was seized by a crocodile at the Nbashe in 1884 but who had not been recruited by the Company⁴ and also the deaths of the two engineers on the Stevenson road who were officially employed by the Livingstonia Mission.⁵ But even so the record is certainly much better than that of the missionary societies. This must presumably be explained by the fact that the staff were drawn mainly from young and able-bodied men who were used to hard manual labour. None of the men who had been recruited directly by the Company in Glasgow died in this period.

This was not much consolation to the Noirs who found themselves constantly short-handed. This was explained primarily by the Company's shortage of capital and only secondarily by the ravages of disease; the health factor made a bad situation worse.

If the table for the growth of the Company's capital is compared with the one for the increase in staff, it will be seen that there is little or no correlation at least until 1887. It is therefore necessary to explain how the development of the Company in terms of a four fold increase in the number of Europeans employed can have been possible without any equivalent increase in capital. It will

¹. E.C. Hore, Tanganyika, op. cit., passim.
³. Colledge, Fenwick and Miller.
⁴. Captain Berry, see above.
⁵. J. Stewart, C.E., and D. McEwan, C.E.
be remembered that the lower river freights were run at a loss until 1888, and although there are no precise figures it can be assumed that no great profit could be made on the lake freights as the Ilala was quite as inadequate as the Lady Nyassa. Unfortunately figures for profit and loss, and for the value of stocks and assets for this period are few and far between. The figures that do exist are only a very rough indication of the actual situation, and are difficult to interpret because it is often uncertain on what criteria they were compiled. For instance in making an assessment of profit and loss the result depends not only on the sum of liabilities, but also on the valuation of assets which in the context of central Africa in the 1880's were almost impossible to estimate as there was no way of finding out what the value of land, of a store or of a planted but unproductive coffee estate really was. Furthermore it is usually difficult to work out how much profit has been retained in the business in the form of depreciation of steamers etc. The following are some of the available figures for what they are worth:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net Profit</th>
<th>Profit in Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>£863</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td></td>
<td>£209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>£346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>£2,266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£553</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Managers' salaries and Glasgow expenses of £1,130 for the year 1884 = net loss for 1883 and 1884 combined of £58 net loss for 1884 of £921 (1)

Less salaries and home expenses of £1,713

1884 net profit = £553 net profit for 1885 and 1886 combined = £899*

*On the basis of this figure a dividend of 2% was declared involving the payment to shareholders of £433. The balance of £464 was carried forward to the next year's accounts. 2

The accounts for 1887 are obscured by the outbreak of the Arab War. The accounts for the period 1887-89 eventually showed a loss of over

2. Ibid., 9th August, 1887, abstract balance sheet for 1886.
£10,000. The figures for 1878-82 are also obscure though it was thought that for the period from September 1878 to June 1880 there would be a loss of between £800 and £1,000 owing to depreciation on the Lady Nyassa of £1,360. This suggests that but for the damage to the steamer there might have been a profit for this period of between £300 and £600.2

The assets of the Company as at 31st December 1884 were as follows:

| Stock of goods in Africa | £7,653 (this would include cost of freight.) |
| Steamers | 1,723 (The Lady Nyassa and the Ilala presumably valued at cost of work.) |
| Mandala and Matope property | 1,345 |
| Coffee plantation at Mandala | 329 |
| Quelimane | 41 |
| Accounts receivable in Africa at home | 4,615 |
| Cash in Africa at home | 200 |
| Sundry items | 196 |
| Less loss £58 | 18,523 |
| £18,523 |

**Liabilities 1884**

- Capital issued: £12,680
- Overdraft: 923
- Bills payable: 2,484
- Accounts due in Africa: 1,644
- Accounts due at home: 590

**Assets at 31st December 1886**

- Goods in Africa: 9,931
- Steamers: 5,275

(including the James Stevenson under construction about £4,000.)

1. Memorandum, 19th August, 1892, in British South Africa Company papers, Salisbury, CT/1/11/5/1.
2. F. Noir to father, 12th March, 1881, (wrongly dated, 1880), Shepperson collection.
Property:

Mandaia, Matope etc. £1,430
Quelimane 44
Coffee estate 443
Karonga 60
Maruru 96
Katunga's 55
Road to Katunga's 100
others 16

Accounts receivable
in Africa £22,208
at home 1,176
Cash in hand, Africa 82
home 4

Bills receivable 1,808
Cash in bank 528
Sundries 31
Ivory in Africa and
in transit 3,408

£26,701

Liabilities 1886

Capital issued £20,360
Bills payable 1,341
Accounts due
in Africa 3,401
at home 700

£26,701  (1)

Balance profit 898

As has been pointed out above the interpretation of these figures is difficult. However, taken together with information available on the loss of the lower river freights, on the issue of capital and on the growth in the number of those employed by the Company it is possible to draw some conclusions. If it is remembered that there was in 1885 a loss of £1,716 on river freights and yet a net profit on the year of £346 it is clear that there must have been a substantial profit on some side of the business which enabled it to remain so nearly solvent. It is not likely that this was made up from the lake freights and it is also not conceivable that it could have been made up from the commission on goods imported for the missions. The balancing factor was ivory.

1. A.L.C. Minutes, abstract account for 1886. The figures are given to the nearest pound, for this reason they do not cross-check.
Owing to the terms of their original contract the Moirs had an interest in ensuring that the Company made a profit; their salary depended on it. When it became clear in the course of 1880 that the necessary capital was not going to be raised to enable them to put the Company on to a reasonable financial basis, to allow the development of agricultural exports from the lower river and Shire Highlands, and to enable the transport business for the missions to be run profitably, they turned their attention to the one source of profit that was open to them. It was above all necessary to generate what would in modern jargon be called a cash flow; between 1879 and the end of 1885 they exported over 40,000 lbs. weight of ivory, this would have been worth at the then market price about £20,000 or the same sum as the total capital raised by the Company to that date.\(^1\) Fred Moir on his first reconnaissance trip to the north in 1879 had found that breaking into the ivory trade was not going to be an easy matter. The main difficulty confronting the Company was its conscientious refusal to sell guns and powder which were usually expected as part of the payment for ivory. There does also seem to have been in the first place an attempt to price the Company out of the market in the interior by demanding coast prices. For these reasons it was necessary at the outset to rely on the shooting of elephants by Company employees for the greater part of the ivory obtained. The best source of ivory so far as the Company was concerned was in the Elephant Marsh to the north of Karonga and towards the Mbashe river where Herbert Rhodes had done a good deal of shooting up to 1879 and where the Company made their north end base until 1882.\(^2\) By January 1880 at least 4,500 lbs. had sent home of which 1,500 had been shot and 3,000 lbs. had been bought.\(^3\) In the later months of 1881 3,360 lbs. were shot and 900 lbs. were bought at the north end and on the lake.\(^4\)

From 1884 the volume of ivory shot by the Company's employees declined as the most easily tapped sources were shot out and as the level of the trade increased with the Company's greater knowledge and

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experience of the market. The season of 1883-4 was the last in which either of the Moirs spent much time devoted exclusively to hunting though even this was disturbed by the necessity for Fred to supervise two caravans of Good News parts for Tanganyika. Between 1883 and 1886 Low Monteith Fotheringham built up an extensive trade with Arab traders at Karonga. By 1886 the Ilala was taking full loads of ivory down from there at every trip and the only restraint on the trade was the limited quantity of goods that the Company could carry north while at the same time meeting its obligations to the missions. In 1885 the Company had made its first contacts with Nwase Kasungu who provided another major source of ivory, and the trade with Nkhota Khota had been gradually built up. Mponda, too, had begun to show more interest in the Company’s wares. The level of the trade can be estimated by the fact that there were at the end of 1886 about 7,000 lbs. weight of ivory either in store in Africa or in transit to Britain. The great advantage of ivory for export was that its very high ratio of value to weight – about £1,000 to a ton - meant that the cost of freight made up only a very small proportion of its eventual price. While the cost of freight was charged in the Company's books at the standard rate, any charge for down freight was in fact a bonus because the rates for up freight had to be adjusted in the first place on the assumption that there would be no down freights, and that imports would have to bear the cost of a return journey. Any exports thus tended towards the reduction of the loss on the steamer service. It is difficult to estimate the profitability of the ivory trade but the few figures that there are indicate that a profit of about 60% of the price in Europe could be expected from the average cost of ivory which had been shot or bought. The average price of ivory bought from the Jumbe of Nkhota Khota and

1. See below, Chapter IV, for consideration of the ivory trade.
3. Bandawe diary, 31st August, 1885, MS 7911.
4. Morrison diaries, 23rd February, 1885.
from the Makololo in the early 1880's was about two shillings per lb.\(^1\)
The cost of ivory shot by hunters on contract came to a similar
figure.\(^2\) So long as ivory was plentiful hunting was the most
profitable way in which the staff could spend their time. In
addition to the book profit made on the ivory in Britain it should
be remembered that all cash generated by sales over and above the
cost of purchase in Africa and of ocean freights was beneficial to
the Company's finances in that it reduced the loss on salaries and
steamers which would otherwise have been made. It seems probable
that it was ivory sales alone which enabled the Company to remain
more or less solvent in this period and to increase its staff in spite
of the loss on the transport business and the lack of new capital.

Given that the Company could make no profit on the transport
business, it is understandable that they should have concentrated on
the side of the business in which there was hope of profit. This
was, however, one of the reasons which contributed to strained
relations with the missions which the Company was intended to serve.\(^3\)
In fact as has been shown above, the resources for transport avail-
able to the Company were so inadequate that it could never in this
period have run an efficient service; there were bound to be delays
in the carriage of goods from the coast, and the experience of those
who attempted to run a rival service was no better than that of the
Company. At the root of the trouble was the fact that the Company
attempted to run a service with the implications of punctuality and
reliability which that word entails in circumstances in which there
were always far too many unknowns and imponderables for there to be
any chance of its living up to the expectations which it had aroused.
It paid a penalty for the ambitions of its founders who hoped to
provide for the Zambesi and Shire the same type of steamer service

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1. Note by F.M. on ivory bought at Nikota Khota, 25th-26th August, 1880;
F.M. to A. Hart, 12th February, 1882, L.B.(1).
2. J.M. to Captain Berry, 3rd October, 1883, L.B.(1). The price paid
for ivory increased later in the decade to as much as 5/- per lb.
The price in Europe remained fairly constant around 10/- per lb.
3. cf. A. Riddel to R. Laws, 20th October, 1883, Shepperson col-
lection. He found that carriers were more concerned to carry the
Company's ivory than his baggage and complained: 'My experience
is that the Company serve themselves and then if they can con-
veniently do anything for you they may do it charging you for it
and letting you do it all yourself.'
as carried John Stephen across the Clyde every day from his house, Domira, to his ship-building yard at Govan. The notion was attractive, but it was over-ambitious. Part of the obloquy which was heaped on the Company may be explained by the fact that it was an institution, almost the only institution in Central Africa at this date; it became the British Railways of Central Africa, receiving little praise when it did arrive on time, and disproportionate blame when it failed. There is a danger that the historian of the African Lakes Company will be induced by the often very unreasonable nature of the criticism of the Company to over-react and to pass too lightly over some of the deficiencies which, after making all due allowance for the handicaps under which the Managers laboured, were culpable.

The most strained relations of all were with the Blantyre Mission under D.C. Scott and Alexander Metherwick. Relations with Duff Mac-Donald appear always to have been cordial in spite of the tension which developed in Scotland between the Committees of the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions largely as a result of Dr. Rankin of Muthil's attempts to tar Livingstonia with the Blantyre brush. Of their relations with the Scotts, Mrs. John Moir wrote that they got on quite well except on business, "then he and Jack always get at loggerheads and no wonder too." There were a number of issues on which there was disagreement: from the point of view of the Company the most important of these was the question of freight rates. The mission was certainly quite right to insist that they did not pay a rate which would have been more than the carriage of goods by boats would have entailed; but this concession made it impossible for the Company to run the steamer profitably, and they appear to have tried to make up for the losses on the standard rates for passengers and freight by a somewhat grasping addition of extra charges and by an inflexible

2. L.M.M. 10th March, 1881, MS 7912.
3. Mrs. J. Moir to John Tod, 18th May, 1883, Shepperson collection.
approach to their accounts. This led to disagreement about the sums due by the Mission to the Company some of which had to be resolved in Scotland between the Directorate of the Company and the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Scotland. The damage to the Lady Nassa referred to above had got the Company off to a bad start in that the mission's passengers had to make do for some time with boats run by the Company rather than the steamer service for which they had paid. A typical complaint was that of Dr. Feden, who was said to have been charged the same rate for the down journey as for the up, and who had had to sleep 'on boxes or anywhere he could.' It was felt that the charge was not commensurate with the service rendered.

Another constantly recurring complaint voiced by all the clients of the Company was that boxes frequently arrived showing evidence of having been opened, and that many did not contain all that they should have done. It was not realistic to blame the Company for this sort of loss for pilfering on goods which may have lain in a variety of warehouses on their journey. Boxes were usually opened by the Customs at Quelimane and could not always be re-sealed, and even if they had not been pilfered before they came into the Company's custody it would have been impossible to keep them under constant supervision, especially as tenga-tenga men tended to make their journeys, often lasting several days, with only general surveillance from a capitao. The acting British Consul in 1884 said that it was irresponsible for the Company to allow caravans to proceed without the presence of a white

1. The Company achieved a great reputation for Scots parsimony. W.P. Johnson recorded that he had been invited by the captain of the Ilala for a short trip, and was surprised to be sent a bill for £5. My African Reminiscences, 1875-95, London, 1924, p. 92. D.J. Rankin claimed that the engineer on the Lady Nyassa measured the volume of a bunch of bananas and included it in the passengers' baggage allowance.

2. A.L.C. Minutes, 28th June, 1883; J. McLagan to DrC. Scott, 4th January, 1883, 1st February, 1883, MS 7546.

3. J. McLagan to W. Birnie, 30th December, 1882, ibid.

With the staff available to the Company this would have been quite impossible and it can be doubted whether either of the Moirs would have approved of the treatment of Africans as people who could not in any circumstances be trusted. The accumulation of complaints on points such as these ensured that relations between the Company and the Blantyre Mission were always strained. One can not help surmising that Consul Haves may have been right when he suggested that there was also an element of jealousy between the mission and the Company which was a reflection of the bitterness which surrounded the ecclesiastical history of Scotland in the nineteenth century. D.C. Scott tended towards a rather exclusive attitude on the position of his church in the Shire Highlands and may have felt some hostility towards the presence of an agency over which he did not have control. There were one or two occasions on which his dissatisfaction with the Company became venomous. He appears to have blamed John Moir personally for the death of Mrs. J.L. Nickoll in 1883. This was totally unjust, their ship had been two weeks late at Quelimane and as a consequence they had to wait for some weeks for the river steamer. Mrs. Nickoll arrived in the Shire Highlands nine months pregnant and died of fever in child-birth; she should never have been travelling in that condition and John Moir was in no way responsible for the delay in her journey. After the death of his wife Nickoll was dismissed from the mission because it was thought that she had been pregnant before their marriage. John Moir gave Nickoll a job, and Mrs. Moir looked after the child which had survived before it was sent back to Britain in the care of one of the Moir's servants. John Moir wrote at the time that he was

1. L. Goodrich to Lord Granville, 20th December, 1884, F.O. 84/1662.
2. E.g. D.C. Scott to Rev. James Robertson, 10th May, 1889; "The Myassa Defence Fund is simply the Lakes Company transmogrified, not for Africa, but for money. You would be astonished if you knew some of the items of their moral and political account." E.U.L.
3. J. McLagen to D. Scott, 13th October, 1883, MS 7546.
4. J. McLagen to W. Swig, 13th October, 1883, ibid; J.M. to Directors, 24th August, 1883, L.B.(1); Mrs. J. Moir to E. Tod, 12th-24th June, 1883.
5. Morrison diaries, 9th December, 1883.
6. J.M. to J.L. Nickoll, 4th January, 1884, L.B.(1); Mrs. J. Moir to Dr. J. Stewart, 23rd May, 1889, Salisbury.
disgusted with the mission and that he was becoming prepared to have nothing to do with them for a while. He blamed Henry Henderson for the poor relations with the mission and hoped that the fact that he and Hetherwick had been taken in by the Company's agent at Quelimane after Nunes had refused to have Henderson in his house might do something to restore the situation. There were further allegations against the Company in connection with the death at Vicenti on the Zambesi in 1887 of Mrs. Mellwain, the wife of a Blantyre Mission employee who had also been employed by the Company. She had been delayed by the accidental sinking of the steamer, James Stevenson. Relations between Blantyre and Mandala were never good at this period and in the light of their obvious disagreement it is easy to see why John Noir did not confide in Hetherwick the nature of the treaties which he made in 1885, and why Hetherwick and Scott were suspicious of them, and did their best to have them shelved.

The mission were always anxious to prevent the Company from acquiring a monopoly position, and to this end encouraged the Buchanan brothers to run a rival river service, but they were generally too pre-occupied with planting at Zomba to do more than occasional trips down river. The mission also refused until 1886, when it was compelled to for the lack of any alternative, to allow the Company to manage their Quelimane business or to pay anything for the work which the Company did there. Later on they encouraged the establishment of the adventurer Eugene Sharrer who did eventually provide some competition to the Company but at a questionable cost to the community at large. In fact no competitor did arise at this time but the Moirs may be forgiven for resenting the attempts of the Blantyre Mission to make their position yet more untenable. It was not until the 1890's with the threat of the British South Africa Company and the development of plantations in the Shire Highlands that Clement Scott began to realise that the Lakes Company had some advantages of principle which more than compensated for its practical failings.

1. J.M. to Directors, 24th August, 1883, L.B.(1).
2. J. McLagan to D.C. Scott, 22nd November, 1883, MS 7549.
3. See below, Chapter IV.
4. J. McLagan to D.C. Scott, 1st February, 1883, MS 7546.
5. J. McLagan to A. Hetherwick, 4th August, 1883, MS 7548.
6. See below, Chapters V and VI.
Relations between the Livingstonia Mission and the Company were never quite so strained as those with Blantyre. The Moirs' personal relations with Dr. Laws appear always to have been cordial though they had frequent disputes about accounts, and about deliveries of goods. The Company and the mission shared virtually the same Directorate and so there was never any serious question of one side feeling that it was being cheated by the other. John Stephen, as active Chairman of the Company, and a leading member of the Livingstonia Committee, could arrange for the mission to pay more reasonable freight rates without difficulty. There were however protracted negotiations in Africa between Laws and the Moirs on the sharing of the expenses of the Ilala, and on the settlement of the accounts of individual missionaries. Laws devoted much of his time to the mission's accounts and had little difficulty in picking holes in those of the Company. Their book-keeper was no match for him and it was only when the Moirs were able to find time to do all the accounts themselves that they were able to keep their end up. This was probably the case with all their clients, the Company does not appear to have had a book-keeper in this period who could be relied upon to produce totally accurate accounts without constant supervision. The Moirs frequently worked into the small hours attempting to get things straight. Laws seems to have taken advantage of the imperfection of the accounts to delay payment even on agreed sums almost indefinitely. This was not helpful to the Company's solvency, and Fred Moir complained with some justification that it would be reasonable to accept the accounts as an estimate and to settle the balance later. Laws' usual practice seems to have been to send occasional bills for the sums that he thought that the mission owed and to leave the Company to fight for the rest. The 1886 Ilala expenses were still unpaid in 1890 and were only settled in the end after the matter had been referred to Scot-

1. MS 7914 in the National Library of Scotland includes a large amount of correspondence between the A.L.C. and the Livingstonia Mission on accounts. 
2. Ibid., F.M. to J. Stephen, 17th October, 1888. 
3. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 12th May, 1883, Shepperson collection; Dr. Bowie, Blantyre Mission to J.M., 5th June, 1889, (copy) L.B.(2). 
4. F.M. to R. Laws, 3rd August, 1887, MS 7914.
land. 1 The Company's accounts seem to have been in a bad way in 1887 before the Arab War broke out; the war was the last straw, it was not until 1893 that the accounts for 1890 were settled.

In spite of the observations of E.C. Hore of the London Missionary Society on the Company and its employees, which have already been quoted, relations between the Society and the Company were comparatively good. It is true that their engineer, J. Roxburgh, did write at the time of the transport of the Good News that:

"If the A.L.C. intend to bring them (parts of the steamer) here in anything like a reasonable time, they must put more spirit and energy into the carrying department of the trade and very much less into the elephant hunting department." 2

The Universities Mission appear also to have maintained quite cordial relations with the Company. Their pioneer W.P. Johnson was the most saintly of the early Malawi missionaries and appears never to have said a harsh word about anyone, a record which none of the others could emulate. He understood the problems which the Moirs had to face and he did not hold them personally responsible for deficiencies which they were powerless to overcome. Realising that the Ilala was inadequate he pressed his mission to buy a steamer, the Charles Janson, which rendered them independent and enabled them to help out the Company and the Livingstonia Mission in time of need. 3 The steamer which was of 65 ft. length and 30 tons weight was carried up by the Company from Tengani's where it had been deposited by a chartered steamer early in 1885, and was with the help of the Company's engineers built at Matope; launched in September 1885; and was steaming on

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1. R. Laws, to J.M., 4th February, 1890, MS 7914; G. Smith to R. Laws, 19th December, 1888, MS 7896.
2. A.J. Swarm to Secretary, L.M.S., 28th October, 1884, compared L.M. Fotheringham favourably to John Moir 'the Manager (so-called)', L.M.S. C.A. 5/5/C; J. Roxburgh to Secretary L.M.S., November, 1883, L.M.S. C.A. 5/3/A.
the lake in April, 1886.1 The Universities Mission was not immune from the delays in the carriage of goods up river which afflicted all the other clients of the Company. These certainly caused annoyance, at one stage a mission employee was sent down river to attempt to collect goods which had been held up for months at Maruru at the head of the KwaKwa. 2

G. H. Swinney complained that the "terrible incapacity of the A.L.C. paralyses all our efforts to get on with our work. They simply don't forward our goods up the river - perhaps they forget. Perhaps they won't because they take care first of No.1."

Following up this complaint Horace Waller, who was usually friendly, had some strong words to say on the Moir's incapacity.4

It is extraordinarily difficult to come to any conclusions on the degree to which the Moirs were personally responsible for the generally bad press that they have received. This is partly because it is usually possible to find a contradictory compliment to the kindness or solicitude of the Moirs to counterbalance the strongest condemnation from the same pen or mouth. Fred Morrison's diary is a good example of this, for every expression of indignation at the departure of the mail without warning there is record of the kindness of the Moirs in sending him cakes on the steamer or giving him dinner at Mandalay. It should be said that it was John Moir who was the subject of most of the emotional outbursts directed against the Company and its Managers. Fred Moir seems to have been a less controversial character and was in the opinion of Robert Henderson 'a somebody to depend on.' The same witness described John Moir as 'headstrong and untamable' and 'a continual source...of amusement at all

1. Prospectus for the Charles Janson appeal, May, 1884; J. M. to Captain Callaghan, 25th February, 30th April, 1885, U.M.C.A. A/3/IV/11); W. Bellingham, The Diary of a Working Man in Central Africa, ed. J. Cooke-Tarborough, London, N.D., pp 11-70. This gives an unusually favourable account of the activities of the A.L.C. Bellingham was himself an artisan missionary and was well able to appreciate the Company's difficulties. See also F. J. Morrison to F. D. Lugard, 29th September, 1888, Lugard Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford, MS Brit. Exp. s 71.
3. G. H. Swinney, to W. Penney, 19th November, 1885, U.M.C.A. A/1/VI.
gatherings of white and black people.  

With the possible exception of Clement Scott no one seems to have accused him of malice, but it is clear that he was capable of acting in a somewhat erratic and unpredictable way.  W.P. Johnson, of the U.M.C.A., seems to have got on well with both the Moirs but tells two stories of John Moir which might well have antagonised a man of less saintly disposition. One paragraph is worth quoting in full:—

"Mr. John Moir paid me a visit too on the same vessel and that was a delight; and when he came back a month afterwards and said he was sorry that he had forgotten to give me my mail, I could easily forgive him, as I had the pleasure of reading my letters still before me."  

Johnson could not help being amused one day when John Moir after lunching with him on his way down the lake called out while rowing away:

"I forgot to tell you that I have borrowed your new oars to go down with."

These were the oars, continued Johnson, 'which the boat he was travelling in ought to have delivered to us on her trip up!'

Others may well have found such treatment intolerable.  F.D. Lugard, who served with John Moir at Karonga, observed that

"He was a man whom it was impossible not to like. I have rarely met anyone who showed such an absolute disregard of danger. It was different from pluck, it amounted to a physical characteristic. Unselfish to a degree, he would invariably leave his own personal comfort entirely out of consideration...His character was one of the most extraordinary I have ever met with in my life: for with all these admirable characteristics, he seemed to blend most of their opposites, and acting on the impulse of the moment he would lose sight of previous promises."

As will be seen below Lugard, like many others, tended to blame the Moirs personally for failings that they could not fairly be held responsible for.

The Moirs' relations with the Directors of the Company varied in warmth. At one point Fred Moir, frustrated by the Directors' unwillingness to...
ingness or inability to approve his plans for development, contemplated leaving the Company and going into business on his own account. 1

The Directors themselves, as a result of criticism of the Moirs, passed on a second reading in January, 1884, a motion calling on the Managers 'to engage Mr. Monteith (Fotheringham) or other competent officer to take special charge of the details of the traffic on the lake, rivers and roads.' In April 1885, a plan was drawn up for the division of the operations of the Company into two spheres, one based at Mandala, and the other at Chirengi, (Mweni-wanda) on the Stevenson road, but shortage of staff made it impossible to put this into effect.3 James Stevenson felt that the Arab War might not have broken out if this plan had been implemented, the implication presumably being that if one of the Moirs had been resident at Karonga the Arabs would not have attacked the Ngombe.3

It would be absurd to claim that John Moir was a dependable man of business. It seems certain that he would not have been a satisfactory manager of a municipal bus company. Although he worked extremely hard he probably did not have the meticulous eye for detail that is required of someone who is first and foremost an administrator. John Moir, and to a lesser extent Fred, would have thought of themselves as Missionaries, Merchants and Adventurers, and certainly as gentlemen. They may have neglected the routine and hum-drum, but they thought of themselves as having a higher purpose than the satisfaction of the demands of their fellow-missionaries. The African Lakes Company should not be judged by the standards of a bus company, it was pioneering in just the same way that the missions in the area were pioneering. While it would not be fair to judge them by the number of their converts, it would not be fair to judge them by the extent to which it kept to a time-table. Much injustice has been done to the Moirs by people who did judge them by this standard.

What had the Company achieved by the outbreak of the Arab War in November 1887? After nine years work it appeared to about to enter a new and more successful phase. The declaration of a small

2. A.L.C. Minutes, 24th December, 1883, 27th January, 1884.
3. Ibid., 6th April, 1885.
4. Ibid., 7th November, 1888.
dividend and the increase of the issued capital to over £27,000, allowing for the launching on the Zambesi of the James Stevenson, a stern-wheel steamer said to be capable of carrying 30 tons cargo, and for the ordering of a new steamer for the lake, the Domira, seemed to indicate that the Company was entering a new era.\(^1\) It was hoped that the new steamers would enable the transport business to be run on a proper basis for the first time. As had been said at the Annual General Meeting in 1886:

"the complaints on all sides of delay in forwarding provisions as well as the inability of the managers to purchase ivory offered for want of means of transporting trade goods have now reached a climax."

The James Stevenson was the answer and was expected to put an end to the complaints, and to enable the Company to begin the export of the coffee which had been first planted in 1881 and which was by now coming to maturity, in addition to the produce from the larger plantation of the Buchanan brothers at Zomba.\(^2\) The Domira was expected to allow the Company to cope more effectively with the demands of the Livingstonia and London Missions and to develop the north end trade with the Arabs which could be seen as a practical example of the substitution of legitimate for illegitimate commerce. The carriage of the ivory to the coast by the Company and its exchange only for trade goods selected by the Company was a part fulfillment of the hope of the founders that the Company would be able to take over the trade from the Arabs. The more sanguine hopes of some enthusiasts that the Arabs would be driven from the trade for ever had not been realised but something had been achieved in the penetration of the trade both at Karonga and at Nkhotaka. The Company had also succeeded after much difficulty in establishing at Quelimane an effective agency which dealt with the ocean shipping lines, and with the Portuguese Customs authorities. There was a staff of three employed there from 1882

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1. A.L.C. Minutes, Prospectus, 1886; Annual Report for 1886, 9th August, 1887.
2. J.M. to J. Tod, 3rd November, 1883, Shepperson collection; J.M. to Directors, 24th August, 1883, L.B.(1); J.M. to J. Stevenson, 24th August, 1883, ibid; J.M. to W. Ewing, 19th October, 1883, ibid; F.R. to Dr. J. Stewart, 13th July, 1886, Salisbury.
onwards and the agent's house was used as a rest-house for passengers waiting for a connection with the river or ocean steamer. At Mandala a variety of houses and stores had been built, and regular employment was given to an increasing number of local people. A two mile irrigation canal served the coffee plantation, and a large variety of other crops were under experimental cultivation. A line of communication had been opened up over 1,000 miles from the Indian Ocean to Lake Tanganyika, as far as from Glasgow to Marseilles, as Fred Moir pointed out. Stations, stores and staging posts had been established along this line of route, men were beginning to make journeys over five hundred miles to seek work and cloth in the Shire Highlands under the Company's auspices. No other agency or political power came into contact with so many of the inhabitants of what is now Malawi and Zambia. Mandala, the name of John Moir, the settlement on the Mudi, and of the Company itself, was one which was known to come from Quelimane to Kituta. In a tenuous way the first strands were being woven in the creation of a new nationality. The Company had made in most cases peaceful and amicable contact with a variety of peoples and was unwittingly training the first staff of what was to become the British Central African Administration. In its first nine years it had been able to do little more than crawl; it must have seemed in the later months of 1887 that at last it might be beginning to walk.

1. F.M. to W. Ewing, 13th April, 1883, L.B.(1); A. Carson, L.M.S., op. cit., 19th February, 1886.
5. A. Carson, op. cit., and see below, Chapter IV.
In the last chapter an attempt was made to give some account of the commercial activities of the Company, and to estimate its success as a European enterprise and as an investment of capital. The Company was not however working in a vacuum; all its activities involved co-operation with the local people. The comparative wealth of the Company meant that from the date of its inauguration it became a new political force to be reckoned with. The presence of the Company and the missions in the country altered the balance of power and introduced a new factor into the political considerations of the people who were already in the area. The initial contact between the two sides was complicated by the ignorance of each about the intentions, the strength and the habits of the other. The Company in its contacts with the population must be considered under a number of different headings, as a missionary enterprise, as an employer, as a land-owner, as an administrator, as an ivory trader and importer of goods, as a commercial competitor, as a potential ally, or enemy, as an agent of technological innovation, and as part of a pressure group with influence in Europe.

It is right to consider the missionary impact of the Company first as both the promoters and the managers thought of their strictly commercial activities as a means to a higher end. The missionary work at this period is, however, the most difficult part of the Company's operations to evaluate; it does not lend itself to an accountant's analysis. Only after the establishment of the Administration did the orthodox missions begin to reap reward for their labours in large-scale conversions. The role of the Company was as an auxiliary to the missions, supplying essential transport services, and according to the interests of individual employees, helping in the preliminary stages of evangelisation. John Moir, who was a deeply religious man, summed up his reflections on mission work after
two years experience in a letter to his fiancée in June 1880:

"I would just like to say that I don’t think it is in any way necessary to have any love to black people to fit one for doing work among them. I for myself have n’t that and never had. I had some idea that their need was great and have that more deeply now. I found particular comfort in the promise ‘Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to thee’—I dare say I like them better than at first; but I never had the same eager yearning after them that I have had for many young men and women, who seemed so near the kingdom, kept back by one thing lacking perhaps. I am I think beginning to have this more nearly now for the two boys now with me, Kali-mwana and Vigeron. I do sincerely hope that God has called you to come out here that you obeying him, may come out here and be blessed while doing his work."

It is important to note that the tone and vocabulary of this letter is distinctly Evangelical, the emphasis being on individual salvation. This approach was common to Morrison and Fotheringham among the Company employees who undertook mission work and was shared by most of the missionaries of the Free Church. John reported from Qualimane that they had begun to have a chi-Nyanja service nightly with their men, commenting that while previously he and Fred had sung, read and prayed together, ‘it is right that we have worship also as a household.’ When Fred Morrison arrived at Qualimane in June 1882 he attended chi-Nyanja prayers led by Fred Moir—he was surprised to notice that none of the men wore trousers. At Blantyre and Mandala the day’s work was begun and ended with prayers and a hymn. A Sunday service was also started at Mandala for the residents of the estate who found it too far to go to Blantyre. This was Morrison’s explanation but it may be that the Mandala villagers showed little inclination to go to Church. It was later noted that the children of the Mandala villagers rarely turned out to the school and in an effort to encourage them to attend a number of children were engaged on Company work in the

1. J. Moir to Miss E. Tod, 16th June, 1880, Shepperson collection.
5. F. Moir to Miss E. Moir, 18th May, 1880, L.B.(l).
6. Morrison diaries, 27th December, 1885.
morning and sent to school in the afternoon. For this they were paid at the rate of two or three yards of calico a month. This system was not entirely satisfactory as on receiving their pay at the end of the month they tended to cease both work and school and were replaced by another lot. Of about one hundred and fifty children who had attended school at some stage in the year of 1888–9 only about twelve had stayed for the whole of the ten and a half month course. In the session of 1889–90 one hundred and forty nine boys and one hundred and fifty one girls attended the Mandala school but the average daily attendance was only seventy. A further one hundred and fifty six children had attended village schools on the Mandala estate. The poor level of attendance could be seen from a comparison with the Blantyre school which during the same session had been attended by a total of two hundred and thirty eight children with an average attendance of 154.9. John Moir had attempted to encourage attendance by speaking to the headmen of villages on the estate, and by appointing the largest boy as a whipper-in who, it was said, was regularly to visit the absentees.

The Moirs' efforts to encourage education were not, of course, entirely disinterested. There was a shortage of skilled labour and they needed men to work on the steamers, for carpentry work at Mandala, for the supervision of their developing estates, and for training as store-keepers and accountants. Their attempts to persuade Dr. James Stewart to send them men from Lovedale had failed and so they had to rely on the products of the local schools. The emphasis of the education which was provided by the Livingstonia and the

2. L.W.B.C.A., July, 1890. The difference can be explained by the fact that Blantyre had a large boarding section.
3. L.W.B.C.A., August, September, 1889.
4. Mrs. J. Moir to Dr. James Stewart, Salisbury; Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 23rd May, 1889. One of John Moir's house servants, who had taken a young child back to Britain, was probably sent to Lovedale for higher education, and was post-master at Manje in the early 1890's.
Blantyre missions was industrial, meaning that pupils were to be trained to do useful jobs, and were not to be taught academic subjects alone which would fit them for teaching work. They were to be trained to play a part in the economic and commercial developments which it was hoped would be made possible by the provision of a supply of trained or trainable labour. It will be remembered that James Stewart, C.E., saw the building of the Stevenson road as an educational exercise which would accustom the population to work for wages. Laws made a special point of paying his teachers with British money because he felt it was important that they should be educated in its use. In the same way the Moirs regarded service with the Company as an educational experience, feeling that 'work' was in itself good, and that as many as possible of the local people should be given the benefit of it. There was a tendency to regard 'work' as a European phenomenon and something to which the people had to be introduced. Complaints of idleness were based on the failure to observe or to understand the seasonal pattern of agricultural work. The novelty of European work lay in the notions of signing on for a specific period of time; the payment of a regular wage; the adherence to a daily time-table; and working for someone to whom one was not related either by kin or traditional political ties.

Fred Morrison, the Company's chief engineer, regarded his steamer crews as under a course of training. He was deeply concerned with their moral, spiritual and material welfare. Many of the members of the crews of the lake steamer came from Old Livingstonia at Cape Mear; Morrison inherited from William Harkess, his predecessor in charge of this steamer, an interest in the people of Cape Mear. He felt that it was wrong of the mission to have abandoned their first station, and that they should have left at least one missionary in charge there. He tried to spend the Sabbath there as often as

1. See K.J. McCracken, op. cit., and A.G. Ross, 'The foundation of the Blantyre Mission, Nyasaland,' in the same volume, p 97 et seq. for discussion on this point.
3. Harkess was going to have taken over at Livingstonia, but was invalided.
4. Morrison diaries, 22nd November, 1882, and 18th October, 1884.
possible to give his crews a chance to see their families, and to carry on evangelical work by holding services. 1 Chinalolo, the man who had been left in charge by the mission was said to be always drunk, and at one stage had told all his people to stop going to Church. 2 Morrison became unofficial missionary to the people of Cape Maclear and built up a strong following among them, being frequently called in to settle 'mirandas' (disputes). 3 His diary includes a touching description of his last meeting there before going on leave in 1887. 4

He seems to have been successful in his training of the crews, and in making steamer work a sought-after occupation. W.P. Johnson of the U.N.C.A. wrote that

"All the natives like work on board the Lakes Company's steamer, and will go to work on it at half the rate of wages which they demand as caravan porters." 5

Johnson too believed in the educational value of steamer work, noting that working with Europeans helped to remove misconceptions about them, and pointing out that a mission steamer would fulfill the same function. 6 Alexander Carson, the L.M.S. engineer, was impressed by his journey in the Ilala and remarked that it was

"very encouraging to me... to see a native crew so attentive and efficient at their work as that of the Ilala and especially to see that natives could be left alone in the engine room. In the Ilala as in the Lady Nyassa, a native managed the engines and boilers so well that during the voyages...I did not once see the natives being interfered with by the Master." 7

Within a few months of his arrival in the country Morrison reported a record-breaking journey up river in the Lady Nyassa which had been accomplished 'no thanks to me as I was scarcely able to go on deck the whole way' owing to illness. 8 The day to day running of the steamers could be left to the crews, the engineers being needed for frequent repairs, navigation in bad weather on the lake, and the

3. Ibid., e.g. 16th September, 1885, 15th November, 1885.
4. Ibid., 22nd March, 1887.
7. Morrison diaries, 22nd July, 1882.
management of the cargo. Morrison never used corporal punishment on his men, and was so shocked by the naval lashings meted out to recalcitrant porters by Consul O'Neill when travelling with him during the emergency of 1884, that he was forced to protest that he could not allow such behaviour in a caravan of which he was a part.\(^1\) Morrison was proud of his crews and could

"not speak too highly of my Livingstonia boys, they are willing and interest themselves in this work. My Atongas are lazy and careless but my other boys make them keep up. I work them all very hard but I never hear a grumble. I never ask them to do what I would not do myself."\(^2\)

In addition to his work at Livingstonia and on the steamers, where he held prayers with his crews daily, Morrison frequently preached in chi-Nyanja at Katunga's, Matope, Bandawe, Blantyre and Mandala.\(^3\) The impact of much of the preaching at this date can be doubted. The main obstacle was that of language. Morrison gives an account of Dr. Cross preaching at Livingstonia soon after his arrival in Africa. He spoke of a "lady with gloves on her hands.\(^4\) This was translated as "a lady with great pendulous breasts and skin on her hands." It is worth quoting in full his account of a sermon which he preached to a congregation of two hundred in a village near Bandawe in 1885.

"After singing, offering a prayer and reading the ten commandments, I addressed them, and in it tried to show them their high position as human beings over and about (above) the brute creation, wherein they and the brutes had things in common but wherein men excelled them in that he had a soul and would have for ever, that its future depended on our present conduct. That our redemption depended on our acceptance of Christ as our saviour the sent of God."\(^5\)

Without belittling either Morrison's sincerity or the intelligence of his hearers it is reasonable to question how much of this can have been understood. Evangelical work is, however, inevitably slow;

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1. Morrison diaries, 19th May, 1884. 'I can not help thinking that had he not thrashed my carriers as he did I might have had them yet.'
2. Ibid., 18th March, 1885.
3. Ibid., passim.
4. Ibid., 15th November, 1884.
5. Ibid., 14th December, 1885.
eleven years separated the founding of Bandawe station and the first conversion there. The part-time preaching and the example of men like Morrison, A.C. Simpson at Maruru on the lower Zambezi, L.M. Fotheringham and J.L. Michell at the north end of the lake, and the Moir at Mandaia must have contributed a little to the establishment of Christianity in Malawi. Morrison certainly hoped that he was preparing the way in order that the work for eternity can be begun.

The discussion of the specifically missionary impact of the Company has led inevitably to consideration of the Company as an employer of labour. This is so because on the one hand the industrial philosophy underlying the Scottish Missions saw the preaching of the 'Gospel of work' as one of the most important contributions which could be made to the 'civilisation' of the people; and on the other hand the people themselves in the words of Duff MacDonald, at first value Mission settlements chiefly for the employment that is given, and the calico that is paid. The same point was made more sardonically by Robert Laws who referred to 'converts to calico'. George Williams, a Lovedale evangelist working among the northern Ngoni at Mbelwa's in 1887, complained that the people there thought only of immediate gain:

"...you will perhaps be speaking to a man about the advantage of education and asking him to send one of his children to school, he will acquiesce to what you say and send the child for a week and then come round on the Saturday morning and expect you to give him four yards of cloth; you will begin to expostulate and try to show him the advantage is to be looked for in the future, as you told him last week his children or his grand-children will reap the benefit. He turns round and tells you that the future is for his children but as the child is his, he will rather take his share now. Because they look upon cloth and beads, cattle etc. as

1. McCracken, op. cit., p 90, quotes Free Church Mission Record, August, 1889, p 238.
4. Morrison diaries, 13th October, 1885.
5. Duff MacDonald, op. cit., Vol.II., p 239.
the only good things in this world and they think that these are the things that education is to bring forth in the future. They think that a man is only great and good in proportion to what he possesses, if he has nothing he is nobody." 1

The present minister of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian at Bandawe explained the initial success of the mission there in terms of the uniform lengths of cloth which were given to those who attended school, and the envy of those who had not been given the cloth for those who had. 2 For most people the most significant fact about the missions was that they provided a new source of wealth.

Some idea of the volume of goods introduced into the region as a result of the establishment of the missions can be had from the calculation that the Livingstonia Mission had distributed in the course of its work between 1875 and 1883, 500,000 yards of calico; 25 tons of beads; and 7 tons of soap. 3 Imports up the Shire in 1883 by the Company on behalf of itself, the Livingstonia Mission, the Blantyre Mission and the Buchanan brothers at Zomba were valued at £7,500. 4 As this was a declaration for customs it would be an underestimate and would not include the cost of carriage and freight. Its retail value in the Shire Highlands could be estimated at twice that amount. From the detailed declaration for 1884-6 which survives it would be reasonable to guess that about half the imports were cloth goods. In these years the value of imports by the Company was running at an average of £7,000 a year. 5 At British prices this would have bought about

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1. G. Williams to Dr. J. Stewart, 25th August, 1887, Salisbury.
5. W. Ewing to Lord Salisbury, 11th May, 1887, F.O. 84/1662, claiming £1,230 in excess duties paid between 8th September, 1884 and 10th December, 1886. The sum claimed represents the difference between the approved transit duty of 3% and the Quelimane duty which was levied on all goods for the interior after the destruction of the Customs post at the Shire-Zambesi confluence in September, 1884. As a result of a complicated calculation it appears that imports between 8th September, 1884, and 27th May, 1886, were valued at £10,563, and between 27th May, 1886 and 10th December, 1886, at £3,351 making a total of £13,914. (Figures to the nearest £). This claim includes a fairly detailed break-down of the goods imported.
700,000 yards of calico. It is therefore likely that over 300,000 yards of cloth were being imported into the area every year by the Company during the mid 1880's. Translated into local terms this would have been enough to pay six thousand men for a year at the standard wage of four yards a month, or to buy over 40 tons of ivory at the usual rate of something over two shillings per lb. It would have required one thousand five hundred porters to carry the cloth into the Shire Highlands from the lower river in a single caravan, and it would have taken about one thousand eight hundred porters to carry out the equivalent local value of ivory. These are only approximate figures but they do give some indication of the economic impact in material terms of the European presence on Lake Malawi and in the Shire Highlands.1

These imports of cloth, and other barter goods such as beads, soap, needles, wire, etc. were exchanged with the local peoples for a variety of other goods and for services. Apart from the small quantities of British currency which had been introduced by Laws for educational purposes, and the Imdan rupees which were later imported by Consul Hawes,2 there was no all-purpose money in circulation and

1. A yard of grey calico, "merikan", was generally assumed to be worth 4d. in Africa. This was about twice the value in Britain. It is reasonable to assume that £1 Sterling in Britain would have bought 100 yards of grey calico. So £3,000 would have bought 300,000 yards of grey calico. A man load equalled 50 lbs. weight or 200 yards approximately of calico. Probably ⅓ of all imports were of barter goods. It can therefore be suggested that annual imports by the Company were worth the equivalent of 450,000 yards. See for example: A.L.C. invoice to Livingstonia Mission, 27th August, 1888, and L.m. to A.L.C., 17th January, 1889, in MS 7914. Fred Moir writing to Robert Laws, 6th September, 1887, ibid., indicates that the L.M. were entitled to ⅓ share of all cloth that was imported at that date, a proportion which presumably corresponded to their share of the total expenditure.

2. Hawes to Salisbury, 2nd July, 1887, P.0.64/1829; W.P. Livingstone, op.cit., p 226, Laws' experiment was not a great success. In 1886 he still had a bag of pounds in coppers which he had never touched. As early as September, 1879, Fred Moir refers to the giving of credit notes for labour payment because of a shortage of cloth. At the north end of Lake Malawi in October 1880 he paid 'promissory notes' for inches of calico. F.M. to A. Hart, 6th September, 1879; F.M. to parents, 3rd October, 1880, L.B.(1).
all business had to be transacted through the exchange of commodities. For the average man the most sought after good was cloth, and his only way of acquiring it labour. The relationship of employer and employee was the most common form of inter-action between European and African in Malawi from the beginning. As the largest and most wide-spread employer at this period the Company had the largest number of dealings with the local population of any agency in the area until the number of children in schools was greatly expanded in the 1900’s.

In the first place the missions and the Company required labour for porterage. Men who did this work were known as 'tonga-tonga' a word derived from the verb meaning take or pick up. Among the Yao, the Misa and the Nyamwezi in particular tonga-tonga work was common and the organisation of caravans to the coast was an accepted part of social life.1 Among the Makololo and the Manganja who provided most of the porters for the Company in the early years on the sixty mile route between the lower and the upper Shire there was no tradition of professional porterage. The Company and the missions had to develop their own organisation. As a general rule it was found that men would not carry loads of more than 50 lbs. weight and so all consignments had to be broken up into packages of this size. There was competition among the porters for the most convenient shapes of load, and awkward loads were often left for weeks unless special arrangements were made for their carriage.2 After some experiment a system was devised whereby every load was recorded before its departure on 'ulondo' or journey notes in triplicate; one copy was retained by the despatching agent, one was carried with the load, and the third was sent on to the destination independently.3 The tonga-tonga were allowed to make their journeys in their own time under the general supervision of a capitae or foreman who carried a gun and was responsible for the arrival of the group of men, probably not more than twenty or thirty, who were in his party. Tonga-tonga did not usually

1. According to Laws Nichota Khota porters were paid 4 yards for a week’s journey, Diary, 17th September, 1878, S.U.L.
3. 'The diary and letters of Peter Moore,' N.J., Vol.XI, p 28, 26th February, 1888. In this diary which is unfortunately lost, he describes his work as the agent at Katunga’s supervising tonga-tonga.
travel more than fifteen miles in a day, they would start at dawn, go on till mid-day and rest in the afternoon.\(^1\) Speed was not important except for those men who were part of a machila team, that is a group of eight men, or if great speed was required, sixteen men who carried European passengers in hammocks slung on poles. These frequently covered thirty or forty miles in a day.\(^2\)

The first large quantity of goods which had to be carried on this route were the parts of the Ilala which were taken up by over one thousand porters supplied by Ramakukan and the other Makololo chiefs in September 1875.\(^3\) The men were paid six yards of calico for the completed journey.\(^4\) It seems likely that they were not paid directly but through their chiefs.\(^5\) Almost all witnesses in the early years commented on the large number of volunteers, men, women and children, who presented themselves for work of any kind. The abundant supply of labour, which in the first place exceeded the demand for it, led to a reduction in the wages offered and to a restriction of the number of days on which a man could work in an attempt to ensure that as many as possible were given the opportunity of earning.\(^6\) For tenga-tenga work the standard rate for the journey from Katunga's to Blantyre or Mandala, and from there to Matope on the upper river, settled to two yards per load for each section.\(^7\) That is four yards for the whole distance as opposed to the six yards which had been paid for about half the distance in 1875.\(^8\) By the time the

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1. Oral evidence from T-Chibesakunda, Kasama, Zambia, 18th December 1968, he had done tenga-tenga work for Mandala on the Stevenson road before the First World War. On the comparatively short journeys between Katunga's and Blantyre or Blantyre and Matope there was no set routine. Each man made his own time.

2. Machila is a word meaning cloth. The first machilas were simply lengths of cloth.


4. Livingstonia diary, 12th September, 1875, MS 7907.

5. F.M. to father, 22nd April, 1880, L.E.(1). See also D. MacDonald, op. cit., Vol. IX, p 146. The wage at Blantyre was then 1 ft. a day for a man, and 9 inches for a woman.

6. Dr. J. Stewart to his wife, 23rd November, 1876, Salisbury.

7. J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 12th May, 1883, L.M.S. C.A. 5/1/A/.

8. The parts of the Ilala were carried round the Murchison cataracts by the shortest possible route, and not via Blantyre which was not established until 1876.
Company began to operate regularly on this route in 1879 there was increasing dissatisfaction with this rate which had by then been constant for about three years. There were a number of thefts of loads on the road and it was suspected that the Makololo chiefs were implicated. It became increasingly difficult to get enough porters from the Makololo to cope with the volume of imports.

A fundamental point about the provision of opportunities for individuals to earn wages was that this alternative source of wealth challenged the authority of the chief whose power was dependent on his comparative wealth. The Makololo chiefs were strong men who had obtained their position through military superiority. Fred Moir felt that 'the Makololo not caring to act as carriers' was due to the fact that 'Young paid twice as much as we do, and gave it to the chiefs who pocketed a proportion. We pay the carriers and the chiefs get less.' It would not be surprising if the chiefs may have resented being by-passed in this way. The encouragement of individualism was, of course, an inevitable consequence of the introduction of western religious and economic ideas and was doubtless seen by the Moirs and other missionaries as of benefit to the people, but they seem to have been insensitive to the position of the chiefs.

With the exception of what they may have learned in conversation with Duff MacDonald it is unlikely that the Moirs knew much of local social organisation. Morrison recorded a revealing incident at Katunga's village in this connection. He was visited by the Makololo chiefs Katunga, Mulilima and Mvita and was

"much struck with the kindness of one of my boys to one of the chiefs, he asked me to give the chief a present as he was his chief, as I would not do so he asked for his wages, I gave him them, he handed all over to him, (his chief). They were taken quite coolly, he did not even seem to recognise it." 3

2. F.M. to father, 22nd April, 1880, L.B.(1).
3. Morrison diaries, 27th July, 1882. Duff MacDonald refers to the payment of wages earned by slaves to their masters: 'Ah! my master is poor today, I must give him some cloth.' MacDonald, op.cit., Vol.I., p 167.
In spite of the payment of wages directly to his people Katunga seems to have been able to retain authority over them, and to forbid them from working for the Company. In May 1883 it was noted that he had not allowed his men to carry for the Company for some months. Porters had to be sent down from Mandela to carry the parts of the L.M.S. steamer up, but these porters too were dissatisfied with their wages. The L.M.S. engineer remarked that on receiving their pay "the natives make a great noise, consequently they will not go back for more loads." The calico being distributed at the time was said to be of poor quality. The crisis was reached when Katunga's son thrashed some men who had been sent down from Mandela for loads; this was followed by a complete stop in the transport service. The chiefs were demanding a minimum of four yards for a journey, the Company refused to give it because they said that if they gave way to this demand they would be at the mercy of future demands. John Moir went down river and saw Katunga; the difficulty seems to have been settled without an increase being granted. Tenga-tenga work went on but this was undoubtedly an important issue which contributed to the worsening in relations with the Makololo which came to a head in the next year.

Labour was also required for road building, forest clearing and plantation work. This differed from tenga-tenga in that a longer period of service was generally required. While a return journey

1. J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 21st May, 1883, L.M.S.C.A. /5/1/4/.
2. Ibid., 12th May, 1883.
3. Ibid., 21st May, 1883.
5. J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., op. cit., 21st May, 1883, and 3rd July, 1883. He commented that relations were still poor though loads were coming up, and added: 'It seems to be a kind of strike.' In March, 1884, the carriers for Matape refused to go saying that the calico promised was not enough, Morrison diaries, 24th March, 1884. In March 1885 the Tenga carriers at Bandawe struck for an extra fathom for the journey to and from the hills, Bandawe diary, 12th March, 1885. After the successful raising of the steel boat, the Hevea, under the direction of Morrison at Bandawe where it had been sunk five years earlier, Chimbano, a headman, attempted to organise a strike among the men for higher wages, ibid., 5th January, 1887.
in the Shire Highlands rarely took more than three or four days, employers wished to encourage other workers to work for as long as possible. In the first season of the Livingstonia Mission at Cape Maclear workers stayed only for short periods. In June 1876 the first worker to stay for a whole month was paid sixteen yards of blue calico, a princely wage by comparison with the four yards a month which was the average wage for agricultural and station work by the late 1870's. While there was always a shortage of labour at Livingstonia owing to the sparseness of the population, there continued to be more workers than there was work at Blantyre for some years.

Large numbers of men and women were employed on the building of the roads to Matape and Kataungu's during 1878, and many more were employed on laying out the grounds at Blantyre, and on building work there and later at Mandala. Blantyre School began to produce graduates who must have formed the majority of the sixty men who were in permanent monthly employment in skilled and semi-skilled jobs with the Company early in 1884. Most of these men were Mangoche Yao, followers of the small chiefs such as Kapeni and Kustaja who had been resident in the Ndirande-Soche district before the arrival of the mission.

The Company always found it difficult to recruit the people resident on its estate for paid work. This was probably because they could meet their material needs through the sale of produce to the Company; there were according to John Moir 3,000 acres of the Mandala estate under cultivation by the people in 1884 in addition to the fifty acres

1. Livingstonia diary, November, December, 1875, passim, MS 7907.
2. Ibid., 19th June, 1876.
4. 'The Yao in the Shire Highlands,' by 'M.T.K.' in the Nyassa News, May, 1894. Fred Moir answered criticism by Lawrence Goodrich that men working for the Company had left their chiefs without permission in a memorandum enclosed with J. Stevenson to Salisbury, 3rd March, 1885, P.O. 84/1734. 'Many of the Yao are practically free to move about as they like. We have a good many trained Makololo with the express permission of the chiefs. Every man before settling was required to give full information on his former abode and reason for leaving. Very many men were allowed to settle only after being taught as carpenters, builders, agriculturists etc.'
of coffee that had been planted by the Company and the vegetable gardens which it maintained. 1 Undoubtedly market gardening had developed to meet the demand created by the European settlement, a demand which must have been increased from 1885 when the Company began to introduce contract labour to the Shire Highlands for the first time.

The greatest problem that the Company faced in its efforts to maintain a constant flow of goods by tenge-tenge was the difficulty of maintaining a constant supply of labour. This was partly due to the seasonal demand for labour in the villages at seed-time and harvest, 2 but probably more due to the phenomenon which came later to be called 'target working.' John Buchanan when asking for an addition to the contracted price for the Zomba Residency complained that in his efforts to get the building finished before the rains he had been forced to pay extra wages which had an unfortunate effect on the labour market for

"When the native becomes possessed of a few yards of calico he is consequently disinclined to do any further work and all through the work we have had a sad experience of this fact." 3

The problem was that the demands of the people for imported goods were not yet sufficiently great for them to be willing to work full-time. This was the fact which led to accusations of 'idleness' under the protectorate and to demands for taxation in Malawi and elsewhere in southern Africa. Duff MacDonald with sympathetic insight pointed out that: 'Their circumstances are easy not because their gratifications are many but because their wants are few.' 4 Unlike a colonial government the Company could not compel, directly or indirectly, people to work for it if they were unwilling. It was entirely dependent on voluntary labour and was not able to back up a request for

1. J.M. to Consul Foot, 5th March, 1884, L.B.(1).
2. E.g. J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S., 12th May, 1883, L.M.S. C.A. /5/1/A.
3. Hawes to Salisbury, 17th May, 1887, encloses J. Buchanan to Hawes, 20th April, 1887, F.O. 84/1829.
labour with a show of force. 1

The difficulty of getting long-term workers in the locality encouraged the Company, in co-operation with the Livingstonia Mission, to recruit Tonga labour from Bandawe, four hundred miles to the north, for work in the Shire Highlands. The first Tonga seem to have come south in 1885 and were recruited on six months contracts. 2 They came down and were returned on the Ilala. 3 The L.M.S. engineer, whose goods were carried up from Katunga's by Tonga porters in April 1886, pointed out that the advantage of the Tonga was that their services could be commanded at any time for

"being away from home they are quite dependent upon their masters - while the Nangenja and Yao work only to get a little calico which they live on in idleness until it is finished when they will again carry a few loads."

Carson, the engineer, was convinced that 'fostering habits of industry in the natives and encouraging trade among them is the great means by which Europeans can educate them.' 4 While their being away from home and on contract made them so dependent on and useful to the Company, it should be remembered that they were all volunteers and that this was not the first venture of Tonga abroad for work, though it was the furthest afield up to that date. 5 What were the factors which

1. J.M. to Directors, A.L.C., 29th August, 1886, L.B.(2). On one occasion in 1886 J.M. did say that he was 'compelling' Mandala villagers to go down for loads of the lake steamer, the Domina, which had been refused by all other labourers because of their size. He cited an agreement with them which presumably bound them to do some work for the Company as a condition of their tenancy. But this seems to be an isolated case.

2. Morrison diaries, 12th November, 1885. He picked up 25 Tonga deck passengers at Matope who were returning to Bandawe. They had probably gone south in May, 1885.

3. Ibid., e.g. March, 1886, 33 Tonga going south; 29th November, 1886, 25 going south; 8th December, 1886, 24 going south; 11th January, 1887, 18 going south. J. McGregor, 1964, op.cit., p 88, quotes Bandawe Journal, MS 7911, 29th November, 1886 as the date of departure of the first party, so does J. van Velsen, 1959, op.cit., pl4, following W.P. Livingstone, op.cit., p 226.


5. Many Tonga had gone to work on the Stevenson road between 1881 and 1885. In April, 1885, 150 men left Bandawe to work at the north end they were to pass through Ngoniland in company with Munro, the engineer. Bandawe Journal, 6th April, 1885, MS 7911. In 1888 190 Tonga went under Alfred Sharpe to fight as levies in the Arab War. Fotheringham, op.cit., p 182.
made the Tonga so conspicuously forward in their response to the lure of the European economy?

The most important factor was the establishment of a Mission Observation Post at Bandawe in 1876, and the transfer there in 1881 of the Livingstonia Mission. The response of the Tonga to the opening of a school at Bandawe was remarkable and there were within a short time a number of people with a rudimentary primary education. It is unlikely that they would have gone south to work at this stage if the Livingstonia Mission had not encouraged them to do so, and if Dr. Laws himself had not run what amounted to a labour agency. There was nothing haphazard about this recruitment; transport was provided, contracts were in writing and for a specific term of months up to a maximum of a year, and care was taken to ensure that people did return at the end of their time. The Livingstonia Mission Journal, the Aurora, later attributed the success of the scheme to there being at the one end, Bandawe...

"the missionary standing security for the proper treatment of the natives (to whom it was a great undertaking in those days to go so far from home,) and at the other, Mr. Moir, whose personal interest in them, and desire for their good, by his Christian work continued the influence of the Mission..."

A Tonga language Sunday school was held for them at Blantyre. But the solicitude of the mission and the Company would in itself have been unlikely to make them travel so far. Two further factors should

2. J. Lindsay (Mandala) to R. Laws, 8th February, 1887, (papers at Livingstonia Mission, expresses gladness that the new contracts are for a year. A. Carson, op. cit., said contracts were in 1886 for six months. R. Laws to F. Moir, 13th May, 1887, No 7914, Chikoko asks for his man to be sent back as his time is more than expired. "Menje, a man of Merenga's, wants me to write to you to enlist him as an elephant hunter...can not be trusted without European supervision...I have prepared him for your negative.
3. Aurora, April, 1900.
be cited: the lack of opportunity, even for cultivation, at home where Ngoni raids continued to be a threatened and actual danger until the late 1880's, and where the Tonga were confined to a narrow coastal belt, and to stockaded villages; and the strongly individualist and competitive character of the Tonga people which has been explained in terms of their social structure, and which was, together with the education provided by the mission, to lead them to fill a disproportionately large number of 'good' jobs throughout southern Africa in the ensuing decades.¹

The Tonga were not the only people to be drawn at an early date under the influence of the Company and of the labour market which it established. In addition to the educated Malawians who had been repatriated under the aegis of the missions, men such as Fred Zarakuti, and Sam Sansoni who kept the Morombala store for the Company until 1884, other individuals emerged into positions of responsibility. Carson noted a Yao foreman at Mandala who was respected by

"black and white alike for his intelligence and good behaviour, he is said to be a sincere Christian and thoroughly trustworthy." ²

The store at Old Livingstonia was at the same date said to be in the care of a much trusted 'black man'. The depots at Marendimny at the head of the Kwakwa, at Higumbe below the Morombala Marsh, and at Nhane between Mandala and Katunga's were also kept by native capitalos,³ as was the steamer dock and store at Matope. The outside work on the steamer was the responsibility of Morrison's capitalo, George, who he tended to find more reliable than some of his white assistants. On returning from Mandala to find the Ilala's engines untouched, he asked the reason why, and was asked in return: 'can work be done by one who lies on his bed all day?' ⁴

All along the Company's line of communications between Quelimane and the south end of Lake Tanganyika people came under the influence

³. Ibid., 3rd to 25th April, 1886.
⁴. Morrison diaries, 15th August, 1885.
of the Company even if they were not formally employed by it. At various places on the river and the lake villages earned cash by cutting wood for the use of the steamer. On the lower river there was a standard rate of payment for this work, the wood was cut into lengths of 18" and stacked 18" high, it was then bought for the length of calico of the pile. At Bandawe salt was the most popular barter commodity and twenty four hours steaming of wood could be bought for 18 lbs.; the price may have been raised because in 1885 the cutters went on strike for more pay. A group of Tonga were established at Banna Bay by the Company, and under its protection, for the express purpose of cutting wood, but this experiment was ended when the population of this sanctuary increased so rapidly that it was feared that the wood supply would be exhausted. Above the Moramahla Marsh the steamer stopped at several villages a day to do a small trade in 'fowls, maize, millet, wax, dried fish, skins and tobacco.' At Katunga's on one occasion Morrison was engaged in buying produce from 11 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. and had finished his stock of beads before 'the demands of the people were satisfied.' At Bandawe he bought a fowl for a newspaper which was to be used for wadding for a musket. Fred Noir had started a small trade in rubber there; at first he bought by the half ounce, but in 1881 he managed to buy 1,200 lbs. and had bought 200 lbs. in the first week of 1882, though that rate was not maintained. On the lower river there was developed a trade in oil seeds, especially with the Makololo, this was limited not by the supply but by the capacity of the steamer.

1. Carson, op. cit., 18th April, 1886. There appears to have been an increase in the price of cut wood on the lower river since 1882 when Morrison paid one yard of calico for a cubic yard of wood, Morrison diaries, 20th June, 1882.
2. Morrison diaries, 5th December, 1884, and 18th February, 1885.
3. Ibid., 27th March, 18th April, 1883. After the A.L.C. cutters had been moved the other settlers rapidly left for fear of attack by the Jumbes of Mhota Khota.
5. Morrison diaries, 22nd June, 1882.
6. Ibid., 3rd October, 1884.
8. Morrison diaries, 15th July, 5th September, 1884. 'The Co, are losing much money every year through the steamer being so small.'
At first the demand of the people was mainly for calico which was in the words of Duff Macdonald 'more valuable than all the coins of the Bank of England would be.'\(^1\) Initially the calico was dyed black; the display of the fancy prints which had induced some of the Kigode to work on the Stevenson road led to a more varied demand, and was accompanied by a greatly increased demand for soap which had not been found necessary so long as people were content with common 'amerikan.'\(^2\) Beads were always in great demand and were a difficult and specialised market owing to the different preferences of different people and the total unacceptability of anything but the 'right' bead.\(^3\) Salt, which was much in demand in those places where there was a natural deficiency, was bought by the Company from Konda's at the south end of the lake and exchanged for labour or goods further north at a considerable profit.\(^4\)

Fred Noir had hoped that 'by making their mouths water for various consumer goods he would be able to induce the people as a whole to produce for the market rather than rely on the sale of ivory and slaves for the satisfaction of the demand for imported goods.'\(^5\) He was not able to achieve this objective in this period owing to the deficiencies of transport which made exports almost impossible, and because for most people in the area trade was still the monopoly of the chiefs and could only be conducted through them. For the latter reason it is not possible to separate the commercial and the political relations of the Company with the people through whose lands its business was carried on. Almost all the people whose relations with the Company have just been described were members of small communities without strong central authorities, the small and weak Mungoche Yao around Blantyre and Mandala, the refugee Tonga.

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2. Ibid., Vol.II., p 96; Morrison diaries, 12th February, 1886.
3. J.M. to W. Ewing, 26th January, 1890, L.B.(2); see also Carson *op. cit.*, 4th April, 1886, on the lower Zambezi 4 ft. of calico was worth 2 os. of beads.
4. Morrison diaries, passim.
5. Ibid., 2nd March, 1883, 4th March, 1883. According to Morrison the Tonga at Bandawe did not put salt in their porridge and were 'sorely troubled with ulcers.' A man would work for two weeks for 2 lbs. of salt.
Sketch Map showing the country occupied by the Makololo chiefs on the river Shire.

- Country occupied by Makololo Chiefs.
- After Dale's Company's road connecting upper and lower Shire.
- Country occupied by the late Chief Chipitala.
near Banda, as well as the Ngonde and Nyakaza at the north end of the lake. It was people from these societies who were most free to enter into the individual relationships with the Company which wage earning, and even small trading, implied. These people in turn tended to look to the Company as a substitute for the strong authority which they did not have. The Company's agents found themselves, willy nilly, called in to arbitrate in cases of dispute and were looked on for defence in time of need. Thus the Company began to undertake some administrative functions, and to acquire a 'clientele' in the political as well as the commercial sense.

Reference has already been made to the tension which arose between the Company and the Nakololo chiefs partly as a consequence of the employment of their people on tenga-tenga work. An examination of the Company's relations with the Nakololo sheds a great deal of light on the complexity of its impact in economic and political terms. It illuminates some of the problems that the Company faced in attempting to establish trade, the inevitability with which it became involved in pre-existing rivalries, and its almost total dependence on the good-will of the political authorities for success in trade, for the provision of labour, and for maintenance of its line of communications with the coast. Before the setting up of the British Administration the Company was, of course, responsible for its own diplomacy and for its own defence. When it is remembered that the Company was constantly engaged in the transport of relatively enormous sums of money (cloth and beads) through a country where the majority of the people were extremely poor, and where the political authority was often uncertain or disputed, it is remarkable that it was able to do this with virtually no formal police or defence force. This was due, in the first place, to the mystique which surrounded Europeans in Malawi at this date, and to the fear that they were stronger than they really were. The story of the Company's relations

1. See below, Chapter V.
with the Makololo between 1873 and 1884 shows how close the Company came to having its bluff called.

The Makololo chiefs occupied a crucial strategic position along the banks of the Shire from below the confluence with the Ruu to Matope above the Murchison cataracts. They were thus able to control the passage of both the Company's steamers. They also formed the only barrier against Portuguese expansion up the Shire; Matakenya, their southern neighbour just above the Morambala Marsh, was the most northerly chief whom the Portuguese could claim to have under their suzerainty. The Makololo chiefs thought of themselves as representatives of the 'English' and had resisted the extension of Portuguese influence, being involved in a succession of wars with slave-traders from Senna and Tete. On the arrival of the Livingstonia expedition in 1875 they had provided porters for the carriage of the Ilala, and had agreed to send their children to school first at Livingstonia, and later at Blantyre. They had also agreed to the opening of schools in the valley though none were opened at this stage.

On the establishment of the Company one of the Moirs' first moves was to buy a plot of land and to build a store at Katunga's village some miles below the first of the cataracts and near the foot of the road to Blantyre. Within a short time difficulty was found in recruiting porters from the Makololo and men had to be sent down from Blantyre. At the same time there were a number of thefts of loads on the road. It was assumed, and there seems to be little doubt, that Ramakukan, the most powerful of the chiefs, either instigated the thefts or took a share of them. Fred Moir, conscious of the vulnerability of the Company, went down to Ramakukan's and made a strong protest. Ramakukan was anxious that the steamer should come up to his village above Katunga's; Moir refused to allow this till the stolen goods were returned. He said that he did not accuse Ramakukan of instigating the thefts but that 'he was the chief of the thieves and must find them out.' He reminded Ramakukan of the bene-

1. H. Henderson to Dr. J. Stewart, 29th April, 1877, Salisbury.
2. Dr. J. Stewart to wife, 1st October, 1876, 10th October, 1876, Salisbury; and Livingstonia diary, September, October, 1875.
fits which would come from increased trade and asked him what his 'old English friends' would think of him when they heard that he was permitting theft. They would ask if the Makololo wanted war. Some of the stolen trusses of calico were returned and Moir felt that his strong language was thus justified. Relations with Ramakukan apparently remained cordial and Moir had been expecting him to dinner at Blantyre with Herbert Rhodes on the day that Rhodes died. It may be that the implied threat contained in Fred Moir's words was unwise in view of the actual weakness of the Company's position. Both the Moirs seem, however, to have worked on the assumption that concessions would be interpreted as signs of weakness and would lead to repeated and excessive demands. Given that they were in a position where they could be held to ransom, there may have been some justification for their view.

In their attempts to establish trade with Ramakukan and the other Makololo chiefs they met with a number of difficulties. The most important of these was their conscientious objection to the sale of guns, gun-powder, and alcohol. The chiefs' major source of wealth was ivory which they obtained through their own hunters or through their right to the ground tusk of every elephant killed in their areas. In order to get more ivory it was reasonable that they should expect some powder or guns as part of the payment for any that they sold.

Both Ramakukan and Chipatula, his rival, who controlled the southern part of the Makololo area from below the Ru to the Elephant Marsh to a point some miles below Katunga's, had developed a taste for spirits. Between the late 1870s and 1884 they entertained between

2. F.M. to parents, 20th October, 1879, ibid.
3. E.g. J.M. to W. Ewing, 29th October, 1883, ibid. For a similar view see J. Buchanan, The Shire Highlands, op. cit., p 199.
4. Foot to Sir Percy Anderson, (private,) 3rd April, 1884, F.O. 84/1688. Hawes to F.O., 7th November, 1885, F.O. 84/1702. Encloses proclamation binding British hunters to respect customary law on this point.
5. For map of spheres of Ramakukan and Chipatula, see, Foot to Granville, 20th February, 1884, F.O. 84/1702.
them at least four European traders who supplied them with this commodity, three of whom died in tragic circumstances. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the Company's stands on these issues, there could be no doubt that they constituted an impediment to the development of commercial relations, and prevented Fred Moir from achieving his ambition to 'clear the Makololo out of ivory.' They did manage to get some ivory from Ramakukan but it called for a great deal of work. Mrs. John Moir described a fruitless day's bargaining:

"He (John Moir) gives what they ask, and they just ask more till it is ridiculous. He thinks they want to send the ivory with slaves to the coast."

There were rumours that Ramakukan was involved with the slave trade. It cannot be proved that he was directly involved, but he did send caravans to the Portuguese coast in company with men from some of the most active Yao traders. The main object of these caravans was to get powder which became increasingly difficult to obtain at Quelimane as a result of pressure from the Moirs among others. One of Ramakukan's caravans returning from Chisanga after a ten month journey stayed at Zomba in March 1881. One of its leaders was a former servant of John Buchanan and told him that it was carrying sixteen new flint-locks, nine kegs of powder, as well as trusses of calico. The caravan had been accompanied by some of Kawinga's people, but it was said that no slaves had been seen on the road.

1. Some time in the late 1870's a Frenchman died in an explosion at Ramakukan's. J. Buchanan diary, 25th May, 1884. Herbert Rhodes, elder brother of Cecil, was burnt to death by the explosion of a demi-john of rum from which he had been drinking with Ramakukan at Schirala. He was buried within the stockade of the village. F.M. to father, 22nd October, 1879; George Fawrick was killed on the 19th-20th February, 1884; he was said to have been drinking with Chipatula for some days. A Frenchman, who was at Nkewe at the same time was saved through the intervention of Ramakukan. Morrison diary, 4th June, 1884.

2. F.M. to mother, 24th July, 1879, L.B.(1).

3. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 12th October, 1882, Shepperson collection.

4. J. Buchanan, The Shire Highlands, op. cit., p 80. F.M. to A. Hart, 12th January, 1880, L.B.(1), he complains of the difficulty of competition. 'We have as yet sold no powder to friend or foe, does the Co. wish it should continue so?' He suggests that the Company should sell powder until the prohibition at Quelimane is properly enforced.

5. J. Buchanan diary, 3rd March, 1881.
carried on trade in ivory with Malemia, a Yao chief near Zomba.

The Moirs found Chipatula more amenable, and thought him more enterprising. It seems likely that he felt that he had more to gain from placating the Company. He was in a more vulnerable strategic position than Ramakukan, occupying the territory which would fall first to any Portuguese move north; and he had ambitions to succeed to or take over Ramakukan's position as most powerful of the Makololo. He looked to John Moir for advice on his often stormy dealings with his southern neighbour, Matakenya, and for intercession with the Portuguese in 1883 when there was a serious threat of invasion. His people did a regular trade in oil-seeds with the Company, and he himself became a regular supplier of ivory. It is possible that the Moirs were induced to relax their embargo on arms dealing in his favour. They may have felt that arms used against the Portuguese would be in the defence of their own position. Mrs. John Moir commented:

"Chipatula is a very clever young man though very wild when drunk, but he seems to want to keep in with Jack who wishes ditto."

The Company did not, however, have anything approaching a monopoly of his trade. He was said to obtain arms from the Portuguese and certainly obtained spirits from free-lance European traders.

While the Company got on 'well enough' with Chipatula, relations

1. J. Buchanan diary, 27th August, 1880, 9th April, 1881.
2. F.M. to father, 22nd April, 1880. Chipatula was thought to be the only chief who could be persuaded to buy an oil-press.
4. E.g. Morrison diaries, 15th July, 1884, 5th September, 1884, Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 24th January, 1883.
5. F.M. to J.M., 7th June, 1881, L.B.(1); Morrison diaries, 21st August, 1882.
with Ramakukan seems to have become strained early in 1883. There were two major points at issue; John Noir was concerned at an increase in the number of thefts on the road for which he held Ramakukan responsible, and Ramakukan was angry at what he considered to be poaching of ivory by the Company from off his preserves. In an effort to increase the exports of ivory on which the solvency of the Company depended, men had been supplied with guns and ammunition on the understanding that of all the elephants that they shot they would give one tusk to the Company and sell the other to it. Consul Foot characterised the people employed on this work as 'renegade Mission boys and native loafers.' They included Kāmtaja, a headman from Blantyre, and Bismarck, an employee of the Blantyre Mission. How far Ramakukan was justified in his complaint of poaching is uncertain as most of the shooting was done in the Elephant Marsh which was uninhabited but in Chipatula's sphere. However in February or March 1883 an elephant was shot in Ramakukan's area; he demanded the ground tusk; the man who shot it was alarmed and gave both tusks to John Noir wishing to have no more to do with them. Ramakukan demanded the tusk and John Noir, while admitting Ramakukan's claim, refused to hand it over until several trusses thought to have been stolen with the connivance of Ramakukan were returned. According to Noir:

"Had I given him the value of the tusk less the value of the trusses, he would have been quite satisfied; but I had just had word that two trusses stolen near Matope had been certainly taken by his men, and one had gone down to the Chief (Ramakukan) who had accepted it. I told him all this straight out and he could only make a lame denial. I also taxed him with receiving several boxes stolen a long time ago on the Matope road and he could not even deny that. So I refused to give him the value of the tusk until all had been returned. The six trusses exceeded the tusk. He went away saying I had stolen from him in open day. He would do the same. I warned him of the serious consequences and made some hints

1. J.W. to Consul Foot, 17th March, 1884, L.D. (1), this dates the beginning of the dispute to February or March 1883.
2. This practice was started by the Blantyre Mission under Dr. Macklin. Christian Express, June, 1879, quotes letter of Macklin, 4th January, 1879.
3. Foot to Anderson, 3rd April, 1884, F.O. 84/1688.
which rather frightened him. I told him we did not want war of any kind but he must insist on punishing his people who stole, and I told him he knew how glad Chipatula would be to fight with him. He called and dined with me after this. But when I wanted to come down with over half a ton of ivory I could get no carriers, as they said Ramakukan was waiting on the road to take it. It is a difficulty but had I weakly paid him there would have been no bounds to the thefts. Mr. Scott agreed with me in this and I think the natives generally think I have acted quite fairly. Even he himself, I believe, sees the full justice — it is in accordance with native law.

The question of carriers was complicated by the long-standing dispute with Katunga over their pay. There were two different points at issue but as Katunga was one of Ramakukan’s men they tended to become confused. Moir was anxious to settle the 'mandanda' before the British Consul who had recently been appointed to Nyasa arrived and before the departure for Britain of Dr. Laws who also had a dispute with Ramakukan about people who it was claimed had left Ramakukan to settle at Livingstona. While relations with Ramakukan were so tense Chipatula sent up a caravan of over one hundred men with salt and ivory for sale at Mandela. Moir arranged with one of Chipatula’s headmen for carriers to be sent up to take over the transport to the river for which he had been forced to send men down from his own three villages on the Mandala estate. The fact that Chipatula sent such a large caravan at a time when Ramakukan was ordering all his people not to carry for the Company indicates that the threat that Moir had made to Ramakukan about Chipatula’s possible intervention in any warfare was a serious one. There is evidence that Moir had at least intended to broach the subject with Chipatula in October when he was on his way down river to Quelimane.

1. J.M. to W. Irving, 19th October, 1883, ibid., at this date J.M. had seen Ramakukan three times about the dispute.
2. Note 4, p. 200 above and J.M. to Ramakukan, 21st December, 1883, L.B.(1). This letter is dated 21st October, but from its position in the letter-book and its content it must have been written in December.
4. Morrison diaries, 5th October, 1883. 'Moir intends to see Chipatula and ask for his assistance in case of war by Ramakukan against us.'
By seeking to exploit the bitter animosity which existed between Ramakukan and his former 'slave' Chipatula, John Moir had embarked on a dangerous course; though it may be that he was temporarily successful. By the middle of February 1884 there appeared to have been a relaxation in tension. Late in December Morrison had safely despatched a large quantity of ivory from Katunga's and had a long conversation with the chief over tea about the significance of the British Consul.¹ On the 13th February 1884 Morrison took a party of Mandala men down to Katunga's in order to break the strike which had been resumed and to show that 'we are not dependent.'² The point at issue at this stage, he makes clear, was the demand for an increase in the rate of payment to four yards per journey rather than the question of the tusk.

Within a week an event occurred which could not have been foreseen, and which totally altered the balance of power. Chipatula was killed at Mbewe by George Fenwick, the former Blantyre Mission and Company employee, who had set himself up as a trader and had returned from Quelirane with goods and spirits for Chipatula. There was a dispute about the payment due for the cargo of oil seeds which Fenwick had taken down. It is not clear who fired first but Fenwick killed Chipatula outright and was himself speared on the island in the Shire to which he had fled.³ Chipatula's death triggered off a struggle for power between the Makololo factions. Ramakukan used his rival's death as an opportunity to consolidate his own position, to assume influence over Chipatula's sphere, and to obtain recognition from all the Makololo headmen, and the British Consul, of his right to be considered the Paramount Chief. At the same time he was able to settle his 'munda' with Moir to his own advantage, and to secure the payment of a regular subsidy by the Company.

The community at Blantyre and Mandala were first warned that something was wrong by the sudden departure of Chipatula's children from the Blantyre School.⁴ This was soon followed by a rumour, and

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¹ Morrison diaries, 26th December, 1883.
² Ibid., 13th February, 1884.
³ J.M. to Fredericks, the agent at Katunga's, 23rd February, 1884, L.B.(1).
⁴ Morrison diaries, 20th February, 1884.
then confirmation of the two deaths, and the news 'that the natives were going to make war on the English.' Then came a false rumour that the Company's agent at Katunga's had been killed and that 'the people as a body were on their way to fight us.' Chipatula's eldest son, Chitu, who had been expelled from Blantyre School for 'disorderly conduct,' was the leader of the war faction. He was determined to avenge his father's death which it was thought had been commissioned by John Moir. There can have been little reason behind this view for as Moir said 'I was always on the best of terms with Chipatula. I was always on the worst of terms with Fenwick,' who had in 1883 threatened to shoot Moir and had begun his last letter to him with the words: 'Go to hell!' Morrison thought that the hostility was due not just to Fenwick but 'to envy of our supposed riches.' The desire to take over the Mandala store, equivalent to the largest bank in central Africa, and one of the objects of a later rising in Malawi, must have been uppermost in the minds of the most hostile of Ramakukan's headmen who can have had no reason to love Chipatula. Chegaru, the headman at Matope who had been responsible for various thefts on the Matope road, and who had recently been raiding villages on Ndirande near Blantyre, took over

1. Morrison diaries, 21st-23rd February, 1884.
2. Foot to Granville, 8th March, 1884, F.O. 84/1662.
4. Ibid., and J. Buchanan diary, 22nd February, 1884. Commenting on Fenwick's 'not untimely end...and who would have expected anything else?...he went around often like a very fiend. No man could oppose him...without being challenged to fight him with revolvers.'
5. Morrison diaries, 26th February, 1884.
7. O'Neill to Granville, 13th April, 1884, F.O. 84/1671. He comments on the dispute for primacy between Ramakukan supported by Katunga, Masea, Muliiraa, Mlauri, and Mvita, against Chipatula. One of the suggested causes of the argument between Chipatula and Fenwick was that Chipatula wished to kill some of Masea's men who had brought Fenwick's goods up in canoes. There was a bitter enmity between them. J.M. to Fredericks, 23rd February, 1884, L.B.(1).
8. J.M. to Mr Laws, 11th December, 1883, L.B2(1). John Buchanan who did not always agree with John Moir had no doubt that Chegaru had caused the Company considerable loss and trouble, and was certain that Ramakukan shared 'any spoil taken by Chegaru,' diary, 1st March, 18th March, 1884.
the Company's store at Matope and removed property belonging to the Company, the L.M.S. and the U.M.C.A. He also sent a message by one of the Company's captains there demanding that Mrs. Fenwick should be handed over to him together with all Fenwick's goods. The Company's agent at Katunga's, on the other hand, was allowed to retire to Mandala. John Moir wrote to Katunga asking him to look after the Company's goods there, and they remained untouched throughout the disturbances.

Meanwhile the Company had to take the threat of attack on Mandala seriously. All the goods were removed to the two storey house which was barricaded with packing cases. According to Morrison they were determined to sell their position dearly, forty guns were loaded with slug shot in addition to Winchesters and Martini-Henrys. There was some difference of opinion with the Mlantyre Mission. D.C. Scott was ready to withdraw to Zomba if war broke out. 'They say that we are doing right in defending ourselves, but they cannot see the force of helping us.' In Morrison's view 'our house is strong, our duty is clear, therefore we can believe the Lord is on our side.' Fortunately this was not put to the test. The combined Makololo, if they could have sunk their differences, were thought to be able to muster 1,500 guns, almost all flint—locks. The outcome of an attack is open to doubt. Early in March messages from Ramakulcan to Consul Foot made it clear that there was no immediate danger of this, but that the situation would be unsafe for any European until the period of mourning was over and until Ramakulcan had taken over Chipatula's villages and quelled the headmen who wanted to kill the Europeans. It is clear that throughout he acted as a restraining influence on the more passionate of his followers.

1. Foot to Grenville, 8th March, 1884; J. Roxburgh to Secretary, L.M.S. 12th August, 1884, L.M.S.C.A., 5/5/10b.
2. Chegaru to Mandala, translated from chi-Nyanja and enclosed with Foot to Consul, 8th March, 1884.
5. Ibid., 24th February, 1884.
6. Foot to Grenville, 28th April, 1884, F.O. 84/1662.
7. Ibid.,
Apart from the possibility of an attack on Mandala the greatest danger that the Company faced was that of the capture of one or other of the steamers. Chegaru had threatened to take over the Ilala if it reached Matope, and the danger to the Lady Hyassa if it reached Chipatula's country was obvious. By the despatch of messengers both these events were avoided during the first stage of the emergency. On the 19th March Consul Foot seems to have reached an agreement by messenger with Ramakukan on the terms of the settlement of the mirandu with Moir over the tusk. Moir attempted to insist on the removal of Chegaru from Matope as a condition of the agreement, but he was persuaded to promise to pay the value of the tusk, when the Lady Hyassa came up river safely. He was also to pay an annual subsidy in consideration for the keeping open of the river.

Moir wrote on the same day to Gouk, the steamer captain, saying that if Ramakukan allowed the message through it would probably be safe to come up. But he warned:

"Keep constant watch. Have plenty wood before entering Makololo territory. Keep guns right and ready. Do not stop for anyone but Kasisi (Ramakukan) himself. He is acknowledged Chief of all that country now. Chikusi is his 'slave'. All along he had been friendly but his chiefs have been crying out for war. He had apparently done his best, and very well too, to keep peace...Guerilla warfare is what I dreaded, not attack on Mandala.'

It is not certain that this letter got through. It is, however, clear that Chikusi and his advisors were informed of the tenor of the messages which were passing because a Blantyre schoolboy, Philip, was able to compose and write a letter to Gouk telling him to come up, which Gouk took to be genuine, and acted upon. He fell into a trap which had been set by Chikusi in defiance of Ramakukan. The steamer was captured. Chikusi wanted to kill Gouk but was dissuaded

1. Morrison diaries, 26th February, 1884.
2. Foot to Granville, 19th March, 1884, P.O. 84/1662.
   The tusk in question weighed 69 lbs. J.M. was to pay its full value, £34 5s. Od., J.M. to Foot, 17th March, 1884, L.B.(1).
   The amount of the annual subsidy to be paid is unknown.
from doing so by one of Ramakukan's headmen, Mlauri. Gouk was stripped of his clothes, given a surely symbolic bark cloth, and sent to Mandala with the message to Moir that until all flint-locks, flints, percussion guns, caps, powder and calico in the Mandala store were handed over, together with Mrs. Fenwick to be killed, they would keep the steamer. If the demands were not met immediately the steamer would be broken up; the same quantity of goods was to be paid every two years if they wished to continue running the steamer on the river. Foot commented that the surrender of Mrs. Fenwick would mean death and the exhibition of her head on a pole at Mbewe where her husband's was already in position. In answer to Foot's enquiries Ramakukan denied having any connection with the capture of the steamer; he had given Mlauri instructions to let it pass, and he was prepared to go to war with Chikusí and Mlauri over the matter.

By this date the position of the Europeans at Mandala and Blantyre was becoming acute owing to a shortage of supplies. No goods or mails had come up river for over two months. Two Company employees, Fred Morrison and L.M. Fotheringham, and later John Buchanan, and the Consul's Secretary, Lawrence Goodrich set out overland to the lower river by-passing Makololo country. They went separately and had differing degrees of success. Morrison met Consul O'Neill of Mozambique who had succeeded in preventing a Portuguese attack on the Makololo, supposedly in aid of the Europeans, but in the event of which Chikusí had promised to kill them all. It was almost the

1. Morrison diaries, 24th May, 1884. Story as told by Gouk to Morrison.
2. Ibid., 18th April, 24th May, 1884; J.M. to Foot, 19th April, with Foot to Granville, 25th April, 1884, F.O. 84/1662. D.J. Rankin in The Zambesi Basin and Nyasaland, London, 1893, says Gouk came up wearing a palm leaf. Morrison is more likely to be correct.
3. J.M. to Foot, 19th April, 1884.
4. Ibid., 30th April, 1884.
6. Foot to Granville, 9th June, 1884, F.O. 84/1662; O'Neill to Granville, 13th April, 25th April, 1st September, 3rd October, 1884, F.O. 84/1671. Morrison diaries, April, May, 1884, passim.
end of May before Ramakukan sent up word that it would be safe for men to come down to salvage the Lady Nyassa which had been taken to Mbove, Chipatula’s capital, and sunk there.  

Foot, and a party including Morrison, Rankin and Gouk met Ramakukan for the first time since February on the 4th June at Katunga’s. On the 5th June they reached Mbove. The steamer was re-floated after two hours baling, Ramakukan making the first move.  

The affair was not quite over; on the way down the river for the first time since February the steamer was almost stopped again by hundreds of armed men on the banks of the river at Chiromo.  

Chikusi then collected five hundred men with guns and 1,000 men with bows and arrows and they went to find Ramakukan. He refused to see Chikusi until he had sent away the men and threatened to kill Chikusi if he did not. When the men had been sent away Chikusi said that he wanted to catch the steamer again because the English did not pay him anything, and asked Ramakukan why he wished to let it pass. Ramakukan reminded Chikusi that ‘Chipatula was my slave and you Chikusi are his son. You wish to be chief but you never shall.’ Chikusi was said to have been sent out weeping. John Moir came down to see Ramakukan about the mirandu and it was eventually agreed that Chikusi should be paid a similar sum to that which Ramakukan had received for his tusk. The river was open and the Company had no more difficulty with Chikusi; Ramakukan, however, continued to find him a threat to his authority and seized the opportunity of the murder of an Austrian at Chiromo two years later to wage a war in which Chikusi was disposed of once and for all, and his own position was finally consolidated.  

From the way in which comparatively small payments of goods satis-

1. Morrison diaries, 24th May, 1884.  
2. Ibid., 4th-5th June, 1884. D.J. Rankin, op. cit., pp 55-6. At Mbove they saw Fenwick’s head on a pole, and Chipatula’s house in which he had been buried; the house was swathed with yards of Fenwick’s, Buchanan’s and Company cloth.  
3. Ibid., 8th July, 1884.  
4. Ibid., 5th September, 1884. Account from eye witnesses. O’Neill to Granville, 3rd October, 1884, quotes J.M. to O’Neill, 6th August, 1884, F.O. 84/1671. Moir had paid Chikusi £32 7s. 6d.  
fied both Ramakukan and Chikusi it seems likely that one of the most important factors leading to this crisis was the feeling that they were not getting as large a share of the wealth brought into the country by the Company as they felt entitled to. The Company had made occasional presents to both chiefs but they had not entered into formal agreements with them, and made no regular payments. With or without John Moir's tactless handling of the ivory question, or the murder of Chipatula, it seems likely that a crisis was about to break over the question of carriers. Both these issues involved a clash between the interests of the chiefs and the encouragement of individual enterprise which was an integral part of the Company's policy and impact. One of the points which emerges is the amount of authority which the Makololo possessed. At the height of the crisis one of Ramakukan's men arrived at Mandala to return a blanket which had been stolen from the agent's house at Katunga's. This adds weight to Moir's view that the chiefs could and must be held responsible for the actions of their people. Ramakukan was able to control his more bellicose headmen, and eventually, those of Chipatula. The fact that he chose to do so in the interests of peace, and of the Company, may have been in part due to the firm stand that John Moir had taken. There is at least as much weight in this argument as in the contrary one that the crisis would never have occurred had it not been for Moir's tactlessness. Moir himself commented:

"Ramakukan has been able to manage his headmen wonderfully to his own advantage, pretty clear that he can keep peace and will now wish to do so." 2

In another letter he pointed out that the affair had given Kasisi (Ramakukan) a tremendous handle against us. However it is possible that even more stability may come out of it. 3 Certainly Moir's dangerous attempt to play off Chipatula against Ramakukan had rebounded on him and it might not have been so easy to salvage the wreck if it had not been for the presence of the British Consul as an intermediary. Even this condensed account of the events of 1884 gives some indication of the complex way in which the Company by its very existence

1. Morrison diaries, 1st March, 1884.
3. J.M. to Dr. Scott, Bandawe, 24th March, 1884, ibid.
became involved in long-standing rivalries, and both attempted to use and was used by the chiefs.

A further significant aspect of this crisis is the evidently prominent part played in the war faction at Chikusi’s of Blantyre School graduates or former pupils including Chikusi himself. The luring of the steamer up river by the forged letter is some testimony to the efficacy of the teaching, but Morrison was

"very sorry to notice when at the Ruo, (Chiromo) numbers of young fellows who were well-dressed in good shirts taking a most active part in the disturbance and asking my boys who they were, was told their names and that they were boys who had been under teaching at Blantyre for some time. It is a strange fact that some of the most accomplished thieves and black-guards have had a school training at the Mission." 1

The attack on the Company was not totally reactionary; by demanding that a large payment should be made every two years in future for the right to run the steamer on the river, Chikusi and his headmen showed an appreciation of the benefits which could be obtained from the Company’s existence and a desire for a greater share of those benefits. They did not aim at the extermination of the Europeans but sought to exploit them. It seems likely, however, that if it had not been for Ramakukan’s restraining influence the position of the Company could easily have become untenable. He must have seen that he had more to gain in the long run from the assertion of firm authority which would strengthen his position than from allowing the initiative to pass out of his hands into those of the son of his old enemy. If he had been fully aware of the vulnerability of the Company would he have shown such restraint? If the answer to this is ‘No’ then the Noirs’ bluff had worked. If the answer is ‘Yes’ he must have had reasons of sentiment, expediency or calculation which led him to welcome its continued existence.

There were a number of special factors which ensured that the Company’s relations with the Makololo chiefs should be more intimate

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1. Morrison diaries, 8th July, 1884.
than those with any other local powers. Their connection with Livingstone, of which they were very conscious, their position as alien over-lords among the Manganja population of the valley, and most important, their control of the banks of the Shire from the Morambala Marsh to Matope, all contributed to the establishment of a special relationship. But these factors tending towards co-operation did not, as has been shown, do much to simplify political relations with the Company, nor did they enable the Company to achieve a monopoly of their trade. With the other powerful political forces in the area the Company was faced with the same difficulties without the advantage of a historical connection, or the necessity on either side of close contact.

While the Makololo welcomed the return of the 'English' whom Livingstone had told them to expect, and for whom they had consciously resisted Portuguese expansion, there could be no such welcome from the great Yao chiefs who knew the English, if at all, as dedicated opponents of the slave trade. The Company had found that its trade with the Makololo was restricted by its reluctance to deal in spirits and guns; with the Yao, the Swahili and Arabs in the interior, and the Ngoni, there was an additional and greater handicap, the prevalence of the slave trade. It would take too long to catalogue examples of the slave trade in action around Lake Malawi in the period under consideration.1 The Yao chiefs, great and small, all participated in the trade and had no scruples about it. Of the Ngoni chiefs Mbelwa at least had scruples but was unable to prevent the trade being carried on by his subordinates.2 Chikusi, of the southern Ngoni, seems to have no such doubts and regularly welcomed Yao and Arab traders.3 The Tonga in spite of their beleaguered situation on the western shore of the lake carried on the trade whenever opportunity allowed.4 The Jumbe of Mchota Khota, probably the most

2. E.g. W. Koyi to Dr. J. Stewart, 19th February, 1884, Salisbury.
3. Christian Express, August, 1879. J. Stewart, C.F., remarked that Mpond's people had not been allowed to enter Ngoniland that year for trade and implied that this was contrary to the usual practice.
wealthy man on the lake, was deeply involved in the trade though it formed only one source of his wealth and probably not the most important one.\(^1\) The Company, totally lacking in military power as it was, could not interfere with this trade, and if it wanted to trade at all it had to compete with those traders who dealt in all commodities.

Before it could even begin to compete commercially it had to obtain the co-operation of the potentates who controlled the supply of ivory. Because this was virtually their monopoly the trade was as much a diplomatic and political one as a commercial one. The Moirs had discovered this on their first journeys up to the lake in 1879. Days of negotiation were generally required before trading could begin. Mbelwa in January 1879 kept Fred Moir waiting three days before beginning to talk about trade. When William Koyi, the evangelist at Mbelwa's, heard that John Moir was likely to come up to trade, he wrote asking that he should bring his own interpreter as he did not look forward to 'twelve days of talking'.\(^2\) At the Sangu chief, Merere's, in 1880 Fred had had to wait for most of two weeks before being allowed to buy a few tusks after his tents had been packed.\(^3\) More often there was a complete lack of response. In 1879 Fred Moir made a visit to Mpmbe, a small Yao chief at the south west end of the lake who was said to have received a large consignment of ivory. They were told that chief would be coming 'manâna';

"His sons turned up their noses at our presents of cloth though some of it was very good, from what we had noticed all along, and the presence of Arabs around, we were not surprised."\(^4\)

Fred called on Mponda the important Yao at the south end of the lake early in November 1880 but 'could make nothing of him at all.'\(^5\)

Earlier in the year John Moir had reported the arrival of a musical box for him so there may have been some more useful contact.\(^6\)

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3. F.M. to parents, 20th October, 1880, L.B.(1).
4. F.M. to parents, 9th February, 1879, ibid.
5. F.M. to mother, 7th December, 1880, ibid.
6. J.M. to R. Henderson, April, 1880, ibid.
Whether trade could be begun or not often depended entirely on the whim or caprice of the chief in question.

Once trading had been allowed to begin the problem was that of satisfying the local taste in barter goods. At Mbelwa's in 1879 Fred had been able to make no progress because he had the wrong kind of cloth. Mpemba's sons had wanted axes and saws. In this matter of market research the Moirs were at a distinct disadvantage in competition with Arabs who had long experience of local fashions. When sending off a very large order for cloth and beads John Moir pointed out that he had 'spared no pains in making up this order, and have had the assistance of Arabs from great distances in selecting them.' He summed up his experience of barter

"The secret of ivory buying I believe to consist in having the particular things that a native chiefly desires. One may see a particularly beautiful cloth or blanket and at once secretly make up his mind to have that and eventually sell his ivory in consequence, with another it may be an iron pot, another of some education, may set his affections on a lamp. But my desire has always been to have if possible what will chain the man to our stores till we can get his ivory." It was some time before the Company could amass enough knowledge of the market to be able to compete on anything like equal terms.

The demand for spirits tended to diminish as one moved further from the Portuguese sphere. When Morrison visited Makanjira on the Fort Maguire promontory in 1885 the chief begged for brandy for half an hour; Morrison presumed that he had been given it by the acting British Consul, Lawrence Goodrich, who had been taken there by the steamer earlier in the year. When he had been travelling south east of Mlanje on his way to the lower river during the emergency of the previous year, Morrison had visited an unknown chief who had offered to share with him a bottle of finest old Glenlivet Whisky. Morrison, who was a teetotaller, declined. In general the Company's refusal

2. F.M. to parents, 9th February, 1879, L.B.(1).
4. Morrison diaries, 7th, 8th and 23rd March, 1885.
5. Ibid., 10th April, 1884, at Mangasanja's.
to sell spirits was not so much of a handicap on the lake as it was among the Malololo on the river who were within quite easy reach of Portuguese sources of supply.

The demand for guns and gunpowder was, on the other hand, quite as great on the lake as on the river. With the exception of the Ngoni, to whom guns were militarily unimportant, all the people on the lake wished to get guns if they could. The followers of the powerful Yao chiefs were almost invariably armed with flintlocks, as were the followers of itinerant Arab traders; even the Tonga were quite well-armed as accounts of their small civil wars show.

Morrison commented on Mponda's people that they 'use guns as a toy as girls do dolls.' When he visited Mponda in 1883, the chief, who had just returned from a six months journey to the coast, put on a display of the guns which he had bought there for defence against the Ngoni. These included a number of Enfield rifles, and Mponda boasted that 'now he had as many guns as the white man.' The stiff resistance which the Yao chiefs, Makanjira, Kapinga, Zaraafi and Mponda were able to make to attacks by the British administration in the early 1890's was some testimony to the sheer quantity of firepower which had by then been accumulated from the profits of the ivory and the slave trade.

While the demand for guns made the purchase of ivory difficult, the trade in slaves made the Company's agents less than welcome when dealings were going on. The opposition of the 'English' to the slave trade was, of course, well-known at the coast and the Company never attempted to disguise its commitment. Henry O'Neill the Consul at Mozambique, described the situation succinctly and with only slight exaggeration:

"slaves are their chief stock in trade: these they can not sell to the English: powder and guns they require in large quantities: these the English do not sell." 6

1. See above, Chapter I.
4. Ibid.
Given these drawbacks in addition to smaller problems such as the finding of carriers to take trade goods across the no-man's land which separated hostile peoples, or the tendency for vendors to ask for coast prices in the interior, it is perhaps surprising that the Company was able to build up any trade at all with Arabs, Yao and Ngoni. There were, it is true, some very important chiefs on the periphery of the area with whom the Company had virtually no dealings. These included Makanjira, Matapwiri, Kawinga, Zarafi, among the Yao, and Chikusi and Mpeseni among the Ngoni.

For all of these the existence of the Company can have made little if any difference in this period. The most important of those with whom the Company did manage to establish some regular contact were the Yao, Mponda, the Arab Jumbe of Mchota Mchota, the Ngoni, Mbelwa, and slightly later the Gowa, Mwase Kazunga, and the north end Arabs of whom the most important was Mlozi. Mponda and the Jumbe had in common the fact that their towns were on the direct route of the steamer and so they could be visited by it without the necessity of sending staff who were always in short supply on a special mission. When entering or leaving the upper Shire and the lake the Ilala had to pass Mponda's villages. The people were in the habit of turning out to watch it pass, and did some trade in salt and skins. The Company does not seem to have done much trade in ivory with the Mponda who died in 1885, and whose mother had entertained Livingstone, but its agents seem to have established an understanding with him. In 1883 Morrison had taken him for a fun in the steamer which apparently pleased him greatly. In February 1885 he arranged to take Mponda, one wife, and two men 'for free as a friend' to Bandawe so that he could consult Dr. Scott. Mponda had offered a truss of calico for his passage and a truss for the doctor. He also wanted to take a large party of men with cloth to buy ivory. He was prevented from going by his people owing to the threat of a combined attack by Makanjira and the Ngoni, Chifisi, and died in July of that year. In October Morrison gave Mponda's son and some of his party a lift in

1. Morrison diaries, 2nd March, 1883.
2. Ibid., 4th February, 23rd February, 1885.
3. Ibid., 5th March, 2nd August, 1885.
the steamer from Nhota Khota to his home. He had been trading for ivory, and probably slaves, at Bandawe. The new Mponda expressed his friendship for the 'English' and sent a present of two small tusks to Fred Moir for which he asked a return present of powder which was given. The political situation at Mponda's never regained stability after the death of the old Mponda and there does not seem to have been much commercial or social contact with the new one whose position was not secure.

The Jumbe with whom the Company dealt at this time was the third and had succeeded his brother in 1877. From August 1880 when Fred Moir bought 328 lbs. of ivory from him the Company did a regular and fairly large trade with him. The major limitation on the trade seems to have been the carrying capacity of the steamer and the supply of cloth which the Company could get to Nhota Khota while attempting to meet its obligations to the missions. Morrison was able to buy only the small ivory and the Jumbe 'said that should I come up with a steamer load of cloth he could provide ivory to buy it.' While the Jumbe traded with the Company presumably because they could give him a satisfactory price for his goods, this involvement did not have any noticeable impact on his slaving activities. He tended to keep slave dhows out of sight when the steamer was at hand but on one occasion in 1882 a dhow was loaded with slaves and sailed away under the nose of the steamer with John Moir on board. The crew shouted 'Why do you wait? Do you want war?' as they passed. As late as 1888 the Jumbe added a postscript to a letter to John Moir

1. Morrison diaries, 2nd, 3rd October, 1885.
2. Bandawe Journal, 12th May, 14th, 15th September, 1885, MS 7911, they had also been to the north end.
6. Note by F.M., 25th-26th August, 1880; F.M. to Directors, 7th December, 1880, L.B.(1). Morrison diaries, 9th February, 10th September, 1st October, 30th October, 17th November, 8th December, etc.
7. Ibid., 19th September, 1885, 18th February, 1886. In February 1886 he produced a 77 lb. tusk in payment of a 50 lb. debt and, as there was no cloth on board to settle the account, was in credit with the Company.
wish me to desist from the slave trade, I shall not be your friend.\(^1\) Jumbe, like Mponda, was fascinated by the steamer though he found his first embarkation on it alarming.\(^2\) Late in 1885 he wanted to hire it to go up to Bandawe to settle a dispute he had there, and early in 1886 he wanted to take a trip up to the north end to visit some friends of his there.\(^3\) It is not clear whether he made either of these journeys, he probably did not.

Contact with the northern Ngoni had first been made early in 1879; a store of goods was left at Kapingina in the hope that ivory would be brought to it for sale, it seems unlikely that this had any success,\(^4\) and it was not until late in 1883 that the Company was able to send a man into the country of Mbelwa as a full-time trader.\(^5\) He must have been successful as a party of carriers was required in June 1884 to bring the ivory which had been bought in Ngoniland down to Bandawe.\(^6\) It was in September 1885 that agents of the Company first reached Mwase Kasungu who was said to have a hundred tusks for sale.\(^7\) In December of that year the Company built its first independent store at Bandawe, it had previously shared with the mission and had its business there looked after by one of the artisan missionaries.\(^8\) Trading to the west of Bandawe in Mbelwa's and Mwase's country proved to be very successful; in January 1887 Morrison loaded one hundred and ninety three tusks at Bandawe which had been collected by Stuart and Stevenson in these parts.\(^9\)

3. Ibid., 13th February, 1886.
4. F.M. to parents, 9th February, 1879, L.B.(1).
7. L. Goodrich to Granville, 1st June, 1885, F.0. 84/1702. Mwase was anxious for the Company to send traders; he was at war with the Jumbe of Nkhota Khota and so few Arab traders reached him. Bandawe Journal, 31st August, 1885, Stevenson set out from Bandawe for Kasungu for the Company on a trading and treaty making expedition.
8. Bandawe Journal, MS 7911, 11th December, 1885.
9. Morrison diaries, 10th January, 1887.
The most successful of all the Company's ivory trading relationships was with the Arabs who had settled at the north end of the lake during the early 1880's. Beginning in 1883 the trade was built up until 1886 when the steamer was being sent south at regular intervals with full cargoes of ivory, and Karonga became the most profitable of the Company's stations. This topic will be considered in the next chapter. In terms of the Company's objects the development of this sort of trade was the substitution of 'legitimate' for 'illegitimate' commerce. With the exception of the north end trade it is doubtful whether the Company's intervention in the trade did much to alter the nature of trade in the region of Lake Malawi in this period. Even the powers with whom the Company did a regular trade sold to it only what they wanted to, and when it was convenient to them, they continued to send caravans to the coast, and to deal in slaves and guns. Most of the Yao chiefs continued their old trading pattern regardless of the Company's existence, and for those who did choose to sell to it, and to take advantage of its transport to the coast, its significance can only have been marginal. It must have been most useful to those like the Ngoni who did not send their own caravans to the coast, and the travelling Arab merchants who had little man-power at their disposal and to whom a journey to the coast was expensive and time-consuming. In their case the Company may have reduced the necessity to obtain slaves for tanga-tanga. The crux of the problem had been stated by James Stewart, C.E., and was recognized by Fred Moir

"The ivory trade is not capable of development, though it may be transferred from the Arabs to English hands. Even though that were done it will never do the country much good, as it diverts the attention of merchants from other articles, the production of which would be more beneficial to the country."

It was only in the Shire Highlands that the logistics of freight permitted practical attempts to cultivate other articles. The example of John Buchanan's coffee plantation at Zomba which was begun in 1879 showed that social change could be brought about through the

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1. J. Stewart, P.R.G.S. (M.S.) Vol.II, 1880, p 430. The same point was made by Consul Foot to H. Waller, 13th February, 1884, Waller papers, Rhodes House, Vol.III. "I don't believe ivory hunting does much good - when it is a fact that ivory is scarce or obsolete so much the better for Africa."
provision of a source of wealth which competed with the existing system and attracted people from it.\(^1\) Hundreds of men from the Yao chiefs Malemia and Mitoche, both of whom were active slave traders organising caravans to the coast, had been to work on the plantations at Zomba and Mau-sure. By 1889 Buchanan was able to tell Mitoche that it was no longer reasonable for chiefs to plead 'the necessity of slave dealing in order to secure cloth for themselves and their subjects' as there were Europeans who were prepared to take an almost unlimited supply of labour, as well as merchants who were prepared to purchase almost 'any marketable commodity.'\(^2\) Buchanan established a firm friendship with Malemia who came to visit him at the Consulate at Zomba; when he died in December 1889 Buchanan's brother, David, made a coffin for the chief and sent a keg of powder to be fired off at the funeral.\(^3\) These plantations had put an end to the slave trade, the chiefs in question remained quite independent and free to organise their people as they wished, but the lure of the European economy was becoming stronger than that of the traditional one. By 1891 even chief Kawinga, a dedicated trader and raider, was impressed at Malemia's prosperity as a result of contact with Europeans. He saw that Malemia's people had cloth while his own still had 'bark garments', and were 'anxious for work that they might be better clad.' Reasons such as these were said to have induced him to make contact with Europeans for the first time in that year.\(^4\)

In these cases also the impact of legitimate commerce as envisaged in Britain could only be said to be marginal. It is probable that it was the political rather than the commercial impact of the missions and the Company that was more significant at this time. Even the strongest and most independent of the local powers were forced to take them into account. Here the Europeans had the advantage of a certain mystique and supposed magical power which led them to be treated with more respect than their actual military power

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3. Ibid., 1st June, 1889, 27th May.
4. A. Hetherwick to D.C. Scott, 23th June, 1892, MS 7534.
warranted. At no time in this period were Company or mission settlements or people under their protection attacked. The people who came nearest to a direct attack were the Makololo, and it cannot be a coincidence that these were the people who had had most experience of Europeans and who had at the date of the crisis had most opportunity for education. No official raids were made by Mbelwa's Ngoni on the Tonga in the vicinity of Bandawe after Dr. Law's visit to them in 1879 and the establishment of the mission there. No raids were made by Chikuni's southern Ngoni on the Blantyre area between 1878 when they were first visited by Dr. Laws and James Stewart, C.E., and 1884 when they came beyond Zomba. According to John Moir they were emboldened to this attack 'by observation and by Fenwick's unavenged death.' On this occasion they were turned back by D.C. Scott and carefully refrained from taking John Buchanan's cattle at Zoraba, though they took all others that they could find. In 1885 they did not cross the Shire, dissuaded by the number of Europeans at Matope and, allegedly, by 'the presence at Mandala of Mr. Fred Moir who was known to have beaten back a vastly superior force of the Machinjire.' In the same year the Jumbe was dissuaded from attack on the Tonga at Bandawe, with whom he had a dispute and over whom he claimed some form of suzerainty by the members of the mission.

1. D.C. Scott to W. Robertson, December, 1881, E.U.L. He refers to a lake chief who sent tusks to Blantyre to buy magic for use against his enemies. See also H.A.C. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism, op. cit., pp 46-51.
2. D.C. Scott told Robertson in the same letter of December, 1881 'that Walker and Fenwick in their intercourse with Chipatula and the other Makololo chiefs have lowered immensely their respect for the English.'
7. As note 5 above.
8. Bandawe Journal, 28th October, – 5th November, 1885, MS 7911. The Jumbe brought with him 3,000 men, of whom 1,000 had guns.
The most active Yao slave traders avoided contact with the Europeans whose presence thus afforded some protection to their neighbours.

However hard the missions and the Company tried to remain impartial and uninvolved in the political conflicts which surrounded them they could not succeed. Their very existence altered the balance of power. Kapeni at Blantyre welcomed the mission in 1876 because he hoped for protection against the Ngoni. Malemia hoped that they would settle with him because he wanted protection from Kapinga, his powerful enemy and neighbour. The Company became involved, as has been shown, in the domestic politics of the Makololo. Control over the mission and the wealth that it brought with it became a central issue in the domestic politics of the northern Ngoni being used in the struggle for power between Mbelwa and his brother Mtwalo. The mission found it difficult to keep clear of Tonga rivalries and was at the centre of the conflict between them and the Ngoni.

Early in 1886 Chifisi, brother and enemy of Chikusi of the southern Ngoni sent messengers with two tusks to the steamer store at Cape Maclear. It was said that he wished to hire the steamer to go and collect Makanjira and his men to attack Mpondi. Mpondi offered to give 'many more tusks' to prevent this. Morrison replied that if Mpondi wanted to hire the steamer himself he would refuse 'as our work here was a work of peace and we were only happy when we were at peace with all the chiefs.'

While the Company's relations with the large and powerful chiefs in the Shire Highlands and on the lake were diplomatic in their nature and as between equals, its relations with the weaker peoples

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1. Evidence of Bismarck enclosed with O'Neill to Granville, 8th November, 1880, F.O. 84/1565.
who looked to it for support against more powerful enemies came close to being administrative. Matakenya regarded Duff MacDonald as 'chief of Bulantaya', and the Jumbe came to recognise the Livingstonia missionaries as 'chiefs' at Bandawe, Umpanda recognised the Company as 'chief' at Cape Maclear. The Moirs and other Company agents were frequently called on to mediate in disputes on the Company's estate at Mandala, at Livingstonia, and among the Ngonde and the Nyakusa at the north end of the lake. In 1882 for instance Fred Moir investigated a theft of powder from the store at Livingstonia and sentenced the man found guilty to be transported (by steamer) to work on the Stevenson road for a year. This was an unusual case involving the Company directly, the great majority were civil cases which the Company's agents were invited to hear as disinterested third parties. On one occasion Morrison took a party of men from Livingstonia to Mponda's to settle a dispute which they had with the chief. The men paid their fares with pieces of wood. Other cases, especially at the north end, were between rival headmen.

The promoters of both the Livingstonia and the Blantyre Missions had been less than clear as to the political role which their missions were to play. Forgetting the experience of the Universities Mission at Magomero, they found the notion of mission stations as settlements for refugees and escaped slaves attractive. Until 1878 both the stations were, owing to a shortage of staff at Blantyre, under the same management. James Stewart, C.E. of the Livingstonia Mission was in charge for some of the time at Blantyre and told the owners of slaves who came to reclaim their 'property' 'plainly that slaves gain their freedom at Blantyre.' The reception of refugees of this

2. Bandawe Journal, 30th October, 1885, MS 7911.
4. E.g. F.M. to parents, 27th June, 1881, 'much time spent in hearing mirandus,' L.B.(1).
5. F.M. to mother, 20th October, 1880, ibid; Morrison diaries, e.g. 15th September, 16th November, 1885.
6. Ibid., 27th May, 1885.
7. Ibid., 11th December, 1882.
8. Ibid., 19th–22nd January, 1887.
type at the stations antagonised their former owners, and posed problems of administration and the maintenance of law and order among people for whom the missions had become 'chief' de facto if not de jure. James Stewart, C.E. thought it impossible to avoid 'assuming powers of life and death.' Robert Laws was alarmed at 'the mission occupying more the position of a colony' than had been intended, and spoke of the necessity of ruling the people who settled near them with 'an iron hand.' The problem of administration was brought to a head by the publication in 1880 of a pamphlet which made some allegations about brutal floggings, and a particularly inept execution, which had been carried out at Blantyre during 1878 and 1879 under the supervision of Fenwick and Buchanan, and after the arrival of Duff MacDonald as head of the mission. Most of the allegations were true although by the time of their exposure the mission had given up any attempt to administer justice and had resolved that expulsion was the most suitable sanction. Neither the Moirs, nor the Company's agents were directly involved in any of the atrocities, though one man was flogged for having stolen beads which it was later discovered had been removed by John Moir who gave evidence to the inquiries which were instigated by the British Consul at Mozambique and by the Established Church of Scotland. They were, however, concerned about the defence of their property and of the

1. J. Stewart, C.E. to Dr. J. Stewart, 20th May, 1878, Salisbury.
2. R. Laws to Dr. J. Stewart, 20th July, 1878, Salisbury.
5. O'Neill to Granville, 18th November, 1880, F.O. 84/1565, encloses affidavit given by J. Moir to J. Nunes at Blantyre, 13th October, 1880. He also encloses a copy of an agreement on the relations of the Mission and the Company made by Duff MacDonald and the Moirs on the 16th June, 1879. Also O'Neill to Granville, 28th April, 1880, encloses D. MacDonald to O'Neill, 22nd March, 1880, F.O. 84/1564. See also Report and Evidence of the Established Church Commissioners, Dr. James Rankin of Ruthil and Alexander Pringle, W.S., given in to the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland by the Rev. J.C. Hardman, March, 1881.
large quantities of goods which they had to send through the country.

Fred Moir was sympathetic towards the Blantyre missionaries, writing to his father:

"You must not be too hard on the Blantyre folk. We are here in a very troublesome district, wars were constantly going on before the Mission came. The land was in one way granted chiefly to make it a sort of barrier between the Ajawa (Yao), who gave it, and the Mangone whom they fear. The whole of the surrounding tribes are on very friendly relations with Blantyre...the receiving of slaves has been the cause of all the troubles and where you come to solid facts the runaways are often bad characters, who are trying to escape justice...Of course I do not approve of some of the things done here but on the whole natives are well treated and like the place." 1

He played no part in the skirmish with Mitoche, a Yao chief presumed to have been responsible for the theft of trusses of calico on the road to Zomba, during which several people were killed, but there is no doubt that he favoured strong action. 2 He felt that if Mitoche continued his thefts they would

"have to burn him out and make him move elsewhere. His neighbouring chiefs would take our side...there must be some sort of law kept in the country and strong measures are sometimes necessary in uncivilised countries; motives for gentle action are usually misinterpreted." 3

Fred Moir thought that the peace could be kept with twenty or thirty well armed men, and drilled. In a big affair we could get plenty allies from friendly chiefs. 4 He felt that such a force could bring commercial return, it being in the interests of the chiefs to be friendly, 'we might arrange with them for purchase of the produce of the country.' 4 At one stage he even suggested getting a concession from the Portuguese for the country above the Morambala Marsh for the purpose of 'keeping the peace, having magistrates to settle native

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1. F.M. to father, 22nd April, 1880, and 27th February, 1879; F.M. to mother, 24th July, 1879, and F.M. to parents, 29th September 1879, L.B.(1).
2. John Buchanan agreed. See diary, 23rd September, 1879. 'Probably the best thing that can be done with Mitoche is to lead in a number of the Machinga Yao, his enemies, and polish him off once for all.'
4. F.M. to Consul O'Neill, 1st December, 1879; F.M. to A. Hart, 1st December, 1879, L.B.(1).
disputes, in fact governing the country.\textsuperscript{1} The Moirs were probably not averse to the idea of taking over the administration, there was talk of Rajah Brooke, and a position such as his would have appealed to their imaginations.\textsuperscript{2}

Such schemes can not have been taken very seriously though Robert Laws did suggest that 'in the event of the L.C.A.C. placing its headquarters at Bandawe and taking over a large tract of country a solution of the problem might be found in the Company undertaking the Civil jurisdiction reserving the Mission...a voice in the government.' The drawback to this plan was that 'the Company might fall into the hands of men of no Christian principle who having no sympathy with the mission might do it harm.'\textsuperscript{3} Duff MacDonald was under the impression that the Established Church was planning a Company of its own which might take over administrative functions.\textsuperscript{4} No more was heard of these ideas; the effect of the Blantyre Scandal was to clarify the legal position of the missions. According to the eminent legal authority consulted by the Free Church they had no legal standing, and even a British Consul, if there were one, could deal only with cases involving British subjects.\textsuperscript{5} A joint meeting of the Livingstonia and Blantyre Committees voted against the Blantyre view of the missions as the nuclei of states, and there followed a change of policy at both centres towards as little involvement as possible in administrative matters.\textsuperscript{6} The Foreign Office reminded them that the only rights that they had were conceded by local chiefs, and called for great caution in the treatment of run-away slaves.\textsuperscript{7}

The missions combined to bring pressure on the British Government

\textsuperscript{1} F.M. to A. Hart, 29th November, 1879, ibid.
\textsuperscript{2} F.M. to J. Stewart, C.E., 27th February, 1880, ibid. 'I shall try and find Rajah Brooke and Shakespeare and send them up.' Fred Moir sub-titled his book, \textit{After Livingstone, 'An African Trade Romance.'}
\textsuperscript{3} L.M.M., 5th April, 1880, MS 7912, quotes letters of 3rd February, and 18th March, 1880.
\textsuperscript{4} a. MacDonald, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol.II., p 168. Refers to September, 1879.
\textsuperscript{5} L.M.M., 3rd September, 1879, quotes the considered opinion of Sir Arthur Gordon.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 6th February, 1880.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 28th June, 1881, considering letter from Lord Granville of 11th May, 1881.
to appoint a Consul to the Malawi region; the Livingstonia Mission had asked for this as long ago as 1876 when they wanted E.D. Young to be given consular authority; their candidate in 1880 was James Stewart, C.B.¹ The Company's role in this pressure group cannot be distinguished at this time from that of the Livingstonia Mission whose directorate it shared.² It was at least partly due to this pressure that Lord Granville appointed Captain Foot, a naval officer with experience of the east coast, to be 'Consul in the territories of the African Kings and Chiefs in the districts adjacent to Lake Nyassa.'³ He was appointed in October 1883 and arrived in the Shire Highlands in January, 1884, having been carried up in the Lady Nyassa.⁴ He was able to be of considerable assistance in the settling of the Chipatula–Fenwick affair, though he was frustrated by his lack of power, and asked Sir Percy Anderson in a private letter for forty or fifty 'blue-jackets' (sailors) with whose help he could make lasting agreements and 'put an end to slavery on the lake.'⁵ He died in August 1884 and was succeeded by acting-Consul Goodrich and Consul Hawes, who had been seconded from the Japanese Consular Service.⁶ These Consuls could do little more than report, and their presence settled neither the problem of administration nor what Fred Moir described as 'the question of whose country we are situated in.'⁷

The definition of the interior frontier of the Portuguese dominions on the east coast had been avoided in the negotiations which preceded the founding of the Company. A Portuguese Customs post had

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1. L.M.M., 5th April, 1880. Sir Charles Dilke was said to have conceded a Consul 'in principle', 2nd May, 1879. But by 30th June, 1880, Dilke had told Dr. G. Smith that there was little hope.


3. Lister to Foot, (draft), 1st October, 1883, F.O. 541/25; Foot to Granville, 18th January, 1884, F.O. 34/1662. There is a fanciful account of the journey up river in D.J. Rankin, The Zambesi Basin and Nyassaland, op. cit.

4. Foot to Anderson, 3rd April, 1884, F.O. 84/1638. This is an important private letter which has been filed separately from Foot's despatches.

5. Foreign Office List, 1886. See A.J. Hanna, op. cit., for an account of the activities of these Consuls.

been established at the confluence of the Shire and the Zambesi for the collection of a transit duty but the status of the British missions in the highlands and on the lake was not clear and the freedom of navigation of the Zambesi was not declared, or incorporated in a treaty. The missions and the Company were conscious throughout this period that the Portuguese might at any time assert sovereignty over them. They were apprehensive about this both because they feared that their religious liberty might be endangered, and because they had experience of Portuguese incompetence and mal-administration. There could be no certainty that either the missions or the Company would be allowed to continue in operation; this uncertainty was one of the most important factors inhibiting investment in the Company. Fred Moir's question was not finally answered until 1890 or 1891; until then the diplomatic game was played out on two levels, in the rarified atmosphere of the Chancellories of Europe, and amidst the malarial vapours of the flood plains of the Zambesi and the Shire. It was the latter venue which was more familiar to the promoters of the African Lakes Company, though they did make occasional forays into the former.2

This antithesis is not a mere literary conceit. Communication between Portuguese diplomatic circles and their officials in the field was at best slow and at worst almost non-existent. On several occasions actions were initiated by officials in Africa which caused the Company great alarm, but were later repudiated in Lisbon. The area of greatest sensitivity so far as the Company was concerned was the region between the confluence of the Shire and Zambesi, and the confluence of the Shire and the Ruo. The latter point marked the southern boundary of the sphere of influence of Chipatula so long as he lived, and later of Ramalkukan. The former marked the boundary of Portuguese 'effective occupation,' at least until 1882.3 The area

1. For the Portuguese threat see for instance J. Stevenson to Granville, 3rd March, 1885, P.O. 84/1734.
3. 'Effective occupation' was a phrase which acquired significance at the Berlin Conference, 1884-5, see Hammond, op. cit., pp97-99.
in between these two points was under the influence of Matakenya, who died in that year. A war between Chipatula and Matakenya blocked the Shire for some time during 1881, and as a result of it Chipatula annexed a part of Matakenya's area. Following Matakenya's death the Portuguese asserted sovereignty over his country, known as the Machinjiri prazo, by a proclamation in September 1882. It was feared at this date that the Governor of Quelimane might extend his journey up river to Blantyre, and that he might declare Portuguese sovereignty over it as well. It was thought that he might use Chipatula's occupation of some of Matakenya's country as an excuse for an attack on him, and that in this event it would rest on Chipatula holding his own whether the Portuguese come up to Blantyre or not. The Moirs were determined to have no part in such a war, and were at pains to point out that they had no influence to prevent Chipatula acting as he chose, while at the same time advising him to take no action which might provoke the Portuguese. The intention of annexing Blantyre was denied in Lisbon, and the annexation of the Machinjiri prazo was assumed to have been made on the initiative of the Governor, acting under the influence of the 'Colonialist party in Portugal.'

There was a further alarm in May 1883 when Chipatula was anxious to attack the Portuguese to settle a dispute about a wife who was supposed to have either fled to, or been removed to, Portuguese territory, and to recover some guns and powder which had been sent to him from Mazaro in exchange for oil seeds and had been confiscated by a Portuguese official. It is not clear if there was any fighting but the Governor was said to have sent a letter demanding to know if Chipatula wanted 'war or peace.' It was feared that if the Portuguese did attack him the rest of the Makololo would go to his aid and that it would then be difficult for the Company to avoid becoming involved. The Portuguese alleged that Chipatula was the tool of the missions, and accused the Company of supplying him with arms; both

2. F.M. to O'Neill, 15th September, 1882, L.B.(1).
charges were denied although it would not be surprising if the latter one were true. 1 In September 1883 Kirk at Zanzibar was able to report the conclusion of the ‘imaginary war between Chipatula and the Portuguese.’ 2 There was a further alarm in April 1884 when the Portuguese Governor of Quelimane appeared to be about to attack the Makololo following the murder of Chipatula. This unwanted assistance was only averted by the intervention of O'Neill. 3

Four months later the people of the Machinjiri prazo rose in protest against the levying of a tax in oil seeds on the whole population including, so it was said, unborn children. The fort at Chironji was attacked where the officers in command and all but three of the garrison were killed. Goods worth £2,500 belonging to the Company had been stored there during the stoppage on the river which followed Chipatula’s death; these were either looted or burned. The Company’s store at Morambala was also destroyed, the agent there, San Sambani, made his escape after throwing away his trousers and taking a loin cloth in order to avoid confusion with the Portuguese. The Customs posts at Shamvo and at the confluence of the Shire and the Zambezi were also destroyed, and a store belonging to a French trading company at the same place. The successful rebellion moved down river with the Portuguese troops retreating ahead of it. 4 Fred Moir had passed down river on his way home for his first leave for six years in the middle of July; after he had reached Quelimane he heard of the attack on the Company’s stores and returned up river to

3. O'Neill to Granville, 13th April, 1884, 25th April, 1884, F.O. 84/1671. Morrison diaries, 18th April, 1884, et seq.
organise a fifteen man 'Volunteer Force of Foreigners' which reached Mopea on the 11th August in time to raise the siege of the Opium Factory which was being defended against several thousand attackers by the manager, Robert Henderson, a former Lakes Company engineer, and his Portuguese and Indian assistants.\(^1\) The lives of these people were apparently saved by Moir's intervention, though about one hundred of the people attacking the factory were killed.\(^2\) It was thought that if Mopea had fallen Quelimane would have been in danger. It was ironical that Moir's intervention which had been intended for the defence of the Company's property, for the maintenance of the steamer traffic on the rivers which had already been closed for most of the year owing to the Chipatula troubles, for the defence of a party of missionaries who were stranded at Maruru ten miles from Mopea, and the relief of his former employee, Henderson, should have had the effect of preserving Portuguese influence, the extension of which to the Shire Highlands was anathema to him. Moir returned up river and made an apparently amicable settlement with the people who had taken the goods from the Chironji store and on whom the Company was dependent for wood. Morrison, who had taken part in the action at Mopea, and who was one of the members of the crew of the Lady Hyassa who were, according to E.C. Hore of the L.M.S. 'very anxious to pop off a few niggers',\(^3\) was moved by the stories told of Portuguese rule. He wrote: 'We gain nothing by Portuguese rule while the poor natives know it to be all loss to them.'\(^4\)

1. Morrison diaries, 17th July - 15th September, 1884.
2. O'Neill to Granville, 1st September, 1884, F.O. 34/1671; J. Harris to Secretary, L.M.S., August, 1884, L.M.S.C.A., /5/5/B, according to Harris there were 3,000 men in the attack on Mopea of whom 100 were killed. Henderson was said to have saved a bullet for himself and did not know whether 'to greet or laugh' on the arrival of the relief force, Morrison diaries, 11th August, 1884.
3. E.C. Hore to Secretary, L.M.S., 25th August, 1884, L.M.S.C.A. /5/5/A/. Hore probably exaggerated though such entries as 'Rebels close at hand, had pleasant games at croquet,' (5th August, 1884) suggest that Morrison, then only 24, may have been more excited than alarmed at the prospect of action.
4. Morrison diaries, 16th August, 1884.
Whether or not Moir's intervention was justified in terms of the lives which were saved, there was a distinctly chauvinistic element in the organisation of an exclusively foreign force to do a job which was the responsibility of the Portuguese. The situation was made more complicated by rumours that the attack on Mopea had been instigated by a leading Portuguese prazo-holder, and by a merchant whose store remained mysteriously unburned. It was feared that the three thousand troops who had been assembled after the suppression of the rebellion might be used in an attack on the Makololo; at the same time Consul O'Neill reported the arrival at Mozambique of Serpa Pinto who was presumed to be about to lead an expedition towards the lake. Attempts made during the year to compel residents in the Shire Highlands to obtain residence permits for Mozambique, and an attempt to tax John Moir's private income all pointed to the likelihood of annexation. The Customs post for the collection of transit duties was not re-opened after its destruction in July 1884 and from that date all goods imported by the Company had to pay the full Mozambique tariff.

Meanwhile in Europe some attempt had been made at the higher level to clarify the situation. A projected bi-lateral Anglo-Portuguese treaty would have guaranteed freedom of navigation on the Zambesi and set the western frontier of Mozambique at the junction of the Shire and the Ruö. These conditions of the treaty were only

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1. Morrison diaries, 14th August, 15th September. Fingwe, a leader of the Machinjiri rebellion claimed that he had been bribed by Ferrao to attack the fort. M.D.D. Newitt in 'The Massingire Rising of 1884,' J.A.H., Vol.II, 1970, p 87, has some useful information from Portuguese sources on the background to the rising but there is no evidence to support his conclusion on the relations between the Machinjiri and the Lakes Company.

2. O'Neill to Granville, 20th September, 1884, F.O. 84/1671.


4. W. Ewing (for A.L.C.) to Salisbury, 11th May, 1887, F.O. 84/1662. This gives details of goods imported between September, 1884, and December, 1886.
subsidiary to its primary purpose: the recognition of Portuguese sovereignty on the lower Congo, and of free trade on the river and in the interior. Publication of the terms of the treaty provoked an outcry from British commercial and missionary groups with interests on the Congo, from King Leopold of the Belgians and the German and French governments. The treaty was never ratified, but led to the calling of the Berlin Conference, the major preoccupation of which was, once again, the Congo and its "conventional" basin which was deemed to extend to the watershed of Lake Malawi but did not include it.¹ The Company would have been satisfied with the terms of the original treaty which while leaving the Malawi region a "no-man's land" would at least have removed the ever constant threat of a sudden move by the Portuguese into the area.² The proceedings of the Conference and of the more important negotiations which went on outside it did nothing to solve the Company's problems.

This was in spite of strenuous lobbying in Berlin itself. Fred Moir, Robert Laws and William Swing, the Company's secretary, made two visits to Berlin at the end of 1884 and early in 1885. Their ostensible purpose was to bring pressure to bear to prevent the import of spirits into the interior, their more serious motive was to press for some guarantee of their position in Malawi. They had interviews with Sir Edward Malet, the British ambassador in Berlin, Sir Percy Anderson, head of the Africa Department at the Foreign Office, and with King Leopold of the Belgians and officials of his Association.³ It seems probable that they discussed the possibility of the region being included in the International Association though James Stevenson was doubtful of support in the Company, and the Foreign Office was

2. A.L.C. Minutes, Prospectus, 23rd February, 1886; J. Stevenson to Granville, 3rd March, 1885.
3. J.W. Jack, Daybreak at Livingstone, op. cit., p 203, 222, 270, pp 289–90. There is no trace in the Foreign Office records relative to the Berlin Conference of these meetings.
also dubious. They came away with the impression that the only way to forestall the Portuguese was 'to get the British Government to assume the protectorate of the district.' A combined delegation from the Company, the Free Church, the Universities Mission, and the Anti-Slavery Society met Lord Edward Fitzmaurice at the Foreign Office in London towards the end of February to discuss this point. They felt that the 'Under-Secretaries were favourable,' and received as a result of the meeting a letter which stated that:

"Her Majesty's Government would be glad to know the exact position which is occupied by them with regard to the native chiefs and in what way they propose that H.M.G. should grant them further protection." 4

William Ewing had already, as a result of his earlier conversations

1. G. Smith to R. Laws, 10th December, 1884, telegram, quotes J. Stevenson to W. Ewing in Brussels, 'Interview very well — but doubtful of support of Company.' See also J. Stephen to W. Ewing, 18th December, 1884, H. Waller to R. Laws, 16th December, 1885, quotes H. O'Neill.

2. J. McLagan, (Secretary, B.C.F.M.C.) to D. C. Scott, 18th February, 1885, MS 7547, reports conversations with W. Ewing, F. Moir and Livingstonia representatives in which he was given an account of the proceedings at Berlin.

3. The deputation was arranged at short notice through the influence of John Cowan of Beeslack, Gladstone's Midlothian campaign manager. He wrote to Edward Hamilton, Gladstone's private secretary, on the 14th February, 1885, requesting an interview 'because of our dread of the Portuguese we anxiously desire the protection of our country.' The deputation saw Lord Edward Fitzmaurice on the 20th February, and presented a Memorial pressing for the declaration of a protectorate and praying 'H.M.G. to authorise the A.L.C. to hoist the British flag at their stations in that district and that they be supported by formal Consular jurisdiction.' The A.L.C. were said to have treaties and titles to land and to be 'in a position to make provision for the maintenance of authority in that district extending say from Blantyre and the neighbourhood northwards to the south end of Lake Tanganyika, westward to the headwaters of the Luangwa and eastward to the sources of the Rovuma.' P.O. 84/1733. Sir Percy Anderson wrote in a memorandum before the reception of this deputation that 'it is rather difficult to say what our position is in the Nyassa district. We have no territorial authority there and have a Consul accredited, if one can use the term in the circumstances, to the native chiefs of the district.' 19th February, ibid.

4. J. McLagan to Dr. J. Rankin, 26th February, 1885, MS 7547. V. Lister to Secretary Free Church F.M.C., (Draft), 27th February, 1885, F.O. 84/1734. L.M.M., 15th March, 1885.
in Berlin, suggested to the Directors of the Company that:

"The managers in Africa should be asked to secure titles of possession for the Company's land and property in Africa, and cession of rights of sovereignty over as many of the native chiefs as possible with a view to handing over the said sovereign rights to the British Crown." 1

At a meeting of the Livingstonia Committee on the 15th March Ewing explained the position and read the 'form of title to land which it was required to obtain.' Dr. Laws recommended that the Company and the mission should take joint action in order to avoid confusion in Africa, and it was resolved that Dr. Laws should 'see that our agents in Africa got titles and to assist the A.L.C. in obtaining them'. 2

The Established Church and the Blantyre Mission had not been represented at the meeting at the Foreign Office, but this was not owing to lack of consultation. Ewing had invited them to join in the delegation but they felt bound by orders of the General Assembly "preventing our mixing ourselves up with questions of trade and commerce." 3 They were however impressed by the need to get title deeds to their land, consulted a lawyer on the subject, and sent instructions to D.C. Scott to take appropriate action. 4 It is important to make this clear because at a later date they maintained that there had been no consultation, and that the Company had acted quite independently.

Owing to the fact that little record has survived of negotiations which were almost all verbal it is difficult to pin down the Foreign

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1. A.L.C. Minutes, 18th February, 1885.
2. L.M.M., 15th March, 1885, MS 7912.
3. J. Molagan to D.C. Scott, 18th February, 1885, MS 7547. In view of the 'danger attending possible Portuguese annexation' they decided to recommend their Foreign Missions Committee to join in 'memorialising' the Government. The Committee must have decided either to remain aloof or was slow in coming to a decision.
4. J. Molagan to J. Mansies, W.S., 14th February, 1885, asks him to draft a title deed for Blantyre. J. Molagan to A. Hetherwick, 7th July, 1885, ibid., regrets that he has not yet sent title deeds for Blantyre from Kapeni. J. Molagan to A. Hetherwick, 4th June, 1886, MS 7548, thanks him for sending the Blantyre title deeds.
Office view on the question. It doubtless found it convenient to be as little committed as possible. There is however sufficient evidence to form a general view. The philosophy which underlay the attitude towards expansion in Africa of the influential civil servants at the Foreign Office was that the interests of British missionaries and traders should be protected so far as possible without direct involvement which would be expensive and have to be justified to what Lord Salisbury later described as the 'Gladstonian garrison of the Treasury.' During the 1880's the most favoured instrument for achieving these objects was the chartered company through which it was possible to stake out a British claim without, it was hoped, the government having to pay the bills for defence and administration. 1

This point can be illustrated by the serious consideration which was given to a tentative scheme of Sir William Mackinnon and Sir Donald Currie for the conversion of the Companhia Africana, in which they were involved with Paiva d’Andrada, into an Anglo-Portuguese Chartered Company for Mozambique. 2 In spite of the fact that Mackinnon, who had invested at least £6,000 in it, was disposed to cut his losses as his 'experience of Portuguese officials...has been so very unsatisfactory that no possible profit would compensate for the perpetual worry and annoyance...', the scheme was referred to the Colonial Committee of the Cabinet. Anderson's opinion was that

"a Company under such men as Sir D. Currie and Mr. Mackinnon with a large English capital and under a charter if one would be granted by H.M.G. and Portugal would be quite a different thing from a Portuguese monopoly and seems worthy of every encouragement." 3

Villiers Lister agreed, adding the proviso that it should not involve a 'recognition of Portuguese jurisdiction which we have already refused,' and that 'the benefit of the company to British interests would probably be much increased by its joining with the A.L.C.' 4

2. Petre to Granville, 17th December, 1884, F.O. 84/1669. Minute on by Clement Hill. Se also Chapter III for earlier reference to Andrada concession. W. Mackinnon to Granville, 3rd January, 1885, F.O. 84/1731.
3. Anderson, minute on the above, January, 1885.
4. Lister, minute on above, January, 1885.
The scheme was understandably rejected by the Colonial Committee but Lister was in favour of Mackinson going ahead without a charter, stating in the same minute his theory of the role of the Chartered Company:

"Our object on the Niger is to give the Niger Africa Company as much power and as strong a position as possible in order that it may relieve H.M.G. of the responsibilities undertaken at Berlin. The object of encouraging Mr. Mackinson and Sir D. Currie to take up the Andrada concession would be to infuse into it a strong British element for the protection of British interests against a Portuguese monopoly without incurring any responsibilities." 1

'Power without responsibility' would be a not altogether unjust summary of their aspirations. There is ample evidence that if the Lakes Company had been able or willing at this time, or during the next few years, to produce the capital necessary to back a charter the Foreign Office would have welcomed their offer and worked to achieve it. They would have had, of course, to settle the Portuguese question, but if the capital which could be provided by 'such men' as Currie, Mackinson, Goldie, or later by Cecil Rhodes, had been immediately available to the Lakes Company, the Foreign Office would have found a way out of the difficulty. Their ambassador in Lisbon had recommended in February 1885 that the simplest solution of the problem of the Scottish missions in Malawi would be to declare a British protectorate rather than 'protest on matters of detail'. 2 This was the solution which was eventually adopted late in 1889 after Rhodes' British South Africa Company had appeared on the scene to pay some of the bills. 3

Anderson and Lister looked on the Lakes Company from 1885 as a candidate for a charter. Anderson wrote of the Company: 'This is another prospect of a Chartered Co.', 4 and regretted that the 'A.L.C. do not seem to be very active and if they are to occupy such a position

1. Lister, minute, 24th January, 1885, See also minutes by Lord Kimberley, 14th January, 1885, R.W. Herbert, 24th January, 1885, and E. Forster, ditto. All in F.O. 84/1731.
2. Petre to Granville, 20th February, 1885, F.O. 84/1708.
3. See below, Chapter V.
as the Royal Niger Co. they should bestir themselves. The assumption seems to have been that it was desirable that the Company should take a Charter since this would relieve the government of the necessity of financing a protectorate in order to satisfy the demands of the missionary lobby. It was cause for regret, therefore, that the Company, which is neither rich nor powerful would be unequal to the task and that all the recent reports seem to show that the A.L.C. is not sufficiently strong to undertake the administration of the country.

While the Foreign Office hoped that the Company might be induced to take over the responsibility of paying for a protectorate, the Company itself hoped that the government could be persuaded to do the same. Its directors had at this time no ambition to take over the administration; they were concerned to clarify the problem of sovereignty in Malawi in order to remove the uncertainty which had inhibited investment, and they were anxious that the British government should give its Nyasa Consul sufficient power to protect their commercial interests. The Company made no formal application for a charter, though they did make a formal application for a protectorate. They desired the

"establishment of a British Protectorate in the district extending from the lower Shire to the south end of Lake Tanganyika under the jurisdiction of a Consul as British resident." 5

1. Anderson, minute, on Hawes to Iddesleigh, 3rd June, 1886, F.O. 84/1751.
4. J. Stevenson to Cranville, 3rd, 13th March, 1885, the latter contains a formal request for a protectorate. According to Hanna op. cit., p 126, the Company made an application at this time for 'authority to establish a protectorate.' He does not give a reference to such an application and there is no evidence that there was an application for this or for a charter, though there certainly was one for a protectorate with Consular jurisdiction to be established by the government, and the Lakes Company expressed a willingness to help in the provision of a police force if this were done.
5. J. Stevenson to Cranville, 13th March, 1885, F.O. 84/1734. Stevenson added that 'A.L.C. are having formal titles presently executed in Africa, in proof of cession of land with right of sovereignty. These will be sent home as soon as completed.'
James Stevenson pointed out that:

"Had there been any permanent settlement such as the Congo treaty would have secured, the company would have at once taken a very different development. Capital would have been employed in greatly improved means of transport and in plantations...But I may be allowed to point out that neither on the Nile, the Congo nor the Zambezi have British traders ventured in advance of political settlement so far as the A.L.C. have ventured in the lakes district. The caution of the company is justified by the constant aggression of the Portuguese." 1

The assumption of a protectorate would 'secure a route into Central Africa which is by some thought not inferior to the Congo.' 2 Anderson's comment on this is revealing:

"The explanation of the weakness of the Lakes Co. is practically an admission of the fact; but it is pleaded that strength will be given by capital, that capital will follow in security, and that security can only be attained by protection against Portuguese aggression. This comes round to the old ground, the request for the British flag." 3

This was the substance of the Company's request. The treaties which the Noirs made in Africa during 1885 were intended to bring pressure to bear on the British government to declare a protectorate. They were devised in Europe in a form approved by the Foreign Office's international lawyers as part of a propaganda exercise. 4 The treaties

1. J. Stevenson to Granville, 3rd March, 1885, F.O. 64/1734. Encloses memorandum by Fred Moir of the same date in which he answers criticism of the Company sent to the Foreign Office by the Acting Consul for Nyasa, L. Goodrich, (Goodrich to Granville, 20th December, 1884, F.O. 84/1662.) Moir pointed out that 'the A.L.C. have always been working under the great disadvantage of insecurity...so long as it seemed probable that the Portuguese would soon try to annex the country, the directors have thought it inadvisable to expend much capital in pushing the enterprise...to those who have spent some years in the country the increase of prosperity and tranquility of several districts is very remarkable.'

2. J. Stevenson, 3rd March, 1885.

3. Anderson, minute on above, 5th March, 1885.

4. See also Waller to Laws, 15th December, 1885, Shepperdon collection. He quotes Consul O'Neill as saying that the treaties made by the Company were in a form approved by Travers and 'Miss' of the Foreign Office. Waller regretted that the Foreign Office 'encourage this sort of treaty but offer no protection.'
consisted of two parts:

(i) a petition to Queen Victoria requesting the declaration of a protectorate, and
(ii) a treaty ceding sovereign powers to the Company in the event of the Queen declining the initial petitions. 1 There could be no question of the second category being effective unless the protectorate had been refused, and it could then be seen only as a last ditch attempt by the Company to prevent the occupation of the lands in question by another power. There is no evidence that the directors of the Company seriously considered the assumption of a charter at this date, though they did suggest that they might be able to help provide a police force for the support of a Consul. 2 These treaties achieved a certain notoriety at the time which has persisted. This was due to the fear that the Company harboured insatiable territorial ambitions and that the administration was going to be handed over to the Moirs as the heads of an unreconstituted Company. 3 It could reasonably be argued that a Company which was unable to run a reliable transport service would be even less capable of assuming administrative powers. These fears were based on a misunderstanding of the intentions of the Company which was due to the aura of secrecy which surrounded the treaties, and a failure of communication both in Africa and Britain between the Company and the Blantyre Mission, and between the Foreign Office and their acting Consul at Nyasa.

Fundamental to these misunderstandings was the ambivalent attitude of the Foreign Office, their hope that the Company would relieve

1. Printed copies of treaties, with J. Moir to Anderson, 22nd April, 1886, F.O. 84/1794. 2. J. McLagan to B.C. Scott, 18th February, 1885, MS 7547. There was also no question of the Company taking over administration in Africa of any type without the consent of the Foreign Office. J. Moir made this clear in his explanations to the chiefs. 3. J. McLagan to A. Hetherwick, 23rd December, 1885, MS 7547. H. Waller to R. Laws, 16th December, 1885, Shepperson collection. These letters describe the same meeting of B.C. Scott with the U.K.C.A. A. Hetherwick to Hawes, 13th March, 1886, with Hawes to Iddlesleigh, 30th March, 1886, F.O. 84/1751. This very strong attack on the Company was written after the treaties had been repudiated in Britain.
them of responsibility, and the Company's hope that they could be persuaded with the help of the treaties to declare the protectorate. On the one hand Anderson implied that a 'strong' company, meaning a rich company, could assume powers similar to those of the Niger Company; on the other hand he could reply to a request for a protectorate from his Consul in Malawi arguing:

"the difficulty of a protectorate which could only be approached through the territory of another European state to whom the protectorate would probably be distasteful. H.M.G. cannot at present accept the protectorate and they cannot delegate to a Company powers which they do not possess." 1

At the same time he suggested that

"the time is ripe for considering whether he (Consul Hawes) might not negotiate with the Makololo chiefs binding the latter not to cede their territory to any other power without the assent of H.M.G. This would form a barrier against the much dreaded Portuguese advance up the Shire to Lake Nyassa without entailing the responsibility which would be dangerous considering the geographical position." 2

He dismissed the delegation of powers to the Company at this date because it had by then become clear that it had not the resources to take up a charter, and because it had been obliged to abandon its treaty claims through the opposition of the other missionary bodies. The question of access was a convenient bogey which proved no impediment when the money for a chartered company was available. 3 Finance was the real issue. The Foreign Office would be glad to arrange a protectorate if it could be obtained on the cheap; they were not anxious to assume one if they had to pay.

1. Anderson to Hawes, (draft), 24th July, 1886, F.O. 84/1751.
2. Anderson, minute, 12th July, 1886, on Hawes to Iddsleigh, 26th April, 1886, F.O. 84/1751.
3. Access to the Zambesi was made easier by the 'discovery' of the Chinde mouth early in 1889 by D.J. Rankin, but this was only a small factor in making possible the declaration of the protectorate. Consul Foot had entered the Zambesi via the Kongone where he was met by the Lady Nyassa in December, 1883, and the lower river steamer the James Stevenson was built under the direction of Fred Moir at the Kongone between November, 1886 and July, 1887. The parts of the lake steamer, the Domira, were also brought in via the Kongone mouth.
It was important to make clear the objects of the Moir treaties because there has been so much confusion about them. For reasons which have been hinted at, and which should become clearer, they were repudiated before they could play the part which had been intended for them. Even the petitions for the protectorate were treated as invalid and were never officially responded to. With a few exceptions the agreements made with chiefs in the area became null and void, and their value in diplomatic terms in Europe was negligible. Some consideration must, however, be given to the way in which they were made, and to their political repercussions in Africa.

It may be said at the outset that all treaties of this kind at this date in East Africa were suspect. Consul O'Neill of Mozambique had written in 1879 that he could have little faith in treaties made with chiefs for the suppression of the slave trade:

"when I know they may generally be completed for a few pounds of powder and lead, and when no material advantages offer themselves but on the contrary self interest points to their evasion without risk." 2

Similar objections could be made to the type of treaties which were made by the Moirs and by Harry Johnston and John Buchanan in Malawi in the 1880's. W.P. Johnson was amused that Buchanan had asked to translate into Yao for the benefit of the chief Nakanjira a sentence including the words, 'there will be strained relations with the Foreign Office'. 3 This was a comparatively easy matter by comparison with the explanation of the terms of a fully fledged treaty.

Harry Johnston was later to heap sarcastic scorn on the Moir treaties but they differed very little from those he distributed himself, some

1. The treaties made with the north and chiefs at Karonga, and Mwaya were never repudiated by the signatories and were the basis of the B.S.C. Company's North Nyasa estate. Nor were the treaties made with the Stevenson road chiefs, nor those made with Mwase Kasungu, which formed the basis of mineral claims eventually transferred to the B.S.M. Company. H.H. Johnston, Report on Land Settlement, 13th October, 1893, F.O. 2/55.


of which were, ironically, interpreted and witnessed by John Moir.\(^1\)

The greatest difficulty was to explain that the petitions and treaties could not give immediate protection against the particular enemies of the signatories and that it was necessary to wait for the answer which would come from Britain. John Moir gave an account of the way in which he had attempted to explain the situation to the Makololo. He told Masea that

"The Queen might decline to grant the Petition, because of her already enormous territories, and because the Portuguese held the gates to the interior, but that in that case, we ourselves would endeavour to give them the same advantages; that it would be illegal for us to do so without the permission of our Government, but that I would go to England, and if the Queen herself would not consent to become general Sovereign of the district would try to make some other satisfactory arrangement with our Government." \(^2\)

Moir spent four days with Ramakukan before that chief signed the first of two treaties which were made with him. During this time they had frequent conversations on the subject.\(^3\) The treaties and petitions from Yao chiefs in the Shire Highlands were signed at a meeting of headmen at Mandala in August 1885, the same explanation being given.\(^4\) Fred Morrison accompanied Moir on his visits to the various lake chiefs who signed treaties; it is clear from his account that efforts were made to explain the terms to them. To a group of people on the east coast who asked for help against the Songea Mgoni, they replied that they could do nothing till our Queen give you her answer whether she will have your country or not.\(^5\) At Karonga the signing of the treaties by two headmen was made a quid pro quo for arbitration in a dispute with their chiefs, and on another occasion a present of cloth was clearly more interesting to the signatory than the explanation of the terms.\(^6\) Of another Morrison commented:

"It was rather a hard job getting him to understand how to make the mark of his name." \(^7\)

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1. E.g. treaty with Katunga, 14th August, 1889, with Johnston to Salisbury, 26th August, 1889, F.O. 84/1969.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Morrison diaries, 21st July, 1885.
6. Ibid., 18th July, 1885.
7. Ibid.
Nevertheless the treaties with the Tonga were clearly explained to public meetings with the help of the mission, and the same was true of the Ngoni. When it is remembered that John Buchanan had to make the mark himself on one of his 1889 Makololo treaties, on which the protectorate was based, owing to the alleged 'superstitious fear' of the chief which inhibited him from putting pen to paper, there does not appear to be anything especially fraudulent about Moir's treaties.

It must, however, be admitted that in conceiving the idea of the treaties as a method of influencing the Foreign Office in London, apparently on their recommendation, little if any thought was given to the political repercussions in Africa of treaty negotiations of this sort. Horace Waller reasonably deprecated:

"'Treaties' with such natives as could not...understand what they are, and pointed out that they naturally anticipated protection from their enemies, if they signed themselves away to the organisers of a protectorate."

For reasons which should be clear from the earlier part of this chapter the Company was only in a position to make treaties with the weaker peoples along the route which it followed. Neither Mponda, Makanjira nor the Jumbe were in much need of 'protection.' It was not so difficult to convince the smaller Yao of the Shire Highlands that they were in need of protection from the Ngoni, or the Tonga, the Ngonde, the Nyakusa and some of the groups on the Stevenson road that they would benefit. The bulk of treaties were made with the almost defenceless. The distinction for them between a petition sent 'over

1. Bandawe Journal, July to August, 1885, MS 7911; W. Elmslie to Laws, 1st September, 12th October, 1885, Shepperson collection.
3. J. Moir also witnessed the treaty.
4. J.A. Smith to R. Laws, 14th December, 1885, Shepperson collection, "The good people who are at the bottom of this treaty business little know I am afraid what it means."
5. H. Waller to R. Laws, 16th December, 1885, ibid.

For a list of most of the treaties see Report by J.M. with J.M. to Anderson 22nd April, 1886, F.O. 84/1784.
the sea* for an answer, and a treaty guaranteeing protection against their immediate enemies, was academic. Following the negotiation of treaties with Tonga chiefs at Bandawe and Chinteche these demanded assistance against the Ngoni saying that they were no longer 'aTonga' but 'aMandala', the people of the Company. They were not pleased by the mission's restatement of the situation, that they had asked the Queen for protection, and failing her Mandala, but that they must wait for an answer. It was said that:

"Most ridiculous stories are being circulated about war medicine that is being secretly distributed over the country by the white man in order to kill the Angoni when they come to fight." ²

The Makololo were the only powerful chiefs who signed the treaties. They were motivated partly by their memory of the instructions of Livingstone, but more forcefully by their fear of Portuguese expansion, and by their knowledge, acquired from John Moir, that 'a large Portuguese expedition had left the Mozambique coast for the interior.' Ramakukan was said to acknowledge that

"he feared the King (of Portugal) in Europe, though he was not afraid of the Governor of Quelimane." ³

The Portuguese posed a real threat to the security of the missions and the Company at this time; part of Major Serpa Pinto's expedition reached the lake late in 1885 and concluded a treaty with a headman under Makanjird. ⁴ Although this party had by-passed the Shire Highlands, the move towards the lake was especially worrying to the Company and the Livingstonia Mission.

Through the mediation of Dr. William Scott, at Bandawe, and of Dr. Elaslie at Mbelwa's, the Company came very close to getting the petitions and treaties signed by this section of the northern Ngoni.

1. Morrison diaries, 23rd October, 1885, Morrison was speaking to a deputation who asked about the result of their appeal to Queen Victoria at Ruarwe.
2. Bandawe Journal, 12th October, 1885, MS 7912.
It was thought tactically wise to announce the possibility of the protectorate to the Ngoni before telling the Tonga, since no difficulty was anticipated in getting the Tonga to sign, but great apprehension was felt at the likely reaction of the Ngoni to the news that treaties had been signed without their knowledge with their enemies and former slaves. The initial response of Mbelwa, and of his council, including his general Ngomono, was favourable. Good hopes were entertained of their signing the treaties though it was feared that 'something more will be necessary to restrain their warlike propensities.' The fact that there was this initial willingness to sign was in part a reflection of the weakness of the true Ngoni in a state which was becoming increasingly dominated by the Tumbuka, some of whom had already had a successful rebellion and moved away to the north. The fact that they did not in the end sign the treaties was attributed to the poor impression created by the representatives of the Company who were sent to do the final negotiation. John Moir had by this time left the lake and was on his way back to Britain with the first batch of treaties, and Fred Moir was detained at Mandala. Elmslie claimed that he had found it impossible to convince the Ngoni that the Company employees in question were of the same tribe as the missionaries owing to their lack of respect for the Sabbath. Elmslie commented that one of them

"was...of the Fenwick kind who believes himself equal to ten whitemen or one hundred natives but whom a small boy can despatch as in Fenwick's case." 3

Owing to the eventual repudiation of the treaties by the Company the non-signing of them by Mbelwa's Ngoni had no lasting significance though it could clearly have endangered the mission's always delicate position poised between them and the Tonga.

Because of the impossibility of maintaining the distinction

1. Elmslie to Laws, 1st September, 1885, Shepperson collection.
3. Elmslie to Laws, 1st September, 1885, Shepperson collection.
between the request for protection and the guarantee of protection, the concept of the petitions and the treaties was dangerous as it was likely to involve the Company in claims for defence which it could not meet. Supposing that the petitions had been presented and declined, the Company would presumably have sought as a second best from its point of view a charter and would have attempted to find financial backing for it. John Moir had made clear to the Makololo that they could not do anything for their defence without the consent of the Queen. ¹ It was probably fortunate so far as the situation in Africa was concerned that the treaties were repudiated, since the chances of the Company being able to meet the obligations to which it might have seemed to be committed were remote. On the other hand if the petitions and treaties are seen in the European context in which they were devised, it could be argued that it was unfortunate that they were repudiated before they had been presented, thus allowing the Foreign Office to avoid a decision on the status of the missions in Malawi.

Their repudiation was due partly to the animosity towards the Company of Lawrence Goodrich, who became acting Consul on Foot's death, and partly to the hostility of the Blantyre Mission who distrusted what they considered to be the ambitions of the Company, and who felt that its involvement with administration would be damaging to their missionary work as they claimed that no distinction was made by the people between mission and Company employees. ²

Goodrich is a somewhat shadowy figure. Mrs. J. Moir hoped that he would not become Consul as

"he does not sympathise with missions, says his first work would be to put up cross trees for whipping posts; also stocks...and a prison to be kept by the Zanzibari boys." ³

³. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, n.d., after August, 1884, E.U.L.
Sir Percy Anderson regretted that

"he had not got on with the Lakes Co.'s people and still worse with the missions, the U.M. complain grievously of him." 1

Owing to the Foreign Office not having told him that the Company was collecting petitions and treaties, and owing to the secrecy of John Moir on the subject, he got the impression that Moir had been making treaties in the name of Her Majesty's Government and without her consent. 2 This was not the case; but he felt it his duty to tell the Makololo chiefs, when they inquired on the subject, that John Moir had been acting entirely without authority and that if they wanted to petition the Queen they should do so through him. 3 It was not surprising in the circumstances that the chiefs in question should then feel some indignation and repudiate the treaties, the complicated terms of which they were unlikely to have grasped completely. The Makololo repeated their repudiation of the treaties to Consul Hawes who replaced Goodrich in November 1885. 4 After Hawes had admitted that he had been prejudiced against the Company and the treaties by Goodrich, 5 and had come to the conclusion that a request for a protectorate, or failing that protection from a reconstituted Company, was necessary in order to guard against Portuguese expansion, the treaties were temporarily revived and re-acknowledged by the Makololo and the Shire Highlands Yao in March 1886. 6 The Makololo said that they would not submit to be under the authority of the present managers or servants of the Company but they would accept the authority of the Company if power was delegated to it by Her Majesty's Government. 7

1. Anderson, minute, 20th October, 1885, F.O. 84/1702. W. Scott to Lawa, 13th October, 1885, Shepperson collection. Goodrich's *antipathy to the Company overbalances any good points he has.* He was said to be doing all in his power to make people believe that the Iwase treaties were a hoax.
2. Goodrich to Salisbury, 9th August, 1885, 29th August, encloses J.M. to Goodrich, 27th August, 1885, F.O. 84/1702. Moir stated that he had given the Makololo no cause to think that he had been acting under the authority of H.M.G.
3. Ibid.
4. Hawes to Salisbury, 1st December, 1885, F.O. 84/1702.
5. Hawes to Rosebery, 25th, 26th April, 1886, F.O. 84/1751.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
By this time the treaties were "beyond treatment medical or otherwise!" owing to the news of their initial repudiation by the Makololo having reached Europe, and to the heavy fire to which they had been subjected by the representatives of the Blantyre Mission, especially D.C. Scott, who was on leave in Britain. The objections of the Blantyre missionaries were based on both general and particular grounds. On the death of Consul Foot, and in the absence of Goodrich, D.C. Scott had commented on the taking

"away from us (of) the closer pressing politics which caused us so much trial. We shall not, I trust, ever see them as near to us again, however necessary it was that we should learn the lesson so much emphasised by their close contact...although we can hardly expect to have the Shire Highlands hedged in like a private garden, we may discourage as long as we can the introduction of elements hostile to religion and to the real good of the natives." 2

Scott felt that these objections applied even more forcefully to the Company under the direction of the Moirs in whom he had no confidence. Horace Waller, after hearing him speak, felt that he was somewhat hard on the Company

"instituted as it is and retaining at its head men like the Moirs and in its heart the aspirations of men like John Cowan and John Stephen and a host of others..." 3

It was unfortunate that the Established Church had held aloof from the meetings which preceded the collection of the treaties and that they did not seem to have appreciated their true purpose. The result was a division in the pressure group which made it impossible for the missions to speak to the Foreign Office with one voice. This was

1. H. Waller to R. Laws, 22nd March, 1886, Shepperson collection.
2. D.C. Scott to W. Robertson, 5th January, 1885, E.U.L.
3. Waller to Laws, 16th December, 1885, Shepperson collection.

Waller referred to Scott's having spoken to a meeting of the U.M.C.A. "in the very highest tone of spirituality," and added that he himself feared to step "on such a sacred ground. Scott seems to have thought it possible to maintain a virtual theocracy in the Shire Highlands. This was somewhat impracticable and he soon became conscious of the danger of the Portuguese; e.g. D.C. Scott to Robertson, 20th February, 1888, 11th July, 1888, 19th October, 1888, September, 1889. It was not until the threat of the British South Africa Company's charter being extended to include the Nyasa district that he began to appreciate that the Lakes Company might have some advantages. Scott to Robertson, 17th March, 18th August, 1890, E.U.L.
in part a reflection of ecclesiastical rivalries in Scotland. It was unfortunate, too, that John Moir had provided a particular ground for concern on the part of the Blantyre and Universities' Missions by including in a treaty with Rassakukan a clause recognising the Company's sovereignty over the Katunga's Ntsope road, and its right to levy a toll on it. It is most improbable that he had intended this to be the basis of a monopoly, but it did cause alarm.

The consequence was that a combined meeting of representatives of the Company and the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions, the Universities' Mission and the Buchanan brothers on 2nd February, 1886 agreed that the treaties should be held to be 'imperative'. The copies of the treaties did not reach the Foreign Office until April 1886 when there was no question of action being taken on them.

The directors of the Company had already told their shareholders that they

"had hoped that the government might be induced to take the responsibility of administering the country, and the necessary treaties were made between the Company and the Native Chiefs, but now... it seems hopeless to expect the establishment of a British protectorate."

Sir Percy Anderson noted that there had been requests for a protectorate but that the interests involved were not agreed as

"the traders doubt their own power over the natives;"

1. J. McEwan to F.C., 6th January, 1886, encloses D.C. Scott to McEwan, 22nd December, 1885, F.O.84/1779. J. McEwan to Anderson, 5th February, 1886, Dr. J. Rankin to Sir D. Currie, forwarded to Salisbury, F.O.84/1781. Anderson, minute, 15th February, 1886. This confirms the split between the missionaries and traders. Anderson, minute, 27th February, 1886, he had heard of efforts by the U.N.C.A. to heal the quarrel between the Blantyre Mission and the Lakes Company. Ecclesiastical divisions in Scotland were referred to by H. Waller to R. Lewis, 23rd January, 1886, Shapperson collection. Stressing the need for unity of action he said: 'I know in Scotland you live in unhappy times with regard to Church matters.'


4. J. Moir to Anderson, 20th April, 22nd April, 24th April, 1886, F.O.84/1784. J. Moir was at the Foreign Office on the 10th February, 1886.

the missionaries dislike the idea of being ruled by the traders; and unless something unforeseen occurs the question must be left in abeyance for the moment."

The 'unforeseen event' which Anderson contemplated proved to be the outbreak of the Arab War at the north end of Lake Malawi just over eighteen months later. In the meanwhile the Foreign Office attempted to obtain through their ambassador at Lisbon some sort of guarantee of the position of the missions, and the revival of the transit duties which had lapsed after the Machinjiri war. The Company's secretary in Glasgow, William Ewing, who Anderson saw frequently and described as 'an honest and reasonable man', continued to be the prime mover in the organisation of the pressure group which, after the demise of the Moir treaties, had more cooperation from the Established Church. A delegation of the Universities' Mission representing all the groups, saw Lord Salisbury in March 1887 to request the declaration of a protectorate but came away

1. Anderson Memorandum, February, 1886, Confidential Print, 5193.
2. There was another threat of a Portuguese advance against the Makololo following the murder of Hinkelma, an Austrian trader, and of a Portuguese trader in November, 1886. See Axelson, op. cit., pp 168-9; Hanna, op. cit., p 63.
3. Anderson minutes, 1st February, 7th February, 1887, F.O. 84/1751. He reports a meeting of himself, Lister, J. Moir, W. Ewing, and Petre, the ambassador in Lisbon. At this meeting Moir and Ewing were warned 'against the suicidal folly of getting up meetings or deputations which would excite the vanity or the hostility of the Portuguese. They appeared to be convinced but have not been able to quiet the ardour of the men of Edinburgh.' Lister, minute, 14th February, 1887, on letter from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh. Moir and Ewing apologised in advance for 'the strength of expression against Portugal' at a meeting reported in that day's paper, Moir and Ewing to Salisbury, 10th February, 1887, F.O. 84/1856. There had been public meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow under the aegis of the three main churches and the Scottish Geographical Society. See J.W. Jack, op. cit., p 291.
4. J. Molagan to Hetherwick, 24th November, 1886, MS 7548; A.L.C. Minutes, 21st September, 26th November, and 13th December, 1886, the latter was a meeting of all the mission interests called by the A.L.C, to organise a Memorial on the Portuguese position.
almost empty handed, as was to be expected. No progress was made and in August 1887 the Moirs came up with the despairing suggestion that the Company should attempt to acquire from the Portuguese the Nachininjiri praso, which was a tax farm, but control of which would possibly prevent the Portuguese moving further up river. This suggestion was not taken very seriously by the directors, but it may be taken as an example of the fertility of the Moirs' imagination.

The promoters of the Company, in spite of the lack of certainty about the future, showed some confidence. Between March 1886 and August 1887 they raised £18,000 in capital some of which was used for the construction of the new stern-wheel steamer capable of carrying thirty tons of cargo on the Zambezi and the Shire. Its construction was begun during 1886 and it came into service in August 1887. An order for a new lake steamer was also made.

This chapter began with the consideration of the relations of the Company with the people, both individuals and groups, with whom it had to deal in its sphere of operation. Inevitably the focus changed from Africa to Europe and to brief consideration of the diplomatic background. It has been difficult to unravel the interaction of these two spheres, and to show how one influenced the other. It was equally difficult for contemporaries, and the history of the abortive Moir treaties shows how a scheme which originated in Europe came to nothing because of a series of failures in communication in

1. Report by Waller and Penney of U.M.C.A. on meeting with Salisbury, 2nd March, 1887. Salisbury said that there could be no question of a protectorate owing to the problems of access which were, he claimed, even greater than those involved in the Emin Relief Expedition. He pointed out that negotiations with Portugal were more difficult than those with greater powers owing to her inflated pride. He said that he would consider the declaration of a British sphere of influence, asked for a statement of the geographical position and assured the deputation that he had 'a strong desire to help the missions, if possible.' See also the printed Memorial from Waller and Penney to Salisbury, 9th March, 1887, and Waller's pamphlet, The Title Deeds to Nyassa-Land. MS 7673.

2. A.D.C. Minutes, 1st September, 1887.

3. J. Moir to Salisbury, 9th May, 1887, F.O. 84/1862. He asks about transit duties and reports that he is about to leave for Africa. Since his arrival in Britain in January, 1886 he has, he says, nearly doubled the 'strength and efficiency' of the Company. See also, J. Stevenson, to Salisbury, 31st January, 1887, F.O. 84/1857.
both spheres.

The promoters and managers of the African Lakes Company, and of the Livingstonia Mission were concerned at this time with two related problems: that of administration, and that of sovereignty. The assumption of a British protectorate would, it was hoped, solve both of these. Of the two problems it was that of sovereignty which seemed to be the most pressing. The Company was vulnerable to interference from local powers, and it was dependent on them for its continued existence, but in spite of some dangerous incidents it seemed that the economic benefits which it introduced made it unlikely that there would be a concerted move to stop its activities. There was little certainty of survival in the event of Portuguese annexation. Their record of monopolies and attempted monopolies did not bode well for the future of the Company under their rule as a commercial organisation, or as a missionary body. It was fear of the Portuguese, rather than fear of the political forces operating in Malawi, that made the search for the security of a protectorate most urgent.

So it came as a shock that the crisis which was to cause the final resolution of the Company's position occurred not on the Shire, but at the north end of the lake, at the foot of the Stevenson road, at Karonga.
The origins of what came to be known as the 'Arab War' have never been satisfactorily explained. Most commentators have suggested that the underlying cause was commercial rivalry between the Arabs who settled at the north end of Lake Malawi during the early 1880's and the African Lakes Company who established a station at Karonga as the base of the Stevenson road in the same period.¹ It can, according to this view, be seen as a straight-forward clash between the exponents of 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' commerce. Attractive though this theory is, it can not explain the outbreak of the war. It is true that the European participants, and their supporters in Britain, came to think of the war as a 'crusade' in which one side was the representative of good and the other of evil, but there is nothing so clear-cut about the background. The relationship which grew up between the contestants in the course of the 1880's was not one of commercial rivalry but one of partnership which proved extremely profitable to the Company and which was presumably also advantageous to the Arabs themselves.

The north end of Lake Malawi had been visited by E.D. Young and Robert Laws on their circumnavigation of the lake in 1875. On this voyage they located and bought land at the Kambwe lagoon which was thought to be a suitable site for a harbour.² The chief there, Karonga, welcomed Dr. James Stewart and his party on their visit in 1877, giving them presents of food and a small tusk.³ Herbert Rhodes was the first European to build a house in the vicinity; he was reported to have established the 'nucleus of a trading station'.

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² J. Moir to A. Cunningham, Secretary to the B.C.A. Administration, notes on the history of Karonga, 8th November, 1898, L.B.(3).
³ Dr. J. Stewart to Dr. A. Duff, 20th October, 1877, Salisbury.
there early in 1879. He used it as a base for his assault on the untapped supplies of elephants and ivory in the marshes to the north of the Songwe. Consul Elton had seen a herd of over three hundred elephants there on his visit. John Moir and James Stewart, C.E. established a station for the Company at Karonga in October 1879. John Moir bought land there, but on account of the closing of the Kambwe lagoon by silt he moved in December to the Mbasbi river at the far north end which provided at that time an excellent harbour. He bought land and built a house which was used in the next two seasons as the base for the Company's hunting operations. This place has come to be known as Mwaya, the name is said to be a corruption of Moir. Fred Moir was known there from an early date as 'Miskita Moyo.' After James Stewart, C.E. had been forced to give up the Songwe route for the Stevenson road at the end of 1881 he moved his base south to Karonga where he built 'a large house with an enclosed verandah' which became the nucleus of the Company's store.

From early in 1882 Karonga became the headquarters of the Company at the north end, though there was no permanent agent settled there until 1884.

The pre-existing political situation is obscure. The first visitors to the north end did not discriminate between the peoples who have come to be known as the Ngonde and the Nyakusa; they referred to both as the 'Chungus', a name which was derived from the paramount chief of the Ngonde, the Kyungu. Later on a distinction was made between the 'Wankonde' and the 'Mwamba' or 'Sankilis' who were thought to be separated by the river Songwe, which eventually became the boundary between the British and German spheres of influence, and consequently between Malawi and Tanzania. There could be

1. Diary of J. Gunn, gardener at Livingstonia, 4th April, 7th August 1879, press cuttings from The Northern Ensign, Wick, in MS 7906.
3. J. Moir to A. Cunningham, 8th November, 1896, L.B.(3).
4. Dr. J. Stewart to Dr. A. Duff, 20th October, 1877, Salisbury; R. Laws, Diary, 22nd October, 1877, E.U.L.
5. James Stewart, C.E., to Dr. James Stewart, 1st July, 1882, Salisbury.
6. F.J. Elton, op. cit., p 324, It seems likely that Elton visited only the Nyakusa and not the Ngonde.
little distinction between the two groups on the grounds of language or culture, as they were much inter-married and related. It is probable, though, that the Songwe marked the northern boundary of the sovereignty of the Kyungu. Among the Nyakusa to the north of the river there was no acknowledged paramount though there were three important chiefs. The so-called Elephant Marsh may have formed a barrier between the two groups; the largest concentrations of Nyakusa seem to have lived at the head of the lake and in the hills behind rising towards Tukuyu. It was, however, those who lived in the plains near the lake with whom the Company was most concerned.

'Arabs' began to arrive in this vicinity almost simultaneously with the Company. They were attracted to the area by the abundant supply of ivory, by the possibilities of acquiring slaves which were presented by local feuds, and by the strategic importance of the lake crossing from Deep Bay to the east side which was opened up at this time. This crossing, which shortened the route from the Songa country and the south end of Lake Tanganyika to Kilwa and Zanzibar, was made possible by arrangements which appear to have been made with the Songea Ngoni or Gwagwara as they were known. These people who had been the scourge of most of the population of the east coast of the lake raiding as far south as the Shire Highlands seem to have become more settled during the early 1880's and were, like their cousins under Mbelwa, Chikusi, and Kpeseni, beginning to enter into diplomatic and commercial relationships. There is no written evidence of Arabs at the north end until 1881 when Fred Moir met some at the Mabashi in August of that year. When he reached the Company's house there in July no-one came out to greet the steamer and he found the villages burnt. There had apparently been a succession dispute following the death of a chief, Malaseka. Two other

1. E.g. F. Moir to father, 14th August, 1880, L.B.(1); see also F.D. Lugard, 'The fight against the slave traders on Nyassa,' The Contemporary Review, Vol. LVI, September, 1889, p 334, on distinction between the Ngonde and the Nyakusa and on the recent political history of the Ngonde.
2. E.g. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 14th March, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
3. F. Moir to father, 29th July, 1881, L.B.(1).
chiefs, Mwakyusa and Manjawarra had called in some Arabs to help them with their guns against a third chief, Massewa. There was evidence that the Arabs had obtained slaves as a result of their assistance. Fred Moir wrote:

"The Arabs have kept very much out of my way, tho' I have not sought to avoid a meeting. One day they met us on the road with several small tusks they said they wanted to sell, as we were far from here they said they would come some other time. They have not come since. They have also been very careful to keep slaves away from here. (Moir had seen only one woman who had escaped in a goree stick.) My boys on a road where they were not expected came on a gang of slaves bound southwards in gorees - it is most aggravating to know that people, some of whom have formerly welcomed us to their villages...are at the present moment being driven away south in slave sticks." 1

Moir felt that if he had arrived at the north end two months earlier the war could have been avoided 'for this year at least.'

"And when we came I would have undertaken to frighten out the dozen or two Arabs who were here, probably without firing a gun, but if there was a possibility of armed resistance we might have had to use our guns. I hear today that they have all cleared out but I can not say if it is really the case." 2

It is probable that the same group of Arabs had been involved in an Ngonde war. Moir passed the burnt out remains of a village which they had occupied north of Karonga; 3 and the Kyungu, Mwafonga, was said to have been killed by Arabs in this year. 4 Neither this Kyungu nor his successor, Mwabalambo, appears to have been able to command the support of all the people; the ease with which the Arabs were able to establish themselves in the area was attributed to the weakness of the Kyungu. Mlozi, the leader of this group of Arabs, was implicated in some way in this dispute but his precise role is not clear. He was able to persuade the Ngonde to allow him to settle at Mpata about twelve miles west of Karonga on the way to

1. F. Moir to Miss E. Moir, 14th August, 1881, L.B.(1).
2. Ibid., F.M. wrote 'two years earlier,' in the context he must have intended to write 'months.'
3. F.M., address illegible, 27th August, 1881, L.B.(1).
Tanganyika. He must have settled there between 1881 and 1883. He had come from the Senga Arabs to whom he continued to owe some allegiance.¹

The situation was made more complicated by the settlement at Kaporo, about fifteen miles north of Karonga, at approximately the same time of a group of Henga people under the leadership of Kanyole. His followers were Tumbuka speaking people who had been subjected and partially assimilated by Mbelwa's Ngoni. Following the successful Tonga revolt of about 1875 the true Ngoni began to fear that the Tumbuka people might also rebel. Mtwalo, the brother and rival of Mbelwa, who took a consistently hard line on military and diplomatic questions, proposed that in order to prevent such an occurrence and to consolidate the position of the Ngoni, the mature Tumbuka speaking Henga and Nkamanga should be killed leaving the children and youths to be brought up as true Ngoni. On hearing the news that this plan was about to be put into practice there was a rebellion in the Henga valley. Mbelwa called in Mwase from Kasungu with his guns to help him put the rebellion down but Kanyole and some of his followers managed to escape.² This was in 1879 at the time that John Moir was travelling west towards the Luangwa. Kanyole, who had been a commander in the Ngoni army, and whose men were at least partially trained in the regimental system, moved north where he was called in to help Massewa against his rivals among the HyaKusa. He was allowed, or chose, to settle at Kaporo from where he continued to make raids to the north especially for cattle. Ngonde sources stress that he had come to their country as a refugee and had been allowed to settle as a favour, thus making more pointed his later treachery, but it is probable that they were in no position to argue with him. They were said to have tried to persuade the Arabs to act against him, and his presence may have been part of the explanation for their reception of these otherwise unwelcome guests.³

There is no evidence of commercial contact between the north end Arabs and the Company until July 1883 when James Stewart, C.E.

1. T.C. Young, op. cit., pp 66-70; J. Moir to A.R. Cunningham, 8th November, 1898, op. cit.
2. Ibid. p 122.
told James Stevenson:

"what is even stranger, the Arab visitors in the district are now well-disposed, and have been selling supplies to Munro...and ivory to Monteith at the lake." 1

John Moir reported to the Directors in January 1884 that a considerable trade had been done at Karonga during the last year, chiefly by Monteith. 2 Low Monteith Fotheringham and J.L. Nicoll were stationed at Karonga continuously from the latter months of 1884. 3 They were engaged alternately in leading caravans across to Lake Tanganyika with the parts of the Good News, and goods and passengers for the L.M.S., and in supervising the Karonga store and developing the ivory trade there. Alexander Carson, the L.M.S. engineer, visited Karonga in May 1886 and left a detailed account of their activities. He makes it clear that Arabs had been attracted to the district in large numbers by the opportunity given for exchanging their ivory. They were said to be building villages in the vicinity and to have many people attached to them including slaves of various types. The Hala was at this time taking regular cargoes of ivory south. 4 Carson saw her take 'a large quantity of ivory down with her and during the week I saw much more bought,' He described the business conducted at the station:

*Arabs arrive early in the day at the station with a string of men following, who carry elephants’ tusks, hippo teeth, rhinoceros horns, gum etc. The chief is sometimes a tall and lanky man with cadaverous features, sometimes a portly man with bright black eyes and flowing beard. Some look shabby in their calico robes and fez, some dress in fine linen with embroidery and have silver jewelry. Their followers are dressed according to their rank, fez and robes or anything between that and a little piece of dirty cloth. They sit on the floor of the store, the chief in front, and followers behind according to rank, with ivory beside them. The agent of the A.L.C. sits in front, with his bales of calico, bags of salt, and cases of provisions around him. A tusk is presented for inspection, which is weighed, then an offer is made to the owner who looks demure and shakes his head, and states his figure. The agent raises the amount offered, gradually,

and the Arab gradually lowers his until after a
great deal of shaking of heads with downcast eyes
and a few words the bargain is struck and the cal¬
ico measured out, when another tusk is in like man¬
er disposed of. Sometimes beads, salt, soap or
vinegar are wanted as part payment when an equivalent
in calico is returned by the owner. This goes on
for days together and generally stops not so much for
want of ivory as want of calico, for the Co. seems
always behind in the supply of their stations."

The latter comment was undoubtedly true; Fotheringham had made a
special trip to Mandala in 1885 to attempt to get more cloth to keep
the business going, and was constantly disappointed by the quantities
which the steamer brought up. Carson makes no reference to powder
being given for ivory at this date; Lugard claimed that the Company
had supplied some to Arabs and there is evidence that limited quan¬
tities were supplied at a later date. Here as elsewhere the re¬
fusal to sell powder and guns would have inhibited trade, and there
must have been a temptation to allow some sales, though the Company
would not sell powder to the Jumbe of Nkota Khota in 1888, though
it was his most insistent demand.

The second function of the station at Katonga, as the base for
the organisation of caravans to the south end of Lake Tanganyika
along the Stevenson road was made more difficult by the unwillingness
of the Ngonde to work as porters - they refused to carry loads

1. A. Carson, "From Quelimane to Miamkolo," op. cit., L.M.S., C.A.,
2. E.C. Hore to Secretary, L.M.S., 7th September, 1885, L.M.S. 6/2/A
3. F.D. Lugard, The Rise of Our East African Empire, Edinburgh,
Karonga recorded in December 1890 that he was permitted to
supply 5 lbs. of powder for every 35 lbs. of ivory bought from
Arab traders, among them Mloni and Kupa Kopa. He personally
was reluctant to sell them powder but he agreed that it was
difficult to answer their complaint: 'If we can not get powder
how can we kill elephants to get ivory?' 'Extracts from the
letters and diaries of Peter Moore,' Part 2, 17th, 24th December
1890, in N.J. 1958, Vol.II, p 64. The originals of these
diaries which were in the custody of the Society of Malawi, hav
now been lost.
4. 'A visit to a slave-trading chief,' by 'S', press-cutting, Jan¬
uary, 1889, paper unknown, in MS 7906.
further than the few miles between the Mambwe lagoon and the Company store — and by the unsettled political state of the plateau over which the route passed. The first difficulty was overcome by the introduction of workers from elsewhere. Some of these were men on contract from Bandawe, and from the Shire Highlands including some Yao and according to Carson some 'Manganja.' Others were unrecruited volunteers, many of them Mambwe who came over from the vicinity of Mhala near the south end of Lake Tanganyika in the hope of getting loads to carry back with them. Carson was glad to be able to employ a party of Mambwe who had come over for this purpose as they contrac-
ted to carry his loads all the way to their destination while other loads had to be carried in short stages across the plateau by different people. On other occasions porters had to be sent for from Mwekwanza about fifty miles up the road. Throughout the history of the Stevenson road as a tonga-tonga route the vast majority of those employed as porters came from the areas which are now in Zambia and Tanzania, with the exception of Tonga who came from over a hundred miles to the south. It is remarkable that Mambwe should have come apparently spontaneously at such an early date over two hundred miles without any certainty of getting work. Like the Tonga they came to be known as energetic labour migrants. Carson left Karonga with fifty-four carriers and four capataos who had been supplied by the Company. One of these, 'Bilali', was described as a Swahili, and another 'Kolembo', was described as a Blantyre graduate 'who speaks

2. Ibid., pp 45-6.
3. Dr. Tomory to the Secretary, L.M.S., in L.M.S., C.A. 7/1/D.
4. See W. Watson, Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy, a Study of the Mambwe People of Northern Rhodesia, Manchester, 1958, p 10, and Chapter III, 'The quest for wages:' pp 36-71. He points out that the need for a payment by men on marriage provided a motive for Mambwe labour migrants. He correctly points out that the first Mambwe to work for wages were those employed on the transport of 'The Good News': he claims that a bridge built by the A.L.C. over the Saisi river at that time 'is still standing and in good repair.' (p 38) It would be pleasant to think that this were true, but it seems unlikely.
and writes good English. Porters who engaged to go the whole distance were to be paid nineteen yards for the journey, and casual porters at the rate of a yard a day. The former were allowed two yards as 'posho' or food money, and four yards pay in advance.1

The political uncertainties on the plateau were due largely to the unpredictable nature of Bemba raids against which all the villages beyond Mweniwanda were heavily stockaded;2 to conflicts between the Mambwe and the Nyamwanga; and to the ambivalent position of Kabunda, the most wealthy of the Arab traders in the area who was settled on the Lofu river among the Lungu who he appears alternately to have protected against the Bemba and to have raided for slaves, and for carriers for his caravans to the coast. The Bemba acted as suppliers of slaves to Kabunda and probably also to the Senga Arabs of whom the leader was Salim bin Nasur; Carson on his journey in 1886 found much evidence of recent raiding though he noticed, in one instance that a cache of tinned food which had been left at the village eighteen months previously by Fred Moir for the use of future Company caravans, had been carefully set on one side by the raiding party.3 Fotheringham in 1885 had been much delayed on one of his journeys by a war between a 'renegade' Mambwe chief and some of the Nyamwanga. This leader had followed Fotheringham for some distance threatening to come down to attack the Ngonde; Fotheringham discouraged him by setting fire to the abandoned village in which he and his followers were staying. This incidentally is the only recorded instance in which a Company employee initiated violent action against any of the local population, though it is clear that the action was regarded as defensive.4

The precise role of Kabunda is difficult to analyse. He was a cultivated man from the Persian Gulf and received European visitors

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1. A. Carson, op. cit., pp 47-9. Carson took with him from the A.L.C. store at Karonga for the expenses of his journey from Karonga to Miamkolo: 1,565 yards of calico, 3 quilts, 6 scarves, 3 fesses, 24 strings of large blue beads, 1½ lbs. small white beads, 1 lb. small red beads, 6 tin plates, 1 basket, and 12 boxes of matches.
2. Ibid., p 61.
3. Ibid., pp 71-2.
with considerable style. Fred Moir and James Roxburgh met him in September 1883 near the Lofu when he was setting out on his way to Zanzibar with a caravan of over three thousand people most of whom were said to be slaves in sticks, many of them carrying loads. Fred Moir's description of the scene is so graphic as to be almost unbelievable but it is confirmed less dramatically by Roxburgh. They found that most of the villages at the south-east end of the lake including those at Miasuko, and Zonde's (on the plateau above the lake near the present town of Mbala, formerly Abercorn,) had been destroyed. Moir attributed this destruction to Kabunda's preparations for departure, while Hore of the L.M.S. thought that it was the work of the Beba. Harry Johnston stayed with Kabunda for a week in 1889 and spent there according to his biographer, 'perhaps the most consciously enjoyed moment of his life.' He regarded Kabunda as a reformed character, though it is clear from A.J. Swann's account that the Lungu were being raided, presumably on Kabunda's instructions within weeks of Johnston's departure. Kabunda is said to have declared himself Sultan of Ulungu in about 1887, and it may be that, as Hore believed, he provided some protection to the Lungu in the immediate vicinity of his settlement, but it would seem that the majority were at the mercy of his whim.

The successful development of the ivory trade at Karonga undoubtedly led to an increase in the number of Arabs who were in the area, although it had not attracted them there in the first place. In

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addition to Mlozi who was established at Mpata by 1883, villages
were established in the next four years by Msalamo, at the point
where the Stevenson road crossed the Rukuru about five miles from
Karonga, by Kopa Kopa about twelve miles to the south of Karonga
between there and Deep Bay from where there was a ferry to Capand-
sero's on the east coast, and by Salim bin Najim about one and a
half miles from the Company station along the lake shore. The
latter left for the coast in about September 1887, and was not in¬
volved in the war. He had left his valuables in the custody of
Fotheringham and told his people to go to him in case of trouble.  
Mlozi, Kopa Kopa and Msalamo were the three most important of the
Arab protagonists. It should be clear from the above account that
'commercial rivalry' can not be a sufficient cause of the war which
eventually broke out; there was co-operation in the ivory trade,
and the Company's agents had never made any attempt to interfere
with the slave trade which these traders undoubtedly carried on as a side¬
line. If this theory is excluded there remain two possible types
of explanation; that the war was the result of a series of minor
local irritations between Arabs and the Ngonde, with the Company be¬
ing called in as the protector of the latter; or that the war was
the result of a move by Arabs all over central Africa to lay claim
to 'effective occupation' of the interior after the European powers
had staked out their claims to the coast-line of Africa.

An examination of the immediate background to the war provides
evidence to support both of these explanations, and it may appear at
this point in time impossible to reach a positive conclusion between
one or the other. Fotheringham gave some evidence to support the
former view when he wrote:

"One great cause of trouble during the last two years at
Karonga has been shortness of supplies, thus causing
Arabs who have come long distances to wait in the dis¬
trict as long as three months before we could give them
their goods. The Arabs always bring great numbers of
people along with them; hence there have been continual

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 32-43; see also map of the north end
in The Manchester Guardian, 25th February, 1888, with report
from the north end, dated 10th December, and probably written
by Consul O'Neill or the Rev. Laurence Scott.
quarrels between them and the natives about food, the Arabs invariably helping themselves... 'Ramathan, one of the principal Arab leaders, a white Belooch, came down from Kabunda's with 1,500 lbs. of ivory. He could not be supplied with goods, and as he had seventy people with him and about fifty guns, the natives did not care for his presence.'

The first incident in the sequence of events which led up to the outbreak of the war seems to have fitted into this category of friction. A headman, Kasote, of a village to the south of Karonga, was killed by a white Arab as a result of a trivial dispute. Fotheringham was asked by Kasote's superior, Kasingula, to recover the body of the dead man, which he did, and then met a deputation of two thousand Ngonde from the Karonga area who wanted to attack Salim bin Najim's village in retaliation. Fotheringham was afraid that this might lead to a general war in which the Ngonde would be at a disadvantage, and attempted to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. He was unable to persuade Salim bin Najim to hand over the murderer of Kasote to the Ngonde but he was able after four days of negotiation to persuade Salim to give, and the Ngonde chiefs to accept, compensation. This was in July 1887; there was no further incident until October, but in the meantime tension had been maintained by the continued presence of Ramathan, who was awaiting payment for ivory which he had sold to the Company, and by the arrival in September of a large number of 'ruga-ruga', presumably from the Senga Arabs, who, according to Mlozi, were going to be used in an attack on the Ngoni who had killed one of his brothers.

It was on the 4th October, 1887, that a quarrel broke out at a village near Mpata, Mlozi's settlement twelve miles up the Tanganyika road, as a result of which a headman, Mwini-Mtete, was killed. As the people there were some distance from the station and were not in close contact with the Company there was no question of mediation by the agent. The Ngonde concerned attacked some of Mlozi's people who were buying food at the time of the murder, killing some and capturing others, including several of Mlozi's wives, according to his

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 35, quoting a letter of 23rd May, 1888,
2. Ibid., pp 34-43.
3. Ibid., p 44.
SKETCH MAP SHOWING DEVASTATION OF WA-NKONDE COUNTRY, NORTH NYASSA.

The villages destroyed by the Arabs were the following:—Mwewi-Mititi, Karambo, Mwaniawanga, Mwaramura, Karoti, Kasangula, Mwanyongu, Malema, Karanga, Ngerenge, Pumbo, Mfuni, Chirapuru, Mwaramba.

Note.—All the people from these villages who were not killed or captured as slaves were driven either to the hills or to the northern extremity of the lake, where they found temporary protection in the country of the Wa-Mwamba, who are really a section of the Wa-Nkonde tribe. Only the names of the villages of the head chiefs are given, but many of these names really represent four and five villages.
account. The Arabs retaliated with attacks on the Ngonde villages near Mpete and the destruction of all the villages between there and Karonga. Most of the inhabitants fled to Ngerenge, the headquarters of the Kyungu, about twelve miles to the north of Karonga. Fotheringham attempted to intercede with Mlozi to prevent the destruction of the villages of Karonga, Kasingula, and Mulilima which were close to the station. Kasingula and Karonga had both signed the Moir treaties; Karonga had sold the land on which the Company’s store was built; people from these villages occasionally worked for the Company, and supplied food for its employees. Fotheringham who, together with Nicoll, had started missionary work among them, felt a special obligation to them. In answer to his messages Fotheringham was told by Ramathan that the fighting would not stop until all the Ngonde had been killed or driven out; that "the country was now the Arabs' and that Mlozi was Sultan of Konde"; that if Fotheringham wanted workers he could employ Henga people who were "the children of the Arabs."; and that if he ventured out from the station he might be shot as "Ramathan means to have war." Mlozi was prepared in view of their friendship, and of the fact that Fotheringham had been in the area for longer than any of the Arabs but himself, to allow Kasingula and Mulilima to stay in their villages as 'children of the white man' if Fotheringham sent up 30 lbs. of powder, two thousand percussion caps, one thousand flints and a supply of red cloth. Fotheringham consulted Kasingula and they agreed to reject this demand as acceptance would have recognised Mlozi’s assumed position.

Fotheringham saw Ramathan for the second time on the 7th October and was told that Kasingula could stay if he recognised Mlozi as his chief, sent men to hoe his gardens, and women for his harem. Fotheringham replied that Kasingula would not recognise Mlozi and that the situation would be reported to the British Consul at Zomba, and to John Moir at Mandala. Mlozi then sent a message regretting

1. L.H. Fotheringham to Consul Hawes, 16th October, 1887, in Hawes to Salisbury, 16th November, 1887. F.O. 84/1829.
3. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 45-7, and Fotheringham to Hawes, 16th October, 1887, op. cit.
5. Ibid., p 56.
his earlier demands and asking Fotheringham to arrange a 'mirandu' (conference) with the Kyungu in order to settle his differences with the Ngonde. The Kyungu was sent for and came to the station but Mozi did not keep the appointment. Mozi suggested that the Kyungu should stay at the station while he went to attack the Ngonde at Ngerenge. Fotheringham feared that if the Kyungu stayed at the station the rest of the Ngonde would come to be with him, that the station would be attacked, and the Company involved in the war. He asked the Kyungu to return to Ngerenge and at the same time began to build a brick wall around the previously unstockaded agent's house and store. He was careful to warn Mozi that he was doing this.

Mozi reacted that he was doing this. Mozi replied that he had no objection, and Fotheringham learnt from Ramathan that the attack on the Ngonde had been delayed until reinforcements came from the Senga Arabs.

Fotheringham met Mozi and Salim bin Nasur, one of the Senga Arabs, at Muceso's village on 15th October. It was agreed that Ramathan and his 'ruga-ruga' should leave their village near the station as a preliminary to the return of Karonga, Kasingula and Mulilima. Ramathan left for Ipata's on the 16th but returned to Karonga on the 17th October. The people of these three chiefs were told by the Henga at Keporo that the way was clear for them to return to their homes; they came back as far as the Kashe marshes a few miles to the north of Karonga, and from there became involved in skirmishes with Arabs from Ramathan's who were beginning to loot the food which was still stored in their villages. On the 27th October the Arabs, together with the Henga, attacked the Ngonde who were taking refuge in the marsh, setting fire to the reeds and shooting at those who came out; many were also taken by the crocodiles which were numerous there. Some escaped to the Songwe river about twenty miles to the north where they were still liable to attack by the Henga from Kanyole's which was a few miles to the south of that river.

On 2nd November the Arabs attacked Ngerenge, many prisoners

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2. Ibid., pp 67–62.
and capturing many cattle. The rest of the Ngonde then fled north to the Songwe. Kopa Kopa’s victorious war party passed the station on its return and Kopa Kopa himself warned that he intended to build his village at Karonga and that he would return to negotiate, which Fotheringham understood to mean ‘dictate terms.’

It was on the evening of that day that the steamer arrived with enough goods to pay the Company’s outstanding debts, and with a party of reinforcements. The party consisted of Consul Henry O’Neill, from Mozambique; Alfred Sharpe, who had been hunting as a freelance in connection with the Company; the Rev. Lawrence Scott, brother-in-law of O’Neill, and brother of C.P. Scott, the editor of the Manchester Guardian; and Dr. Tomory of the L.M.S. who had recently passed through Karonga on his way home from Lake Tanganyika but felt it his duty as a doctor and missionary to return to Karonga. The steamer brought little ammunition to add to the thirteen Chassepot rifles and thirty-four cartridges which were all that were in the Company’s armoury. On 6th November J.L. Nicoll returned from Tanganyika bringing with him about twenty men and eighteen guns, mainly breech-loaders. On the same day about sixty Henga people who had formerly lived with chief Karonga came to ask for refuge; they claimed to have been threatened with attack by Kanyole, the Henga chief, and had nowhere else to go. They were allowed to stay at the station, becoming the first refugees to be given protection by the Company.

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 85.
2. H.E. O’Neill, entered Navy, 1862, H.M.S. London, Zanziber, 1875-9; Consul at Mozambique, 1879-1889; Consul at Leghorn, and later at Rouen, retired 1899.
3. Alfred Sharpe, born 1853, solicitor, acting magistrate, Fiji, 1885-6, hunting on commission basis for the Lakes Company, 1887 volunteer in Arab War, 1887-9, engaged on treaty making for H.H. Johnston and the A.L.C. and B.S.A. Companies, 1889-91; Vice-Consul, B.C.A., 1891; Consul, 1894, Commissioner and Commander in Chief, B.C.A., 1897; Governor, Nyasaland Protectorate, 1907-10; died, 1935.
4. J.E. Tomory, to Hawes, 14th January, 1888, with Hawes to Salisbury, 16th January, 1888, P.O. 84/1883.
5. Fotheringham to Hawes, 16th October, 1887, op. cit., By the date of the Arab attack the defenders of Karonga had 32 breech-loading rifles with 339 cartridges, and 12 percussion guns, together with a few sporting rifles and elephant guns. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 90.
They were starving and had no food. On 7th November Ramathan came to the station to settle his outstanding account. Fotheringham felt that the fact that the debt was outstanding had told in favour of the Company as so long as it was unpaid an attack on the station was unlikely and the Company had some hold on the Arabs. The eventual attack followed almost immediately after the settlement of the last account, that with Salim bin Nasur.

Meanwhile Consul O'Neill made several attempts to enter into negotiations but was unsuccessful. The Arabs began to cut trees to build stockades from which to attack the station. Karonga, Kasingula and Mulilima sent repeated requests that they should be allowed to return with their people from Kaporo where they were suffering from attacks by Kanyole and where they had no food or shelter. On 17th November a party was sent to bring them back, they returned on the 19th November with about one thousand five hundred people, together with their cattle and goats, when Fotheringham was warned that there would be an attack on the following day. Last minute preparations were made; thorn bushes were piled up to extend the fort to the lake which formed the east side of a rectangle. The first attack came on the 23rd November when J.L. Nicoll was sent to the north end to summon the Nyakausa chiefs to the Company's assistance.

Fotheringham was certain that the murder of Mwindi Mtete in October had been premeditated, and that it had been done on the instructions of Mlosi in order to precipitate a war in which the Ngonde could be driven out, the Ilenga put in their place, and Mlosi proclaimed Sultan. Mlosi himself argued that if the murder had been deliberate, he would have been careful to see than none of his wives were out at the Ngonde villages at the time. Even if Mlosi's word is accepted it seems clear that he used the Ngonde reaction to the murder as an excuse for a bid to establish himself as a political power in

2. Ibid., pp 87-94.
5. Ibid., p 71.
the area on the model of the Jumbe at Mchota Mhota. The fact that by attacking the Company's station he was prepared to sacrifice an apparently advantageous commercial connection suggests that political considerations were uppermost in his mind. He presumably felt that the eventual decision of the Europeans at Karonga to allow some of the Ngonde to take refuge at the station was a challenge to his newly asserted authority. Fotheringham was influenced in his decision to allow the Ngonde to return partly by the knowledge that they were likely to suffer extremely from starvation and attack by the Henga if they did not return, and partly by Mlozi's repeated protestations that he had no quarrel with the Company and that he would not object to the people of the villages close to the station returning. Fotheringham had earlier shown his reluctance to become directly involved by asking the Kyungu to leave the station when Mlozi threatened to attack Ngeringe. The offering of protection to some of the Ngonde was the only provocation which the Company provided for the Arab attack. In view of the Company's association over eight years with the chiefs in question it would have been very difficult to reject their request. To do so would have seemed to deny the humanitarian foundations on which the Company claimed to have been based. It had, of course, to be presumed that at least some of the Ngonde who were captured as a result of the Arab attacks would find their way to the slave markets. While there could be no doubt that Mlozi and his associates were slave traders it does not seem that the attacks on the Ngonde fall into the category of straight-forward slave raids. The declaration of the Sultanate, the attempts to gain recognition from the Company and the chiefs under its protection, and the successful levying of tribute from the southern Ngonde chiefs such as Kayuni near Deep Bay, all suggest that the primary motives for the coup were political. If it is accepted that the attacks on the Ngonde and the Company were not simply the result of an accumulation of friction, or of commercial rivalry, but rather of political design, it remains to be

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 89.
asked was this design conceived and carried out by the Karonga Arabs as an independent venture, or was it in the words of Robert Laws 'no mere isolated spurt, but part of a concerted scheme for resuscitating the slave trade to more than its previous vigour.' Laws, O'Neill, Fotheringham and D.C. Scott of Blantyre all believed that the outbreak at the north end was related to other manifestations of Arab power in the Congo Free State, and Uganda. It preceded the resistance to the imposition of German government on the east coast but was thought to be part of the same phenomenon. O'Neill was certain that it had been inspired from Zanzibar and that pressure should be brought to bear on the north end Arabs from there.

There is some evidence to suggest that the attacks at the north end may have been premeditated over a fairly long period, and that they were concerted with other powers in the area. The active role of Ramthan, Kabunda's agent, in the attacks and the gradual build-up of 'ruga-ruga' at the Arab settlements in the months before the attacks, together with the declared delay in the attack on Ngerenge until reinforcements came from Senga, all suggest that Kabunda and the Senga Arabs were implicated. The only independent African account of the war, written by a follower of Manyole, indicates that Mlozi and the other Arab leaders swore blood brotherhood with Manyole and his headmen before the attack and that it had been agreed in advance that the Ngonde should be driven out and the Henga put in their place.

Aminduna of Malulue, the chief of the Songea Gongo, told John Buchanan and W.P. Johnson in March 1888 that Mlozi had sent messengers to

1. Quoted in O'Neill to Salisbury, 30th May, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
2. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 33; D.C. Scott to J. Robertson, 10th May, 1889, E.U.L.
4. Andrew Mkonjera, History of the Henga tribe of Lake Nyasa,' part 2, Journal of the African Society, Vol. II, 1911-1912, p231. Mkonjera was a Henga living at Manyole's during the war. His opinion was confirmed in T.C. Young, op. cit., p 70; and in Hawes to Salisbury, 10th January, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
Mhalule a year previously asking for help against 'the English.' Mhalule was said to have refused to co-operate and to have advised Mlozi not to attack them. A representative was however sent to Mlozi to discuss a possible combined attack on the Nyakasaj; this fell through and the independent attack on the Ngonde was said to be the result.\(^1\) Robert Laws heard from Mbelwa's Ngoni: that a compact existed between the Arabs and the Lo Bemba, whereby the latter were to proceed south along the Luangwa valley, while the Arabs were to execute a corresponding move along the lake shore and intervening ground.\(^2\) Laws never had any doubts as to the correctness of the Lakes Company's stand at Karonga and wrote in 1889 that he felt that "the check they gave, and have kept up, on the Arabs, (has) . . . been the means of preventing Arab combination and aggression which would have secured their dominance on the lake, and which most probably Zomba, Blantyre and Mandala would not have escaped."\(^3\)

On the other hand, during the two years that the war lasted Mlozi received very little overt diplomatic or practical help from the other Arab powers in the area. Kabunda and the Senga Arabs, while they almost certainly gave some material assistance, were careful to appear strictly neutral; the Jumbe of Mchota Khota similarly remained impartial.\(^4\) Mlozi received some supplies from the east coast of the lake and seems always to have been well provided with ammunition, but he never mounted a serious offensive after his initial successes in the latter months of 1887. During 1888 there were rumours that he was bankrupt, and that he was unable to return to the Senga Arabs,

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1. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 14th March, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
2. Quoted in O'Neill to Salisbury, 30th May, 1888, F.O. 84/1846. The Ngoni had heard this from captives who had they taken from the Bemba as a result of a joint attack that they had made on the Bemba with the Misa and the Senga.
4. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 135-6, 138, 140. By November 1888 there was a rumour that the Senga Arabs had 'thrown in their lot' with Mlozi, if this was true it could have been due to the news of the rising against the Germans on the east coast which had begun by then, cf. M. Perham, op. cit., p 138. See also J.A. Bain to R. Laws, 22nd August, 1888, MS 7891, on the relations of Mlozi with the Senga Arabs, and J.A. Bain to Laws 14th August, 1888, MS 7891, on the risk of a junction between Mlozi and the Arabs at Merere's, (Tukuyu) this did not happen.
presumably because he was in debt to them. Probably recognition would have followed on success. Owing to the Company’s refusal to allow him to subjugate the Ngonde, Mlozi was never able to claim complete success even during the period of three months when the Company had been forced to abandon its Karonga station. It seems probable that Mlozi had gambled on the Company’s putting the valuable business which he and his fellow Arabs did with it before the interests of the Ngonde. When the Company, or its agent, seemed to be taking the Ngonde under its protection he may have hoped that a successful attack on the poorly armed Europeans and their refugee allies would compel recognition of his claims. There is no evidence that he wanted the Company to cease its commercial operations in the area which had clearly been of benefit to him and to other Arab merchants.

The origins of the Arab War are of considerably greater interest from the point of view of this study than the conduct of the war itself. The question arises how did a company which was intended to bring about change in central Africa through the peaceful influence of trade become involved in a war? How does the war fit with the doctrine of ‘commerce and Christianity versus the slave trade’ which had inspired the founders of the Company? Does the outbreak of the war indicate the practical failure of the doctrine? It will be remembered that the doctrine was never one which would stand very rigorous analysis from either an economic or a commercial point of view. The notion with which it was associated that ‘good trade drives out bad’ was clearly unjustified; but in terms of the philosophy as it was believed by the promoters of the Company the development of the trade with the Arabs at Karonga was probably as near as it ever came to practical success. From 1885 to 1887 the Company’s agent at Karonga was being offered more ivory than he could supply goods to purchase. The ivory was being offered by the type of Arab trader who found the most difficulty in getting his goods transported

1. J.A. Bain to Elmslie, April 1888, MS7891, and Robert Laws, The Scottish Leader, 27th January, 1888. There was a fear that the Jumbe was trying to get a foothold among the Tonga at Chinteche to the north of Bandawe; there is, however, no evidence that he was in contact with Mlozi about this, and he was unable to take action on this front owing to the threat of a war with Makanjira with whom he had a quarrel.
to the coast and who was most likely to raid for slaves to do the carrying work for him. That is the type of trader who unlike the Yao chiefs, the richer Zanzibar merchants, or the Jumbe of Mkhota Mhota, had neither the political power nor the wealth to be able to command or to hire professional porters. ¹ The price being offered by the Company to these traders had risen to as much as five shillings per pound of ivory which was evidently enough to attract traders from over two hundred and fifty miles.² In dealing with these men the Company had to turn a blind eye to their slaving activities but this was justified to Carson at Karonga in 1886 in these terms:

"It is asserted (almost certainly by Fotheringham) that in dealing thus with the natives that slavery of the worst kind is checked for it is agreed that when the Arabs requisit to carry their ivory to the coast that villages are destroyed by them for the purpose of making slaves and that it is in these journeys that the slaves suffer." ³

In contrast to the Company's trade with the Mhkololo, the Yao, and the Jumbe, described in the last chapter, the trade at Karonga must have been of more than marginal importance to the Arab participants. The fact that Ramathan, for instance, was prepared to wait months for his goods is some indication of that. The Company had certainly not acquired a monopoly of their trade but it was doing enough to have some influence over the types of commodity which were imported; and in providing transport to the coast for large quantities of ivory at a competitive price it was doing something to change the nature of transport, if not of trade.

1. J. Noir to Directors, A.L.C., and B.S.A. Company, 9th November, 1889, (L.B.(2)) *I believe a new class of Arab was beginning to spring up who was proving a valuable feeder to the Company.*

2. J. Noir to Directors, A.L.C., 28th August, 1889, L.B.(2). This price would represent the value of goods exchanged including the expenses of freight. J.N. thought that if they were able to offer six shillings they would be able to take over the whole trade and price out the Arab traders. Of course the Arabs were making a profit at five shillings, and so presumably the Company could have bought at less than this price if they had had enough buyers in the far interior.

If this commercial relationship was apparently beneficial to both sides, why did it end in conflict? As has been argued above the causes of the war lay not in commercial rivalry, but in political considerations, either local and peculiar to Mlozi and his associates, or global and related to the activities of politicians and diplomats in Europe. It was, of course, the fundamental weakness of the 'commerce and Christianity' doctrine that it failed to make allowances for the fact that long distance trade in the nineteenth century in central Africa was as much a political as a commercial activity.

Finally it may be asked did not the Company by encouraging Arab traders to come into the country for the purposes of trade damage the interests of the Ngonde people? To this it may be answered that their interests had already been damaged by the earlier arrival of the first of the Arabs, including Mlozi, by the Henga, and by the raids on the Ngonde. Without the presence of the Company it is probable that they would have had even less chance of preserving their identity than they did with the assistance of the Company, and later of the British Central African Administration.

The military history of the Arab War, though dramatic, is of only marginal relevance to this history. It is, however, necessary to give an outline of its salient features in order to be able to appreciate its important political, diplomatic and commercial repercussions. The siege of the hastily constructed fort at Karonga lasted from 23rd to 28th November, 1887. For most of this time the fort was under steady fire from as many as five hundred armed men with guns. The defenders had not more than fifty guns between them, with less than thirty cartridges per gun. The fort was fired at from stockades which had been built on three sides of the fort, and between fifty and one hundred yards from it. The one thousand five hundred Ngonde refugees sheltered in pits which had been dug, on the instructions of O'Neill, in the sand on the beach which formed the east side of the fort. There were few casualties but the pos-
ition of the defenders would probably have become untenable owing to hunger, and disease following from lack of sanitation, if it had not been for the arrival of J.L. Hicoll with a reputed five thousand Nyakusa warriors provided by Makyusa and Manjiwarra.\(^1\) The Arabs were warned of their approach by the Henga from Manyole's and had withdrawn to Mpeta by the moment of their arrival. O'Neill and Fotheringham wanted to use them to launch a counter attack on Msere's stockade but after burning the village which had been occupied by Ramathan, the Nyakusa and the relieved Ngonde began to leave for the north end thus forcing Fotheringham to abandon the station.\(^2\) The whole party then withdrew to the Nesse river to the north of the Songwe from where they made a successful attack on Manyole's village which had earlier been a source of attack on the Ngonde refugees.\(^3\)

Consul Hawes and John Moir reached the north end on the 10th December, and Hawes was persuaded to lead an attack on Mlozi's stockade. This took place on 23rd December, having been delayed by the death of the Nyakusa chief, Manjiwarra.\(^4\) An estimated four thousand Nyakusa took part in the attack but they proved to be undisciplined, and more interested in loot, especially cattle, than in bringing the attack to a successful conclusion. As a consequence only a third of the village was destroyed. John Moir was wounded in the leg during the attack. Hawes seems to have been disillusioned by the comparative lack of success and advised the abandonment of the north end and the withdrawal of all the Europeans. His instructions forbade him to become involved in direct action, but he had allowed

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 95-105.
2. Ibid., pp 105-110, Fotheringham had to leave £300-400 worth of goods behind as he could not find carriers for them. Most was taken away north by the Nyakusa, and in canoes.
3. Ibid., pp 112-115; Andrew Mkonjera, 'History of the Kamanga tribe...', J.A.S., op. cit., p 232. According to Mkonjera the Ngonde pressed Fotheringham to attack Manyole before attacking Mlozi, because in the event of an unsuccessful attack on Mlozi, Manyole would be able to cut off their retreat. After the attack some of the Henga fled to Mlozi's and others returned to the Ngondi.
himself to be persuaded into leadership of the attack by John Moir, and Consul O'Neill.¹

He now expressed it as his opinion that

"it appeared an unwise step to receive distressed fugitives into the fort and that in all probability would have provoked irritation." ²

Such a view, though possibly correct in terms of his instructions, was totally contrary to the philosophy of Moir, O'Neill, Fotheringham, or Nicoll. It was decided that the area could not be abandoned and that the Company had an obligation to its Mambwe employees who would be left defenceless and to the Nyakusa and Ngonde who would look to it for assistance in the probable event of renewed Arab attacks. Fotheringham and Nicoll were left at Mweniwa's on the understanding that Moir would return with reinforcements within three months. Hawes warned Moir not to expect official support for any renewed attack.³

Hawes was anxious to leave the country for the sake of his health.⁴ O'Neill, on the other hand, was anxious to lead the new expedition.⁵ He and the Moirs seem to have hoped that Hawes would leave, giving them a free hand. He became suspicious of their intentions, and by threatening to protest to the Foreign Office against O'Neill's 'breach of all official etiquette' through intervening in his district, finally dissuaded him from taking part.⁶ His attempt to delay the Moirs' action by advising them to consult their directors had little impact; John Moir assured him that 'we have great powers invested in us.'⁷ Moir stressed the need for swift action, and the danger to the Livingstonia Mission, to the L.M.S., and to the

¹. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 114-123.
⁴. Hawes to Salisbury, 16th January, 1888, encloses Dr. J.K. Tomory to Hawes, 14th January, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
⁵. O'Neill to Salisbury, 3rd February, 1888, F.O. 84/1846.
⁶. Hawes to O'Neill, 8th February, 1888, in Hawes to Salisbury, 10th February, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
⁷. Hawes to Salisbury, 10th February, 1888, ibid.
Ngonde, and asked Hawes, if he forbade action, to stay in the country at this most dangerous time. Hawes left the country in mid-February; he appointed John Buchanan his Vice-Consul. 1

The Moirs agreed with Buchanan that he should attempt to reach a peaceful settlement with Mlosi before they took any further military action. 2 Buchanan met Mlosi south of Karonga on 20th March, 1888. Fred Moir had re-occupied the ruined Karonga station four days previously. Buchanan came to an agreement with Mlosi and the others that they would remove their stockades and withdraw to the Senga country. They were to return the next day to sign the agreement with Fred Moir, but they did not appear, and Mlosi later sent a message to say:

"We do not want war with the white men but if they want war they may come." Buchanan felt certain that they would not make peace unless they were allowed to keep their stockades which would leave them free to do what they liked with the Ngonde, and would be a blow to 'English' prestige. 3 W.P. Johnson, the very pacific U.N.C.A. missionary who acted as interpreter, did not think that 'less could have been asked of them with any hope of permanent peace..." 4 Lugard, and the Moirs, later alleged that Buchanan had prolonged the war by telling Mlosi that the Company would not have the support of H.M.G. in any attack 'inducing them to think that they had only a small isolated party to contend with, who were unsupported at home and had not the sympathy of the British nation.' 5 Buchanan replied that he had represented

1. J. Moir to Hawes, 8th February, 1888, and further correspondence between Hawes, O'Neill and Moir enclosed with Hawes to Salisbury, 10th February, 1888; also Hawes to Salisbury, 21st February, 1888, from Quelimane, F.O. 84/1883.
2. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 15th February, 1888, encloses J. Moir to Buchanan, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th February, 1888, Buchanan to Moir, 13th, 14th February, and J. and M. Moir to Hawes, 10th February, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
5. Lugard to Buchanan, 1st March, 1889, in Buchanan to Salisbury, 8th April, 1889, F.O. 84/1942; Buchanan to Salisbury, 27th August, 1889, ibid. See The Mail, 19th April, 1889, and The Times, 29th May, 1889, for similar views.
to Klosi.

"a far higher state of efficiency and fighting capacity than the events of the past year have shown that the
Company possess." 1

On the 10th April, 1888, Fred Noir led an unsuccessful attack on Msaleno’s stockade in the early moments of which he was severely wounded, his right arm being shattered. He had succeeded in setting fire to the village with some fire darts of his own invention, but the attack was ended by a counter-attack from Kopa Kopa’s stockade about half a mile away. Fred Noir left Karonga on 27th April in the care of Dr. Cross and returned directly to Britain. Fotheringham remained in charge at Karonga until the arrival of a large party under Captain F.D. Lugard and John Noir on 28th May.2

Lugard, who was suffering from severe depression after a disastrous affair in India, was travelling down the east coast of Africa in search of some action to relieve his gloom; at Mozambique he met O’Neill who sent him up to Mantyre saying that he would ‘be a Godsend to them’.3 John Noir asked him to lead the expedition which he had been preparing. Nine volunteers, or mercenaries, had been recruited by the Company’s agents in Durban, in addition to eleven of the Company’s regular staff who were available for service at the north end.4 Buchanan was reluctant to give Lugard permission to lead the expedition but eventually agreed on condition that he was asked to go by the British community in the Shire Highlands; a meeting composed mainly of members of the Mantyre Mission formally requested him to take the command, and Buchanan, relieved of some of the responsibility for the decision, gave his consent. He justified his action on the grounds that he could not prevent the expedition,

1. Buchanan to Lugard, 6th April, 1889, in Buchanan to Salisbury, 4th July, 1889, F.O. 84/1942.
 ‘That admirable company’s indent on its Durban agents for a military commander and a cannon...must surely be among the curiosities of late nineteenth century commerce.’
"troubled at what I thought might be the result of an expedition whose avowed object was fighting, carried out under his (John Neir's) command."

He judged Lugard

"qualified to keep the expedition within the limits of legal warfare and prevent it assuming an aggressive and desultory character and finally ending in disaster, and further loss of prestige to the English."

Buchanan had no doubt as to the necessity of the defeat of Mrosi for the security of the Livingstonia and Likoma missions.1

On his arrival at Karonga Lugard started to introduce something approaching military discipline and order into the Company's forces. He was surprised at the Company's informal approach to warfare. He insisted that he had found one of the staff smoking his pipe while sitting among the powder kegs on the steamer.2 He set about the improvement of the sanitation at the fort and the segregation of the European and African quarters which he regarded as essential on health grounds. He organised the Tonga, Mamba, Menge and Yao troops, (about four hundred in all) into companies under European 'officers' and attempted to institute some drill.3 The largest element in this army were Tonga from Bandawe, about one hundred and ninety of whom were brought up overland early in June by Alfred Sharpe.4 After some reconnoissance he launched his first attack on Kopa Kopa's stockade on 15th June. It proved to be considerably stronger than had been thought; Lugard himself was seriously wounded in an attempt to scale the walls. He was shot through both arms and the chest. It was decided that the stockades were impregnable to attack by rifle fire.5 John Neir left almost immediately for the coast to get a gun

1. Buchanan to Salisbury, 20th May, 1888, encloses Lugard to Buchanan 18th, 16th May, 1888; Rev. D.C. Scott and others to Lugard, 17th May, Buchanan to Lugard, 18th May, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
3. Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 177-9; Lugard to Buchanan, 10th September, 1888, in Buchanan to Salisbury, 18th September, 1888, F.O. 84/1883.
5. Lugard, The fight against the slave traders on Nyassa, The Contemporary Review, op. cit., p 340; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 168-
large enough to breach the walls. He had reached Quelimane by 26th July, and went on to Delagoa Bay.¹ Lugard stayed for a month longer to prevent all the volunteers leaving, one had been killed, two died, and all had been ill.²

After convalescence at Bandawe and Blantyre Lugard returned with John Moir to Karonga at the end of October.³ In the meanwhile Fotheringham had organised the harassment of the Arab lines of communication. It was suggested at this time that Karonga should be abandoned once again and Deep Bay occupied to prevent reinforcements reaching Mlozi. This plan was rejected but Nicoll did occupy an island at Deep Bay which commanded the crossing to Capandansaro’s.⁴

Late in November an envoy arrived from Zanzibar to attempt to reach a peace settlement. He went to stay in Kopa Kopa’s stockade, and was not seen again until after the end of the war.⁵ Early in January, 1889 the long awaited seven pound Armstrong mountain gun arrived.⁶ After some delay owing to the possibility of a peace settlement it was used for the first time against Moaleno’s and Kopa Kopa’s stockades on 21st February. It was thought to have done some damage but the gun was of such high velocity that the shells passed through the stockades without exploding, thus greatly reducing their effect.⁷

A further attack on 14th March was inconclusive, and Lugard left Karonga on the next day. He intended to go to the coast to order

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1. J. Moir to Directors, A.E.C., 26th July, 2nd August, 1888, L.B.(2)
2. Lugard, The Contemporary Review, op. cit., p 344. He described the situation at Karonga as he had left it: "Come with me into one of our reed huts, plastered with mud and thatched with grass. It is not quite proof to wind or rain. One man, perhaps, is lying at death’s door, with dysentery or jaundice, four more are ‘down with fever,’ and are vomiting close by your bedside. Two or three others are about who were only yesterday in the same state... Elsewhere they would be considered very ill... Day after day drags past."
4. Ibid., p 217.
5. Ibid., pp 219-227; the envoy who had been sent as a result of O’Neill’s view that the root of the war was to be found at Zanzibar, was eventually rediscovered at Mchota Mchota in December, 1889, ibid, pp 294-5.
6. Ibid., p 224.
reinforcements, and to Zanzibar to cable the Company in Britain to discover whether they intended to prosecute the war to the end. He reached Zanzibar where a cable was sent in a different sense from that which he had intended; as a result of this he was recalled to Britain for consultations. He never returned to Karonga. ¹

Fotheringham was left at the north end with the remaining five of the original force of twenty-four Europeans. Some of the Yao and Tonga had also been withdrawn. Both the Arabs and the Company were troubled by shortage of food, small-pox, and dysentery. Fotheringham continued to supervise attempts to cut the Arabs' supply lines, but with the reduction in the Company's force and the illness prevalent among its members, a situation of stalemate had been reached which could only have been ended by the provision of reinforcements which the Company could not afford to send. ² The stalemate was ended, or rather confirmed, by the peace settlement which was worked out by Consul Harry Johnston, and signed by the Company and the Arabs on 22nd October, 1889. According to the terms of the treaty one of the stockades on the Stevenson road was to be removed, there were to be no claims for compensation, and the Ngonde were to be allowed to return to their homes, and not to be molested. ³ The stockade was not removed, and as many of the Ngonde had already returned to cultivate their gardens under the Company's protection, the treaties amounted to a recognition of the status quo. ⁴ The ivory trade was resumed on something approaching the old scale, and the Arabs continued to deal in slaves, though less openly than before, until Johnston's assault on the stockades in December, 1895. ⁵ As a result of that attack Mlozi was captured and hanged after trial by the Ngonde chiefs under Johnston's supervision. ⁶ Fotheringham who had been at the north end continuously for six years in Africa with-

² Fotheringham, op. cit., pp 237-70.
³ Ibid., pp 277-9.
⁴ J.M. to Directors, 21st November, 1888, 8th April, 1889, L.B.(2).
⁵ Buchanan to Salisbury, 29th March, 1891, F.O. 84/2115; Lugard op. cit., Vol.I., p 164.
out leave for almost eight years was relieved at the conclusion of the war which had assumed the 'desultory character' which Buchanan had feared. Lugard, who had plans for putting an armed steamer on the lake and taking the stockades by force, was disappointed at the terms which Johnston had secured, but there was no practical alternative at that date. John Moir who in April had written:

"Much as I would like to see the end of the war, I see no honourable or advantageous way out but by carrying it through to the bitter end."

commented that it was 'an ending without éclat indeed; but we ought to be conscious that we have done our duty and saved whole tribes from the ravages of the slaver.'

The military results of the war would not have enabled the Moirs to fulfil the 'insane desire for glory' which one witness credited them with. Fred Moir had been invalided and never fully recovered the use of his arm. John Moir had been strongly advised not to go north in November 1887 on account of his health, but travelled in the next twelve months over four thousand miles between Mandela and Karonga, and the coast. In May, 1889, Dr. Bowie wrote that he had advised Moir to go home in July and November, 1888, and that

"for more than a year Mr. Moir has been working beyond his strength, and has injured...and is injuring his constitution very severely by the constant and severe strain thrown upon him."

1. Fotheringham, op. cit., p 284; Buchanan to Salisbury, 20th May, 1883, F.O. 84/1883.
3. J. Moir to Directors, A.L.C., 12th April, 1889, 19th November, 1889, L.B.(2). Johnston had facilitated the making of peace with Mosi by an agreement to subsidise the Jumbo of Nkhota Khoti. The Company were to pay him 3,000 rupees per annum 'on the understanding that the Company (as newly organised) prefers to bribe rather than fight the Arabs.' Extract from letter of Johnston to Moir, n.d. enclosed with Moir to Directors, 24th November.
4. J.A. Bain to W. Elmslie, 13th May, 1888, MS 7801. He commented 'It is strange that Fred Moir should have acted almost if not more imprudently than his brother and as a result has received probably a severer wound.'
5. Medical report by Dr. Bowie of the Blantyre Mission, with J.M. to Directors, 5th June, 1889. In May he had reported that after 19 paces his pulse rate rose from 60 to 120, J.M. to Directors, 24th May, 1889, L.B.(2).
He himself wrote with justification in July, 1889: 'I have worked as hard as my strength will allow.' They had not achieved the victory for which, as hot-blooded philanthropists, they doubtless prayed. They had brought their company to the verge of bankruptcy, but they could claim that they had preserved the Ngonde and the Nyakusa from subjugation, if not from annihilation. Though the Ngonde remember Montisi, Mandala and Chindevu with affection to the present day, it is probable that the Arab War had a greater significance which should be sought elsewhere, in the diplomatic sphere, in its influence on public opinion in Britain, and in its commercial repercussions. In several ways it may appear to be the event which, above all others, determined the way that the 'Scramble' around Lake Malawi was resolved.

On the diplomatic level the outbreak of the Arab War gave added urgency to the hunt for a solution to the problems which had long threatened the security of the British settlements on Lake Malawi, and in the Shire Highlands: the 'vexed question of the interior frontier of the Portuguese dominions', which had been so carefully shelved by both parties in the later 1870's; the related problem of the right of free navigation on the Zambesi, which would have been resolved if the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1884 had been ratified; and the question of a protectorate or charter which had become dormant in the early months of 1886.

Following treaties with France and Germany which Portugal had made in May and December, 1886, she published a map which laid claim to a continuous band of territory from the west to the east coasts. The Foreign Office, at Salisbury's instigation, pointed out that there were within this area "countries in which there are British settlements in which Great Britain takes an exceptional interest...Great Britain considers that it has now been admitted in prin-

1. J. Moir to Directors, 4th July, 1889, L.B. (2).
2. Mandala = John Moir; Montisi = L. Monteith Fotheringham; Chindevu = Fred Moir, the bearded man.
ciple by all the parties to the Act of Berlin that a claim of sovereignty in Africa can only be maintained by real occupation of the territory claimed." 1

This, the principle of 'effective occupation,' was the primary consideration which influenced Salisbury in determining his attitude to rival claims in east Africa at this time. In spite of the statement cited above 'effective occupation' was not the undisputed interpretation of the Berlin Act; Germany maintained that the principle applied only to the coast-line and that any power who had successfully asserted its claim to the coast could claim the 'hinterland' of that coast. 2 This principle, if applied to the Lake Malawi Region, would have given the southern two thirds of the lake to Portugal, and the northern third to Germany, who had agreed with Portugal to the division of their spheres of influence along the line of the Ruvuma river. 3 Salisbury never had any intention of accepting this view; but for him to be in a position to press the alternative theory it was clear that occupation had to be effectively maintained. If the Moirs had taken the advice of Consul Hawes and abandoned Karonga and the Stevenson road at the end of 1887, they would have given up any British claim to the north end of the lake, and to the Nyasa-Tanganyika plateau. They would have necessitated the withdrawal of the Livingstonia Mission from Mweni-wanda, and almost certainly of the L.M.S from the south end of Lake Tanganyika. 4 Salisbury would have been in no position to oppose the German claim to the north end of Lake Malawi which was put forward in July, 1889, if he could point only to an unsuccessful bid to occupy the area. The Moirs thought

4. Jane F. Moir (Mrs. F. Moir) A Lady's Letters from Central Africa, A Journey from Mandala, Shire Highlands, to Ujiji, Lake Tanganyika, and Back, Glasgow, 1891, p 35; see also the Pall Mall Gazette, 23rd June, 1890. They were already dependent on the Company for the transport of their missionaries, and were cut off from the east coast by the overland route from November, 1888, until early 1890 owing to the rebellion on the coast.
of their war in terms of the suppression of the slave trade, and the
defence of the Ngendo, but in functional terms they were performing
a holding operation of considerable diplomatic significance.

Lord Salisbury had been inhibited from declaring a protectorate
over the mission settlements in 1887, and again when the request was
repeated in April, 1888, by two considerations. The first of these
was the fact that there was no known mouth of the Zambezi through
which an ocean-going ship could pass; it was therefore necessary
for all goods destined for the interior to be landed on indisputably
Portuguese soil. Salisbury could not contemplate the assumption
of a protectorate access to which would be dependent on a possibly
obstructive power. The second objection was that a protectorate
would have to be paid for, and there was little possibility of get¬
ting either the Treasury or Parliament, in which the Gladstonian
Liberals were the largest party, to meet the expenses of Empire.
If these two objections could have been answered he would have de¬
clar ed the protectorate at the earliest opportunity; at no time be¬
tween 1887 and 1890 did he show any inclination to abandon what he
regarded as the legitimate interests of the Scottish missions.

- iv -

It is probable that, with or without the Arab War, a crisis
would have developed in connection with the Portuguese claim to the
Shire Highlands and the lake. The Arab War precipitated that crisis.
Beginning with an attempt early in 1888 to force the Company to
transfer the registration of its new steamer, the James Stevenson,
to a Portuguese ownership and to run it only with a Portuguese
captain, there were a series of incidents on the river which impeded
the import of goods. These would have been irritating at any time
but when the Company was attempting to sustain a war effort it could
be argued that they were dangerous.¹ An issue which occupied the

Hanna, op. cit., pp 131-2. On James Stevenson, see A.L.C. to F.O., 10th March, 1888, F.O. 84/1919, minutes by Lister
and Salisbury.
attention of the Foreign Office and the Company from 1888 to 1890 was the question of the Company’s right to import arms, and especially artillery, into the interior. The Portuguese had some excuse for raising objections to these imports as the Company had, together with the missions, previously brought pressure to bear on the authorities at Quelimane to prevent the indiscriminate supply of arms to the interior. The question of artillery for the war became an important political issue in Portugal, decisions on which were taken at Cabinet level. The request called attention to the fact that non-Portuguese were well established in the area which Portugal claimed. Salisbury recognised the Portuguese right to prevent guns being carried over land which was definitely theirs, but he was adamant in maintaining the freedom of the Zambesi, and advised the A.L.C. that if they could carry guns in through the Kongone mouth they would have his full support. The Admiralty were consulted on the matter. The Portuguese eventually gave way in November 1888 after Salisbury had warned them in very strong language that they would be held responsible for any loss of British life which could be attributed to their obstructive attitude. Their officials at Quelimane, who were always slow to respond to instructions from Lisbon, excelled themselves in March 1889 by arresting and sending for trial at Mozambique the British Vice-Consul, A.C. Ross, who was a Lakes Company employee, and had asked for permission to import some war rockets. He was charged with smuggling, but was rapidly released after telegrams to the Foreign Office and to Lisbon.

Partly as a result of the publicity which had been given in Portugal to the war, the Portuguese government turned their attention to the demonstration of the effective occupation of the region which they claimed. It was in July 1888 that Lieutenant A.M. Cardoso received his instructions for a journey to Lake Malawi to establish

a station close to the headman who had signed a treaty with another
Cardoso in 1886. This headman was a follower of Makanjira and was
driven out of his village before he could be reached, but the exped-
iton did reach the lake in December 1886 and treaties were made with
Mponda and Matapwiri. This renewed Portuguese pressure on the
mission and Company's sphere had the effect of opening a second front.
Their position was threatened by the Arabs in the north and the Port-
uguese in the south.

In August 1888 John Moir wrote from Mandala that the Portuguese
were fortunately busy with the suppression of the rebellious Bonga
family between Senna and Tete and that they were unlikely to have
time to invade the Shire Highlands, but he thought it wise to stay
in the south instead of going up to the north end; he hoped to be
able to keep the Portuguese 'at bay in one way or another until the
Arabs are driven from the road.' With either presumption or foresight
he stated that he intended to 'act (if I can) on the understanding
that north of the Ruo is a sphere of British influence.'

The importance of the Makololo as the barrier to Portuguese
expansion on the Shire has already been stressed. It was unfortun-
ate that this resurgence of Portuguese pressure should have coincided
with the death early in June 1888 of Ramakukan, who had since the
death of Chipatula in 1884 been their acknowledged paramount. There
was no obvious successor to the paramountcy and the consequence of
Ramakukan's death was to bring into the open rivalries which had been
suppressed by his personal influence. His eldest son, Kulepata, was
passed over and the chieftaincy was given to Mlauri, one of the headmen.

Mlauri was unable to assert the same authority over the Makololo
as Ramakukan had done. In the north of the Makololo area Katunga,
Mulilima, and Masea, the most important of the surviving followers
of Livingston, appear to have acted independently of him, and in
the south he was unable to control the people at the Ruo confluence
who had been followers of Chipatula and Chikusí, and who now came

2. J. Moir to Directors, 26th July, 1888, to H. Walker, 15th August,
1888, and to Directors, 16th August, 1888, L.E.(2).
3. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 5th June, 30th June, 1888, P.O. 84/1883.
under the leadership of Chikuse's brother Chitaonga. This breakdown in the unity of the Makololo endangered the position of the missions and of the Company in the Shire Highlands and on the rivers, in the event of a Portuguese advance on the Shire. It was for this reason that John Moir went down river late in 1888 to warn the chiefs against conceding anything. He was careful to have his say

"before as many of the people and headmen as possible. I tried to make it clear that it might be to the chiefs' advantage to accept Portuguese rule but not to the peoples'...Most of the chiefs promised voluntarily to consult me before doing anything. I trust that they will remain firm." 2

There were two dangers so far as the missions and the Company were concerned; one was that the Makololo might be persuaded by the Portuguese to make treaties with them; the other was that they might do something which would provide the excuse which the Portuguese had long been seeking for invasion. Their first opportunity occurred in June, 1889. The root of the trouble was the involvement in Makololo politics of A.C. Simpson, a Company employee who had been put in charge of a recently opened station at the Ruo, and M. Pettitt, an independent trader. Either or both of them were said to be plotting with Chitaonga, Chikuse's brother, to assume the chieftaincy over the Ruo people. 3 As a result of suspicions aroused by this involvement one of Mlauri's sons fired on the Lady Nyanza when she was passing Mbewe with Simpson in command. He returned down river and asked the Portuguese commander, Cardoso, who was encamped some miles below the Ruo, for assistance in sending mails overland to Mandala. 4 Cardoso apparently construed this as a request for military assistance and sent off 'secretly and hurriedly to Quel-

2. J. Moir to Directors, 14th December, 1888, L.B.(2).
3. John Buchanan was convinced that Simpson was trying to ingratiate himself with the Portuguese in the hope of getting employment with them, and that he was more than anyone responsible for the troubles on the Shire with Mlauri. He commented that if he had been manager of the Lakes Company he would not have kept Simpson in his service any longer than it took to write his dismissal.
imane asking for forces to avenge this outrage by a Portuguese subject.1 According to John Moir, Simpson resisted Cardoso's pressure to put this request in writing, but Moir himself was forced to go down to Vicenti's on the lower Zambesi to prevent a Portuguese attack. On his return up river he held a long mirandu with Mlauri, and other Makololo leaders including Katunga who supported Moir in demanding that those who fired on the Lady Nyassa be punished. Moir warned that Serpa Pinto2 with three hundred Zulus and Manouel Antonio with three thousand followers were said to have been planning to attack them 'and asked....how they would have liked that and pointed out how foolish they were to give them a chance to intervene.' Mlauri claimed that they had 'all been drunk that day' when they attacked the steamer, and promised to do his best to prevent any further attacks.3

John Moir's journey to Vicenti's had prevented the Portuguese advance for a time, but when Harry Johnston, the newly arrived Consul at Mozambique, came up river on his way to the Shire Highlands and Karonga early in August 1889 he found Serpa Pinto with seven hundred troops camped on the Shire just below the Makololo frontier about twenty miles south of the Ruo. Pinto complained of the hostility of the Makololo and spoke of forcing his way through to the lake. Johnston warned him of the consequences for Anglo-Portuguese relations of an attack on the Makololo. Pinto then withdrew to the coast leaving his troops on the Shire.4

1. J. Moir to Directors, 4th July, 1889, L.B.(2); the account of these events in E. Axelson, Portugal and the Scramble for Africa, 1875-1891, Johannesburg, 1967, is unreliable so far as the Company and the Makololo are concerned.

2. Serpa Pinto was the most distinguished of late nineteenth century Portuguese Africanists; he had crossed Africa from Angola to Mozambique and published an account of his journey in How I Crossed Africa, London, 1881. He was a leading member of the Portuguese Colonial lobby and reached the Zambesi in about April 1889 with the intention of leading a so-called scientific expedition to the south end of Lake Malawi.

3. J. Moir to Directors, 4th July, 1889, L.B.(2).

Agreement, Treaty, or arrangement with any Foreign Government except through and with the consent of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of England, &c., &c.

Done at Katunga this fourteenth day of August, 1839.

[Signatures]

Signed in the presence of

[Signatures]

We, the Undersigned, do swear that we have truly and honestly interpreted the terms of the foregoing Agreement to the Contracting Parties, in the Chinganga language.

[Signatures]

Witness to signatures:

[Signatures]
made pre-emptive treaties with the Makololo chiefs except for Mlauri who would not sign, before going on to the lake. He also left instructions with Buchanan to declare a protectorate over the Makololo and the Shire Highlands in the event of a renewed Portuguese advance. Almost immediately the Portuguese troops advanced to a point just below the Ruo and Buchanan wrote on the 19th August to Serpa Pinto declaring a British protectorate over 'the Makololo country and the Shire Hills commencing at the Ruo.'

On the 8th September the James Stevenson was stopped and searched by the Portuguese just below the Ruo. Buchanan and Moir complained that this had led Mlauri to believe that the British and Portuguese were in league, and that Moir had asked the Portuguese to come up to punish him for the attack on the Lady Nyasas.

1. Buchanan to Salisbury, 19th August, 1889, encloses Buchanan to Serpa Pinto, 19th August; Buchanan to Salisbury, 10th September 1889. According to Harry Johnston, British Central Africa, 1897, 3rd edition, 1906, pp 85-6, he had originally intended to make only treaties of friendship with the Makololo chiefs but was influenced towards leaving instructions for the declaration of the protectorate by the presence of a trader of German origins and British nationality who was trying to use the difficulty with Mlauri to get a treaty ceding sovereign rights to him personally. Johnston refers to him as 'S' but he was Eugene Sharrer, the twice bankrupt partner in the Zanzibar firm of Sharrer and Tiede, and was financed by Hamburg merchants. It was feared that he might attempt to sell his rights, if he could obtain them, to Germany or Portugal. He had some connection with Karl Wiese, another concession hunter of German origins who had established himself at the court of the Ngoni chief, Mpazeni. See Kirk to Cawston, 6th February, 1892, Cawston papers, Vol.IV. J. Moir to Directors, A.L.C., 2nd August, 1888, 2nd January, 1889, 4th July, 1889. Buchanan to Salisbury, 10th January, 1889, F.O. 84/1942; 16th March, 1890, F.O. 84/2051; 2nd February, 1891, F.O. 84/2115, with correspondence on a dispute between Buchanan and Sharrer on land claims. Johnston asked for permission to declare a protectorate in a despatch to Salisbury, 9th August, 1889, F.O. 84/1969.

2. Buchanan to Salisbury, 13th September, 1889, encloses Moir to Buchanan, 13th September; Buchanan to Salisbury, 26th September, 1889, encloses Moir to Buchanan, 25th September, Moir was demanding £500 damages for delay to the steamer for 14 days. See also J. Moir to Directors, 6th October, 11th November 1889, L.B.(2).
Buchanan and Moir negotiated protection treaties with the Makololo before Buchanan made the formal declaration of the Protectorate on the 25th of that month. They then went down stream to inform the Portuguese of this at their encampment; on their return early in October they were able to persuade Mlauri to accept the British flag which he had earlier refused. He planted this on the right bank of the Shire opposite the Portuguese encampment and left it up day and night. It was removed by the Portuguese troops causing Mlauri to complain that he had been cheated as he had been promised that the flag would prevent the Portuguese from coming. Buchanan and Moir attempted to discourage Mlauri from attacking the Portuguese but he was under heavy pressure from his headmen. He appears to have given into this on about the 8th November when he attacked some of the Portuguese at Mpassa's below the Ruo. The Makololo were easily repulsed and Mlauri took refuge on Mount Cholo. John Moir, who according to Portuguese sources had instigated the attack, commented that it was

"the most stupid thing possible. Buchanan and I tried to prevent this - but Mlauri would not stand up against his foolish headmen...He has done just what the Portuguese desired." 

Moir was right, this was the moment that Serpa Pinto had been waiting for. He had returned from the coast and immediately set in motion the invasion of the Makololo country. With the help of two armed steamers his troops advanced to Chiromo at the Ruo confluence, which they reached on about the 17th November and were at Mbewe, Mlauri's headquarters, above the Elephant Marsh by the 8th December.

1. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 7th October, 1889, F.O. 84/1942; J. Moir to Directors, 8th October, 1889, L.B.(2).
2. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 8th November, 1889, F.O. 84/1942; J. Moir to Directors, 21st October, 1889, L.B.(2).
3. J. Buchanan to Salisbury, 11th November, 1889, F.O. 84/1942; encloses declaration of war on Makololo dated 24th October, 1889, this had been sent by the Portuguese to Moir and not to Buchanan. As it is agreed that Mlauri attacked after this date it is not clear what the significance of this declaration was. See also J. Buchanan diary, 14th December, 1889.
4. J. Moir to Directors, 11th November, 1889, L.B.(2).
It was also the moment that Lord Salisbury had been waiting for. While publicly denying that the government had any responsibility for the defence of the missions and the Company in the Nyasa region he had repeatedly assured them that they could rely on his diplomatic support if they were prepared to act in their own defence. This was the most that he could promise in view of the facts that there was no possibility of getting Treasury support for military action in the area, and that there was no way that a force could be conveyed to the lake without Portuguese consent. He had been annoyed by the series of difficulties which the Portuguese had put in the way of the Lakes Company's conduct of the Arab War, and by their attempts to deny the free navigation of the Zambesi which he considered to have been guaranteed by the Berlin Conference of 1885. He was prepared to support the Lakes Company if they undertook to force the free passage of the Zambesi with an armed steamer, though he confessed in October, 1888, that he had doubts about 'declaring the river to be a highway of nations when there is only one fathom of water in it — and not always that.' The Portuguese had been persuaded to give way in principle on the introduction of arms for the Arab War after it had been pointed out that Karonga was beyond

1. Sir James Fergusson had made this point in the House of Commons on 28th February 1888 and had caused an uproar among missionary circles. He had suggested that the Missionary settlements had been made without the 'concurrence' of government. Nothing could have been better calculated to provoke a reaction. E.g., Waller to Ewing, 9th March, 1888, and Waller to G. Smith, 12th April, 1888, MS 7873. A meeting was held in the Westminster Palace Hotel on the 24th April of members of both Houses interested in Nyasa, it was well attended. A similar meeting was held in Manchester. A deputation of all those interested saw Lord Salisbury on the 27th April, 1888; he repeated promises which he had made the year before on the free navigation of the Zambesi, and the prevention of the Portuguese assuming a protectorate. He also made it clear that he would be glad if the missions and Company would defend themselves. See L.M.H. 26th July, 1888, MS 7912; and J. McMurtrie to Sir J. Cuthbertson, 29th February, to D.C. Scott, 15th February, 14th March, 12th April, 10th May, 1888, in MS 7534.


the latitude of the Revuma, their declared northern frontier.  
While some of the officials in the Foreign Office were still prepared to negotiate with Portugal on the basis of recognition of her claims to the Shire Highlands in exchange for a guarantee of the security of the missions, Salisbury had come to the conclusion late in 1888 that "we shall get nothing out of this government," and had told his ambassador in Berlin to warn the German Government that "if Portugal interferes with the Lake Nyassa region we should be forced to take some one of the Portuguese possessions in India or the Atlantic coast as a material guarantee."  
The news of the departure of Serpa Pinto for Africa had prompted him to divert Harry Johnston, whom he had already appointed Consul at Mozambique to Lisbon in a last effort to find the basis for an agreed settlement, but he had rejected the plan which had been agreed between Johnston and the Portuguese Colonial Minister, Barros Gomes.  
He had told Lord Harrowby, one of the missions' Nyasa lobby in June 1889 that in view of the fact that they had recently climbed down on a number of issues including the arrest of Vice-Consul Ross it would probably be best to postpone a projected lecture to Portugal 'until they become troublesome again - which will probably be by the time you come back,' doubtless from the grouse moors.

The invasion of the Shire proved to be the occasion which he had foreseen. He had been considering for some time the use of strong-arm tactics on Portugal; his reason for this approach seems to have been a conviction that public opinion there would not permit the government to make the concessions which he required through negotiation, and that the government was prepared to exploit its vulnerability to shame Britain into generosity. It was necessary

4. Oliver, op. cit., 146-151.
for him to settle with Portugal before going on to what he considered to be the much more important settlement of African boundaries with Germany, and he concluded that the Portuguese government would ‘not be sorry for an earnest of British determination.’\(^1\) He calculated that an ultimatum would, while painful, be quick and relieve the Portuguese government of the blame which would undoubtedly have been attached to negotiated concessions. Following telegrams from Buchanan and the acting Consul at Mozambique, Salisbury set in motion his elaborately planned ultimatum - a series of telegrams accompanied by naval movements - which secured the withdrawal of the Portuguese troops from the Shire and determined the present southern boundary of Malawi.\(^2\)

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There were outstanding boundary disputes with Portugal in other areas of southern Africa, such as Matabele-Mashonaland, and Lourenco Marques, it was the problem of the Scottish settlement in Malawi that was Salisbury’s primary concern. This is made clear by his reaction to the proposals which Harry Johnston brought back with him from Lisbon in April, 1889. Johnston had prophesied in August, 1883, that

> "if our government only grants some measure of support to the British agencies, commercial and evangelical, which have obtained such a footing in the Lake region, our possessions in South Africa may be linked some day to our sphere of influence in Eastern Africa and the Egyptian Sudan by a continuous band of British dominion. The day will come, let us hope, when the African Lakes Company will shake hands with the British East Africa Company on the shores of Tanganyika." \(^3\)

In order to fulfil his dream of painting the map red from Cape to

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2. This interpretation is largely based on the account given by Lady G. Cecil in Vol.IV of her father’s life, pp 223-70, and on the account in Hamsond, op. cit., pp 100-132, though it differs from the latter.

Cairo it was essential to break through the Portuguese claim for a continuous band of territory from the west to the east coasts. He was therefore pleased to have been able to persuade Barros Gomes to concede this in principle in exchange for the Shire Highlands and the southern end of Lake Malawi, areas which, Gomes was certain, no Portuguese parliament would ever yield. Salisbury was not so pleased; he commented

"I do not wish to have the appearance of putting pressure on these Scotch people to abandon what they believe to be their rights..."

He was equally unimpressed by the Portuguese concession of free navigation on the Zambesi, he did not think that it was a concession since they had, in his view, no right to withhold it in the first place. He sent Johnston to Scotland to attempt to persuade the missions to accept his plan, while at the same time making it clear to one of their leading representatives in the House of Lords that he did not intend that they should give way, and that a demonstration of their opposition would be diplomatically useful. For Salisbury the safeguarding of the rights of the missions was more important than a pattern of colour on the map. If his main preoccupation had been, as Johnston's was, the Cape to Cairo route, or as Rhodes' was, south of the Zambesi, he could have accepted the Portuguese proposals, but he chose to reject them.

Although Salisbury made it clear that a demonstration of protest would be welcome there is no need to suggest, as some writers have, that he was a puppet-master who manipulated public opinion to suit his own diplomatic ends. If he had agreed to the surrender of the Shire Highlands and the Blantyre Mission to Portugal he could reasonably have been accused of breaking his promises to the missions.

4. W.P. Livingstone, A Prince of Missionaries, London, 1931, the peer in question was Lord Balfour of Burleigh.
5. It should perhaps be pointed out that Salisbury's rejection of the Johnston - Gomes proposals was probably made on the assumption that it was extremely unlikely that the Portuguese Cortes would ratify such concessions.
The fact that he had made the promises in the first place was due to the effectiveness of the pressure group in which the African Lakes Company played the leading and most vociferous part. The Scottish Churches had already been circulating a petition for a protectorate, which was eventually signed by eleven thousand ministers and elders, fills five volumes of the Foreign Office records, and was justifiably described on its presentation as 'the voice of Scotland.'

This was not something which Salisbury, the politician with a minority government maintained only by the Irish vote, could afford to disregard. There is not space here to dilate on the role of the pressure group or of the press in the determining of British foreign policy in the late nineteenth century. Salisbury himself was certainly conscious of their power. While the final settlement with Portugal was being worked out he told the ambassador in Lisbon to

"point out to them that I have a public opinion as exacting and powerful as their own, and that I shall not be allowed, even if I wished to do so, to sacrifice the rights of British Companies." 2

John Moir in Africa was equally conscious of the importance of this pressure; he implored his Directors to 'spare no pains or agitation to prevent anything above the Ilwanza from becoming Portuguese.' 3

The Directors of the Company can not be accused of dragging their feet in this matter. They sent a continual stream of information and exhortation to the Foreign Office in London; in the two years 1888 and 1889 alone their representatives were received there at least six times, and they sent at least twenty-eight letters and telegrams, often providing news of the latest developments in Africa before the government's own representatives. 4

The Foreign Office sent them at least twenty-two letters; Sir Perey Anderson and Sir Philip Currie wrote seven memoranda on their affairs in addition to innumerable

1. W.P. Livingstone, op. cit. pp 51-2. The petition is filed in F.O. 84, April, 1889.
4. A.L.C. Minutes, 1888 and 1889, passim. The Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions also kept up a fairly steady pressure on the Foreign Office but in terms of volume of information the Company was considerably more active.
John Bull, "Look here, my little friend, I don't want to hurt your little feelings.—But, come off that flag!!!
contributions on the subject, and influential journals such as Blankwood's Magazine, The Contemporary Review, Chamber's Journal, and Murray's Magazine, published articles.\(^1\) By the middle of 1889 the Company was an institution which could be referred to without introduction or explanation,\(^2\) while Cecil Rhodes was still unknown, or at the most 'rather a pro-Boer M.P. in South Africa, I fancy.'\(^3\)

It was the Arab War which created the first awareness of the Company and the missions outside their own immediate circle and prepared a wider public to take an interest in their future welfare.\(^4\) This bore fruit in the near hysterical response which followed the news of Serpa Pinto's advance on the Shire, and accompanied Salisbury's ultimatum. The crowning glory was Sir John Tenniel's Punch cartoon depicting the 'insult to the flag' at the Company's Katunga's station.\(^5\)

The decision that the Portuguese troops should withdraw below the Ruo was made in Lisbon as a result of an ultimatum from Lord Salisbury which was in turn the result of what he considered to be

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2. This is made clear in a notice in The Pall Mall Gazette, 29th May, 1889, which gives the first hint of a plan for a new Chartered Company for central Africa. Of the companies which were thought likely to be included in it, the A.L.C. took pride of place.
4. This point was made explicitly by Lord Aberdeen in the House of Lords on the 25th March, 1889, Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol. CCCXXXIV, col. 660, where he stated: 'There is no doubt a very large amount of interest has been attracted in this country towards affairs in the Nyassa territory, and I think this interest has been extended and increased owing to the fact that an association known as the African Lakes Company has been carrying on operations in that region. That company had its origins in Scotland and is chiefly equipped by Scotchmen.' Lord Salisbury commented that: 'The enterprise is one which we all regard with the greatest sympathy, and the progress of which will be advantageous not only to the progress of this country, but to the civilization of those who dwell in those regions.'
5. Punch, 15th January, 1890.
the demands of British public opinion. While this interpretation is almost certainly correct it appears to leave little significance to the activities of John Buchanan and John Moir on the Shire. This provides an example of the way in which the slowness and unreliability of communication between Africa and Europe frequently led to situations where the agents of an imperial power were acting and taking decisions in very dangerous circumstances in the knowledge that their actions might already have been made irrelevant by diplomatic negotiation. This knowledge did not however make the position which these agents found themselves in any easier, nor did it absolve them from the need to make decisions. So far as Buchanan and Moir were concerned they were facing in the latter months of 1889 a Portuguese invasion which, if allowed to continue unchecked, might lead to the destruction of over ten years work. John Moir was convinced that

"if they succeed in getting acknowledgement from Britain of their claim of conquest...the peace and security will be less than in the past and that a heavy blow will have been struck at the prosperity of our Company and the progress of the country." 1

Buchanan pointed out that

"of course if England chooses to assert her right the mere fact of Portugal planting a flag will go for little, but it always tends to weaken our hands." 2

After Klauri had shot his bolt and, ignoring all advice, attacked the Portuguese, Buchanan had little confidence in the steadiness under pressure of the Makololo. When Masea panicked and threatened to give way unless Buchanan himself drove the Portuguese from Mbeve he commented that this had confirmed him in an opinion that he had long held:

"viz; that the natives in this country would sell themselves to the highest bidder or the strongest power without any respect whatever to after result. I do verily believe that had I not arrived here at the time I did arrive the Makololo chiefs would have accepted the Portuguese flag. The people themselves do not want the Portuguese but with strong pressure brought to bear upon them they would all surrender." 3

1. J. Moir to Directors, 13th December, 1889, L.B.(2).
2. J. Buchanan diary, 19th December, 1889.
3. Ibid., 13th December, 1889.
The strategy that Moir and Buchanan chose to adopt in the face of the Portuguese invasion was that of ensuring that the Makololo chiefs were kept out of the hands of the Portuguese and were thus unable to cede their territories. Buchanan's view was that if he could get the Makololo chiefs

"to keep away from their villages and not to accept any flags the mere planting of flags will not be much... It is a game that two can play at any day." 1

Buchanan himself was at Zomba when Mbewe was captured and the Portuguese reached Masea's village three miles below the Company's Katunga's station. John Moir was at Katunga's and was able to persuade the three most important chiefs in the neighbourhood, Masea, Katunga, and Muliilima to withdraw into the hills above Katunga's. He promised to compensate them for losses sustained as a result of abandoning their villages. 2 On Buchanan's return to the river the Portuguese withdrew to Mbewe and Katunga went back with Moir to Blantyre. 3

When Buchanan returned to Zomba at the end of December the Portuguese advanced once more towards Katunga's. Moir was down at the river and this time succeeded in getting Masea and Muliilima to leave their villages and retire with him to Mandala. 4 It was on the 2nd January 1890 that the Portuguese formally took possession of Katunga's, hauling down the Union Jack to the accompaniment of a twenty-one gun salute from the pole which Buchanan had erected ten days previously; the salute was repeated as the Portuguese flag was raised. They also hauled down the red ensign which flew with the Company's house flag at its station. The three agents who had been left in charge refused to accept the flag and handed in a written protest. 5 Meanwhile at

1. J. Buchanan diary, 12th December.
2. J.M. to Directors, 13th December, 1889, L.B.(2); Buchanan diary, 9th-12th December, 1889; see also Buchanan to Salisbury, 11th 23rd, 24th December, 1889, F.O. 84/1942.
3. Buchanan diary, 10th, 11th December, 1889; J.M. to Directors, 13th December, L.B.(2).
4. Buchanan diary, 2nd January, 1890; J.M. to Directors, 10th January, 1890.
5. Buchanan diary, 3rd, 4th January, 1890; quoting accounts of Wilson and Atwell, A.L.C. agents at Katunga's. Buchanan had raised the flag on 22nd December, see diary. See also Buchanan to Salisbury, 5th January, 1890, enclosing C. Wilson to Buchanan 2nd January, 1890, F.O. 84/2021.
Blantyre Buchanan was seriously considering armed resistance in the event of an attack on the settlement there. The difficulty was that the Portuguese controlled the river and it would be "hardly possible to do anything without the assurance of support from home as there are too few of us here to form a Republic and even then we should still have to face the difficulty of obtaining supplies." 1

Fortunately the Portuguese did not advance beyond Katunga's and Buchanan was not called upon to 'nail the colour to the mast and defy them to do their best.' 2 John Moir felt that

"the chiefs could not have behaved better than they have done. At our invitation they have come up here and are living at Mandala and Blantyre...quietly waiting till our 'words' in the matter shall have reached our Queen and she shall command the Portuguese to retire." 3

They withdrew from Katunga's on the 8th February, and from the north bank of the Ruo at Chiromo on the 12th March, leaving their flags flying behind them. 4 With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to see that it would have made no difference to the eventual outcome if the three Makololo chiefs whom Moir and Buchanan so carefully protected had ceded their territories to the Portuguese. Salisbury's ultimatum was a response to Buchanan's telegram of 11th November, and was set in motion before the capture of Katunga's village and store. 5 Moir and Buchanan were not themselves in the possession of this information, they could do little more than pray that "Britain will not throw the Makololo overboard to some 'policy' or other but manfully insist on Portugal's withdrawal." 6 They were doing their best to maintain those limits of 'effective occupation' which, at the Ruo in

1. Buchanan diary, 6th January, 1890.
2. Ibid., 14th December, 1890.
3. J. Moir to Directors, 10th January, 1890, L.B.(2).
4. J.M. to Directors, 26th February, 1890; Buchanan diary, 9th February, 7th and 12th March, 1890; see also Buchanan to Salisbury, 26th February, 11th March, 16th April, 10th May, 2nd June, 1890, F.O. 84/2021. The flag was raised again on 7th March to a 21 gun salute. Katunga himself died on 27th May, 1890. Buchanan had applied for £1,311 damages for the Makololo who had left their homes; this included the value of crops and of 116 guns and 43 canoes.
6. J. Moir to Directors, 10th January, 1890.
the south as on the Stevenson road in the north, were to form the boundaries of new and still existing states.

The Arab War, and the campaign for the declaration of a British protectorate or sphere of influence, raised once again the question of administration and the possibility of a charter. It was always clear that the government would be extremely reluctant to undertake anything which committed it to the expenditure of money in central Africa; it was this knowledge that induced the Company to begin thinking in terms of a charter once again, rather than the burning ambition attributed to it by Harry Johnston 'that Moir I be crowned king of Nyassaland.'¹ The Directors of the Lakes Company never had any illusions as to the prospects of combining administration with their commercial operations. The struggle that they had to break even on the latter after ten years, together with their experience of the great expenses involved in the Arab War led them to be almost certain that the Company could not carry on the administration and make a profit. They were, however, prepared to consider a charter if this was the only way of preventing the area from being divided between Portugal and Germany. Dr. Charles Cameron, an M.P. for Glasgow, and a friend of the missions asked Sir James Fergusson late in February, 1888, if the Foreign Office were aware that the Company

"if empowered by Charter to enter into alliance with friendly tribes and assisted by Government, is prepared to equip and maintain an armed police force among the friendly tribes on Lake Nyassa, and to place a gunboat on that lake for the suppression of the rapidly increasing slave trade on its shores...." ²

It does not appear that this was a serious application; it was more probably an attempt to sound the government on their attitude to the

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¹ Johnston to Weatherly, (Secretary, E.S.A. Company), 3rd March, 1892, Salisbury, CT/1/16/4/1.
² Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol.CCCXXII, cols. 1648-9, 28th February, 1888. Sir James Fergusson replied that the government were not 'in a position to confer administrative power over a district which is not under their control,' and stated that he had no knowledge of the Company's power to protect life and property.
Aral War — it received a negative response. The Company had simultaneously been sounding General Strauch of the Congo Free State administration and a 'gentleman in Germany interested in East African affairs', possibly Karl Peters. The latter were no more than informal consultations but caused some consternation to Sir Percy Anderson and to Horace Waller.

The Directors did however continue to give their attention to the subject. As might be expected from the analysis of their commercial principles attempted in an earlier chapter they were agreed that any administration should be as cheap as possible; this meant in effect that it should interfere as little as possible with the status quo. So far as it can now be reconstructed it makes an illuminating comparison with the system of administration proposed and eventually carried out by Harry Johnston the guiding principle of which he declared to be 'divide et impera.' John Stephen proposed 'the creation of an African State,' to be governed by 'a mixed council of natives and Europeans.' James Stewart of Lovedale agreed that this would be necessary as it was unlikely that the chiefs would consent to the setting up at first 'of a government even in an informal sort of way among the people.' He felt certain that in order to avoid later conflicts there must be agreement with the chiefs on the outlawing of certain practices which British members of administration could not tolerate. He mentioned particularly: slave trading; slave raiding; poison ordeals; witch-craft, and certain punishments, Change was bound to be slow; it could be brought about partly by the power of the Gospel, by education, and by consultation, but it would be hastened by the provision of a strong armed force for this was

2. H. Waller to Dr. G. Smith, 14th April, 1888, MS 7373.
3. K.H. Johnston in a memorandum to the Directors of the B.S.A. Company on 'The Administration of British Central Africa by a Chartered Company,' 17th July, 1890, printed copy enclosed with Johnston to Salisbury, 7th October, 1890. In this he stated that the 'general policy to be followed should be divide and rule—divide et impera — though stopping short of incitement to civil war.'
4. Dr. J. Stewart to J. Stephen, 19th July, 1888, answering a letter of Stephen's which is missing, Salisbury.
5. Ibid.
'the power that impresses an African.' While supporting the idea of a mixed council he was clear that this would mean that 'ultimately the white men become the real rulers of the country.' He spoke of the benefits which had been conferred on India by 'John Company' and envisaged the gradual extension of the Lakes Company's administration along similar lines. He felt that the main arguments in favour of the formation of a state were that the Company was in the country, had gained the confidence of a large section of the population, and had done so much of the preliminary work that they were practically in a stronger position than Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Company.\footnote{1} \footnote{2} \footnote{3}

John Moir was pressing at the same time for an application for a charter in the hope that this 'might hasten the declaration of a sphere of British influence.' He complained that Sir Percy Anderson had made promises of help in 1885 but that they had been prevented from undertaking administration then by

"the suspicion of Mr. Scott and Dr. Rankin who would not face the difficulties likely to occur, (and) which have now shaken us so severely,"

In a long letter written in October 1889 he outlined his plans for the administration of the country. He was opposed to the

"buying up of the Sovereign Rights of the chiefs, as has been done, I understand, on the Congo, not so much because it appears to me an unnecessary expenditure of capital, as because the subsequent relations with the European rulers and administrators would, I think, be unsatisfactory. The natives are, on the whole, a thoroughly law-abiding people, who are at present satisfactorily ruled at a minimum cost by their chiefs and headmen. Here is a large firm basis to build upon; and I strongly believe that the Company will secure efficiency and economy by disturbing the existing state of affairs as little as possible. Still less would I advise anything approaching the Military Occupation lately attempted by the German East African Company.

I would rather urge the very greatest caution in

\footnote{1} J. Stewart to J. Stephen, 19th July, 1888, \textit{op. cit.} \footnote{2} J.M. to Directors, A.L.C., 8th September, 1888, L.D,(2). \footnote{3} \textit{Ibid.}, 21st November, 1888.
assuming administration where it is not desired; for unless we retain the good-will and trust of the natives, already so largely acquired, the force that the Company will possess may become a source of weakness rather than of strength. And I would impose no direct taxation at first.

I believe that the policy I recommend would be efficient yet inexpensive; that the Company would thus slowly but surely acquire a very strong hold on all the country, would maintain peace, and become a backbone to the detached tribes, (and) would be more and more called in to assume direct control...

'I would look upon our commercial dealings with the natives as one of our very best means of keeping in touch with them, and of securing a paramount influence over the tribes....'

He thought that it would be necessary to have a gunboat on the Shire and another on Lake Malawi, together with a well-armed, land force for the defence of the Company and its allies; but he felt that such a force

"though kept constantly well drilled, should, in ordinary times, be fully occupied in peaceful work in building, transport etc., and...in constructing strong defensible forts on the Tanganyika road, to form an effective barrier against the Arabs. The great bulk of the men would need...to be recruited from the natives here. A nucleus of Zulus or Basutos would certainly make the creation of such a force quicker and easier. But such natives suffer nearly, or quite as much, as Europeans from fever. I would suggest, therefore, that merely a nucleus of foreign natives be employed." 1

John Moir was genuinely shocked by the plan for the administration which Harry Johnston produced in July 1890. 2 It envisaged the annual expenditure of £32,000 in the new protectorate. This was as much as the total capital of the Lakes Company raised to that date and the salary of £2,500 which Johnston proposed for himself as Commissioner was nearly ten times the sum that the Moirs had allowed themselves. Although Johnston himself was confident that this administration would soon pay for itself and would be showing a profit in ten

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2. Memorandum, 17th July, 1890, op. cit.
years Moir was certain that the country could not finance such a structure without causing hardship to the people. He felt that Johnston’s scheme

"would mean a thorough revolution in the Company’s actions. The Company has consistently tried to improve the condition of the natives and has found in so doing its own profit and advantage. As I trace Johnston’s scheme in my imagination I seem to see the Company engaged in one great struggle, ever vainly endeavouring to support a huge system that would crush its very life out, or else leave it powerless for the good it could otherwise do. I believe in the administration of the country through the native chiefs and headmen by means of constant contact with honest Christian traders. You should send out as soon as possible some better educated men to put those there already on their feet. This would tend to raise the standard all round...Otherwise the old lines would not serve badly to extend, and run upon." 1

John Moir’s opposition to direct taxation was based on his knowledge of the state of the economy and on his conviction that it would be impossible without resort to the ‘German’ methods which he deplored to collect any tax from the people who were entirely without currency and mainly without cloth. He imagined that a minimal administrative structure could be supported by the profits from the ivory trade which he hoped by the institution of regular markets in the interior and the payment of a higher price to wrest from the Arab traders; by the extension of the Company’s plantations and the encouragement of independent planters, and by taxation on imports. 2 While he was keen to encourage planters and industrial missions he did not think that the country was suitable for white colonisation and insisted that Europeans were wanted only to direct. 3 The fundamental difference between Moir and Johnston’s views was over their assessment of the scale of administration which the country could


*I presume the country is not suited for colonisation*

*Not for white colonisation. We only want white men to direct.*
support, and over the speed with which it was to be introduced. Johnston's contention that an administration on the scale he proposed would pay for itself within ten years was wildly optimistic and bore no relation to the then state of the economy, a subject about which John Moir was considerably better informed. The history of the protectorate under Johnston was to show that even starting with a much less grandiose apparatus than he envisaged in 1890, he was unable to raise the revenue to meet his expenditure, and was compelled to introduce a level of direct taxation which, besides being undesirable in concept, was also more demanding than was reasonable.¹

The commercial history of the Lakes Company in this period clearly influenced both the directors and the managers in their inclination towards the slow and gradual inauguration of a minimal administration relying as far as possible on existing institutions. The decisive factor was of course the Arab War. This had three important commercial consequences: it closed the market for ivory at the north end of Lake Malawi which had almost certainly been the Company's greatest single source of profit in the three years before the outbreak; it called for much additional expenditure on men and arms; and it made necessary the diversion of the Company's meagre staff and steamer resources almost exclusively to its conduct, at the expense of the Company's other trading and transport commitments. The war itself was estimated to have cost £12,000,² but this made no allowance for the losses which were incurred due to the break in the normal activities of the Company. It was thought to have turned a probably large profit on the Karonga account for 1887 into a loss of £560,³ to have cost £8,400 during 1888,⁴ and to have contributed to a loss for the years 1888 and 1889 combined of £10,083.⁵ It was clear that

¹. See below, Chapter VI.
². J. Stewart, draft letter to The Times, 20th January, 1891, Salisbury.
⁴. Ibid., 13th December, 1888.
⁵. Weatherley, (Secretary, B.S.A. Company), Memorandum on the Financial Position of the A.L.C., 19th August, 1892, Salisbury, CT/1/11/5/1.
military operations and profitable commercial activities could not easily be combined.

At the high point of the war in May and June 1888 there were twenty-six Europeans at Karonga of whom three were volunteers and the remainder employed by the Company. Of the latter thirteen were members of the staff on the usual five year contracts and ten were mercenaries who had been recruited by the Company's Durban agents. As the total staff on the outbreak of the war had amounted to less than thirty there had been a large increase in the number of men employed while many men had been called away from their usual occupations. The number of men at Karonga was gradually reduced as a result of illness, death, dismissal and desertion until at the conclusion of the war there were less than half a dozen staff there, but this reduction was accompanied by a reduction in the total number of staff so there was little easing in the shortage in other parts of the Company's business.

In view of the strain which the war put upon the staff and the steamers it is surprising that they were able to do anything else at all during these two years. Work continued on the coffee plantation at Mandala and considerable building operations were undertaken there which extended the house and store into a fortified square.


2. J.M. explained that of 25 men employed by the Company at the beginning of 1888 10 had left and none had been replaced by May, 1889, J.M. to Directors, A.L.C., 16th May 1889. In a typical letter to the Directors of 8th April 1889, he reported that Stewart had been invalided with 'incipient phthisis', Hector was suffering from 'shattered nerves' and must leave. T. Morrison would have to leave immediately, and Fred Morrison was recovering well from dysentery but was still very weak. Four of the Company's employees died during 1888 and 1889, one of wounds and three from the effects of the strain of the Arab War.

3. J.M. to Directors, A.L.C., 8th September, 1888, L.B. (2). At the same time Noir was attempting to organise mineral prospecting and formed a Nyassa Gold Syndicate, with Alfred Sharpe and a Polish prospector, A. Antonieski, (later known as Austin) who claimed to have found gold near Bandawe. This syndicate formed the basis of the Scottish Exploration Company, which was registered in Edinburgh in July 1889. It had a capital of £2,000 and was later sold to have been founded mainly with the object of preventing Antonieski from bringing in the Portuguese which he had threatened to do. Two of the men employed in the defence of Karonga, Figott who died and Rolfe who was wounded had been employed in the first place as prospectors. See J.M. to Directors, 16th August 1888, 15th January 1889, L.B. (2). See also Scottish Exploration Company file, no.18/2 2nd July 1889, Companies Registry, George Street, Edinburgh; and A.L.C. minutes, 24th 25th February 1891.
ably the greatest single work undertaken at this time was the transport and construction on the upper Shire at Matope of the new lake steamer the *Domira*. She had been ordered in 1887, and reached the Kongone mouth of the Zambezi in parts in about June 1888. She was 84 ft. long, could steam at 9 m.p.h., could carry 18 tons of cargo and weighed 65 tons. She was more than twice as heavy as the Charles Janson which had been put on the lake in 1885 and posed John Moir with the biggest transport problem that he had had to face since the transport of the Good News.¹ He found it very difficult to get porters owing to the difficult shapes and weights of the parts and had to rely on the Tonga who had been brought down to the Shire Highlands, on tenants on the Mandala estate, and on three ox waggons which he had imported specially.² The work of construction also proved to be very difficult and was delayed by the illness of three of the engineers who worked on her, all of whom had to leave the country.³ The last of the parts reached Matope in January 1889, she was launched in August and made her maiden voyage in November 1889 in time to bring Harry Johnston back south from his journey to Tanganyika in January 1890. Her arrival on the lake was timely as the Ilala, after fifteen years' service was worn out by the strain of the war, was badly in need of new engines, and after causing considerable delays had finally broken down in the same November.⁴

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¹ F. Morrison to F. D. Lugard, 29th September 1888, Rhodes House, Brit. Emp. s. 71. Morrison had returned to Scotland in March, 1887 to supervise the construction of the steamer, its dismantling shipping to the Kongone and rebuilding at Matope. See also J.M. to G. Cawston, testimonial on F. Morrison, 26th February 1890, L.B. 2. J.M. to Directors, 8th September, 1888, 21st November 1888, 15th January 1889. Several hundred men were said to be coming from Lake Shirwa to assist in the transport of the parts. By the 15th January 1889, 15 of 20 draught oxen had died of tsetse on their way to Matope.

² J.M. to Directors, 11th November, 1889, L.B. (2).

³ J.M. to Directors, 19th November, 1889, L.B. (2); Johnston to Salisbury, 1st February, 1890, F.O. 84/2051; F. Morrison to J. Buchanan, 16th January 1890, with Buchanan to Salisbury, 27th January 1890, F.O. 84/2021. Morrison pointed out that 'for many years the A.L.C. have had their work hindered by the small carrying power of their first lake steamer, the Ilala, whose accommodation was also most deficient.'
On the lower Shire too there had been difficulties with the steamers. These were caused by the first onslaught of a problem which was to become increasingly serious almost every year from then on. The level of the lake and the river, which was already lower than it is now, began to fall to the point at which navigation became difficult and on the higher reaches of the lower Shire impossible. The James Stevenson which had been launched at the Kongone in July 1887 was capable of carrying 30 tons and was an infinite improvement on the Lady Hyassa but owing to the lowness of the river was involved in two serious accidents in her first six months operations. She was also extremely difficult to steer owing to her size and shallow draught. According to John Moir she needed to be steered by men of 'strong firm nerve' - an alarming comment from a man who was reputed to be without fear. The Lady Hyassa was sunk in the Morambala Marsh in August 1888 and was thought to be beyond salvage; Fred Morrison, the ingenious engineer who had earlier raised the steel boat, the Herza, which had been sunk off Bandawe, succeeded in raising her and she was running again in November, though badly in need of a new hull. The inward freight rate continued to be £20 a ton from Quelimane to Mandala which John Moir regarded as 'low enough for the broken up nature of the voyage and too low in years of extra difficulty.' He was reluctant to increase the rates owing to the possibility of competition from Eugene Sharrer, a twice bankrupt German trader and land speculator, who had begun to import some goods by boats and sell them at prices which Moir thought must be subsidised.

1. J.M. to Directors, 26th July, 1888, 21st February, 4th July, 1889, L.B.(2). Moir felt that the fall in the lake and the rivers was accounted for by the very poor rains, 'without the rash statement that the Lake Districts are in the process of desiccation.' He was told by Katunga, the Makololo chief, that when they had first come into the country there were good rains and much mapira, and that there would be good rains in the next year, 1890.
2. J.M. to Directors, 6th June, 1889, L.B.(2).
3. Ibid.
4. F. Morrison to Lugard, 29th September, 1888, and J.M. to Directors 11th November, 1889, op. cit., and 8th October, 1888.
5. J.M. to Directors, 19th August, 1889, L.B.(2).
by his backers, a firm of Hamburg merchants.\(^1\)

The shortage of staff showed itself most extremely in the accounting side of the business; the book-keeper proved incapable of working without supervision and John Moir had to do most of the work himself; he finished the accounts for 1887 in June 1889 and the accounts for 1888 in December of that year.\(^2\) The situation grew worse from 1891 when the staff were fully employed keeping up with the current accounts and were unable to cope with the back-log. In August 1892 they were still two years behind and it was not until late in 1893 that they were up to date.\(^3\)

It is uncertain how the loss of over £10,000 in the years 1888 and 1889 was financed. About £7,000 had been subscribed in August 1887 but at least £3,000 of this must have been spent on the purchase and shipment of the Domira and her construction on the lake.\(^4\) Another £2,500 was subscribed to the Nyassa Anti-Slavery and Defence Fund which was launched by the directors in September 1888. It had been hoped to raise £10,000 by this means

"for the purpose of organising a small band of experienced and efficiently equipped men to undertake the task of repelling the Arab aggressors," but the notion of a commercial company appealing for funds on a charitable basis was unusual and the appeal was not a success.\(^5\) A further £1,500 was subscribed on capital account during 1888 bringing the nominal subscribed capital to over £31,000 - there was also an overdraft of more than £1,000.\(^6\) An approximate balance of the Company's accounts drawn up in October 1888 showed an excess of assets over liabilities of £273.\(^7\) The value of the stock of goods in Africa remained almost static at £9,931 at the end of 1886 and £11,192 in December 1888.\(^8\) At the same time remittances from Africa fell away

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2. J.M. to Directors, 6th June, 13th December, 1889, and to W. Ewing 27th September, 1889, ibid.
3. Weatherley memorandum, August, 1892, op.cit.
5. A.L.C. minutes, 11th September, 1888, with printed prospectus.
7. A.L.C. Minutes, 12th October.
8. Ibid., 9th August, 1889; J.M. to Ewing, 27th September, 1890, L.B.(2).
dramatically owing to the interruption in the ivory trade and the impossibility of developing any new business. The Company was not quite bankrupt, but it was clear that there would have to be a large injection of new capital if the business was to be put onto a sound footing, and the war brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

This need was emphasised by the encouragement which was given by Lord Salisbury to the missions and the Company to defend themselves, and by his indication to the Company that he would give diplomatic support to any attempt to demonstrate the free navigation of the Zambesi by the entry of an armed vessel from the Kongone, or any other branch of the river delta. From October 1883 onwards the Company was contemplating some action of this sort to ensure the continued supply of arms and equipment for the war.

At about the same date A.L. Bruce, son-in-law of Livingstone, nephew of John Moffat, a share-holder in the Lakes Company since 1887, and a founder of I.B.E.A., met Cecil Rhodes, the young diamond millionaire, at the Cape. Rhodes had earlier in the year defeated Barnato in his battle for control of the Kimberley mines and was turning his attention and the resources of de Beer's to the execution of his long contemplated drive into Matabeleland which he expected would be followed by the acquisition of 'the balance of Africa' at least as far as the Stevenson road. It is probable that it was at this meeting that Rhodes first began to consider the absorption of the African Lakes Company as a means of extending his influence to the north of the Zambesi and gaining control of the lakes route and the Stevenson road. He came to London in March 1889 to organise the

2. A.L.C. Minutes, 1st October, 3rd October, 7th November, 1888.
4. J.G. Hookhart and C.M. Woodhouse, Rhodes, London, 1963, p 158, quoting Rhodes to Rudd, August, 1888: 'If we get Matabeleland, we shall get the balance of Africa.'
unification of the companies interested in Bechuanaland and Matabeleland, and the application for a charter over the area to the south of the Zambesi. On his arrival he wrote to Bruce to inform him that "now is the time to carry out our plans." It can not be said with any certainty what these plans were, but before the 18th April 1889, George Cawston, one of the leaders of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, which was a member of the consortium which Rhodes had gathered together, had conversations with William Ewing, the secretary of the Lakes Company, on the possibility of including the Company in the charter application. The attraction for Bruce and for the rest of the Company's promoters of this suggestion was, of course, the opportunity of tapping Rhodes' vast financial resources. There was also the possibility of co-operation with Rhodes against the Portuguese on the Zambesi. Perhaps as a result of his earlier conversation with Bruce a clause had been included in the Rudd concession on Rhodes' instructions providing for the launching of an armed steamer on this river. At the same time the Lakes Company was interested in his plans for the extension of the Kimberley railway to the Zambesi, which might be the basis of a supply route to the Nyasa missions which would not be dependent on the passage through the settled Portuguese possessions on the east coast. John Stephen had been thinking in these terms since August, 1888.

By the 5th June 1889 agreement had been reached in principle between Rhodes, Cawston the directors of the Lakes Company and Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the leading supporter of the Nyasa missions in the House of Lords, on the extension of the charter for which Rhodes had formally applied on the 30th April to include the Nyasa region. If the Charter was granted Lord Balfour of Burleigh was to be chair-

1. Bruce to Cawston, 31st March, 1890, op. cit. 
2. The earliest evidence of contact between the Lakes Company and Rhodes' interests is a letter (draft) from Cawston to Ewing of 18th April, 1889, referring to an earlier conversation and stating "that I and my friends are now maturing arrangements respecting the proposed application for a Royal Central South African Charter. Would like to know if A.D.C. require inclusion in area of Charter." Cawston papers, Vol. I., Rhodes House. 
3. Lockhart and Woodhouse, Rhodes, p 146. 
4. J. Stephen to Dr. J. Stewart, 23rd August, 1888, Salisbury.
man of the new company which would be known as 'the British South Africa and Lakes Company.'¹ There was to be an exchange of £30,000 issued capital of the Lakes Company into shares in the new company; the share-holders were to have the right to take a further £20,000 in shares to bring their holding up to £50,000 or one fifth of the projected issue of £250,000 out of a nominal capital of £1,000,000. The new company was to provide £20,000 on capital account and £9,000 per annum for 'the administration of the country north of the Zambesi, especially with regard to the restoration and maintenance of order in the neighbourhood of Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika.'² The Lakes Company's directors were to be given a fair representation on the board of the new company as they were 'best fitted from their long experience to deal with the affairs of Nyassaland,' and the company was to have among its principal objects the support of the missions, the prohibition of the import of liquor and the abolition of the slave trade.³ Dr. George Smith of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland was present during

1. Cawston to Lord Knutsford, 30th April, 1889, with Knutsford to Salisbury, 16th May, 1889, F.O. 84/1995. Ewing to Salisbury 3rd May, 1889, F.O. 84/1994, referred to a meeting on the previous day chaired by Lord Balfour 'of a large number of the most solid and influential men in the west of Scotland, when it was unanimously agreed to take steps for the formation of a new company on a wider basis...'. There does not seem to be any other reference to this meeting but the association of Lord Balfour with it and the fact that discussions on the inclusion of the Lakes Company had been going on for at least two weeks between Ewing and Cawston make it almost certain that the new company referred to was the projected British South Africa Company. Lord Balfour of Burleigh was forced to withdraw from the chairmanship of the company because he took office in the government. The Duke of Abercorn replaced him. See Cawston to Herbert, 1st July, 1889, F.O. 84/1994.

2. These terms were included in Rhodes and Cawston to Ewing, 5th June, 1889, with Ewing to Salisbury, 14th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2079. Printed copies of further correspondence and the memorandum of an agreement of 29th October, 1889, were sent by Ewing to the Foreign Office at the same time. A.L. Bruce wrote to 'Isabella', on the 6th June, 1889: 'I have this afternoon been taking part as a founder in what may be a great British African Empire whose motto is Light and Liberty. Agnes and I drive with Cecil Rhodes...to discuss another Chartered Company of one million and a half square miles,' Shepperson collection.

3. Rhodes and Cawston to Ewing, 5th June, 1889, op. cit.
these negotiations and wrote to tell Robert Laws of their hope that the company, if chartered, would at once run a railway from Kimberley to the Zambesi and rule the country up to Tanganyika where they would shake hands 'with the Company's very old friend Sir William Mackinnon,' and the I.B.E.A., so that 'no-man's land may have a settled government and your lives may be safe and peaceful.'

This close association between Rhodes and the missionary interests is at first sight incongruous and needs explanation. A.L. Bruce, who according to his own account was asked three times to become a director of the new company, seems to have been the link between the two sides. He had

"so strongly urged the alliance believing that it would be advantageous for both companies and promote the best interests of Africa." 2

He also seems to have thought that the grant of a charter and the association of Rhodes with other interests would be 'the best way to keep his ambition in check.' 3 The Lakes Company were anxious to procure capital for the development of their business and for the financing of the Arab War and the probable expedition to the Zambesi which they had in mind for some time and which they were urgently pressed to undertake by F.D. Lugard who arrived back in Britain in late May or early June. 4 They had often considered applying for a charter but their innate caution had discouraged them from embarking

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1. C. Smith to R. Laws, 5th June, 1889, MS 7898.
2. A.L. Bruce to G. Cawston, 31st March, 1890, op. cit.
3. A.L. Bruce to Dr. J. Stewart, 25th April, 1889, Salisbury.
4. Lugard to Laws, 5th January, 1890, Shepperson collection, gives an account of Lugard's attempts to have his plan for the suppression of the slave trade on Lakes Malawi and Tanganyika put into practice, and of his disillusionment as a result of his treatment by the Lakes Company's directors who did not take him into their confidence, and gave him only £100 for his expenses, and with Rhodes who showed an interest in his plan and then left for South Africa without warning him. The Lakes Company directors may have been influenced by a letter from John Mair of 8th April, 1889, reporting Lugard's departure for Zanzibar 'and probably home. He had to leave Burma with shattered nerves and is now suffering from the same again. He told Mr. Fred Morrison that he had lost confidence in himself; and on one occasion came over expressly to tell me this...I cannot think that his nerves would stand the strain of being in supreme command out here, where one must often act on his own judgment, but I may be wrong.' L.B.(2). See also J. Stephen to Lugard, 2nd July 1889, Rhodes House.
on a venture which common sense told them was likely to involve a long series of losses. The arrival of Rhodes with a guarantee of £1,000,000 from Lord Rothschild must have seemed a god-send to them, and with Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a leading member of the Established Church, and respected Unionist politician, as chairman, with Company directors on the board, a one fifth share of the capital, and assurances that the interests of the missions would be safeguarded, there can have seemed to be little impediment to the accomplishment of the scheme.  

For Rhodes the plan had several advantages: on the one hand there was the possibility of using the Zambesi expedition which had already been approved by the Foreign Office in principle in connection with his own planned move into Matabeleland and for cutting through the Portuguese claim to the interior; on the other hand his alliance with the missionary pressure group weakened the opposition of those philanthropists such as John MacKenzie who were anxious to prevent the granting of a charter to a commercial company, and to persuade the government to assume a protectorate over the area. It also gave the company an air of respectability in the person of Lord Balfour of Burleigh which Rhodes, Cawston and Lord Gifford, could not themselves provide, as well as capturing the public interest which had been aroused by the Arab War. The leading article in The Times on the 29th May 1889 which, together with a notice in the Pall Mall Gazette of the same date, first made public the plan for a chartered company was almost entirely devoted to the affairs of the Lakes Company and to the fight against the slave trade, and made little or no reference to the thrust into Matabeleland and Mashonaland which was Rhodes' primary objective.  

These articles were almost certainly inspired by Rhodes through W.T. Stead and Flora Shaw both of whom he had met and impressed on this visit to London.  

1. Rhodes and Cawston to Ewing, 5th June, 1889, op. cit.  
2. The Manchester Guardian, 30th May, 1889, made the point even more clearly when it said that the A.L.C. 'would do for a nucleus upon which the greater Company would be built.'  
using the good-will of the Company and the missions as a cloak for his own immediate ends.

Rhodes visited Scotland at the end of June and had a meeting with James Stevenson, William Ewing, and Fred Moir on Stevenson's steam yacht, Fire Fay on the Clyde. As a result of this meeting Cawston made an application to the Foreign Office for the extension of the charter to cover the area to the north of the Zambesi; in the event of this extension not being granted they would be willing to

"assist the Lakes Company and the Scotch Missions pending the settlement of the boundary question with Portugal and the ultimate extension of the Charter." 2

On the same day Ewing wrote on behalf of the Lakes Company in support of Rhodes' application and referring to plans for taking over the administration of 'Nyasaland'. 3 This had not been expressly mentioned in Cawston's letter and led the officials in the Foreign Office to doubt whether the two applicants were pulling together. Sir Villiers Lister commented that

"some who know Mr. C. Rhodes well think that he has no serious intention of joining with the Lakes Co." 4

He certainly had no intention of honouring the agreement which he had made with them to the letter. The application referred to the issue of £700,000 of the nominal capital as opposed to the £250,000 which the Lakes Company was given to understand would be subscribed. 5 The issue of the larger sum would, of course, have the effect of swamping the Lakes Company and would have entailed the absorption rather than the amalgamation of the Company. This was made clear by his instructions of the 9th October that the Company should be confined to its original capital and be denied the £20,000 additional capital which they had been promised. 6 Rhodes, 'the great amalgamator', was trying out the well-tried technique which had earlier

4. Lister, minute, on above, ibid.
5. Rhodes and Cawston to Ewing, 5th June, 1889, op. cit., F.O. 84/2079.
6. Rhodes to Cawston, 4th October, 1889, Cawston papers, Vol.I., Rhodes House. 'The Lakes must be confined to their exact capital.'
brought him control of the South African diamond mining industry.1

Whatever Rhodes' intentions the Lakes Company still believed that he was acting in good faith. The question was whether or not the charter would be extended to the north of the Zambesi. This was a question of diplomacy and could only be answered by the Foreign Office and in the final analysis by Lord Salisbury. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Knutsford, had recommended the original application for the charter to the south of the Zambesi on the grounds that a chartered company would be more amenable to government influence than an ordinary company and suggested that it might, if the charter were granted,

"he required to include within its sphere...such portion of the territory north of the Zambesi as it may be important to control with a view to the security of communications with the Shire and Lake Nyassa, and the protection of British missionary settlements." 2

Lord Salisbury had rather different ideas. Although he was favourably disposed towards the Scottish missions on the lake, and was certain that the Portuguese had no rights there nor any claim to the country 'between Nyassa and Barotsé' he was not convinced that Britain had any claim to the latter area.3 While he was amused by Harry Johnston's dreams of a Cape to Cairo route which he regarded as 'a most inconvenient possession',4 his fundamental interest in African affairs was as an extension and complication of European power politics. The extension of the charter to the north of the Zambesi would involve the risk of a clash with Germany and would raise the issue of 'hinterland', a word which had not been defined and about which he was 'not very anxious to come to a definition'.5 He was, however, certain that there could be no German claim to the interior

1. Lockhart and Woodhouse, Rhodes, op. cit., p 126.
2. Knutsford to Salisbury, 16th May, 1889, F.O. 84/1995, Salisbury commented, 27th May, 1889, 'In order to ease off the political difficulty they might be extended up to the Zambesi in the first instance.'
south of the line of the Ravuma river which had been recognised as the coastal boundary of Germany and Portugal. He therefore regarded the area north of the Zambesi but south of the Ravuma as free of a Portuguese claim because they could not prove effective occupation, and free of a German claim because it could not be the hinterland of the acknowledged German coast. He saw it as a potentially British sphere of influence access to which would have to be assured by a Portuguese recognition of the free navigation of the Zambesi before the northern boundary could be settled with Germany. The ultimatum to Portugal which he was already contemplating in July 1889, was the instrument which he intended to use to settle this problem before going on to deal with Germany, but in the meantime he told his ambassador in Berlin that he was afraid that

"the new Company which is to carry civilisation into the midst of Africa will startle people a little at Berlin. I have, however, strongly recommended them in the first instance to confine their proposed region of operations to the south of the Zambesi." 2

Consequently the two companies were told in July 1889 that the charter would not be extended to the north and that they should not finalise their plans for amalgamation. 3 Arrangements were however made on the terms for the final amalgamation in the event of the charter being extended, and when the charter to the south of the Zambesi was granted at the end of October, 1889, Dr. George Smith told Robert Laws that 'its telescope will be pulled out north of Central Zambesia as soon as possible.' 4 This decision undermined the basis of the alliance between the two companies which from the point of view of the Lakes Company, at any rate, had been co-operation in their planned expedition to open the Zambesi and to bring an end to the Arab War.

2. Salisbury to Malet, 12th June, 1889, quoted by Lady G. Cecil, op. cit., Vol.IV, p 244.
3. Rhodes to Ewing, 8th August, 1889, and Ewing to Secretary, B.S.A. Company, 3rd December, 1889, with Ewing to Salisbury, 14th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2079.
4. Smith to Law, 24th October, 1889, MS 7898; the charter had been passed by the Privy Council before that date and received the Great Seal on the 29th October, 1889.
Although he was prepared to provide some capital for the Lakes Company, with or without the extended charter, it is not likely that Rhodes was very concerned by its restriction to the south of the Zambesi. He was anxious to stake out as large a claim as possible in southern and central Africa and believed that he had, through his planned absorption of the Lakes Company, acquired the 'keys in the lake connection,' that is the Stevenson road.\(^1\) But he was nothing if not a shrewd businessman, he did not believe in spending money unless it was absolutely necessary. In the middle of May he had met Harry Johnston, shortly after the latter's return from his abortive mission to Lisbon, and a few weeks before his departure for Mozambique with instructions to investigate the Portuguese position on the Zambesi and to negotiate a settlement of the Arab War. Rhodes told him of his plans to take over the Lakes Company and gave him £2,000 towards the expenses of treaty making in the area.\(^2\) Rhodes saw no point in 'armed expeditions and expensive whites' if a satisfactory settlement could be achieved without them.\(^3\) While it would be convenient to have the country to the north of the Zambesi reserved for future occupation, and a possible future extension of the charter, he was fully occupied with his plans for the occupation of Matabeleland-Mashonaland. Early in December 1889 he was convinced by Selous that the Zambesi was not, owing to the difficulty of navigation, a suitable means of access to the interior, and turned his attention to the south and Bechuanaland as the base for the drive into Lobengula's country. On the 1st January 1890 he signed a contract with Frank Johnson for the organisation of the pioneer column which was to reach Mashonaland by the end of September of that year.\(^4\)

1. Rhodes to Abercorn, 25th June, 1890, with Abercorn to Currie, 16th July, 1890, F.O. 84/2006.
Meanwhile the pressure on the Zambesi and Shire was building up and the Lakes Company's secretary, William Ewing, was pressing the London Board of the British South Africa Company to organise an expedition to relieve the threatened mission and Company interests there. George Cawston and some other B.S.A. directors saw Lord Salisbury who warned them of the danger of any such expedition but the Board nevertheless sent a telegram to Rhodes on the 20th December advising a 'strong Zambesi expedition to help A.L.C. and keep Portuguese employed.' They had consulted Lord Wolseley on the use of Nile steamers and forwarded to the Foreign Office a report which they had had prepared by D.J. Rankin on the organisation of a Zambesi expedition and on the use of the Chinde mouth as the point of access to the interior. These schemes were finally rendered superfluous by the news of the ultimatum to Portugal and by Harry Johnston's settlement of the Arab War.

It was at this point in time that the directors of the Lakes Company began to suspect that Rhodes might have intended to double-cross them. Their suspicions had first been aroused in October by the reduction in the allotment of additional shares in the British South Africa Company from £20,000 to £5,000; it was not until March 1890 that they heard through an answer in the House of Commons that the issued share capital of the Chartered Company was already

1. Ewing to Cawston, 3rd December, 1889, with Ewing to Salisbury, 14th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2079.
2. Cawston to Rhodes, 13th December, 1889, reporting meeting with Salisbury. 'It seems very dangerous for us to think of any expedition to Nyassaland as that noble fellow Ewing is trying to warry us into at the present time.' Weatherley to Cawston, 20th December, 1889, quoting telegram to Rhodes, Cawston papers Vol.I.
£750,000 and that they had consequently been reduced from an expected 20% share in the issued capital to 5%. This would clearly reduce considerably the influence of the Lakes Company's shareholders on the policy of the Company if the charter was extended and the amalgamation went through. At the same time they had received only £5,000 of the £20,000 subscription on capital account which had been promised as part of the amalgamation agreement, and doubts were being expressed by some of the missionaries as to the propriety of the Company's association with the South African interests. Robert Laws writing from Africa spoke of

"rumours that the same morality which had characterised the life and conduct of the agents of the A.L.C. would not be observed by the agents of the B.S.A. Co., and notably that native women would be kept by the agents of the latter at the various stations." 3

D.C. Scott of the Established Church's Blantyre Mission was also doubtful of the prospects of chartered company government and feared that it would make

"land-grabbing certain, ousting of native chiefs certain, (and) atrocities certain."

He had 'seen enough even of the Lake Co. to know what to expect.' 4

A.L. Bruce protested to the South Africa Company on their manipulation of the share capital, and William Ewing told Sir Percy Anderson that relations between the two companies were strained and that the Lakes Company was contemplating breaking off the negotiations and finding capital for the development of the business from among

1. J. Stevenson to Salisbury, 5th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2079; J. Stevenson to A.L. Bruce, 5th April, 1890, Salisbury, CT 1/11/5/1; B.S.A. Minutes, 4th October, 1889, CT 1/16/1/; Ewing to Beit, 31st October, 1889, Hawksley to Ewing, 2nd December, 1889, A.L.C. to B.S.A. Company, (through solicitors), 17th December, 1889, 5th February, 1890, CT 1/16/1/. Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol. CCCLXVIII, cols. 1141-2, Baron H. de Worms to H. Labouchere, 15th March, 1890, 'some time ago £750,000 of the share capital had been subscribed.'


4. D. G. Scott to J. Robertesp, 18th August, 1890, also 16th August, 1889, 17th March, 1890. E.U.L.
the original shareholders. The South Africa Company and Rhodes by telegram denied that the Lakes Company had ever been promised a fifth share in the issued capital, and repudiated Bruce's claim that the Lakes Company's shareholders were entitled to a fifth share of the total issue of £750,000, but after it had been hinted that the Lakes Company might ask the government to arrange for arbitration, the London Board decided to agree to a compromise whereby the management of the Nyasaland business would be directed by a Northern Committee elected by the original shareholders of the Lakes Company, with a representative of the South Africa Company, while there would be a representative of the Lakes Company on the London Board of the South Africa Company. The latter agreed to this arrangement as they felt that if the matter were taken to arbitration

"there might be a question as to whether they (the Lakes Company) would not be entitled to a proportionate allotment of the second issue, corresponding to the number of shares given them in the first issue." In other words they admitted that they had been guilty of sharp practice and were afraid that they might be caught out. The shares of the South Africa Company were at this time selling at four times their nominal value, so the Lakes Company's shareholders would have done very well if they had been allotted the £150,000 shares at par to which they thought themselves entitled. They waived all claim.

1. A.L. Bruce to Cawston, 31st March, 1890, with Weatherley to Harris, 8th April, 1890, CT 1/11/5/1, also Cawston to Bruce, 1st April, 1890, Bruce to Cawston, 8th April, 1890, Anderson, memorandum on visit of Ewing, 23rd April, 1890, F.O. 84/2080.

2. Weatherley to Harris, 8th April, 1890, ibid., 'This matter was carefully considered and it was decided to repudiate the claim.' Encloses Beit to Rhodes, 'Advise Cecil Rhodes deny Lakes promised fifth. Refer Bruce London Board.' Rhodes to Beit, 'Telegraphed Bruce denying offer fifth.'

3. Weatherley to Harris, 2nd May, 1890, CT 1/11/5/1. Weatherley to Harris, 8th May, 1890, CT 1/11/5/1, encloses agreement of 29th April, 1890. The agreement confirmed the terms originally stated in Rhodes and Cawston to Ewing, 5th June, 1889, with the addition of the Northern Committee, and the representation on the B.S.A. Company Board. See also Anderson memorandum on visit of Ewing, 29th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2080, 'reported better relations between the L.C. and the S.A.Co.' There is another copy of the agreement with Anderson memorandum on a visit of Hawkesley, 1st November, 1890, F.O. 84/2094. See also A.L.C. Minutes, 3rd April, 29th April, 1890.

to this share of the issue as a quid pro quo for the agreement which
appeared to ensure that the administration of Nyasaland and the
management of the Company's business would be kept in their hands
and out of the hands of the South Africa Company.

In spite of this revelation of the mailed fist beneath the
gloved hand of the South Africa Company, there continued to be some
co-operation between the two interests to the north of the Zambesi.
This was directed towards the demonstration of the effective occupa-
tion of the area between the Zambesi and the Stevenson road in the
south and north and Lake Malarw and Barotseland in the east and west.
This was done by the purchase of land and the negotiation of treaties
which could be used as ammunition by the Foreign Office in their
settlements with Portugal and Germany. The declaration of the Brit-
ish protectorate over the Shire Highlands led to a small invasion of
land speculators: of these the most dangerous from the Company's
point of view was Eugene Sharrer, who was believed by Buchanan and
Johnston to be prepared to make a deal with either the British, the
Portuguese or the Germans and who had left the country at the time
of the Portuguese invasion of the Shire so as not to be put in a posi-
tion where he would be forced to commit himself before the outcome
was certain.¹ In February 1890 John Moir instructed one of his
agents to buy from Kupata, Ramakukan's son, as much land on both sides
of the Murchison cataracts as possible. It was important to get
rights over at least one large waterfall for 'we may in the future
make electricity there to drive our steamers, who knows.' He would
be prepared to pay £50-£100 for a large piece of ground but if Sharrer
was operating in the area he was to be cut out 'at any price.' The
agent was to use the title deeds which had been obtained for the
Katunga's station as a model and was instructed to

"get anyone who can write to sign and as many headmen as
possible. Give the signatories a fathom (of cloth)
to keep it in memory." ²

At the same time the Buchanan brothers were staking out very large

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¹ Buchanan to Salisbury, 14th May, 1890, F.O. 84/2021.
² J.M. to Wilson, 27th February, 1890, L.B.(2).
claims for themselves and for A.L. Bruce, J. Rankin, of Muthil, and Horace Waller. Among Lakes Company employees John Lindsay acquired the Limbe estate near Blantyre, and A.C. Simpson made claims on the lower Shire. The latter were considered as friendly purchases and to be encouraged, but more threatening was a certain Louie Bowler who was believed to be aiming for the north of the Zambesi and who was thought to be working for German interests. He seems in the end to have turned his attention to the south of the Zambesi, but the threat of his arrival increased the pressure on the Company from Harry Johnston and the London directors of the South Africa Company to buy up land. Early in 1891 Daniel Rankin, working for the interests of V.L. Cameron and the King of the Belgians, arrived and began attempts to undermine Lakes Company claims to the west of the Shire by negotiations with the representatives of the Manganja headmen, who had been dispossessed by the Makololo from whom the Company had acquired claims.

Beyond the already declared British protectorate a number of people were involved in making claims on behalf of the two companies whose amalgamation was still expected. Harry Johnston had made treaties on the Stevenson road and at the south end of Tanganyika, and following up his dream of a Cape to Cairo route persuaded A.J. Swann of the L.M.S. to disobey his mission's instructions and make an expedition to the north end of Lake Tanganyika to secure treaties in Burundi; Johnston himself would have attempted to obtain these if

1. J. Buchanan diary, 16th January, 1890. 'The ALC agents have been purchasing land at various points along the east shore of Nyassa. At the north end have bought one or two bays. And all Monkey Bay.' 20th February, David Buchanan bought land, 22nd February, bought land for A.L. Bruce.
2. J. Buchanan diary, J. Lindsay, 17th January, A.C. Simpson, 17th March, J. Duncan of the Blantyre mission left at the same time to plant coffee, 26th February, 1890.
3. H.H. Johnston to Cawston, 7th July, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II, Rhodes House. A.L.C. Minutes, 7th July, 1890, telegram to Africa following letter from B.S.A. Company: 'Buy as hard as you can all land west Nyassa, Shire Highlands, Upper Shire, same manner as we have bought land north Nyassa under Johnston's directions. Expenses Cawston.'
he had not been summoned back to the Shire Highlands late in 1889 as a result of Serpa Pinto's invasion. 1 Fred Moir and his wife, accompanied Swanh on this expedition as far as Ujiji where Moir did a large trade in ivory with Runalina who had been cut off from the Zanzibar market by the rebellion on the German coast. 2 In April 1890 Nicoll and Grant established a station at Kituta on the south east corner of Lake Tanganyika at the terminus of the Stevenson road. 3 Fred Moir selected a site for a station above the lake which was to retire if the lake station proved too unhealthy, and which eventually became the town of Abercorn, now Mbala. 4 On his return he selected the site at Mwenso of what was to be known as Fife, and left agents there to establish it as a staging post about half way between the lakes. 5 The directors of the Lakes Company announced that it was to be known as Bannockburn, but this must have been too much for the directors of the South Africa Company, and would have caused Harry Johnston considerable dismay. 6 At the same time stations were founded by the Company at the Songue river to the north of Karonga and at Parumbira Bay on the north-east coast of the lake. 7 L.M. Fotheringham had made a treaty-making expedition to the north and of the lake, and into the Livingstone Mountains on the east coast, on behalf of Harry Johnston at the end of 1889. 8 While Abercorn and Fife had a commercial as well as a diplomatic function the latter stations had no function other than the demonstration of effective occupation, and were short-lived.

Johnston had also recruited Alfred Sharpe who made three expeditions to the west of Lake Malawi in the course of which he confirmed the treaties which had been made on behalf of the Lakes Company in 1885 with Mwase Kasungu, and acquired mineral rights from Undi, another Cewa chief. He was unable to come to terms with Ngweni, the Ngoni chief to the southwest of Kasungu, who had living at his village a

1. Oliver, op. cit., pp 166-72.
3. Ibid., pp 31-2.
4. Ibid., p 34.
5. Ibid., p 75.
6. A.L.C. Minutes, 19th May, 1890.
7. J. Moir to Salisbury, 20th June, 1890, F.O. 84/2084.
German speculator with Portuguese connections, Karl Wioso. He reached Katanga after a remarkably rapid journey but was unable to get Msiri's signature to a treaty and did not choose to use the strong-arm tactics which later gave Captain Stairs control of Katanga at the cost of Msiri's death. In March 1891 Sharpe made a further expedition at Fred Moir's request to conclude mineral concessions in what came to be known as Central Angoniland with Chiwere and Tumbala. Independently of Johnston, and much to his annoyance, Joseph Thomson, one of the most distinguished living African explorers had been recruited by the London Board of the South Africa Company on the recommendation of A. L. Bruce and had been instructed by Rhodes to make the same journey to Katanga. He agreed with Sharpe to attempt the journey from a different starting point - he left from Mkota Khoa in August 1890, while Sharpe left from Karonga. Thomson was accompanied by J. A. Grant, son of Grant of the Nile, but he did not reach Katanga. He did however make a series of mineral treaties, including some on the Kafue which were to be the basis of the South Africa Company's claim to a royalty on production from the Northern Rhodesian and later Zambian copper-belt.

2. Sharpe to Johnston, 3rd June, 1891, in Johnston, to Salisbury, 7th July, 1891, F.O. 84/2114. Sharpe's allegation that Fred Moir was in the wrong in buying land in the name of the A.L.C. alone was based on a misunderstanding of the relationship between the two companies.
3. A. L. Bruce to Cawston, 19th September, 1889, Cawston papers, Vol. I, J. Thomson to Cawston, 30th March, 1890, ibid., Vol. II. Johnston to Rhodes, 13th October, 1890, Rhodes papers, Charters, 3 A 52; Thomson to Rhodes, 16th August, 1890, Charters 3 A 29. Thomson, Johnston, J. Moir and Rhodes met together at Kimberley early in May, 1890, see photograph. Johnston advised Thomson to go overland to the Shire Highlands from Mozambique and complained that he did not take his advice, while Thomson wrote that he was thankful that he had not done so.
4. Thomson to Rhodes, 18th August, 1890, op. cit.
Minerals were the greatest single lure which attracted Rhodes to the north of the Limpopo; he was said to believe that the Witwatersrand reef extended north to Katanga, but he was at this date surprisingly casual in his approach to the area beyond the Zambesi. In a letter to the Duke of Abercorn in July 1890 he spoke of pushing the Portuguese off the east coast of Africa and caused Lord Salisbury to remark that 'they are quite hopeless,' but on Trans-Zambesia and Katanga Rhodes commented:

"there is still a piece of country left called Mwata Iamvo's kingdom and I think the destination of this can be well left alone. Thomson may bring some concession for this and if so there is no harm in marking it red. I have no desire at present that we should spend any large sums over the Zambesi but that is no reason why now they are settling the partition of Africa we should not try and get this marked for us." 2

It was Harry Johnston who made the running in the campaign for the extension of the British protectorate as far north as possible, arranging treaties in areas which were acknowledged to be in the German hinterland. While Rhodes was pre-occupied with the organisation of the pioneer column and with cutting the Portuguese out of as much as possible of the east coast and the south of the Zambesi, Johnston reproached him:

"You only think of Africa south of the Zambesi, I not only consider our interests all over Africa but our Imperial interests throughout the world." 3

As a result of pressure from the Lakes Company's directors Rhodes did add his voice to the campaign for the preservation of the Stevenson road, which fell within the German hinterland, and was claimed by

1. Ewing to Weatherley, 3rd December, 1889, with Ewing to Salisbury, 14th April, 1890, F.O. 84/2079.
2. Rhodes to Abercorn, 25th June, 1890, with Abercorn to Currie, 16th July, 1890, and minute on by Salisbury, F.O. 84/2086.
3. Johnston to Rhodes, 13th October, Rhodes papers, Charters, 3 A 52. Joseph Thomson made the same point to Cawston, 10th June, 1891, Cawston papers, Vol.II: 'I suppose you are all so much occupied with the more important events south of the Zambesi as to forget my existence.'
The missions and Company were vociferous in this agitation and managed to preserve the road, though they lost the Livingstone Mountains and the Nyakusa at the north end in whom the Company were interested, and the U.M.C.A. were unable to substantiate their claim to the east coast of the lake in which they had done almost all their evangelical work.\(^1\) Lord Salisbury took a personal interest in the Stevenson road;\(^2\) its inclusion in the British protectorate was a diplomatic victory for his principle of effective occupation over that of hinterland. In a Cabinet Memorandum on the subject he wrote:

"...a far more tenable ground of claim consists in the fact that, on the south of Lake Tanganyika the English originally discovered and have now for many years, through the African Lakes Company, through Mr. Stevenson's road, and through the Scottish Missions, occupied the territory which the Germans claim..."\(^3\)

The settlement of outstanding differences between Britain and Germany in Africa was concluded on the 2nd July, 1890, the path having been made easier by the cession to Germany of Heligoland. In urging the necessity of this exchange to Queen Victoria Salisbury made clear the considerations which influenced him above all in his treatment of African questions:

"On the other hand we could not without this arrangement come to a favourable issue as to the Stevenson road, and any indefinite postponement of a settlement would render it very difficult to maintain terms of amity with Germany, and would force us to change our system of alliances in Europe. The alliance of France instead of Germany would involve the early evacuation of Egypt under very unfavourable conditions."\(^4\)

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1. Weatherley to Harris, 9th May, 1890, quotes Rhodes' telegram, 2nd May, 1890 on Stevenson road: 'This highway must remain British...I will not work for Germans,' and B.S.A. Company's reply 'Board agrees your view and supports.' Also J. Moir to Salisbury, 20th June, 1890, F.O. 84/2084, and J.C. White, for Livingstonia Mission, 27th June, 1890, ibid., J. Stevenson, 17th June, 1890, ibid., and other correspondence in same volume. See also Weatherley to Harris, 23rd May, 1890, CT/1/16/2: 'It remains to be seen whether public opinion can be sufficiently raised in Scotland to strengthen Lord Salisbury's hands in resisting the demands of Germany.' Quotes cable, Harris (for Rhodes) 'Don't surrender Stevenson road Germany as required Salisbury we have made bona fide occupation.'


4. Cabinet Memorandum, 2nd June, 1890, quoted, ibid.

5. Salisbury to Queen Victoria, 10th June, 1890, quoted by Lady G. Cecil, op. cit., Vol.IV, p 298.
There is no evidence that Rhodes was very dismayed by the terms of this agreement. His fury was reserved for the terms of the Anglo-Portuguese Convention which were published late in July of the same year, which did not give him direct access from Mashonaland to the Indian Ocean, conceded parts of Mozambique and Casaland which he expected to incorporate in his new territory. Rhodes declared that he had no intention of abiding by these terms and the Portuguese Cortes played into his hands by refusing to ratify the Convention and thus permitting him to go ahead and establish himself in the disputed areas. Rhodes blamed Harry Johnston for this initial setback, not realising that the latter's total contribution to the working out of the agreements with Portugal and Germany had been to extend the Nyasa protectorate north to the Songwe (from the Kaporo) in exchange for Mafia island at the mouth of the Rufiji.\(^1\)

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The settlement of the boundaries of the spheres of influence in central Africa need not necessarily have been followed by the introduction of active administration. When Harry Johnston had told Lord Salisbury that Rhodes was prepared to pay the expenses of treaty making to the north of the Zambesi in May 1889 Salisbury had commented:

"It would be preferable that the Foreign Office should pay your travelling and treaty-making expenses in Nyassaland, as we do not want to commit ourselves to handing over the region to a Chartered Company. Outside its limits I see no objection to Mr. Rhodes paying your expenses and meeting the cost of negotiations."\(^2\)

Salisbury told some representatives of the British South Africa Company that it had always been understood that Imperial control should be more marked to the north than to the south of the Zambesi.\(^3\)

According to his daughter Lord Salisbury was in principle in favour of direct Imperial administration in the whole of the British sphere

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1. Oliver, op. cit., pp 176-8. He also persuaded the Foreign Office to secure from the Portuguese a concession at the Chinde mouth of the Zambesi.


3. Hawksley to Cawston, 7th March, 1891, reporting interview with Salisbury, Cawston papers, Vol.III.
to the north of the Zambesi and over Matabele-Mashonaland as well, this was, of course, made impossible by the attitude of the Treasury who were most unlikely to sanction the spending of money in the area and who refused late in 1890 to provide £10,000 per annum for the direct administration of the area to the north of the Zambesi. But in spite of the position of the Treasury Salisbury does not appear to have considered seriously the granting of a Charter for the administration of Nyasaland. Sir Percy Anderson had told another South Africa Company deputation of the

"difference between Nyassaland and Matabeleland arising from the existence in the former of the old Mission settlements, which guard jealously their independence." He made it clear that as 'the British settlers and the natives had objected' to the granting of administrative powers to the Lakes Company the most likely outcome was 'Consular Administration' but that

"this would not relieve the traders of the task of defending their stations, protecting their caravans, opening trade roads, and so forth..." 4

In other words the official Foreign Office view came close to that of John Moir that 'the old lines would not serve badly to extend, and run upon.'

Johnston was at this time working on the assumption that there would be no official objection to the extension of the charter to cover the whole of British Central Africa. He was convinced that 'no power or governing rights whatever should be given to the A.L.C.' The Glasgow Board were in his opinion 'not capable of administering Central Africa.' Their directors were with perhaps one exception,

3. Anderson memorandum, 1st November, 1890, after a visit from Hawksley of the B.S.A. Company and on seeing the agreement between the Lakes Company and the B.S.A. Company of 29th April 1890 for the first time. F.O. 84/2094.
6. Johnston to Cawston, 2nd October, 1890, F.O. 84/2052.
7. Johnston to Cawston, 17th July, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II.
A.L. Bruce,

"a set of miserly, fanatical, uncultured Glasgow merchants and shipbuilders whose interference in the affairs of Nyassaland would probably bring about another Arab War and terrific quarrels between the Lakes Company and the Missionaries."

He pressed the B.S.A. Company to 'swallow up, digest, deglute the African Lakes Company,' and threatened to support direct Imperial intervention in the area if they did not bring their negotiations with the Lakes Company to an end as soon as possible. While he told a member of the Foreign Office that he had always been in favour of direct administration and regarded Company rule as a 'pis aller,' he was certain until November 1890 at least that the charter would be extended to cover Nyassaland, and that he would go out for the B.S.A. Company as administrator of the whole of the British Central African sphere. Rhodes was said to have been prepared to provide £25,000 per annum for the execution of his plan but the London directors of the South Africa Company were doubtful.

George Cawston told Sir John Kirk that

"the £25,000 north of the Zambesi is a very large sum and should only be spent in case of necessity and in case the country proves itself worth developing."

Early in November Johnston realised that his original scheme was not likely to be realised. He telegraphed Cawston:

"Chief (Salisbury) discourages my going as Company's man at present until administrative powers conferred...resistance of Lakes great hindrance."

He wrote next day that he found himself

"debarred for the present from the fascinating scheme of creating a great British Central African Province under the aegis of the B.S.A. Co., but I feel sure it is a matter for subsequent arrangement with Lord Salisbury." It is not clear what form the resistance of the Lakes Company to which Johnston referred had taken. He later wrote about this

1. Johnston to Anderson, 7th October, 1890, F.O. 84/2052.
2. Johnston to Cawston, 8th October, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II.
3. Johnston to Barrington, F.O. 84/2052.
4. Johnston to Rhodes, 7th June, 1893, quoted by Oliver, op. cit. p 182.
5. Cawston to Kirk, 8th November, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.III.
6. Johnston to Cawston, telegram, 8th November, 1890, Vol.II.
period of negotiation that

"It is my impression that the unofficial opinion at the
Foreign Office was not unfavourable but on the news
of it reaching the A.I.C. through John Noir they in-
cited the Missionaries and others to raise a violent
objection to the settled portion of Nyasaland being
placed under the rule of the Company. The government
finding that this opposition was strong, and that it had
this claim to consideration that it emanated from people
who had been the pioneers of British enterprise in Nyas-
land, decided that the Districts around Lake Nyasa and
the Shire should be placed under British protection,
while four fifths of the British sphere 'should be placed
under the B.S.A. Co.' subject to the usual and reasonable
amount of Imperial control..." 1

There is some evidence to support Johnston's view in a letter of
Cawston to Rhodes of the 29th October in which he explained that

"there is some muddle about a letter he (Salisbury) had had
from Lord Balfour of Burleigh which Lord S. has misun-
derstood to "that 'the African Lakes have asked the Gov. not
to allow the B.S.A. to interfere in Nyasaland.'" 2

At the same time the directors of the B.S.A. Company were pressing
ahead with plans for the completion of the amalgamation of the two
companies presumably in the hope that this would facilitate the ex-
tension of the charter to the north of the Zambesi. The Duke of
Abercorn, the chairman of the Company remarked languidly:

"I suppose that we must submit to a necessity and the amal-
gamation must take place, together with the admission to
our Board of a Director of the Lakes Co. It is most dis-
tasteful to have all our dealings made known to one of
that lot." 3

Albert Grey insisted that amalgamation was desirable in itself and
that it must go through whether the Lakes Company chose to send as
their director Bruce, Balfour, Stevenson 'or any other glass-bottomed
lunatic.' 4 He hoped that A.L. Bruce who was 'hard-working, honest,
sealous and capable' would be sent but feared that he would not come.

1. Johnston to Rhodes, 8th October, 1893, with Johnston to Anderson,
8th October, 1890, F.O. 2/54.
2. Cawston to Rhodes, 29th October, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II.
3. Abercorn to Cawston, 15th November, 1890, ibid.
4. A. Grey to Cawston, 15th November, 1890, ibid.
'London is too far off for the convenience of any of the Lakes lot'.

At this stage a new element was introduced into the discussions by A.L. Bruce's suggestion, that the £9,000 per annum which the B.S.A. Company had been paying to the Lakes Company for administration in Nyassaland should be paid to the government to enable them to undertake the direct administration of the district. This suggestion was presumably prompted by a realisation that administrative powers were very unlikely to be conferred on the Lakes Company or on the proposed Northern Committee of the amalgamated Company. The proposal was warmly welcomed by Albert Grey who commented:

"The difficulties of the action in Nyassaland because of Scotch jealousies and cussedness, make it in my opinion most desirable that we should support Bruce's proposal to facilitate the Govt. taking over the administration of Nyassaland by paying over to the Govt. the £9,000 a year we now pay the Lakes - if the Govt. would consent this of course gets us out of all the difficulties. It rids us of all necessity of amalgamating with the Lakes - it reduces the Lakes to nothing bigger than a small trading concern, and it enables us to look forward to the possible inheritance of Trans-Zambesia without the incubus of a Scotch Director. (MSS note by G. Cawston 'hearp hear') For if in course of time it should appear that the Govt. were in need of a larger annual subsidy than £9,000 a year in order to enable justice to be done to Nyassaland it would always be open to us to make the offer that we would find the moneys required if we were allowed to add Nyassaland to Charterland, and this I think is the answer to your objection that if the Govt. assumes the administration of Nyassaland one of the Principal Parts of our great idea when we first embarked upon the Charter would be destroyed. I discussed this suggestion confidentially as my own personal opinion with both Currie and Herbert, and from the way in which they both received it I came away with a strong impression that the Govt. would not be at all indisposed to accept the £9,000 a year in order to enable them to become themselves the administration of Nyassaland."  

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1. A. Grey to Cawston, 15th November, 1890, Cawston papers Vol.II.
2. Johnston to Barrington, 15th December, 1890, F.O. 84/2052.
3. A. Grey to Cawston, 29th November, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II.
This was the basis on which the administration of the British Central African sphere was arranged. Harry Johnston was appointed in March, 1891, to be H.M. Commissioner and Consul General over the Nyasa protectorate, now Malawi, and the British South Africa Company’s sphere, later North Eastern Rhodesia, and eastern Zambia. He was to receive £10,000 a year from the B.S.A. Company which could be spent in either district according to his judgement. It was also stated in his instructions that he would have the use of the Lakes Company’s steamers ‘subject to trade not being unreasonably interfered with.’ The B.S.A. Company was to pay the Lakes Company £2,500 a year for this service. 1

Although the plan had been suggested by a Lakes Company director, the details were worked out between Johnston, Rhodes and the Foreign Office early in February 1891 without any consultation with the Lakes Company or the mission interests. 2 Rhodes’ attitude to them was

1. Anderson to Johnston (draft instructions,) 24th March, 1891, F.O. 84/2113.
2. Johnston to Currie, 9th February 1891, outlines the plan as approved by Rhodes, F.O. 84/2114. The details were worked out at discussions between Rhodes, Johnston and the Foreign Office officials at this date. See Oliver, op.cit., pp 188-90. The directors of the Lakes Company had no knowledge of these discussions nor of the arrangements for the use of the steamers which were agreed then. EWing wrote to Salisbury on the 24th March 1891: ‘My directors have reason to believe that certain engagements have been entered into by H.M.G. concerning vitally the future conduct of affairs in Nyassaland. The Scottish interests in that region being so dominant and so national, my directors ventured to hope that they would have received some communication thereupon, enabling them to assure those in Scotland who have so long laboured for the development and best interests of Nyassaland, that these interests are being duly regarded. My directors instruct me respectfully to submit the foregoing for your Lordship’s consideration and to crave your Lordship’s usual kind attention therein. They venture to hope that your Lordship will kindly see your way to communicate to them the basis of the arrangements proposed, or concluded. My directors will also be glad to learn whether the Charter of the British South African Co. has been extended north of the Zambesi, and if so what region it includes.’ The reply to this letter, Currie to EWing, 9th April, 1891, is in Salisbury, CT 1/11/5/1. The Lakes Company had already received warning from Johnston that he would be arriving at the Chinde mouth in June, 1891 with 100 tons of equipment and a party of soldiers and that he would expect transport for these. (A.L.C. Minutes, 24th March 1891) They replied that agreement on the use of the steamers had not been concluded and that they would do their best to carry his goods, but that they had entered into important contracts for transport at that time. These letters are quoted in J. Stephen to Dr. J. Stewart, 25th March, 1891, Salisbury.
clearly expressed:

"The steamers on the lakes should continue and if they
like let the Scotch people continue to use them and
make their profits out of each other, it will amuse
them and not hurt us but give them no power and we
will instruct them to put their steamers at your dis-
posal whenever required." 1

The Lakes Company's directors were informed of the plan and of
the role which their steamers were expected to perform at a stormy
meeting with Rhodes at the Westminster Palace Hotel on 24th February
1891. 2 Rhodes seems to have intended to frighten them into amal-
genation on his terms, that is the absorption that he had originally
intended. He accused them of fraud in connection with the setting
up of the Scottish Exploration Company, a subsidiary mineral pros-
pecting company which had been established in July 1889 mainly with
the intention of buying out a Polish prospector who claimed to have
discovered gold and who threatened to do a deal with the Portuguese.
Rhodes' allegations of fraud and concealment were especially hollow
as he himself became a shareholder in September 1889 and had been
sent two copies of the Articles of Association. 3 A further and
equally spurious allegation was that the agreement of April 1890 had
been 'entered into on the understanding that the A.L.C. had adminis-
trative powers in its sphere and could make regulation for the main-
tenance of order.' 4 As John Stephen pointed out 'Rhodes and they
(the other directors of the B.S.A. Co.) knew our powers as well as
ourselves.' 5 The Lakes Company's directors refused to yield, and
rejected the agreement which was presented to them on the use of the

1. Rhodes to Johnston, 7th March, 1891, Johnston papers, Salisbury.
3. The allegations concerning the Scottish Exploration Co. were no
   more than a smear but were taken seriously by Sir Percy Anderson
   who commented after he had been told of them by Hawksley: 'Would
   it not be well that this story should get out?' 1st. November
   1890, F.O. 84/2024. It had already been widely reported in the
   papers, e.g. The Glasgow Herald, 20th October, 1890. They are
totally refuted by the Scottish Exploration Co. file, Companies
Registry, Edinburgh, and by the certificate of transfer of £100
shares from A.L.Bruce to Rhodes, 15th October, 1889, and Ewing
   to Bruce, 20th August, 1889, Bruce to Ewing, 31st August, 1889,
   Ewing to Rhodes, 29th August, 16th October, 1889, Shepperson
   Collection.
   CT/1/11/5/1.
5. J. Stephen to Dr. J. Stewart, 25th March, 1891, Salisbury.
steamers; they also demanded that the amalgamation on the lines of the agreement of April 1890 should go through.  

It might appear that these plans and the way in which they had been worked out, would have undermined the whole basis of the 1890 agreement which had been entered into on the assumption that the charter would eventually be extended to include Nyasaland. The Lakes Company's directors were, however, in a strong position: the 1890 agreement had been conceded by the B.S.A. Company when it was discovered that Rhodes' plan to swamp the Lakes Company had misfired, and there was a risk that the Lakes Company might be thought by an arbitrator to be entitled to a 20% share in the issued capital. As a result the agreement was extremely favourable to the Lakes Company who were to retain control of the Malawi business, and to have a director on the B.S.A. Company board. By March 1891 the Lakes Company had already received £33,500 from the B.S.A. Company, £20,000 in subscribed capital and £13,500 in subsidy. They were not anxious to forego this source of capital especially as the terms of the agreement left them free to spend it as they wished. The B.S.A. Company, on the other hand, having transferred their subsidy to the Foreign Office had little further use for the Lakes Company except as the owner of steamers on the Zambesi and Lake Malawi, and of claims to land in the protectorate. The Lakes Company's solicitor learned in May 1891 that the B.S.A. Company were not anxious for amalgamation

1. Matt (A.L.C. solicitor) to Hawksley, 31st March, 1891, CT/1/11/5/1. He stated that amalgamation in the spirit of the 1890 agreement was the only solution to the difficulties posed by Johnston's request, or rather intimation, that the whole available resources and steamers of the Company should be placed at his command at once without the slightest reference to the present engagements of the Company, or to the possibly disastrous effect it would have on their business...I need not say my clients could never permit any such interference with their business and certainly not for the sum of £2,500.  

2. The £20,000 was for shares in the Lakes Company, the £13,500 was 18 months payment for 'administration' and went into the general expenses of the Company. The B.S.A. Company also gave £31,000 shares in exchange for the Lakes Company's shares. Their total expenditure in connection with the Lakes Company was thus £64,500. See Weatherley memorandum on The Financial Position of the A.L.C., August, 1892, CT/1/11/5/1.
which would mean the working by them of a large commercial undertaking.\textsuperscript{1} The B.S.A. Company's financial and stock-market position was deteriorating and they were not prepared to find more money for the development of transport and trade in Nyassaland.\textsuperscript{1}

In spite of this reluctance the B.S.A. Company continued to negotiate for amalgamation on the original terms throughout 1891. In December the Lakes Company held a general meeting to elect the members of the Northern Committee and Sir John Kirk as their representative on the B.S.A. Company Board.\textsuperscript{2} Between then and May 1892 the negotiations broke down apparently over the question of whether the Company should be liquidated before or after the establishment of the Northern Committee.\textsuperscript{3} The B.S.A. Company wanted liquidation first and the Lakes Company were unwilling to allow them this opportunity to go back on the agreement. A compromise was suggested whereby the Lakes Company's directors would have found £25,000 capital for preference shares secured on their Company's assets, but the B.S.A.

\textsuperscript{1} The £1 shares of the B.S.A. Company which had been standing at £4 in 1890 were selling for about £2 in November, 1890, Cawston to Kirk, 12th November, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.III. Alfred Beit was said to be prepared to sell his for 12/- in March, 1892, Kirk to Cawston, 26th March, 1892, ibid, Vol.IV. Kirk to Cawston, 8th February, 1892, ibid, referred to the B.S.A. Company's shortage of money and their reluctance to raise more capital for fear of causing a panic in the market.

\textsuperscript{2} A.L.C. Minutes, 8th December, 1891, also 7th August and 27th August on negotiations.

\textsuperscript{3} On the 21st December, the A.L.C. decided to fix June 1891 'as date from which amalgamation with the B.S.A. Company shall be held to have taken place.' On the 14th January, 1892, Kirk told Cawston that A.L. Bruce and Hawksley had agreed on terms for liquidation at a meeting on that day, Cawston papers, Vol.IV. Kirk makes clear that the reason for the break-down was Hawksley's refusal to have the Lakes Company's director appointed to the board before the liquidation. As this was the only guarantee that the Lakes Company could have that the Northern Committee would ever sit it was reasonable for them to refuse as once the Company had been liquidated there could be no redress. See Kirk to Cawston, 6th February, 4th April, 2nd May, 14th May, 16th June 1892. He told Sir Percy Anderson, (26th May, 1892, minute, F.O. 84/2250) that both sides were in the wrong; 'the S.A. Company for having made a bargain and then backed out of it; the Lakes Co. for taking up a dog in the manger position, neither raising money themselves nor letting others come in and spend it. He believes that it would be in the interests of Nyassaland to let Mosenthal in, letting down the Lakes Co. as easily as possible.'
Company entered into negotiations with Lord Gifford and Harry Mosenthal’s Bechuanaland Trading Association who were said to be prepared to invest £100,000 in the development of trade and transport in Malawi. They then proceeded to demand that the directors of the Lakes Company initiate the liquidation of the Company so that its assets could be handed over to the Bechuanaland Association which was to be instructed to maintain the existing service to the missions.

In its reply the Lakes Company pointed out that the B.S.A. Company could not fulfil its obligations under the agreement through a third party. The B.S.A. Company then requisitioned liquidation, and the Lakes Company retaliated by ‘arresting’ the former’s shares and suing in the Scottish courts for an instrument of Suspension and Interdict which would restrain the B.S.A. Company from attempting to liquidate. In court the B.S.A. Company’s lawyers brazenly denied that they had ever intended to compel liquidation, and disclaimed any knowledge of negotiations with the Bechuanaland Trading Association. As a result the Judge concluded that the Lakes Company’s action had been premature and the proceedings were suspended.

The action, however, forced both sides to reconsider their positions and to look for a satisfactory compromise. When Rhodes was in Britain in December, 1892, the final details of a plan for the disentanglement of the two companies, which had been worked out through their solicitors, was agreed.

Owing to further delay for which the B.S.A. Company was responsible it was not until the 28th July, 1893:

1. A.L.C. Minutes, 3rd May, 1892; memorandum by Lord Gifford ‘as to the development of the B.S.A. Company territory north of the Zambesi,’ 24th August, 1891, CT/1/11/5/1/. Weatherley to Ewing, 27th April, 1892, ibid., 4th May, ibid.
2. Ewing to Weatherley, 3rd May, 1892, ibid.; Watt to Hanksley, 10th May, ibid.; Weatherley to Harris, 10th June, 1892, ibid. also J. Stevenson to A.L. Bruce, 12th May, 1892, brought in by Bruce, 26th May, 1892, F.O. 84/2250, with Anderson minute, and J. Stevenson to Anderson, with memorandum on ‘Issues of much importance to the well being of the Nyassa protectorate,’ 5th August, 1892, F.O. 84/2252.
that this agreement was finally signed and sealed.\(^1\) It provided for the transfer of the trading and transport business together with the stations and stores to a new company which was to be known as the African Lakes Trading Corporation. The new company was to have a nominal share capital of £150,000 of which 12,500 'A' voting shares and 12,500 'B' non-voting shares were to be allotted to the B.S.A. Company in consideration for the transfer of the business and the rest were to be open for public subscription at the discretion of the directors of the new company who were in the first place James Stevenson, John Stephen, A.L. Bruce and William Ewing. The land and mineral claims of the Lakes Company were transferred to the B.S.A. Company on the understanding that all land surrounding existing stations should be handed over to the new company, and that provision should be made for its future requirements. As a result of the agreement on land which was worked out in Africa between Harry Johnston and L.M. Fotheringham in September 1893, the B.S.A. Company retained the large land claims in the North Nyasa Province, and on the Stevenson road in the Nyamwanga and Mambwe territories, including the road itself.\(^2\) These claims were based on treaties made by the Company from 1895 onwards. They also retained the mineral claims and rights of pre-emption over the lands of Mwase Kasungu, Undi, the Jumbe of Nkota Khota, Chikusai, the Ngoni chief, Chiwere and Tambala as well as the claims dependent on Thomson and Sharpe's treaties in the B.S.A. Company's sphere of influence. The African Lakes Corporation received back about forty thousand acres including all but five hundred acres of the Mandala estate, three thousand acres at Matope, six thousand acres at Karonga, two thousand acres at Misanje, four thousand acres at Rivì-Rivi in Southern Ngoniland, one thousand acres at Chiromo, six thousand acres at Fife, (Mweno), and about thirty

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1. A.L.C. file, Companies Registry, Edinburgh. The African Lakes Trading Corporation was incorporated on the 31st July, 1893. The last board meeting of the Company and the first board meeting of the Corporation were held on the 15th September, 1893.

smaller estates.\footnote{Agreement between Johnston and Fotheringham, September, 1893, \textit{op. cit.}}

In effect these terms involved the payment by the B.S.A. Company of £40,000 for most of the Lakes Company's land claims in the Nyasaland protectorate.\footnote{The B.S.A. Company had provided 51,000 shares in its own stock for the purchase of the Lakes Company, which together with the £13,500 for administration made the total cost of their involvement with the Lakes Company about £64,500. On the unscrambling of the agreement they received £25,000 shares in the new company and the land and mineral claims which were thus valued at about £39,500. The terms of the new agreement were not finally executed until the allotment of these shares to the B.S.A. Company on 21st January, 1896, A.L.C. Minutes.} These claims proved to be of little or no commercial value although they might have proved very lucrative if payable ores had been discovered in Malawi. By conceding them the Lakes Company's directors showed the fundamental difference in philosophy which separated them from Rhodes and the directors of the Chartered Company. While the latter were not interested in the investment of money in the immediately rewarding provision of a transport service, the development of which was essential if the people of Malawi were to be able to meet their demands for imported goods by the export of their own produce; they looked for the more dramatic rewards of mineral exploitation.

While the B.S.A. Company was willing and able to spend very large sums of money on the invasion and subjection of areas in which it had expectations of making a spectacular profit, the Lakes Company was able and willing to spend only comparatively infinitesimal sums on the slow development of trade and transport. The attitudes of the two companies to the work they intended to do in Africa were so different that there should never have been any question of their amalgamation - they were incompatible. That they did come together for a time was due partly to the desperate financial straits to which the Lakes Company was reduced by the expense of the Arab War, and partly to their calculated deception by Rhodes who intended to overwhelm them as he had Barney Barnato, and who misled them as to the place that they were to have in his projected company.

That they evaded the usual fate of Rhodes' take-over victims was...
due partly to the fact that they were so small that he did not care, and partly to that Scottish determination and caution which caused Harry Johnston and the directors of the B.S.A. Company so much supercilious mirth. It was certainly not due to the officials of the Foreign Office who were easily impressed by Rhodes' wealth, and who did not even have the good manners to inform, let alone consult them, on the disposition of their steamers and the division of the British sphere of influence. Their survival alone was a small triumph for the Lakes Company's directors, that 'set of miserly, fanatical, uncultured Glasgow merchants and shipbuilders.'

Largely as a result of the impact of the Arab War the directors had secured the British protectorate for which they had long prayed. The exclusion of the B.S.A. Company from the administration of Nyasaland was doubtless welcomed by James Stevenson, who saw the attempt of the B.S.A. Company to liquidate the Lakes Company as the reaction of men who had found their 'policy of extending South African influence over Nyasaland thwarted by the proclamation of the protectorate,' and condemned the recent legislation in the Cape

"for depriving the natives...to a large extent of the franchise (which) also shows an intention of degrading them in their material interests as well as in their social relations." 2

In spite of Harry Johnston's assertion to Rhodes, 3 however, there is little evidence to link this exclusion to the opposition of the Lakes Company. There is no evidence that Lord Salisbury ever had any intention of including Nyasaland in the area of the charter though Rhodes later claimed that he understood that he had acquired a reversionary interest in the protectorate through the payment of the subsidy for the Johnston administration. 4

Commerce and Christianity as agents of peaceful change had received a serious check as a result of the outbreak of the Arab War. They received their quietus with the gradual establishment of the British administration after 1891. The reign of 'King Johnston over

1. Johnston to Cawston, 8th October, 1890, Cawston papers, Vol.II.
2. J. Stevenson to Salisbury, memorandum, 5th August, 1892, F.O. 84/2256.
3. Johnston to Rhodes, 8th October, 1893, with Johnston to Anderson, 8th October, 1893, F.O. 2/54.
4. Oliver, op. cit., p 249.
the Zambesi' was to be very different from anything that had been envisaged by John Noir. The gradual involvement of the raiding and slaving chiefs with new forms of commerce and administration was abandoned in favour of that 'Military Occupation' which Noir had deprecated. From this time on the Company ceased to be its own politician and diplomat, and was no longer working in a situation where it was dependent for its survival on the good-will of the chiefs and people. Its role became secondary to that of the Administration, and with the development of plantations and rival transport companies its significance was further diminished. It gradually became just another transport and trading company, conscious of the ideals which had inspired its promoters and managers, but with little influence over the policy of those whose job it was to maintain diplomatic and political contact with the people, and to guide the way in which their resources were used and developed.
THE LATE MR. A. R. COLQUHOUN.

Mr. Grant. Mr. J. W. Moir. Mr. Jos. Thompson.

WELL-KNOWN FACES A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO.
CHAPTER VI

The Company under the Protectorate, 1891-1906.

Harry Johnston reached Chiroro, the southern boundary of the protectorate, in the third week of July, 1891, with a party of seventy Sikhs and Zanzibaris, and 100 tons of stores and equipment; these were carried up river by the Company’s steamer, the James Stevenson, which, with two flat-bottomed gunboats, H.M.S. Herald and Mosquito, had met him at the Chinde mouth.1 Two months earlier, on the 10th May, 1891 D.C. Scott had completed and dedicated Blantyre Church which has remained the most remarkable building in central Africa.2 Among those present at the service were Joseph Thomson and Fred Moir, both of whom must have hoped that they might occupy Johnston’s position, and both of whom left the country in June and July, respectively.3 John Moir had left Mandala on the 20th March 1890 after twelve years work in Malawi, the last three of them involving an extreme amount of travel and physical suffering in connection with the prosecution of the Arab War and the threatened Portuguese advance into the Shire Highlands.4 On his departure D.C. Scott, with whom he had often disagreed, commented:

‘He is one of the oldest in the country next to Henderson. It is like the passing away of an institution. Not a tradition of the old will remain in the Company when he goes. I feel growing much older in the work.’5

John Moir himself expected to return as a manager of the amalgamated ‘British South Africa and Lakes Company’ and to stay in Africa for a further three years before returning to Britain to become a director of the new company. He visited Rhodes at Kimberley in

2. L.W.B.C.A., June, 1891.
3. Ibid, and August, 1891. Fred Moir left the country on the 12th June.
4. J. Buchanan, diary, 20th March, 1890.
5. D.C. Scott to J. Robertson, 17th March, 1890, B.U.L. The Blantyre Mission paper later commented: ‘Much regret is expressed by the natives that John Moir, their Mandala, is leaving the sphere of influence in which he has exercised for so long his influence and welcome authority. They had, as we, got to believe that he and the place were one and the same.’ L.W.B.C.A., December, 1892.
May, 1890 and made an agreement with him on the terms of his employment and that of his brother. As late as December, 1891 it was expected that John Moir would return to Africa as manager of the Company though it was agreed that he should not be the sole manager and that he should work with I. Monteith Fotheringham who had taken over as acting manager on the departure of Fred Moir. It was, however, decided by the end of August 1892 that the management of the Company should never again be placed in the hands of the Messrs. Moir. As Fotheringham had earlier written to Lugard: 'the reign of the Moirs is ended.'

Although they can not have realised it their reign had ended when Fred Moir left Mandala in June, 1891. He had expected to leave in August of that year and it is possible that he had brought forward the date of his departure in order to avoid having to live and work under the administration of Harry Johnston, though it was more probably a coincidence. Johnston had attacked the Moirs fairly frequently in his letters and despatches but there was no evidence of personal animosity; John Moir had written very cordially to Johnston after the latter's departure from the Shire Highlands in January, 1890 thanking him for his invitation to stay at the Consulate at Mozambique and regretting that he had been unable to do so. Nevertheless the Moirs must have felt some disappointment after 13 years work in Africa during which they had laid the foundations of a modern communications system, had started plantations and experimental gardens, had trained a large staff of Malawian steamer and store assistants, as well as a comparatively large staff of European agents, and had extended

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1. Copy of agreement signed by C.J. Rhodes and J.W. Moir at Kimberley, 12th May, 1890, in the possession of Miss L.M. Maitland Moir, of Edinburgh. There is another copy of this agreement in J. Moir's hand dated 14th May, 1890, but not signed by Rhodes in the B.S.A Company papers, Salisbury, 6/I/16/1.
2. A.L.C. Minutes, 1st December, 1891.
5. J. Moir to Johnston, 31st March, 1890, L.B. (2).
their sphere of operations 1,500 miles from the Indian Ocean to Ujiji, that they were removed from the direction of affairs in Africa at the moment when 'having borne the burden and the heat of the day, it is quite possible that the Company is going to pay.'

Fred Moir was more fortunate in this respect than his brother for he became Secretary in Glasgow of the African Lakes Corporation on its foundation and continued to work for the Company in that capacity and as a director for over forty years. John Moir returned to Africa late in 1892 at the Company's expense to complete the bringing up to date of the accounts, but on the strict understanding that he was to play no part in the management. He completed the task that had been assigned to him and then moved in August 1893 seventy miles from Manda to Mlanje where he began again from scratch laying the foundations of the Lauderdale estate, and becoming, together with Henry Brown of Thornwood, the pioneer of the Malawian tea industry. He threw himself into the work with his usual impulsive energy, contracting to build part of the road from Blantyre to Mlanje, building Lauderdale House, planting coffee and cocoa as well as tea, diverting a stream to power a mill for coffee cleaning and hulling, and building up a herd of 100 cattle improved with imported Shorthorn stock, as well as attempting to keep horses which suffered severely from the climate and disease. It was, however, according to his wife 'not any love of the place which kept Jack here, but simply of money.' He had received the estate from the Company at cost

1. J. Moir to F. Moir, February, 1889, ibid.
2. He became a director as well as Secretary of the African Lakes Corporation in January, 1911, A.L.C. Minutes, 6th January, 1911. He resigned as Secretary on 22nd April, 1912, ibid. He became Chairman of the Company and sat on the board for the last time on 12th October, 1938, ibid. He died on the 2nd November, 1939 in his 60th year. See Life and work, December, 1939. He had paid a last visit to Malawi during 1921.
3. A.L.C. Minutes, 23rd August, 1892.
price, but was constantly in debt to them. He had to sell his shares in the Company in order to find cash to finance his operations, and it was not until the death of his father that he inherited enough money to pay off his mortgages and to leave the country in 1900, on doctor's orders. He sold the estate which then consisted of about 1,400 acres to the newly formed Blantyre and East Africa Company in 1901 for £4,500. He received half of this in cash and half in shares and became a director of the company. It was almost forty years after his departure from Africa in 1890 before he received any recognition of his work. He was invited to the coronation of George VI in 1937 as a representative of the Nyasaland Protectorate and was made a C.M.G. in that year. He died in March, 1940 in his ninetieth year.

The Moirs left no Blantyre Church as their memorial. They did leave Mandala House which is almost as remarkable in its way, and 'the Mandala' at Karonga, a twenty acre enclosure with a twelve foot wall; the bricks were used to build primary schools within the

1. He paid £500 for the Lauderdale estate which had been first claimed by Fred Moir before April, 1891, he paid a further £300 for other estates totalling about 6,000 acres. These were allotted to the Lakes Company and transferred to him in payment of debts outstanding to him of £750. J.M. to F.M., 1st March, 1893, Shepperson collection. Also Mrs. J.M. to Miss J.Tod, 9th February, 1895 (?) and 25th September, 1898, E.U.L. His father who died in 1899 at the age of 90 left him £1,000 straight-away 'as he had not done as well as the others,' ibid, 4th August, 1899. The Moirs left Lauderdale in March, 1900; John Moir almost died on the way home.


3. Papers in the possession of Miss M.L. Maitland Moir, Edinburgh. He devoted much of his time in retirement to bee-keeping, and formed the Moir Library of the Scottish Bee-Keepers Association which is kept in the Edinburgh City Library, and which is thought to be one of the largest collections on the subject in the world. He died on the 13th March, 1940, and left £7,198. There is an obituary in The Scotsman, 14th March, 1940, and a tribute in Other Lands, August, 1940, by Dr. Hastings K. Banda, entitled 'The Moirs of Nyasaland, An African's Tribute.'
last twenty years, and half the foundations are now covered by
the lake. 1 (John Moir would doubtless have approved the use
to which the bricks were put; when sending a £40 donation to
the Blantyre Mission in 1869 he had specified that only £5 should
be spent on the church building as we would rather have our
money spent in Mission work than in building expenses. We both
have a great love for the little old grass church we fear can
never be transferred to a larger building. 11) The achievement
of the Moirs was nevertheless very great. It is the wide range
of their activities both in terms of variety and of distance
which is most impressive. When the practical result of the
work which they did with their minute capital and small staff
is compared with vastly better financed and manned operations such
as I.B.E.A. or the early Belgian efforts on the Congo their
success is remarkable. 2 Fred Moir could fairly point out that
while it was said that when a trading station was founded the Congo

's the natives remove to a distance, where-over we have a
strong station our difficulty is to prevent the people
(froemen, not slaves,) from settling around us in too great
numbers.' 3

The difficulty of making any fair assessment of the Moirs'
capacities has already been pointed out. 4 The rest of the

1. J. Moir to D. M. Scott, 16th May, 1869, I.B.E. (2).
2. E.g. H. H. Stanley, The Congo and the Founding of its Free State,
2 volumes, London, 1895. The account of Stanley's efforts
with comparatively vast resources of capital and man-power to
got steamers on to the upper Congo make a very illuminating
comparison with the efforts of the lakes Company in the same
period. It took a staff of 11 Europeans with 118 carriers, 65
of them from Zanzibar, over a year to carry the parts of two
steamers totalling fifty tons for 52 miles, vol 1 p 240.
The Imperial British East Africa Company raised £590,000 capital
in its first year and in its third year was spending £100,000
a year with no return. Made Kiviett Hasphill, The History of
3. F. Moir, 'Englishmen and Arabs in East Africa,' Murray's
Magazine, November, 1883, p. 626. Joseph Conrad referring to
his experiences on the Congo in 1890 made the point to which
Frid Moir alluded in The Heart of Darkness, 1898. He wrote
of 'paths spreading over the empty land... and a solitude,
a solitude, nobody, not a hut. The population had cleared out a
long time ago. Well, if a lot of mysterious negroes armed with
all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling on the
road between Deal and Gravesend, catching the yokele right and
left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage
thereabouts would get empty very soon.'
4. See above, Chapter 3.
problem is that they tended to be blamed quite unjustly for deficiencies which they were powerless to remedy, such as shortage of steamer space, delays on the rivers due to lack of water navigation, and shortages of stock due to the same factors or, to lack of capital. They were also unfortunate in that they and the Company were the victims of what Sir Villiers Lister of the Foreign Office described as Harry Johnston's 'horribly rhetorical' despatches which, while intended to amuse, as much regard for truth and accuracy as the letters of Sir Philip Francis on Warren Hastings' administration of India.

Joseph Thomson, though more capable of objectivity, was almost as prone to hyperbole. He wrote of the Company in April, 1891:

'As far as the directors at home are concerned it must be said that astounding folly has been their prevailing characteristic and if the Company exists today its directors deserve no credit, for they acted especially in those latter years like people bent on their own destruction. That this was not altogether accomplished is due entirely to the unusual set of men they have in their employ. Among them of course stand out prominently the Messrs Hoar. Two more interesting or remarkable men it would be difficult to find. The very beau-ideal of commercial and philanthropic pioneers in wild country they have slaved and suffered with an unselfish enthusiastic devotion. But it is only as pioneers that they have shone: as managers of a going concern requiring unusual business capacities and breadth of view they have signally failed. They could lay splendid foundations but they could not build upon them and however hard it may seem it was necessary for them to leave that to other hands and brains.'

The weakness of this line of argument is of course that the Hoars never had the opportunity of managing a going concern. Throughout their association with the Company in Africa they were doing work of a pioneering type, organising a line of communications, choosing the sites of stations, and attempting to

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1. Quoted by Oliver, op. cit., p. 200.

2. Thomson to Rhodes, 26th April, 1891, B.S.A. Company papers, Salisbury, CT/1/16/6/.
establish trading relations with the various chiefs and people. In their organisation of the steamers on the rivers and lake, and of the tengas between Katunga's and Matepe, and along the Stevenson road, they had laid the foundations of the system of communications which was to continue in much the same, though greatly increased, form for most of twenty years. In their laying out of plantations they had, together with the Buchanan brothers, provided the basis of what was to be the first major agricultural export from Malawi—coffee. From their thirty or so agents and engineers, about half the European population of Malawi in July 1891, were provided the nucleus of Harry Johnston's civil service, as well as the leading staff of the rival transport firms which were established two or three years later.

Joseph Thomson had been extremely critical of the Company on his first arrival in the country; much of this criticism, for instance the allegations that the Arab War was due to 'the outrageous conduct of the A.S.C. on whom the whole responsibility rests,' or that the staff were paid £60 a year at a time when none was paid less than £120, was quite unjustified. He later modified his opinion, regretted some of his earlier strictures, and pointed out that the Company was, despite its obvious deficiencies, 'an admirable basis to work from' without which the B.S.A. Company or any other administration 'would have a vastly more difficult and expensive task if the intention of obtaining a footing to the north of the Zambesi is still maintained.'

Most of his criticism had been aimed at the very poor stock of goods which was available in the Company's stores on his arrival in Africa in mid 1890. This was due primarily to the almost complete block on the river between October, 1889 and March, 1890 which was the result of the conflict with the Portuguese and Serpa Pinto's invasion of the Shire. Thomson

1. Ibid, and Thomson to Rhodes, 18th August, 1889, Rhodes House, Charters, 3A 29.
2. Thomson to Cawston, 10th June, 1891, Cawston papers, vol 3.
himself had been fired at by the Portuguese early in July, 1890
when the James Stevenson was arrested at the Ruo and its crew
were taken for trial to quelimane, thus causing a further break in
the Company's supply line. 1 Another cause of the poor state of
the stores at this time was the shortage of capital in Scotland
where only £5,000 of the £20,000 promised by the British South
Africa Company as part of the terms of the amalgamation
agreement had been paid; but this was secondary as no amount of
capital would have altered the situation so long as goods could
not be imported. 2 The Company's competitor, Eugene Sharrer,
was at this time at an advantage because his goods were brought
up in boats while the Portuguese only interfered with the
running of the steamers. In March, 1891 Thomson was still
complaining that there was not a yard of calico in the stores,
that the Tonga porters who had gone with him to the Kafue had
not been paid, and that the James Stevenson was expected to
'collapse at any trip.' 3

It was at this stage, when the state of the Company in Africa
clearly left a great deal to be desired, that the B.S.A. Company
entered into an agreement with the Foreign Office, without
consulting the Lakes Company, for the handing over to Johnston of
the Company's steamers whenever he needed them for the sum of
£2,500 per annum. Johnston wrote to the Lakes Company informing
them that he would require the use of the James Stevenson in June
for the transport of his troops and their hundred tons of
equipment. 4 The Company had already committed itself to carry
out large contracts for the L.M.S. and the White Fathers' mission
on Lake Tanganyika, and to carry in at about the same time the
first party of the Berlin mission who were to establish themselves

1. A. C. Hoss to W. Churchill, Vice-Consul, Mozambique, 24th July,
   1891, encloses J. Thomson to Hoss, 17th July, 1891, F.O. 84/2052.
2. See above, chapter 5.
3. Thomson to Rhodes, 26th April, 1891, op. cit.
4. Anderson to Johnston, 24th March, 1891, F.O. 84/2113, draft. J.
   Stephen to Dr. J. Stewart, 24th March, 1891, Salisbury; and
   Johnston to A.L.C., 27th March, 1891, copy in Bruce papers,
   Shepperson collection.
at the north end of Lake Malawi among the Nyakusa in the German sphere of influence beyond the Songwe river.\textsuperscript{1} They were at the same time trying to carry out the orders of the Livingstone Mission, to compete with Sharror in the Shire Highlands, where he had succeeded in taking over much of the Blantyre Mission's trade. They were also under attack by Alfred Sharpe and Joseph Thomson for what was regarded as their failure fully to exploit the opportunity of buying ivory on Lake Tanganyika which was presented by the closing of the land routes from that lake to the east coast.\textsuperscript{2} This criticism was somewhat unjust as Fred Moir had himself been to Ujiji in the latter months of 1890 and had returned with about three tons of ivory.\textsuperscript{3} In view of these varied commitments it was reasonable that the directors of the Company should have repudiated the agreement, and while promising to do their best to transport Johnston's party, should have pointed out that they could not allow him to have sole use of the steamers. Johnston himself was not aware of the complexity of the relations between the two companies and found it difficult to understand that the Lake Company should be in a position to act independently of the South Africa Company which he believed to have acquired a controlling interest in it.\textsuperscript{4}

The question of the use of the steamers bedevilled relations between the Company and the Administration for the first two or three years of the latter's existence. Johnston was an autocrat who could not tolerate dependence on any other power.

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid, and Weatherley to Harris, 8th May, 1891, CT/1/11/5/1/.

\textsuperscript{2} Thomson to Rhodes, 26th April, 1891, op. cit. Sharpe to Johnston, 26th December, 1890, with Johnston to Salisbury, 2nd March, 1891, F.O. 84/2114.

\textsuperscript{3} Mrs. F. Moir, A Lady's letters from Central Africa, op. cit., p 86.

\textsuperscript{4} Johnston to Weatherley, 8th December, 1891, B.S.A Company papers, microfilm, Rhodes House, Oxford.
within his protectorate, but there was no alternative to the use of the Company’s steamers on the rivers and lake. 1 It was bad enough that these steamers were not directly under his authority, it was worse that he had to wait his turn for goods with the mission and planting interests in the country. 2 The gunboats provided by the navy for the Zambesi proved unable to assist in the transport of goods and were under orders not to act as carriers for the Administration, even if they had the capacity which they did not. 3 The situation on the rivers was eased by the latter months of 1894 when the Company’s fleet had been increased and Eugene Sharrer had placed two steamers on the route relieving the pressure on the James Stevenson and the Lady Blyss which had until then to do almost all the transport work. 4 Three gunboats were provided for the lake and the upper Shire and were launched in the latter months of 1893, but they suffered from the same deficiencies as the river ones, and were, according to Johnston, as suitable for use on the lake as a Thames steamer would be in the English Channel. 5 Until the launching of the 350 ton vessel, H.M.S. Guandalen, which was carried up

1. cf. comments of Sir Percy Anderson on Johnston’s draft licence regulations, 13th June, 1891: ‘This is very arbitrary,’ and ‘what should we say of this if it were made by the Portuguese?’ F.O. 84/2114, and minute by Anderson of 19th May, 1895, ‘We spent months… in trying to make him understand that his autocracy must be kept within bounds. I hoped that to some extent we may have succeeded, but he soon has he got back than he reverts to his old ways we may only hope to pull him up at once, for we do not know what he may do if unchecked,’ F.O. 2/80.

2. Johnston was certain that the ‘local officials are under orders from home when they thus put spokes in our wheels,’ and protested: ‘as long as it rests with them to take or refuse my supplies so long shall I have to concern myself with their favourable or unfavourable attitude to my administration.’ Johnston to Salisbury, 27th June, 1892, F.O. 84/2179.

3. Ibid, and Johnston to Salisbury, 20th February, 1892, F.O. 84/2179.

4. A. Sharpe, Report on the Trade of British Central Africa, for 1894, April, 1895, Consular reports, C.7504. By the 31st December, 1894, the A.M.C. had increased its fleet by two steamers of 70 tons total capacity, and Sharrer had two steamers and a steam launch of 50 tons total capacity.

by the Company in 1890-9, the Administration continued to be dependent on the Donira for all its transport work on the lake and for the carriage of troops for the expeditions against Makanjira and Hlosi. 1

The cause of the torrent of abuse and invective, some of it quite amusing, which Harry Johnston aimed at the Company, its managers and directors, between 1891 and 1894 was his dependence on them for the running of his administration. His attacks reached their high point in December 1891 when, together with everyone else in the protectorate, he was suffering from the effects of a dearth of calico, which was due not to the inefficiency of the Company, but, as the Blantyre Mission paper pointed out, to the unprecedented lowness of the rivers which had caused a complete stop to imports. The situation can not have been eased by the fact that no ocean going steamer had called at Chinde for six months, and that there was as yet no regular service from Europe to that port, which had been laid out by Johnston in June.

It may be worth quoting, as a specimen of the genre, from a letter which he wrote to the Secretary of the B.S.A. Company at this time:

'There is nothing for it. You must make up your minds to trust me, for say one year, with the supreme direction of all things in British Central Africa. I must be able to say to one of your trading agents 'build a store here', 'Give six and threepence a pound for ivory', 'You are selling that cloth too dear!', 'You must send an indent for twelve gross of brass pans', 'Supply Crawshay instantly with one dozen child's tops, 26 wax dolls, 3,000 yards of cotton, 30 packets of fancy stationery, five bales of imitation cashmere shawls, and send them off to Lake Mweru tomorrow.' I know as much about your African trade as your Moirs and your Evans. It is twelve years ago today since I landed in Tunis and I have studied Africa ever since. Besides, for the first year or two in my great task of bringing five hundred thousand square miles of Central Africa under British control, the shop is second only to the sword. But it is a shop which must be wisely and judiciously managed, and its shopboys must not be allowed to baulk my efforts by cheating an

1. A.S.C. Minutes, 8th April, 1890, the Company contracted to carry up the gunboat for £5,250. See also, S.C. Williams, 'Some old steamships of Nyasaland,' N.J., vol 10, part 2, p. 42.
African chief over damaged jam or pretending that half a crown and a rupee are just the same value. In plain words the African Lakes Company is loathed by everyone in the land. Its policy has been idiotic because its silly little frauds have not even profited it. However enough on this score. If you start your Trading Department in the way I have sketched out, send out, with public or private instructions to work under my directions in all things, two good men of the accountant type, and for a change, just for a change, send Englishmen. The manager should, (let us say) reside at Mandala (if the Vampire is really dead and a good heavy slab on its tomb) and Monteith Fotheringham, the present acting manager of the A.L.C. should be transferred to Karonga, his old post on Nyassa. But if the Vampire (poor old thing, I am half ashamed of hustling it so,) is still stalking abroad as a Northern Committee and you have a delicacy about displacing it, then your general manager had better live at Zomba, near me...they must be fairly young men, good book-keepers and men of business, spruce, temperate, clean and pleasant mannered, struggling with me to keep up a higher tone of society in this embryo Colony by dressing for dinner in nice white dinner-jackets and behaving like quiet low-voiced gentlemen. Fotheringham is a good, honest, hard-working "chap" but he is pig-headed, quarrelsome and is too much imbued with African Laoustriaa "nearness" to be fitted for a great commercial post. He would do well back at his old post at Karonga... for goodness sake do not saddle yourself with the Noirs anymore. Pensioning them off would be cheaper.

It would have been ironical, if it had been tragic, that at the very moment that Johnston was writing this letter at Zomba, the Company's lake steamer, the Dombira, which had been converted temporarily into a gunboat, was stranded on a sandbank under heavy fire from the coast near Makanjira's town where the commander of Johnston's troops, Captain Kaguirc, had been killed on the previous day, and where two of the Company's engineers were seriously wounded. A third, McEwen, was killed four days later together with the Sikhs' doctor and several of the Tonga steamer assistants when they went on shore to attempt to reclaim the captain's body. The steamer, and the

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Administration's seven pounder gun were only saved by the bravery of one of the engineers, Urquhart, who despite severe wounds organized the shifting of the steamer under cover of darkness. Nothing would have been known of the fate of Maguire, McLewin or the other members of the party if it had not been for the escape with equally severe wounds of one of the Tonga crew members who managed to return to the steamer in spite of heavy fire.¹

Johnston did occasionally concede that the Company might have a case. While pressing for the despatch of steamers for the lake he wrote to Lord Salisbury in February, 1892:

'I can not stand the strain of relying on the A.L.C. steamers much longer. They are not wholly unreasonable in the objection to divert their vessels from their proper function.'²

In September, 1893, he asked the directors of the B.S.A. Company to bear in mind that however much he might have abused the Lakes Company's directors he had always been on good terms with their staff in Africa, especially with Fotheringham who, he said, had been very reasonable over the settlement of the Company's land claims.³ His attacks on the Lakes Company had, so long as amalgamation was projected, caused considerable alarm to the directors of the B.S.A. Company.⁴ Sir John Kirk, who would have become a director of that company if the amalgamation had gone through, wrote to say that he could not understand his attitude to the Lakes Company 'whose whole property and interest' was involved with that of his paymasters.⁵

² Johnston to Salisbury, 26th February, 1892, F.C. 84/2179.
³ Johnston to B.S.A. Company, 2nd September, 1893, Salisbury, CT/1/16/4/1/.
⁴ Weatherley to Johnston, 11th March, 1892, draft, 'the directors desire me to remind you that whatever assists the Lakes Company assists our Company,' B.S.A. Company minutes, microfilm, Rhodes House.
⁵ Kirk to Cawston, 6th February, 1892, Cawston papers, volume 4.
The fear that Johnston was discriminating against the Lakes Company's land claims was one of the causes of his quarrel with Rhodes in the summer of 1893. Rhodes protested that Johnston had sanctioned all land concessions in the protectorate except those of the Lakes Company and remarked: 'This you will admit is absurd.' He was, he said, aware of Johnston's feelings towards the Company but asked him to remember that:

'they were in possession of the country and it was better at first to work with them than to oppose them. They say that they have been there since 1878 and they have the whole Scotch sentiment behind them.'

Johnston acted judiciously in limiting the Company's claims in the Shire Highlands to about 36,000 acres, but it was highly questionable whether he was justified in giving comparatively enormous concessions to Eugene Sharrer who had acquired his claims by methods in comparison with which those of the Lakes Company were distinctly enlightened. The Buchanan brothers and A.L. Bruce were also allowed very large claims over densely populated land, with almost no provision made for the requirements of shifting cultivation. The arbitrary nature of the settlement was illustrated by the granting to the B.S.A. Company, through the Lakes Company, of the whole of the North Nyasa district on the basis of the repudiated 1885 treaties and further treaties of 1890 which had been made in the same form as claims in the Mlanje district which he described as 'outrageous.' He was, of course, under strong pressure from Rhodes and the B.S.A. Company to provide them with something to show their anxious

1. Rhodes to Johnston, 4th April, 1893, Ct/1/16/4/1/.
2. Ibid.
4. This point is made by B.S. Krishnamurthy, op. cit., p 120. The North Nyasa treaties had never been repudiated by the Agonde, but they had been repudiated by the Company.
share-holders for the money which had been given for his administration, but there was little consistency in the settlement of the claims, and his remark that 'for £3,000 the Lakes Company could have had half Nyasaland, as it is they spent £600 and have claims that no lawyer could accept let alone defend,' did not put a very high valuation on the protectorate.

He may have hoped that the giving of very large concessions of land to these interests would encourage investment, and the development of imports and exports from which he could raise revenue. He certainly hoped that they could be induced to go into the trade and transport business in competition with the Lakes Company. He regretted that the Lakes Company was not a trading company 'but the most miserable grocery business you can imagine,' and hoped that the B.S.A. Company itself would start a trading transport business. He could not understand how it was that they allowed the 'mismanagement to remain in the hands of the rotten Glasgow directorate who send out a troop of the worst class of rowdy uncivilised Scotchmen to conduct a business which if properly managed would become amazingly wealthy and powerful. As it is I feel so strongly against the present policy of the Lakes Company that to maintain British interests and develop the country I am compelled to encourage every rival. I am forcing on the Buchanans, Sharrers and many others into the Nyasa trade, because left to the A.L.C. British trade on the Lake Nyasa will always be kept in a crippled condition ... the riff-raff of Glasgow are not the best material with which to develop the commerce of British Central Africa.'

1. The B.S.A. Company here by this stage standing at a discount. Johnston was scornful of the draft agreement on the division of the land claims in the protectorate between the A.L.C. and B.S.A. Company. 'I read it with amazement. I could not believe that a grown man like Hawksley, and an experienced lawyer should have been so easily let in. I can only account for it by again calling the L.C. a Vampire and supposing that the B.S.A. Company lies as much within its horrible spells as did the poor Vampire haunted maidens of Mediaeval times.' He was 'disgusted with the whole agreement' and expected to hear that he was to 'hand over the Residency at Zomba to be the home of the A.L.C. Manager.' Johnston to Weatherley, 23rd July, 1893, B.S.A. Company minutes, microfilm, Rhodes House.

2. Johnston to Weatherley, 22nd October, 1892, ibid.

The latter comment might have carried a little more weight if it were not that more than half of the first fifteen civilian members of Johnston’s administration had been recruited by, or associated with, the African Lakes Company. J.L.Nicol, who became Vice-Consul for South Nyasa, had been recruited by John Haig and served with the Company for eight years, most of them at Karonga. John Kydd, who founded Rhodesia station on Lake Mweru, had worked for the Company for four years and had played a prominent part in the Arab War as well as making treaties in 1890 along the line of the Stevenson road.¹ H.A.Hillier, who became the first head of the Customs department, at Chiromo had been with the Company for three years, becoming traffic manager, and his assistant, J.R.Halloch, had also been an employee. J.C.Bainbridge, who founded Fort Rosebery station on the Luapula, and died there in 1894, had been recruited by the Company but joined the administration almost as soon as he arrived in the country.² Alfred Sharpe and Richard Crawshay,³ both gentlemen hunters, would have been insulted by the suggestion that they had been employed by the Company, but they had shot elephants on contract for it and had served as ‘volunteers’ during the Arab War. Both had worked for the Company during the interim period, 1889-91, but would have regarded themselves as employees of the B.S.A. Company. A.C.Ross, who had joined the Company in 1882, left it in 1891 to become a full-time member of the Consular service as Vice-Consul at Qualimane where he had combined the posts of A.L.C. agent and Vice-Consul for four years.

1. He had died before April, 1894. See Johnston’s Report on The first Three Years Administration of British Central Africa, Parliamentary Papers, 1894, Africa, (6).

2. L.W.B.C.A. May, 1894.

3. Crawshay was probably the least outstanding of Johnston’s appointments, Joseph Thomson described him as ‘the laughing stock of Nyasaland,’ Thomson to Gwinston, 10th June, 1891, Gwinston papers, vol 4. Edward Alston thought him ‘a terrible ass, quite mad.’ He was Vice-Consul at Deep Bay for North Nyassa until 1896. Alston diaries, 10th December, 1895.
He was not strictly a member of Johnston’s administration as he was responsible to the Consul at Mozambique but he had done work for Johnston on the Zambezi and in the Shire Highlands during 1890.1 Ralph Belcher, who had been captain of the Universities Mission steamer, the Charles Jansen, before joining the A.L.C., for a short time, was employed in the B.C.A. Administration, and later succeeded Ross as Vice-Consul at Quelimane. The six civilian members of the Administration in the first two years of its existence who had never been associated with the Company, were John Buchanan, who needs no introduction, but who was definitely Scotch; H.C. Marshall, who had been recruited by Buchanan on the lower Shire in 1890 where he was a free-lance hunter and trader – he was probably Scotch;2 Gilbert Stevenson, a cousin or nephew of James Stevenson, the founder of the Lakes Company – he was definitely Scotch and probably came from Glasgow;3 J.C. King, whose origins are obscure; Alexander Whyte, the naturalist and gardener, who was also Scotch, and William Wheeler, the accountant, who had worked for the Union Steamship Company at Quelimane. Johnston also offered both Monteith Petheringham4 and John Moir5 posts in the Administration – they declined – but even without them it is clear that his debt to the Company in terms of man-power was considerable. The loss of good men to the Administration continued to be a problem to the Company for many years. In February, 1890, the directors resolved to point out

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1. Mrs. F. Moir, A Lady’s Letters from Central Africa, op. cit., 24th May, 1890, Ross arrived unexpectedly at Mambala to do a report on the political situation in the Shire Highlands at the Hoc for Johnston. He was probably the only member of the Company’s staff in this period to hold a degree. He was an M.A. of Aberdeen. He did very well in the Consular service retiring in 1922 after eleven years as Consul at San Francisco.

2. Buchanan to Salisbury, 12th July, 1890, P.O. 24/263.

3. A.L.C. Minutes, 28th April, 1892. He was Collector at Fort Haster for some time. He was severely wounded in the attack on Limonde early in 1893 and was killed in a shooting accident in 1896. L.C.B.C.A., September, 1896. He was also a cousin of H.C. Stevenson.

4. Johnston to Kacebery, 26th March, 1894, P.O. 2/66. Johnston said that he had offered Moir a post in the Administration, “being sorry for the rather abrupt way in which the Lakes Company had thrown him off.” He added that Moir had refused because he wanted to be free to engage in planting, but that he had later attempted to get a post.
to Alfred Sharpe, then Commissioner for the protectorate, the difficulties which were caused by the continual 'luring away' of the best men by the Administration.

Johnston must have been fully conscious of the extent to which he was building upon foundations which had been laid by the missions and the Company. It was unfortunate that in spite of his dependence on people who had worked with the Company for staffing his civil administration, and his dependence on the Company for transport facilities on the rivers and the lake, the policies which he attempted to effect from the day of his arrival in the country were diametrically opposed to those which had guided the Company and the missions. His remark that 'the shop is second only to the sword,' revealed the wide gulf which separated him from men like John Moir who hoped that they could combat the slave trade through the provision of alternative sources of imported goods for which there was an undoubted demand. In his memorandum on the administration of British Central Africa of July 1890 he had spoken of the necessity of adopting a policy of 'divide and rule', and in an earlier paper on his west African experience he had stated that it was sometimes necessary 'to educate the negro by force... leaving him to thank us and understand us afterwards, when by our teaching we have raised him to a condition to do so.'

1. Quoted above, Johnston to Weatherley, 16th December, 1891.
Within two days of his arrival with Captain Maguire and his Sikhs at Chirimo in July, 1891 he had despatched them to make a punitive expedition against a Yao chief, Chikumbu, who was said to have been causing trouble to two planters on the slopes of Mlanje. Johnston was in no position to know the facts of the case, and an offer of mediation by the Blantyre Mission who were well acquainted with Chikumbu, was rejected. Their paper had earlier feared 'provocation to violence' on the part of one of the planters who had settled on Chikumbu's frontier in a 'strongly fortified' state. When Johnston came to do his land settlement he found that Henry Brown, the planter in question, produced a claim dated five months before he (Brown) entered the country. In other words this first 'punitive expedition' had been made in support of a claim which Johnston himself conceded to be fraudulent.

In the chapter of his book entitled 'Founding the Protectorate,' Johnston refers to thirty military expeditions carried out by his forces in the five years from 1891-6. There were undoubtedly many more which he did not record. On his arrival in the country he was determined to use his troops to bring about the submission of all those chiefs who retained independence of action. With the exceptions of the Jumbe of Melita Kote, who had been paid a subsidy since 1899, and the chiefs of the northern Ngoni, who were protected by their close relationship with Dr. Laws

2. L.M.B.C.A., August, 1891.
3. Ibid, April, 1891.
6. e.g. Alston diaries, Salisbury, 1895-7.
and the Livingstonia Mission, there was not a single independent and powerful chief who escaped 'punishment' in the years before 1900. Within six months of his arrival in the country his forces experienced a disastrous reverse through the loss of Captain Maguire who had been attempting to destroy two of Makanjira's dhows which had escaped a previous unannounced attack on his own town.  

1 Unsuccessful attacks on Kawinga and Zarafi, the latter of which was repulsed with heavy loss, showed the Yao chiefs very clearly that the European Administration was far from invulnerable. An attack on Livonde on the upper Shire early in 1893 almost ended in disaster; the loss of the Domira which happened to be passing down river at the time was only averted by the arrival of von Hiisemann's German Anti-Slavery Society expedition with a Ketchkiss gun and twenty Sudanese soldiers. 

2 The systematic attempt to destroy all Makanjira's dhows was a direct blow at the base of his economic and political power. It was also calculated to destroy the traditional pattern of trade. This was the antithesis of the policy of the Moirs, and one of the Lakes Company, which had always been to attempt to gain influence and bring about change in the nature of the trade through participation in it with as many as possible of the local powers. W. F. Johnson, writing in the Nyasa News lamented that the policy of the Administration appeared to be to undermine the basis of the Yao way of life which was trade. He regretted that they were making perpetual enemies of the Yao when they should have been encouraging them to use their very real talent for, and love of, commerce over a wider sphere. He felt that they should be encouraged to trade to the west in

1 Johnston, op. cit., p 102.  
2 Ibid., pp 116-117. They were engaged at that time in the transport of the steamer, the Hedwig von Hiisemann, on the lake, and were on their way to the German sphere at the north end.
powder and guns for ivory. Although they would have stopped short at promotion of the arms trade, the Moire would certainly have favoured this more positive approach to the problem which was posed by the powerful slave trading Yao chiefs. There could be no doubt that they were engaged in the slave trade, but it was equally certain that the traditional slave trade to the coast was dying a natural death by the early 1890's.

The destruction of Arab power on the German coast, the bringing of Zanzibar under direct British control, and the increased activity of the Portuguese on their coast all tended to make the carrying on of the trade more difficult. At the same time the provision of opportunities for employment in the Shire Highlands was already, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, beginning to draw people out of the traditional Yao economy where the only means of acquiring cloth was through journeys to the coast. Followers of Malelaia and Kawinga were

1. *Kwansa News* (the journal of the U.M.C.A. in Malawi.)
   'The Yoes as a defence and suggestion,' November, 1893.
   'Burn dhows and lake-side villages and Yoes will be united in deadly hate... and thrown more and more on eastem, Swahili and halfbred influences... encourage their dhow building, let them have powder to trade, with in the far interior.'

2. e.g. W. Churchill in Consular report on Trade of Mozambique for 1893, 4th July, 1894, in Parliamentary Papers, 1895, vol. 39, on the overland trade in slave and ivory, and on the consequences of cheaper freight to and from Lake Malawi.
coming down to work for the Church of Scotland mission at Domasi
on the boundary of Kawinga's area. Among those who had
worked on the building of Blantyre Church were men from the
southern Ngoni on the upper Shire. Captain Maguire, himself,
wrote three days before he was killed that but for the meanness
of the Lakes Company, the people on the lake would have been
stopped from sending goods to Kilwa and Qelimano overland long
before, and that 'Mponda's people for one lot strongly object to
going to the coast.' He was wrong in attributing to meanness
the price for ivory which the Company could give on the lake which
was determined by the cost of freight, but he was probably right
that a higher price would have led to the trade being diverted
into the Company's hands. Ironically the establishment of the

1. See above, chapter 4, especially Hetherwick to D.G. Scott, 26th
June, 1892, MS 7534. In this letter he gave an account of the
history of Kawinge, the part he had played in defeating the
Songea Ngoni invasion of the Shire Highlands in 1883, and the
visit to him in June, 1891, at his request, of Buchanan and
Mr. H. Scott of the Domasi Mission, during which he had signed
a treaty. There had been no reports of slaving by Kawinga for
over a year, but in November, 1891 Captain Maguire approached
Kawinge's with a large party 'altogether in the face of African
custom' to 'procure Kawinge's promise to renounce slavery.'
The party was opposed and withdrew, burning villages and looting
ivory on the way. Kawinge then sent a couple of tusk which
were accepted in lieu of gun taxes, which gave ground for
believing that the real object of the expedition 'was for the
purpose of forcing Kawinge to submit to taxation.' Since this
incident there had been reports of 'disabling carriers' away
their loads. Hetheringham had sent to ask for the loads but
had been told that if he wanted them he could come and fight for
them. Hetherwick feared the effects of a second repulse on the
Domasi Mission, which had been on good terms with Kawinge for
some time. He regretted the 'utterly unjust and unfair
treatment to which Kawinge has been subjected' and 'would not
have considered so arbitrary proceedings as possible even in
a Portuguese colony.'

2. L.N.A. B.C.A., October, 1880, report by J. McIlvain on the building
work to that date. Of about a thousand men who had already
worked on the Church which had been begun only a few months before
fifty were Ngoni from the upper Shire. There can be no doubt
that Maguire intended to attack Kawinge at this time. Johnston
referred to 'our abortive attack on his positions in 1891,'

3. G. Maguire to Johnston, 12th December, 1891, Johnston papers,
Salisbury. Maguire was killed on the 15th December.
Administration which so much increased the volume of imports, and reduced the overheads on the running of the steamers, was to bring about a situation in which the prices offered on the lake could be very considerably reduced, but the policy of the Administration was at the same time destroying the commercial influence of the Yao and driving their most powerful chiefs into exile over the Portuguese frontier. Johnston's policy of 'shoot first and ask questions later,' as applied first to Chiikumba, then to Makandanjii, Mponda and to Makanjira, led all the Yao chiefs to believe that there was no alternative to resistance. There was no diplomatic contact between the Administration and Makanjira before his town was attacked. There was very little between it and Mponda, and yet Johnston could express the view that Mponda was quite pleased at the bombardment of his town because 'now they know it is no use to resist the white man.' Maguire's death and the unsuccessful attack on Zafafi in February, 1892, which resulted in the loss of the Administration's seven pounder gun, far from teaching the Yao that it was useless to resist the white man, broke down their fear and stiffened their will to resist. Johnston had thrown away the strongest card which he held, the myth of European invincibility. Strategically the failure of these attacks was disastrous. By 1894 Kasinga had gone over to the offensive, and during 1895 the Shire Highlands were subjected to a concerted attack by Kasinga, Zafafi and Matapwiri.

The men who attacked Malamia's people near Domasi were said to have been so confident of victory that they tied cloths to the house to

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1. Johnston to Salisbury, 24th November, 1891, F.C. 84/2114. Sir Viliers Lister minuted on a despatch of Johnston from Uganda, 13th October, 1899, F.C. 2/204: 'Sir H. Johnston's method is simple: treaty or compulsion, your money or your life. It answered well in Central Africa where all recalcitrant chiefs were impressed away and where the area was comparatively small: but it was preceded by many small wars.' Quoted by Oliver, op. cit., p 299.
make claims rather than burning them. The repulse of this attack marked the end of the Yao as a major threat to the security of the Administration in the Shire Highlands, but it is questionable whether they need ever have become a threat.

A further ground for criticism of Johnston's policy was that it was more expensive than the resources of the protectorate could at that stage bear. Moir's view that any administration should be on as small a scale as possible was shared by Joseph Thomson and John Kirk among others. Thomson could see no need for 'any more elaborate machinery,' it was very unlikely that there would be a rush of Europeans into the country needing to be kept in order, and the Angoni who only a few years ago harried Blantyre with fire and the spear now come down in thousands to cultivate the plantations and work for the missions. The Yao live peacefully with the Manganja they were slaughtering by the thousands and selling as slaves... there will not again be a 'North End War'.

He later heard that:

"Mr. Johnston means to launch into a costly system which the country will not be able to manage for a generation to come. From all we know of Nyassaland as yet it is but a poor region. Its wealth is entirely prospective."}

1. L.W.B.C.A., February, 1895, Because of the danger to the Domasi Mission and the attacks on Nalena's people which accompanied this campaign, the Blantyre Mission were not opposed to the final assault on Kapinga, though they would have maintained that his alienation was avoidable. It was said that in the event of their attack being successful Kapinga intended to settle at the Residency, Zomba, and Zarafo intended to take over the Blantyre Church. R.C. F. Maugham, Africa As I Have Known It, London, 1929, pp 127-8.

2. Johnston had no high opinion of the Yao as an enemy. 'The Yao is not a brave enemy. He is a wily, skulking robber. You fight with him at a great disadvantage in his own country, where there is plenty of cover; in the open plains, he is too cowardly to come up within range of your guns.' Report on the first Three Years Administration, op. cit., pp 23-4.

3. Thomson to Rhodes, 26th April, 1891, G/1/16/6/, Salisbury.

4. Thomson to Cawston, 10th June, 1891, Cawston papers, vol 4.
Thomson was not surprised to hear of the Makanjira disaster. He only wondered that "the fall did not come sooner," Kirk, it will be remembered, had always distrusted 'Quixotic' or large schemes in Africa and believed that all work there must be slow and cautious. On the news of the Makanjira affair he commented:

"if Johnston is to have a war policy we shall have to know at whose expense. £10,000 will be nothing if we are to have war carried on by Indian troops." He was certain that the B.S.A. Company should come to an agreement with the Foreign Office on the question of who was to pay the overdrafts, for Johnston had no idea of the vast amount of money it will take to force government in Africa or of the difficulty there will be in collecting a local revenue.

Kirk was right; Johnston had originally planned the spending of £32,000 a year on the administration of British Central Africa under the B.S.A. Company; when it became clear that the charter was not going to be extended to include Nyasaland he had reduced his estimate to £10,000 a year. In fact he spent about £30,000 a year during the first two years of the Administration, excluding the expenses of the gunboats on the river and lake which were provided out of the Navy vote. After three years he had built up overdrafts of £30,000 which were eventually paid by the Treasury which provided a grant in aid from 1894. In December 1893 he had estimated his expenditure for the coming year at £35,000 and his revenue at £7,000. In a typically rhetorical despatch begging the Foreign Office to provide the money for

2. Kirk to Cawston, 14th January, 1892, ibid.
3. Ibid. 6th February, 1892.
the continuation of his policy of slave trade suppression he
made it clear that his heavy expenditure was the result of
the strong-armed tactics which he had attempted to employ against
the Yao chiefs; he came much closer to the truth than he intended
when he wrote that if this policy had to be abandoned owing to
lack of financial support 'we might live here in perfect peace
with the Arab; the Yaos and the other slave-trading people with
whom our quarrels have lain since the commencement of an active
opposition to the slave trade.' He went so far as to argue
that if the active policy were abandoned 'we might raise a large
revenue by levying an export tax on slaves.' Although this
remark could not have been intended to be taken seriously, he
was guilty of gross exaggeration as to the virulence of the slave
trade. On his own admission he had been able in the first three
years of his administration, during which the effective power
of Makanjira and Mponda had been broken, to liberate no more
than 864 slaves, and of these probably only a very small
proportion were in transit for sale on the coast. The total
expenditure of the Administration from 1891-6 when Johnston
left the country was estimated at £165,669, of this £123,664

1. Johnston to Rosebery, 16th December, 1893, F.0. 2/55.
2. Johnston to Canning, Secretary, B.S.A. Company, 10th March,
1894, F.0. 2/65.
3. Johnston, Report on First Three Years Administration, op. cit.,
p 27. Dr. Wordsworth Pooles, a doctor with the Administration
cast doubt on the figure which Johnston quoted for released
slaves. He wrote: 'and we kill their men and burn their
houses and collar their cattle and ivory and cloth and
beads and their women whom we call slaves and to whom we
give papers of manumission, which papers are found again
afterwards thrown away in heaps, for obviously a paper
saying so and so has been freed by me this day—signed so and
so, is not really much use to a free woman.' Quoted by
was spent on police and military expenditure, and this excludes almost all the naval expenditure.¹

Depending as he did at first on the subsidy from the B.S.A. Company, and latterly on the grants-in-aid provided by a reluctant Treasury Johnston set about the levying of direct taxation on the African population. The first tax he attempted to levy was a ten shilling one on the possession of guns. In the Shire Highlands, which was only area where the tax could be raised, guns were owned by most of the population who used them for hunting. In a country where payment in cash was almost unknown, and in which there was virtually no coin in circulation outside the European community, and where a good wage was three shillings a month, a tax at this rate was clearly unjust.²

From early in 1892 Johnston attempted to raise a hut tax of six shillings a year in the areas which were regarded as settled. This was strenuously opposed by the Blantyre Mission, and would certainly have been opposed, if he had been in the country, by John Moir who had recommended in 1889 that no taxation should be raised from the people at first.³ Even Johnston realised that the rate which he proposed was beyond the capacity of the people in the Shire Highlands to pay and he reduced it to three shillings per hut per year. He stated his opinion that:

'A gentle insistence that the native should contribute his fair share to the revenue of the country by paying his hut-tax, is all that is necessary on our part to secure his taking that share of life's labour which no human being should evade.'⁴

2. L.W.B.C.A., November, 1891.
3. Ibid. June, August, 1892, and February, 1893. The hut-tax was begun to be collected in June, 1892 at 6 shillings, and reduced to three shillings by February, 1893.
A 'gentle insistence' on the payment of hut-tax may have been the ideal, but it was far from being the practice.

There is ample evidence of the devastation which was the inevitable accompaniment of punitive expeditions, many of which were no more than hut-tax wars. The Blantyre paper described the aftermath of the first attack on Chikhamba during which the Sikhe in their enthusiasm burnt the houses of the mission itself on Mlanje.¹ Hetherwick described the burning of Miteche's near Chiredzulo for his refusal to hoe the Zomba road and to pay gun licences. He commented:

'This procedure will be the ruin of us all and can not fail to alienate the native from the European, the old confidence is being broken down, the English used to be spoken of by all as the people who came with peace—now the 'war' of the English is a common phrase. War at Mlanje, war on Miraende, war on the lake, where-ever the administration has gone it has been burning, plundering and destroying villages... we are sowing a great crop of trouble for the future which we ourselves or our successors will have to reap... has Johnston power to force taxes in this way?²

Another member of the Blantyre Mission reported in June, 1893 that the situation at Mlanje was approaching a crisis, and prophesied that:

'if the present policy of forced labour and tax-gathering by fire and sword be persisted in we shall have either a race war which will sweep the country of Europeans, or a general exodus of the native population of the Shire Highlands.'³

Shortly after the Moirs moved to Mlanje in August, 1893, Mrs John Moir reported the burning of villages in the area for tax collection, and a retaliatory attack by Mkanda's men which was

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1. L.W.B.C.A., September, 1891.

2. Hetherwick to Dr. A. Scott, 13th June, 1892, with J. McMurtrie to Rosebery, 29th August, 1892, MS 7534.

3. A. Currie, Mlanje, 12th June, 1893, MS 7534.
repelled by some of the other Mlanje planters with the help of their Tonga workers, some of whom were killed. An eye-witness of the original attack, almost certainly John Moir himself, writing under the pseudonym of 'Pro Bono Public', described the 'natives rushing from their burning homes, the wall of the distressed and flying women, the flames of burning huts shooting into the sky with columns of smoke and the crack of rifles a scene scarcely worthy of our boasted peaceful conquest and our suppression of slavery, our religious profession, our African philanthropy and our boasted Christian aims for Africa's redemption. There is no need for all this wreck and ruin to collect taxes.'

John Moir protested to the Foreign Office about these raids in the Mlanje district, and Johnston was called upon to answer his charges. He replied by accusing Moir of pretensions to be the great man of the neighbourhood to whom all 'palavers' must be referred, and of taking advantage of his knowledge of the language to "meddle in native affairs." He dismissed the charges with the remark that: 'These little wars were always forced on us by the aggression of the native chiefs who always fired the first shot.' This was in direct and flagrant contradiction of eye-witness accounts which insisted that Mkanda's attacks had been in retaliation for attacks which had been made on him. The activities of the military under Johnston's supervision continued to be a cause of concern to the Moirs, who were forced to stand by as spectators while their years of work to win the goodwill of the people were being undermined. Mrs. Moir commented in December, 1895:

"if they go on as they will have no natives to do any work in any of their places. It is all shooting and burning."

1. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 20th, 27th October, 1893, L.U.L.
   Edward Alston found Mkanda was still chained hand and foot in the prison at Fort Lister in March, 1893. (Diary, 26th March, 1893)
   He removed his handcuffs, of Johnston, to Anderson, 23rd March, 1893, F.O. 2/54. "I wish you would solve the matter more Africano by just having the Postmaster-General exposed in chains for three days at the main entrance of the Foreign Office. This is the way in which we do NOT treat natives out here."
4. Mrs. J. Moir to Miss J. Tod, 27th December, 1895, L.U.L.
D.C. Scott wrote that there was a policy of steady conquest of the country and taxation. There is evidently a list of proscribed individuals and the government waits until it can overtake their punishment. Makanjila has been thus treated, his village or town rather, twelve miles long by five miles wide burned, and other chiefs on the lake in like manner.

He conceded that there was probably not much bloodshed, and that chiefs like Makanjila were not blameless.

'yet to my mind the policy of force when one can succeed so splendidly by a little trouble and personal influence seems most unfortunate. We make the natives pay for the administration not knowing the native language and being at the trouble of dealing with the people.'

Accounts of the devastation caused by these attacks do not come only from people such as Scott, Hetherwick and the Moire whom Johnston accused of unreasonable and obstructive criticism due to loss of the paramount influence which they held before the coming of the administration. Edward Alston, one of the more sensitive members of the military establishment, provides ample evidence in his diaries of the tone of the Administration. He sent Sergeant-Major Bandawe, a noted Tonga soldier, with thirty men to Chikala 'where they are wanted by Manning to do a bit of raiding.' He described how one of the men on his return from a victorious raid... would insist on showing me the head of a chief he had killed in one of his battles last year and dancing his war dance with it in his hands.' He revealed the way in which slave trade suppression had been made the excuse for licenced raiding with the observation that:

'Steewart (was) busy liberating slaves (III) all day so I couldn't hand over the station to him as I wanted.'

1. Scott to Robertson, 16th December, 1893, E.U.L.
2. c.s. Johnston to Salisbury, 10th March, 1892, F.0. 04/2197.
4. Ibid, 9th April, 1895.
5. Ibid 23rd November, 1895.
He wrote: 'we leave tomorrow for Chimberanga's village which is to be done away with,' and two days later added with some remorse that there was no-one at Chimberanga's, that it was a 'very pretty village, a fairly big one, and it was quite a pity to destroy it, but he had been so cruel and pugnacious to Atonga passing through on their way to their own country, and as the Atonga do more work for the whitesman than anyone else it had to be done.'

Alston makes it clear that expeditions soon became an end in themselves, a form of amusement for the military officers, and a means of acquiring medals. Soon after his arrival he was pleased to hear that the B.C.A. medal had been approved, and hoped to get it himself before long:

'I ought to as there are several rows on the tapis and three little wars are said to be certain to take place this year.'

In January, 1896 he was disappointed in Tambala 'not giving us a fight, as they might have kept the place some time before we got in and we should have lost a few men.' Of the attack on Humbe at Kasungu, as a result of which he was somewhat non-plussed to find himself an Illustrated London News hero and to receive an enormous amount of congratulatory mail he commented: 'Several spears and arrows flew about me. I enjoyed it immensely.'

Major Edwards, Johnston's commander, wrote that he hoped that there would be a suitable enemy to try out his trained

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1. Ibid. 14th January, 1895.
3. Ibid. 26th March, 1895.
4. Ibid 13th January, 1895.
5. Ibid. 30th December, 1895.
companions. He had hopes of Kpeseni and Matako but he feared that the others would run away.\(^1\)

The attack on Mlozi at the end of 1895, which resulted in his execution, was in view of Mlozi's record, and of his refusal to abide by the terms of the agreement of 1899 which had ended the Arab War, or to enter into diplomatic negotiations with the Administration, probably the most justified of the numerous expeditions which were undertaken in these years. But even in this case the immediate excuse, an alleged involvement with Bamba attacks on villages near the south end of Lake Tanganyika which provided porters for the Stevenson road was far-fetched, and the real reason was that it was impossible for the Administration to levy taxes in the north end area so long as Mlozi and the other Arabs were entrenched there. Taxes were raised from the Ngonde as soon as the war was over.\(^2\)

Under Sharpe's administration from 1896 there was even less pretence that the activities of the military were justified than there had been under Johnston. The attacks on Gonani, Kpeseni, and the Lunda Casambe, the latter of whom offered no resistance, were made on the flimsiest of excuses. The attack on Gonani was made in the face of vociferous opposition from the

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1. Edwards to Johnston, 1st April, 1897, Johnston papers, Salisbury.
2. Johnston to Salisbury, 3rd January, 1896, F.O. 2/106. Alston diaries, 20th January, 1896. The execution of Mlozi was followed by a macabre incident which Johnston covered up with a straight-forward lie. Walter Gordon-Cumming, the eccentric nephew of Roualyn, the great hunter, served as a volunteer in the attack on Mlozi and had the latter's head removed on the night after the execution. This he carried round in a tin box in which he kept his clothes and some other skulls which he had collected. Alston who travelled with him was rather sickened by Cumming's habit of taking the head out for examination during meals. News of the incident reached Britain and was reported in Labouchère's paper, Truth: Johnston denied the allegations that a member of the Administration had taken the head. He must have known perfectly well what the truth of the matter was, as Sir Hector Duff recorded that he reprimanded Cumming for the deed.
planting community in the Shire Highlands, who had tended to support the Administration's military activities, but who feared with some justification the effects on the supply of Ngoni labour to the Shire Highlands of an attack on them. The attack on Hpeseni was also the object of opposition after the event from the North Charterland Company who had acquired a concession in the area, who protested about the damage that had been done to their property. 1 A.B.S.A. Company official who visited the area nine months after the attack reported that all but a few of the villages had been destroyed by the troops, and that their former occupants were still timid and living in small scattered groups in 'Masas,' (shelters) 2

Probably the most authoritative condemnation of the methods of the Administration, as pioneered by Johnston and carried on under Sharpe, came from the leader of the Boundary Commission who surveyed the Stevenson road, Captain Close, an officer then beginning an outstanding career:

'There is a custom still in vogue of burning the villages of chiefs who give trouble to the Administration. In the last case, that of the burning of Kerai's and Kasese's in November, 1898, the harvest was over, and the grain was in and was burnt with the houses.

This barbarous punishment is unworthy of the representatives of a civilised country. It moreover directly diminishes the wealth of the country, embitters a whole community against the Administration, and punishes the innocent with the guilty. Such a punishment is, in fact, a confession of the incompetence of the police. .... the burning of villages puts the British Administration on a level with the Acomba in the native mind, and it would not be surprising if the two

1. Manning defended the Administration against charges of unnecessary devastation and the looting of cattle. Manning to F.O. 30th August, 1898, F.O. 2/148. The North Charterland Company complained to the Foreign Office, 4th August 1899, F.O. 2/247, that the action of the Administration had been 'most prejudicial to British commercial enterprise in the future,' it wrote 'the wholesale loot of cattle and expulsion of the natives,' and claimed that the number of cattle in the area had been reduced from 24,000 to 12,000.

villages recently burnt, Kora's and Kasebe's went over bodily to the German side of the border.¹

It is perhaps slightly unfair to blame Johnston and Sharpe for everything which was done in the name of the Administration in these years. They were certainly not present at every expedition carried on by their officials. They did, however, back up their men, and were careful not to report the more discreditable events to the Foreign Office. Johnston was not above some terminological inexactitude; he told Lord Rosebery in March, 1894 that:

"Throughout the small proportion of the Protectorate there the native hut tax is levied, it has been paid during the last year without any coercion... it would be an idiotic policy to wring a small revenue out of them which would raise them all in revolt against our rule."²

While it would be difficult to disagree with the latter part of this statement, the former assertion was simply untrue.

As late as November, 1900 expeditions were still being carried out on the slightest pretext. Captain James Brander Dunbar, of Pitteavon, took part in an attack on Tarabala's, the excuse for which was the alleged murder of a post messenger, in that month. Although most of the opposition appear to have been armed with bows and arrows, they were subjected to a heavy fire in which several were killed. The villages in the neighbourhood were all burned.³ No report of this expedition was ever sent to the Foreign Office, and there appears to be no record of it in the official files; though an inquiry was made at the same time into disturbances which had occurred in Central Angoliland as a

¹. Captain C. Close, Report on the Tanganyika-Thyassa Boundary Commission, February, 1899, F.O. 2/246. Close, born 1865, died 1932, Director-General, Ordnance Survey, 1911-22. President, Royal Geographical Society, 1927-30. Became Sir Charles Arden-Close. He also reported that: "There is a widespread idea both in B.C.A. and B.S., that any white man has the right to beat any black man if he wants to, and the result is that a great deal of indiscriminate flogging goes on... the flogging of carriers, personal servants and villagers is usually sheer brutality on the part of a low bred white man in a fit of temper or half-drunk."²


³. J. Brander Dunbar, diary, November, 1900; and conversations with author.
result of burnings which had been carried out with the connivance of Administration officials in order to encourage the payment of taxes, and labour recruitment for the Shire Highlands. 1

Johnston's view that the Administration should 'act as the friends of both sides and introduce the native labourer to the European capitalist' 2 had led to the development of a system by about 1895-6 under which the Collectors in the districts acted as labour recruiting agents for the Shire Highlands' planters. 3 Under Sharpe this system was institutionalised by the establishment of a Labour Bureau which was intended to distribute tax labour according to supply and demand. 4 The payment of taxation by the employer was of great convenience to the Administration as the almost total lack of money in circulation, and the payment of labour in yards of cloth which continued until after 1900, meant that taxes, if paid by the people themselves in the early years, were almost invariably in kind. The Bureau

3. L.W.B.C.A., June, 1895, A.C.Simpson of Mlanje reports that the 'bitterness' had been taken out of hut-tax collection as a result of co-operation between the Collector, C.Stevenson and the planters in the organisation of payment of the tax through labour service.
4. The Labour Bureau was established in May, 1900. Duncan Beaton, joint manager of the African Lakes Corporation, was the first chairman. It was intended to prevent the abuses which had become frequent as a result of the activities of independent labour recruiters, especially in southern and central Angolan. It undoubtedly did do some good work in regularising the system of recruitment and attempting to see that employers in the Shire Highlands observed the regulations which had been issued on conditions of service, ensuring for instance that employers provided sufficient food for their workers. The Labour Bureau was an attempt to make the best of an unsatisfactory situation which had been brought about by the attempt to raise direct taxation from the people before they had money, and by the excess in demand for labour over supply which had become apparent by 1900 as a result of the increased need for tanga-tanga to carry the coffee export crop, as a result of the opening of many new plantations, and of the low wages which were offered. Central African Times, 5th May, 23rd June, 27th July, 1900. See also, B.S.Krishnamurthy, op. cit., pp 102-4.
were submerged in produce which, owing to the cost of tanga-tanga transport, was almost valueless unless it had been paid at Mbuya or Zomba where there was a market.\(^1\) The close involvement of the Collectors with labour recruitment, and payment of taxes by employers, produced the kind of labour tax, and in some cases virtual forced labour situations, which had been condemned by the Foreign Office elsewhere. When they became aware of the way in which the Labour Bureau was operating, they ordered that it should be closed.\(^2\) The introduction of direct taxation before the population were in a position to pay in cash also led to the growth of the tenzala system under which the European owners of estates first paid the taxes of residents on their estates in return for a month's labour, and then began to demand labour service from tenants who could not prove that they had been there before the date of the certificate of claim, or who had moved their cultivation since then, an inevitable occurrence for which no provision had been made in Johnston's land settlement. It was to the credit of the African Lakes Corporation that they were almost the only large land-owners in the Shire Highlands who never charged

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1. H. Sutt, Nyasaland under the Foreign Office, London, 1906, p 352. He described the bones in the early years as having the appearance of farm-yards, owing to the quantities of produce which had been brought to them. It was not until 1903 that any attempt was made to enforce the payment of wages in cash; this was owing to the abuse of the cloth payment system by the employers who stood to gain if the price of cloth was below three pence, the nominal value of a yard.

rent to their tenants, and never demanded labour service from
them.\(^1\)

It might be thought that the dependence of the planters in
the Shire Highlands on the Administration for the satisfaction
of their labour requirements would have led them to support the
military methods which were used to increase the tax revenue.
Planting opinion, however, as expressed by the spokesman of
commercial interest,\(^2\) the Central African Planter, was often severely
critical of these activities of the Administration. At the root
of this criticism was the knowledge from experience that the
devastation caused by punitive expeditions reduced the flow of
labour to the plantations, and discouraged voluntary recruitment,
and the feeling that there was an excessive expenditure on the
military while the interests of the planting community in public
works such as roads, and in scientific research, were neglected.
It became clear early in 1896 that an attack on Gomani's southern
Ngoni was scheduled to take place sometime in that year if the
slightest casus belli could be found. The Planter requested
the Administration not to make any action, 'punitive or otherwise,'
which might discourage Ngoni labour coming down, and pointed
out that many Ngoni were known to be staying at home that season

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1. D. Beaton to A.I.C., 4th May, 1903, letter-book I, Mandala,
Blantyre, Malawi. 'With regard to Mandala estate we do not
at present exact rents from the natives but it is understood
that we have a first claim to their labour should we require
it, on payment of course of current wages. There are a
great many who are entitled to retain their gardens independently
of us, as provided for in certificates of claim, but there
are a great many more who have no such rights and are merely
tenants at will, having come onto the estate since the date
of the certificate of claim. The reason we allow new
settlers on our estate is on account of the quantity of food
they grow, which is readily sold to our Ngoni carriers.
If food was not available in this way we should probably
have to provide food as we are at present doing in Chinde
and thus considerably add to our working expenses.' Post
or food money was given, rather than food itself. See for
analysis of the tenant system, Krishnamurthy, op. cit.,
pp 210-212.
for fear of the coming war. Johnston assured them that there was no intention of an attack on the Ngoni, that they had done nothing to deserve an attack, and that the Administration had no intention of interfering in their internal quarrels. By October the British Central African Gazette was reporting attacks by Comani's men on villages of the Mambesi Industrial Mission, and the spearing of people with tax receipts. Later in the month the expected expedition was made and Comani himself who had surrendered voluntarily was shot after a court martial. On the despatch of troops to the north in April 1897 the Planter commented:

'To put it mildly... we residents of E.C.A., are getting pretty tired of these walk-overs called wars... and no wonder when we read in the home papers of H.M.Acting Commissioner saying Blantyre from the clutches of the Angoni by promptly despatching three columns to the front.'

The Planter recommended that if they could not find the slave raider the Administration should hang Sergeant-Major Bondwe and a score or two 'assacis', (soldiers) for they were sure, 'may absolutely sure that this would be hailed by all with intense satisfaction and would tend to make the Administration a little more popular than it at present is'.

Dissatisfaction with the Administration led the planting community to favour the extension of Chartered Company rule in Nyasaland. The Planter admitted that there had been abuses under the E.C.A. Company south of the Zambezi but asked:

'Will anyone say that the same abuses (on a smaller scale naturally) have not shown themselves here? Have the

2. Ibid.
5. C.C.F., 22nd April, 1897.
6. Ibid.
Administration not farmed taxes? Have our native police not oppressed the people? Have not our native troops looted and burned villages in time of war, and made prisoners of women and children?¹

The Central African Times pointed out that the excuse for the attack on Mpezeni early in 1898 had been the murder of a Dr. Roberts who proved not to have been harmed, and that the followers of Mpezeni who were armed with assegais and spears had been unable to get close enough to the guns to cause their assailants any damage.² It was pressure from the Times and the Chamber of Commerce which brought about the judicial enquiry early in 1901 into the events in Central Angoniiland late in the previous year, which were due to the activities of labour recruiters working together with Administration officials. The Judge who conducted the enquiry attempted to cover up the involvement of these officials but ordered the execution after trial of five men, two of them captaeos from Blantyre 'whose zeal in personal plunder and rapine' had led them 'in the interests of their employers to commit at least three murders and innumerable raids.'³ The reaction of the paper to a 'reign of terror' which was said to have sent the population of Blantyre to the tops of neighbouring hills in July, 1902 when porters were being recruited by the military to carry loads down to Chiromo on the departure of a battalion of the British Central African Rifles to Somaliland, led to the temporary imprisonment of the paper's editor. He had written that the activities of the police 'mean theft, they mean personal violence, they mean rape, and in extreme cases they mean murder... nothing but a public example will show the surrounding natives that such conduct is abhorred by the white

¹ C.A.T., 15th September, 1897.
² C.A.T., 13th March, 1898; D.C.A.C., 15th January, 26th February, 1898, gives an account of the Ngoni fighting with assegais versus Maxims.
³ C.A.T., 5th January, 12th January, 23rd February, 23rd February, 1901. The Chamber of Commerce condemned the 'mal-administration of Central Angoniiland and the oppression of the natives.'
man and will not be tolerated on any account. R.S. Hynde, the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and proprietor of the Times had commented that 'from the state of matters during the last few days they might as well have been in Somaliland as in B.C.A.', Hetherwick said that there had not been such a panic among the people since the Ngioni raid of 1884, and Alan Kidney, then manager of the Lakes Corporation, pointed out that but for the activities of the police the Company would have been able to find porters and do the transport with no difficulty.

Nothing is more remarkable about the despatches of Commissioners Johnston and Sharpe than the absence of discussion on the agricultural and economic problems of the country. It would be practically impossible to write a coherent account of the rise of the various export industries, of the progress of the planting community, or of the problems of labour and transport from this source. Neither Johnston nor Sharpe thought deeply about these problems; Johnston summarised his views on the development of British Central Africa:

"My idea is that Africa south of the Zambezi and north of the Atlas and the Nile cataracts must be settled by the white and whitish races, and that Africa which is well within the tropics must be ruled by whites, developed by Indians, and worked by blacks, must be Black, Yellow and White in fact."

Johnston, it is true, had a deep interest in Botany, but the work done by his gardener, i.e. Alexander Maitre, at Zomba on the Residency garden, and on the collection of specimens, was of more academic than practical interest. The Central African Planter contains:

1. C.A.T., 2nd August, 1902.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. e.g. Johnston's Report on The First Three Years Administration includes two pages on the economy out of 42, pp 15-16.
   British Central Africa, op. cit., has 17 out of 544, pp 160-77.
5. Johnston to Anderson, 10th October, 1893, F.O. 2/55.
the comparatively enormous military expenditure of the Administration with the £1,800 which had been spent in three years on the kind of scientific research that was so much needed to assist the planters all of whom were experimenting with crops and soils. 1 They pressed without avail for the appointment of a soil scientist and a veterinary officer. 2 The division of interest was symbolised and perpetuated by the separation of the commercial capital, Blantyre, from the administrative and military capital, Zomba. The directors of the African Lakes Corporation attempted without success to bring pressure to bear on the Foreign Office to have the capital moved to Blantyre. 3 This might have done something to break down the cleavage between the Administration and the planting and commercial community which could at least in part be traced to the snobbish contempt of Johnston and many of his officials for men with 'Scotch' accents. 4 As it was the Commissioners rarely visited Blantyre except on their way into or out of the country, and were consequently out of touch with commercial opinion 5

The Administration took no initiatives in the commercial development of the country in this period. The fact that experiments were made with different crops, and that exportable commodities, first coffee, then tobacco, cotton and tea were produced was

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1. C.A.T., July 1896. Sharpe said that he saw no need for a soil scientist as soils could be sent to Britain for analysis. C.A.T., 10th December, 1897. For the same criticism of the Administration, see C.A.T., 26th May, 29th September, 1900.
2. C.A.T., 7th September, 1907.
3. A.L.C., Minutes, 27th June, 1898. Sharpe was in sympathy with the move to Blantyre but said that the decision would be made by the Foreign Office on grounds of expense, C.A.T., 10th December, 1897. The decision not to move the capital was reported in the C.A.T., 7th September, 1898.
4. Johnston's views on Scotchmen should be obvious, in Alston on McClunie's diary, 20th May, 1895. "(he) talks such dreadful Scotch that I could hardly understand what he said, he 'sir'd' me the whole time which was as it should be!"
5. e.g. Sharpe was reported by the C.A.T. as being in Blantyre once on his return to the country, 6th April, 1901, again at the Nyasa Agricultural Show, 3rd May, 1902, and on leaving the country on the 2nd May, 1903.
due entirely to the enterprise of individual planters and the few companies which began to operate. The pressure for the building of a railway, which was to be the most important single issue confronting the protectorate in this period, came almost entirely from the planters and companies who had to undertake at their own expense the first surveys. 1 The Administration of British Central Africa was throughout this period a military administration; by far the greatest part of its expenditure was military and the interests of its Commissioners, as their despatches make clear, were primarily military. 2

At the risk of labouring this point, it does seem important to make clear that the tone, policy and practice of the Administration under Johnston and Sharpe marked the very antithesis of the philosophy on which the Company had been founded. While the Company had been forced in the peculiar circumstances which surrounded the outbreak of the Arab War to become involved in one military campaign, they saw this as a failure though, as was pointed out above, the war was not itself the result of commercial rivalry but of political or diplomatic factors which the Company was powerless to influence. The notion that the Company should, as Johnston did, mount an aggressive assault on the slave trade, and on the whole pattern of long distance trade as it was then carried on by the Yao, the Ngoni and the Ceu, would have been anathema to them, and would moreover have appeared to be both unnecessary and excessively expensive. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the material, let alone the spiritual, damage which was done by this looting and burning which were the characteristics of the British Administration in these early

1. Johnston and Sharpe did support the campaign for a railway but the initiative came from elsewhere. See below.

2. While Johnston and Sharpe were not full-time soldiers most of their time was taken up with military matters. Sharpe was succeeded by William Manning, later a General, who remained Governor until 1913.
years, but the opposition of the otherwise far from liberal planting community of the Shire Highlands to these activities indicates that they felt that their interests were not being served. The ivory and slave trades which had formed the basis of the wealth and power of the great Yao chiefs and by this time of the Ngoni chiefs, as well as of the Arab traders and colonisers, were already doomed and dying, and changed in the way that their people satisfied their material wants were inevitable. The slave trade was bound to die because of events on the coast, the ivory trade was bound to die, as it did in the course of the 1890's, because of the shooting out of the most easily accessible elephants. The luring of the followers of the Yao and the Ngoni chiefs into the European economy was something which had begun to happen some years before the establishment of the Administration and would have continued with or without the active policy against the slave trade which Johnston instituted. It is probable that the violence of the assault on the Yao slowed rather than hastened this process. The chiefs Mponda, Makanjila, Kawinga, Zarafi and Matapwiri were compelled to defend themselves against attack, and were encouraged by the demonstration of the weakness of the administration in its first year to make attacks on it which they would almost certainly not have made without provocation. The decline in the slave and ivory trades would have rapidly reduced their wealth and their following, while the attraction of the plantations in the Shire Highlands would have encouraged their people, many of whom were only partly assimilated Manganja, to leave. The power of these chiefs was broken and many of their people did leave anyway, but their confidence in the benevolence of the Administration must have been diminished by the violence to which they had been subjected. Monteith Petheringham, writing to Ingard in July 1892, wrote of Johnston:

"You will have seen the fearful mess he has made of the Makanjila.

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1. The C.M.Z., 26th January, 1891, reported the danger of the extinction of the elephant and the need for protection.
business just through sheer rashness," and lamented that attempt to raise a six shilling tax had estranged the people, and that the country was not as safe as it had been before the Administration had been established.\(^1\) The examples of the Tonga who were left alone, and only given an administrative official when they had asked for one, and agreed to pay a tax to support him;\(^2\) and of the northern Ngoni who came under the protectorate by agreement in 1904 some time after their people had begun to go to the Shire Highlands and as far as Rhodesia for work, showed what might have been done throughout the protectorate if the policy of peaceful co-existence, and more pacific administration, as suggested by John Moir, had been pursued. It can not, of course, be said with certainty that there would have been no conflicts with chiefs jealous of their authority, and of their right to trade in the manner to which they were accustomed, but it can be asserted that it was both unnecessary and expensive to seek conflict which could have been avoided by diplomatic effort, and that in many cases the military were guilty of fighting wars for their own sake and without any regard for their material, psychological, or spiritual consequences. It can also be asserted that the excessive scale of the Administration military involvements led to the situation in which it was compelled to raise direct taxation from the people before they were able to pay, and that the association of the Administration with forced labour recruiting was bad both for its reputation and for labour relations throughout the protectorate. Forced labour, no less than slave labour, is wasteful and inefficient.

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1. Fotheringham to Lugard, 28th June, 1892, Lugard papers, Rhodes House, Oxford.

2. Edwards to Johnston, 31st March, 1897, Johnston papers, Salisbury.
With the gradual establishment of the Administration from 1891 the importance of the Company was reduced. It ceased to perform any significant diplomatic or political functions, and was dependent on the initiatives which were taken by the Administration in these spheres. The slave trade which the Company had been founded to combat was coming to an end, and the policy of active opposition to it which was pursued by Johnston, and to a lesser extent by Sharpe, made the Company's policy of peaceful competition redundant. The flag had followed the Company and the missions, at their request, into Malawi; trade now had to follow the flag. Although there was such a marked divergence between the policies of the Company and the Administration, the former benefited commercially from the existence of the latter. The Administration provided the security the lack of which had so inhibited investment in the earlier years, and generated an unprecedented amount of transport business which enabled the Company to operate profitably for the first time. The commercial history of the Company under the protectorate is one of comparative success which can be illustrated by the profits which were made and the dividends which were paid. There was a considerable increase in the scale and profitability of the Company in these years, but there was very little difference in the nature of its activities which followed closely the lines which had been laid down by the Moirs. For this reason the Company's commercial history can be more briefly stated, for the problems which the managers faced, and the range of solutions which were open to them, have already been analysed.

On the departure of Fred Moir from Africa in June 1891 the management of the Company was taken over by Low Monteith Fotheringham, the hero of the Arab War. He remained in sole charge of the Company's operations until his death at Chinde in July 1895 while on his way to Britain to make arrangements for the transport of
THE RHODES COLOSSUS
STRIDING FROM CAPE TOWN TO CAIRO.
the material required for the construction by Rhodes' African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company of the southern section of the Cape to Cairo line. Following the example of the Moirs he travelled energetically in the pursuit of the Company's business between Tanganyika and the Indian Ocean. Before coming out to Africa he had been a foreman in a ship-building yard at Govan on the Clyde; he was very far from Johnston's ideal of a well-spoken, and dinner-jacket wearing accountant. He was however a man of great courage and integrity and earned the respect of a wide cross section of people including Lugard, with whom he corresponded. Johnston regarded his death as a major blow to the protectorate and wrote that he was well-known and loved, by the name of 'Montisi', from Chinde to Kituta. At Karonga, where he spent six years, he is still well-remembered. There was said to have been a considerable improvement in the efficiency of the Company under his management. It is probable that this apparent improvement was due to the stronger financial base and larger staff which the Company acquired at this time rather than to his personal qualities. To say this is not to underestimate Fotheringham but merely to suggest that with the same facilities, and conditions of relative security, the Moirs could have produced the same results.

On Fotheringham's death the management was divided between John Gibbs at Mandala, and Duncan Beaton at Chinde. Gibbs organised

2. L.W.B.C.A., May, 1894, and letter of 3rd May, 1894 in author's possession from Fotheringham to an aunt in which he says that he is returning from Chinde to Mandala, and that since September he has been to Tanganyika and back.
   'Fotheringham was so decent and straight-forward with his bluntness that people forgave him...
4. Lugard papers, Rhodes House.
5. B.C.G.A., August, 1895.
the Shire Highlands and lakes trade and transport, and Beaton organised the shipping business and the lower river transport. Loss is known of the personal characteristics of these men; both had joined the Company under the Moirs in 1889. John Gibbs made a pioneering journey in 1896-7 over the whole of the Company's extended line of business. He travelled across the Stevenson road to Kituma and from there to Ujiji and to the north of Lake Tanganyika; he also travelled at the same time to Lakes Mweru and Bangwolo, and visited Daniel Crawford's Careganzwe Mission in the Congo Free State. His report on this journey, which was published in the British Central Africa Gazette, shows him to have taken an intelligent and enterprising view of the possibilities for development to the north of the Shire Highlands.

Gibbs left the Company late in 1900 and Duncan Beaton then took over as sole manager at Manda, with Alan Kidney as assistant manager, also living at Manda. Beaton was a Gaelic-speaking highlander from Skye and seems also to have taken an enterprising and optimistic view of the development possibilities. Some of his letters are reminiscent of the Moirs - he spoke of the introduction of cotton looms and mills, and saw the cultivation of cotton by the people as the likely salvation of the protectorate. He was impatient, as the Moirs had been, of the cautious policy of the directors and pressed them continuously to raise more capital and to press ahead in a variety of ways.

Kidney joined the Company in 1900 with the very high salary of £600 a year. He had been recruited by the directors from a firm of East India merchants, and had Indian but no African experience. He was the first of the managers not to have served

1. A.L.C. Minutes, 29th July, 1895.
2. B.C.G., Ist, 15th March, 1897.
4. e.g. Beaton to directors, 9th August, 1901, 4th October, 1901, 1900 book, Manda; ibid., 21st August, 1903, 11th June, 1904 1903 book, Manda.
5. A.L.C. Minutes, 22nd May, 1900.
in the pre-protectionate Niq-dominated Company, and seems to have lacked the spark of originality which they had shared with Fotheringham, Gibbs and Beaton. He was more in sympathy with the hard-headed and cautious policy which had always characterised the directors of the Company. From 1902 he served as joint manager with Beaton who resigned in September 1906; he then continued as sole manager until his retirement in 1924.2

All of the managers in this period were active members of the Free Church. Beaton and Kidney were elders of the Blantyre Church and were described by a Malawian member of the Church who knew them well as 'just like missionaries.'3 They tended to take a more liberal line than most of the commercial community on land and labour questions. Beaton was the first Chairman of the Labour Bureau, and was also a Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. As heads of what was for most of this period the largest employer of labour, both European and African, they were expected to speak for the commercial interests and seem to have done so for the most part on the side of moderation, and to have acted with the Blantyre Mission, who were the leading defenders in the Shire Highlands of the people’s interests.4

The practical and commercial difficulties which the managers faced were, as has been pointed out, no different from those which had been identified by the Niq. Solutions to them were, however, made easier by the resolution of the political and diplomatic problems which had caused them so much trouble, and absorbed so much of their time and energy. The fundamental difficulty was, of course, that of capital. It will be remembered that the Niq’s plans for expansion and development were thwarted by the shortage

1. Ibid., 28th September, 1906.
2. Ibid., 30th November, 1923.
4. e.g., Beaton to directors, 2nd July, 1901, 1900 book, Mandala.
of funds which compelled them to reply on grossly inadequate steamers and on a minute staff.\(^1\) The caution of the directors seemed to be justified by the extremely precarious position of the Company in the Portuguese and German hinterlands. So rich a man as William Mackinnon had decided not to risk his capital in the venture, and James Stevenson was able to claim, in a letter to Lord Granville, that on no river in Africa had commercial interests penetrated so far in advance of diplomatic settlement.\(^2\) In spite of the obvious hazards the directors had continued to supply some capital without getting any return on it. They were prompted to do this by their commitment to the support of the Livingstonia Mission, by their belief in the role which Christian commerce could play in the fight against the slave trade, and by their desire to stake out a British claim to what appeared to be one of the most promising routes into the interior of Africa. The settlement of the diplomatic questions, and the conclusion of the Arab War, followed by the establishment of a British Administration, greatly reduced the risk to which their capital was exposed, and provided them with the opportunity of running a successful trading and transport business, but at the same time it ended their special role as primary agents of change in a diplomatic no-man's land.

The directors had always hoped that their Company could be run at a profit, and had deprecated 'quixotic' or 'philanthropic' schemes; the existence of the Administration allowed them to devote all their attention to the running of the business on 'the sound commercial lines' which had always been their ideal, but which the exigencies of the Company's situation had forced them at least temporarily to disregard. There was, of course, nothing remarkable about a commercial company seeking to maximise its profit, or the return on the capital employed. In their insistence on the fastest possible turn-over of the capital, on the keeping down of stocks to the most economical level, and on the running of

1. See above, chapter 3.
2. Quoted above, chapter 4.
every department of the business at a profit, they were acting according to the financial orthodoxy of their or any other day. They did, however, lay themselves open to the charge of hypocrisy in these years by appearing to pride themselves on their past, and on the years in which they had made no profit, while at the same time making very healthy profits. One of the Company's promoters, Lord Overtoun, remarked on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary in 1896 that most of the shareholders were more interested in the development of Africa than they had in the rate of profit which the Company maintained. This may have been true, but the dividend declared for that year of 7½ was hardly a philanthropic one when Consols at 2⅔ were standing at a premium.

The increase in the Company's capital, the rate of profit and dividend can be seen from the following table:

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1. A.L.C. Minutes, 20th December, 1898.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Gross Profit</th>
<th>Net Profit</th>
<th>Dividend</th>
<th>Pay-out</th>
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<td>13,785</td>
<td>6,459</td>
<td>4,455</td>
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<td>2,856</td>
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<td>5,623</td>
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<td>5,763</td>
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<td>19,613</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>13,696</td>
<td>7,866</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>14,416</td>
<td>8,568</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,939</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>22,004</td>
<td>13,065</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16,922</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>13,970</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures given for the capital employed are for the amount of money subscribed rather than for the number of shares issued, as there was a variation in the amount which had been called on shares issued at different times. The total from 1894 includes £25,000 in fully paid shares which were allotted to the British South Africa Company by the terms of the final agreement with them. These did not qualify for a dividend until after the final settlement of the division of property in Africa in 1896. The difference between net and gross profit is accounted for by transfer to reserve, depreciation, and sums carried forward to the next year's accounts. All these figures are taken from the annual reports and the Company minute books.
The shares were quoted on the Glasgow Stock Exchange from 1896 which widened the range of share-holders who had until then been drawn largely from the same people who had invested in the Company before 1893. The directorate was very similar to that of the earlier company, James Stevenson was nominal chairman until his death in 1903, and John Stephen was active chairman until then when he became chairman in name also. The Company suffered a severe loss by the death in November 1893 of A.L. Bruce, who would, if he had lived, probably have taken over the chairmanship and, as a much respected, enterprising and effective businessman, would almost certainly have ensured that the Company was more adventurous in its policies than it proved to be. William Ewing, the former secretary, became a director in 1893 and continued to be very active as a lobbyist travelling frequently to London for interviews at the Foreign Office, and with the B.S.A. Company, Rhodes, and others with an interest in the commercial affairs of central Africa. He also travelled fairly often to the continent, especially to Brussels in connection with the Company's business with the Congo Free State, and the Katanga Company. New directors in this period included F.J. Stephen, nephew of John Stephen, and his successor as chairman of the Company and of the family ship-building firm; R.S. Allan, of the shipping line of the same name; and Robert Gourlay, the Glasgow manager of the Bank of Scotland, who was also a director of Bumrah Oil and of George Outram and Co., the proprietors of The Glasgow Herald. He was helpful to the Company in the establishment of its banking business from 1894. Fred Moir was secretary of the Company from

2. Ibid, and obituary, Glasgow Herald, 29th January, 1903.
3. Ibid., and obituary, The Scotsman, 28th November, 1893.
6. Ibid., 28th December, 1916.
1893, and was able to give the directors more first-hand information on the position in Africa than they had readily available before.

The good dividends which were paid eased the difficulty of raising capital; the shares changed hands at a premium. In February 1901 the Company's £1 shares, 15 shillings paid, were said to be selling for 24 shillings and 6pence.\(^1\) When 50,000 shares were issued in 1903 at 15 shillings paid, they were sold at a premium of three shillings and 6pence each, and the issue was over-subscribed by 15,000 shares.\(^2\) The directors were however slow to take advantage of the opportunities for increasing the capital which the share price indicated. As the table shows there was no significant increase in the capital between 1896 and 1903, though this was a period in which there was an unprecedented increase in the scale of the business in Africa, in the size of the Company's fleet of steamers, and in the profit which was earned. This expansion had been financed out of the profits which were made between 1893 and 1900 on the lower river freight business, and on the transit trade through the protectorate to the Congo, North Eastern Rhodesia and German East Africa; and from 1898 to 1903 on the export of rubber from Lake Mweru and Bandawe.\(^3\)

The managers in Africa had to fight a constant battle with the directors, as the Moirs had done, on the question of remittances to Glasgow. The factors of time and distance, which separated the directors and the managers, led sometimes to strained relations. There was usually a time lag of a year or more between the receipt in Glasgow of an order from Africa and the receipt of payment from Africa to cover it.\(^4\) This tied up the Company's capital and led frequently to the building-up of large overdrafts. The comparatively

\(^1\) Beaton to A.C. Simpson, 4th February, 1901, 1900 book, Mandala.
\(^2\) A.C. Minutes, 14th December, 1903.
\(^3\) See below.
\(^4\) Beaton to directors, 18th August, 1903, 1903 book, Mandala.
rapid expansion of trade in Africa, at least until 1900, ensured that orders were always in excess of remittances, and the Company had to raise money to pay for the new orders often before it had received payment for orders which had been made long before. The managers were therefore constantly pressing for an increase in capital, and protesting that they could not send back more money than they did, while the directors were equally constantly pressing for remittances, a quicker turn-over, smaller stocks and higher profits.1 Without more rapid communications both for words and goods, there was no way out of this dilemma. The telegraph between Blantyre and London was opened in 1898, but it was too expensive for anything but emergency messages.2

It was undoubtedly very frustrating for the managers to feel that the expansion of the business was being inhibited by the caution of the directors. Gibbs protested that 'to create business we must of necessity risk a little,'3 and that 'it will be found in the long run that a sharp businesslike attitude does not pay in this country.'4 In view of the minute scrutiny which the directors gave to the tiniest details of expenditure in Africa, querying even the sum of £5-10-0 which had been spent on prizes at the annual Mandala

2.C.A.T, 30th April, 1898.
4. Gibbs to directors, 28th October, 1899, ibid.
sports, it is easy to conclude that the policies of the directors were narrow and short-sighted. However it can not be denied that their caution was too often justified. Gibbs was permitted to take the risk which he spoke of and the result was an irrecoverable loss of £500, an expensive court case, and peripheral involvement in an international incident on Lake Mweru involving the Congo Free State Administration and a rubber trader. The conservative approach of the directors was best illustrated by their attitude towards competition on freight rates. They were not prepared to take part in price-cutting wars, they preferred to lose business than to risk losses. Kidney wrote in answer to a letter from the directors making this point:

"We so taken up with the fascination of trying to secure all available transport to the Corporation that we have not sufficiently weighed such points as that with which your letter closes, viz:—that it may perhaps pay the Corporation better to run steamers not well filled at full rates, than to have full steamers running at reduced rates."

The directors insisted on very full details of all the company's activities being sent back to Glasgow. All the employees had to keep diaries in triplicate; it was said that the steamer returns which had to be kept up employed three clerks at Chinde and Fort Johnston, and cost £500 a year to prepare. The company's business was

1. Kidney to directors, 28th June, 1901, Beaton to directors, 29th June, 1901, 1900 book, Mandala.
2. The risk involved was an agreement with G.M. Rabinek, a trader who collected rubber in the Congo Free State under a concession which he had obtained from Katanga Company, which was repudiated by the Congo Free State government. He was arrested by Congo Free State officials on board the company's steamer, the Scotia, on Lake Mweru in February, 1902, and died on his way to Boma where he was to be tried for illegal rubber collecting. The affair was exposed by E.D. Morel in an article entitled 'Another Stokes Affair,' in West Africa, 26th July, 1902. There was diplomatic argument as to whether the Scotia had been in British or Belgian waters at the time of the arrest. Alfred Sharpe made a special journey to Lake Mweru to try and settle this. There is a volume of correspondence on the affair, F.d. 2/972. There are also letters from Beaton and Kidney to the directors, 11th November, 24th November, 1902, and 28th May, 1903, letter-books, Mandala.
3. Kidney to directors, 14th January, 1902, 1900 book, Mandala
divided from 1897 into four divisions, trading, transport, banking, and agencies.\(^1\) It was insisted that each of these should be run at a profit; this necessitated a very complex system of internal costing and accounting, with the different departments making notional profits and losses at each other's expense. The consequence of this system was that the Glasgow office must have known eventually about the smallest transaction which had occurred in Africa, but a great deal of effort must have been put into the keeping of such elaborate accounts, which might have been better used in the promotion of the business. It must have had a restricting effect on the managers in Africa who were conscious that they would have to be able to answer for the slightest expenditure to the directors, and who were inhibited by what Kidney described as 'the bogey of capital expenditure' from embarking on new ventures without consultation.\(^2\)

Bearing in mind the caution of the directors, and their conservative views on accounting, and investment, it is perhaps surprising that there was so much development in the Company's activities during these years. They did raise much more capital than the Company had ever had before. The total of £156,000 reached by 1904, which saw the Company through until the First World War, was five times the total which had been achieved by 1899. There were in addition other sums which were being used by the Company. In 1903 there were £32,000 employed in the business which had been deposited by the public of British Central Africa and North Eastern Rhodesia in the Mandala Bank which was from 1894 to 1901 the only Bank in the region, and was after the opening of the Standard Bank at Blantyre in the latter year the only bank with branch offices. Mandala cheques could be cashed for goods at any of the Company's Stations.\(^3\) There was also over £30,000 in a reserve fund which

\(^1\) A.L.C. Minutes, 6th September, 1897.

\(^2\) Kidney to directors, 12th June, 1902, 1900 book, Mandala.

\(^3\) Ibid. 19th April, 16th August, 1901. The bank continued to operate until 1917 when the business was sold to the National Bank of South Africa. In the previous ten years it had made average profits of £1,362, A.L.C. Minutes, 24th November, 1917.
had been built up during the 1890's; £14,000 which had been accumulated in an insurance fund, and a Glasgow bank overdraft which had in 1903 been as high as £38,000 and which was frequently over £20,000.2

In the period from 1893 to 1908 the Company paid an average dividend of about 8.1%, and by 1914 it had paid out more in dividends than had been invested in it. There can have been no more profitable investment made in the country at this time. Although some of the planters may have made good profits from coffee between 1896 and 1900 they were very badly hit by the ensuing slump, and the alternative crops—cotton and tobacco—were not very successful by 1908.3 The two rival transport and trading companies, The African International Flotilla and Transport Company,4 and Sharrer's Zambezi Traffic Company made profits during the late 1890's, but the former had abandoned the business by 1907, and Sharrer's Company had been founded in October 1892 with an initial capital of £50,000 and a first call of £25,100. Its directors included Verey Lovett Cameron, the explorer, and it was connected through him with the Zambezia Company, the Central African and Zoutpansberg Exploration Company, and the Oceana Development Company which took over its operations from 1902. The Flotilla Company staged a transport service to Lakes Tanganyika and Mweru using the German government steamer on Lake Malawi, but withdrew from all stations north of Fort Jameson in 1902, and closed down its operations in the area in 1907. See prospectus, F.O. 84/2261; Beaton to directors, 29th September, 1902, 1900 book Mandala; C.A.T., 11th November, 12th December, 1905.

5. The business was established by Eugene Sharrer in 1891, and was registered in London, on 23rd April, 1895. No shares were issued until December, 1897 when 70,000 shares of £1 each were offered for subscription. The working capital up to that date was said to have amounted to £46,000. It was claimed that a profit of 15% had been made on this capital in the three years from 1894-7. The directors from 1897 included Lord Stanmore, Sir Bradford Leslie, a railway engineer, and W.M. Schneider, a financier who was interested in the building of the Shire Highlands railway. See prospectus, F.O. 2/690.
absorbed by the British Central Africa Company which was founded in 1902, and paid no dividend until after the Second World War. 1 The African Lake Corporation, by contrast, paid a dividend in every year until 1933 when it was hit, as all other companies were by the Slump. 2 It must be concluded that the policy of the directors in limiting investment, and refusing to take unnecessary risks, even when refusal meant loss of business, was justified by the results. 

The policy was justified if the Company is seen merely as an investment of European capital, but the rate of return which was derived provided no excuse for a claim that the Company was performing any philanthropic service to the people of Malawi and Zambia, or even to the planting community. The capital could not easily have been more profitably employed in Britain. If the welfare of the people had been the sole criterion for investment in the area the greatest service which could have been performed would have been, as the Moire had hoped, the reduction of freight rates from central Africa to the level where the people could have earned cash from the produce of their own labour in their own fields. It was the weakness of the criterion of profitability, and of economic theory as a whole at this time, that it made no provision for the spending of money from which there could be no guaranteed short-term return. The most beneficial investment which could have been made at this date would have been the construction of a railway from the Indian Ocean coast to Lake Malawi passing through the Shire Highlands. 3 This was an investment which was made by the British government in the case of the Uganda railway which linked the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria before there was any agricultural export from the latter lake. But in this case the expenditure was not made for commercial or economic reasons, but for reasons of

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1. For the establishment of the British Central Africa Company, see below.
2. A.L.C. Annual reports, 1903-1933.
3. The question of the railway will be considered later in the chapter.
strategy. Strategically the line was worthless, but it made possible the remarkable development between 1904 and 1914 of peasant-based Uganda cotton cultivation. There were, it is true, factors in Buganda society which helped to explain this remarkable phenomenon, and the example of the development of the plantation economy in the White Highlands of Kenya, as a result of the building of the same line, shows that peasant cropping was not the inevitable consequence of railway building. However it is safe to say that the primary object of the Company, as it had been conceived by David Livingstone, and by the Moira, was to stimulate cultivation by the people of crops which could be exported. Because of the commercial and economic philosophy which guided the directors, and which was dominant on a world scale until the 1930's, the Company was unable to make the investment which could alone have made the development of which they had dreamed possible.

SECTION IV

The problem of river transport and freight rates had during the 1880's turned the attention of the Moira and of John Buchanan towards the cultivation of crops such as coffee which involved capital investment and technical skill and which could only be grown in plantations. This had led in the late 1880's to the development of a wage labour and migratory system which was to be the basis of all agricultural exports during this period, and for a long time to come. It is suggested here that this was a

1. cf. Sir M. O'maneey, Crown Agent, to Sir C. Hill, 30th August, 1899, F.C. 2/690. 'The reasons for building that line (the Uganda railway) were political rather than commercial. It was never expected to have a living traffic within any period of years which could be gauged.'


4. See above, chapter 4.
Total Trade.

The following schedules show in total the import and export trade of the Protectorate from 1909-10 to 1920-21, classified under the various headings. Government stores and specie are excluded.

### IMPORTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Food, Drink and Tobacco</th>
<th>Raw Materials</th>
<th>Manufactured Articles</th>
<th>Miscellaneous and Unclassified</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>£ 16,524</td>
<td>£ 82,887</td>
<td>£ 3,766</td>
<td>£ 106,177</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>£ 19,674</td>
<td>£ 108,608</td>
<td>£ 4,025</td>
<td>£ 128,300</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>£ 28,614</td>
<td>£ 108,457</td>
<td>£ 4,550</td>
<td>£ 141,621</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>£ 31,849</td>
<td>£ 105,808</td>
<td>£ 4,550</td>
<td>£ 142,207</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>£ 37,185</td>
<td>£ 104,823</td>
<td>£ 5,655</td>
<td>£ 153,263</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>£ 39,426</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 152,285</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>£ 48,846</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 151,706</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>£ 51,264</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 153,133</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>£ 53,707</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 155,576</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>£ 58,392</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 151,251</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>£ 63,944</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 156,803</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>£ 69,851</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 6,004</td>
<td>£ 152,706</td>
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</table>

### EXPORTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Food, Drink and Tobacco</th>
<th>Raw Materials</th>
<th>Manufactured Articles</th>
<th>Miscellaneous and Unclassified</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900-10</td>
<td>£ 49,688</td>
<td>£ 43,471</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 97,502</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>£ 57,290</td>
<td>£ 43,471</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 148,901</td>
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<td>1911-12</td>
<td>£ 67,481</td>
<td>£ 105,457</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 177,501</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>£ 69,838</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 181,836</td>
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<td>1913-14</td>
<td>£ 72,000</td>
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<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 183,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>£ 74,000</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 185,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>£ 75,000</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>£ 75,000</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>£ 75,000</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>£ 75,000</td>
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<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
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<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>£ 75,000</td>
<td>£ 106,855</td>
<td>£ 5,143</td>
<td>£ 186,998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following tables show the acreage devoted to the cultivation of various products, the quantities exported, the values at the port of shipment from the Protectorate, and the total value of the crops over a series of years. In many cases the exports are the result of the previous year's cultivation:

### Coffee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Quantity in lbs</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833-34</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>93,118</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 7d.</td>
<td>2,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834-35</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>522,000</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>7,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-36</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>702,332</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>16,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836-37</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>13,299</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>22,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837-38</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>861,034</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>32,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838-39</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>390,756</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>25,736</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839-40</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>214,180</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>68,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-41</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,148,409</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>25,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-42</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>690,020</td>
<td>5d. &amp; 6d.</td>
<td>14,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-43</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,007,602</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>25,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843-44</td>
<td>8,807</td>
<td>714,743</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>17,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844-45</td>
<td>4,850</td>
<td>1,303,655</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>27,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845-46</td>
<td>5,273</td>
<td>773,919</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>16,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846-47</td>
<td>5,553</td>
<td>454,111</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>2,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847-48</td>
<td>6,134</td>
<td>780,183</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>16,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848-49</td>
<td>6,697</td>
<td>634,896</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>19,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849-50</td>
<td>5,629</td>
<td>734,410</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>15,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-51</td>
<td>4,339</td>
<td>334,161</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>6,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851-52</td>
<td>3,755</td>
<td>750,304</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>16,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-53</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>194,704</td>
<td>5d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853-54</td>
<td>1,976</td>
<td>192,076</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>4,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854-55</td>
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<td>99,477</td>
<td>6d.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855-56</td>
<td>1,331</td>
<td>106,081</td>
<td>6d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856-57</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>131,390</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>2,858</td>
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<tr>
<td>1857-58</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>2,774</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858-59</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>188,865</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>4,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859-60</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>148,950</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>2,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-61</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>112,055</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>1,069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cotton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>European acreage</th>
<th>Total exports in lbs</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,736,099</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 7d.</td>
<td>58,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>23,332</td>
<td>1,359,094</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 10d.</td>
<td>44,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>23,755</td>
<td>3,237,555</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 10d.</td>
<td>80,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>23,607</td>
<td>2,400,142</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 10d.</td>
<td>63,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>24,606</td>
<td>2,648,508</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>72,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>20,578</td>
<td>3,065,248</td>
<td>8d.</td>
<td>65,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>27,342</td>
<td>3,400,478</td>
<td>8d. &amp; 10d.</td>
<td>127,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>23,372</td>
<td>806,510</td>
<td>10d. &amp; 10d.</td>
<td>339,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>18,141</td>
<td>2,670,534</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>156,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>12,665</td>
<td>930,048</td>
<td>1/4, 1/2, 2/7</td>
<td>55,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>15,274</td>
<td>913,718</td>
<td>1/4 to 2/7</td>
<td>80,463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Native grown cotton began to form part of the quantity shown in the exports column from about the year 1903. The extraordinary increase in acreage in 1904-05 was due to the reckless opening up of unsuitable land by untrained planters. The lesson was soon learnt, however, and the 1911-12 crop, when next the acreage exceeded 20,000 acres, was five times as valuable as the crop from the 1904-05 acreage.

### Tobacco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Exports in lbs</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888-89</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>5d.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-00</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4,480</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>14,359</td>
<td>7d.</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-03</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>17,604</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-04</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>28,914</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-05</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>55,826</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-06</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>190,020</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>3,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>2,330</td>
<td>413,316</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>6,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>584,395</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>9,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>2,836</td>
<td>570,102</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>14,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>2,836</td>
<td>1,084,737</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>27,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>3,274</td>
<td>1,704,637</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/7</td>
<td>42,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>4,507</td>
<td>2,140,615</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>53,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>7,411</td>
<td>2,262,545</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>56,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>10,409</td>
<td>2,763,014</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>94,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-15</td>
<td>9,042</td>
<td>3,308,918</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>82,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>7,484</td>
<td>3,708,203</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>92,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>9,386</td>
<td>4,304,124</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>112,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-18</td>
<td>9,516</td>
<td>2,029,332</td>
<td>6d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>67,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-19</td>
<td>6,027</td>
<td>5,950,306</td>
<td>10d. &amp; 1/2</td>
<td>279,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>9,818</td>
<td>4,340,381</td>
<td>1/4, 1/2, 2/7</td>
<td>271,395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
second best in terms of the welfare of the people, and that a system which would have allowed people to produce for the world market on their own account, without leaving their homes, would have been preferable. Given that there was a demand for imported goods which had for long been satisfied by the export of the only two commodities — slaves and ivory — which would bear the cost of transport to the coast, it was, however, better that the people should have been enabled to satisfy this demand by working on a European plantation than that the old system should have continued.

The increase in the cultivation and export of agricultural products can be seen from the accompanying tables. ¹

These clearly show that coffee was by far the most important export until 1900 after which year, for a variety of reasons which will be explained later, there was a first dramatic and then gradual decline. This led to the diversion of the energies of the small planting community of the Shire Highlands into the cultivation of tobacco and cotton which in spite of early difficulties were to continue to be the most important export crops. A comparison of these tables with the one which gives the Company's profit figures and with the following table showing the total values of all imports and exports (excluding goods in transit through the protectorate) shows that there was a close correlation at least until 1903 between the profit made by the Company and the level of trade to and from the protectorate. The profits from 1903 which go against this trend were due for 1903 and 1904 to the expansion of the business into North Western and North Eastern Rhodesia, and the relatively low profits which were made from 1905 to 1908 were due to the Company's declining share of the river transport business, and to difficulties in it which were caused by the level of the waters.

¹ S.S. Murray, Nyasaland Handbook, Zomba, 1922.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>IMPORTS</th>
<th>EXPORTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>49,142</td>
<td>6,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>75,720</td>
<td>21,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-5</td>
<td>82,760</td>
<td>9,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-6</td>
<td>80,055</td>
<td>19,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-7</td>
<td>81,528</td>
<td>23,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-8</td>
<td>99,290</td>
<td>25,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-9</td>
<td>183,435</td>
<td>37,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>146,663</td>
<td>79,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1901</td>
<td>116,751</td>
<td>38,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-2</td>
<td>134,606</td>
<td>21,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-3</td>
<td>169,309</td>
<td>34,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-4</td>
<td>135,928</td>
<td>27,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-5</td>
<td>177,485</td>
<td>46,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-6</td>
<td>192,258</td>
<td>56,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-7</td>
<td>125,242</td>
<td>49,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-8</td>
<td>124,687</td>
<td>54,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-9</td>
<td>106,167</td>
<td>81,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>229,707</td>
<td>97,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>267,669</td>
<td>151,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>179,527</td>
<td>174,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>171,634</td>
<td>200,422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be remembered that the factors which had prevented the Moire from reducing freight rates to a sufficiently low level to allow the export of crops which were already grown were: the problems of access to the Zambezi, and the payment of transit duties to the Portuguese, which had necessitated the use of Quelimane, and the Ruo Ruo river and porterage; the inadequate size and pay-load of their river steamer; and the difficulties of tonga-tonga transport in the Shire Highlands, and to Lake Malawi. Considerable progress was made towards the solution of some of these problems in these years, and there was a significant reduction in
from Blantyre to Chinde including the cost of tena-tena at about £2 a ton from Blantyre to Katungas.¹

Once a regular service of ocean ships had been started to Chinde there was no longer any need for the costly Kav Kav river boat service and porterage, and this was a major factor in making possible the reduction in rates on the rivers. Fred Moir had in 1879 stressed that the future development of the Shire Highlands was dependent on the opening of the Konga mouth of the Zambezi—the mouth opened was a different one, but the effect was similar to that which he had envisaged. The Company also took up another early suggestion of his at this time by chartering sailing vessels to carry goods to Chinde from Britain; this proved to be very profitable.²

The second factor that contributed to the lowering of the freight rates was the vastly increased volume of business which was provided by the establishment of the Administration, and the increase in planting activity. This justified investment in new steamers and barges, and by increasing turn-over greatly reduced overheads. The lower river fleet of the Company had been increased by the end of 1896 to a total of 147 tons capacity with the launching of the Bruce, the Scott, and the Sir Harry Johnston, all stern-wheel shallow draft steamers of about 30 tons capacity each. The Company had also bought from the Zambezi Industrial Mission, their steamer which was renamed the John Stephen, and hired from the Blantyre Mission their steamer, the Henry Henderson, which was bought from them in 1900. The pioneer steamer, the Lady Nyasaa was sunk in a storm at Chinde early in 1897, and the James Stevenson was retired in the same year, but the fleet was increased in 1898 with the launching of the Princess, a two decker stern-wheel of Mississippi style which was the largest

¹ C.A.T., 26th October, 1901.
² A.L.C. Minutes, 13th May, 1895, 24th June, 1895, 7th September, 1895, 23rd August, 1899.
the cost of freight both for imports and exports. The cost of freight from Quelimane to Blantyre in 1889 by the Company was £20 a ton. By August 1893 the rate to Blantyre or Mandala had been reduced to £8 a ton, and the rate for down freights had been reduced from £15 to £6 a ton.1 In 1901 the standard rate for imports from Chinde to Blantyre was £7 a ton. From Chinde to Katunga's was £5 a ton, and the export rate from Katunga's to Chinde had been reduced to £2 or £2-10-0 per ton.2

These reductions had been made possible by a number of developments. The first of these was the establishment from mid-1891 of the port at Chinde, a sand bank on one of the mouths of the Zambezi, where a British Concession was acquired as part of the terms of the Anglo-Portuguese Convention.3 The development of this port was hindered in the first place by the difficulty of getting ships to call there, but from early 1892 there was a regular service to the south by Rennie's line coasters to Lourenco Marques, and to the north by the German East Africa Line to Mozambique.4 There was also a Union Line service to the south but this was withdrawn in 1895. There was no direct service to London, but there was from 1902 a further British India Line service to the north.5 Larger ships were discouraged from using the port because of the difficult bar, which only small vessels could cross, and on which several even of them were wrecked. By 1901 the average freight rate for goods from Chinde to London was £3-10-0 a ton, slightly more than the rate

1. J. Mair to directors, 10th May, 1889, L. E. (2); Fotheringham to Johnston, 23rd August, 1893, with Johnston to Canning, 2nd September, 1893, Salisbury, CT /1/16/4/1/.
2. C. A. T., 26th October, 1901.
3. Sharp to Salisbury, 6th November, 1891, F. O. 84/2115, encloses agreement and plans of Chinde Concession. For the development of the trade of Chinde see the Consular reports on trade and navigation for Chinde and Mozambique.
5. Johnston to Kimberley, 2nd August, 1895, F. O. 2/89.
and most comfortable of the steamers ever placed on the Zambesi-Shire route and which guaranteed the Company a dominant share of the passenger traffic even when it had lost first place among the freight carriers. The fleet was further increased in 1899 by the Empress and Duchess, and in 1902 by the purchase of the Chipando from the British Central Africa Company. This brought the fleet up to its maximum of eight steamers with a total capacity of 450 tons, and 46 barges with a total capacity of over 1,500 tons. The steamers usually went up river with a 50 ton barge lashed to each side. 1

A third factor which led to the reduction in freight rates was the establishment of the two competing transport companies. Sharrer's company and the Flotilla Company both put steamers on the river during 1893. This was at a time when the Lakes Company was temporarily starved of capital as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the amalgamation negotiations. By the end of 1894 Sharrer's Company had three steamers on the rivers, the John Bowie, the Sentipede and the Scorpion, and the Flotilla Company had two, the Cameron and the Argonaut. 2 By 1907 Sharrer's Company, then the British Central Africa Company, had increased its fleet to eight steamers of 521 tons capacity, with over 40 barges, and the Flotilla Company, then the Oceana Company, had increased its fleet to five steamers of 155 tons capacity, with twelve barges. It went out of business during that year; it had tended to do more business between Portuguese ports on the Zambezi than with the protectorate. 3

The comparative success of the three companies as regards their share of the import and export trade of the British Central Africa protectorate, but exclusive of trade between the Portuguese ports, can be seen from the following table:

1. Consular reports, Chinde, 1892-1908, and A.L.C. Minutes, passim.
2. Consular report, Chinde, 1894.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Freight carried</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>1093 A#</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>2,618</td>
<td>1,275</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>2,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>3,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>1,962</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>2,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>3,441</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>A.L.C. Sharrer</td>
<td>3,880</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>4,144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these figures come from the Consular reports on Chinde and the British Central Africa Protectorate printed in the Parliamentary Reports. They exclude trade carried between Portuguese ports on the Zambezi. The missing years are due to inconsistencies in the way that the figures were collected.
The Lakes Company maintained its leading position in the lower river transport business until 1903. Its declining share after then was due to the British Central Africa Company's involvement in the building of the Shire Highlands Railway, material for which accounted for most of the increase in goods carried until 1906, and to the refusal of the directors of the Lakes Company to compete with the rates offered by that company.

It is probable that the lower river freights had been run at a profit from 1893 until 1901, though there may have been losses in 1895 and 1896 when the rivers were exceptionally low.1 During 1890, the only year for which there is precise information, five steamers were run at a profit of £2,466, or 12% of gross receipts which amounted to just under £19,000.2 There were losses in 1902 and 1903 due to the river level, and a cutting back of the number of steamers and staff employed during 1904 when the Administrative freight contract was lost owing to the lower tender offered by the British Central Africa Company.3 From 1894 until late in 1903 there had been agreement between the three companies on the rates which were to be charged, though discounts were given on contracts.4

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This very large development in the scale of the river transport business was matched in other departments and made necessary an increase in the number of staff employed. There were about 40 Europeans employed in Africa early in 1891,5 over 60 by the end of 1893,6 73 by the end of 1896,7 91 by the end of 1899,8 and 119

1. A.L.C. Annual Reports, 1895 and 1896.
2. Gibbs to directors, 21st April, 1899, 1897 book National Archives, Zomba.
4. A.L.C. Minutes, 10th May, 1894.
5. Dr. J. Stewart, draft letter to The Times, 20th January, 1891, Salisbury.
6. F. Moir to B.S.A. Company, 12th January, 1894, Salisbury, CT/1/11/3/19/.
8. Ibid., 23rd August, 1900.
in November, 1902, including the two managers and staff on leave, or on their way home. There were by this date an average of 100 staff employed in the different departments of the business in Africa. This level probably remained fairly constant until the First World War, as the contraction in the transport business was matched by expansion in the trading department. Of the total of 100 about 30 would be employed on the river and lake steamers, about 25 as agents at out stations, and about 30 as clerks and store-keepers at Chinde, Mandalena and Fort Johnston. The remainder were craftsmen, agriculturists, and accountants.

Salaries rose from a basic minimum of £120 in 1893 to about £150 in 1899. The staff continued to be employed on five year contracts until 1899 when they were reduced to four after the protectorate judge had strongly attacked the terms of the contracts which made no provision for the staff to give notice. The Central African Times felt that this was a contract which no sane man should sign and called on the directors to 'put an end to it if they wish to save the good name of their Company and to protect the pockets of their share-holders.' The paper claimed that the Company and the public suffered from the services of men who 'were working for their dismissal.' In practice the Company does not appear to have prevented men from taking up more lucrative employments, and they suffered many losses to the Administration, to the British South Africa Company, and to the mining companies which began to operate in North Eastern Rhodesia from 1900. The Company had also provided the two first managers of Sharrer's trading company, the Kubula stores. Although the pay and conditions of service were not

2. Ibid.
4. C.A.T., 5th November, 1898, 22nd July 1899.
5. Ibid.
as good as could be had with other employers the Company did not have any difficulty in getting recruits. Kidney claimed in October 1903 that there had been advertising in Scotland.1 There was however a problem with recruits who absconded in South Africa on their way out. This was thought to be due to the stories which they were told by old hands on board ship of the unhealthiness of British Central Africa. The managers recommended that staff should be sent out by the east coast, presumably because the ports of call on that route were if anything even more unhealthy.2

The health of the employees continued to be a major problem for the managers. There was between 1889 and 1901 a higher turn-over of staff than during the earlier period. 300 men joined the Company in these years but only three stayed for more than ten years.3 Although there are no detailed figures it seems likely that the health of the employees was worse than it had been before. Blackwater fever was the scourge which became endemic in the 1890's, but which had not been identified during the 1880's. At least four of the Company's employees died of the disease during 1898, and the directors were induced to ask the British government to promote research into the disease, and contributed money for this purpose.4 The Company employed a full-time doctor at Chinde from 1901; they appointed Dr. Hermann Leya, who joined the Administration in 1904 and became a leading authority on east African questions.5 They also built a recreation hall at Mandala with new bachelor's quarters, improving the living conditions of the employees which had previously been criticised.6

During the 1890's there appears to have been an increase in

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3. Beaton to directors, 25th October, 1901, Mandala.
4. A.L.T. Minutes, 16th May, 27th June, 14th October, 1898.
5. Ibid, 4th February, 1901, 20th September, 1904.
drunkenness among the employees. Edward Alston complained that the agent at Karonga in 1895 was always drunk,1 and Mrs. John Moir said that deaths at Mandala were due to drink.2 Beaton admitted that Mandala had once been for its drunkenness but claimed that by 1901 this was no longer the case.3 The Company still aimed to employ teetotallers only and Kidney was pleased to note that the entire staff at Fort Johnston in 1903 were temperate and churchgoers.4 There were several cases during the 1890’s of the Company’s agents taking the law into their own hands, and at least two were charged with manslaughter.5 One who was given six months hard labour by Harry Johnston for such an offence, was later employed as an assistant collector by the British South Africa Company.6 By the earlier years of this century the situation seems to have become more settled, and there do not appear to be any examples of extreme misconduct by the Company’s staff.

If the problem of maintaining an adequate and healthy staff had been one which the Moire had constantly to fight, the question of the level of the water in the lake which caused their successors so much trouble had not seriously worried them until the last few years of their managership. The Lady Nyassa which drew several feet had first been grounded a short distance below Katunga’s in 1865.7 The James Stevenson which drew even more stuck fairly frequently in 1888–9 and the possibility of a permanent lowering of the level of the river and the lake was then first considered.8

1. Alston diary, 10th December, 1895.  
3. Beaton to directors, 19th September, 1901, Mandala.  
The issue had become serious by 1893 as the terminal point of the steamer traffic was pushed in the dry season gradually down stream to Chiramo, then to Mawanje, (Fort Herald) and by 1895 to the Pinda rapid between there and Villa Bocage in Mozambique. There were good rains in 1896 and the steamers were able to reach Katunga's; the situation had deteriorated again by September 1901 when the larger steamers were unable to reach Fort Herald; it was partly relieved by good rains in 1903, but was soon causing great difficulty again, with the steamers being able to reach Chiramo in only a few months of the ensuing years. The effect of the shallowing of the river was to cause delays in imports, and to necessitate several transhipments of goods to smaller steamers and barges on the way up stream. Each trans-shipment increased the cost of transport, and the complications of getting the right steamers to the right place at the right time called for the diversion of more staff to the river management. This problem also affected the upper Shire, so that by 1906 goods for the lake had to be carried from Blantyre to Fort Johnston. A further consequence of the fall in the water levels was, therefore, to increase the demand for tonga-tanga. The further goods had to be carried the more porters were required. This reduced the supply of labour to the plantations, and restricted their development, providing a strong argument for the building of a railway from Chiramo.

Fred Moir had stressed the inadequacy of tonga-tanga transport, and the need for an alternative in 1879. The greatly increased weights of goods which were imported and exported after the establishment of the Administration worsened the difficulties to

3. C.A.T., 22nd February, 1908. The state of the rivers was the cause of many jokes, of which a fine example is the remark of an A.L.C. skipper whose steamer was stuck on a sand bank in the lower Shire to a woman who had come to draw water: 'Gin ye tak' another dram o' madai frae this burn afore I win over this saun bank I'll gie ye a daud on the back o' the neck wi' a sungwi ye'll no forget in a hurry.' C.A.T., 17th November, 1906.
which he had alluded. From 1893 there were recurrent blocks at Katunga's and Blantyre when goods could not be forwarded owing to a shortage of carriers, especially during the planting season. In February 1893 there were 32,000 loads waiting for transport at Katunga's. It was said that the depots were almost invisible for the thousands of loads piled high as a house around them. 1

1895 was another very bad year, and as exports of coffee increased in the following five years the situation worsened, until 1900 when the thousand ton coffee crop of the previous season strained the resources of labour well beyond their capacity. There were said to have been 60,000 loads awaiting movement at Katunga's in January of that year, that is about 1,500 tons weight. 2 Labourers were coming to the Shire Highlands from all over the protectorate, and also from Portuguese East Africa, but there were not sufficient to meet the demands of the transport companies who were thought to need about 100,000 months of labour in 1900, and the planters who needed over 300,000 months. 3 Contracts were generally for four months and few men were thought to work for longer than this time, so there was probably a requirement for about 100,000 men to do a period of work in the Shire Highlands. When it is considered that out of a total population of approximately 1,000,000 there can have been only about 200,000 men of working age this was a high figure. 4

1. L.W.B.C.A., February, 1893.
2. Ibid., January, 1900.
3. C.A.T., 19th May, 1900.
4. The shortage of tengu-tenga and of agricultural labour might have been relieved if the Administration had provided a road suitable for wheeled vehicles from Chiremo to Blantyre. In fact virtually nothing was done to improve the road even from Katunga's to Blantyre which had been used by mule carts in the early 1880's. No wheeled vehicles, appear to have used the road during the 1890's. Following Fred Neir's earlier recommendation the Company sent out a traction engine in 1896 but it was unable to climb the Katunga's hill. Two more engines were sent out in 1900 but although they were able to work for a few miles on the Matope road, they proved
to be more expensive than tenge-tenge. The Company introduced a steam lorry in 1902, but this was also a disappointment. The directors sent out in 1904 against the advice of the managers, the first motor car to enter the protectorate. Beaton sent a report of the trial run at Chiroro, 9th August, 1904, 1903 book Mandala: 'Mr. Soulsby reports that the jolting was so bad that the oil jumped the can, with the result that the engine caught fire and burned part of the engine cover. This car is practically useless without the accumulators, as, at present, only short runs of about 15 minutes are possible without having to stop and re-start the engine.' For some account of the state of the roads see, Krishnamurthy, op. cit., pp 146-8. The Company also experimented with oxen and donkeys. Managers to directors, 11th January, 1901, 12th March, 1901, 1900 book, Mandala.
The shortage of labour led to an increase in the wages of tenga-tenga who had always been paid at a rate which was higher than could be earned in agricultural work. The standard rate for Katunga's to Blantyre at this date was between one shilling and one shilling and sixpence, but was higher at the time of the greatest difficulty. The planters complained that the transport companies drew labour away from them. A shortage of agricultural labour in the 1899 season was said to have led to a loss of 400 tons of coffee, and a lack of people to do weeding work led to many acres going out of cultivation. The collapse of the coffee industry after 1900 was, however, due more to the fall in the price following the great expansion in Brazilian production. Agricultural wages were very low at between three and five shillings a month, but with the prevailing cost of freight for export they could not have been greatly increased with any hope of profits being made on agricultural production. These factors all increased the pressure from the planters for the building of a railway which would both release men from tenga-tenga work, and by reducing freight rates, allow a larger margin of profit on their produce.

Another bone of contention between the transport companies and the planters was the development of the transit trade to the Congo Free State, German East Africa and North Eastern Rhodesia which employed labour in the carriage of goods which, they argued, were not contributing directly to the growth of the Protectorate's economy.

2. C.A.T., 29th April, 1899.
The Company played a leading part in the opening up of these areas. There was competition in this sector also which helped to reduce the freight rate for the transport of a ton of goods from Chinde to Kazongo from about £50 in 1889 to £20 by 1900. Goods could be taken to Kituta at the south end of Lake Tanganyika for £50 a ton in contrast to the £12.5 a ton which had been charged for the carriage of the Good News. The fleet on Lake Malawi was increased by the launching in 1894 of the Livingston, and in 1898 of the Monteith which were both shallow draft steamers used between Matope on the upper Shire and Fort Johnston, and by the launching also in 1898 of the Queen Victoria, the largest vessel on the lake to that date, which could carry up to 90 tons of cargo. The only other steamer on the lake which operated commercially was the von Missman which worked in co-operation with the Flotilla Company until 1901. That company put a steamer, the Stair, on the upper Shire in 1899.

The volume of business expanded until about 1901 when the transit trade was worth over £50,000. During 1900, the only year for which there are figures, and certainly one of the busiest, the Company carried 188 tons of goods across the Stevenson road, of these all but 31 tons were imports, and almost all the exports were of rubber from Lake Mweru. The main customers of the Company on this route were the Congo Free State who sent all their officials and goods for Katanga by this route until 1903 when the western route via the Congo became faster and cheaper; the British South Africa Company; the government of German East Africa who used this route for access to what is now south eastern Tanzania until about the same date; and various missions including the Carenganze Mission; and

1. Beaton to directors, 17th December, 1900, 1900 book, Mandala.
2. Beaton to directors, 17th December, 1900, 1900 book, Mandala.
4. Kidney to directors, 14th January, 1902.
5. C.A.T., 24th June, 1899.
the White Fathers, and London Missionary Society on Lake Tanganyika. The Company bought the Good News from the latter mission in 1895; she remained the only steamer on the lake until 1901 when two steamers, which had been carried across the Stevenson road, were launched for the Katanga Company, and the Tanganyika Concessions Ltd. The latter company was obliged to put a steamer on the lake as part of the quid pro quo for a mineral concession in the British South Africa Company’s territory. The steamer, named the Cecil Rhodes, was intended to form a link in the Cape to Cairo route connecting with the railway which was to have been extended from the Victoria Falls to the south end of Lake Tanganyika. The launching of these steamers ended the Company’s monopoly, and the Good News was little used after 1902; she was beached in 1906 and her engines were taken out and stored in 1909. This was not before she had done useful service by carrying much of the material for the extension of the Cape to Cairo telegraph which reached its terminus at Ujiji in 1903. Much of the material for the telegraph which passed along the west coast of Lake Malawi and followed the line of the Stevenson road had been carried by the Company from 1895. The Good News also carried Ewart Grogan on his ‘walk’ from Cape to Cairo in 1899. He had come up by the Company’s

2. A.L.C. Minutes, 25th March, 1895. The steamer was bought for £1,750.
3. Managers to directors, 29th December, 1902, 1900 book, Mandala. The Good News was then said to be out of a job.
5. A.L.C. Minutes, 21st March, 1906, 31st May, 1909. The Good News has now been covered by the rise of the lake, but she lies a few inches below the surface about 150 yards from the shore at the village of Kituta.
6. A.L.C. Minutes, passim, and reports of the African Trans-Continental Telegraph Company, in The African Review, 1895-1904. The telegraph poles which were carried by the Company now carry the telephone wires. They can still be seen near Blantyre, along the west side of lake Malawi, along the line of the Stevenson road as far as Abercorn, now Mbala.
service from Chinde and was taken as far as the north end of Lake Tanganyika with three tons of baggage and 60 Tonga porters. He amassed a bill of £1,500 with the Company but there is no evidence that he paid more than £700.1 His comments on the Company were uncomplimentary, and he gave them little credit for having carried him over a third of his journey.2

In addition to the carrying business the managers in this period were anxious, as the Moirs had been, to find commodities which could be profitably exported from the lake districts. Ivory continued for some time to be the only export from these areas. The Company were pressed to take advantage of the blocking of the east coast route from Lake Tanganyika to take over this trade. During 1893 they bought about £20,000 of ivory, much of which had been brought down from Ujiji by the Good News.3 Kituta, the station at the south end of the lake, which had been named Abercorn in 1890, became for a time the Company’s most profitable station, but this trade was short-lived, and gradually declined until in 1898 it came to an end after the directors had lowered the price which could be paid there owing to losses on some consignments.4 The Company had an agent at Ujiji in 1897 but it is doubtful whether he was kept there very long; Gibbs found then that cloth could be brought there overland more cheaply than the Company could carry it. At 1,500 miles from Chinde the Company lost the cost advantage which it had at least as far as Lake Mweru.5

An agent was sent to start a store at Mweru late in 1894 but he reported that there were few trading possibilities. By October 1895 the Company advertised that it had a store on that lake at Chiengi.6 It was not however until 1897 that large profits began to

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be made from the export of rubber from there, as well as from Bundese on Lake Malawi, where Fred Noir had started a small trade fifteen years previously. During 1898 the Company exported 28 tons of rubber from these sources worth about £3,000. In May 1899 the directors reported a profit of almost £5,000 on rubber, presumably the profit on the previous year's consignments. The rubber was carried out by tanga-tanga to Sumbu on the south-west coast of Lake Tanganyika, where there was a Company station from about 1900, and then on by the Good News to Kituta. A small steamer was carried up, built and launched on Lake Iweru during 1900. Named the Scotia she was capable of 3 m.p.h., and ran on the lake and on the Luapula as far as Johnston Falls. Much of the rubber which was exported from Iweru came from the Congo Free State; people brought it to the Company's store because they offered a better price than could be obtained on the Belgian side. After the launching of another steamer on the lake by the Katanga Company in 1901 the Belgian officials attempted to prevent this practice. The Company also had competition in 1900 from the Flotilla Company who opened a store on the lake, but the time of greatest profit had passed; the world price began to fall in 1901, and the wild landolphia rubber was becoming more difficult to find. Its collection was banned by the North East Rhodesian Administration as from April 1904; this put an end to what Kidney had called 'this highly lucrative trade.'

Later exports of rubber from the protectorate were almost all of ceara rubber which was grown on the Company's Chombe estate near Mzata Bay, where the first trees were planted in 1902. This

2. A.L.C. Minutes, 23rd May, 1900.
3. Managers to directors, 15th September, 1900, 1900 book, Mandala. The construction of the steamer had began in July, and she was running on the 4th September.
6. Beaton to directors, 5th February, 1903, Mandala. The estate which was 6,200 acres was leased from 1902, and purchased in 1908. The rubber trees still stand, but have not been tapped for some years. Part of the estate was sold in 1955 to Booker Brothers, McConnell Ltd. who have established the very successful Chombe tea estate.
was the only attempt at direct development in the present northern region of Malawi until after the Second World War. The failure first of ivory and then of wild rubber had demonstrated once again the difficulty of finding any product which could be grown in the far interior and exported to the world market. It was this difficulty which led to the rapid increase from the late 1890's in the number of men who were prepared to travel not just to the Shire Highlands, but to Rhodesia and to South Africa in the pursuit of cash.¹

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If the development of export trades from the lakes proved difficult, the Shire Highlands planters also had problems. The years 1899-1900 proved to be critical for the economic history of the protectorate. The achievement of the first thousand ton crop of coffee was accompanied by a slump in the world price, and by difficulties in the cultivation which indicated that coffee was unlikely to be, as had been hoped, a staple crop. The planters and the companies were forced to turn their attention to other crops, tobacco, cotton and tea. At the same time the problems caused by the moving of the coffee in the four months before the rains, when the transit trade was also at its peak, and the resulting delays in the carriage of all types of goods, as well as the shortage of agricultural labour which has been alluded to, brought to a climax the campaign for improved transport and for the building of a railway.

¹. The development of labour migration from Malawi, and especially from the northern region, was one of the most significant economic events in the years before the First World War; it is not considered here because it is not directly relevant to the history of the Company except in so far as it contributed to the growth of retail trade; it has been dealt with in detail by B.S. Krishnamurthy, op. cit., pp 214-306.
This campaign had been launched by John Buchanan in October, 1893. He had written in June that with

"a railway connecting the Shire at Chiromo with the lake the whole question of the opening up of Central Africa to Civilisation is settled."

At an earlier but uncertain date James Stevenson had offered £60,000 for a light railway to link Katunga's and Blantyre but nothing had come of this. Buchanan's scheme was for a line from Chiromo, further down the Shire, to pass by Cholo, Blantyre, and Zomba to the lake. He made the proposal to a meeting of residents in the Shire Highlands at the Blantyre Vice-Consulate; among those present were Alfred Sharpe, D.C. Scott and John Gibbs, then assistant manager of the Company. Following this meeting both the Company and Eugene Sharrer began to investigate the possibilities of constructing the line. The directors discussed the proposal and in May 1894 formed the Shire Highlands Railway Syndicate. Among the promoters were Sir William Arrol, the contractor, and Sir John Cowan. In December, 1894 they resolved to send out a surveyor to make estimates for the cost and to select the best line for a route from Chiromo, following the Ru and Tuchila rivers. They appointed Grieve MacCrone, who had experience on the building of the West Highland line; he began work in Africa in June, 1895. Detailed plans for the 85 mile section from Chiromo to Blantyre were received in Glasgow in May, 1896 and forwarded to the Foreign Office.

1. Minutes of a meeting held in the Vice-Consulate, Blantyre, B.C.A., regarding a proposed railway to connect the upper and the lower Shire, 13th October, 1893, F.O. 2/55. Buchanan correctly prophesied that tanga-tanga would not be adequate to transport the thousand ton coffee crop which he expected to be produced in a few years. Buchanan himself did not live to see this crop; he died at Chinde on his way to Britain in March, 1896, L.W.B.C.A.; he had contributed more than any other individual to agricultural development in British Central Africa, experimenting with coffee, tobacco and cotton.

2. J. Buchanan to J. Bankin, 25th June, 1893, private collection.

3. D.C. Scott, minutes of meeting, ibid.

4. A.I.G. Minutes, 10th May, 1894.

5. Ibid., 27th December, 1894; Johnston to Kimberley, 7th June, 1895, F.O. 2/68.
in that month. The plans were for a narrow gauge line with steep gradients and tight curves; it was estimated that this would cost about £200,000 to construct. Further plans for the continuation to the upper Shire were received in July, and for a slightly cheaper alternative route via Cholo in November, 1896. The Company made a formal application in December to build this line to Mpimbe for £300,000 and requested a 3% government guarantee of interest on the capital.

Meanwhile Eugene Sharrer had also been making proposals. In March, 1895 he had registered simultaneously with his Sharrer's Zambesi Traffic Company a 'Shire Highlands Railway Company.' In May of that year he had proposed the building of a railway from Katunga's to Blantyre, passing entirely through his own land. This was not well received in the Shire Highlands and he then modified his route to follow the one which had been followed by MacCrone. He had not sent out an engineer or a surveyor and he could produce no detailed plans, but he had obtained, with the assistance of the Established Church of Scotland, some respectable backing. They had first persuaded Lord Balfour of Burleigh to become chairman of Sharrer's companies; when he resigned on taking office under the Crown, Lord Stanmore took his place. Among the directors were Sir Bradford Leslie, railway engineer, and W.H. Schneider, a financier. Although they had no plans for their railway the financial terms which they offered in November, 1896 were marginally more attractive. It was proposed that the Shire Highlands Railway Company should be absorbed with Sharrer's Zambesi Traffic Company, which at this date had no paid up capital.

2. Ibid.
6. McClure to D.C. Scott, 'I have encouraged Lord Balfour of Burleigh to become chairman of Sharrer's Railway Company,' 14th February, 1895, MS 7535.
in a British Central Africa Railway and Navigation Company which was to issue £400,000 in shares; £100,000 in ordinary shares were to be allotted for the purchase of the Traffic Company, and £300,000 was to be raised in 4½% cumulative preference shares, for which a 2½% guarantee was requested.¹

These two proposals were first referred to the Crown Agents for their opinion. The Crown Agents had many years experience in the building and financing of railways for the Colonial Office, and showed a remarkably shrewd awareness of the difficulties which might follow on the acceptance of either scheme. Their experience had led them to the conclusion that colonial railways should be built by government, and that all schemes involving guarantees or land grants were suspect. The senior Crown Agent at this time, Sir M.F. Ommaney, put forward arguments for state enterprise with great cogency.²

He maintained that a guarantee would not be requested or granted unless it was going to be invoked. The consequence was that the government would have to meet the losses which were incurred in the initial running of the railway without securing a share in any future profits. The guarantee was not an incentive to the Company to run the line efficiently, and the capital required for the building of the line could be raised more cheaply by government than it could by private enterprise. While the rate of interest in the gilt-edged market was less than 2½%, a guarantee of 2½% interest amounted to the issue of preference shares at a premium. The alternative of land grants involved the mortgaging of a country's future before the land's true value could be known.³

In the six years between 1896, when the proposals for the railway were first considered, and 1902, when the contract was signed, there was intermittent argument between the Foreign Office, the

¹ Memorandum to F.O. from Shire Highlands Railway Company, 10th November, 1896, F.O. 7/63.
² Ommaney to F.O., 15th December, 1896, 6th April, 1897, F.O. 2/609.
³ Ibid.
Crown Agents and The Treasury on the method by which it should be financed. These discussions provide a fascinating side-light on the fiscal and economic theories of the time. It has already been pointed out that the economic philosophy which guided the directors of the Company prevented them from making investments from which there could be no immediate return, and led them to reduce business on which a loss was made rather than to attempt to make a profit through increased turn-over. The Treasury were not running a business in which it was possible to make a profit, but they held equally conservative views on investment. They were opposed to the spending of any government money on the building of the railway, and were only very reluctantly persuaded to sanction land grants—they at least did not involve any payment of money. The Foreign Office did not pretend to have any view on economic theory, though they were anxious that the railway should be built as soon as possible and with the greatest advantage to the protectorate. The Crown Agents had a definite point of view. They expressed the opinion of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, that the colonies should be regarded as 'undeveloped estates' on which money had to be spent before they could provide any return. They were, however, as Chamberlain was, subject to the authority of The Treasury.

The first important decision on the railway question was taken by Lord Salisbury himself in February, 1897 when he vetoed a government guarantee.¹ A committee was then formed with representatives of the Foreign Office, the Crown Agents and The Treasury to consider the proposals, on the understanding that there could be no direct assistance but that 'private enterprise should be given every legitimate encouragement.'² The Committee concluded that it was hopeless to try and unite the two schemes, but that on Ommally's suggestion, a draft contract giving the specifications of the railway to be built should be drawn up and submitted to the two

¹ Salisbury to Crown Agents, 3rd February, 1897, F.O. 2/689.
² F.O. to Treasury, 23rd February, 1897, ibid.
companies. He also managed to persuade them that it was essential that a government survey of the route should be made, and that it was preferable that the line should be built by government "thus securing the advantage of its high credit but also the full measure of those benefits likely to be derived from the development of the country."  

The Treasury were induced to agree to the sending out of a surveyor, though they insisted that the expenses should be borne by the protectorate Administration. The surveyor began work in September, 1897 and his report, and that of the consultant engineers, was received at the Foreign Office in April, 1899. The surveyor's proposal was for a railway which would follow virtually the same route as MacCrone's but which would be of higher technical specifications. Gradients were to be limited to 1 in 30 as opposed to 1 in 50, the tightest curve was to be of 363 feet radius as opposed to 200 feet, and the rails of 50 lb. weight per foot instead of 30 lbs and the gauge 3 feet 6 inches instead of 2 feet 6 inches. The point of these specifications was to allow for the future linking of the line to the South African rail network, and for a larger carrying capacity than would be possible on the narrow line. The estimated cost was however, £4,520 a mile in contrast to the Company's proposed £2,500 a mile, and Sharrer's £2,750.

The Treasury were shocked by this increase in the proposed cost and the Permanent Secretary, Sir Edward Hamilton, pointed out that

"heavy and increasing liabilities in Africa make it advisable that the consideration even of this shorter line (from Chirongo to Blantyre) should be postponed... at the present time, my Lords are not prepared to assent to any action in the matter which would impose a burden on the Exchequer for the construction of the line."

1. Committee on railway to F. O., 14th April, 1897, ibid.
4. Hamilton to Bertie, 8th August, 1899, ibid.
In the Treasury's view the arguments for delay were made even stronger by the fact that Lord Salisbury had been converted to the Crown Agents' view that the line should be built by government. At this point Fred Moir, on behalf of the Company, asked for an answer to the application of December, 1896. Before answering the Foreign Office asked for permission to offer land grants of 1,000 acres per mile; the Treasury agreed, but the outbreak of the South African War in October led to further delay. Bertie suggested that the question be shelved until after 'the end of the Transvaal War.' Salisbury agreed but minuted: 'you will have to wait still longer.'

The war and the consequent postponement coincided with the moment of greatest crisis regarding transport in the Shire Highlands. Pressure from the planting community, from the missions, from the Commissioner, Alfred Sharpe, and from various Chambers of Commerce in Britain combined to make the Foreign Office more than ever aware of the seriousness of the situation. The question remained in abeyance until early in 1901 when there was a revival of activity. The Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hicks Beach, remained adamant. The Chancellor uttered his last words on the subject in July, 1901:

'I have all along declined a guarantee for the railway and could not agree to it... the history of the Uganda railway is enough to prevent me from entrusting the Foreign Office with any similar work.'

1. Ibid.
5. e.g. Cable from Sharpe to Salisbury, 7th August, 1899, reports resolution of the B.C.A. Chamber of Commerce, 'opinion railway necessary progress prosperity protectorate,' F.O. 2/690. Memorial from Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 4th August, 1899, Dundee, 5th September, 1899, ibid. Parliamentary question by Sir Bampton Gurdon, 20th July, 1900, F.O. 2/691. Resolution of 4th Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, 26th July, 1900, ibid. Cranborne to Lansdowne on deputation of residents in B.C.A., 10th January, 1901. This deputation included Dr. Law, Dr. G. Smith, John and Fred Moir, Dr. McMurtrie, and William Ewing, F.O. 2/691.
He did not think that the trade of British Central Africa would be sufficient to pay for the line, and he had no confidence in the development of the transit trade which he said 'had failed in Uganda.' He concluded:

'What we want in our African protectorates is such (private) enterprise; for they will never be developed by government agency, which is totally alien to our past Colonial history, and in my opinion will end only in failures and loss to the tax-payers.'

The Foreign Office was anxious to get the railway built on almost any terms. Eyre Crowe conceded that their policy might be short-sighted but claimed that it was forced upon them by The Treasury. 'If we want a railway built at all now,' he wrote, 'we must let private capitalists build on such terms as alone will make them come forward.' Lord Cranborne lamented: 'As we will contribute nothing we are hardly in a position to dictate terms... any further delay is really intolerable,' Sir Clement Hill commented that the local clamour for a railway was getting very loud, and I am getting anxious for the future of the Protectorate if we do not have one.

The Company do not seem to have pressed their bid to build the line very hard after 1899. It is probable that they were put off by the extra expense of building to the government surveyor's specifications which they may have thought would involve excessive capital expenditure. Sharror, with the backing of Sir Alexander Henderson, a railway magnate, was prepared to find the money. A

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1. Hicks Beach to Cranborne, 26th July, 1901, F.O. 2/692.
2. Crowe, minute, 16th February, 1901, F.O. 2/591.
5. In a letter to the Foreign Office of 17th November, 1902, Fred Noir on behalf of the Company complained that they had not been fairly treated, as they had not been offered the size of land grant that was proposed for the E.C.A. Company. He added: 'only a line promoted and constructed on an economical and reasonable business basis can give satisfaction.' F.O. 2/693.
6. Later the first Lord Faringdon.
preliminary contract for the construction of the line was signed with his group in August, 1901. No mention of land grants was made in this contract, and the Foreign Office appear to have been somewhat surprised when negotiations were started on a final contract in June, 1902 that the British Central Africa Company, which was to build the line, asked for a land grant of 6,400 acres per mile. Land grants were, however, the only inducement which they could offer. They eventually agreed to a compromise grant of 3,200 acres per mile; the contract incorporating these terms was signed on the 22nd December, 1902.

The Crown Agents had maintained their opposition to the scheme until the very end. Sir Edward Blake, who had succeeded Ommaney, wrote that in their view land grants without geological surveys were 'a leap in the dark in which the Government were almost certain to get the worst of the bargain.' Ommaney had referred scathingly to 'so-called private enterprise' and Blake stated that it was not Chamberlain's policy to 'grant either direct or indirect aid to persons or companies receiving concessions.' He pointed out that the protectorate might be handed over to the Colonial Office, and that they therefore had an interest in the arrangements made, and he questioned the government's right to make grants of Crown land in a protectorate; the Foreign Office's legal adviser also had doubts. Lord Lansdowne put the Foreign Office view clearly:

'Grants of money are far preferable but we can't get them, and as we wish to secure Sir A. Henderson we must give him land.'

4. Blake to F.O., 14th July 1902, ibid.
7. Davidson, minute, 4th November, 1902, F.O. 2/693.
So the Shire Highlands got their railway at a price. The land grant was very unpopular in the protectorate and was eventually replaced by a payment of £150,000, which had to be borne by the Protectorate government.\(^1\) The Crown Agents were proved right by the difficulties which this grant caused, and by the drain which the railway proved to be on the protectorate's meagre resources.\(^2\)

Eugene Sharrer undoubtedly made money from the terms of the sale of the land which he had acquired, and the business which he had founded, to the British Central Africa Company, but the share-holders in that company certainly did not.\(^3\)

Sharrer's Zambesi Traffic Company which was valued at £150,000 had been in a very bad way before the contract for the railway was signed. Beaton had commented: 'nothing can save them unless they get more capital for the railway.'\(^4\) Kidney though Sharrer's prospectus of 1901 'the most mendacious document of the kind I have ever seen.' He believed that the valuation of the steamers included £5,000 for a steamer which 'lies rotting at the bottom of the river at Chinde.'\(^5\)

1. The grant was the immediate cause of the setting up of a Land Commission to investigate questions of tenure. C.A.T., 9th May, 1903. There was increasing pressure on the Imperial government to take over the line. C.A.T., 27th October, 8th December, 1906; 2nd February, 1907, 18th January, 1st February, 22nd February, 1908.

2. The payment in lieu of the land grant was made in three instalments from 1911. The protectorate also agreed to guarantee the interest on the debentures raised to pay for the extension of the line towards Beira. The payment was financed by a Colonial loan to the protectorate; this was to prove a constant drain on the revenue, and prevented expenditure on other development projects. I am indebted for this point to Mr. Louis Mhenda of St. Antony's College, Oxford, who is working on Nyasaland and the Treasury from 1919.

3. It is almost impossible to unravel the extremely complex transaction which surrounded the establishment of the B.C.A. Company. £1,000,000 debentures at 4\% were issued. £350,000 were for cash for the building of the line, and were to receive preference income from profits of the Sharrer's Zambesi Traffic Company. £250,000 were issued to Sharrer for his 372,000 acres of land, and for the transport business. These were not to receive income until after the interest on the £350,000 was paid. It is not clear how much of the £180,000 compensation for the land grant he received. See C.A.T., 30th August, 1902. The B.C.A. Company paid no dividend until the Second World War.


In October, 1902 Sharrer's company was said to be doing little or no business, and there were rumours that the staff were to be given notice. On the news of the land grant Beaton commented:

"It is a well-known fact that natives living on Sharrer's land are given to understand that they have got to work for him and no-one else. It is a shame that the rights of the people should thus be alienated without their knowledge or consent, or without giving them the opportunity of acquiring a few acres for themselves, a thing which many of them would be only too glad to do."

The managers of the Company were of course partisan witnesses, but there seems to be little doubt that the valuation of the assets of the British Central Africa Company was suspect, and that the project should not have been undertaken by private enterprise. In terms of their obligation to their share-holders the directors of the African Lakes Corporation had been wise not to pursue the scheme.

Nevertheless the granting of the railway contract to Sharrer's Company marked the beginning of the end of the Company as a transport business. When material began to be imported for the railway in 1903 Sharrer was able to use the vastly increased turnover on the river to reduce his freight rates below the level at which the directors considered it profitable to operate. The result was that the Company had from 1903 a declining share of the lower river transport business. The shallowing of the river made it necessary for the railway to be started at Fort Herald, about 30 miles below Chiromo, and after the opening of the Central Africa Railway from there to Chindio on the north side of the Zambezi in 1915, and of the Trans-Zambezia Railway from Beira to the south side of the Zambezi in 1922, the steamer service was finally abandoned and they were sold to the railway company.

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1. Beaton, 9th July, 17th October, 1902, 1900 book, Mandala. Beaton thought that a fair valuation of Sharrer's business and land would be £100,000, 2nd December, 1902, ibid.
3. See table above.
While doubts were thus arising about the future of the river transport the managers were engaged from 1900 in the expansion of the business in several directions. Following the collapse of the coffee industry they were concerned to encourage experiments in the cultivation of new crops. They had from 1896 employed two experts in coffee cultivation in addition to their gardener at Mandala. From 1902 they employed a rubber expert who laid out the Chombe estate, and a tobacco expert from Holland who attempted to introduce Sumatra leaf at Mlanje where he built two large curing barns. The experiments with Sumatra leaf proved to be a failure and from 1905 Virginia leaf was introduced which was more successful, and became the basis of lasting export industry.

Beaton did his best to encourage the cultivation of cotton by offering in 1901 to export any of the crop produced in the next year for £2 a ton from Katunga's to Chinde. The Company also began to grow the crop on its own account; the first crop was produced in 1903 and by 1904 there were 125 acres under cultivation at Mandala, and it was hoped to have 500 acres by the end of the year. Experiments were also made at Katunga's, Chiromo, and at Matope. Some Indian cultivators had been brought into the country but they were convinced that the climate was not suitable for cotton, and they stayed only for a short time. Cins were sent out in 1903 and by 1905 there were 24 at Mandala worked by one of the Company's steam traction engines. The Company had become agents for the British Cotton Growers Association in May, 1904 and provided seed at their expense to many planters. Beaton was convinced that

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1. A.I.C. Minutes, 22nd June, 1896.
2. There were 50 acres planted at Mlanje by April, 1903, managers to directors, 16th April, 1903, 1903 book, Mandala. Kidney to directors, 2nd October, 1903, and Beaton, 12th August, 1904, ibid.
5. Ibid., 11th April, 25th April, 1904.
6. Ibid., Kidney, 9th March, 1st April, 1903.
7. Ibid., Beaton, 12th July, 1904; A.I.C. Minutes, 8th March, 1905.
'if seed was supplied to the natives, and they could be
induced to take up this industry, it might in time prove
the salvation of the country.'

It was agreed with Sharpe that taxes could be paid in cotton,
and the Company agreed to supply chiefs on the lake with seed, and
to buy the crop from them for 3d per lb. unginned. Beaton felt that

'should the natives take to the cultivation of cotton, and we
believe they will, as they are most anxious to pay their tax
in this way, rather than be obliged to leave their homes to
work for it elsewhere, we anticipate a very large acreage
will be put under cotton this year.'

African cultivation increased rapidly so that their production had
by 1914 passed 1,000 tons unginned, but the industry did not take
off as it did in Uganda; this was due largely to the difficulties of
transport and of freight.3 Experiments with tea were not begun
until 1911 when Kidney asked permission to plant 100 acres at
Chitakali near Mlanje,4 but by 1908 the foundations at least had
been laid of two of the staple exports, cotton and tobacco, which in
spite of difficulties with disease were to prove a lasting success.

A further attempt to stimulate the development of the protectorate
economy was the founding by the Company in 1901 of the Central African
Mining Company which employed a prospector from then until 1903,
but without success.5 Mining was, however, to be the basis of a

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1. Ibid., Beaton, 21st August, 1903.
2. Ibid., 11th June, 1904.
4. A.I.C. Minutes, 6th April, 1911.
   £2,000 in capital was raised by the directors of the Lakes
   Corporation for this enterprise. They employed a Cornish
   prospector, Captain Williams. A.I.C. Minutes, 23rd January, 15th
   March, 6th May, 1901. Beaton to directors, 5th March, 1903,
   1903 book, Mandela, reports the invaliding of Captain Williams.
   The Company had never pursued mineral prospecting very energetically
   it is sad to record that the Kitwe-Mansa mine on the Zambian
   copper-belt was discovered by a former employee, J.Hoffit
   Thomson, in 1910 when he was working for the B.S.A.Company, Cama,
   A History of Northern Rhodesia, op. cit., p 122.
large extension of the Company's trading and transport business between 1900 and 1908 into both North Eastern and North Western Rhodesia. In this development they followed *on the heels of the Chartered Company*¹ who established their first headquarters in North Eastern Rhodesia under Robert Codrington at Fort Jameson in 1899.² The Company established a store there early in 1901, and undertook, at the Chartered Company's request, the organisation of their tanga-tenga route first from Mchota Khota and then from Tete. The latter route was opened when the Company began to run a steamer, the *Henry Henderson*, regularly to Tete and opened a store there.³ After the making of a road of sorts between Tete and Fort Jameson this route proved quicker and cheaper than the old one via the lake.⁴ Very large profits were made out of the Fort Jameson store trade between 1901 and 1904 when competition reduced the profit margins.⁵ Fort Jameson was also a staging post on the route which was opened and used between 1902 and 1905 to Kambove, the tin mine of the Tanganyika Concessions in Katanga near Jadotville, which was being worked under the supervision of George Grey.⁶ The route from Domira Bay on Lake Malawi via Fort Jameson, Soronje, Salonta, and Chinama on the Luapula was almost 500 miles long, and its operation was one of the most remarkable feats of organisation which the Company ever performed. Several hundred tons of equipment were carried in, and ore carried out, in these years, and very considerable profits were made.⁷ A station had also been started in 1901, at

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1. Beaton to directors, 19th December, 1900, 1900 book, Mandala.
2. Gann, op. cit., p 95.
6. Kidney to directors, 6th February, 17th April, 1902, on negotiations with Holland and Grey of Tanganyika Concessions on the opening of the route to Kambove, 1900 book, Mandala.
7. Kidney to directors, 30th October, 8th December, 1903, 1903 book, Mandala, on re-negotiation of contracts, Grey was said to have described the profit made by the Company as 'monstrous.' Kidney to directors, ibid., 7th June, 1904, the Company contracted to carry 200 tons of tin from Kambove to Chinde for £45 a ton.
Kasama which was on an alternative route to Lake Nзерu, and in 1902 at Abercorn, the Administration Boma above Lake Tanganyika, the site of which had been chosen by Fred Noir. The Company also did transport work for the North Charterland Company's Ssera mine near Fort Jameson where another store was established.1

In North Western Rhodesia the Company undertook transport for the mines which were worked by the Northern Concessions Company in the vicinity of Broken Hill, now Kabwe.2 These included the Silver King and Sable Antelope mines in the Nambwa district, where stores were opened. Transport to them involved another remarkable feat, the launching on the upper Zambesi in February and June, 1903 of two steamers, the Andrea and the Olivia which had been carried round the Cabora Bassa rapids and built at Cachombo where a station was established.3 They worked in conjunction with a lower Zambesi steamer and navigated as far as the junction with the Kafue, going about 30 miles up that river to a point close to the present town of Kafue, and a short distance from Lusaka.

These operations proved to be the swan song of the Company as a transport business. The opening of the railway between the Victoria Falls and Broken Hill in 1906 made all these new routes redundant with the exception of the Fort Jameson—Tete one which continued to be used for some time.4 The opening of the railway, improvements in steamer navigation in the Congo, and railway developments in German East Africa had virtually killed the Stevenson road as a means of access to the interior.5 The Good News, which the Noirs had struggled to put on Lake Tanganyika twenty years earlier, was beached, and the half-way staging post at Fife, was put into

1. Managers to directors, 14th November, 1902, 1900 book, Mandala.
3. Ibid., 10th January, 18th March, 10th June, 1903.
5. C.A.T., 1st April, 1905.
the hands of a capitao in 1906. The Company's lower river transport service was doomed; the Lake Malawi steamer service survived, but it was reduced owing to the decline in the Stevenson road transit trade.2

The era of the steamer was ended; that of the railway had begun. The outlook for the Company might have seemed gloomy, if it had not been for its success as a trading enterprise. Without the always difficult tanga-tanga business the Company was poised to take advantage of developments in the economies of Malawi and Zambia; there was to be no spectacular development until the large-scale opening of the Zambian copper-belt in the 1920's, but the Company was already the leading trading company in the area and was able to profit from this. In Malawi the Company's major effort in the years from 1905 was in the development of the small-scale retail business in the country areas. It was not until after the enforcement from about 1904 of regulations insisting on the payment of labour in cash that there was any real African retail trade. Until then trade had been mainly in provisions for European customers, and in wholesale barter goods. The gradual introduction of cash which was stimulated by the higher wages which were paid to men who worked on the construction of the railway line, and by the money which was brought back by the rapidly increasing army of migrant workers from Rhodesia and South Africa, where wages were very much higher than in the protectorate, made the establishment of small village stores worthwhile.3 The first stores which had

1. A.L.C. Minutes, 8th June, 8th August, 1905. The Karonga store had been making losses for three years.

2. The Demira was laid up late in 1903 as the Queen Victoria could carry all the trade. Managers to directors, 7th December, 1903, 1903 book, Mandala. Both the steamers were much used for troop transport during the First World War; the Queen Victoria continued to, until she was wrecked in July 1924 off Makanjira's, A.L.C. Minutes, 31st July, 1924.

3. Robert Codrington of the B.S.A. Company at Fort Jameson criticised the Company in April, 1903 for not paying enough attention to the African trade. He also criticised them for relegating this trade to a corner of the European store at Fort Jameson. Kidney, at his suggestion, separated the African from the European business. Kidney to directors, April, 1903, 1903 book, Mandala.
relied mainly on African trade for their turn-over were at Bandawe, and Nichota Khota during the late 1890's. The custom at the first case from Tonga migrant workers, and at the latter from the sales of rice which had grown by 1900 to 500 tons. Later stores were founded at Ekwendeni, in conjunction with the Livingstonia Mission, and a various Administration Bomas where there were Indian, Yao or Tonga troops. All these stores were simple buildings selling basic commodities, and managed by Malawian capitae. Men were also employed to do hawking business, travelling from place to place with a small selection of wares. By 1912 the Company had at least 50 of these village stores in Malawi. They had to compete with the Indian traders who had begun to enter the country early in the 1890's, and who had caused the Company some alarm.

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1. There had been a Company store at Nichota Khota since about 1896. the development of rice production there had been stimulated by the need to supply Johnston's Indian troops. Some was also exported to Chinde. Managérs to directors, 22nd March, 1901, 1900 book, Mandala.


3. Small stores were opened during 1904 at Dedza, Dowa and Lilongwe. Beaton wrote: 'We should try and run these stores by intelligent natives, as the trade in Central Angoniiland is not yet large enough to warrant the employment of a European.' Beaton to directors, 15th December, 1903, 29th February, 1904, 1903 book, Mandala.

4. Beaton, 23rd July, 1904, op. cit., 'Our out-door capacitae visit periodically almost every village in Central Angoniiland and dispose in this way of a considérable amount of goods.'

5. This is evident from a land tax return for 1912 among papers at Mandala. Also oral evidence from the late H.P. Nenoll, who joined the Company in 1907. 13th December, 1969. He died at MacDuff, Banffshire, in March, 1970 in his 90th year.

6. e.g. Beaton to directors, 27th September, 1901. 1900 book, Mandala. It is clear from this letter that the African retail trade of Blantyre was almost entirely in the hands of Indian traders in this year. However so long as almost all workers were paid in cloth this trade was comparatively important. The Company held a strong position in the wholesale trade both to European planters and employers, and to the Indian traders who had very little capital. There are very few figures for the turn-over of the trading business from a letter from the managers to the directors, 20th September, 1903, it seems likely that the turn-over at Mandala at that time was from £50-60,000 per year.
Presumably the employment of Malawian capital enabled it to compete effectively with those traders who are still notorious among European traders, and companies, for the slenderness of their profit margins. By the 1930's there were about 300 of these village stores in the country, one in almost every village of any size. In this way the name 'Mandala' continued to be a byword throughout the land as it had been in the days of John Noir, and the first Malawians were able to gain practical experience of retail trade.

When the first scheduled passenger train reached Blantyre on the 31st March, 1908, it was in the words of Sir Alfred Sharpe, then Governor of the Nyasaland protectorate, 'an epoch-making day in the history of Nyasaland and a red-letter day for Blantyre.' It also marked more than any other event a turning point in the Company's history. It was ceasing to be primarily a transport company based on 'the navigation of the rivers and lakes of central Africa,' and was becoming a straight-forward trading concern. Owing to the almost total destruction of the Company's African records from 1904 the history, in detail, of this transformation can never be written.

3. Interview, Peter Mbira, trader, Karonga, and former A.L.C. capital, 9th December, 1968. Donald Gondwe, Eskenderi, 30th November, 1968. The most successful former A.L.C. employee was the Ngwe Kyungu, Peter, who worked for the Company from 1899-1912, and then ran stores on his own account, and grew cotton in the Karonga district. See C. Wilson, The Constitution of Nyasaland, op. cit., p. 68.
6. See bibliography.
POSTSCRIPT.

In the thirty years of the Company’s existence to 1908 there had been revolutionary changes in the nature of trade and society in this area. The slave trade had come to an end, and the trade in ivory had been reduced to insignificance. A system of transport had been inaugurated which made possible the export of tobacco, cotton and tea, the crops which have remained Malawi’s largest earners of foreign exchange. In the remoter areas labour was still the only commodity which could be exported, but men were beginning to leave their homes voluntarily in the knowledge that they could return, in contrast to their predecessors who had left involuntarily as slaves.

This could be described as progress, but in several ways the dreams of David Livingstone, of the promoters of the African Lakes Company, and of the Moirs, had not been fulfilled. Commerce and Christianity had not been allowed to complete the transformation of the economy which there was some evidence by the late 1880’s, at least, that they had begun. Military occupation had replaced commercial contact at a critical moment. The development of peasant-produced export commodities had been delayed by the early difficulties of transport, and a plantation system had grown up in the Shire Highlands. While this was beneficial in that it provided opportunities for employment, it was based on the payment of very low wages, and was not the development which had been intended. The alienation of very large tracts of land, and inadequate provision for the residents on it, had sown the seeds of discontent which were soon to erupt in John Chilembwe’s Rising of 1915.

The central problem which the Company faced, of how to reduce the cost of transport to the level where people throughout the area could profitably sell their own produce to the outside world, and pay for what they imported from it without leaving their homes, remains to be solved. The problems of transport still inhibit the development of agricultural production in the more remote areas of Malawi and Zambia.

The completion of the railway from the Shire Highlands to the Indian Ocean by the opening of the Zambesi bridge in 1935, the development of motor transport since the Second World War, the completion in 1970 of the new railway from Nyimbe on the upper Shire
to the coast at Nacala, have all done something to further the work which the Moirs began, but a great deal still remains to be done.

It could reasonably be argued that the rate of change and development in the Malawian economy in the last sixty years had been slower than in the thirty years considered here. The main features of the economy of today are recognisable in that of 1908. In 1970 men still leave Bandawe on Lake Malawi for work in the south on the Ilala II, as their great-grandfathers did on the first Ilala in 1885. Remittances from Malawian workers abroad still make an important contribution to the country's balance of payments. In Zambia there have been, thanks to mineral exploitation, more marked changes, but men still leave the remoter areas and migrate to the towns where they hope to find more reward for their labours than can be found in subsistence agriculture. Much of the country remains agriculturally and economically dead ground. Zambia's problems of access are as acute now as they ever were. It is ironical that the projected railway from Dar-es-Salaam to the Copper-belt, which may be completed by 1977, is intended to fulfill precisely the same function as the road which the Moirs began from the same place in 1877 - the by-passing of the Portuguese coast.

Much has been achieved since the Moirs landed at Quelimane with the parts of the Lady Nyassa in 1878, but they would doubtless wish that the pace of economic development, which they struggled to start, should be more rapid in the future than it has been in the past.
For the sake of clarity the subject of this thesis has been referred to throughout as the African Lakes Company, or simply 'the Company.' Between 1878 and 1906 it operated under four names.

i) The Livingstone Central Africa Company, from the 2nd July, 1878.


iv) The African Lakes Corporation, from the 2nd May, 1894 until the present day.

Patience has not been kind to the records of the Company. The directors in this period insisted on the most detailed accounts being sent back to Glasgow, and from 1884 all the Company's employees had to keep diaries in triplicate. One copy was kept at Mbanda, the second was kept in Glasgow, and the third was retained by the writer. The Glasgow records survived intact until 1914 when on the outbreak of war, many were destroyed, though a selection of the most important was preserved. These were thinned out in 1924, and the remainder were sent to a store, and destroyed on the outbreak of war in 1939. Now only the minutes of the directors' meetings survive which give a skeletal account of the Company's activities.

The Mbanda records survived intact until about 1953 when they were destroyed. Two letter-books survive at Mbanda. These contain the letters of the managers, Duncan Beaton and Alan Kidney, to the directors from 1900-1904, and have been referred to as '1900 book,' and '1903 book.' There are also a few letters, deeds, certificates of claim, and land tax returns.

There are also three letter-books in the Malawi Archives, Zomba. These are of less importance, and are the Glasgow Finance book, from 1897-9, which is mainly concerned with remittances and bills of exchange; Alan Kidney's local business letterbook from October, 1903 to February, 1904; and the same from 16th February to the 8th March, 1906.
For the earlier period two of the Moir's letterbooks dealing with Company business between 1878 and 1890 have survived. They are in the University of the Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg. They are on tissue and can not be read on microfilm.

The first, referred to above as L.B.(1), contains:

a) Private letters of Fred Moir, mainly to his parents from September, 1878 to 2nd October, 1881, ff 1-237.

b) Business letters of John Moir from 13th August, 1883 to the 25th March, 1884, ff 239-456.

c) Some business letters of Fred Moir from 4th May, 1879 to September, 1880, and from May, 1881 to 7th May, 1883, ff 361-462 in reverse.

The second, referred to above as L.B.(2), contains: some business letters of John Moir, from 19th May, 1888, to 30th November, 1890, ff 1-326.

There is a third letterbook, L.B.(3), containing business correspondence of John Moir from 1895 to 1900, after he had left the Company. It is mainly concerned with his plantations and is written by a number of different people. It was of only slight relevance to this work.

There are, therefore, no detailed accounts of the Company's business between 1884 and 1888, 1890 and 1900, or 1904 and 1908, and for almost all the other years the evidence is very patchy.
1. Oral Evidence.

Lewis Rambwe, M.D.E., Blantyre, 12th November, 1966, son-in-law of
Joseph Bismarck, born about 1890.

Malenga Chazi, chief, Nichota Chota, 21st November, 1966, born about
1888, his father remembered Livingstone.

Minister and teacher, born about 1889, at Overtonin
Institute, Livingstonia, before 1900.

Chief Chikalagemvembe, Belero, Rumpi, Malawi, 29th November, 1966.

Captain James Byander Dunbar, of Pitgavony, born 16th October, 1875,
died 25th December, 1969. Served under the Foreign Office
in B.C.A., 1900-1901.

Mapp Jere, near Ekwendeni, 26th November, 1968, born about 1885,
civil servant and historian.


H.B. Mantell, Keduff, Scotland, 13th December, 1966, born 1880,
died March, 1970, joined the A.I.C., 1907.

Peter Abiga, near Karonga, Malawi, December, 1966, trader, former
A.I.C. capito.

The Rev. Amon Musakunguli, Karonga, 13th December, 1966, minister
and historian, born about 1835, son of the Kyungu,
Musakunguli, father of the present Kyungu.


Miss M.L.H. Moir, Edinburgh, daughter of John Moir.

Chief Mwalala, near Ekwendeni, Malawi, 25th November, 1968, born
about 1875, grandson of Ziwangendabo.

Yacobi Mwasi, Mkomah, 10th November, 1968, born about 1875, one of
the Gona who took refuge on Mkomah mountain from
Agoni raids.

Henock Mwana, Bandawe, Malawi, 27th November, 1968, teacher and
historian, born about 1895.

The Rev. W.F. Young, of Livingstonia and Gordonstoun, born 1886,
died 1969, was at Livingstonia from 1911.
2. **Manuscript Sources.**

**Edinburgh.**

**Private Collections.**

Mrs. S. Brook, some letters and papers of Dr. James Stewart of Lovedale.

Miss H. L. M. Moir, letters, papers and photographs of her father,

John Moir.

Professor G. Shepperson, various letters and papers of the Moirs, missionaries at Livingstonia, including Dr. Laws, and of A. L. Bruce.

The African Lakes Corporation, Ltd., 2 York Place.

Minute books of the directors, 1878-1939, 7 ledgers.

Annual reports, 1893-1939, various miscellaneous papers and photographs.

Companies Registry, George Street.

The Livingstonia Central Africa Company, from the 2nd July, 1878.


The African Lakes Corporation, from the 2nd May, 1894.

The Blantyre and East Africa Company, from 8th August, 1901.

The Central African Mining Company, from the 4th April, 1901.

The Scottish Central African Syndicate, from the 1st December, 1898.

The Scottish Exploration Company, from the 2nd July, 1889.

These files contain lists of share-holders, prospectuses, and some annual reports.

**Edinburgh University Library.**

Robert Laws, note-books, diaries, and papers, 1875-1934.


Mr. and Mrs. J. Moir, about 250 letters, 1882-1900, mainly from Mrs. J. Moir to her sister.

John and Frederick Moir, diary of road building expedition from Dar-es-Salaam, 25th April, 1877-21st January, 1878, ff 127.
P. Morris, A.L.C., engineer, diaries, 10th April, 1882-25th March, 1886, 27th October, 1886-22nd March, 1887, 7 volumes.


The National Library of Scotland.

Records of the Established Church of Scotland.

MS 7534. Letterbook of the Convener of the F.M.C., 1872-82, 1886-94.

MS 7535-40. Ibid., 1896-1907.

MS 7541-7554. Letterbooks of the Secretary, F.M.C., 1875-95.

MS 7606, 7625, 7633. Letters from missionaries in Africa, 1881-1917.

Records of the Free Church of Scotland, (after 1900, the United Free Church of Scotland.)

MS 7670-5. General letter concerning the Livingstonia Mission, 1874-1927.

MS 7676-7689. Letters from missionaries to Scotland from Africa, 1874-1926.

MS 7690-6. Letters to Dr. Laws from missionaries and residents in Malawi, 1887-1896.

MS 7697-7901. Letters to Dr. Laws from Scotland.

MS 7902-3. Private letters to Dr. Laws, 1875-83.

MS 7904-5. Printed circulars etc., on Malawi.

MS 7906. Press-cuttings concerning Livingstonia and Malawi.

MS 7907-9. Cape Maclear station journals, 1875-80.


MS 7913. Ibid., extracts, 1894-5, 1897-8.

MS 7914. Accounts and correspondence with the A.L.C., 1879-95.

MS 7917-23. Letter-books of the Convener, F.M.C., 1876-1900.
The Relator House.

Inventory of productions in suspension and interdict - The African Lakes Company against the British South Africa Company. 1892-14.

Scotland, Private collections.

Captain James Brander Dunbar, of Pitgaveny, diaries, British Central Africa, 1900-1, 1903, 1907.

H.P. Mantell, MacDuff, diary, Karonga, 1907.

England.

London.

The Public Record Office.

F.O. 84. The Slave Trade Department. Despatches from Consuls at Mozambique, 1875-1892, with correspondence from Vice-Consuls at Quelimane and Chinde. Despatches from Consuls and acting Vice-Consuls, Nyassa, 1883-91. Despatches from Commissioner, British Central Africa Protectorate, 1891-2. Domestic various section containing correspondence from members of the public with the Foreign Office, 1875-92.


F.O. 54. Confidential print, 1875-1891. Contains some despatches from Lisbon, and Zanzibar of relevance to East Africa. F.O. 403, confidential print, also contains some useful material.

C.O. 525. Despatches from Commissioner and Governors of British Central Africa, and Nyasaland Protectorate after its transfer from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office from 1st April, 1904. This series was consulted from 1904-1910, but little of relevance to this work was found.

London Missionary Society, archives.

Royal Commonwealth Society Library.

Collection of photographs of the Shire Highlands, circa, 1890.
Harry Johnston papers, Salisbury, Rhodesia, on microfilm.

The School of Oriental and African Studies Library.

Mackinnon papers, very important letters between John Kirk and William Mackinnon, 1875-1891, concerning the road from Dar-es-Salaam, and the origins of I.B.B.A. Also letters from Harry Johnston and others.


Oxford.

The Bodleian Library, Rhodes House.

Papers of George Cawston, 1889-95, 6 volumes. Contain very important material on the origins of the British South Africa Company and the amalgamation question.

Papers of Frederick Lugard, 1888-90. Contain important letters and diaries on the Arab War.

Papers of Sir Gerald Portal, 1889, some letters on Lugard and the Arab War.

Papers of Cecil Rhodes, under the heading 'Charters', include letters from Harry Johnston, John Neir, and Joseph Thomson.

Papers of Horace Waller, few letters of relevance to this work, but one from Consul Foot, February, 1884.

There are also in Rhodes House bound volumes of the annual reports and papers of the British South Africa Company from 1889.

Private collections, England.

Anon. Diaries of John Buchanan, 1879-1881, 1884, 1889-90, and some letters.

In the possession of the author, a few letters of Low Monteith.
Malawi

Blantyre

The African Lakes Corporation, Mandaia, see above
The Land Registry, certificates of claim and deeds.
The Blantyre and East Africa Company, various certificates of claim, and deeds.
The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian, minutes of the Synod of Blantyre.
Livingstonia Mission, various ledgers and some letters, 1875-1900, also minutes of Livingstonia Synod.

Zomba

The Malawi Archives.

A.L.C. letterbooks, op. cit.
Livingstonia letterbooks contain some business correspondence with the A.L.C.

Rhodesia

National Archives, Salisbury.

Diaries of Edward Alston, 1895-7.

British South Africa Company papers, 1889-95. Correspondence between Cape Town and London offices, prefixed, CT. A very important source for the amalgamation question, also for relations between Rhodes and Johnston.

Papers of Sir Harry Johnston, a few relevant letters.
Letters and diaries of Dr. James Stewart, of Lovedale, a very important collection including letters of the Mores, John Stephen, James Stevenson, Robert Laws, and James Stewart, C.E.

South Africa

University of Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg, Moir letterbooks, see above.
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