

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN KARAMOJA DISTRICT

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Karamoja was the locus of economic prosperity in the area vaguely defined as the British sphere of influence in Uganda for more than ten years after its establishment. It was ivory from Karamoja and not the richness and fertility of Buganda, which was the key to revenue earning in the area. The highly competitive exploitation of this commodity has been described by several writers.¹ In the last decade of the nineteenth century a great trading centre had grown up at Manimani in central Karamoja and large numbers of foreigners—British, Greeks, Swahilis, Baluchis—vied for the profits from this trade. Before the completion of the railway, only ivory could assure a return large enough to cover the high costs of transportation to the coast. Even in the first years after the railway had reached Lake Victoria, ivory continued to occupy the predominant position as a source of revenue for the Protectorate Government. In 1903, ivory accounted for £26,000 of a total export value of £43,000.² Ivory in 1904 was still considered significant enough to necessitate the establishment of a government post at Mbale. This was done in order to divert the ivory trade to the west of Mount Elgon, so that the revenues earned from the trade were not siphoned off illegally through Mumias, recently transferred to the East African Protectorate.³

Despite this prosperity and its attendant potential for development, Karamoja was largely neglected by the British authorities. Concern with the affairs of Buganda and the western kingdoms focused official attention at the centre, leaving the periphery very much to itself. The religious rivalries in Buganda, the Bunyoro campaign and the Sudanese mutiny occupied the bulk of the administration's time and energy in the last years of the nineteenth century. The first official British contact with Karamoja did not come until 1898, at which time Major Macdonald led an expedition through the district in a vain attempt to reach the Nile as part of a southern offensive against Fashoda.⁴ At that time he expressed the fear that if Karamoja remained outside of British control it would become the prey of unscrupulous traders.⁵ His plea was timely for it is clear that by 1898 the trade had fallen into the hands of untrustworthy adventurers.⁶ By this time also the Ethiopians had succeeded in pushing southward as part of the design of Emperor Menelik of Shoa, and they too desired a share

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in the profits. As competition for ivory grew more fierce, there emerged an exchange of firearms for ivory, and soon guns became the prime object of exchange. In fact, Kabalega of Bunyoro continued to receive arms via this northern route after his supply from German East Africa had been cut off, the ultimate source of the arms being Ethiopia and Somaliland.⁷

Nevertheless, throughout the first decade of the twentieth century the British government took no effective action to regulate the system of trade or the extreme lawlessness of the district. It seems clear that this inactivity stemmed from a Foreign Office decision to limit involvement in Uganda to the areas along the Nile which were considered vital. Despite this reluctance to advance, the early governors in Entebbe all expressed awareness of the desirability for extending some sort of control over the area. Johnston was an avowed imperialist whose enthusiasm for northern expansion was limitless. Even Hayes-Sadler and Hesketh Bell, both predominantly intent on consolidation at the centre, and hesitant to expand northward,⁸ saw the need for assuming some responsibility mainly in the interest of maximizing profits from the ivory trade. Hayes-Sadler estimated that some sixty traders visited the country annually. He suggested the establishment of a post in the vicinity of Manimani in order to put the Karamoja trade on a proper footing. He was, however, aware of the problems presented by trying to establish such a post so far away from the settled areas of the Protectorate, and proposed, as an alternative, to shift the existing government station at Budaka to the direct road from Karamoja to the coast in order to intercept the trade.⁹ This second alternative was, as we have seen, the one which was implemented with the founding of the government station at Mbale. In addition, Hayes-Sadler enacted an Outlying Districts Ordinance in 1904 which was aimed specifically at exercising some control over trade in Karamoja.¹⁰ Hesketh Bell too, though much more cautious than either of his predecessors, was interested in putting trade on a proper footing. He was careful to point out that the cost of any forward step would be more than compensated by redirecting the trade in ivory, much of which was being illegally diverted to Ethiopia.¹¹ In the end, however, he did nothing to further official British interest in the area. The policy, in the words of a subsequent governor, remained one of "obtaining revenue at any cost," to the detriment of law and order in the area.¹²

Administrative control was not undertaken until a combination of factors brought the issue to a head. In 1910 the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate complained that the unsettled state of the area was a menace to the more or less settled peoples of the outlying districts of his Protectorate. Subsequent problems posed by the strategical difficulties of moving troops up to the area via a route east of Mount Elgon led the Governor in Nairobi to suggest that the whole area be administered from Mbale.¹³ Simultaneously, a mission under P. A. Tanner, commissioned to investigate the gun-running in Karamoja, and sent out from Entebbe in 1910, made its report and recommendations. This mission had been inspired by reports from British officials in Addis Ababa

of an increasing Ethiopian penetration into the area and a need for demarcating the frontier between areas of British and Ethiopian sovereignty. The report, coming as it did simultaneously with agitation from the East Africa Protectorate, led the acting Governor Tomkins to recommend that measures should be taken to put a stop to the state of lawlessness which prevailed. His proposals focussed on the appointment of a touring officer, working out of Mbale, whose duties would include visiting the various trading centres, checking licenses and firearms which were in the possession of merchants, getting in touch with the various tribes and recording all information which might subsequently be useful. He was "to interfere as little as possible with native customs and methods of government."¹⁴ After further correspondence, the Colonial Office finally agreed that the time had come for a forward move. These decisions were finalized after Governor Jackson, a man of personal experience in the area, had reached Uganda.

By the time the British took an active, official interest in Karamoja, however, the basis of its economic prosperity and potential had been largely exhausted. Already in 1904 one official described ivory as a "broken reed," being replaced in importance by such commodities as chillies, ground nuts, hides and skins. It is perhaps this declining importance of ivory which accounts for the reduction in the size of the bazaar at Mbale over the next few years.¹⁵ But the really important economic development that had occurred during the decade of official inactivity in Karamoja was the introduction of cotton, first in Buganda and then in 1908 in eastern Uganda. From a value of £236 in 1904, cotton exports sky-rocketed by 1910/11 to a value of £165,412.¹⁶ This meteoric rise in cotton production eclipsed the ivory trade and the focus of prosperity shifted very rapidly away both from ivory and from Karamoja. Not only, therefore, had the inaction of the British permitted an uncontrolled exploitation of the ivory resources, so that the supply was practically exhausted by 1910,¹⁷ but also new developments elsewhere had robbed the area totally of its already dwindling importance.

These circumstances encourage the view that Jackson was in no way motivated in his extension northwards by the possibility of reaping economic benefits from Karamoja. Indeed, he saw traders as the root of all evil. He cancelled all trading licences for Karamoja and forced the traders out of the district with brutal efficiency.¹⁸ Such a move indicates clearly how different was the basis of Jackson's policy from that of his predecessors. Whereas Johnston, Hayes-Sadler and Hesketh Bell had pointed to the advantages for trade that extension would bring, Jackson did not, indeed could not. "Although Jackson was eager to extend civil administration across the north.," Barber argues, "his policy initiative, at least in the north-east, was for greater control not greater development."¹⁹ Thus when administration came, it was largely in response to pressures external to Karamoja itself. The agitation from the East Africa Protectorate and the menace from Ethiopia were paramount. No longer did extension hinge on the economic potential of the area. Furthermore, not once in the

early correspondence was it mentioned that the benefits purported to have been accrued by the British administration would be made available to the people of the district. Indeed, it was explicit that the people of the district were to be interfered with as little as possible. Such a statement emphatically set the tone for British contact with the people of Karamoja over the next several decades. It is within the context of this non-development orientation of British policy that the story of educational development—a story of painfully slow growth—must be set.

There are, of course, other factors which were significant in establishing the direction and intensity of educational growth in Karamoja. Dyson-Hudson, in his more general study, has analyzed the slowness of the Karamojong to change in terms of a value factor, an institutional factor, and an ecological factor, in addition to the historical factor.²⁰ In an earlier study I too concerned myself at some length with what I called the sociological, political and environmental aspects of an observed conservatism in the willingness of the people of Karamoja to accept educational innovation.²¹ One or another of these aspects have been taken as the subject of analysis by other writers on the area.²² It is the contention of this paper, however, that in the case of Karamoja *each* of these factors retains its significance as a force inhibiting educational development to the degree that the supposed innovators remained ignorant of, or oblivious to, the ways in which it entered into the decision-making processes of the people of Karamoja. Thus, the pre-eminence of cattle in the system of values, often called the "cattle complex," or the nomadic life style imposed by the exigencies of the environment do not of themselves constitute insurmountable barriers to acceptance of educational innovation. Such factors may render this acceptance more difficult. It is in the light of these constraints, however, that the approach of the colonial authorities and the missionaries becomes *the crucial variable*. Insofar as their policies are, (i) based upon a firm knowledge of the people and, (iii) include a realistic and co-ordinated development plan based on this knowledge, and insofar as education is part of this development plan, then opposition is not inevitable. If one or another or all three of these elements are missing, opposition seems almost inevitable. Thus the remainder of this paper will focus on an analysis of this historical variable with special reference to the attention education received in the thinking and action of the policy-makers.

From 1911 to 1921 Karamoja was under a military administration. The district commissioners, either military men or police officers, were assisted in the enormous job of establishing an administrative structure with an ever-fluctuating military force, never really adequate for the job, and severely inadequate during the war years. The great bulk of the administrator's time was devoted to patrolling the area, disarming the people and suppressing the remnants of the ivory trade. He was also called upon to organise supplies and maintain communications in an exceedingly large area, as well as to build administrative posts throughout the district. The area for which this officer was

responsible included not only the present Karamoja District, but also the areas of present-day Turkana and Suk Districts in Kenya which were north and west of the Turkwell River. Thus, in addition to regulating internal affairs he was also expected to defend Karamoja against the slow, persistent incursions of the Suk in the south, and the fierce attacks launched against the northern parts of the district by the powerful Ethiopian-Turkana alliance.²³

Given the exigencies of the situation, it is hardly surprising that there was little or no development in spheres other than security and law enforcement. However, two aspects of British policy during this period bear further scrutiny. First, a rudimentary system of administration was set up to meet the needs, however limited, of the programme of pacification of the district. The collection of firearms, the supply of food and especially of labour for the maintenance of roads, and the construction of camps and stations—all these were tasks which called for some sort of link between the colonial government and the people of the district. To provide this link, the early military administrators introduced a system of administrative chiefs appointed on the vague notion that a particular person enjoyed a local reputation as an elder or notable. The ability to speak Swahili was also of some importance in this selection. An attempt was made to legitimize councils of elders as advisers to the chiefs, but "it was impossible to disguise that a new authority, a new source of power had been established, and in so far as the chiefs accepted recognition from this new authority they became identified with it."²⁴

Had the British authorities, through the medium of these administrative chiefs, been willing and able to transmit to the people their desire to attempt to develop the district in a way perceived as reasonable to the Karamojong, i.e. through the maximization of their cattle potential, it is conceivable that some measure of co-operation might have been achieved. Instead, the concern of the authorities, and thus of their appointees, focused exclusively on effective administration and law and order. To achieve these aims they moved with determination against what was seen as the main source of lawlessness and instability—the traders who had introduced firearms into the district.²⁵ Governor Jackson's first move was to close the district to all traders. This restrictive policy was continued throughout the decade of military administration, so that by 1920 only two or three traders had been granted licences, and these aimed principally to serve the needs of administrative personnel.²⁶ These restrictions ran directly counter to the desire for trade that had been stimulated in the district as a result of the ivory rush of earlier years. Indeed, so significant was this trade that to get round the restrictions a market was established at the Kilim River, bordering Bukedi District, so that the export of cattle could continue.²⁷

The important thing to note with regard to this second aspect of British policy is that the refusal to allow, let alone to encourage, the normal development of economic activity based on cattle rendered almost impossible the task of the administrative chiefs. As they had become identified closely with

British policy they were soon seen as working against the common interest of the people of Karamoja. It was not long before complaints about the ineffectiveness of these chiefs were heard, and by 1918 the system of appointing government agents from other areas of the Protectorate was extended to Karamoja as a clear indication of the dissatisfaction at the way the locally appointed chiefs were operating.²⁸

The administrative and economic policies of the period of military rule in Karamoja must be seen together as it is only in this way that Karamoja can be effectively contrasted with other areas of Uganda. Welch has discussed at length how the model of administration developed in the interlacustrine kingdoms of the south was ineffectively applied among the "stateless" societies of Karamoja.²⁹ It is, of course, true that the system of ruling through chiefs was a direct copy of what had been done elsewhere. For the study of Karamoja, however, the more relevant comparison is between the chief system as it operated in Karamoja on the one hand and in the "stateless" societies of eastern Uganda on the other. British administration was not introduced into Karamoja straight from the interlacustrine kingdoms. Its introduction had been mediated via the ten or more years of experience in the areas of eastern Uganda that had been exposed to Kakungulu's rule. Of all these areas Teso perhaps provides the best comparison as it shares certain important traditions with Karamoja. In terms of administration, chiefs were appointed in both places with very little knowledge of, or reference to, the traditional political system. There are, however, two significant differences between the introduction of a system of appointed administrative chiefs into Teso and Karamoja. First, government agents and advisers were appointed at the same time as chiefs were identified in Teso whereas in Karamoja there was a delay of some nine years between the appointment of chiefs and the recruitment of the first agents. Second, and more important, no effort was made at this time to educate sons of chiefs in Karamoja, whereas in Teso this work was undertaken by the missionaries at government request as soon as a chiefship system took shape.

The explanation for this difference in policy lies in the vastly different approaches in the sphere of economic activity. In the case of Teso, the introduction and phenomenal growth of the cotton industry which paralleled the development of administration made demands on that administration which necessitated an intelligent co-operative team of chiefs whose duties extended into many spheres of activity. It is doubtful, for example, if the acceptance of cotton would have been nearly so rapid and successful if the chiefs had not themselves been convinced of its merits and willing to encourage peasant cultivation.³⁰ In Karamoja, the economic picture was quite different. Ivory—the basis of prosperity in the area for at least a decade—had been exhausted because of a conscious policy of administrative neglect. The subsequent trade in cattle which had been stimulated by the contact between the people of Karamoja and numerous foreigners was being rigorously and effectively stamped out by the administration in its own interest. In other words, administrative officers,

under order from Entebbe, were carrying out a policy designed to thwart any possible outlet for economic development. In such a situation, appointed chiefs were seen as important only insofar as they would carry out those simple tasks of administration identified above. It was assumed that they would have little significance in terms of economic development as there was to be no economic development. Thus no steps were taken to educate either the chiefs, through resident advisers, or their probable successors through a school for the sons of chiefs. Given the limited demands made on them, it would appear that no special training was thought necessary. Only when even the simple tasks of administration proved too difficult for these appointees were agents called in. No indication was recorded at that time that the more dynamic step of establishing a school for the training of sons of chiefs on the lines of Ngora was ever contemplated.

Civil administration was introduced into Karamoja by the Protectorate authorities in 1921. There is some disagreement about the significance of this change. Barber has suggested that there had been a change in policy at Entebbe that allowed for the growth of a "development minded" administration which, while still seeing law and order as paramount, was interested in fostering progress among the pastoral people of Karamoja.³¹ Welch, on the other hand, argued that the changeover from military to civil rule reflected a demand for a decrease in defence spending throughout the empire, and introduced no significant interest in development.³² The difference in these conclusions stems largely from the fact that the two writers had quite different ideas on what constituted development. For Barber, efforts at rationalizing the administration constituted development; for Welch, since these efforts ran counter to the maximization of cattle assets, they did not constitute development. But the fact remains that in the first years of civilian rule the administration did become more complex, more rationalized. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1919 was applied in Karamoja, thus increasing the duties of the administrative chiefs. A tax was imposed in the district, chiefs' courts were established. Both of these jobs required careful attention to the keeping of records. The chiefs were also called upon to control movement of stock, arrest offenders and impose punishments. With this significant increase in chiefly duties, it is not surprising that even with the presence of a few government agents, the volume of complaints heard during the early years of civil administration greatly exceeded that of the preceding decade. Barber has suggested that the civil administrators might well have asked why, if the system worked among the Teso, it did not work successfully in Karamoja. The significant difference is once again the lack of attention to two important elements that were present in Teso—(i) a programme of economic development which introduced a new order that was seen as desirable by both the chiefs and the peasants, and (ii) a programme for educating chiefs and their successors up to their increasingly complex obligations within this new order.

Taking them in reverse order, let us look at what educational programme

was proposed. During the period of military administration, as we noted earlier, no effort was expended or any sort of educational development. The commencement of civil rule seems to have ushered in no new thinking on this question. The first civilian district commissioner, Mr. Ashton Warner, drew up a lengthy report some two months after assuming duty in the district in which, among many other topics, both trade and medical services were treated and recommendations made. No mention of educational plans appeared.³³ Indeed, the first mention of an educational programme is found not in government sources at all, but rather in missionary correspondence.

As early as 1902, Crabtree, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary who had opened their first station in eastern Uganda at Masaba (Nabumali), had, in his inimitable way, envisioned an energetic expansion north to Karamoja and beyond. He was especially concerned that traders, in their penetration of the area, would do irreparable damage so as to render any future work more difficult.³⁴ At that time, of course, no concrete action was contemplated as the expansion into the Mount Elgon area was itself only in its infancy. Some years later, excited by the discovery that the language of Teso was similar to that of Karamoja, a number of other CMS missionaries expressed the hope that work would soon be undertaken. Dr. A. R. Cook saw the effective occupation of Teso as merely the preliminary step to evangelizing not only Karamoja but also Turkana.³⁵ Mr. Dillistone, one of the early missionaries in Teso, reiterated this point of similarity in language and looked forward to "the future when Teso teachers will go to Karamoja as missionaries and possibly link up with the remnants of early Christianity of which Krapf wrote."³⁶

These unsolicited projections into the future received no encouragement from the mission authorities at Mengo who were hard pressed financially. Coming as they did just at the start of military administration in Karamoja, there was also little chance of convincing government authorities of their merits. Indeed, no CMS missionary ever visited Karamoja until the first years of civil administration. And according to these missionaries even at that time they were forbidden to undertake mission work "because of the uncertain temper of the people." They had to content themselves with stationing teachers at the borders of the district.³⁷ Clearly much of this early interest was merely pious "thinking aloud." It was not articulated in forms which were easily translated into policy decisions within the mission; even less did it offer a concrete programme which could support government policy. Nonetheless, the CMS had proven itself capable of implementing an effective programme of secular education in Uganda, not once but several times, and not far removed from Karamoja, but on the very threshold of the district in Teso.

It was surely this consideration which prompted the government in 1924 to request the CMS to send teachers to the district. This request was forwarded to the Teso Church Council where at first it was found difficult to recruit the necessary staff. By the end of that year, however, two Itesot and one Muganda

had started teaching in Karamoja. The work was centred at Moroto, the government headquarters. This meant that initially at least the teaching was carried on primarily among the police and hospital personnel stationed there, many of whom were Baganda.³⁸ However, the District Commissioner also saw the need for similar work in those areas of the district away from Moroto. Thus, he encouraged one of the teachers to start teaching at Kangole some 16 miles distant. The teacher sought and received the co-operation of the local chief in securing accommodation in the chief's own compound. This operation was apparently facilitated by the fact that the chief had himself come into contact with church teachers on an earlier visit to Teso, and was probably aware of the benefits likely to accrue by having such a man in his compound. Unfortunately, the District Commissioner's clerk, possibly because he feared losing his post if some Karamojong became literate, interfered with the work at Kangole and attempted to force the teacher to leave.³⁹

He was not successful, however, for it was noted in the first report of the Protectorate Education Department, that CMS had three sub-grade schools in the district with a total enrolment of 33 pupils, and the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Mission had one such school with only 19 pupils.⁴⁰ The Catholic school had closed by 1928, and in the same year the Protestant one was reported to have 34 pupils, an increase of only one in two years.⁴¹ By 1930, both of these missionary societies had withdrawn leaving the entire district without any schools.⁴² It seems clear therefore that the work which had been undertaken had not been sustained.

This early educational episode is very poorly documented; thus, our knowledge of it is sketchy. That which we do know, however, permits us to say something about the attention education received in the thinking and action of the policy-makers in Karamoja. It would appear that the growing complaints about the inability of the chiefs to do the new jobs demanded of them had encouraged the government to seek assistance from the missions. Demands for mission co-operation in the area of education had generally been couched in terms of administrative needs, and coming as it did at the time that the Phelps-Stokes Report was receiving publicity and that the government was itself shaping its own plans for active involvement in education, this request was certainly tied to the requirements of the increasingly complex administrative structure in Karamoja. These needs had been highlighted in 1923/24 as a result of the violence which surrounded the attempt by an appointed chief at Nabilatuk in south Karamoja to implement unpopular administrative decisions.⁴³ The District Commissioner's suggestion that at least one of the teachers should be located at the compound of a chief further supports the notion that the chiefs were one of the targets of this educational endeavour.

The failure to sustain this effort was most likely due to the inability of the Teso Church Council to continue adequate financial support. This view gains credence when we note that one of the first works of the newly-formed Diocese on the Upper Nile in 1926 was to establish a Board of Missions to co-ordinate

work in missionary districts, one of which was Karamoja. The most important function of this Board was to centralize fund-raising, thereby relieving individual districts from their financial responsibility which was difficult to fulfil.⁴⁴ If, however, the Church was having trouble meeting the costs of their work, the question arises as to why the government did not take this opportunity to implement its plans to become involved in education. The authorities were clearly convinced of the utility of mission education for their own purposes. Indeed, it was at that very time that a Department of Education was first established in Uganda on the basis of close co-operation between government and missions—the government supplying money and the missions supplying the personnel. That they did not extend this idea of co-operation to Karamoja at this time can only be laid to the fact that once again the authorities opted for an explicitly limited administrative policy. As a result of the violence of 1924, Governor Archer made a report in which he characterized his policy as the “absence of any energetic administrative action calculated to cause resentment.”⁴⁵ If there was to be no energetic administration then there could be no justification, it must be presumed, for an expenditure on educating chiefs whose tasks were to remain limited. The Karamoja Security Committee of 1961 summed up the connection between this negative view towards education and limited administration in its comment that “it was only the system that was introduced and not the drill and discipline that goes with it which Kakungulu and other Baganda agents inculcated into other tribes. It has, therefore, not taken root and the chiefs have not acquired the same authority, respect and prestige that the chiefs in the other parts acquired.”⁴⁶

To continue our comparison with Teso, let us look at the second element that received attention in Teso and did not in Karamoja—an attempt to implement a programme of economic development and thus to introduce a new order. Approaches to economic development, while of interest in themselves, also have ramifications for educational development and it is to this end that some time will be devoted to summarizing British efforts in this direction in Karamoja during the period of civil administration.

There has been in the literature, as mentioned above, a controversy over whether or not the civil administration which began in 1921 was development-oriented. The answer to this controversy depends largely on how you define development, for clearly in the sphere of administration, some rationalization was taken in hand. In the sphere of economic activity, however, little was attempted and even less was achieved. Ashton Warner, the first civilian District Commissioner, saw potential in trade if the district were to be opened up and licences granted under strict control.⁴⁷ But most of his time and attention were devoted to administrative reform, and before any steps were taken to liberalize trade, events overtook the authorities.

Mention has already been made of the violence which erupted in 1923/24 at Nabilatuk over the question of chiefs' authority. This incident was crucial for it created a stir not only in Moroto but also in Entebbe which led to high

level discussions, and eventually, decisions on the policy for Karamoja. In brief these decisions were as follows (i) the Karamojong were to be protected from raids; (ii) chiefs should be appointed on the advice of elders; and (iii) "the Karamojong should be left in peace to tend their herds in the manner in which they had been accustomed in the past, and that every facility should be afforded them for this purpose."⁴⁸ The first of these decisions referred to a continuation of the law and order policy that had already been of prime importance. The second introduced an important new dimension into the administrative structure. The third concerned itself with the question of economic development. These policies too have been the subject of some controversy. Barber has commented that the "Entebbe decision meant that there would be little if any change in policy from that pursued under the military administration."⁴⁹ Welch, on the contrary, wrote that "Sir Geoffrey Archer's decision would seem to imply a change from the then present policy that could only be described as revolutionary."⁵⁰ How can we explain these divergent conclusions?

As regards the first decision, there was little new in establishing a line of defence against hostile neighbours. This had long been one of the main components of any Karamoja policy. Thus Barber seems justified in seeing little change. On the other hand, the question of actively incorporating the opinion of elders into the recruitment of chiefs was clearly a significant divergence from what had happened earlier, and could even be seen as revolutionary. It is, however, in connection with the third decision—the basis for development—that the lines are not so clearly drawn. Welch has emphasized the phrase "every facility should be afforded them," and interpreted it to mean that Archer was cattle-development-oriented, interested in paying heed to "the special needs of Karamoja and its people."⁵¹ Conversely, Barber focused attention on the notion that "the Karamojong should be left in peace to tend their herds . . ." and concluded thus that security would continue to be dominant, and development subsidiary.⁴² In light of the repeated admonitions from Entebbe to assure an "absence of energetic administration," it seems difficult to agree with Welch that Archer was particularly interested in developing the area on any basis. The discontent which surfaced among the administrative officers at Moroto was not, as Welch argued, the result of a conflict between the "cattle-development" orientation of Archer and Entebbe on one side and the non-development orientation of the Moroto officials on the other.⁵³ These officials did not revolt because Archer was forcing them unwillingly into a forward development programme based on cattle. Rather they revolted because they feared that Archer's policy, which can best be described as a *laissez-faire* approach, would undo all that had been achieved over the past years in the maintenance of law and order.⁵⁴ It is true that the policy followed for the next thirty years in Karamoja was one developed in Moroto, not in Entebbe, but the conflict was not between development (Entebbe/Archer) and non-development (Moroto). It was a conflict between a policy of *laissez-faire* and

non-development (Entebbe/Archer) and one of strict law enforcement and non-development (Moroto). In such a situation it is not surprising that British civil administration brought few economic benefits to the district.

The policy, such as one existed, has been described as "cattle-blind," ignoring the economic potential of the enormous herds and devoid of any concern for improving animal resources.⁵⁵ The most significant aspect of this policy was that Karamoja remained a "closed" district throughout the entire period of civil administration from 1921 to 1962. In this way the lead of Governor Jackson was assiduously followed, with disastrous results for trade. Cattle disease provided the principal justification for this continued ban on trade, and indeed the one time that the quarantine was lifted in 1931, an outbreak of rinderpest elsewhere was traced to Karamojong beef, thus necessitating its immediate re-imposition. Disease was again used as an excuse to withdraw the two trading licences that had been issued six years earlier to British traders, even though exports had risen rapidly from 480 head to 7,553 head in 1938. Despite these frequent references to cattle disease, the authorities did very little to introduce veterinary services into the area. One stock inspector was sent to the district in 1922, but by 1927 he had disappeared from the scene. In 1923 a small inoculation campaign was undertaken but no large-scale programme took shape until 1949. In 1926 an effort was made to start a demonstration herd, but the cattle were sold the same year because of financial problems. No District Veterinary Officer was appointed to the district until 1948.

The outbreak of war had the unexpected effect of boosting the export trade in Karamoja as a Kenya firm was permitted to purchase beef there in order to supply British troops in the Middle East. The trade continued until 1947. In the following year, with an overall change in colonial policy, the first positive steps were taken to reverse the lethargy of preceding decades. A cattle marketing scheme was introduced under which 11,000 head of cattle were sold each year until 1958. The only analysis of this scheme, however, is critical on the grounds that the scheme was devised as a way of paying for local government activities. Dealings were not regulated by local government authorities and thus the profit never reached the Karamojong.⁵⁶

What is most striking from this brief outline is that despite government lethargy, from 1933 right up to the eve of independence, some cattle was exported every year, and the annual total increased substantially to 11,000 head in 1958. This growth indicates both the willingness on the part of the Karamojong to sell their cattle, as well as the potential of such trade. The willingness of the Karamojong can effectively be contrasted with the unwillingness of the authorities to seriously consider cattle as a source of wealth for the district in light of their refusal to take up on themselves the responsibility for the veterinary services and effective marketing facilities so necessary for its profitable exploitation.

It was within this context of non-energetic administration that the educational efforts of the missionaries were renewed in the 1930's. Ideally the educational interests of the people of Karamoja should have been dealt with in accordance

with the political and economic development of the area. In a situation in which the official attention paid to these needs was both inadequate and misdirected, the work of the educator was at a serious disadvantage. When this initial disadvantage was compounded by other problems internal to the organisation of the educational effort, the result was inevitably unsatisfactory.

By 1930 the CMS had withdrawn totally from the district, thus putting an end to initial educational efforts. At about the same time, however possibilities arose that mission work would continue. The Bishop of the Upper Nile Diocese wrote in 1929 that two members of the Sudan Interior Mission had sought and been given permission to open up a mission station at Kangole. "They will work in close co-operation with C.M.S." he noted, "and on the established Native African Church lines." For him, this represented an extension of work on behalf of the CMS.⁵⁷ In fact, however, the work was started in 1930 by the newly-formed Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS) which had been exploring the possibility of opening up evangelical work in a wide area roughly centred on Lake Rudolf. Their first station was not at Kangole but at Lotome, some 25 miles from Moroto.⁵⁸ It is significant that it was this society which undertook work in the area because the society itself had been established partly as a result of disagreement with the CMS over approaches to evangelization. If it represented any continuity with past missionary approaches in Uganda, it was only with the most fundamental branch of the Protestant work. Of importance for this study is the fact that it began its work in Karamoja without any tradition of, or commitment to, a programme of secular education such as existed within the CMS. On the contrary, the most influential of the early missionaries stated unequivocally that, "our one and only aim in bringing girls and boys to school is to lead them to their Saviour."⁵⁹

In one sense, of course, this absence of fixed aims about the secular role of schools could work as an advantage, leaving scope for the flexibility needed in such a different environment. The organizers offered a hopeful sign that they were cognizant of these differences when, at the outset, they stressed that the problem of mission work in Karamoja "is similar to that which confronts those who attempt to reach the tribes of Arabia . . . the ordinary method of establishing a station in a well-populated area and starting schools and churches in the principal villages will have to be modified to suit conditions. A new mode of campaign must be evolved. . . . To the waterholes we therefore must go."⁶⁰

Unfortunately, however, their deeds did not meet their words. The first project undertaken was the construction of a building at Lotome which, it was hoped, would act as a church and school. A boys' dormitory was built nearby with accommodation for 30 boys. Entrance into the school was to be a privilege, and so a fee of five shillings was charged. To supplement this dormitory, a model Karamojong village was built on the compound at Lotome where a man wishing to come to school could occupy a house together with his wife, family and cattle.⁶¹ In addition to the work established at Lotome,

and with the help of two teachers recruited from Kenya, nine sub-stations were opened throughout the district. The choice of locations for these centres was determined by the territorial base of the new administrative structure, however, so that teachers were sent to the places where an appointed chief resided, such as Nabilatuk, Kotido, Kapelimoru, Rengen and Lolachat.⁶² Two aspects of this early approach need to be underlined. First, it was based on the notion that sedentarisation was a pre-condition for effective education. Second, it continued to see the chief as the main agent of contact and penetration. On neither count did the mission succeed in identifying the interests of the Karamojong. In the first place, there had been no economic breakthrough in the district which had lessened the need to move with their cattle, thus rendering dormitory occupation difficult, if not impossible. Nor had the authorities succeeded in interjecting into the administrative structure anything which had effectively raised the prestige and power of the chiefs, thus limiting their role as an effective agent of contact.

Inevitably, progress during the 1930s was slow. By 1933 the boys' boarding school had been recognized by the government, but in 1935 the number of boys admitted was only 45.⁶³ Throughout the decade, the role of government was minimal. In 1933, they provided a grant to the school at Lotome, and statistics were reported each year, but in 1936, the Education Department noted that all districts had been visited and systematically inspected except Karamoja.⁶⁴ The first real governmental interest came in 1941, following a visit to the district by the Governor. The Director of Education was sent to inspect the work of the BCMS, and the outcome was an offer to increase the assistance thus far granted. This offer was accepted by the society and in 1942 the enrolment figures rose to 101.⁶⁵

Up until this time all of the educational thinking and planning had been based on the assumptions outlined above. The mission had failed to come to grips with the environmental and historical variables that distinguished Karamoja from the other areas of the Protectorate. Uncharacteristically, the government authorities in 1948, in light of the failure of the missions, recommended an experimental approach to education which was the first real attempt to adapt the system to local conditions. Their report is quoted at length:

As a result of recommendations by the Anti-Desiccation Committee and Local Education Authority of the District it was decided to open in 1945 nine "Kraal" schools, that is schools of a sub-grade type supplied with essential but rudimentary equipment, it being considered that welfare measures will prove ineffective unless some minimum of education is introduced into the outlying areas of the District. Nine teachers for these schools were given a refresher course at Lotome to enable them to start work in 1945. Money for the erection of temporary buildings for the kraal schools was allocated by the Local Authority.⁶⁶

There are several aspects of this report which are of interest. First there was to be no basic change in the system of dual responsibility for maintaining

schools. The mission and the government were to continue their partnership. Second, attention was paid to the temporary nature of residence at a given "kraal", through establishing potentially peripatetic schools. Most significant, however, was the admission that the native administration (the appointed chiefs) had failed to provide an effective link between the Protectorate authorities and the people of the district. It can only be assumed that the education authorities were called into discussions with the Anti-Desiccation Committee because welfare measures concerning over-grazing had been ineffectively transmitted to the people; education in the kraals was seen as the solution. It was the first attempt to bypass the chiefs in the interests of contacting the people directly. The project was short-lived, however, because of the shortage of teachers willing and able to withstand the difficulties inherent in the situation. Such a programme required enormous supervision and control. Thus, the local authorities had to admit, only two years later, that the kraal school idea had failed.⁶⁷ By 1948 the schools had fallen into real difficulty and they were brought finally under the supervision of the BCMS in 1949.⁶⁸

The conclusions which the government drew from this experiment were that the educational problem could only be tackled along different lines and at a time when the population of the district had developed and stabilized in other fields.⁶⁹ Once again, sedentarisation was seen as a pre-determining factor for successful educational development. It was also recognized that education could scarcely be seen as feasible without development in other spheres. Instead of encouraging this sort of development, however, these conclusions led to a withdrawal from active consideration of educational problems. Government continued to render financial support and to report enrolment statistics, but their initiative was minimal. With the provincial re-organization of 1947, though Karamoja was administratively tied to the Northern Province, for purposes of educational administration, it was linked to the Eastern Province.⁷⁰ This move was certain to render any co-ordinated action unnecessarily difficult. Without government encouragement the interest of the local authorities was also minimal. In 1948, Rev. Clark of the BCMS was asked to act on behalf of the Local Education Authority.⁷¹ In 1950 the Karamoja District Council complained that in comparison with other districts education was severely retarded. In response the Provincial Commissioner placed the blame for this state of affairs on the Karamojong themselves pointing to the non-co-operative attitude of parents who discouraged their children from attending school.⁷² This accusation seemed to have dampened any enthusiasm that the authorities might have had, for in both 1951 and 1952, the annual reports noted that the Karamoja Local Education Authority had met less often than any other in the country.⁷³ As late as 1957, the Karamoja authorities had not yet taken over from the central government the responsibility for primary education in the district.⁷⁴ It was not until 1959 that the first District Education Officer was appointed to Karamoja.⁷⁵ The experimentation and interest of the early 1940s had met with little success. These failures had blunted any enthusiasm that

might have existed in government circles so that little dynamic action was forthcoming.

In light of government apathy, the missions were again left to carry the ball. In 1948, the BCMS opened a Vernacular Teacher Training College aimed at providing refresher courses for serving teachers. By 1951 nine teachers had passed through the course.⁷⁶ This work expanded slowly and was complemented by the beginning of another Teacher Training College (T.T.C.) at Kangole under the direction of the newly returned Verona Fathers Missions. However, the endemic shortage of staff which had been reported with unfortunate regularity ever since the war, led in 1958 to the closing of the T.T.C. at Lotome. It remained shut until 1961.⁷⁷ The first junior secondary school in the district opened at Lotome in 1953. Although the academic results were not spectacular it represented a real advance in Karamojong educational development.⁷⁸ Unfortunately the percentage of pupils who were Karamojong was quite small. As late as 1958, of 84 boys, only 34 were from the district.⁷⁹

As in the early years, missionary efforts were characterized by an institutional approach that did not suit the nomadic patterns of the people of the district. This approach inevitably failed. The one effort to cater to these patterns through peripatetic schools had also failed. Yet a third alternative, the establishing of boarding schools, had been tried at Lotome at the outset. In 1955, this system was again introduced with the setting up of a primary boarding school in each county in the district. The cost of the project was enormous; the results have been only mediocre. Yet this type of school continued as the keystone of education in Karamoja long after independence.⁸⁰

Hunter has characterised the growth of African education by two phases, the first in which effort had to be expended in getting children to go to school, and the second in which all effort was spent on providing enough schools and equipment to meet the demand.⁸¹ Education in Karamoja was distinguishable at independence by virtue of the fact that it had not yet reached Hunter's second phase. In 1963, the report of the Uganda Education Commission noted emphatically that in Karamoja "left to themselves parents would not send their boys and girls to school."⁸² In this same report Karamoja was treated in a separate section as an educationally underdeveloped area. This signified low percentage enrolments in primary aided schools. With 12% of the age cohort in school Karamoja's statistics were far and away the lowest in the country.⁸³ In stressing the unique role of education in the district, and, at the same time, pointing out the overwhelming problems which it faced, the report concluded that "here the schools are called upon not merely to educate children but to enable them to traverse in a decade the distance which has been covered by civilisation in the last 5,000 years."⁸⁴

In conclusion, I refer again to Barber who has noted that the phase during which strong native authority and a new pattern of life within the colonial situation was built up in other districts did not take place in Karamoja.⁸⁵ Without this new pattern of life as a basis for educational work, the task of

the missionaries and those interested government authorities was enormous. All their efforts were directed toward approaches that were totally outside of the traditional life of the people. Yet this traditional pattern had not been effectively replaced by anything new. Until such time as a new pattern had been evolved, the common measure of interest on which any educational innovation could be based did not exist, and without it, little success could be expected.

FOOTNOTES

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2. C. Ehrlich, "The Uganda Economy 1903-1945," in V. Harlow and E. Chilvers, eds., *History of East Africa*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 397.
3. M. Twaddle, "The Founding of Mbale," *Uganda Journal* 30 (1966), pp. 25-36.
4. For detailed account of this expedition see H. H. Austin, *With Macdonald in Uganda* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 314 p, and J. R. L. MacDonald and H. H. Austin, "Journeys to the North of Uganda," *Geographical Journal* 14 (August, 1899), pp. 129-155.
5. James Barber, "Karamoja in 1910," *Uganda Journal* 28 (March, 1964), p. 15.
6. W. D. M. Bell, *Karamoja Safari* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1964) 298 p; and H. Rayne, *The Ivory Raiders* (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1923), 192 p.
7. R. W. Beachey, "The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* III (1962) p. 462.
8. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 34-43; 54-65.
9. P.R.O., FO 2/37, Hayes-Sadler to FO, 2 December 1903.
10. P.R.O., CO 536/25, Bell to CO, 6 January 1960.
11. P.R.O., CO 536/25, Bell to CO, 6 January 1909.
12. P.R.O., Co 536/41, Jackson to CO, 19 July 1911.
13. This and subsequent information on the assumption of British control over the area is contained in Barber, *Frontier*, pp. 107 ff.
14. P.R.O., CO 536/39, Tomkins to CO, 21 January 1911.
15. See Ehrlich, *op. cit.*, p. 397; see also, ESA A/10 Vol. 4, No. 169, Boyle to Commissioner, October, 1904, P.R.O. CO 536/21, Bell to CO, 11 September 1908.
16. C. C. Wrigley, *Crops and Wealth in Uganda* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 14.
17. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 105.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
20. N. Dyson-Hudson, "Factors Inhibiting Change in an African Pastoral Society: The Karamojong of Northeast Uganda, *Transactions of the New York Academy of Science*. 24 (1962) p. 771-801.
21. V. M. Battle, "Selective Conservatism in Culture Contact: A Study of Educational Adaptation in the Karamoja District of Uganda," (Unpublished M. A. diss., Columbia University, 1967), p. 16.
22. B. Brock, "Pastoral Values as an Explanation of Conservatism in Karamoja District Uganda," *Issues in African Development*, p. 22-48.; H. Schneider, "Pokot Resistance to Change," in W. R. Bascom and M. J. Herskovits, eds., *Continuity and Change in African Cultures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 144-67.
23. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 138 ff.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
25. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
26. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 151-52.
27. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 56-57.

28. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 145-46.
29. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 91 ff.
30. L. Pirouet, "A Comparison of the Responses of Three Societies to Christianity (Toro, Teso, Kikuyu)," Paper presented at USSC Conference, Dec., 1968.
31. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 201.
32. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 61-63.
33. P.R.O., CO 536/114, Ashton Warner to PCEP, 13 August, 1921.
34. Church Missionary Society (CMS), A7/03, Crabtree to Stock, 5 April, 1902.
35. A. R. Cook in *Church Missionary Review*, June, 1909, p. 366.
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38. CMS, *Historical Record*, 1924/25 (Typescript), p. 77.
39. *Church Missionary Outlook*, (1925), p. 92-94.
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41. U.P., E.D., *Report*, 1928, p. 23.
42. U.P., E.D., *Report*, 1930, p. 49.
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44. CMS, *Historical Record*, 1927/28 (Typescript), p. 92-93.
45. Moroto Archives, Notes on Meeting of 21 December 1923, as cited in Barber, *Frontier*, p. 208.
46. B. K. Bataringaya, *Report of the Karamoja Security Committee, 1961*, as cited in Barber, *Frontier*, p. 214.
47. P.R.O. CO 536/114, Ashton Warner to PCEP, 13 August, 1921.
48. Moroto Archives, *op. cit.*,
49. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 209.
50. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
52. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 209.
53. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
54. Barber, *Frontier*, p. 209.
55. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 72 ff. The brief synopsis of attempts at development come from this source, as well as Barber, *Frontier*, pp. 211-12.
56. Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 78-79.
57. *South of the Sudd and on the Backwaters of the Nile*, I (1929), p. 20.
58. For a general history of this society and its work in the Lake Rudolf region, see, W. S. Hooton and J. S. Wright, *The First Twenty-Five Years of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, (1922-1947)*, (London: BCMS, 1947), 242 p. The Verona Fathers Mission also established a school at Kangole in 1934, and five sub-stations. Their progress during the 1930s was slow, and with outbreak of war between Britain and Italy the Mission's work ceased. They were only permitted to return to the District in 1951, when they were limited to the Labwor area in western Karamoja. See U.P., E.D., *Report, 1934, 1937, 1951*.
59. BCMS, *The Record of a Seventeenth Year*, 1939, p. 24.
60. BCMS, *The Record of a Seventh Year* 1929, p. 29.
61. BCMS, *The Record of an Eighth Year*, 1930, p. 56.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 57-58.
63. BCMS, *The Record of a Thirteenth Year*, 1935, p. 77-78.
64. U.P., E.D., *Report*, 1936, p. 10.
65. BCMS, *The Record of a Twentieth Year*, 1942, p. 35.
66. U.P., E.D., *Report 1944*, p. 15.
67. U.P., E.D., *Report, 1945-46*, p. 25.
68. BCMS, *The Story of the Year*, 1950, p. 11.

69. U.P., E.D., *Report, 1945-46*, p. 25.
70. U.P., E.D. *Report, 1947*, p. 9.
71. U.P., E.D., *Report, 1948*, p. 20; see also, BCMS, *The Story of the Year, 1948*, p. 50.
72. U.P., *Annual Report, 1950*, p. 132.
73. U.P., E.D., *Report, 1951*, p. 24; 1952. p. 24.
74. U.P.' E.D.' *Report, 1957.*, p. 13.
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76. BCMS, *The Story of the Year, 1951*, p. 16.
77. BCMS Archives, Lockett to BCMS, 18 July, 1960.
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83. *Ibid.*, p. 62
84. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
85. J. Barber, "The Karamoja District of Uganda: A Pastoral People Under Colonial Rule," *Journal of African History*, III (1962), p. 114-15.