

10 Administration, Staff and Labour

(Table 13)

Administration

From 1st January 1954 the Department came under the newly appointed Secretary for Agriculture and Natural Resources, an arrangement which improved materially the Department's contacts with higher levels of Government. With the establishment of a ministerial system in the middle of 1955, the Secretary became the Minister of Natural Resources. At this time the internal administration of the Department was largely decentralised on a territorial or functional basis. Territorially there were four provinces each in the charge of a Provincial Forest Officer (PFO) and twelve district charges each in the charge of a District Forest officer (DFO). In addition there were three functional or specialist divisions, the Silvicultural Division (silvicultural research), the Utilisation Division (utilisation research, advisory and trade training work, transport maintenance) and the Forest School.

During 1956, there was internal reorganisation of the Department which was organised into three divisions: Direction, Management and Development. These changes were more of nomenclature than of function but they served to emphasise the administrative pattern which was emerging:

Direction Division – the clerical work organised in four sections, accounts establishment, registry and stores;

Management Division – the normal territorial field organisation with 4 PFOs and 12 DFOs;

Development Division – comprising:

- (1) **Silvicultural Section** – Ecologist in charge of natural regeneration research, increment studies, herbarium; silviculturist in charge of plantation research, seed supplies, library, etc;
- (2) **Mapping Section** – interpretation and type-mapping from aerial photographs; preparation and custody of maps;
- (3) **Working Plan Section** (not set up until January 1957) – preparation and revision of certain major working plans, initially in the Western Province;

- (4) **Utilisation Section** – research into the properties and uses of Uganda timber, advisory work in logging and milling, maintenance of departmental vehicles, training of apprentices and assistance in departmental housing and road-building. Some of the service functions were pruned in 1957 and research extended to include logging and milling studies to help the Section to fulfil better its primary function, the promotion of more complete utilisation of Uganda's forests;
- (5) **Entomological Section** (not set up until January 1957) – pests of the living trees and of converted timber;
- (6) **Forest School** – training of Rangers and Foresters.

On the formation of a new elected Government on 14th April 1961, the Department was transferred from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Ministry of Land and Water Resources. On the change of Government which occurred after the elections in April 1962, the Department was involved in yet another change – to the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. Attempts to have Forestry, one of the oldest departments in Government, incorporated in the title of the new ministry were unsuccessful.

At the same time the organisation of the Administration by provinces was abolished. The organisation of the Department, however, continued on the same basis, the former provincial forestry charges being redesignated regional charges and remaining coincident with the former provinces. The practice of linking conservator posts with regional charges had to be abandoned in 1962/63 in the interests of continuity during a period of frequent staff changes. The officer in charge of silviculture research assumed control of utilisation research as well and his post was upgraded to Conservator rank.

With the departure on retirement of the Regional Forest Officer (RFO) (North and East) in November 1963, the RFO (West) in April 1964 and the transfer of the RFO (Buganda) to Conservator (Research), all regional offices were closed indefinitely due to lack of officers with sufficient experience to post to them. Supervision and control of district officers had then to be undertaken by Head Office, far from being a satisfactory or efficient arrangement. This serious shortage of experienced officers was emphasised by the fact that at the end of the year, all district charges except one were held by officers who had little more than one year's experience, if that, in a professional charge or of tropical conditions. Nevertheless, it was a tribute to their enthusiasm and keenness that so much was accomplished during the year.

Staff

In 1950 it had still seemed that independence for Uganda lay in the distant future, so the staff structure continued to be seen (as it had for half a century) as comprised of a few expatriate professional and sub-professional staff, primarily concerned with forest management, directing the activities of a much larger body of junior local staff. The first specialist officers, Ecologist, School Principal and Engineer, had only been appointed in 1948 and 1949. However, great changes took place in the next 15 years prompted by three major

factors. The flourishing economy allowed a great expansion of forestry activity; the educational standards of potential Ugandan recruits arose rapidly; and political development accelerated, eventually resulting in independence in 1962 and the need for the Department to be seen to be managed by Ugandans.

The first factor permitted the recruitment of a few more expatriate staff, though even so these did not suffice for a DFO for each of the then 14 administrative districts, but rather enabled appointments to more specialist posts such as silviculture, working plans, mapping, utilisation and entomology. The other factors resulted in increasing emphasis on the training of Ugandan professional staff abroad, and this instalment of the history ends appropriately with the appointment of the first Ugandan Head of Department.

Nevertheless, the story for almost the whole period of this history was shortage of staff, professional and clerical, due to a large degree to difficulties in recruitment. Moreover though the senior staff was at full strength for most of 1951, the exigencies of leave and post-graduate courses made it difficult to man the minimum number of charge posts. Nevertheless a high degree in stability in posting was achieved except in South Mengo which was badly affected by leave and sickness. I.R.Dale acted as CF from the beginning of 1951 until May when C. Swabey assumed duties on transfer from British Guiana (Guyana). A Saw Doctor was at last recruited in England and arrived in Uganda on 1st January 1952.

The clerical position continued to be critical – it was extremely difficult to recruit and keep suitable clerks in the face of commercial competition. It was so bad in the following year that it was necessary to recall the Chief Clerk to duty before the expiry of his leave in Goa. It was very gratifying to record the award of the Certificate of Honour to C.J.P.J. Rodrigues after nearly 30 years of devoted and loyal service.

In 1952 I.R. Dale was promoted to the new post of DCF, but the Department suffered a severe loss in the transfer of R.G. Sangster (PFO Buganda) and J.A. Fraser (DFO South Mengo) to Tanganyika (Tanzania) after 16 and 15 years' service respectively in Uganda. While the general standard of the Forest Ranger cadre was improving steadily, there was a serious lack in 1952 of senior Rangers of the requisite ability and experience to undertake the more responsible duties – a problem which only time could solve.

In 1953, the titles of Conservator of Forests (CF) and Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) were changed to Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) and Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests (DCCF) to bring them into line with the other East African Territories. No functional or financial changes were involved. H.R. Webb, MBE, the Principal of the Forest School, retired and D.W.G. Bacon was appointed in his place. G.J. Leggat was appointed PFO/WP in October 1953.

It was possible to recruit only one ACF leaving three vacancies at the end of the year. This coupled with normal leave requirements and the absence of four officers on post-graduate courses led to serious under-staffing for most of the year. It was still impossible to fill clerical vacancies. When seven were advertised in September, only one was filled. The ranks of Forest Guards and Senior Headmen were merged into one cadre of Guards and Senior Guards with four classes to provide better promotion facilities and to permit the recruitment of a better type of man.



PLATE 20

PLATE 20. Presentation of the MBE to Mr J.M.S. Asavedo (Head Office Superintendent) by H. E. The Governor, Sir Andrew Cohen, to mark the former's retirement after 33 years service. This splendid image of imperial pomp and circumstance emphasises the valuable contribution of the Goan staff to the running of the Department. (Annual Report, 1955)

Coronation Medals were awarded to the CCF, DCCF, H.R. Webb, MBE, and Mrs Webb, and F.X. Kamunye, Forest Ranger.

In 1954, the retirement was recorded with regret of Brigadier Goodwin, OBE, Timber Grading Officer, and of R.G. Miller, SACF (PFO Buganda). Miller had 22 years' service in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Uganda and the loss of this experienced and efficient officer was a serious blow to the Department. The Department continued to face grave shortages of clerical staff. Of 35 clerical posts, it was possible to maintain only 21 and 10 were filled by unqualified clerical assistants and 4 remained vacant. These deficiencies, both numerical and qualitative, imposed unnecessarily severe burdens not only on the available clerical staff but also on professional officers.

The death was recorded with deep regret of Forest Ranger N. Kaliebara in a motor cycle accident. He was a most promising young officer and the best African field botanist the Department had ever had.

The awards were recorded with great pleasure of:

- (1) the MBE to J.M.S. Azavedo, Chief Clerk and Storekeeper, after thirty years' service in the Department; (Plate 20)
- (2) the Certificate of Honour to Forest Guard Z. Lunanoba after 43 years' of Government service, 15 with the Department;

(3) the Certificate of Honour to Forest Guard Huseni Abedi after 35 years' of Government service, 23 with the Department.

In 1955, three vacancies were filled, one by transfer from the Sudan and two by appointment of Colonial Office scholars (graduates who completed their first year's Oxford Course in 1954/55). But the new posts of Forest Entomologist and Logging and Milling Engineer and two ACF vacancies had not been filled by the end of the year.

Two new posts of CF were approved in 1955 and filled by the promotion of G.J. Leggat and G. Webster from the ACF cadre. It was intended that these posts would be filled by the officers in charge of the Western Province and Buganda, the most important territorial changes in the Department. G.W. St Clair-Thompson, SACF (PFO Western Province) retired in 1955. 'Miti' Thompson joined the Colonial Service in 1927 and after service in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Tanganyika (Tanzania), came to Uganda in 1938. His imagination and enthusiasm left a permanent mark on the Department's silvicultural work.

The award of the MBE to H.C. Dawkins, Forest Ecologist, in the New Year's Honours 1956 was noted with much pleasure. The post of Chief Clerk and Storekeeper was upgraded to that of Office Superintendent and J.M.S. Azavedo, MBE was appointed to it. J.C.F. de Souza, J.F.U. Pereira and R.S. Britto, all members of the clerical staff were promoted in the C scale.

A Departmental Consultative Staff Council was set up in 1955 with provincial and district sub-councils. This formal machinery for the airing of views and problems of all grades of staff got off to an excellent start and meetings were held in all districts (except Karamoja) and the provinces. One territorial meeting was held at HQ.

Ivan Dale retired in 1956 after 28 years' service (18 in Uganda); during his career he had been in charge of each of the provinces and also of the Department and his wide knowledge, wisdom and humour were widely missed. In the same year, J.M.S. Azavedo, MBE, Office Superintendent, retired after service for 33 years in the Department with the utmost loyalty and integrity. It is appropriate at this point to pay tribute to the sterling work of the Goan officers who served in the Department with great efficiency and loyalty and who were the backbone of the clerical branch. Forest Ranger F.X. Kamunye also retired after serving in the Department for 33 years.

Vacancies for one ACF, a Logging and Milling Engineer and an Office Superintendent were filled in 1956. Vacancies for another ACF, a Forest Entomologist and DCCF were filled soon after the end of the year. For the first time for many years the Department thus had, at any rate for a week or so, a full complement of senior staff.

The following year it was not possible to maintain a senior officer in all districts but, on the whole, continuity was reasonably satisfactory. The administration of Buganda Province was particularly stretched as, in addition to shortage of district staff, the officer in charge of the Province also performed the duties of Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests throughout the year, first in an acting capacity and later substantively. The previous year, he had at various times held the posts of DCCF (acting), PFO Buganda, DFO West Mengo (acting), DFO Busoga (acting), and DFO Mbale. A District Commissioner, on reading about these postings in the Official Gazette, enquired what he did in the afternoons.

Of the approved Ranger staff of 93, only 56 were on field posting at the end of the year, 20 Learners being under training, leaving 17 vacancies to be filled as suitable applicants and training facilities became available. A Departmental Promotion Board was appointed during the year to advise the CCF on appointments and promotions in the field staff. The excellent work of P.F. Antao, Office Superintendent, and Forest Guard E. Muwereza was recognised by the award of the Certificate of Honour.

During 1957, two Colonial Forest Service (CFS) Officers and one sub-professional officer retired and one CFS officer was appointed. The retirements included C. Swabey who retired from the post of CCF to take up that of Forestry Adviser to the Secretary of State. He had been head of the Department since 1951 and his inspiring leadership guided the Department through those years of great development.

In a postscript to the Departmental Annual Report for 1956, he added, possibly with tongue in cheek, 'When completing this Report, it occurred to the writer that this was the twentieth Colonial Forest Department Report that had appeared over his signature. He was, therefore, nostalgically constrained to turn up his first – for 1937. On reading it again, he was distressed to observe that the problems of today seemed to be no less numerous or baffling than those of 20 years ago, while the writer's style had, if possible, deteriorated.' His successor as CCF was W.E.M. Logan, formerly DCCF Tanganyika (Tanzania). In spite of ever-increasing difficulties, he carried on the good work until 1962 when he retired and was succeeded by G. Webster who, in turn, retired in 1965.

Other retirements which merited mention were G. Elliott, Superintending Forester, Senior Ranger M. Kamyia and S. Kiwanuka and P. Semanda of the clerical staff. These four officers between them had a total service to Government of 113 years, the lowest being 20 years. Their retirement was a great loss to the Department.

Changes of staff during 1958 were:

- one CF appointed on transfer from Tanganyika (Tanzania), one ACF recruited;
- the Logging and Milling Engineer resigned on expiry of contract;
- two Rangers appointed, two Rangers retired or resigned;
- six Forest Guards retired, resigned or dismissed;
- one Accounts Officer retired, one Clerk resigned.

The Accounts Officer was J.C.F. de Souza. He had been with the Department for 20 years and had served Government in all for 32 years.

The Departmental Promotion Board functioned smoothly and usefully.

With the retirement of the Logging and Milling Engineer, the opportunity was taken in 1959/60 to introduce the post of Utilisation Officer as head of the Section. Two possible candidates expressed interest but nothing came of it in either case. The lack was a crippling handicap in that field and, to avoid any further delays and disappointment, training was sought and achieved under the Colombo plan for one of the Department's ACFs, R.A. Plumptre, in 1962/63.

Four retirements deserved mention: P.F. Antao (Office Superintendent), J.S. Kabengwa, E.A. Holyoak (Assistant Principal of the Forest School) and Forest Ranger W.Mugenzi. Mr Antao had served for 35 years, 31 with the Department, and Mr Kabengwa for 23 years. Mr

Holyoak had served for only six years but he had made a great contribution to the Forest School with his teaching of Ranger and AF trainees and the many fine buildings he had built at the School. Mr Mugenzi had served the Department for 28 years, 18 as a Ranger. He was later appointed an Honorary Forest Officer. Four Rangers who retired had a total of 103 years in the Department between them: G.M. Byakagaba, J. Kajjula, A. Mutono and Y.K. Mukasa.

The Ecologist, H.C. Dawkins, MBE, was awarded a Nuffield Foundation Scholarship for three years to study the productivity of tropical high forest which he took up in September 1960. While his departure was a severe loss to Uganda, his fellowship was regarded as a great gain to the wider sphere of tropical forest silviculture and management as a whole.

Following the attainment of full internal self-government on 1st March 1962, and the grant to expatriate officers of the option to retire with compensation for loss of career, five expatriate officers out of an establishment of 26 opted to retire. The departure of these officers gave rise to acute staffing difficulties in the following years. No less than seven further professional officers retired during 1962/63 which with the retirements of the previous year, and the absence of two officers on a fellowship and a course, meant the loss of more than half of this cadre.

Two officers, one a Ugandan, were recruited and assumed duty; two others, both Ugandan, were appointed and sent on post-graduate courses. Four others were expected to join the Department early in the following year but in spite of these useful additions, it was to be a long time before the loss of experience could be made good. On the bright side, sufficient AFs and Rangers were available to meet requirements.

In accordance with the Government's Ugandanisation policy, a Ugandan, Martin Rukuba was promoted to DCCF in January 1963 and to CCF in July 1965.

A further five professional officers retired during 1963/64/65 but the loss in numbers was made good by the return of a Ugandan ACF on successful completion of his degree course, by the recruitment of an expatriate officer on contract and by the secondment of two professional officers from the UK Forestry Commission. Two other Ugandans completed their professional training and were due back in August 1964. A welcome addition to the staff was a member of the Norwegian Agency for International Development who had the necessary training and experience to be able to take charge of the Map Section when the Map Officer went on vacation leave.

Labour

In 1951, labour supply in Buganda was generally adequate, though there were seasonal difficulties at Masaka and Kampala while the Mabira Forest continued to be as unpopular as ever due to the mbwa fly *Simulium damnosum* (though a few years later this carrier of onchocerciasis, River Blindness, was eliminated by treating the River Nile with insecticide).

In other districts labour shortages were almost universally chronic and resulted in considerable modifications of programmes. It was difficult to see what the answer was: improved housing and living conditions might help and improved labour lines were constructed in some districts. Wage increases were made during the year but as they formed part of an

inflationary spiral, they were hardly likely to improve labour recruitment. Economy of labour through mechanisation was an attractive solution but it was hardly possible with the scattered operations and lack of skilled mechanics. Joint staff and labour committee meetings were initiated in most districts and, in general, got off to an excellent start with a far less degree of irresponsibility than had been expected.

The labour shortage continued throughout 1952 with a few local exceptions and it was difficult to recruit men for forestry work when less arduous and perhaps more congenial jobs were available. This often had most unfortunate results on silvicultural work, much of which was dependent on securing adequate labour at the right time. There was some improvement in supply in 1953 except in the EP where there was a steady deterioration. Works committees were maintained or established wherever the numbers or permanence of labour forces warranted it. In many areas a change was made from the cumbersome and laborious monthly pay system to a daily pay one.

In November 1954 a new wage structure for Government unskilled labour was announced based on an eight-hour day (six hours task work) which generally was bound to mean substantial increases in labour costs for most operations. A complementary revised wage structure for skilled and semi-skilled labour was under consideration by Government at the end of the year. A revised structure based on a grouping system was introduced in 1955 and was acceptable by FD labour to a greater degree than had been expected and the change-over to the new system was made with little trouble.

The supply of labour became increasingly difficult in the WP and seriously affected departmental operations. Labour for the softwood plantations of Toro and Kigezi was consistently inadequate and more active steps were needed to encourage recruitment. There were seasonal difficulties at Mbale and Soroti, and in the West Nile softwood plantations. In Soroti, the shortage remained acute and it was possible to do only the minimum of maintenance of plantations. In the remoter parts of Buganda (Mubende, Singo Hills) it was difficult to get labour for boundary demarcation and maintenance. Elsewhere labour supply was adequate and in Mbale it was sufficient for the first time in five years.

The Works Committees continued to perform a thoroughly useful function though a somewhat tedious one for DFOs. Efficiency tests for labour were introduced without major difficulties and the efficiency bonus was raised in September 1956. The average labour force of some 2,400 men proved adequate to deal with normal works but there was the usual seasonal difficulty in obtaining the additional labour required during the planting seasons. In many districts the output of work showed few signs of improving and increased mechanisation, particularly in plantation work, was becoming inevitable.

The labour supply improved in 1957 except in Toro, Bunyoro and Karamoja districts. In Toro it was both short and of poor quality. In Buganda the labour force was reduced at all major plantation centres as part of an economy drive. The average labour force employed during the year was just over 2,000, a reduction of nearly 300 on the preceding year.

In 1958, for the first time for eight years, the supply of labour was adequate in all charges. In the WP there were statutory increases in wages in certain districts but no visible signs of increased output resulting from them. In Buganda further economies in labour were made

both in plantation and high forest work. In this province the standard of labour in nurseries and plantation was reported to be poor even with labour of long-standing experience. In high forest work, on the other hand, an encouraging development was the building up of a regular force of sprayers who were willing to live in temporary camps as the work moved on to more distant forests.

In 1959/60 adequate supplies were again available in all charges. In fact, due to wage increases which were applied in several districts, economies had to be practised, the result being a reduction in the departmental labour force by about a quarter. As usual the Department was required to meet the wage increases from within its existing financial provision by economising on labour and increasing tasks. This was done but it would not be possible in future to cope with more wage increases without extra funds.

Supply was adequate in 1961/62 in all districts and there were no disputes or stoppages. The average labour force of the Department was about 1,700. In the following year, supply was again adequate and there were no disputes. Wages were increased for labourers working in or near the main towns of Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja. The average force was approximately 1,400.