

GLASGOW AND AFRICA: CONNEXIONS AND ATTITUDES 1870-1900

By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

A.A.	African Association.
A.A.B.	Anglo-African Bank.
A.I.A.	Association Internationale Africaine.
A.I.C.	Association Internationale du Congo.
A.L.C.	African Lakes Company.
A.S.C.	African Steamship Company.
B. & A.S.N.C.	British & African Steam Navigation Company.
B.B.W.A.	Bank of British West Africa.
B.S.A.C.	British South Africa Company.
C.O.	Colonial Office.
C.P.	Confidential Print.
C. of S.	Church of Scotland (Foreign Missions Committee Records)
C.R.O.	Companies Registration Office (Edinburgh).
D.M.	Directors Meetings (Glasgow Chamber of Commerce).
encl.	enclosure.
F.A.C.	Foreign Affairs Committee (Glasgow Chamber of Commerce).
F.O.	Foreign Office.
G.H.	Glasgow Herald.
G.N.	Glasgow News.
H.U.A.C.	History of the United Africa Company.
I.B.E.A.	Imperial British East Africa Company.
n.a.	not available.
N.A.C.	National African Company.
N.B.D.M.	North British Daily Mail.
N.C.	Niger Company.
n.d.	not dated.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
R.N.C.	Royal Niger Company.
R.J.S.C.	Register of Joint Stock Companies.
S.E.Y.B.	Stock Exchange Year Book.
U.A.C.	United Africa Company.

SUMMARY OF THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the connexions between Glasgow and the African continent during the years 1870-1900, i.e. over the period of the Partition of Africa. The survey covers the following fields:

Chapter I. Trade in commodities conducted between Glasgow and Africa, giving attention both to exports and imports, in terms of areas traded with, the volume and value of the trade, and the changes taking place in these factors over the thirty years.

Chapter II. The firms and companies associated with Glasgow to a greater or lesser extent which conducted business in Africa itself, primarily in West Africa, but also in East and South Africa.

Chapter III. The estimate held of Africa by commercial opinion in Glasgow as represented by the Chamber of Commerce, and the activities and expressed opinions of that body concerning developments in Africa.

Chapter IV. The movements of general public opinion in Glasgow in relation to commerce in Africa and to the course of the Partition, primarily as reflected in the local press.

Finally, an attempt is made to investigate the links and connexions, so far as they existed, between trade movements, firms active in Africa, and the opinion and outlook of businessmen and the general public.

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INTRODUCTION

The final three decades of the nineteenth century saw a marked expansion and intensification of European economic activity on the African continent in terms of local trade, of exploitation of vegetable and mineral resources, and even of state finance, as in Egypt and Tunis. Parallel with this trend, the more spectacular political developments of these thirty years resulted in the transformation of nearly all parts of Africa into dependencies of the European powers, or, in the case of the Congo Free State, of a single individual. The precise nature of the relationship between these two processes, and indeed the question of whether there was a connexion of any sort at all, has been the subject of sharp and prolonged debate; the existence of such a link having been vigorously asserted and as strenuously denied.⁽¹⁾

Without claiming in any sense to comment on this general problem, the purpose of the following study is to endeavour to illuminate this relationship in some detail for one particular area of the United Kingdom, namely the city of Glasgow. Such an investigation is unlikely to answer directly any of the fundamental questions as to the connexion between commercial enterprise and political and diplomatic activity in various parts of Africa, for none of the groups/

(1) Among the best-known works in English concerned with this debate are, from the earlier period, J.A. Hobson's "Imperialism, A Study", Nisbet 1902, Lenin's "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow (first published in 1916), and Leonard Woolf's "Empire and Commerce in Africa", Labour Research Publications, 1920, all arguing strongly for an intimate connexion between finance capital and the colonisation process. Present-day critics of this viewpoint include D.K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism, An Historiographical Revision", Econ. Hist. Review, 2nd Ser. Vol. XIV, No. 2, and "The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism", Longmans Green 1967. Also R. Robinson, J. Gallagher and A. Denny, "Africa & the Victorians", Macmillan, 1961. For a critique of this last work see J.D. Hargreaves in "Victorian Studies", Sept., 1962, J. Stengers & C.W. Newbury, in "Journal of African History" Vol. III 1963, No. 3, also in a more polemical vein, V.G. Kiernan "Farewells to Empire", "The Socialist Register" 1964.

groups or individuals in Glasgow who come into this field were directly in the confidence of British governments of either party. Nevertheless a documented survey of these interests may throw some light both on the manner in which businessmen regarded commerce in Africa and the extent to which they were politically involved. An attempt is made to distinguish whether such involvement arose naturally out of their business interests or was carried on in a wholly separate context of patriotism, religious fervour or other motivation.

This thesis attempts to estimate the prevalence of Glasgow interests in Africa, and the degree to which political intervention was considered by these interests as the prosecution of commerce by other means. The influence of such a standpoint may be measured by the extent to which assistance and support were sought from the Government, on what terms and with what justifications. It is important to consider, so far as possible, not merely what the commercial interests desired from the State, but the attitude of the State to such approaches, and how readily such approaches met with a response. Monopolistic concessions were granted in this period to three British chartered companies in Africa, The Royal Niger Co., The Imperial British East Africa Co., and The British South Africa Co. It is a moot point whether the Government did so because it wished to advance the financial prospects of the promoters, Sir George Goldie, Sir William Mackinnon and Cecil Rhodes, or because such companies were regarded by the Foreign Office as useful diplomatic makeweights and surrogate British administrations, in a process of territorial expansion quite divorced from economic considerations. The relations of the Government with lesser interests of inferior diplomatic significance such as those based on Glasgow may perhaps provide a comparison which would assist in answering/

answering this question.

Concern with commercial and political development in Africa did not remain confined to the Government and directly interested parties; consideration is also given to the public context in which the Glasgow-African interests operated, primarily the local atmosphere of opinion. In the first place attention is given to other business groups and the expression of commercial opinion through the Chamber of Commerce, in an effort to determine whether, as was the case in Liverpool, there was any solidarity and common purpose between African interests and business opinion at large, and secondly to public opinion in a more general sense as expressed through contemporary publications. In particular the question is raised as to whether any deliberate attempt was made to mobilise local opinion in favour of local interests in this sphere, while considering at the same time the expressed attitude of influential organs of public opinion such as the daily press towards government policy and commercial prospects in Africa.

The place of Glasgow trading interests in African affairs can be defined approximately as being considerably less than those located in London or Liverpool, but greater than any other British city, with the qualification that the predominance of Manchester in cotton manufacturers and the prevalence of cotton exports in the African market meant that Glasgow producers did not have such major interest in that market as those of Manchester.⁽¹⁾ At the same time, Glasgow was, after 1882, the major port for northern Britain in the South African trade. It also emerges that Glasgow's African interests were much less integral to its commercial life than those in Liverpool, where the Elder Dempster combination dominated/

(1) See Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Directors' Minutes, 8.8.98 and 12.9.98.

dominated West African shipping, and where the Chamber of Commerce had a special African Section which could count on the support where necessary of the Liverpool Chamber as a whole. The situation in Glasgow contrasts also with that in Manchester where James Hutton, a leading member of the commercial community, was deeply involved in African questions, and whose views on these prevailed in its Chamber of Commerce.

The following study commences with a survey of trade movements between Glasgow and Africa during this period, giving attention to its volume, value, destination and nature, noting significant changes in any of these aspects and their possible connexion with political events. What is indicated is, with some variations, a persistent development and expansion of this trade, concentrated in the early seventies mainly on West Africa, and thereafter on Egypt and South Africa. A comparison of these overall trends with the locations of Glasgow based firms actually operating in Africa reveals that the latter themselves could have been responsible for, at most, only a very small proportion of the commodities exported from Glasgow to the African continent, or imported from there into the city. Glasgow trade was carried on mainly with the more economically developed regions, North and South Africa, while the more significant of the Glasgow firms tended to be pioneers in the tropical regions, and to avoid the areas through which the bulk of exports and imports passed. An exception to this generalisation must however be made for the early 1870's, when Glasgow firms working in West Africa were responsible for a significant trade in palm oil between West Africa and Glasgow, and sizeable shipments of spirits, cloth and miscellaneous commodities in the other direction. This ceased, however, about 1874, and the subsequent period of development of these firms, Miller Bros., Taylor/

Taylor Laughland, Couper Johnstone, Ltd., did not involve the shipment of their products through Glasgow.

Following the description of Glasgow trade with Africa, an attempt is made to analyse the structure and activity of the Glasgow firms in West Africa, East Africa and South Africa, some attention being given also to those which were not managed from Glasgow, but in whose direction individual Glaswegians held a prominent place. The questions raised in this respect concern, so far as it can be ascertained, firstly the individuals responsible for the management of these firms, the capital funds at their disposal, and the shareholders who provided it, as well as their connexions and relations with other bodies concerned in African trade; for example Miller Bros. relations with the R.N.C. or that of the African Lakes Co. with the B.S.A.C. Secondly, and central to the question being considered, is the nature of these firms' trading activities, the extent to which they, on the one hand, confined themselves to an exchange of products or other economic activity without altering the local environment in any manner, and on the other hand attempted to mould the situation so as to satisfy their commercial requirements. Here the question of the political role played by these companies is raised in two forms.

In the first place it is necessary to consider any political actions undertaken by the firms on their own account, - alliances with African chiefs to monopolise a market, or interference with slave-trading practices; and in the second place approaches made to the Government with the purpose of securing state intervention to modify local conditions when this was beyond the power of the company itself. Such intervention might range from a request to put official pressure on an unco-operative African chief or a European/

European rival, to a demand for annexation of a territory to forestall foreign acquisition. The question will therefore be posed as to what attitude was taken by these commercial interests to the imperial factor, and whether they regarded themselves as in any way its agents.

The question of local public opinion is considered in relation to these points. An attempt is made to determine whether there was a public consciousness of commercial possibilities in Africa, and hence a feeling for the local firms engaged in exploiting them, and whether public discussion took place on the basic essentials of economic development in Africa; transport, labour supply and the related question of the slave trade. Further to this the attitude of public opinion towards political developments in Africa will be discussed, together with the question of whether there was any contemporary belief in a connexion between economic interests and the process of partition.

A discussion of public opinion can scarcely be relevant without reference to its formulators, and local comment on African events, to be meaningful, must be related to those who originated it. Our concern here is whether this opinion could be said in any way to have been created by those who might have had an interest in doing so, or whether it was voiced by editors, politicians, ministers, unconnected with the merchants, whose attitudes to Africa were determined as an aspect of their general outlook on political and social affairs.

During the thirty years under review, Glasgow individuals and business houses, without being in the front rank of empire-builders, contributed substantially to altering the economic and political circumstances of the African continent, primarily in the Niger region and in Nyasaland. They developed trade in the Niger delta, and pioneered/

pioneered it on the Niger river; they entered into commercial-political alliances with African potentates such as Ja Ja of Opobo. According to circumstances they waged economic war on their European rivals, or entered into negotiations and alliances, being variously involved at different times either in opposition to, or combination with the R.N.C., the African Association of Liverpool, I.B.E.A. and the B.S.A.C. On Lake Nyasa they fought private wars. The aim of this thesis is to show how they operated in Africa, and promoted their particular interests in the context of the economic situation of the regions in which they were active. It aims to show the means used by them to protect and enlarge their investment in Africa while facing problems of local disorder, commercial rivalry or annexation by other States, and the degree to which they felt it necessary to invoke state and public support in order to achieve these ends. It attempts to trace the developing and changing attitudes of Glasgow public opinion towards the African situation, in particular the role envisaged by this public opinion for trade and industry in Africa's future, especially that which originated in Glasgow, and whether this opinion was in accordance or at variance with the entrepreneurs' own point of view.

CHAPTER I.

TRADE BETWEEN GLASGOW AND AFRICA

1. Sources

The materials available for constructing a picture of the trade between Glasgow and Africa in the years 1870 - 1900 are both fragmentary and unsatisfactory in a number of other ways. The Glasgow Custom House was unable to provide information. The Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom provides a table of total tonnage of shipping engaged in foreign trade entering and clearing from Glasgow, but the one reasonably complete ⁽¹⁾ record of the African trade remaining extant is a publication entitled the "Clyde Bill of Entry" issued three times a week during these years, from the Custom House for the information of shippers and the general public; and which lists, among other things, ships entering and leaving the Clyde ports and Grangemouth, together with a summary of their cargoes.

For a number of reasons, including the fact that the years 1887 and 1888 are missing, the "Clyde Bill of Entry" is far from adequate in providing a complete record. The relevant sections of the Bill of Entry are classified under the headings "Imports to Glasgow" and "Exports from Glasgow". Under the latter, the name of the ship is first listed with the appropriate date, followed by the place of ownership, the ship's destination, its captain, its tonnage, the number of its crew and the agents in Glasgow. There follows/

(1) Some fragmentary information is obtainable from a "Directory of Export Merchant Shippers" published in London apparently in only 1 year, 1885, (Mitchell Library, Glasgow) This indicates that of 495 exporters in Glasgow, 62 shipped to Africa, 47 of these being manufacturers.

follows a description of the cargo, under which a commodity is cited, followed by its value. The commodity in question, however, may or may not be enumerated, e.g. on one occasion, "10 gls linseed oil, £x", on another, "linseed oil, £y". The items are listed in an apparently almost random fashion, with little order or system to the way in which they are set out. The ability of the Bill of Entry to furnish a complete picture is further hindered by the fact that until 1882 the values of spirits, wine, tobacco and certain other commodities are not recorded.

From the beginning of 1895 the above system changes, and cargoes are no longer listed against their respective vessels. Instead the exports for a number of days are set out against their ports of destination. The ships and tonnages involved are recorded elsewhere. This system is even more unsatisfactory than that previously in operation, since no values are mentioned for such commodities as are enumerated by weight, volume or otherwise. Spirits, for example, are recorded in gallons, textiles in yards, metal manufactures in tons, but no values are cited; whereas, when values are given there is no enumeration of the goods to which they refer.

Imports throughout these years are recorded in a similar manner to that used for exports before 1895, and remain so after that date. In addition to the other details, the consignees for the individual items are noted, but the record for imports is even more unsatisfactory than that for exports for no values are ever mentioned at any time, and there is a tendency to use different standards of measure for the same commodity at different times. Esparto grass for instance, though it is usually recorded by weight, is sometimes instead listed by bales or bundles.

The statistics used here therefore, are subject to a fairly wide/

wide margin of error. Nevertheless this need not be too serious a disadvantage. All that is required is a reasonable indication of the comparable size and direction of trade movements for the purpose of drawing broad conclusions.

2. Shipping

The main outlines of the direction of trade between Glasgow and the continent of Africa during these years are easy to distinguish. Three main areas were involved; Egypt, West Africa and South Africa, the second only for a short period. The most consistent trade, both in respect of imports and exports was done with Egypt, as Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate. So far as can be determined this trade does not appear to have been, at any time during this period, in the hands of a single or small group of shipping lines. It appears to have been carried on in numerous miscellaneous vessels, domestic and foreign, generally of small tonnage, served by diverse shipping agents.

By far the most significant African trade within these years in terms of volume and value was that with South Africa, and this, with insignificant exceptions, was entirely an export trade. Like the Egyptian trade, it was plied in the seventies in small ships, presumably independent of major lines, on a relatively insignificant scale, less than 700 tons being employed yearly until 1876. From that date it began to increase somewhat, varying between 3,673 and 1,163 tons, and carried by independent shippers until 1881. There were, however, no regular shipments until in 1881 the firm of Cayzer Irvine & Co., established since 1878 in the India trade, were approached by "a number of Glasgow and Liverpool shippers", who brought to the notice of the Clan Line that so far as South/

South Africa was concerned there were no shipping facilities in Scotland or the north of England, and who promised support if a service was started from the Clyde and the Mersey, so as to avoid the cost of having their goods transported to southern ports. The Clan Line responded to this request, and the "Clan Lamont" inaugurated the service, arriving in Cape Town on 8th October, 1881. Thereafter sailings followed at approximately monthly intervals.⁽¹⁾

At that time, according to the same source, "Cape Town was the only port with pretensions to harbour works, and the vessels discharged at open roadsteads at other ports. This meant that the vessels needed to be specially equipped to handle all types of cargo under various conditions"

This trade developed rapidly, and by 1889 41,458 tons of the Company's fleet were engaged in it, the ships employed being mostly the "Clan Lamont", "Clan Alpine", "Clan Fraser", "Clan Gordon", "Clan Stuart", of around 1300 to 1500 tons. Cayzer Irvine acted as their own agents in Glasgow. From 1889 until the end of the century the level remained consistently high, reaching a maximum of 82,281 tons in 1899, and standing at 61,531 tons in 1900. From the record of the Bill of Entry, it would appear that Cayzer Irvine must have quickly driven all their competitors who pioneered this trade from the run, for the tonnage of the independents, at 3111 tons in 1881, dropped to 1126 tons in 1882, 465 tons in 1883, and disappeared thereafter to all intents and purposes. It is not impossible that this disappearance may have been connected with the promise of the shippers to support the Clan Line.

Taken over the three decades the course of development in the export/

(1) Private communication from Clan Line Steamers Ltd.

TABLE 1

EXPORTS

Tonnages* of ships sailing from Glasgow to African Ports 1870 - 1900

	South Africa	Egypt	Algeria	West Africa	Other Ports	Total	Total Tonnage cleared from Glasgow to foreign ports	Tonnage to Africa as % of total
1870	621	8372	133	12034	667	20629	576234	3.70
1871	267	12963	199	13533	1343	28035	630202	4.54
1872	249	6512	1527	14562	247	23097	680261	3.33
1873		1558	2300	14119	844	18821	677264	3.33
1874	247	2856	497	7115	749	11464	784823	1.29
1875	665	5503	1470	-	-	7638	807393	1.00
1876	3132	6617	600	279	-	10628	828537	1.33
1877	3670	4441	834	128	-	9073	846725	1.06
1878	1163	2752	278	-	-	4193	909615	.44
1879	1429	1391	741	-	-	3561	915615	.43
1880	2740	266	315	-	-	3321	1086794	.27
1881	11928	7479	400	-	-	19807	1176372	1.72
1882	30000	6726	1398	-	-	38124	1306839	2.94
1883	19388	6284	1713	443	-	27831	1443645	1.96
1884	18394	10114	799	-	107	29805	1414039	2.12
1885	17550	*8306	136	-	-	25992	1385574	1.88
1886	15173	6556	2119	-	1095	24943	1369622	1.81
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1464326	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1554571	n.a.
1889	41458	*14270	2879	-	-	58607	1621307	3.70
1890	38413	*25141	2097	940	956	67547	1697662	4.00
1891	46119	*14640	5570	-	-	66329	1661672	4.00
1892	39931	*30575	3736	-	-	74242	1731064	4.34
1893	45501	*29207	3918	-	-	78628	1709302	4.76
1894	44283	*20198	-	-	-	64481	1672089	3.84
1895	54363	36499	6641	402	1069	98974	1911739	5.00
1896	55217	40915	3664	-	560	100356	1902330	5.26
1897	73601	25945	11346	-	-	110792	2002662	5.55
1898	69648	72039	20816	1291	841	164634	2226738	7.69
1899	82218	46013	2646	-	1304	132181	+2152234	6.66
1900	61531	52833	1195	-	-	115559	+2229574	5.26

African tonnages computed from Clyde Bill of Entry, overall tonnages from Statistical Abstract. It may be noted in this connexion that 'tons' are highly ambiguous units of measurement. It can refer to at least four different systems of measurement, - Gross Registered Tonnage, i.e. the total space available in the ship; Net Registered Tonnage, i.e. total space less a deduction for that proportion which is not income-yielding; deadweight tonnage and freight tonnage. The 'Bill of Entry'/'

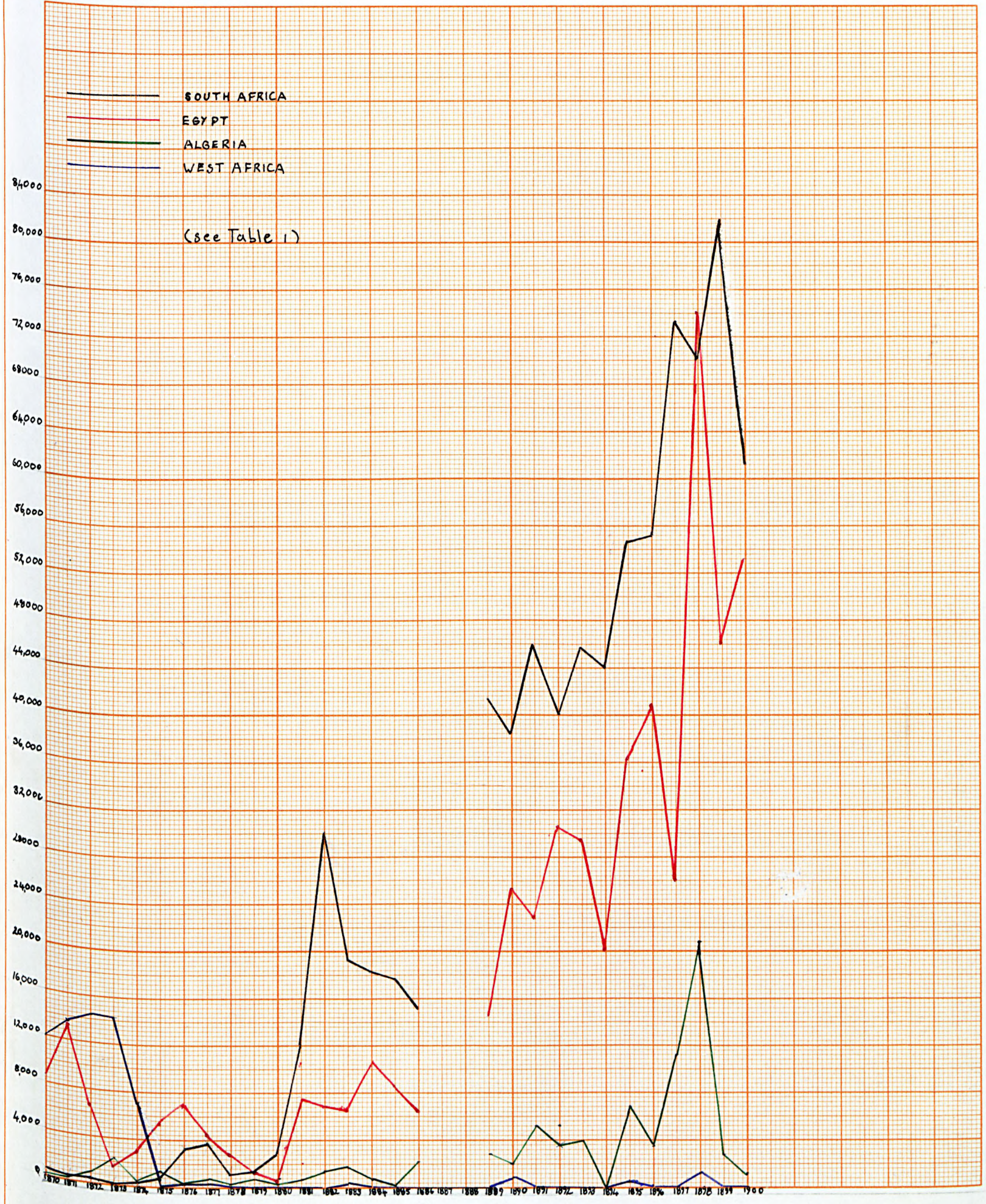
Footnote to TABLE 1 continued:

The 'Bill of Entry' does not state which measure of tonnage is being used but a deduction is possible. The steamer 'Roquelle' is quoted in the Bill as being 765 tons. It is known from other sources that this ship was around 1300 Gross Registered Tons. Since the Net Registered Tonnage is less in numerical units than the gross tonnage, while the other two kinds give a higher numerical value, it follows that the entries in the 'Bill' refer to Net Registered Tons.(f) Likewise, as affirmed by the Board of Trade, the figures in the Statistical Abstract are also given in Net Registered tons.

(f) See Frederic C. Lane, 'Tonnages Mediaeval and Modern', Economic History Review, 2nd Series, Vol. XVII No. 2, 1964.

+ Not including troop transport to South Africa. 19011 tons in 1899, 10,587 tons in 1900. Not recorded in 'Bill of Entry'.

Tons TONNAGES SAILING FROM GLASGOW TO AFRICA 1870 -1900 FIG 1.



export trade both to South Africa and Egypt, as measured by shipping tonnage are not too dissimilar. In both cases, as Table 1 makes clear, there is a marked rise between 1880 and the middle of the decade, which declines somewhat by 1886. From 1889, within a generally rising trend, the figures for South Africa, which is defined here as Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay, seem to show a recurring two-year cycle of rise and check, and for Egypt a two or three year cycle. The phases of the cycle do not necessarily coincide for the two areas, and in 1898 they move in markedly opposite directions.

It may also be noted from Table 1 that the proportion of the African trade in the total export shipping of the city, after declining greatly in the seventies, becomes by the late nineties a fairly substantial percentage.

The decline in the seventies was due to the cessation of the trade between Glasgow and West Africa, defined here as the coast between Dakar and Calabar. The import trade stopped in 1873, and the export in 1875. This trade was closely associated with the Glasgow merchant houses operating in the palm-oil trade of the Niger Delta and other points of the coast; Miller Bros., Taylor Laughland, Couper Johnstone. The commodity imported into Glasgow was almost exclusively palm oil. The ships engaged in this trade were almost wholly those of the British and African Steam Navigation Co. This company was registered in Glasgow, and its ships were mostly built in the Fairfield shipyard:-

<u>B. & A.S.N.C.</u>	1868	"Bonny"	1869	"Roquelle"
	1869	"Congo"	1870	"Loanda"
	1870	"Liberia"	1870	"Volta"
	1874	"Benguela"	1874	"Cameroon"
	1875	"Gambia"	1876	"Corsico"

<u>B. & A.S.N.C.</u>	1878	"Gaboon"	1880	"Coanza"
	1880	"Malemba"	1882	"Sherbro"
	1883	"Calabar"		
<u>Taylor Laughland</u>	1869	"African" ⁽¹⁾		

Taylor Laughland were the Glasgow agents for the British & African line. Occasionally also cargoes were carried in ships belonging to the oil firms themselves, e.g. the Miller Brothers' steamer "Ja Ja". By 1875 neither an import nor an export trade continued with West Africa, the British & African Co. having transferred all its operations to Liverpool in 1874. Imports from West Africa ceased even earlier, in 1873. Thereafter trade between Glasgow and West Africa was negligible. The only other part of the continent with which Glasgow maintained a regular export trade was Algeria, which, as can be seen from the table was not comparable with that to South Africa or Egypt.

Although throughout the seventies the import trade from Egypt remained the highest from any part of the African continent, there was a distinct falling off during the remainder of the decade, from the level reached in 1872, and though recovery took place from the mid-eighties, the level reached was not significantly higher than that attained in 1871-2, while a further decline occurred toward the end of the nineties. The import trade from Algeria was secondary to that from Egypt until 1882, when it attained a roughly similar level, and after 1885, except in occasional years, it greatly exceeded that from Egypt, mainly due to increasing quantities of iron ore, the main import from Algeria to Glasgow. From 1885 imports from Morocco and Tunisia also became important. The most obvious fact concerning the African import trade is therefore that it was, with trivial exceptions, entirely Mediterranean following the extinction of the West African trade.

It/

(1) "Fairfield 1860-1960" Privately published by Barbour Maclaren, Glasgow, 1960.

It is clear that during the years in question export trade between Glasgow and Africa was on a relatively substantial scale, apart from the years 1874-80, during which trade with West Africa had ceased, and that with South Africa had not yet developed. It is obvious too that after the mid-seventies this trade was concentrated in areas of the continent subject to a relatively high degree of European penetration, i.e. South Africa, Egypt and Algeria, and it is worth noting that while Glasgow business houses and companies were mainly active in tropical Africa, trade was, after 1874, almost wholly with the North and South. On occasion the percentage of shipping involved was as high as 7.7% in the export trade in 1898, and in 1871-2 6½% in the import, but considering the vast and extensive trade carried round the world from Glasgow, and her many other activities, it could never be described as of central importance to the city's economy.

3. Content of the Trade

a) Exports

Among the commodities which are cited by the Bill of Entry as making up the export trade from Glasgow to African ports, certain items are recorded in a sufficiently consistent manner to enable their progress to be traced over the period with a measure of accuracy. These include first of all Spirits, overwhelmingly listed as British compound (Bc) or British pure (Bp), with small amounts of rum, gin, (never apparently whisky) and other forms of spirits. The measurement of spirits is given in gallons, as is wine, that of beer in barrels.

Textiles form a second well-defined category of goods in the Bill of Entry, the heads under which these are noted being: dyed (or coloured) cotton, printed cotton and plain (bleached or unbleached) cotton, wool, linen and jute. These are measured in yards. Textile manufactures;/

manufactures are recorded separately from the unmanufactured article, and though a measurement in yards is sometimes given for these, more frequently only the value is cited, or else the number of separate items in the consignment is shown against the value, e.g. "2 doz. cotn. dresses, &c.". Only values are used therefore in the tables relating to these, and after 1894 this category cannot be used.

The third main category consists of iron and steel, and again the manufactured and unmanufactured articles have been tabled separately. In this case fortunately, weights (in tons) are noted in the Bill as well as values, thus enabling the table to be continued beyond 1894. Coal exports have also, for convenience, been placed in this grouping.

The fourth category employed in the tables includes machinery, locomotives, and railway equipment of various sorts. These are almost invariably measured by values in the Bill, the few cases which are exceptions have been ignored, and do not seriously distort the general picture.

There remains a large variety of enumerated and unenumerated miscellaneous items which do not fit under any of the above categories. For purposes of tabulation these have been grouped under two headings: (i) commodities destined for use in industry and building, e.g. tar, linseed oil, cement, bricks, sulphur, acid, and (ii) commodities destined for domestic consumption, e.g. foodstuffs, household furniture, stationery. Naturally it must be borne in mind that there is a certain degree of ambiguity attaching to many items thus classified, and these categories, of which total lack of consistency in enumeration makes value the only possible measure, are not wholly satisfactory. Similarly, the inconsistency or complete absence of enumeration makes it impossible to continue the table for these items beyond 1894, when a consistent enumeration is lacking, and values are given only in random/

random instances.

In the export of every commodity other than coal, the South African trade, once established, was easily dominant. Within this trade the general tendency was for the quantity of most commodities to increase steadily with time. In the case of spirits, however, the most striking feature was the volume exported to West Africa while this trade was in operation. Till 1873 this amounted to around and over 350,000 gals., a level equalled by the South African trade only occasionally, even in the late nineties.

With regard to the South African market, there was a steady, though not consistent rise in the export of spirits to 1892, thereafter some decline to 1894, a swift rise between 1894 and 1896, a fall over 1897 and 1898, and a further rise in 1899 and 1900. The best years for this trade were between 1894 and 1897, though the drop in 1898 still left spirit exports at a higher level than in any year before 1894. It is to be noted, however, that volumes and prices did not necessarily move in the same degree. The volume of spirits exported to South Africa in 1894, 287,000 gals. at a value of £102,000 would give an average price per gallon of c.7/-, while the 166,000 gals. exported at a value of £77,000 in 1893 gives an average value per gallon of c.10/-. The rapid rise in volume of exports in 1894 may therefore be associated with an increased capacity to buy in South Africa due to the lower price, and thus be related to price movements at home rather than any specific change in Africa itself.

The export of spirits to Egypt begins to show a steady rise from the mid-eighties, which continues to 1900 without major fluctuations, but with minor dips in 1894 and 1897-8.

Exports of beer to South Africa had by 1881 reached the relatively high level of 7,000 barrels, a figure only exceeded once late in the century./

TABLE 2

EXPORTS OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (VOLUMES)

	<u>South Africa</u>			<u>Egypt</u>			<u>West Africa</u>		
	Spirits (gals)	Wine (gals)	Beer (brls)	Spirits (gals)	Wine (gals)	Beer (brls)	Spirits (Gals)	Wine (gals)	Beer (brls)
1870	-	-	63	859		65	347828	366	55
1871	-	-	83	1137	75	336	378145	608	33
1872	-	-	90	37	40	-	359072	2650	102
1873	-	-		-	-	-	287728	776	50
1874	-	109	187	-	-	-	65165	53	17
1875	-	-	151	-	-	71	-	-	-
1876	342	200	529	-	-	26	25600	-	-
1877	419	605	735	-	-		6425	6	-
1878	2631	121	501	-	-	1	-	4	-
1879	1052	713	1460	-	-		-	-	-
1880	4870	1789	624	-	-		-	-	-
1881	8203	432	7000	-	-	-	-	-	-
1882	24060	448	5415	54	-		-	-	-
1883	31671	1110	6081	-	-	350	29	-	6
1884	40083	993	2481	1757	-	1413	-	-	-
1885	55256	617	7058	1005	-	155	-	-	-
1886	53699	226	1731	4227	90	1023	-	-	-
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	159781	871	6610	1888	4	228	-	-	-
1890	143700	1128	12058	3909	4	526	6973	-	-
1891	149623	799	5539	6068	23	102	-	-	-
1892	182604	390	5750	13524	20	292	-	-	-
1893	165532	99	1965	13015	12	292	-	-	-
1894	287404	2022	2346	9212	-	4	-	-	-
1895	303259	2239	3900	16792	-	175	-	-	-
1896	406129	1204	4465	18658	6	51	-	-	-
1897	363648	2314	6638	16739	-	312	-	-	-
1898	269995	338	5777	16671	2	1284	-	-	-
1899	290780	262	3574	26519	4	1818	-	-	-
1900	324173	423	3557	27943	12	2016	-	-	-

TABLE 3

EXPORTS OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (VALUES)

	<u>South Africa</u>			<u>Egypt</u>			<u>West Africa</u>		
	Spirits £s	Wine £s	Beer £s	Spirits £s	Wine £s	Beer £s	Spirits £s	Wine £s	Beer £s
1870	-	-	213	-	-	-	-	-	350
1871	-	-	311	-	-	-	-	-	192
1872	-	-	490	-	-	-	-	-	510
1873	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	487
1874	-	-	926	-	-	-	-	-	143
1875	-	-	784	-	-	463	-	-	-
1876	120	284	2103	-	-	171	-	-	-
1877	126	507	3185	-	-	-	606	3	-
1878	-	-	2073	-	-	-	-	-	-
1879	389	294	5146	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	1909	224	5907	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	3916	181	19628	-	-	-	-	-	-
1882	8710	519	18207	23	-	-	-	-	-
1883	10019	505	19878	-	-	1005	12	-	38
1884	17262	411	8640	241	-	1916	-	-	-
1885	23476	260	20601	376	-	684	-	-	-
1886	26062	108	5266	1068	27	2065	-	-	-
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	75398	574	20447	657	1	741	-	-	-
1890	69658	444	35045	1185	2	1426	749	-	-
1891	67502	391	17696	1311	26	244	-	-	-
1892	79542	153	17716	3923	13	724	-	-	-
1893	76737	77	6572	3886	6	858	-	-	-
1894	101820	866	8162	2553	-	424	-	-	-

Gallons
100,000

EXPORTS OF SPIRITS (volumes) 1870-1900

FIG 2.



(see Table 2)

century. Following this there was a fall to 1731 barrels in 1886, with a rapid rise to 12,058 barrels in 1890, the highest figure reached in the period. Within three years exports declined to 1,965 barrels in 1893, and following this climbed steadily to 6,638 barrels in 1897, falling back in 1899 and 1900 to 3,574 and 3,557 barrels, somewhat above the level for 1894. Exports of beer to South Africa, therefore, did not follow the general trend of most commodities and reach its highest levels in the nineties, the best years being instead those between 1881 and 1890.

Exports of beer to Egypt had reached a figure of 1,023 barrels in 1886 (after a quick rise and fall early in the seventies). From that, there was a fall to almost nothing in 1894, after some degree of recovery in 1890 and 1892-3. This was followed, except for a minor setback in 1896, by a very rapid rise beyond all previous levels to 2,016 barrels in 1900. Thus the exports of alcohol to Egypt, fairly substantial in 1870 and 1871 and subsequently disappearing, begin again in 1884, after the British occupation, and may be connected with the provisioning of the troops.

Changes in the level of textile exports to South Africa vary with the type of textile in question. Dyed or coloured cottons provided the largest bulk of cotton cloth exports followed by printed cottons, with plain cottons the smallest. All classes of cottons show the same basic movements which differ from those of other textiles. The exports of dyed and printed cotton rose towards 1889, though those of plain cotton fell fairly substantially between 1881 and 1889. From 1889 all three classes fell to a low point in 1891, and rose again towards 1893, when there is another drop in 1894, though less marked than that of 1891. A further rise then occurred, to 1896 and 1897 in the case of dyed and printed cottons (791,259 yards and 622,672 yards respectively)/

TABLE 4

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO SOUTH AFRICA 1870-1900 (Yards)

	Dyed cotton	Printed cotton	Plain cotton	Linen	Wool	Jute
1870	-	-	-	-	-	-
1871	-	- v	-	-	-	-
1872	-	-	-	-	-	-
1873	-	-	-	-	-	-
1874	-	-	1200	-	-	-
1875	-	-	-	-	-	2160
1876	-	-	-	-	-	-
1877	-	-	-	5851	-	-
1878	-	-	-	700	-	-
1879	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	9048	15678	22176	4561	16070	-
1881	186820	204091	455215	70456	15748	9005
1882	667787	170366	654523	83439	60350	95092
1883	162008	136260	211195	60363	48193	40606
1884	91885	73333	110397	11591	75728	6205
1885	417758	341282	410599	83874	77571	14856
1886	345097	301809	254018	43542	42863	24790
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	479588	268434	170904	80394	59270	43460
1890	396011	170971	128608	46933	73386	82752
1891	183822	178529	117412	53347	75611	41075
1892	660585	330599	306383	28116	135667	27764
1893	978546	371108	349149	44403	176751	47467
1894	504498	366368	241213	32473	134600	62200
1895	621550	424896	298538	37974	124332	44052
1896	791259	505717	355556	66120	202364	98717
1897	714422	622672	382442	106912	209373	71551
1898	683937	546543	336420	56437	208178	32596
1899	677781	528691	430457	128262	193459	26686
1900	284457	282688	211948	191148	84782	59746

TABLE 5

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO SOUTH AFRICA, 1870-1894 (Values in £s)

	Dyed cotn.	Pntd. cotn.	Plain cotn.	Linen	Wool	Jute	Cotn. mnfr.	Linen mnfr.	Wool Mnfr.	Jute mnfr.
1870	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	240
1871	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	-	236
1872	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1873	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1874	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1875	-	-	-	-	-	82	-	-	45	302
1876	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	50
1877	-	-	-	261	-	-	-	-	-	50
1878	-	-	-	79	-	-	-	-	50	-
1879	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	308	244	374	151	805	-	112	12	1303	10
1881	4933	4354	5471	2396	1550	233	1401	331	13066	341
1882	14975	1257	10339	3040	4051	3244	6219	323	7376	362
1883	4106	2091	3220	2592	2572	1384	2341	395	3924	446
1884	10537	6940	8225	1193	6886	1258	7354	346	3034	838
1885	11840	6035	6336	2570	5984	634	4947	209	1712	119
1886	7478	5265	3834	1189	3476	908	3935	990	3235	337
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	11531	3897	2867	2130	3639	978	5918	1661	4247	1705
1890	7837	2563	1805	1801	4225	2449	5830	3883	2363	1409
1891	3893	2592	1568	1684	4569	744	4988	3488	2505	544
1892	13335	4872	4426	867	7267	1029	6354	4345	5722	306
1893	17010	5352	5038	1669	10888	804	12070	6068	7445	629
1894	8787	6777	3104	1108	6663	1295	9376	3805	7568	-

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO SOUTH AFRICA (yards) 1880-1900 FIG 3.



yards respectively), to 1899 in that of plain cottons (430,457 yards) with a marked fall in 1900 for all three classes to a figure nearly the same for all, and corresponding to that at the beginning of the decade, when the figure was also close for all three. As well as being exported in greater quantities than printed or plain, coloured cottons were subject to much greater fluctuations, though the amount shipped in any given^{year} was never less than that of any of the others. (1)

The trends for the exports of other textiles to South Africa are quite different. The figures for wool show a relatively rapid rise until 1893, with a further rise to 1897 after a fairly drastic fall in 1894 and 1895. Following 1897, the figures indicate an accelerating decline to a level in 1900 not much above that for 1890.

The exports of linen cloth to South Africa show high points reached in 1881 and 1889 (70,456 and 80,394 yards), and thereafter a fluctuating dip to 1895 and a rise by 1900 considerably above any previous level, broken by a sizeable fall in 1898. The movement in jute textiles was basically similar to that of linen except that the high point for jute at the beginning of the final decade was reached a year later than that for linen, - 1890 rather than 1889. The 1890 figure was approximately equalled again in 1896, while the corresponding phenomenon for linen occurred in 1897. A fall in the figures for jute, longer and more marked than that of linen occurred between 1896 and 1899/

(1) J. & P. Coats, Ltd., Thread Manufacturers, Paisley, state that in the nineties they made sales to South Africa, Algeria and Egypt on a "direct customer" basis as follows:

	<u>South Africa</u>	<u>Algeria</u>	<u>Egypt</u>
July/June 1896-97	£24,011	£3,552	£18,007
1897-98	28,004	3,826	22,218
1898-99	28,276	4,604	23,774
1899-1900	24,596	5,150	27,099
1900-1901	40,471	5,595	29,347

- private communication.

In this instance there is an upward trend with scarcely any break.

TABLE 6

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO EGYPT, 1870-1894 (Values in £s)

	Dyed cotn.	Pntd. cotn.	Plain cotn.	Linen	Wool	Jute	Cotn. mnfr.	Linen mnfr.	Wool mnfr.	Jute mnfr.
1870	10071	12536	3078	111	-	-	12690	16	-	654
1871	65119	7174	3728	380	-	-	19748	1244	129	5787
1872	27632	5663	8778	-	-	-	1085	-	-	3874
1873	57	659	225	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1874	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1877	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1878	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1879	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1882	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1883	-	-	-	-	-	114	-	-	-	773
1884	-	-	-	-	-	65	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	-	-	-	-	-	1039	-	-	-	-
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	-	-	-	17	-	-	1115	-	-	-
1890	-	-	105	-	-	-	190	39	-	66
1891	-	-	-	28	-	-	603	-	-	-
1892	240	2000	109	152	46	498	1307	-	-	1560
1893	640	1510	183	-	-	205	1940	-	53	262
1894	-	1786	-	-	-	-	755	-	-	-

TABLE 7

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO EGYPT (Yards) 1870-1900

	Dyed cotton	Printed cotton	Plain cotton	Linen	Wool	Jute
1870	522811	71650	-	-	-	-
1871	2934776	396710	403930	12060	-	-
1872	1199612	346990	423659	-	40	-
1874	4200	49200	17280	-	-	-
1875	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876	-	-	-	-	-	-
1877	-	-	-	-	-	-
1878	-	-	-	-	-	-
1879	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	-	-	-	-	-	-
1882	-	-	-	-	-	-
1883	-	-	-	-	-	11654
1884	-	-	-	-	-	1916
1885	-	-	-	-	-	-
1886	-	-	-	-	-	38560
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	-	-	-	519	-	-
1890	-	-	4200	-	-	-
1891	-	-	-	534	-	-
1892	2650	141596	8604	3126	122	54260
1893	63200	148500	4289	-	-	25673
1894	-	171600	-	-	-	-
1895	-	94900	-	1287	-	-
1896	5747	56200	-	1846	-	-
1897	-	170000	3451	1449	-	-
1898	-	-	-	6120	-	-
1899	3242	137402	-	4661	1965	434
1900	100230	189504	11862	5352	-	1061

and 1899, where a rise commenced again, though the figure for 1900 was less than that achieved in any of the better years of the previous decade.

So far as it is possible to ascertain the values of textile manufactures as distinct from cloth up to 1894, it can be seen that while the movement in exports of cotton manufactures exactly parallels that of cotton cloth, particularly dyed cottons, those of other textile manufactures tend to move, if anything, contrary-wise.

In the case of textile exports to Egypt, a marked change is to be observed between the early seventies and all later years. Until 1872 exports of cottons to Egypt were on a very high level, exceeding two million yards in 1872. This was easily the most valuable export from Glasgow to Egypt, considerably exceeding in value the exports of coal, which was later to become the chief commodity in this trade. In 1873 this export disappeared more or less completely, and never again reached a comparable level, despite an improvement towards the end of the period, after having remained negligible until a modest recovery took place in the nineties. Whether this phenomenon was due to internal developments in Egypt, or to the general overall economic situation of widespread depression, is impossible to say, though exports of British textiles in general were not affected in such a manner, and the seventies saw a steady expansion of cotton exports.⁽¹⁾ After 1873 Glasgow's textile exports to Egypt were highest in the years 1892-3, and thereafter there were consistent exports of printed cottons and linens with occasional consignments of other textiles. Table 8 also shows that there was a high level of exports of cottons to Algeria in the years 1871 and 72 which subsequently disappeared entirely, and Table 9/

(1) See S.B. Saul "Studies in British Overseas Trade" 1870-1914. Liverpool University Press, 1960, Chapters 2 and 5 for an analysis of the trade movements of various British commodities during the "Great Depression".

Table 9 the trend for West Africa.

Table 8 Exports of Textiles to Algeria, 1871 - 1873 (yards)

	<u>dyed cotton</u>	<u>printed cotton</u>	<u>plain cotton</u>	<u>linen</u>	<u>wool</u>	<u>jute</u>
1871	489,617	16,600	1,300	-	-	-
1872	481,800	92,650	343,009	9,456	-	-
1873	-	13,300	67,400	-	-	-

(values in £s)

	<u>dyed</u> <u>cotn.</u>	<u>pn</u> <u>ted.</u> <u>cotn.</u>	<u>plain</u> <u>cotn.</u>	<u>linen</u>	<u>wool</u>	<u>jute</u>	<u>cotn.</u> <u>mnfr.</u>	<u>linen</u> <u>mnfr.</u>	<u>wool</u> <u>mnfr.</u>	<u>jute</u> <u>mnfr.</u>
1871	10210	310	125	-	-	-	640	-	-	-
1872	15106	1766	5034	242	-	-	-	175	-	795
1873		233	991	-	-	-	1491	-	-	-

Exports of unmanufactured iron and steel to South Africa showed, after a decline from an early high point in 1882, a relatively consistent rise until 1897, with a moderate fall between 1895 and 1896. The level of 1897 was succeeded by a decline throughout the remaining years to 1900, by which time exports of unmanufactured iron and steel were again at the level of 1893.

So far as iron and steel manufactures were concerned, the highest levels of exports to South Africa were reached in 1889, and in the three years 1896, 1897 and 1898, with 1897 marking the peak. This was attained at the end of a steady climb from 1890, becoming rapid between 1894 and 1896, after a slight fall in 1892. Following 1897, a steady drop set in to 1900.

The figures for the export of iron and steel, both manufactured and unmanufactured to Egypt show that a relatively high level was reached in 1871 (1263 tons and 1311 tons respectively) conceivably associated with the opening of the Suez Canal, declining to nearly nothing/

TABLE 9

EXPORTS OF TEXTILES TO WEST AFRICA (Yards) 1870-95

	Dyed cotton	Printed cotton	Plain cotton	Linen	Wool	Jute
1870	162850	50600	-	-	-	-
1871	323006	97733	-	-	-	-
1872	576817	78550	3822	6290	2650	-
1873	852933	98269	6850	5916	-	-
1874	211050	32120	33000	-	-	-
1876	39240	-	-	-	-	-
1877	7550	-	-	-	-	103
1883	-	20300	26100	-	-	28000
1895	1820	-	-	-	240	-

(VALUES IN £s)

	Dyed cotn.	Pntd. cotn.	Plain cotn.	Linen	Wool	Jute	Cotn. mnfr.	Linen mnfr.	Wool mnfr.	Jute mnfr.
1870	3483	1070	-	-	-	-	4302	528	533	96
1871	4873	2707	-	-	-	-	11976	20	930	389
1872	12542	1607	609	-	-	-	7127	211	400	484
1873	20676	1925	172	156	-	-	825	137	2950	895
1874	5465	787	777	-	-	-	-	-	245	-
1876	731	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1877	118	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
1883	-	200	280	-	-	37	-	-	-	-

nothing in 1872, the 1871 figures not being exceeded till 1897 for the manufactured product (except for an isolated year of uniquely high export in 1876), and 1899 for the unmanufactured. For Egypt, in both types of commodity there was a steady rise to 1897, with relatively large fluctuations. In the case of manufactured iron and steel the 1891 level showed a decline from that of 1889, and the 1889 level was reached again in 1894, following a rise in 1892, with a drop in the following year. The very steep upward movement in 1899 occurred after a fall between 1897 and 1898, to the approximate level of 1889, 1893, 1895 and 1896.

In the case of the unmanufactured product shipped to Egypt, 1892 provides the highest figure between 1881 and 1899. Subsequent to 1891 a decline, though not a substantial one, was manifested to 1896, with a recovery by 1898 to the level of 1895. The exceptionally high figure for 1899 in both categories was, in both cases, followed by a very similar fall in 1900 to figures still well above all previous levels.

The most important of all exports to Egypt was that of coal, the only commodity in which the Egyptian export regularly surpassed those to South Africa. The one year after 1881 in which tonnage of ships sailing to Egypt is greater than those sailing to South Africa is 1898, a year of uncommonly high exports of coal to all the parts of Africa concerned. The importance of coal exports to Egypt in this context can be judged from the fact that the curve for the weight of coal closely corresponds with that for shipping tonnage at almost every point, apart from a couple of minor anomalies in 1892-93 and 1895-96. It is possible that these exports may have been disconnected with bunkering operations at the north end of the Red Sea after the opening of the Suez Canal. The general/

TABLE 10

EXPORTS OF IRON, STEEL & COAL (quantities) 1870-1900
(Tons)

	<u>South Africa</u>			<u>Egypt</u>			<u>Algeria</u>
	Iron & Steel	Iron & Steel Mnfrs.	Coal	Iron & Steel	Iron & Steel Mnfrs.	Coal	Coal
1870	60	-	61	470	-	8757	
1871	31	-	-	1311	1263	6761	876
1872	10	19	40	15	4	4854	350
1873	-	-	-	-	66	1699	2593
1874	154	32	40	-	846	5742	-
1875	168	80	100	-	-	6575	2399
1876	1442	778	1816	184	7287	-	-
1877	590	253	2712	-	-	7342	1309
1878	504	162	151	-	425	4375	531
1879	81	534	319	86	-	557	1408
1880	351	1466	449	-	-	204	820
1881	1502	1169	2589	-	-	10023	-
1882	2555	1559	881	-	-	10523	3377
1883	649	1602	461	-	-	8829	2770
1884	318	846	-	260	31	15117	678
1885	433	822	-	-	14	8742	321
1886	279	1570	-	260	388	10040	3647
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	1406	9036	75	291	675	22398	5178
1890	1713	4717	1520	631	393	46626	2287
1891	1176	6012	10022	620	200	21500	9493
1892	1885	5189	1099	1189	752	54413	6193
1893	2914	5804	764	870	557	60677	4674
1894	3296	6190	-	974	281	34349	-
1895	7138	8278	800	978	508	63441	8451
1896	5192	11216	1921	701	560	55330	4815
1897	7515	11929	6490	818	1351	40513	7592
1898	5750	11156	15293	1000	507	129179	38930
1899	5667	8715	11415	4106	4401	70281	5626
1900	2750	7930	14277	2841	3232	88242	1584

TABLE 11

EXPORTS OF IRON, STEEL & COAL (Values in £s) 1870-1894

	<u>South Africa</u>			<u>Egypt</u>			<u>Algeria</u>
	Iron & Steel	Iron & Steel Mnfrs.	Coal	Iron & Steel	Iron & Steel Mnfrs	Coal	Coal
1870	1140	-	35	1862	1000	3510	-
1871	525	-	-	5929	9194	4183	380
1872	60	220	29	98	60	3658	370
1873	-	-	-	-	750	1643	2284
1874	1103	554	38	-	650	3488	-
1875	2075	1191	52	-	-	4414	1274
1876	9672	4639	730	2399	3250	-	-
1877	6846	3032	1374	-	-	3003	642
1878	5125	3014	84	-	8277	1728	213
1879	986	3664	142	1340	-	181	482
1880	3926	13130	210	-	-	150	320
1881	15659	11913	1087	-	-	4176	-
1882	27717	18070	472	-	-	3587	1230
1883	5519	11136	298	-	-	3260	1039
1884	3023	9104	-	639	215	3962	210
1885	4639	7668	-	-	-	2765	136
1886	2815	11656	-	478	2697	3390	1376
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	12280	60725	63	1138	4672	8533	2092
1890	14805	60547	1112	2255	2957	24077	1281
1891	9136	62274	4919	2014	2084	10584	4643
1892	14016	56689	616	4487	7202	25015	2692
1893	17900	68875	321	2684	7177	21248	264
1894	22029	69172	-	2965	2638	15171	-

EXPORTS OF IRON & STEEL (tons) 1870-1900

FIG 4

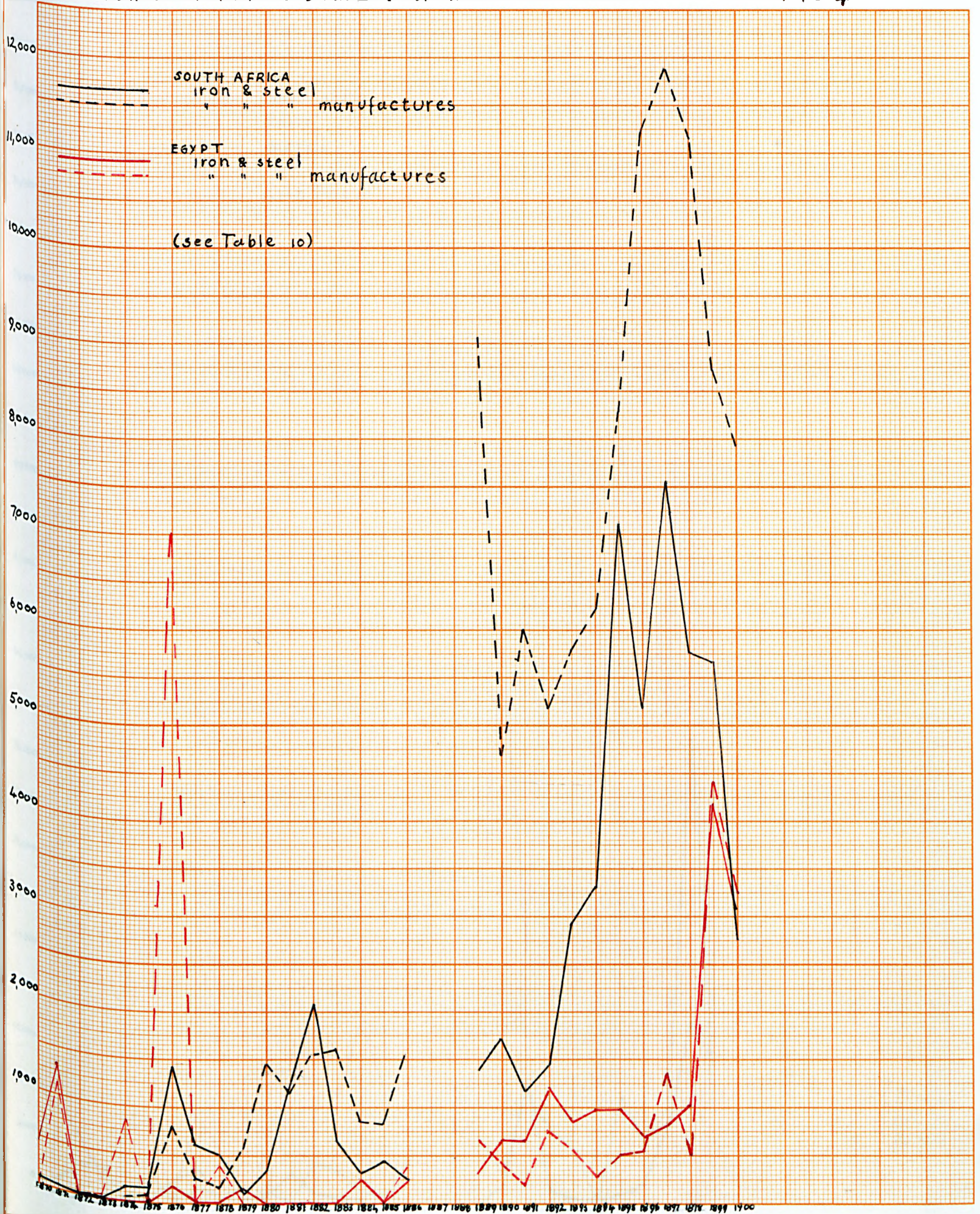




FIG. 5.

EXPORTS OF COAL (tons) 1870 - 1900

(see Table 10)

SOUTH AFRICA
 EGYPT
 ALGERIA

general trend was for a quite sharply fluctuating rise from 1889 to 1898, with high points within this trend at 1892-93 and 1895, and lows in 1891, 94 and 97. Following the very substantial rise already noted in 1898 there was a relatively large drop in 1899 to 70,281 tons, which was still a higher level than for any year other than 1898, and the decade ends with a further upward trend to 88,242 tons.

The only exports to Algeria of more than minor significance were also of coal, and as in the case of Egypt the graph for shipping tonnages very closely follows that for coal exports, with one anomaly in 1892-3. In the case of Algeria there was an even more dramatic rise in quantity between 1897 and 1898, with a correspondingly drastic fall in 1899 to below the 1897 level, a fall which continued even further in 1900 bringing the level at that date below that of 1890, another low point. In broad outline the movements for Algeria were similar to those for Egypt, except that a high point for Algeria in 1895 coincided with a low for Egypt, while the fall for Algeria in 1894 is particularly marked, exports declining in fact to zero.

The exports of coal from Glasgow to South Africa, in which trade it played a relatively modest part, and in which the quantity was absolutely much less than that for Egypt, follow a very different trend to the Egyptian one, except during the years 1897-1900 when the movements were exactly comparable, and a low point in 1894 was reproduced in both cases. The figures for South Africa indicated a steep rise from a negligible figure in 1889⁽¹⁾ to a high point of 10,022 tons in 1891, most of the rise occurring in the latter year. From this point there was a rapid fall to nothing/

(1) Except for 1882 - an exceptional year.

nothing in 1894 and a steep rise over the next four years to 15,293 tons in 1898, a figure well above the 1891 level. A fall in 1899 still left the total number of tons above that of 1891, and a further rise took place in 1900. One may speculate as to whether any connexion existed between the rise in coal exports to Algeria and South Africa in 1891, and the fall in exports to Egypt during that year.

A steady rise in the exports of machinery to South Africa till 1895 was broken only by a decline in 1893. 1895 is, however, the highest level achieved, and was followed by a steady fall to the 1890 level in 1898, with a modest rise again in the final two years of the century.

As for mining machinery, exports of this commodity continued from the late eighties, but at a very low level until a rapid expansion in two years from £14,362 in 1895, to £44,402 in 1897, coinciding presumably with the high level of gold-mining operations on the Rand. A steep drop occurred in 1898 to £7,121, but still left these exports at a higher level than in any year before 1895. In the two final years of the decade there was again a recovery, perhaps rather surprisingly in view of the political situation which might have been expected to inhibit mining activities.

The figures for the exports of locomotives and, even more, railway equipment to South Africa show very rapid and marked fluctuations, which however do not seem to coincide to any degree. In regard to locomotives, high points were reached in 1889, 1893 and 1900, with smaller rises in 1898 and 1896, and a fall to zero in 1895. A period of two years appears to have been the usual extent for each phase of fall and rise, while the period between 1896 and 1900 showed a general rise with marked variations. However, fluctuations/

TABLE 12

EXPORTS OF MACHINERY & RAILWAY EQUIPMENT

1870 - 1900* (Values in £s)

	<u>South Africa</u>				<u>Egypt</u>			
	Locos.	Railway Equip't	Machin-ery	Mining Machinery	Locos.	Railway Equip't	Machin-ery	Mining Machinery
1870	-	-	4030	-	-	-	-	-
1871	-	-	-	-	-	222	2151	-
1872	-	-	1000	-	-	-	-	-
1873	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1874	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1875	-	-	3782	-	-	-	-	-
1876	-	-	230	-	-	-	-	-
1877	-	-	332	-	-	-	-	-
1878	-	-	330	-	-	-	-	-
1879	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
1880	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
1881	-	-	920	-	-	-	-	-
1882	-	27	47247	-	-	-	-	-
1883	-	-	19423	-	-	-	-	-
1884	-	-	962	-	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	393	-	-	-	-	-
1886	-	-	655	-	-	-	17426	-
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	52100	49254	4728	3693	-	-	4242	-
1890	27170	107063	8681	956	-	-	4711	-
1891	11461	47770	10017	20	-	-	1738	-
1892	33779	13160	19534	-	150	-	4049	-
1893	69000	12478	12811	1704	-	-	4791	-
1894	9220	13676	22234	-	1590	-	1285	-
1895	-	1900	38400	14362	155	-	667	-
1896	21555	54092	54020	15227	-	-	216	-
1897	19800	507	25427	44402	-	-	22847	-
1898	34400	-	10340	7172	24000	-	1274	-
1899	21972	5077	15527	25176	-	50	-	-
1900	71170	975	17168	27595	3000	1356	-	-

* Does not include figures for steamers and engines exported to Egypt in 1876 and between 1883 and 1885 - see text.

EXPORTS OF MACHINERY & RAILWAY

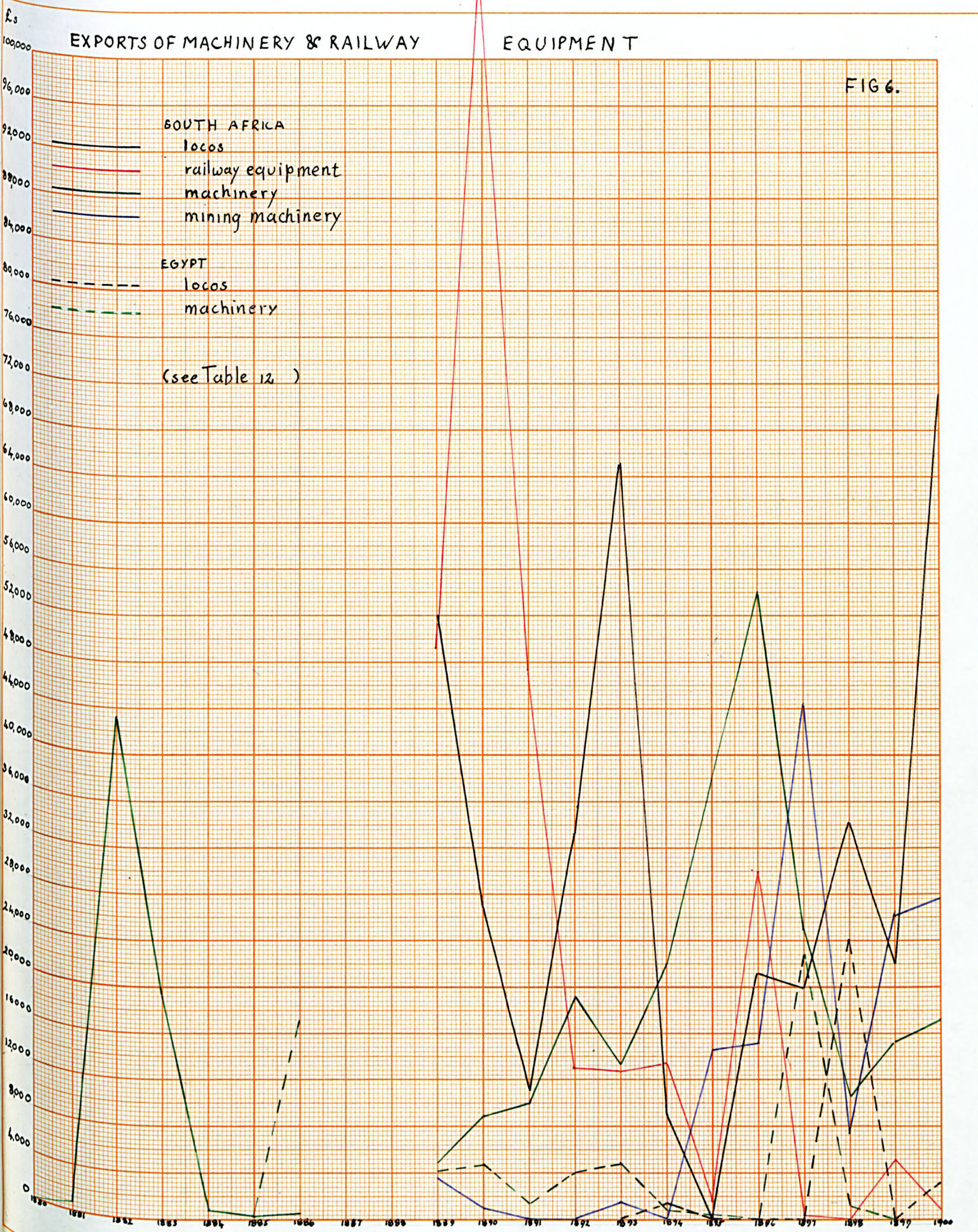
EQUIPMENT

FIG. 6.

SOUTH AFRICA
locos
railway equipment
machinery
mining machinery

EGYPT
locos
machinery

(see Table 12)



fluctuations of this sort would not be unexpected with locomotives, these being commodities with a very long life span. Thus exports are likely to be related to railway buildings or extensions. The high level of export to South Africa between 1889 and 1893 coincides, for example with the connexion of the Transvaal border to Delagoa Bay in 1889, to Natal in 1891, to Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth in 1892, the linking of the Cape with the Rand in 1892, and of Pretoria and Delagoa Bay in 1894.⁽¹⁾

The export of railway equipment to South Africa reached high points in 1890 and 1896. From 1890 there was a rapid fall to 1892, followed by a slower decline to 1895, after which a rapid rise and fall took place between 1895 and 1897, the high point of 1896 being substantially below that of 1890. From this point to the end of the period, exports of railway equipment continued at a steady low level.

Table 12 shows that for Egypt regular exports of machinery took place from Glasgow between 1886 and 1898, attaining substantial figures in two years, 1886 and 1897. In 1876 and from 1883 to 1885 the total values of Glasgow exports to Egypt were greatly expanded by the delivery of river steamers complete with their machinery:

<u>Table 13</u>	1876	Iron barge and engine	£7,000	
		Steamer hulls	£9,000	Total = £23,000
		" engines	£7,000	
	1883	5 steamers	£26,500	
		5 engines	£15,000	Total = £41,500
	1884	7 steamers	£16,690	
		7 engines	£19,000	Total = £35,690
	1885	14 steamers	£14,000	
		14 engines	£11,820	Total = £25,820

It would seem/

(1) See C.W. De Kiewiet, "A History of South Africa, Social and Economic" (O.U.P. 1957) p. 125.

It would seem reasonable to suppose that these exports in 1883 - 85 were connected with the beginning of the British administration in Egypt, and were intended for its use. Normal economic activity at that particular juncture would be unlikely to account for it. Exports of locomotives occurred in five of these years, between 1886 and 1898, but in only one, 1898, on a significant level. It would seem fairly reasonable to assume that this unusual burst would have been connected with the military operations in the Sudan, particularly in view of the fact that a number of the cargoes were sent to the Sudanese port of Suakin.

Some further details on the export of locomotives to Africa is provided by the order books of the Glasgow locomotive engineering companies for the period. The books of three of these are extant, Dubs Locomotive Co., Neilson and Co., and Sharp Stewart.⁽¹⁾ The number of locomotives exported to Africa by these three companies was as shown in Table 14.

It will be noted that the trend follows only very approximately that deduced from the "Bill of Entry", and the difference is particularly marked between 1879 and 1883, and in 1895, where no locomotives are recorded in the "Bill" as being exported to South Africa, but which in terms of the order books were years of high deliveries. It would therefore seem that these locomotives must have been exported through other channels. However, in 1882 and 1883 there were considerable exports of locomotive machinery from Glasgow by the Clan Line, reflected in the uncommonly high figures for machinery exports in these two years.

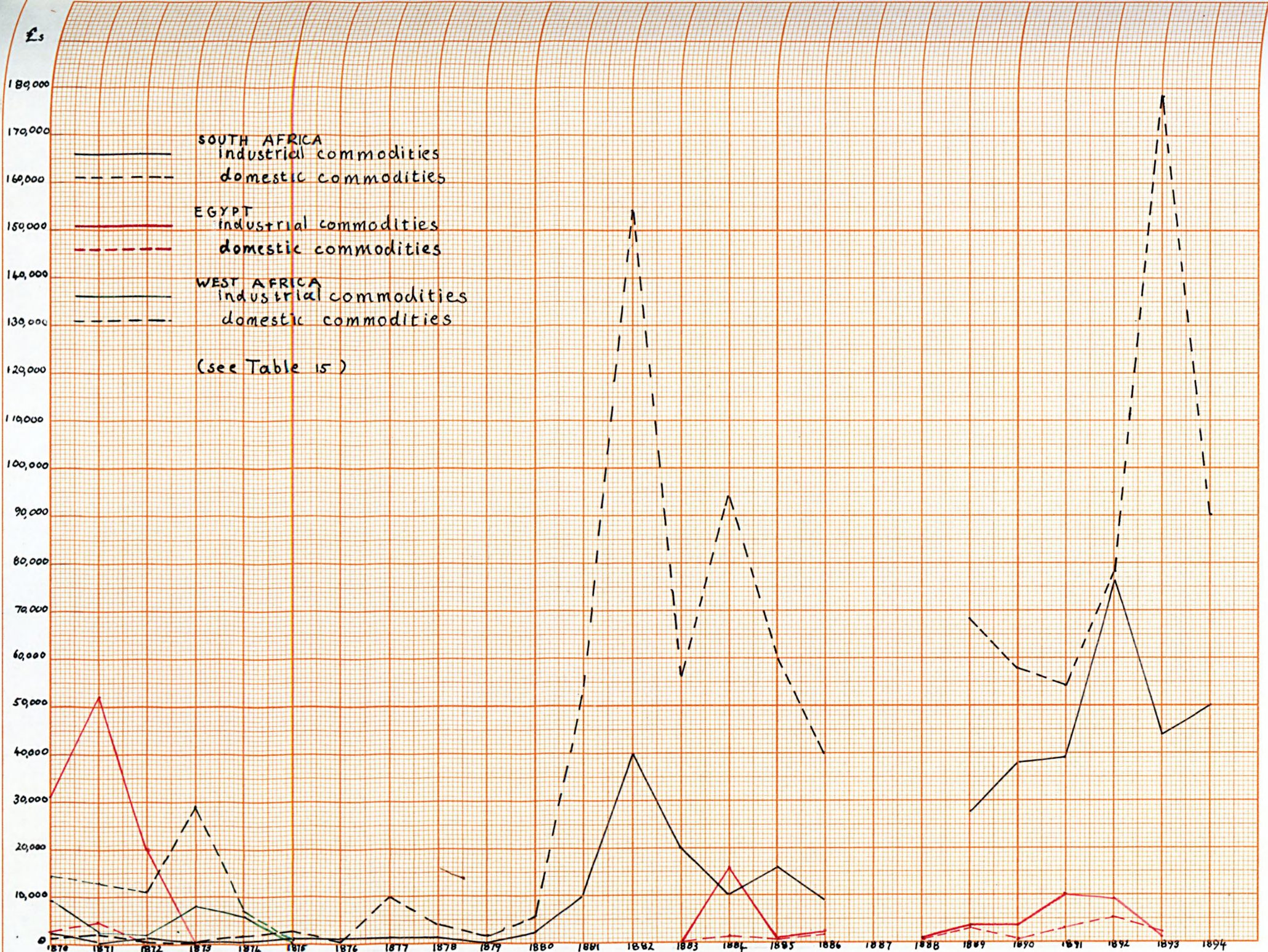
The exports of miscellaneous industrial and consumption goods to South Africa between the establishment of the Clan Line run and 1894 show that these in the latter category tended to predominate in value/

(1) Available in Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

TABLE 15

EXPORTS OF MISCELLANEOUS COMMODITIES - 1870-1894 (Values in £s)

	<u>South Africa</u>		<u>Egypt</u>		<u>West Africa</u>	
	Industrial Goods	Consumption Goods	Industrial Goods	Consumption Goods	Industrial Goods	Consumption Goods
1870	1986	830	30862	2913	8905	14343
1871	61	1530	60346	4872	2068	12886
1872	1672	856	29213	1541	1074	11657
1873	-	-	-	-	8502	24238
1874	571	318	-	-	6191	6365
1875	1014	2216	33	-	-	-
1876	1250	1257	-	48	1033	175
1877	1823	9722	-	-	133	184
1878	1455	3964	150	33	-	-
1879	343	1664	190	112	-	-
1880	2766	10898	-	-	-	-
1881	10685	53883	-	-	-	-
1882	39387	154397	-	-	-	-
1883	20732	56126	-	-	347	635
1884	10719	94147	16943	1404	-	-
1885	16030	60877	1237	228	-	-
1886	9774	39356	2489	1415	-	-
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	28555	67876	1283	663	-	-
1890	39075	58143	3187	3568	-	-
1891	39479	54559	3049	1245	-	-
1892	76998	78606	10126	3127	-	-
1893	42963	128440	9180	4693	-	-
1894	49885	95454	1524	2678	-	-



value, while movements tended to be similar in both cases. The exports show a marked increase in 1881 and 1882, which for the latter year is in conformity with the generally high level of South African trade. (See Table 15) The export of miscellaneous consumption goods in 1882 is in fact the highest level reached for the period. A steady general rise occurred to high points in 1892 and 1893, with the difference in value between the two classes growing less until 1892, due to a more rapid expansion in the export of miscellaneous industrial products. In 1893, however, while exports of these consumption goods reached a new peak, those of industrial products experienced a sharp decline, almost returning to the level of 1891, while another rise began in 1894, though in that year the exports of miscellaneous consumption goods declined appreciably. Projecting beyond 1894 it may be reasonably conjectured that since the exports of both metal products and machinery rose between 1893 and 1894, and the rise in these commodities continued to be fairly substantial in the subsequent three or four years, the same would apply to other industrial products.

The figures for these categories in the Egyptian trade show a not greatly marked predominance of industrial over consumption products, except in the early seventies where this predominance was overwhelming, and where the value of the former class reached levels never approached again during the nineteenth century.

In regard to total values exported up to 1894, it is noticeable that the value of exports to West Africa, despite the relatively small tonnage of shipping involved was comparatively very high. As observed above, no value is indicated for spirits exported, but basing a very rough estimate on the value of a comparable level of exports to South Africa in later years, and bearing in mind a general/

TABLE 16

TOTAL VALUES EXPORTED (£s) 1870 - 1894

	<u>South Africa</u>			<u>Egypt</u>		
	Glasgow exports to South Africa	British* exports to South Africa (to nearest £000)	Glasgow+ exports as % of British	Glasgow exports to Egypt	British exports to Egypt (to nearest £000)	Glasgow exports as percentage of British
1870	8752	1962000	0.4	79703	8829000	0.9
1871	2686	2315000	0.1	192417	7125000	2.5
1872	4327	3993000	0.1	81624	7308000	1.1
1873	-	-	-	3384	6322000	.05
1874	3679	4702000	.08	4138	3674000	0.1
1875	11546	5350000	0.2	4910	3036000	0.1
1876	20340	4684000	0.4	28868	2687000	1.0
1877	27273	4503000	0.6	3003	2327000	0.1
1878	16174	5459000	0.3	10197	2264000	0.4
1879	12728	6370000	0.2	1823	2208000	.08
1880	42379	7206000	0.6	150	3175000	.005
1881	159929	7692000	2.0	4176	3340000	0.1
1882	365947	8078000	4.5	3610	2620000	0.1
1883	166707	5000000	3.3	46652	3501000	1.3
1884	190879	4533000	4.0	60572	3083000	2.9
1885	174330	4183000	4.1	46170	3707000	1.2
1886	127345	12237000	1.04	42094	3005000	1.4
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	414710	9791000	4.2	33828	3020000	1.1
1890	457594	9804000	4.7	50630	3460000	1.5
1891	351780	8639000	4.0	22890	3876000	0.6
1892	439583	8595000	5.1	71671	3316000	2.1
1893	505220	9356000	5.4	59314	3434000	1.7
1894	337130	9038000	3.6	32969	4066000	0.8

* Source: Statistical Abstract for the U.K.

* The Glasgow percentage is exaggerated somewhat, as the Glasgow figures include exports to Delagoa Bay. The Figures in the "Abstract" do not.

TABLE 17

TOTAL VALUES EXPORTED (£s) 1870 - 1894

	<u>Algeria</u>		Glasgow exports as % of British	<u>West Africa</u>		
	Glasgow exports to Algeria	British exports to Algeria (to nearest £000)		Glasgow exports to West Africa	British* exports to W.Africa (to nearest £000)	Glasgow exports as % of British
1870				Less alcoh. exports 34563, est. tot. 105000	1163000	9.0
1871	12170	120000	10.	Less alc. exp. 42322 est. total 150000	1209000	12.4
1872	42562	92000	46.	Less alc. exp. 43857 est. total 140000	1330000	10.5
1873	7327	60000	11.6	Less alc. exp. 64671 est. total 140000	1370000	10.2
1874	42	48000	.09	Less alc. exp. 22140 est. total 45000	1177000	3.8
1875	1500	163000	0.9	-	-	-
1876	559	213000	0.2	4218	1236000	0.3
1877	642	276000	0.2	1063	1428000	.07
1878	231	174000	0.1	-		
1879	510	230000	0.2	-		
1880	320	300000	0.1			
1881	-	-	-	-		
1882	1375	324000	0.4	-		
1883	1161	351000	0.3	14341	1798000	0.8
1884	835	391000	0.2	-		
1885	136	363000	.04	-		
1886	1959	276000	0.6	-		
1887	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.
1888	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.
1889	2134	292000	0.7	-		
1890	1281	334000	0.3	986	1659000	.0006
1891	4828	392000	1.2	-		
1892	3213	337000	0.9	-		
1893	366	228000	0.1	-		
1894	-		-	-		

The "Abstract" figure does not include French and Spanish possessions. The Glasgow percentage is therefore slightly exaggerated.

general fall in price levels over the interval, the value of total exports to West Africa must have been in the region of £105,000 - £110,000 in 1870 at a conservative estimate, £150,000 in 1871, and £140,000 in 1872. In the South African trade this figure began to be exceeded substantially in absolute terms only between 1887 and 1889, and in terms of value per ton of shipping involved no other sector of the African trade came anywhere near it. Undoubtedly this must have been due to the large proportion of high-value commodities, spirits and cotton, in the cargoes. As may be seen from Table 17, cargoes shipped from Glasgow formed a very respectable percentage of British exports to West Africa until 1873. After a drastic fall in 1874 only a few intermittent cargoes were carried, of little substance save in the year 1883, which were made up mostly of cloth and unmanufactured iron. This shipment of such iron - 413 tons at £12,771 - was in fact the biggest export of metal to West Africa. Some iron and coal was shipped between 1870 and 1874, but not to any significant extent.

Total values for South Africa show a steady upward trend with the increasing volume of exports, but fall in 1894 below the value for any of the previous 5 years. The same dip is mirrored in the case of Egypt where it is correlated with a marked decline in coal exports during that year, as is a similar fall in overall value in both cases in 1891. As regards South Africa, however, these quite marked falls in total value of exports are matched by only a slight decline in shipping tonnages in 1894, and an actual move upwards in 1891. Presumably this is related to the fact that exports to South Africa were not so exclusively based on a single commodity. Once the South African trade became well established by the later 1880's, the value of exports to both South Africa and Egypt moved in step, but in prior years there was no correspondence - it can be seen that while/

while between 1878 and 1881 the value of the South African trade expanded nearly ten times, that of the Egyptian shrank by more than half, while from 1881 to 1886 though the South African trade fell by around a fifth, the Egyptian increased by nearly ten times. The most striking point about the value of the Egyptian trade however is that in the period to 1894 the value of exports never again reached the level of 1870 - 72, £79,703, £192,417, £81,642, the next best figure being £71,671 in 1892. The same point is even more marked in the case of Algeria, the value for 1872 being £42,562, the next best £4,828 in 1891. In addition, exports to Algeria between 1871 and 1873, apart from being high in comparison to later years were also much more diversified. From 1874 they consisted almost exclusively of coal, exports of cloth disappear from the "Bill of Entry". Most remarkable of all, in 1872 Glasgow's exports to Algeria rose to nearly half the total for Britain, 46%, the bulk of this figure of £42,562 being made up of cottons (£21,906) with a considerable proportion also of unmanufactured iron and steel (£8,746). Nothing remotely approaching this value was ever attained again, and there was never again a significant export of metal goods. No evidence is available to indicate the particular reasons behind this cessation, though it would not be unlikely that the ultimate cause was the general depression in trade.

To conclude: the broad trend for the general run of commodities in the export trade between Glasgow and Africa runs in the direction of a general rise, with the notable exception of the West African trade, cut short in 1874, and the export of cotton textiles to Egypt and Algeria. This general expansion is what would be expected given the establishment of the Clan Line route to South Africa in 1881, but it would appear that within the terms of this general rise a high level was achieved in the early eighties which was/

was not wholly maintained during the remainder of the decade, this stagnation being succeeded in the late eighties and early nineties by another move upwards. For most commodities there occurs during the later nineties a slowing of the rate of advance or even a sag, with major fluctuations in both directions, while a more rapid advance sets in again towards the end of the century. From this compound picture, however, individual commodities may vary more or less markedly, while the outline itself tends to reflect the state of economic expansion or contraction prevalent in world markets generally during the period.⁽¹⁾

b) Imports

In respect of imports there are seven commodities recorded in the Bill of Entry with sufficient consistency of measurement to be traced over the period. The seven in question are beans, wheat, barley, maize, cotton seed, esparto grass and iron ore, which are recorded in the Bill in tons, hundredweights or quarters, though occasionally they are listed otherwise, but these occasions are sufficiently infrequent to be ignored. Of the seven commodities, the imports of maize are relatively negligible, those of wheat cease almost entirely after the seventies, while those for barley are irregular and small.

Of the remaining four commodities dealt with, three were subject to relatively sharp and rapid fluctuations in quantity in both directions from year to year. This applies less to esparto grass (used in paper manufacture) which remained very stable between 1892 and 1900 after reaching a high point in 1891, and which in previous years maintained a steady though relatively ^{low} rate of import.

The period of maximum importation for all these commodities was the first half of the last decade of the century, though this applied/

(1) See S.B. Saul loc.Cit.

TABLE 18

I M P O R T S

Tonnage of ships entering Glasgow from African Ports, 1870-1900

	Egypt & Tripoli	Algeria	Tunisia & Morocco	West Africa	Other Ports	Total	Total T'age entering Glasgow from foreign ports	Tonnage from Africaas % of total
1870	6816	3921	-	8738	483	19958	331480	5.88
1871	12795	1572	924	10992	-	26284	376446	6.66
1872	18188	2179	-	5341	-	25707	418180	6.66
1873	8828	1834	131	-	-	10723	441991	2.5
1874	5251	5295	304	-	440	11290	512732	2.12
1875	4609	2193	500	145	-	7447	473616	1.45
1876	9717	1665	351	-	252	11985	556286	2.17
1877	14508	1678	427	58	271	16942	535564	3.22
1878	2808	1254	234	257	-	4553	548084	.91
1879	5748	1166	-	-	-	6914	605926	1.16
1880	4675	2646	158	-	-	7479	755350	.92
1881	6840	2932	430	-	-	10202	809182	1.23
1882	2033	1578	-	-	-	3611	828290	.49
1883	10238	2434	1892	-	-	14564	944076	1.42
1884	7250	8625	-	-	207	16082	879071	1.81
1885	9252	25134	2922	-	-	37308	922927	4.
1886	11486	19570	2118	-	-	33174	913031	3.57
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	972032	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	994311	n.a.
1889	4767	14819	6555	-	-	26141	1058228	2.50
1890	12086	11540	4071	-	-	27697	1121700	2.43
1891	18720	7903	5897	-	483	33003	955385	3.33
1892	17149	28436	7444	-	-	53029	1209841	4.34
1893	8374	14828	6093	-	1334	30643	1039297	3.03
1894	20899	5878	5519	-	-	32296	1088185	2.94
1895	7125	12943	4744	-	-	24812	1184537	2.04
1896	5782	14106	5492	-	-	25380	1289377	1.96
1897	3763	27593	3468	-	735	35559	1418724	2.38
1898	1362	19375	1282	-	-	22109	1457705	1.66
1899	9960	24667	684	-	1164	36495	1460700	2.5
1900	8169	11783	5332	-	2837	33032	1452023	2.27

TABLE 19

IMPORTS FROM NORTH AFRICA (Tons) 1870 - 1900

	Beans	Barley	Wheat	Maize	Cotton-seed	Esparto	Iron-ore
1870	7027	-	-	-	1504	1181	-
1871	14234	-	409	-	11323	831	-
1872	14620	30	7372	-	1972	1514	600
1873	4678	733	1943	-	1592	232	386
1874	4823	3763	-	-	11452	559	1139
1875	5810	109	1503	-	480	615	90
1876	9928	825	1475	-	-	301	100
1877	19916	1312	828	-	-	418	48
1878	2829	-	-	-	-	388	73
1879	13162	-	236	-	-	237	200
1880	7912	2230	-	-	288	263	-
1881	11061	240	-	530	-	193	351
1882	29221	-	-	-	-	243	548
1883	19689	-	-	-	-	2063	585
1884	10662	1095	1112	583	-	1626	6332
1885	18282	3923	-	156	-	2536	31002
1886	10295	-	-	-	1905	3066	24264
1887	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1888	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1889	12191	-	-	-	45011	1720	26073
1890	15480	1524	-	-	5378	4138	13430
1891	23416	62	-	34	39766	10444	6950
1892	14220	658	-	514	42820	3604	21840
1893	17048	136	-	1851	3487	4570	8400
1894	28273	-	-	-	47745	4731	3015
1895	15271	-	-	-	1007	1983	5500
1896	4455	-	-	-	-	6348	3119
1897	538	-	-	-	-	6243	7863
1898	2496	12	-	-	-	5356	10940
1899	1566	1320	-	75	25200	6113	13596
1900	8461	-	-	278	-	6064	14620

applied less to iron ore than to the others, and there were rapid fluctuations of ore, beans and cotton seed even within this short period. From 1895 these three were at a markedly lower level, while ore and beans showed an upward trend again from 1898 to 1900, and cotton seed, the fluctuations of which were much more exaggerated than the others, rose from nothing to 25,500 tons in 1899, to zero again in 1900. This commodity, after being imported on a fairly high level in the early seventies, is missing from the record until it reappears in 1886.

The figures for iron ore show a very definite high point in 1885, with lesser ones in 1889 and 1892, with a relatively steady rise from a low point in 1896 to 1900. Algeria was the main source of iron ore, and the two firms which appear most frequently in the "Bill of Entry" as having ordered the consignments are Crossley Tilburn & Co., and the Coltness Iron Co. However, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from this fact, as most of the shipments are reported only as being consigned "To Order".

Most of the beans were imported from Egypt. These were at their highest in the years 1871 - 2, 1877, 1879, 1883, 1885, 1891 and 1894, and at their lowest in 1873, 1878, 1882, 1896 - 9.

The average yearly importation was in the region of 10,000 tons. The following table indicates the relation of the Glasgow importation to the total British import of Egyptian beans. (1)

Figures are given in tons.

(1) Source for British figures "Abstract Statistics for the U.K." Information is not available to enable a similar table to be compiled for iron ore.

<u>Table 20</u>	Beans imported to Glasgow	Beans imported to Britain	Glasgow imports as % of British
1870	7,027	941,000	0.7
1871	14,234	2,123,000	0.6
1872	14,620	1,563,000	0.9
1873	4,678	729,000	0.6
1874	4,823	1,022,000	0.4
1875	5,810	1,371,000	0.4
1876	9,928	2,600,000	0.4
1877	19,916	2,536,000	0.8
1878	2,829	822,000	0.3
1879	13,162	1,811,000	0.7
1880	7,912	1,682,000	0.4
1881	11,061	1,538,000	0.7
1882	29,221	1,243,000	0.2
1883	19,689	2,627,000	0.7
1884	10,662	2,308,000	0.4
1885	18,282	2,455,000	0.4
1886	10,295	1,540,000	0.7
1887	-	-	-
1888	-	-	-
1889	12,191	980,000	1.2
1890	15,480	2,009,000	0.7
1891	23,416	2,428,000	0.9
1892	14,220	2,134,000	0.6
1893	17,048	1,974,000	0.9
1894	28,273	2,935,000	0.9
1895	15,271	1,788,000	0.8
1896	4,455	1,227,000	0.3
1897	538	806,000	0.06
1898	2,496	465,000	0.5
1899	1,566	1,102,000	0.1
1900	8,461	560,000	1.5

The years of low importation to Glasgow mirror a drop in the British volume, and indicating that the causes of these dips were not specific to Glasgow.

Other products imported which the method of entry in the Bill makes it impossible to enumerate were bark, hay, dates, oranges, guano/

guano, onions, vegetable fibre, skins, coffee, feathers. The imports from West Africa, 1870 - 72, were almost exclusively of Palm Oil, which was presumably refined in Glasgow or nearby. The following quantities of palm oil were imported:

1870	3,024 casks
1871	2,809 "
1872	1,093 "

The main use for West African palm oil was in soap making. In 1872 there were sixteen soapmakers functioning in Glasgow. These were: R. Brown & Co., W. Henderson & Sons, Lewis & John Maclellan, Jas. Parker, Paterson & Bruce, Walter G. Patterson, Reid & Cameron, Robin J. Houston, Shaw & Speirs, James Smith & Son, Sutherland & Abercrombie, C. Tennant & Co., Alex. Whitelaw, James Young. - (Information supplied by Mr. J. Hume, Dept. of Economic History, University of Strathclyde.)

From the record of the Clyde Bill of Entry the main trends in the trade between Glasgow and Africa are reasonably evident. In the field of imports this centres on Mediterranean North Africa, and until 1872, West Africa. After that date this import trade is conducted with North Africa to the almost complete exclusion of any other area.

In the last five years of the 1870's North Africa, and Egypt in particular, provides the focus of both import and export trade. Following 1881 the South African trade rapidly expands and attains dominance, with the establishment of the Clan Line sailings to that area, while a steady increase in the trade over the last two decades accelerating from 1894 is shown in both cases, though less consistently in that of Egypt. While these main lines are reasonably clear the particular movements of individual commodities are/

are, due to inadequacies in the evidence, considerably more blurred.

There would not appear to be any sort of integral connexion between Glasgow trade with the three areas of the continent in which it was developed, other than to note that South Africa and Mediterranean North Africa were the areas of greatest population and most extensive economic development in Africa. This, however, is merely what would be expected since Africa could not be regarded in any way as a geographic or economic unit. South Africa, Egypt and Algeria were, so far as Africa was concerned, self-contained economies; the fact that they happen to be located on the same continent is purely coincidental. If there is any consistent thread linking the fate of Africa as a whole during this period with groups in Glasgow, it must be sought elsewhere than in the volume of trade passing between them.

CHAPTER II

FIRMS AND COMPANIES

Part I

Glasgow Firms Operating Primarily in Africa

The multitude of business houses and assorted commercial enterprises active in Africa during the years 1870 - 1900, thanks to the development of communications, the feats of explorers, and the intervention of governments, included a fair number associated in one way or another with Glasgow. These divide themselves naturally into two classes:

- (1) Companies situated in Glasgow, and concerned exclusively or mainly with Africa, and
- (2) Those which were either, (a) Glaswegian with subordinate African interests, or (b) operated in Africa from other parts of Great Britain, but had Glasgow connexions.

This section of the chapter deals with the first of these classes, the main elements of which are five firms trading in West Africa, and one in East Africa, and a South African mining enterprise. Part 2 discusses the second category, including two shipping lines, The Royal Niger Co. and a Swaziland mining company. The history of the R.N.C. has been related by J.E. Flint in "Sir George Goldie and the making of Nigeria" (O.U.P., 1960), and is only discussed here in so far as it relates in any way to Glasgow.

In the first category, the nature of the extant evidence on the African Lakes Co. enables less emphasis to be laid on its African work than on the behaviour and negotiations of its Board of Directors in Glasgow.

1. West African Firms

(a) Miller Bros.

In the later nineteenth century the most commercially productive area of the continent next to South Africa was tropical West Africa, specifically the lower Niger and its Delta, and it was here that the greatest weight of Glasgow enterprise in Africa was concentrated, and here that the most commercially important Glasgow firm in Africa emerged.

Since the suppression of the Slave Trade, the coastal Africans had been adapting their economies to various forms of "Legitimate" commerce, most successfully in the Niger Delta where palm-oil had replaced other Africans as the main trading commodity. (1)

Throughout the nineteenth century there was a considerable demand in Europe for this product, for the purpose first of soap manufacture and later of aluminium smelting. The oil was extracted by a process of boiling down the fruit of the palm which grew inland of the mangrove swamps fronting the coast. The direct producers in the interior sold the product to the organisers and controllers of the trade, the kings and chiefs of the coastal towns. On the basis of this trade, a very complex social structure, depending on a system of promoting slaves who succeeded in trade, had emerged in these towns - Brass, Bonny, Old and New Calabar - each of which were sovereign entities and fierce trade rivals. The great majority of the British firms dealing with them were centred in Liverpool, a legacy of the fact that the former commercial relationship, slave dealing, had also been organised from there.

Among the key components of this system was the monopoly of the trade maintained by the coastal Africans, and accepted by the Liverpool/

(1) A very full account of the origins of this trade can be found in N.H. Stillard "The Rise and Development of Legitimate Trade in Palm Oil with West Africa", M.A. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1938.

Liverpool firms as the most satisfactory procedure. It ensured wealth and power for the middlemen chiefs and kings of the City States, and although it prevented any of the Liverpool firms from trading directly with the inland producers, it put all on the same footing, and thus maintained an acceptable equilibrium. The close and mutually advantageous partnership maintained between the Liverpool traders and individual chiefs, underpinned by a system of credit called "Trust" made it extraordinarily difficult for outsiders, lacking in experience and contracts, to enter the trade without seriously disrupting the commercial and political structure. Hence both middlemen and traders strenuously resisted the efforts of Macgregor Laird and others in the eightenfifties, to break the monopoly by by-passing the delta and trading directly up-river on the lower Niger, ⁽¹⁾ and the traders established a commercial federation, the African Association, including two Glasgow firms, but led from Liverpool, to co-ordinate the activities of the established European palm-oil merchants.

The "Niger" traders were a nuisance, but one which could be accommodated. The first really effective challenge to the system, both in the delta and on the main river came from the Glasgow firm of Alexander Miller, Brother & Company, which entered the West African trade at the end of the 1860's.

It is to be regretted that Miller Bros. own records, apart from a few documents relating to the late 1890s ⁽²⁾ have not survived. The company never became public, and there are therefore no materials in the Companies Registration Office. The reconstruction of their history depends on two main sources, firstly, material extant/

(1) See Flint, op.Cit. Chapter 2 for the attacks and harassment inflicted on them.

(2) These are in the possession of the United Africa Co.

extant in the Public Record Office, including correspondence between Millers and Government departments and comments on the firm by various classes of government officials, consuls and vice-consuls in the Bights of Benin and Biafra; secondly on an unpublished history, "The History of the United Africa Company, Ltd., to 1938", written anonymously for the United Africa Co., and which deals with Millers at some length, but whose references cannot, in general, be checked.

Correspondence between the Millers and the Liverpool merchant John Holt can be found in the John Holt papers, in the possession of John Holt & Co. (Liverpool)Ltd. These have not been used directly in this study, though quotations from them in Flint's work have been referred to.

The first venture of Alexander and George Miller was in the West Indian, specifically the Guianian and Trinidadian trade in the 1860s. This was not very successful and was gradually wound up after 1868.⁽¹⁾ The brothers then turned their attention to West Africa, commenced trading on the delta in 1869, and followed this with an establishment on the Gold Coast.⁽²⁾ The non-Niger section of the business always remained subsidiary.

The commencement of Miller's business in the city-state of Brass, followed shortly thereafter by a vigorous push up the Niger, aroused the violent and persistent antagonism of the Liverpool merchants and their allies, the Brass middlemen. Millers' entire subsequent history is defined thereafter by their relationship to the African Association. The seventies saw them established in defiance of their rivals and finding their own African ally, Ja Ja of Opobo. The eighties brought a continuing quarrel, culminating in the victory/

(1) History of the United Africa Co. p. 60.

(2) H.U.A.C. p. 61, & P.R.O., F.O. 84/1407 Millers to F.O. 31.12.74.

victory of the Liverpool interests with Ja Ja's deposition by the acting consul, Harry Johnston, in 1887, while Millers were in close and intimate relationship with the Liverpool firms' other enemy, the Royal Niger Co. A brief and uneasy alliance between Miller Bros., the R.N.C. and the African Association in the late eighties, knocked together in the hope of obtaining a Charter to govern the Oil Rivers similar to that of the R.N.C., was followed, on its disruption, by renewed commercial warfare between Millers and the A.A. in the early nineties, but the later part of this decade saw the pressure of events and mutual interest in resisting the encroachment of Alfred Jones' steamship lines - which had been largely responsible for destroying the Charter idea - result in a gradual drawing together of Millers, the R.N.C. and the African Association, which was confirmed by a formal agreement on profit sharing and spheres of interest in 1899.

The Brass factory was established in 1869 with the local assistance of Archibald McEachan, whom the brothers took into partnership, and James Croft whom they appointed as their agent.⁽¹⁾ According to Millers, buildings and wharves were erected and "a thoroughly organised factory established". Immediately the firm ran into difficulties "owing to the unprofitableness of the trade from excessive competition".⁽²⁾ That the new firm was subjected to a systematic campaign of undercutting on the part of the already established merchants appears a definite possibility.

After a year the brothers admitted partial defeat. McEachan was instructed to transfer the major part of the business to the then unexplored Opobo river, leaving an agent at Brass to manage as best he could with the trade, though maintaining the Brass establishment, rented at 3 puncheons of palm oil per annum from the king/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 61. Neither of the Millers ever visited Africa.

(2) F.O. 84/1407. Millers to F.O. 31.12.74

king, as the administrative centre for the Niger business and a depot for produce shipping in and out.⁽¹⁾

Millers' major opportunity arrived when Ja Ja, originally a slave of the King of Bonny, to the east of Brass, having risen to considerable eminence in Bonny, quarrelled with the other chiefs and seceded to found his own township on the Opobo, and to seize the Bonny markets in the interior. Hard pressed in war by the Bonny men, Ja Ja was enabled to stabilise his position when the British Consul, Livingstone, in January, 1873, recognised him as King of Opobo, treaties being signed also between Ja Ja and Bonny through the Consul's good offices, defining their respective markets.⁽²⁾ The enterprising Glasgow house had from the first put themselves in partnership with the enterprising ex-slave and supported him politically. A letter from Millers to Lord Granville in December, 1871, complained about the alleged arrogant behaviour of Consul Hopkins, who was accused of acting in a threatening manner against Ja Ja when visiting Opobo, while the unresolved dispute between the two towns caused trade to stagnate in Bonny. The F.O. minute on the letter attributed the dispute to the backing given to Ja Ja by British interests.⁽³⁾ Soon Miller Bros. were handling the major share of Ja Ja's expanding trade.⁽⁴⁾

Millers had now embarked on an independent career. If they had ever been willing to stick to the old channels, the Liverpool attitude had destroyed that possibility, but their next venture in the Oil Rivers/

(1) Ibid. & F.O. 84/1498, Journal of Niger Expdtn. by W.N. Hewett.

(2) F.O. 84/1918. Memorandum by C. Hill on Ja Ja. See also Flint Op.Cit. p.27, & Roland Oliver, "Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa" (Chatto & Windus, 1959) p. 108.

(3) F.O. 84/1315. Millers to F.O. 16.12.71.

(4) F.O. 84/1918, Hill memorandum, and Flint op.cit. p. 27.

the Oil Rivers was less successful.

"At the end of 1872 we opened trade in an as yet unvisited river, the Middleton, a very short distance, say eighty miles or so, to the westward of the Brass River". (1)

Without the political connexions the firm established in Opobo, however, the enterprise failed to show a satisfactory profit, "owing to the natives holding out for the same unprofitable prices as they had been in the habit of getting in the Nun and Brass Rivers on the one side and the Benin River on the other". (2)

Despite the poor showing of Millers' trade in the Middleton, it was yet apparently sufficient to annoy the Brassmen and the Liverpool firms. The document just quoted sets out the early history of the firm as a background to a request to the Foreign Office to intervene with armed force against the Africans to prevent interference with their trade. The Middleton River affair came to a head when Croft and McEachan were apprehended by the Brassmen in October, 1874, and terrorised into promising to leave the Middleton. (3)

In their letter Millers cited this incident as merely one more example of the general attitude of their rivals, and hence :

"We do not memorialise your Lordship on account of our interest in the Middleton River alone but for the general welfare of ourselves and other European traders that we may be at liberty to legitimately develop trade on the West Coast of Africa",

a state of affairs which they hoped to see appear as a result of a visit by the Consul accompanied by a gunboat, though Millers were not unmindful of their public relations:

"We take the liberty of craving your Lordship to bring to the notice of H.M. Consul the desirableness (sic) of not bringing the name of our firm or any of our agents too prominently before the natives as the origin of any investigation which your Lordship may cause to be made". (4)

The F.O./

(1) F.O. 84/1407 Millers to F.O. 31.12.74.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

The F.O. departmental minute on the letter attributed the trouble to the fact of Millers trading in the interior markets and depriving the Brassmen of the trade. Such prohibitions, the F.O. felt, must be accepted on occasion in the interests of peace, though it was agreed to ask the Consul to investigate and report.⁽¹⁾ However, the firm's agent decided to abandon the Middleton in any case late in 1874, though Millers in reporting this repeated their request for a gunboat.⁽²⁾ Despite this setback the brothers continued to extend their establishments in the Delta, and within a short time placed factories at Abonemma, Calabar and on the Benin River.⁽³⁾

Miller Bros. thus established themselves as a considerable force in the Oil Rivers trade, and it is not unexpected that businessmen of their temperament soon endeavoured to penetrate the Niger itself. Here they were even more successful than they had been in the Delta, and before long were the dominant European firm trading on the lower river.

This domination can to some extent be statistically documented from the reports of three British officials who visited the lower Niger in the seventies. The disorders on this part of the river and the fierce rivalry of the competing firms, unrestrained by any legal framework, induced the British Government to seek ways of asserting some degree of control which would not put the Consulate of the Bights to too much expense and trouble.

The first essay in this direction involved an embassy by Commissioner W.H. Simpson in 1871 to King Masaba of Nupe, a Muslim state straddling the Niger above its confluence with the Benue, the aim/

(1) Ibid.

(2) F.O. 84/1425. Miller to F.O. 18.1.75.

(3) H.U.A.C. p. 61.

aim of the mission being to persuade this leading local potentate to extend his protection to the British traders, keep order between them and the Africans, and thereby dispense with the need for a British Vice-Consul ⁽¹⁾ in Lokoja, at the junction of the Benue, the limit of the palm-oil belt, and with the yearly visit to the river by a British gunboat. ⁽²⁾

The area in which the traders were operating extended beyond the palm-oil belt, where Onitsha was the main base, to Lokoja in Nupe territory, and beyond to Egga where a considerable trade was conducted in a newly exploited product, shea butter, discovered in the late sixties to be a perfect substitute for palm oil; the other commodities coming from the region above Lokoja being ivory, beniseed and cotton. Apart from Miller Bros., four other firms were involved at this time, Holland Jacques & Co., later to be the basis of Goldie's United Africa Co., the West Africa Co. of Manchester with its connexions with the Church Missionary Society, James Pinnock of Liverpool, and J.P.L. Davis of Lagos. ⁽³⁾

Millers' principal steamer on the river was named - appropriately enough - the "King Ja Ja" and commanded by Croft. Governor Glover of Lagos in fact advised Simpson to travel on this vessel on the grounds that Croft was "a great friend of King Masaba", but to take adequate precautions because the West Africa Co. had intrigued with the Brassmen to ambush the expedition. Simpson, however, eventually travelled by the "King Masaba" belonging to Holland Jacques, which gave rise to a complaint from Croft that Simpson/

(1) The incumbent was an embarrassment. He was permanently drunk.

(2) F.O. 84/1351, 21.11.71. For an analysis of the diplomatic thought behind the scheme, see Flint op.cit. Chapter 2.

(3) Ibid. Simpson's report.

Simpson was favouring that firm. (1)

Simpson's report included estimates for the Niger trade in the year 1871 according to the towns involved.

	Ivory (tons)	Beniseed (tons)	Cotton (bales)	Palm Oil (puncheons)	Shea Butter (tons)
Egga	25				120
Lukoja	2	50	25		
Onitsha				1200	
Adoni &) Alenso)				150	

He then computed an approximate market value (in England) for the above:

50 tons of beniseed at £38	£1,900
27 tons of ivory at £5.00	£135.00
25 bales of cotton at £6	£150
Palm-oil approx. 900 tons (1350 puncheons) at £38	£34,200
Shea Butter -120 tons at £40	£4,800
Total value	£54,550

and indicated the trading voyages of the 5 vessels involved in his expedition:

Voyages to:	Egga	Onitsha	Benue
King Masaba (Holland Jacques)	1	4	
King Ja Ja (Millers)	1	3	
Victoria (West Africa Co.)	2	2	
Rio Formas (Pinnock)			1
Niger (J.P.L. Davis)		1	

Simpson used these statistics to support his scepticism as to the possibilities of the river trade above the palm-oil belt, an assertion which Vivian of the Foreign Office remarks in a minute on the report is justification for withdrawing the yearly naval visit course/

(1) Ibid.

a course which was in fact adopted, though Croft and the representatives of Holland Jacques and the West African Co. had expressed themselves as opposed to it on the grounds that Masaba's protection was inadequate. (1)

Croft had complained to Simpson of continual harassment by the delta Africans at the instigation of the European merchants, and claimed that the "Ja Ja" was the only vessel fired on. That his allegations of persistent hostility were not wholly unfounded is shown by the fact that a further expedition was considered necessary in 1876, the object of which was, in the words of its commander, W.N. Hewett,

"to obtain reparation for a series of murderous attacks made by the EJoe people, assisted by the King of Brass on the British steamer 'Sultan of Sockotoo' belonging to the firm of Messrs. Alex. Miller during the passage of that vessel through the Delta in the months of April, May and June, 1876, and to re-open the navigation of the river".

The 'Sultan' was lent by Millers for the purposes of the expedition. (2)

Hewett compiled tables which show how far the Niger palm oil trade had expanded since 1871, - 2,500 tons in 1875 compared with 900 tons in the former year, and eclipsing the 1,500 tons of the Brass and Nun rivers in 1875, - and show how far Millers' predominance had advanced.

(1) Ibid.

(2) F.O. 84/1498, Journal of Niger Expedition 1876 by Cmdr. W.N. Hewett, 11.1.77.

Vessels engaged in Niger Trade, 1876

<u>Tons burthen</u>	<u>Trips to be made in 1876</u>			
	Onitsha	Lukoja	Egga	Benue
Sultan-390 (Millers)	7		2	
Pioneer-80 "	4			
King Omuru-200"			4	
Busybody (launch)20(Millers)				
Ella (hulk) - 200 "				
Victoria (West African Trading Co.) - 120	4		2	
Snowden - 165 "	3			
Anussi - 18 "			2	1
King Masaba (Central Africa Trading Co.) - 250	6	2	2	1

Trade in other commodities, above the palm oil belt, had also advanced:

Produce from Niger

	Palm Oil (puncheons)	Ivory (tons)	Cotton (tons)	Shea Butter (tons)	Beniseed (tons)
Akassa)					
Ndoni)					
Osomari)	5600				
Alenso)	= 2290 tons				
Okoko)					
Onitsha)					
Lukoja		1	30	120	50
Timuhu		2			
Egga		37½	30	200	125
Winauli				350	
Shenga					20

An interesting point noted by Hewett was that no credit was given, except to kings at Egga, a fact which might indicate that the firms had succeeded in abolishing the trust system on the Niger, a system which had brought innumerable difficulties in the delta, where/

where, with limited legal and practical sanctions, debtors were more easily able than most to renege on their obligations.⁽¹⁾

The estimated market value for the Niger produce again contrasts with 1871:

Palm Oil,	2290 tons at	£36 per ton	£82,400
Ivory,	40½ " "	£600 " "	24,300
Cotton,	60 " "	£56 " "	3,360
Shea Butter,	670 " "	£38 " "	25,460
Beniseed,	195 " "	£14 " "	<u>2,730</u>
Total value			£138,290

It will be noted, however, that the price of palm oil had declined by £2 per ton.

Hewett's attitude to the Niger traders was a sympathetic one, and - noting that Millers was the firm most complained of - he discounted the Brassmen's contention that the penetration of the Niger had ruined their trade. He quoted Simpson's assertion that very little of the palm oil produced in the Onitsha region had reached Brass, an argument which rather missed the point as the dispute was not about a physical dearth, but about the effect on prices produced by European competition up-river.

At any rate, Commander Hewett, while setting down in his report the grievances - not all of them commercial - of the Africans against Millers, which he did not deny, and which he in fact tried to remedy in some degree,⁽²⁾ nevertheless showed his consideration for Millers' rights by bombarding and burning three villages held to be responsible for the attacks.

Two years/

(1) See F.O. 84/1351 8.9.71, 18.9.71, 27.9.71 and 4.10.71 for an unsuccessful attempt by Wm. Couper & Co. to recover a debt from Ja Ja.

(2) e.g. he advised Croft to dismiss an objectionable employee.

Two years later Consul Hopkins was up the river on his own initiative, and without instructions from the F.O. in order, as he explained in his report, to remind all concerned of the British presence, and to overawe any would-be wrongdoers. His report (1) outlined a fairly complete anatomy of the state of trade on the Niger river at this point. Four companies are mentioned as being involved, these being Millers, the West Africa Co., the Central African Trading Co., formerly Holland Jacques, and Pinnock. Once more the Consul quoted figures which illustrate Millers' predominance:

Miller Bros. Steamers

Hausa	332 gross tons	196 H.P.	70 crew
Unicorn	98 " "	90 " "	30 "
Busybody (launch)	10 " "	10 " "	12 "
Smasher	5 " "	8 " "	5 "
Florence	2 " "	6 " "	4 "

A Niger fleet with a tonnage of 447 tons, not including hulks, with 310 H.P., employing 121 crewmen. In comparison the West Africa Co. had a fleet of 2 ships and a steam launch, amounting to 520 tons with 110 crew. The Central African Co. possessed 245 tons with 112 H.P. and 65 crew; Pinnock's, one steamer, the 'Wanderer', of 97 tons and 30 H.P. with a crew of 30 had run aground and remained stranded for five weeks.

Hopkins lists 16 stations from Aba and Adoni at the delta end to Shenga, well above Egga. Millers operated at all but two, and by this time were exporting also from Lokoja the palm oil kernel, formerly a waste product, but now capable, with new techniques, of yielding oil. A trade in ground nuts had also been developed at Egga. Hopkins outlines the approximate quantities shipped:

(1) F.O. 84/1508 18.11.78

5,000 tons Palm Oil	at £39 per ton	£195,000
65 " Ivory	at £800 " "	52,000
1,500 " Shea butter	at £39 " "	58,500
150 " Beniseed	at £24 " "	3,600
50 " Ground nuts	at £12 " "	<u>600</u>
	Total	£309,700

According to Hewett's figures the price per ton of palm oil had risen slightly since 1876. However trade was poor due to a boycott by the African producers that season. On the other hand, the shea butter trade was good, almost double that of the previous season, though the beniseed, cotton and ground nuts had been failures owing to raids from Nupe.

Commenting on the situation, Hopkins recommended that the firms should withdraw from Aba and Adoni, the lowest of the stations, because of the extent of the demands made by the Africans in these places, and because if there were no factories downriver, some trade would be drawn back to Brass and New Calabar.

The Consul felt that the only way to solve the problems on the Niger was to extend his jurisdiction to include the merchants there - he claimed that the traders themselves supported both this and the proposition of a visit to be made every year by a warship, with consular powers of holding a court at the trading stations, and deporting prisoners to Lagos. He considered that the activities of the firms' supervisors at the stations were highly dubious; many of the Sierra Leoneans allegedly pilfered goods and used them to trade in slaves. If dismissed in consequence they were immediately hired by another firm for their knowledge of the rival. Another stratagem he accused them of using was to waylay the agents on their way home by Lagos and dishonestly sue them there, the agents/

agents generally losing the case because they then had no access to the relevant evidence.

Though unofficial, Hopkins initiative appears to have had a favourable reception in the F.O., where the comment on his report indicated support for his idea of extending consular jurisdiction and his demand to have a warship up the Niger whenever required. (1)

Such a point of view was naturally in direct contradiction to that of the Liverpool firms, whose feelings were set out in a letter from the African Association to the Earl of Derby at the end of 1877. (2) In this it was claimed that the operations on the Niger inevitably jeopardised existing treaties with the Africans, since the volume of palm oil trade was not sufficiently great to be extended in all directions, and expansion at one point was bound to injure others. Thus the coast was seriously hit, reducing the demand for British manufactures there:

"It is of course no part of this Association's province to place any restrictions on freedom in trade, but the members do object to the unnecessary risk of valuable lives and the great expenditure of money involved in Her Majesty's Government sending expeditions to protect people who run serious and unnecessary risks at distances from the coast in localities beyond the limits prescribed by the Treaty and whose bad example and questionable commercial morality do serious injury to the cause of religion and civilisation".

The African Association discounted the Niger firms' complaints of attack by the coastal Africans, and accused them of blaming Brass for their own crimes after interfering with the Brass trade, asserting that it was,

"very desirable on Diplomatic and Economic grounds that trade, as regards Whitemen should so far as possible be confined to the Sea Coast or within easy reach of H.M. Consuls and ships of war",

and that the government should announce that henceforth all Niger operations/

(1) Ibid.

(2) 84/1499. A.A. to Lord Derby, 1.12.77

operations must be conducted at the firms' own risk, who would at the same time be held responsible for any disturbances.

Such proposals were dismissed out of hand by the Foreign Office, C.M. Wylde minuting that the fighting had been promoted by the Coast traders trying to prevent the up-river enterprise, and since West African trade had increased substantially from the time the Niger began to be worked it was impossible to accede to the Liverpool requests.⁽¹⁾

Such was the state of affairs into which Goldie entered, the following year, to revolutionise commercial conditions, and to end Millers existence as an independent entity on the river.⁽²⁾

Under the terms of the amalgamation⁽³⁾ the United Africa Co. bought out Miller Bros. Niger interests, "land ships and stores" for part payment in the shares of the amalgamation to the extent of £27,000 in 5,400 shares, divided 933 to Alexander Miller, 933 to George Miller, 934 to Archibald McEachan and 2,600 collectively to Robert Scott, Alex Moore and David Miller, (all Glasgow men).

A further agreement of 17.11.80⁽⁴⁾ indicates the final value placed upon Millers' Niger business. This amounted to £36,000, and Millers received payment in a further 1,800 £5 shares, the brothers to receive 900 each, McEachan meantime having died abroad.⁽⁵⁾

A shareholders list of 20th November, 1879, shows that of the 13,007 shares taken up in the U.A.C. the Glasgow firm held 5401, the/

(1) Ibid.

(2) Flint, op.cit. Chapter 2.

(3) Memorandum of Agreement between U.A.C. and Millers, 5.8.79. Registrar of Joint Stock Companies 13209.

(4) Ibid.

(5) In July, 1879, according to the document.

the largest single block,⁽¹⁾ and were well represented on the first board of directors, the two brothers, McEachan and James Croft holding seats on a board of 10 directors.

Upon the completion of the amalgamation, Alexander Miller moved to London, to be chiefly responsible, while Goldie handled the administrative sector, for the commercial direction of the new company.⁽²⁾ Henceforth Millers' Niger business ceases to be a primarily Glasgow interest and becomes part of the history of the U.A.C., later the N.A.C. and the R.N.C. and will not be further considered here, except to note that while Goldie's antagonism to the Liverpool firms was very much based on his own outlook and temperament⁽³⁾ the fact that Miller Bros. were of such significance in his firm may be presumed to have strengthened his hand considerably in ensuring its support for his policies.

All other portions of Miller Bros. however maintained their existence as an independent firm, and though Alexander Miller in London also took charge of the Gold Coast interest of the original firm, George Miller, remaining in Glasgow continued to handle business in the Oil Rivers, the most important element of which was the factory at Opobo.

The following table, compiled in August, 1884, by R.W. Craigie, Commander of H.M.S. "Flint", gives some idea of the distribution of European interests in the Oil Rivers in the mid-eighties.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid. When the National African Co. was formed in 1882, Glasgow shares in the U.A.C. were 7,251, mostly Millers, out of 21,314, a somewhat reduced proportion. - R.J.S.C. File No. 13209, Return of U.A.C. Capital, 1894.

(2) H.U.A.C. p. 64.

(3) Flint, op.cit.

(4) F.O. 403/83 (F.O. Confidential Print) 1.8.84, encl. in Adm. to Lister 9.9.84.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>PORT OF ORIGIN</u>
<u>Benin River</u>	T. Harrison & Co.	Liverpool
	Cheetham & Clarke	"
	Stuart & Douglas	"
	J. Pinnock	"
	A. Miller ⁽¹⁾	Glasgow
	Launder	Liverpool
	Reece	West Indian
	Wilkin	-
<u>Akassa River</u>	National African	London
<u>Brass River</u>	Launder	Liverpool
	Hatton & Cookson	"
	Y.A. Moore & Co.	"
	Stuart & Douglas	"
	T. Harrison & Co.	"
	Senegal Co.	Marseilles
	Deprez Huet & Cie. Paris	"
	Leigh	Sierra Leone
<u>Bonny River</u>	Harrison & Co.	Liverpool
	Couper Johnstone	Glasgow
	Stuart & Douglas	Liverpool
	Holt & Cotterel	Liverpool
<u>Opobo River</u>	British & Continental	Liverpool
	Couper Johnstone	Glasgow
	Harrison & Co.	Liverpool
	Taylor Laughland	Glasgow
	Stuart & Douglas	Liverpool
	Miller Bros.	Glasgow

(1) Millers is incorrectly quoted as a Liverpool firm.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>PORT OF ORIGIN</u>
<u>Qua Eboe River</u>	George Watts	-
<u>Old Calabar River</u>	George Watts	-
	Taylor Laughland	Glasgow
	British & Continental	Liverpool
	Harrison & Co.	"
	W. & R. Kings	Bristol
	Stuart & Douglas	Liverpool
<u>Cameroon River</u>	W. & R. Kings	Bristol
	Lucas Bros.	"
	Ryder & Andries	"
	Ashwell	Liverpool
	George Watts	-
	Hamilton	-
	Woermann	Hamburg
	Jantzen & Thormahler	"
Ahlen	-	

Millers were the first firm to establish relations with Ja Ja, but the King's skill and dynamism both as a trader and a ruler soon attracted also the members of the African Association to win a share in the benefits of his commerce, five firms of the Association setting up in Opobo, including the two Glasgow members, Taylor Laughland and Couper Johnstone. These were established adjacent to each other on a beach inside the river mouth. Millers faced them from an islet at the entrance which divided the Opobo mouth into two inlets. (1)

It was not long before the situation prevalent in the other coast towns/

(1) 84/1828, Map by H.H. Johnston, encl. in Johnston to F.O. 12.8.87.

towns reproduced itself in Opobo. The Europeans traded exclusively with Ja Ja who banned them from the interior markets, which he kept under strict control. The most important of these lay on a tributary of the Opobo, the Qua Eboe river, on which the people of the same name had established the town of Ohombela. Millers had apparently, in the early days of Ja Ja's rule, placed a hulk on this river, but had withdrawn it owing to a quarrel with the local inhabitants,⁽¹⁾ and since then all the local firms had accepted the situation, Ja Ja's monopoly being supported originally as much by the Association firms as by Millers.

This is demonstrated by the fact that when in April, 1881, George Watts, an independent trader and client of John Holt, at that time outside the African Association, tried to penetrate the Qua Eboe river, all united to oppose him.⁽²⁾

According to Holt, when Watts maintained his intentions and the Qua Eboe people similarly refused to stop trading with him, Ja Ja attacked by surprise, massacred the Qua Eboe and destroyed Watts' property, compounding his crime by flying the British Ensign while committing it.⁽³⁾

The British Government refused to recognise Ja Ja's claims⁽⁴⁾ but this decision apparently had very little effect on the local situation. In 1884 Holt was renewing his complaint on behalf of Watts, and pleading for assistance in getting the Opobo men entirely out of the Qua Eboe River.⁽⁵⁾ Later in the year Watts himself began/

(1) 403/18 (C.P.) J. Holt to Lord Granville, 28.10.81.

(2) Ibid. A.A. to F.O. 17.5.82, letter in support of Ja Ja's rights to monopolise the Qua Eboe trade.

(3) Ibid. Holt to Granville, 28.10.81.

(4) Ibid. F.O. to Ja Ja, 21.1.82.

(5) F.O. 403/31 (F.O. C.P.) Holt to F.O. 16.2.84.

began to correspond with the Foreign Office, and in October claimed that Ja Ja was still practising his intimidations,⁽¹⁾ while Consul Hewett underlined the point that the opposition to Watts' activities was a collective one of all the firms, in concert with the King:

"They (the merchants) are too cringing to Ja Ja and supported him in his claims to the Qua Eboe because they thought, or said they thought, - for they had been so taught by Ja Ja, - that if Mr. Watts remained in the Qua Eboe it would interfere with some of the Opoobo markets and this would affect their trade" (2)

and remarks further that:

"Mr. Johnstone (of Couper Johnstone) was the person who for a long time acted as clerk or amanuensis to Ja Ja, and certainly does not give a true or impartial account of the Qua Eboe matter".

The views of the Consul and the Foreign Office were not shared by the local Naval Officer, Admiral Richards, who replied to the Government's instructions to support Watts⁽³⁾ with the comment:

"Tear up the treaties and proclaim free trade and you will have the natives cutting each others' throats. Europeans will be safe nowhere, and the squadron on the station will be under endless requisition for operations in out-of-the-way places for punishment of isolated outrages" -

and refers to the situation on the Niger as a pertinent example.⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless instructions were sent to Hewett reaffirming the Government's refusal to recognise the sovereignty of Opoobo in the Qua Eboe, and stipulating the punishment by a heavy fine, of interference with European traders, since the Government would "countenance no further monopolies".⁽⁵⁾

The restatement of the Government's position does not, however, seem/

(1) F.O. 403/33 (F.O. C.P.) Watts to F.O. 29.10.84.

(2) F.O. 403/33, Hewett to F.O. 29.9.84.

(3) Ibid. Lister to Admrl. Richards, 4.12.84.

(4) Ibid. Richards to Lister, 5.12.84.

(5) Ibid. Pauncefort to Hewett. 26.12.84. Ja Ja's legal claim to monopoly was based on the 1884 Treaty of protection. See below.

seem to have had much practical effect until a crisis emerged in the relations of the traders at Opobo itself, a fact foreshadowed in Hewett's despatch of September 29th, 1884, when he mentions that "lately there have been changes among the agents there".

In 1885, endeavouring to protect themselves against the continual decline of the price of palm oil in European markets, all the Opobo merchants collaborated to set up a price ring, and refused to buy from Ja Ja except at agreed rates. Ja Ja then began to ship his oil direct to Britain, and the merchants retaliated by withholding "comrey" the form of rent paid to the king.⁽¹⁾

In the course of these events Millers' regular agent at Opobo, Farquhar, had been absent. On his return he decided that the agreement entered into by his replacement was unsatisfactory in that it apportioned to Millers an inadequate share of the market.⁽²⁾ Farquhar therefore demanded that it be re-negotiated, and when this was refused, he broke the boycott and re-entered into relations with Ja Ja. Despite the firm's previous participation in the ring, Ja Ja readily accepted, and Millers became the sole buyer for the king's oil.⁽³⁾

This action provoked a decisive rupture between Ja Ja and Millers on one hand, and the African Association firms on the other, which now determined to solve their problems by disposing of the inconvenient monarch.

Two sets of circumstances gave them the necessary lever to accomplish their object. Firstly, the fact that Ja Ja was continuing to/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 62, see also Oliver, op.cit. chapter 2, and J.C. Anene "Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906" (C.U.P. 1966).

(2) H.U.A.C. loc.cit.

(3) Ibid. loc.cit.

to monopolise the Qua Eboe contrary to the edicts of the British Government (1) and secondly he was laying imposts on the traders over and above the "comrey" sanctioned by the 1873 treaty.

The imposition in question was known as "shakehands" and was traditionally a gift from the merchant to the king in return for permission to trade. The firms complained to the Consul that it was being exacted under duress and demanded repayment, while Ja Ja insisted that the payment was voluntary, the firms were in the habit of making it, and if trade had been in boom instead of slump, they would gladly have paid it in order to attract as much custom as possible. (2)

At the same time the African Association moved against Ja Ja's monopolistic claims, and in March, 1886, brought up the issue before the Consul when he visited Opobo. The same day Hewett gave his decision according to their wishes, "H.M.G. having declared they will allow no monopoly of trade in their countries", and at the same time judged "Shakehands" to be illegal, affirming that Ja Ja must refund it to all concerned except Farquhar, who was held to have paid voluntarily. (3)

The A.A. firms then proceeded to Ohombela to exploit the interior markets, while Taylor Laughland and Couper Johnstone established factories at the upper end of Essene Creek, a twelve mile long waterway, nine miles up the Opobo. Ja Ja refused to accept defeat, and for/

(1) Ja Ja's case was that the British Government had accepted his monopoly since the 1884 Treaty of Protection specifically excluded the usual free trade clause and Hewett had disclaimed any intention of interfering with "his markets". The legal issue turned on an interpretation of this phrase. See Oliver, op.cit. Chapter 2 for a discussion.

(2) F.O. 403/33 Ja Ja to Rosebery, 19.4.86.

(3) F.O. 403/77, encl. in Ja Ja to Salisbury, 2.4.86.

for a year his agents successfully prevented the firms from trading in Ohombela⁽¹⁾, binding the inhabitants with a taboo not to do business with Europeans, until the intervention, in Hewett's absence, of the Vice-Consul, Harry H. Johnston, who had, if anything, even less sympathy with Ja Ja than the Consul. When the crisis reached its climax in August and September, 1887, Farquhar was again temporarily absent from Opobo, and the Miller Bros. agent was one. Turnbull. When on August 5th Johnston, by threatening to bombard Opobo, obliged Ja Ja to sign an agreement throwing open the interior markets,⁽²⁾ Turnbull advised the king to sign under protest, a move which aroused considerable resentment on the Vice-Consul's part,⁽³⁾ who claimed that the agent had obstructed him further by removing his mail from a steamer in the river.⁽⁴⁾

Accompanied by the agents of the five Association firms, Johnston next proceeded to Ohombela, where Ja Ja's representative formally dissolved the taboo. However, on the Vice-Consul's departure Ja Ja continued to resist, and his men continued to intimidate the Qua Eboe producers. Immediately he returned to Opobo therefore, Johnston issued instructions to all Europeans to stop trade immediately with Ja Ja until the king submitted and consented to accept appropriate punishment. Acting on his employers' instructions, Turnbull at first tried to defy the ban, since it was "absurd" for Johnston to stop trade, "regardless of the immense loss which would arise through steamers being detained, contracts unfulfilled, etc. etc."⁽⁵⁾, then protested/

- (1) Ja Ja was unable to prevent the Essene Creek operations - F.O. 84/1870, Capt. Hand to Adm. 13.8.87, and in Adm. to F.O. 26.9.87.
- (2) A fuller account of the action, considered from Johnston's viewpoint can be found in Olivier, loc.cit.
- (3) F.O. 84/1881, Johnston to F.O. 10.3.85.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) F.O. 84/1969, Millers to Turnbull, 18.8.87, printed in pamphlet encl. in Millers to F.O. 23.2.88.

protested and submitted a claim to Johnston for £1,800 per month damages, a move which Johnston characterised as "an act of gratuitous impertinence".⁽¹⁾

The continued tension provoked by Johnston's decree and Ja Ja's despatch of an embassy to plead his case in London, led, on September 19th, to the king's arrest and deportation by the Vice Consul in circumstances suggesting bad faith,⁽²⁾ especially as it was carried out from the beach of one of the Liverpool firms, Harrison. The African Association thus achieved its object and Millers lost a profitable monopoly, though continuing to conduct considerable operations at Opobo, to which Farquhar shortly returned.

While Millers never denied that they supported Ja Ja so far as they were able, it is an open question as to how far they actually incited his actions. Johnston believed that they were largely responsible. In his opinion Ja Ja would never have dared to obstruct without Millers' "greed for monopoly", though they had "taken great care to avoid any legal implication in the King's acts",⁽³⁾ and again that Millers incited Ja Ja to monopolise the interior markets by illicit means.⁽⁴⁾ His feelings found further expression in a letter to Farquhar early in 1888,

"I cannot allow any renewal on your part of the policy of obstruction to Consular authority and intrigue with the natives which has hitherto been the characteristic of Messrs. Miller Bros. action in the Opobo River",

and while he claimed to have been lenient to Turnbull who was acting under orders, Farquhar was threatened that if he set "my authority at defiance/

(1) F.O. 84/1828 Johnston to F.O. 20.8.87.

(2) See Anene and Oliver for contrasting viewpoints on this incident.

(3) F.O. 84/1881. Johnston to F.O. 16.3.88.

(4) Ibid. Johnston to F.O. 14.4.88.

defiance and attempt to interfere unduly in native affairs" he would be deported and his factory closed down. (1)

Certain of the Foreign Office officials shared Johnston's opinion. One refers to Ja Ja as "a tool of Millers". (2) Paunceforte, the permanent Undersecretary agreed, and accused the firm in addition of intriguing to supply Ja Ja with arms to resist British authority, (3) though Anderson, the senior clerk in the African Department, was more sympathetic. (4)

Millers for their part denied strongly that they harboured any such desires, or had tried to set Consular authority at defiance. Such of their letters and statements as are on record indicate that they wished to appear conciliatory and reasonable, whether or not this reflected their real feelings.

The deputation of relations and chiefs sent by Ja Ja to London to plead his case in September, 1887, was received on September 19th at the Foreign Office by the Undersecretary, Sir Philip Currie. George Miller acted as spokesman for the deputation, which was accompanied also by Farquhar and Consul Hewett. (5) Miller, speaking for the deputation disclaimed knowledge of any attack by Ja Ja on Johnston, and protested against the seizure of the king's markets, allegedly guaranteed by Consul Livingstone in 1873, and confirmed by Hewett in 1884. Miller admitted, however, that Ohambela was "not within Ja Ja's sphere", but claimed that he "possessed great indirect influence/

(1) Johnston to Farquhar 11.12.87 reprinted in pamphlet encl. in Millers to F.O. 23.2.88, F.O. 84/1916.

(2) F.O. 84/1869. Minute by Wylde on protest of Millers to Salisbury 3.9.87 at trade stoppage.

(3) Ibid. Minutes in letters from A.A. and Couper Johnstone to F.O. supporting the deportation, 12.12.87, 13.12.87.

(4) F.O. 84/1881. Minute on despatch of Johnston, 19.3.88. Salisbury also had his doubts on Johnston, though these did not affect his actions. See Olivier, op.Cit.

(5) F.O. 84/1619. Minute by Wylde on deputation (date obscured)

influence there". Miller expressed himself as deploring any interference with trade, and readily approved Salisbury's plan to hold an investigation into affairs at Opobo by a naval officer, apparently confident that any such enquiry would have an outcome favourable to Ja Ja.

The progress of events having rendered this discussion irrelevant however, Millers commenced to agitate for Ja Ja's re-instatement, and early in the following year published a pamphlet to justify their case.⁽¹⁾ This consisted of correspondence between Miller Bros. and Salisbury, Farquhar, and Johnston, and is said to include "copies of all letters sent by them to their agents and to King Ja Ja at Opobo" - an inaccurate assertion, for letters are mentioned which are not reproduced.

The intention of the pamphlet was to vindicate the assertion that Miller Bros. in no way encouraged Ja Ja to resist consular authority or monopolise the interior markets; that on the contrary, the firm tried to dissuade him from such courses.

In the introductory letter Alexander Miller complained to Salisbury of "serious charges against my firm which are unfounded and contrary to the facts"⁽²⁾ - and the extracts printed were designed to reinforce this contention. On January 8th, 1886, Millers wrote to their agent that Ja Ja's boycott of the Association firms would not continue indefinitely, a compromise must be arranged, and on January 15th expressed their belief that:

"..... no power can interfere with the natives trading with whom they like so long as Ja Ja does not, as chief, prevent those who wish to trade to do so with whom they like. No power can compel any trader to trade except where he pleases".⁽³⁾

In November, 1886/

- (1) F.O. 84/1916, encl. in Millers to F.O. 23.2.88.
- (2) Ibid. A. Miller to Salisbury, 25.1.88
- (3) Ibid. Millers to Farquhar, 15.1.86.

In November, 1886, Miller wrote that Ja Ja should not use forcible measures against the interior traders, or offend the British Government, instead he should compete on equal terms as he was perfectly capable of doing⁽¹⁾, and instructed on January 7th, 1887, that Ja Ja "must on no account resort to force"⁽²⁾, while giving the opinion in September, 1887, that

"He can easily arrange with the Eboe men to trade with him and the Opobo men only, and if he can run the bulk of the trade for even six months, he will so weary the amalgamated people that they will be glad to leave. It is a case of competition, and if the Opobo men are as active as they should be, they can clear away all the produce so that none of it goes to Bonny or the amalgamated people".⁽³⁾

Miller wrote on September 15 to Ja Ja himself that he must not molest the Eboe people if these wanted to carry on trade with the Whites.

Although there is no reason to believe these published extracts of the firm's correspondence were not genuine, it must be doubted how seriously the points made were meant to be taken. The counsel allegedly given to the agents and the king did not correspond in any way with the realities of the situation, and it is scarcely believable that the brothers were so ignorant of how the Oil Rivers trade functioned that they really believed Ja Ja could follow a course of permitting free trade in the interior without destroying the structure of his government and his state, and to allege, in West African circumstances that, "no power can compel any trader to trade except where he pleases" was absurd.

Some other points of interest emerge from the pamphlet. Shortly after Ja Ja's arrest George Miller travelled from Glasgow to London via Liverpool to protest, but was unable to see anyone.⁽⁴⁾ The final/

(1) Ibid. Millers to agent 12.11.86.

(2) Ibid. Millers to agent 7.1.87.

(3) Ibid. Millers to agent 16.9.87.

(4) Ibid. George Miller to Ja Ja. 13.10.87.

final section represents Millers as co-operating willingly with the government as the best way to ensure justice for Ja Ja. Alexander Miller claimed he was told by Sir Philip Currie that the arrest was an act done wholly by the acting-Consul on his own responsibility, and "the outcome of a pre-concerted arrangement, probably concocted and recommended by Consul Hewett and known by members of the amalgamation." Thus it was best to keep on good terms with the Foreign Office, so that Salisbury would review favourably the report of the admiral charged with Ja Ja's trial, and Miller claimed to have advised the Opobians to be patient. (1)

The bitterness aroused by the Ja Ja affair made it immensely more difficult for the Delta firms in the following months to concert their action in the way required to present the united front necessary if they were to achieve their ambition of receiving a Royal Charter to exploit the Oil Rivers as Goldie's Royal Niger Company had done for the main river.

At length, however, after much difficulty and haggling, in which the first round of negotiations broke down in November, 1887, because the African Association refused Millers' demand for pledges to protect Opobo traders against rivals in Bonny, (2) an alliance was accomplished between Miller Bros., the Association and the R.N.C. (3) for the purpose of having the R.N.C. charter extended to the Oil Rivers. George Miller wrote to John Holt,

"My object is just to stop competition now by a fusion of interests, second to secure the administration and control of the country by which we can secure a monopoly ... (and) deal together with the Africans and secure a profit ..." (4)

The alliance/

- (1) Ibid. A. Miller to E. Bannerman, Solicitor at Accra.
- (2) H.U.A.C. p. 73.
- (3) See Flint, op.Cit. p. 102 for details.
- (4) G. Miller to J. Holt, quoted by Flint, op.cit. p. 104.

The alliance disintegrated however under pressure of the West African shipping interests who feared a united competitor, humanitarian opinion and the Delta Africans, both of which objected to the political rule of the R.N.C. Several of the Liverpool firms, conscious of the hostile publicity, defected, and eventually Millers did so as well.⁽¹⁾ The British Commissioner, Major Claude Macdonald, who was sent to the Oil Rivers to investigate the situation and recommend the most appropriate form of government for the region, interviewed Millers' agent, now one Bruce, at Opobo in 1889, and reported him as being against the abolition of slavery and favouring a separate charter (i.e. excluding the R.N.C.) for the Oil Rivers.⁽²⁾

Macdonald commented that in his opinion Bruce's view was probably influenced by orders from home, but there is some obscurity here. It is hardly to be expected that Millers, having abandoned hope of joining a company to be dominated by their ally, the R.N.C., would have been particularly anxious to join one dominated by their rivals. They certainly did not join the incorporated African Association established in June, 1889, to try for a separate Charter. In fact, towards the end of the year the Liverpool interests decided to press ahead a campaign for a separate Oil Rivers Charter, and issued a "Preliminary Statement" attacking Miller Bros., Ja Ja and the R.N.C.⁽³⁾ This would appear to have been a forlorn hope, the Government, on the basis of Macdonald's report received in mid-1889, having already decided against a Charter, but the fact that the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in 1890, after consulting Millers but not the Glasgow members of the African Association drew up a memorial against/

(1) Flint, op.cit. p. 105 - 107.

(2) F.O. 84/1940, Macdonald's report dated 12.6.89.

(3) H.U.A.C. p. 78.

against the separate Charter, ⁽¹⁾ would tend to confirm that Millers were opposed to such an option.

In any case, competition between Millers and the Association continued as fiercely as ever in the Oil Rivers during the early 1890's, at the same time as the Liverpool firms were trying to get the better of Goldie on the Niger itself. According to the unpublished history the success of Millers' enterprise in this decade was largely due to Alexander Cowan, who joined the firm in 1887. ⁽²⁾ The nineties also saw expansion on the Gold Coast after an unpromising start, stations being opened at Saltpond, Accra, Elmina, Sekondi and Winnebah, as well as the original factory at Cape Coast Castle.

In 1891 Millers extended their activity to Bonny. Previously, in mid-1888, they had retaliated against the African Association for its Opobo policies by entering the Bonny interior markets at Akweta and Asa, naturally to the great indignation of the Bonny chiefs. The Association was not at this point exploiting the Bonny markets directly, but the brothers' action forced it to do so, the Consul having refused a request by the Bonny chiefs to prohibit Millers from these markets. ⁽³⁾

The Liverpool firms fared less well there than did the Glasgow one, but in 1893 J. Hampden Jackson, the Secretary of the Association, himself came to the Oil Rivers, and consulting secretly with the chiefs of Opobo and Bonny got an agreement that the Europeans should retire from the inland markets and sell their assets there to the chiefs. The agreement stipulated further that if Millers refused to go along with this arrangement they were to be completely boycotted at Opobo/

(1) See below, Chapter III.

(2) H.U.A.C. p. 65.

(3) H.U.A.C. p. 79.

Opobo and Bonny.

Millers tried to resist at first. Cowan was sent immediately by George Miller to Opobo to try and break the boycott, and Miller himself contacted the British High Commissioner, Sir Claude Macdonald, in Switzerland, who informed Miller that he could not forbid a boycott. Before the issue could be fought out the agent at Opobo capitulated and withdrew from the interior markets. (1)

The objective conditions of the trade, however, combined with the example of the R.N.C. on the main river pointed unescapably towards the replacement of cut-throat competition by some form of cartels or amalgamations as the most satisfactory solution for the European interests, and the point was underlined by the fact that the disunity of the West African merchants put them all, including the R.N.C., at the mercy of Alfred Jones' Elder Dempster shipping combination, so far as freight rates and freedom of choice among shippers were concerned. (2) Indeed, the opposition of the shipping lobby had been one of the key factors in ensuring the defeat of the Oil Rivers Charter plan; and in the mid-nineties Jones' monopoly commenced to trade on its own account, in competition with the merchants, driving them out of the coal and cement market, and further penetrating the economic life of the area by trying to establish itself as the major supplier of the banking facilities now increasingly being required in the region.

Prior to 1892 all the West African merchants had the privilege of receiving such silver as they required for trade purposes, or more commonly for paying duties, at cost price from the Mint. In that year/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 80.

(2) For a description of the situation see P.N. Davis, "Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade", M.A. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1963.

year the ~~West~~ African Banking Corporation was established at Lagos, and given a monopoly of Mint orders on silver.⁽¹⁾ The significance of this point was that only new silver was acceptable to the Africans, the bank was put in the position of monopoly seller to the merchants, and according to Hutton it charged high rates. Within a year the W.A.B.C. closed down, but the business was purchased by the Elder Dempster shipping line, and in 1895 the Bank of British West Africa was established as a continuation, and was given privileges which, though formally modified from those of the earlier establishment, amounted in Hutton's opinion to the same thing⁽²⁾ and were extended by 1898 to the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone.⁽³⁾ The merchants were now faced with the monopolist of one essential service threatening to become, with government backing, the monopolist of another. The commission charged by the B.B.W.A. was 1%.

Even this threat was not sufficient to produce unity amongst the competing houses. The Bank gave a rebate if an annual order was made in advance, and Millers took advantage of this.⁽⁴⁾ Meantime John Holt, now the chairman of the African Association, tried to negotiate an agreement with Jones whereby the Association would have turned its entire shipping over to him, abandoning the private fleet it still maintained, on condition Jones gave it preference over Millers and the R.N.C.⁽⁵⁾ Jones' terms were unacceptable, and in 1895 Holt promoted a rival West African line, the General Steam Navigation Co. Due to a variety of factors, not least Millers' refusal/

(1) C.O. 879/62 (Colonial Office Conf. Print) West Africa Currency Committee 14.12.99. Evidence of Jas. Hutton.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Royal Commission on Shipping Rings, 1909, H.M.S.O. Cmd. 4668-4670. Evidence of Leslie Couper.

(4) Davis, op.cit. p.136.

(5) Ibid. p. 107-9.

refusal to form a common front with the African Association, Jones successfully beat off the challenge.⁽¹⁾

When in 1896 Jones, by an adroit exercise of bad faith⁽²⁾ forced the uncompromising Holt out of the chairmanship of the African Association, relations between that organisation and Millers began to improve. Soon afterwards the first temporary and local agreement was made between the two with reference to the price and division of produce,⁽³⁾

A few documents are extant which throw some light on these agreements. A letter from the Secretary of the Association to Millers of October 28th, 1897,⁽⁴⁾ refers to an alleged breach of such an agreement between the African Association, Millers and the firm of Pickering & Bethoud by the third of them, and the steps to be taken to deal with it. Pickering & Bethoud's agent at Opobo was accused of paying higher prices than those agreed to the Africans, and the firm was asked to discipline their agent. The Millers and Association agents were "arranging on 25 September prices, and instructing vigilance committees". Pickering & Bethoud for their part, however, denied "having exceeded the rates agreed on at Opobo", claiming that their agent had given an explanation of "matters which he expected would lead to charges of breach of price".⁽⁵⁾

It is not clear whether this incident was connected in any way with the sale of Pickering & Bethoud's Opobo business to Millers and the African Association a matter of days afterwards,⁽⁶⁾ the Association having exacted a promise that Pickering & Bethoud should not/

(1) Ibid. p. 95-6.

(2) Ibid. p. 117-122.

(3) H.U.A.C. p. 85.

(4) J. Hampden Jackson to Millers, document in possession of U.A.C.

(5) Ibid. 26.10.97.

(6) P. & B. to A.A. 29.10.97 encl. in A.A. to Millers, 4.11.97.

not trade directly or indirectly with Opobo for ten years after the sale was completed. Miller Bros. and the Association paid half each of the £2,750 purchase price.

In 1893, the African Association having failed in a last attempt to break the R.N.C. monopoly on the Niger, had sold all its equipment and withdrawn from the river. The impending revocation of the R.N.C. Charter in 1899 raised once more the possibility of competition by the river and delta interests in each other's spheres, when the R.N.C. could no longer use administrative methods to coerce its rivals. Conferences thereupon took place in London, Liverpool and Glasgow between Stanley Rogerson, of Thomas Harrison & Co., the largest firm in the Association, George Miller and Goldie, leading to a preliminary agreement on April 6, 1899, which was subsequently ratified and expanded by an agreement between the three firms and a fourth, the Oil Rivers Exploration Co., on May 1st, 1900. (1)

The object of the agreement, to form a profit pool, was specifically stated (Article 7) not to be a partnership, and to apply only to trading activity. Each constituent firm was to retain individual responsibility for its obligations and proprietorship of its property.

Each year net profits were to be pooled and distributed proportionately according to capital (Art. 3), the capitals to be employed in this connexion being:

A.A.	£300,000 maximum
Niger Co.	£350,000 "
Miller Bros.	£250,000 "
Oil Rivers Exploration Co.	£50,000 "

Article 9 agreed that the Niger Co. and the others would mutually respect/

(1) Memo. of agreement in possession of the United Africa Co. with reference to previous agreement of 6.4.99.

respect their former trading spheres, and all four firms undertook to give "trust" to Africans as seldom as possible (Article 3). A Committee of control was set up to supervise the agreement, and sat once a month or oftener at Surrey House, the Niger Co. headquarters, with Lord Scarborough of the N.C. as its president. (1)

Although every effort was made to keep the agreement secret, rumours leaked out, and opposition interests got the ear of Sir Ralph Moor, Macdonald's successor as High Commissioner. He contacted Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who took the situation and the threat of monopoly sufficiently seriously to personally confront the Committee, a meeting which appears to have satisfied him. (2) A collective letter from the three major groups in the combination to the Colonial Office in July, 1900, referred to the incident. (3)

In this letter the desire to create a monopoly, even if it were possible, was disclaimed, and the agreement said to be,

"... a purely self-protective measure by which we hope to avoid the recurrence of certain heavy losses of the past, and to ensure an adequate return on capital".

A further, though less fundamental move towards combination had taken place in 1897, when George Miller convened a meeting in Liverpool on January 27th of Oil Rivers merchants, opposing the trading activities of the crews on the Elder Dempster lines. A committee was elected, including Miller and Holt, which was able to obtain a certain amount of redress, and in December a further meeting put the Committee on a permanent basis and formed the West African Traders Association. (4) By 1909 this body included 29 firms trading/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 86.

(2) Ibid. p. 86-7.

(3) C.O. 520/5 5.7.00.

(4) P.N. Davis, op.cit. p. 201-204.

trading in British West Africa, and according to George Miller in that year, there was no firm of any substance outside it. (1)

The main content of the firms' letter to the C.O. quoted above refers to the bank established in Southern Nigeria in late 1899, jointly by the Niger Co., the African Association and Millers. (2)

The firms claimed that it was not set up in opposition to the former bank, the point being made that the B.B.W.A. directors had disclaimed any intention of opening east of Lagos and that the Anglo African Bank was,

"...a separate and distinct undertaking (from the individual firms) established to provide the necessary requirements for the altered condition of trade in Nigeria by the substitution of sterling currency for barter, and to furnish the trading community with proper facilities for secure deposit of their money, and that we think it due to you to make this explanation in reply to your remarks, not as presuming that H.M.G. have any desire to favour the Bank of British West Africa, or guard the interests of the steamship companies against the natural consequences of a policy (antagonism to the West African merchants) inimical to their interests". (3)

Nevertheless the idea of the Anglo African bank was certainly not divorced from that of circumventing the B.B.W.A. monopoly of Mint orders for silver. Announcing the bank's formation to the C.O. (4) its directors extended an invitation to the Government to put its Niger business in their hands, and expressed themselves as happy to consider any proposals from Chamberlain for establishing further branches in the Oil Rivers or Niger. Three houses, safes, and other necessary equipment were already ordered, and the bank was in a position to commence business immediately at Old Calabar, Asaba or Onitsha and Lukoja, being capable of extending later to any place in Northern Nigeria desired by Lugard. The bank would deliver cash/

(1) Royal Commission on Shipping Rings, 1909, Evidence of George Miller.

(2) The Bank of British West Africa was not established on the Niger or Oil Rivers.

(3) A.A., N.C. and Millers to C.O. loc.cit.

(4) C.O. 444/4 A.A.B. to C.O. 17.11.99.

cash to Lugard & Moor on the same terms as the B.B.W.A. in Lagos. (1)

The bank, however, received no government favours, either in the shape of government business or in the right to import Mint silver. The C.O. officials put a decidedly more cynical interpretation on the A.A.B's motives than appears in the letters of its promoters. A letter from the bank to the C.O. of April, 1900 (2) regrets the Government's refusal to employ them for its business and asks for authorisation to receive from the Mint the supplies of silver needed at Old Calabar. The authorisation was refused, (3) the C.O. justifying its position on the grounds that the bank was merely the African Association and Miller Bros. under another name. The individual firms had apparently got the right to import up to £800 of mint silver per month for their Nigerian business - though they sometimes found difficulty in exercising even this (4) - and the C.O. officials believed that the Bank's request was simply designed to avoid this limitation. A memorandum of June 2nd, 1900, elaborates the C.O. point of view (5),

".... we refused unlimited facilities in the first instance because we suspected that these firms, baffled in their attempt to control the currency in Southern Nigeria by the establishment of the Anglo African Bank there to the exclusion of the Bank of British West Africa might utilise unlimited facilities for the importation of silver to create a redundancy of the coin in Southern Nigeria, and so discredit beforehand the cash system which we wish to introduce in place of the barter system, which the trader prefers as being more profitable".

and looks forward to the establishment of the B.B.W.A. in Old Calabar to/

(1) The Directors were John Kirk; C.B. Edgar, N.C.: Stanley Rogerson, Wm. Couper, A.A.: G. & A. Miller. The bank was established at Calabar, Burunta and Lokoja - Royal Commission on Shipping Rings, evidence of Clifford Edgar.

(2) C.O. 520/5. A.A.B. to C.O. 9.4.00.

(3) Ibid. C.O. to A.A.B. 14.4.00

(4) C.O. 879/62 (C.O. Conf. Print) West Africa Currency Committee, Evidence of Alex. Miller.

(5) C.O. 520/5 2.6.00

to control the silver supply in the Niger area, while a memorandum of July 9th, 1900, mentions that imports of silver are used almost exclusively to pay duties and little effort made by the merchants to encourage circulation among the Africans. (1)

The letter previously quoted from the three firms justifying the foundation of the A.A.B. carries a marginal note by a C.O. official opposite the assertion that the purpose of the bank was to extend the use of silver currency to the effect that,

"This is by no means the object of Mr. Alex. Miller according to his own admission before the West Africa Currency Committee".

The West Africa Currency Committee sat at the end of 1899 to consider the question of a separate colonial currency for West Africa in place of British coinage then in use. (2) Alexander Miller's evidence before it gives a picture of the firm's operations at the end of the century. On the point referred to above, Miller had said that he preferred the barter system to a silver currency in the rivers, because he feared ^{the latter} ~~it~~ would be less profitable. (3) He also opposed the idea of a token coinage below 3d. in value being substituted for the generally used brass rods and cowrie shells, as "there would be a danger from the natives - in competition", who, "would be cutting the thing closer than it is".

Miller told the Committee that the Oil Rivers trade was still mainly barter, only a little silver was used, and that exclusively for the purchase of African rubber. The main trade goods used were cottons, hardware, guns, gunpowder and salt, and the barter trade was being extended inland up the creeks, especially since the destruction of the King of Benin's power. The firm's trade was entirely a wholesale/

(1) Ibid.

(2) C.O. 879/62 (C.P.) for report and evidence. The report favoured a Colonial currency but was not implemented.

(3) Alfred Jones evidence tends to confirm this. He claimed the merchants opposed the B.B.W.A. because it undermined their truck-like system.

wholesale one with African middlemen, it did no petty or retail business.

At this time the Gold Coast sector of the business mainly dealt in smuggled rubber from the French possessions. In 1900, however, the French administration had begun to repress the trade, and no rubber had come in that autumn, while very little else was being produced on the Gold Coast. Since the trade there was done mainly on a currency basis, this had resulted in Millers having to hold unprofitably large stocks of silver which they had shipped out, then to repatriate it again at a loss. Apart from this difficulty, Alexander Miller felt that the currency situation on the Gold Coast was reasonably satisfactory. He also mentioned that by this date Millers had no steamers of their own.

Little information is available regarding the West African rubber trade which flourished briefly in the late 1890s. A letter by Ralph Moor to the Foreign Office⁽¹⁾ referring to requests for rubber concessions from Millers and the African Association argues that,

"I am inclined to object to the applicants rather more than the concessions, for they put little or nothing into the country, and want the concessions merely to draw all they can out - this 'entre nous'".

One of the brothers visited the Colonial Office in December, 1900⁽²⁾ to discuss a letter of the West African Trade Association on the development of resources in West Africa, particularly of rubber. The Association requested that measures be taken in Southern Nigeria to protect a species of rubber plant producing "root rubber" be extended to Lagos to prevent destruction of the resource by over exploitation. The Trade Association requested at the same time an easing of the prohibitive/

(1) F.O. 2/197, Moor to F.O. 16.5.98.

(2) C.O. 520/5 Minute 15.12.00.

prohibitive duties on mahogany exports from the Niger, especially in view of the fact that they did not exist in Lagos, a reduction in spirit duties, a government contract for the Anglo-African Bank, more government attention to communications and greater concentration by the Government on political as distinct from military expeditions.

The later history of the firm may now be briefly recounted. From 1900 it continued to expand throughout Nigeria and by 1904, with the establishment of a branch in Lagos, was represented at every important location,⁽¹⁾ and in 1902 the home office was moved from Glasgow to Liverpool. In 1906, jointly with the African Association, it purchased the Niger interests of James Pinnock, formerly a constituent firm of the R.N.C.⁽²⁾, and Taylor Laughland's Gold Coast business was bought in a similar fashion in 1906, while in 1904 Millers had largely taken over the business of F.A. Swanzy on the Gold Coast. Previously, in 1903, Millers had set up jointly the Ashanti Obuasi Trading Co., Ltd., to take over trading activity in the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation territory⁽³⁾, and a Gold Coast pool was formed between Millers, its client company, Swanzy, and The African Association. In 1907 the firm of Alexander Miller Brothers & Co. disappeared, being divided into two private companies for Nigeria and the Gold Coast respectively.⁽⁴⁾

When the 1900 agreement expired in 1909 it was renewed, - unenthusiastically, because of previous frictions - for a further twenty years⁽⁵⁾, and the pool tried unsuccessfully to buy out the West African/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 64.

(2) H.U.A.C. p. 84.

(3) Ibid. p. 87.

(4) Ibid. p. 68.

(5) Ibid. p. 88.

West African interests of Elder Dempster when Jones died in 1909. In 1911, the Anglo African Bank, now re-named the 'Bank of Nigeria', not having proved a success, was sold to the Bank of British West Africa.

An attempted amalgamation of the companies in the pool having failed in 1915, open competition began in 1917 between the Niger Co. and the others, and the agreement was declared ended. Alexander Miller resigned from the Niger Co. board and the Miller group and the African Association to operate in Niger Co. territory, combining 2 years later into the African & Eastern Trade Corporation, in which the African Association, being a public company, formally absorbed the others. (1)

Leverhulme, having acquired the N.C. in 1920, tried to buy the Corporation but failed until in 1928 the Corporation, after suffering a loss, was cut off from credit by the banks. To save itself from liquidation the Corporation had to agree to accept a chairman nominated by the banks, and he immediately began to negotiate for a merger with the Niger Co., accomplished in the firm of the present U.A.C. (2)

Before this outcome, however, both the brothers had died, George in 1924 and Alexander in 1922, leaving, according to Sir Harry Johnston, a very considerable fortune. (3)

(b) Taylor Laughland

Following Miller Bros. the most notable of the Glasgow West African firms were two members of the African Association, Taylor Laughland and Couper Johnstone, the former a private and the latter a public/

(1) Ibid. p. 91-3

(2) Ibid. p. 101.

(3) Sir Harry Johnston, "The Story of my Life", Chatto & Windus, 1923. p. 216.

a public company. Taylor Laughland were established well before 1870, there is a passing reference to them in a government document of 1866⁽¹⁾, and their interests were also much more diverse than those of the other firms mentioned. Alongside their main sphere of operations in the Niger Delta they were active at the Congo mouth, where their factory, according to a Glasgow Herald report of 1870, was burned down accidentally in March, 1870⁽²⁾. At some period within the following twenty years however, they appear to have withdrawn from this field. S.J. Cooley in his book "Britain and the Congo Question" mentions Hatton and Cookson of Liverpool as being the only British firm working there in 1890⁽³⁾. The firm's interests also extended to the Gold Coast⁽⁴⁾ and to Sierra Leone.⁽⁵⁾

During the period under consideration the leading figure in the firm appears to have been one R. Cowan McKinnon, who signed most of the letters on behalf of the firm extant in the P.R.O. records, and is referred to from time to time in the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Minutes.⁽⁶⁾ In 1894 he became a director of the Royal Niger Co.⁽⁷⁾ presumably under the agreement of 1893, whereby the African Association was allotted a director on the R.N.C. board in return for selling its Niger equipment and ceasing competition there.

According to Commander Craigie's list of Oil River firms of 1884 reproduced above, Taylor Laughland were established at Opobo and Old Calabar in the Delta. The firm, as noted, also opened a factory on Essene Creek/

- (1) F.O. 84/1268. Report on the River Congo. 30.6.66.
- (2) G.H. 1.4.70.
- (3) S.J.S. Cooley, "Britain and the Congo Question 1885-1913" (Longmans 1966).
- (4) H.U.A.C. p. 84.
- (5) See below.
- (6) See below.
- (7) Stock Exchange Yearbook, 1895.

Essene Creek up the Opobo. (1)

No independent protest by Taylor Laughland to the Government is discernible regarding the Anglo Portuguese Congo Treaty of 1884, a fact which might indicate on one hand that the firm had already withdrawn from that region, or that Taylor Laughland felt their interests were sufficiently safeguarded by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, by which the firm was consulted before the Chamber delivered its opinion on the Treaty.

Despite the ill feeling between the West African merchants and the Elder Dempster shipping lines as described above, Taylor Laughland were nevertheless, during the nineteenth century, the Glasgow agents for the British and African Steam Navigation Company. (2)

It is not possible to obtain any indication of the size of the firm in capital terms, or of any of its financial transactions or shareholders, and its detailed history is largely obscure, apart from one episode involving an attempt by the firm to extend its interests west of Sierra Leone. It discovered what was considered to be an ideal point of entry into the trade of the region in the shape of the tiny coastal island of Matacong, lying just off the boundary line between Sierra Leone and French Guinea at the mouth of the river Mellacourie.

Having leased the island, however, Taylor Laughland discovered that in pursuing commercial expansion along these lines it fell foul of the French Imperial authorities, and that its claim to operate commercially on Matacong was considered to have serious implications for the sovereign rights of the French administration.

Such being the case, the Governor of French Guinea took steps to make life impossible for the Taylor Laughland agents, and to exclude them/

(1) F.O. 84/1828. Map encl. in Johnston to F.O. 12.8.87.

(2) City of Glasgow Directory.

them from Matacong, and prevented the firm from exercising not only the contested rights, but even those which the French themselves admitted, regardless of the fact that it emerged that there was some degree of imprecision and ambiguity in the bilateral agreements which transferred the British claim to Matacong to France, so much so that even the officials in Sierra Leone appeared to be unaware of the fact. (1) Had the Foreign Office, at a time of widespread partition and vigorous imperial expansion, had any urge to place the weight of British diplomacy behind the British firm's claim to proprietorship of the island, it would have had little difficulty in discovering arguments to support its case. Conversely, had the Government wished to act according to frequent usage in disputed African territories, and use the alleged rights of Taylor Laughland or its lessor as a lever to establish a claim of its own, it could have done so with every appearance of rectitude. As European claims to African territory went, Taylor Laughland's certainly appeared to be no worse than most.

However, the Government did not choose to follow such a course. Not only did it concede without argument the interpretation of the Anglo French agreements which put Matacong firmly inside the French colonial borders, but it also declined to give any effective backing to the efforts of Taylor Laughland and its lessor's solicitors to win French acknowledgment of their proprietary rights, and to be permitted unfettered exercise of their trading activities.

Matacong Island had been ceded by its inhabitants to the British Government in a treaty signed in 1826, but this agreement had never been implemented, though the Government appears to have maintained its option. In 1846 a trading factory was established (2) and/

(1) Correspondence relating to the Island of Matacong, West Africa, F.O. 27/3449, Norris & Sons, Solicitors, Liverpool, to F.O. 29.10.91.

(2) Ibid. C.O. observations on Bowden's title, 10.5.92.

and in the mid seventies it became apparent to the Sierra Leone administration that considerable damage was being caused to the Customs revenue of the colony by the diversion of imports through the island, at that time occupied by the firm of Randall and Fisher. It was therefore decided to take advantage of the 1826 treaty and incorporate Matabele into the Colony, and a notice of annexation was posted in 1877. This action, however, resulted in the French advancing a claim to sovereignty, and in 1879 French troops were landed⁽¹⁾ .

Following protests on the part of the British these were later withdrawn, and both parties agreed to respect the status quo until a permanent agreement could be negotiated. In 1882 a boundary convention was signed between the two governments in which Matabele was ceded to the French. This convention was never ratified for, anticipating the attitude of the French Chamber, the government never presented it. Neither was it published, but the two governments chose to treat the convention as if it were in force. Finally in the year 1889 an agreement was signed and ratified, which intimated that the boundary of the two colonies should conform to the terms of the 1882 convention, but which neither quoted the previous document, nor mentioned Matabele island.⁽²⁾

While these events were proceeding Randall and Fisher, the company installed on the island, mortgaged their property to Jas. Bowden, and proceeded into bankruptcy. The property reverted to Bowden, who, hearing rumours of the 1882 treaty, enquired in 1885 at the Foreign Office, and received assurances that proprietary rights were/

(1) Ibid. Memo on Matabele by Sir A. Hemming of the C.O. encl. with copy of letter by Smith to T.L. 29.5.91, with Norris to F.O. 22.10.91.

(2) Ibid.

were not affected.⁽¹⁾ When the 1889 agreement was arrived at Bowden's received no intimation of any change in its position,⁽²⁾ and in 1891 the firm proceeded to lease the island to Taylor Laughland, who sent out a Henry Smith as agent to commence operations.⁽³⁾

Taylor Laughland believed that the island was very favourably situated from an economic point of view. According to the pamphlet which Taylor Laughland issued at a later stage to explain its position, on Matacong, in contrast to the mainland, trade was not confined to seasonal periods, but could be conducted on an all-the-year-round basis. The island numbered among its products; rubber, gum, palm oil, kernels, ground nuts, indigo and rice. In addition the natives were said to be co-operative and eager to engage in trade. The greatest inducement of all, however, according to this document, was the belief that Matacong was exempt from import duties, as apparently no charges were laid on trans-shipments from thence to the mainland,⁽⁴⁾ and McKinnon later reiterated this point in a letter to the Foreign Office.⁽⁵⁾ Smith indeed expressed himself as confident that Matacong was the key to the French possessions in this part of West Africa, and could ruin the revenue of that region. For this reason, he thought, the French would stop at nothing to gain possession.⁽⁶⁾

It may be questioned as to how far these reports were reliable.

Salisbury/

- (1) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 26.9.91.
- (2) Ibid. R.C. McKinnon to F.O. 21.3.92.
- (3) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 26.9.91.
- (4) Ibid. "Facts Regarding the Lease of the Island of Matacong, West Coast of Africa by Taylor Laughland & Co. Glasgow, & Forcible Expulsion by French Armed Force".
- (5) McKinnon to F.O. 4.12.91.
- (6) Smith to T.L. 25.9.91.

Salisbury may have been speaking out of annoyance when he called Matacong, "A desert island at the mouth of a pestilential river"⁽¹⁾, but "a Liverpool correspondent" of the Glasgow Herald in 1879 made an unpromising estimate:⁽²⁾

"It possesses no harbour and the steamers trading between the coast and Liverpool have to anchor about four miles off when they have occasion to call for cargo.....Matacong is not noted for the growth of any particular produce, the soil being rather sterile than otherwise. It is not thickly populated and is not very often visited by the Whites of the other part of the coast. In many quarters the island was looked upon as an open port where the natives could sell the land, and the purchaser would be under the protection of the government to which he belonged, while by others it was considered to be under the protection of the British flag".

Smith arrived at Matacong on July 26, 1891, and immediately began to organise trading. His version of what followed goes thus. Several large trading canoes from the mainland had already visited him when on September 11 two men, claiming the authority of the French government arrived on the island and commenced to maltreat the African population. Smith remonstrated with them, and subsequently on September 16 five gendarmes arrived to inspect the situation. Nothing happened, and on the 19th Smith was about to leave the island temporarily, but having seen a French gunboat approach it, he turned back in order to keep an eye on further events. Reaching the station he found the British flag he was accustomed to fly hauled down, and his assistant, Charles McFoy, subjected to ill treatment. Immediately he hoisted a fresh flag, and this being observed from the gunboat, men were sent ashore, who after removing the flag and assaulting McFoy once more, took both of them prisoner, though promising Smith he would be allowed to proceed to Sierra Leone. On the way to the French gunboat "Ardent" Smith/

(1) J.D. Hargreaves, "Prelude to the Partition of West Africa" (Macmillan & Co. London, 1963) p. 226.

(2) Glasgow Herald, 7.4.79.

Smith was roughly handled. Once on board they were confronted with Ballay, Governor of French Guinea, who having assaulted McFoy yet again and put him in irons, took both men to Conakry where Smith, having been refused any assistance by Ballay, managed with difficulty to get a passage back to Sierra Leone, while McFoy was sentenced to fifteen days imprisonment with hard labour.⁽¹⁾

This is the only extended account of the incident which appears, and apart from denials of the charge of brutality by the French it was not substantially contradicted by any of the parties concerned.

There ensued a lengthy correspondence, largely between the relevant government departments and Norris & Sons of Liverpool, solicitors for James Bowden & Co., who claimed the proprietorship of the island, but from time to time directly involving Taylor Laughland as well.

On 26th September, 1891, Norris opened the exchange with a letter to the Foreign Office, summarising the island's background, stating that Taylor Laughland's representative had been expelled, and enquiring what steps were to be taken to protect Smith's person and the British proprietary rights.⁽²⁾ On 22nd October this was followed up with a copy of Smith's report detailing the circumstances surrounding his expulsion.⁽³⁾ The correspondence continued for almost exactly seven years, during which Norris and their clients constantly reiterated their demand for recognition and protection of their claimed proprietary rights, and the Foreign Office just as constantly evaded them.

Much of the argument in fact was conducted at cross purposes. The F.O. concentrated on discussing the question of sovereignty, the companies/

(1) F.O. 27/3449 Smith to T.L. loc. cit.

(2) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 26.9.91.

(3) Ibid. Smith to T.L. 25.9.91.

companies naturally were more concerned with the issue of their property rights. Not that Smith or Taylor Laughland neglected the question of sovereignty all the same. Both were firmly convinced that Matacong was British by rights, agreements notwithstanding. In the pamphlet published by Taylor Laughland previously mentioned, it is asserted that,

".....the French can therefore have no claim to the island ... as no mention of the island of Matacong is made in the agreement between Great Britain and France of 10.8.89, Africa No. 3 (1890) which refers to a Treaty of 1882, which Treaty, however, was never ratified or published. The line of demarcation referred to in Article No. 2 of said agreement merely applies to the mainland"(1)

This, however, was subsidiary, even though Smith was able to demonstrate that even the Sierra Leone authorities were not sure what the true position was, and were ignorant of the fact that the 1882 Convention had been confirmed by the 1889 agreement.⁽²⁾ Norris and Taylor Laughland rested their case on the grounds that, whatever the position in regard to sovereignty may have been, Smith's expulsion was illegal as he had committed no crime. It was not illegal to fly the British flag in foreign territories, and Smith's predecessor had been accustomed to do so.⁽³⁾ Secondly, Taylor Laughland stressed the degree to which the British Government was responsible for its plight, as the island had been leased under the firm impression that it was a British possession, and no intimation had ever been received of any change in status. The question of sovereignty, it was argued, did not affect the fact that the British companies were the legitimate proprietors and lessees of Matacong, and the French authorities were arbitrarily denying them access/

(1) Ibid. "Facts Regarding the Lease...."

(2) Ibid. Summary of correspondence between Smith and Colonial Secretary at Freetown, Summarised by Hemming, 29.10.91.

(3) Ibid. McKinnon to F.O. 21.3.92.

access to and use of their own property. On 6.11.91 Norris demanded to know whether any provision regarding the proprietary rights had been included in the 1889 convention.⁽¹⁾ This question apparently was never answered, and although Norris had been informed in 1885 that the question was exclusively one of sovereignty and proprietorship was not affected in any way, nevertheless a minute appended by Lister to Norris's letter of 6.11.92 makes it clear that the point had never been raised in 1885 when negotiations were proceeding, as it had been considered "inappropriate" at the time to do so.

Following the policy of concentrating on the proprietorship question and the illegality of the French behaviour, R. Cowan McKinnon, on behalf of Taylor Laughland, wrote a letter to the Foreign Office in which French sovereignty was conceded, and the request made that the Government should use its influence with the French to the following purposes:

- 1) To get a formal recognition of Bowden's proprietary rights and the legitimacy of the Taylor Laughland occupation as lessees.
- 2) To get an undertaking from the French that duties on the island would not be higher than those on the mainland, and that no differential duties would be imposed to the prejudice of British shipping together with some concession on the tariff rates.
- 3) Compensation for the Smith affair.⁽²⁾

The Foreign Office did agree to raise the matter with the French, but displayed a signal lack of urgency in pressing any claims. From the beginning it showed no great enthusiasm for the validity of the company's title. Appended to McKinnon's letter, a minute by Anderson/

(1) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 6.11.91.

(2) Ibid. McKinnon to F.O. 4.12.91.

Anderson suggested a reply in the terms that no idea of sovereignty could be entertained, but the Office would advocate the proprietary claims if title was proved. Nevertheless, the minute continued, the British Government could not interfere with French law in respect of proprietorship of land in French territory by British citizens.

The documents relevant to title claims were received from Norris in March, 1892.⁽¹⁾ Two months later they were still under examination, having been passed on to the Colonial Office for an opinion.⁽²⁾ The C.O. concluded that Bowden had a title by a document of 1842 establishing the factory, but not by the Treaty of 1826.⁽³⁾ Nevertheless, this does not appear to have satisfied the Foreign Office officials, for on May 24th Salisbury wrote to Norris informing the solicitors that the Government would only make representations on the basis of continued possession as sufficient validity of the title was not recognised.⁽⁴⁾

Smith's allegations of ill-treatment of himself and McFoy found little support or sympathy in the Foreign Office, though at first his case seemed to evoke some concern.⁽⁵⁾ A minute attached to the copies of Smith's correspondence with his employers asserts - without quoting any evidence - that he exaggerated his ill-treatment; but a further minute by Lister disagreed, stating that excessive violence was used, and stressing that his actions on the face of it appeared to be perfectly proper.

By January/

- (1) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 11.3.92.
- (2) Ibid. T.V. Lister to McKinnon, 9.5.92.
- (3) Ibid. C.O. Observation on title, 10.5.92.
- (4) Ibid. Salisbury to Norris. 24.6.92.
- (5) Ibid. - unsigned minute, - Minute by T.V. Lister attached to copy of Smith to T.L. 25.9.91.

By January, 1892, Salisbury, writing to Norris was asserting that it was clear that Smith had tried to repudiate French sovereignty - which does not seem to have been the case - and that no compensation would be demanded as the charges of brutality had not been established.⁽¹⁾ In March Anderson added a minute, enclosed by Lister, to a letter written by McKinnon to Salisbury, in which Anderson noted that there was "no need to continue" the correspondence regarding Smith.⁽²⁾ A reply was then despatched to McKinnon, in which, without decisively repudiating Smith's case, the Foreign Office excused the delay in dealing with his case on the grounds that Her Majesty's Government could not examine the evidence of foreign officers.⁽³⁾ Nothing more appears to have been done. The Foreign Office was sufficiently anxious to avoid action on this issue to try and switch responsibility to the Colonial Office, on the grounds of its connexion with Sierra Leone.⁽⁴⁾ The Colonial Office refused to be drawn, and expressed the opinion that since Matacong was now a French possession the matter was properly the concern of the F.O.⁽⁵⁾ Lister regretfully accepted this,⁽⁶⁾ but in December, 1891, Meade of the Colonial Office was writing again to the F.O. upbraiding its staff for failure to reply to the letter from Norris which had passed on to the Colonial Office for an opinion and subsequently remitted.⁽⁷⁾

Yet another procrastinating device employed by the Foreign Office officials was to claim in regard to Norris's queries that they could not be answered as the office was already in touch with Taylor Laughland/

(1) Ibid. Salisbury to Norris. 22.1.92.

(2) Ibid. Minute by H.P. Anderson. 21.3.92.

(3) Ibid. F.O. to McKinnon. 9.5.92.

(4) Ibid. Inter-departmental minute. 8.12.91.

(5) Ibid. C.O. to F.O. 23.12.91.

(6) Ibid. Minute by T.V. Lister on C.O. memo.

(7) Ibid. C.O. to F.O. 31.12.91.

Laughland, and could not correspond with the lessees and proprietors of Matacong at the same time.⁽¹⁾

Eventually in August, 1892, the Government did make approaches to the French.⁽²⁾ During the negotiations which followed, the French government appears to have applied a policy of calculated obstructiveness. This seems to have commenced as far back as July, 1891, when ^{the} administration in Guinea informed the Colonial Secretary at Freetown that Smith would be allowed back on Matacong if he deposited at the French Consulate copies of his title to the factory⁽³⁾, copies which were in the possession of the Glasgow office and not of the local agent.

During the discussions which followed Lord Dufferin the Ambassador's first approach to Paris in August, 1892, the French, avoiding an open legal confrontation, did not at any time make an outright denial of the British proprietary claim, but they did use every device to obstruct a settlement favourable to Taylor Laughland, and seem to have taken steps to advance the interests of their own nationals.

In January, 1893, Dufferin informed Rosebery that permission would be given for Smith to return to Matacong if he obeyed the regulations, but it was felt all the same that Taylor Laughland should send another agent, and in any case demanded that Smith apologise to the Governor of Guinea for his attitude.⁽⁴⁾ These conditions appear to have been refused. In April the French Government wanted to inspect the title deeds.⁽⁵⁾ Before any results emerged/

(1) Ibid. F.O. to Norris. 21.12.91.

(2) Ibid. F.O. to Ambassador in Paris. 9.8.92.

(3) Ibid. Colonial Secretariat, Freetown, to H. Smith. 7.11.91.

(4) Ibid. Dufferin to Rosebery. 12.1.93.

(5) Ibid. Dufferin to F.O. 17.4.93.

emerged from this, information came from Smith, now based on Freetown, that due to the negligence of the French authorities the Taylor Laughland premises on Matacong had been robbed, and, in the beginning of 1894, that a French company was preparing to open business there⁽¹⁾, while Taylor Laughland protested that anchorage dues were beginning to be levied on the island.⁽²⁾ Norris, however, was informed on 24th April, 1894, that the anchorage charges were in line with those prevalent in French Guinea, and further that the French now asserted that other claims to ownership existed and must be given consideration.⁽³⁾ This brought bitter protest from Norris who complained that never before had anything been heard of a rival claim, and that it was obviously nothing but a delaying device.⁽⁴⁾ Then in May, 1895, the French expressed themselves willing to recognise proprietary rights for the occupied buildings,⁽⁵⁾ Norris in the meantime having rejected a previous French suggestion that Bowden should prove their claim before a local court, or submit to arbitration, since the French had never proved their title deeds to be out of order, nor produced any legitimate rival claimants.⁽⁶⁾ The later suggestion was rejected likewise, Bowden & Co. asserting their right to proprietorship of the entire island.⁽⁷⁾

In July, 1895, with no settlement still in sight, the British Government suggested arbitration between the two governments as an alternative to private arbitration, since the case was unlikely to be settled/

(1) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 8.11.93.

(2) Ibid. Dufferin to F.O. 7.9.93.

(3) Ibid. F.O. to Norris. 24.4.94.

(4) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 11.5.94.

(5) F.O. 27/3450. Dufferin to F.O. 25.5.95.

(6) Ibid. Dufferin to F.O. 7.11.94, Norris to F.O. 4.1.95.

(7) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 4.1.95.

settled satisfactorily through normal diplomatic channels.⁽¹⁾ Reluctantly Norris agreed, and suggested as a possible alternative that perhaps the French would buy out the British claims,⁽²⁾ While Smith wrote on December 11th, 1895, that the French were erecting new buildings on Matacong and dismantling previous ones⁽³⁾ the French government refused both suggested courses.⁽⁴⁾ It would not buy out the claim and it rejected inter-government arbitration. Only private arbitration, or a settlement through the Conakry courts was acceptable to it. Norris protested that no justice could be expected from the Conakry courts, and at private arbitration Bowden would be up against a French government which had shown a disposition to injustice and refused governmental arbitration because it would be more likely to be fair.⁽⁵⁾

The F.O. replied that if Bowden lost in the Conakry court the firm could appeal to the Cour de Cassation in France,⁽⁶⁾ but owing to Norris mislaying this letter it was nearly a year before the solicitors replied that no confidence was felt in the Cour de Cassation as the Conakry court would take steps to make the right of appeal useless.⁽⁷⁾ Clement Hill minuted a reply that since the French were immovable the British government could do little more, and scotched a suggestion from Norris that it should be put before the Niger Commissioners, currently discussing the Niger boundaries.⁽⁸⁾ The reply was sent on October, 26, 1897, and there was no further correspondence until Norris on July 28, 1898, reiterated their refusal to trust the French courts, and demanded from the government for their client the protection and assistance "to which he considers he is entitled".⁽⁹⁾

- (1) Ibid. F.O. to Norris. 16.7.95.
- (2) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 23.8.95.
- (3) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 11.12.95.
- (4) Ibid. Dufferin to F.O. 20.2.96. F.O. to Norris 9.9.96.
- (5) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 20.8.96.
- (6) Ibid. F.O. to Norris 9.9.96.
- (7) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 5.10.97.
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) Ibid. Norris to F.O. 28.7.98.

entitled". To that the Foreign Office closed the correspondence with the reply that Salisbury had no intention of suggesting to the French that their courts were corrupt, and since Bowden had refused arbitration he did not see any way of helping until legal measures were exhausted. (1)

From the evidence available there does not seem on the face of it to have been any very determined attempt by Taylor Laughland to mobilise outside support to bring pressure to bear on the government in their favour. The firm did publish a pamphlet - though not in its own name - setting out its case. On 9 and 23 April, 1895, there were questions asked in Parliament concerning the affair, (2) but the matter does not appear to have been pursued after the Government's evasive answer. An approach for support was made to the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. On March 14, 1892, R.C. McKinnon raised the matter at a Directors' meeting, but the Board's decision was to wait until the position was clarified by further correspondence between McKinnon and the Government. (3) In June, 1892, a letter from McKinnon was read to the directors, stating that the Government had practically admitted the validity of the British owners' title, but that the claims of the proprietors were still outstanding. (4) The directors referred the matter to the Foreign Affairs Committee which, after hearing McKinnon on the subject, recommended that no action should be taken in the meantime. (5)

It is a striking feature of the correspondence that the arguments advanced by Taylor Laughland and Norris were throughout sidestepped and/

(1) Ibid. F.O. to Norris 11.8.98.

(2) 'Hansard', loc.cit.

(3) Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Directors' Minutes, 14.3.92.

(4) Ibid. 13.6.92.

(5) Ibid. 8.8.92.

and evaded, while the Government, under three administrations maintained a nearly inflexible determination not to press forcibly on Taylor Laughland's behalf.

During the first five years of the eighteen-nineties such an attitude could not reasonably be put down to a lack of interest in African questions or even in West African issues, as bitter disputes with the French over territories on the Niger were to demonstrate in the next three years. It could not be attributed either to a passion for abstract justice and respect for the claims of others, as during the same period the Government showed no hesitation in taking advantage of a number of treaties made by the Royal Niger Co. which British Commissioner, Claude MacDonald, judged to be spurious. It may be noted that Taylor Laughland, unlike the British South Africa Co., the Imperial British East Africa Co. or the Lake Nyassa missions had no powerful backers.

It appears reasonable to deduce that having transferred Matabeleland to French sovereignty, the British Government was determined to wash its hands of it as far as possible. The French seem to have realised this, and to have pressed their advantage to the utmost, motivated very likely by the threat which Matabeleland was alleged to present to the customs revenue of the mainland.

It would not indeed be unreasonable to expect the British Government to adopt the attitude it did at this particular time. Vast tracts of African territory were being marked down and appropriated by European governments during these years, the question of the ultimate division of the entire continent was obtruding itself sharply, and the British Government was striving to reach accommodations with several European powers in numerous delicate areas. It is hardly to be expected that it would permit a petty squabble involving an insignificant Glasgow firm in an obscure West African backwater/

backwater to jeopardise these projects, particularly as a boundary agreement had been negotiated in this region to the satisfaction of both powers, and a strong demarche in favour of Taylor Laughland would presumably have risked upsetting it. The Glasgow firm fell victim to the obscurities and ambiguities in this agreement, for in every instance the Foreign Office tacitly allowed the French to have the benefit of any doubt which existed, so that in spite of the apparent strength of their case in legal terms, Taylor Laughland after seven years of discussion and argument obtained no satisfaction whatsoever, while strong grounds exist for believing that their interests were sacrificed to the exigencies of continental diplomacy.

(c) Couper Johnstone

A greater range of general information exists on Couper Johnstone than on Taylor Laughland, the former being a public company whose official returns may be inspected at the Companies Registration Office, 102, George Street, Edinburgh.

The company was incorporated on May 23rd, 1879, and enjoyed a separate existence thereafter for ten years. It is not entirely clear whether this company was a successor to the private companies of William Couper & Co. and Couper & Scott & Co. which traded in the Oil Rivers during the seventies, but the presumption is that this was so, the chairman in each case being William Couper.

The firm's capital at incorporation was £20,000 in 2,000 £10 shares, 300 of these being 'B' and the remainder 'A' shares. The Memorandum of Association specified that the company should carry on the business of merchants and traders at Opobo, or at any other place in the U.K. or the West Coast of Africa, or elsewhere. Among the subscribers, apart from two Coupers, William and James, and Walter Johnstone/

Johnstone who gave the firm its name, were R.N. Dunn, a ship broker and the Belgian Consul in Glasgow, and Thomas Coats the Paisley thread manufacturer. In 1881 a decision was taken to raise the capital of the firm to £30,000 by creating 1,000 shares of £10 each. Prior to this Couper had held 450 and Johnstone 430 out of a total of 1,450 shares allocated. In December, 1881, Couper and Johnstone held 600 and 580 respectively out of a total allocation of 1,750. Johnstone held 1,100 shares out of a total of 3,000 on his death in 1885, Couper having 1,105 at that period.⁽¹⁾

Couper Johnstone's interests in the Oil Rivers were slightly more extensive than those of Taylor Laughland. According to Commander Craigie's 1884 table, the firm traded at New Calabar, Opobo and Bonny.

When first settled at Opobo the firm seems to have been in very close relations with Ja Ja, and to have supported the exclusion of Watts from the Qua Eboe market. In 1884, Consul Hewett, writing to the Foreign Office on the situation and a letter from Couper Johnstone in support of the king commented that, "Mr. Johnstone was the person who for a long time acted as clerk or amanuensis to Ja Ja, and certainly does not give a true or impartial account of the Qua Eboe matter".⁽²⁾ It is to be presumed that while Couper looked after the Glasgow end of the business, Johnstone was in charge on the West African coast. This might account for the fact that Opobo, where Johnstone seems to have been based, was specifically mentioned in the Memorandum of Association establishing the firm.

Things altered completely, however, with the development of the dispute between Ja Ja and the African Association, and Couper Johnstone entirely backed the African Association. Thus the agent at Opobo/

(1) C.R.O. File No. 891.

(2) F.O. 403/31 (C.P.) Hewett to F.O. 14.2.84.

at Opobo wrote in 1887 that,

"Now that Ja Ja sees us ready and determined to go up (to the interior markets) he threatens us with opposition armed or otherwise, so we are waiting for the Consul and a gunboat. Trade is stopped".(1)

Nevertheless the former friendly relations between the firm and the Opobeans do not seem to have disappeared entirely. Writing in 1888 Hewett told the F.O. that Couper Johnstone had abandoned their station at Essene Creek, and remarks that, "This step of returning was taken, I have no doubt, to curry favour with the Opobo people, and is quite in accord with acts of previous representatives at Opobo of Messrs. Couper Johnstone & Co., Ltd."(2) Since that in Essene Creek was the only up-river trade conducted by the firm, Hewett now felt confident he could buy their steam launch for his own purposes.

Couper Johnstone appear to have been particularly apprehensive about possible encroachment by the R.N.C. into the Niger Delta. A letter to the Foreign Office in 1886⁽³⁾ enquires on the precise limits of the R.N.C. charter, and incidentally, even at this early date, suggests a similar independent one for the Oil Rivers. The comments by the F.O. staff on this letter are illuminating. Wylde thought there was nothing to stop the R.N.C. acquiring Opobo if it could do so, whereas Pauncefaute was convinced that the town lay outside the Charter limits. In the event, the reply sent on April 1st stated that the three rivers on which Couper Johnstone operated were outside the limits of the R.N.C. Charter, while at the same time the Government had no intention of granting a similar Charter for the Oil Rivers. A comparable anxiety had already been expressed in 1884 regarding the German West African annexations, when William Couper/

(1) F.O. 84/1918 Couper Johnstone agent to F.O. 23.6.87, quoted in memorandum on Ja Ja.

(2) F.O. 84/1881, Hewett to F.O. 13.11.88.

(3) F.O. 84/1880, Couper Johnstone to F.O. 10.8.86.

Couper wanted to know if, in view of these, the rivers from Benin to Old Calabar would be secured by the British Government,⁽¹⁾ and, even at this date, the question of a Delta Charter was brought up. Goldie was evidently not the only person in West Africa thinking along such lines.

An interesting fact, not wholly explicable, is that by 1886 every shareholder in Couper Johnstone also held shares in the British & African Steam Navigation Co.⁽²⁾ In view of Couper Johnstone's enthusiasm for an Oil Rivers Charter this could not indicate that the trading firm was in any way dominated by the shipping line. Bitterly antagonistic to any such project, it could possibly mean a desire on the part of those financially interested in West Africa to spread their commitments, and buy shares in the palm oil firms when these were in the public market. Most were not, the trade was dominated by family firms. Unfortunately it is not possible to record any information on Couper Johnstone's commercial performance. Its name does not appear in the Stock Exchange Year Book.

In December, 1889, the Company passed a resolution to transfer its business to the African Association Ltd.⁽³⁾ though this would not appear to have been a total merger, for when complaining to the Foreign Office on the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's attitude to the proposed Oil Rivers Charter, which Couper Johnstone was still forlornly backing in 1890, William Couper implied that his firm still had some sort of independent existence.⁽⁴⁾

When shortly after its incorporation the African Association decided to take an inventory of the assets of the constituent firms, one/

(1) F.O. 403/32 (C.P.) Couper Johnstone to F.O. 28.8.84.

(2) C.R.O. File No. 891, and B. & A.S.N.Co. file E67206.

(3) C.R.O. File No. 891. At this point William Couper held 1320 shares out of a total of 3,000.

(4) F.O. 84/2080. Wm. Couper to F.O. 24.4.90.

one of the two persons chosen to do so was William Nicholl of Couper Johnstone. "The report they brought back with them was far from pleasant reading. A good deal of the property was in various stages of obsolescence".⁽¹⁾

Thereafter the history of Couper Johnstone merges with that of the African Association.

(d) W.B. McIver and Higate Brothers

Of the final two firms relevant to this section, one originated in Glasgow and the other in Paisley. The firm of W.B. McIver did not operate in the Oil Rivers, but at Lagos, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. According to the unpublished "History of the United Africa Co." it was formed in 1875 by two brothers born in Dumfries, who got their business training in Glasgow,⁽²⁾ though in evidence to the West Africa Currency Committee, W. McIver stated that the firm had been functioning since 1870. One of the brothers, Charles, had been interested in a Sierra Leone firm which was unsuccessful, and liquidated shortly after the partnership was formed. There is a further contradiction between the unpublished History and the documents in that the former claims that W.B. McIver died in 1883, leaving his brother Charles to carry on the business, whereas in fact he is recorded as giving evidence to the Currency Committee in 1899.

In the nineties the firm prospered through the exploitation of forest rubber, but when the boom broke later on, found itself in trouble.⁽³⁾ To go by McIver's evidence to the Currency Committee, at which he claimed to be representing the views of the West African Trade Association, this firm also had problems obtaining the bullion supply/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 77.

(2) ^{ibid} p. 56.

(3) H.U.A.C. p. 56.

supply necessary to carry on the rubber trade.⁽¹⁾ McIver found the banks reluctant to release silver for export to West Africa⁽²⁾ and professed himself unable to understand the reason. The service of the Bank of British West Africa he found very unsatisfactory; their stock was frequently depleted, and their charges were 2 - 2½% per month, sometimes going as high as 6%.⁽³⁾

With the decline of the rubber business the firm tried to diversify into the timber trade. A letter from McIver to the C.O. relates to a timber concession on the Gold Coast granted to McIver for cutting trees over two areas, one of 46,700 acres, the other of 42,880 acres.⁽⁴⁾ Such action, however, did not avail to save the firm, and bankruptcy overtook it in 1900.⁽⁵⁾ An investigation followed showing that McIver had not been dishonest, and he was given an honourable discharge. By this time the head office had been moved from Glasgow to Liverpool, and the firm was sold by the Public Trustee to the Assets Realisation Co., from which it was bought by some West African merchants who reconstituted it under its old name⁽⁶⁾, and finally, "The purchase by Lever Bros. of the business of W.B. McIver & Co., Ltd. in 1910 is generally spoken of as the company's first entry into the West African trade".⁽⁷⁾

The case of the Paisley firm of Higate Bros. illustrates vividly the problems faced by any independent outsider trying to break into the palm oil trade as late as the nineties, despite the aggressiveness and determination which its promoters evidently possessed. The firm commenced/

- (1) C.O. 879/62 (C.P.) West Africa Currency Committee. Evidence of W.B. McIver.
- (2) It was claimed that the government feared a heavy re-import of redundant silver from West Africa would glut the currency - loc. cit. Committee report.
- (3) Loc. cit.
- (4) C.O. 879/67. McIver to C.O. 11.4.99.
- (5) H.U.A.C. p. 56.
- (6) H.U.A.C. loc. cit.
- (7) Ibid.

commenced its operations late in 1891⁽¹⁾ at Goolah Beach on the Forcados river. Whether by accident or design the firm had chosen a strategic point, for the Forcados had lately been discovered to be a more convenient entry to the main Niger than the former route of the Nun, at the mouth of which the R.N.C. had its Akassa headquarters. Again by accident or design, the firm had chosen a locality, the possession of which was as yet indeterminate between the Oil Rivers Government and the Royal Niger Company. The firm claimed to have invested several thousand pounds in the business, and at the beginning of 1892 complained to the Foreign Office against "a step which we can plainly see will ruin our business" - the assignment of the Forcados river to the R.N.C. administration.⁽²⁾

Higate Bros. would not appear to have been affected for some months however, for in August the African Association was accusing them of trading in dutiable goods in the Forcados and Nun without making any payment either to the Royal Niger Company or the Oil Rivers Government, making the point, however, that the firm could hardly be criticised for such behaviour since no one was responsible for collecting the duties in that particular area.⁽³⁾

It was not long, however, before the Royal Niger Company took action. Higate Bros. had in any case been living on borrowed time, for in January, 1892, they were warned by Goldie in person that he would require the land on which they were established, but promised them three to four months notice.⁽⁴⁾

In October, Joseph Flint the Royal Niger Company agent, warned them that licences and customs dues must be paid or their trade would be/

(1) F.O. 84/2265, H.B. to F.O. 7.12.92.

(2) F.O. 403/171 (C.P.) Higate Bros. to F.O. 15.1.92.

(3) Ibid. F.O. to A.A. 19.8.92. A.A. to F.O. 28.8.92.

(4) F.O. 84/2265. Higate Bros. to F.O. 7.12.92.

be stopped.⁽¹⁾ Higate Bros. chose to be defiant and refused to pay. Their stores were thereupon sealed up by the Royal Niger Company, and their agent forcibly removed from the Forcados,⁽²⁾ to take refuge in Warri, while the chartered company threatened dire consequences if Higate Bros. tried to break the seals.⁽³⁾

The Paisley firm remained intransigent, complained to Flint that Goldie's promised three-four months notice had not been given, and held him responsible for the expenses of the factory for four months, the period of the promised notice. The assertion was made that Higate Bros. were misled into believing that the Royal Niger Company duties would be equivalent to the Protectorate ones, and finally they suggested that the Royal Niger Company, if it wanted a satisfactory settlement, should buy them out⁽⁴⁾; and again complaints were directed at the government over the high level of R.N.C. taxation compared with that in the Oil Rivers Protectorate.⁽⁵⁾

These efforts proved futile. The Foreign Office informed the firm briefly that their fate had been due to their failure to pay the legitimate licences and customs of the Royal Niger Company.⁽⁶⁾ Higate Bros. are heard of no more.

The most obvious point to emerge from these records is the great predominance of Miller Bros. over any of the other Glasgow firms, including its two Glasgow competitors in the African Association. Indeed, Millers in scale and range of activity were, although late-comers, almost equal to all the Liverpool interests put together, and/

(1) Ibid. Flint to H.B. encl. in above.

(2) Ibid. H.B. to Flint 16.10.92.

(3) Ibid. McTaggart to H.B. 16.10.92.

(4) Ibid. J. Auchterlonie to Flint, 17.10.92.

(5) Ibid. H.B. to F.O. 7.12.92.

(6) F.O. 84/2266. F.O. to Higate Bros. 5.12.92.

and had these not been combined together in the African Association, might well have absorbed or driven them out of the market.

If the fact of Millers R.N.C. interests are taken into account, they were undoubtedly the most important single commercial enterprise (apart from the shipping lines) trading in West Africa. Had Millers withdrawn from the R.N.C., as did James Pinnock in 1889, Goldie's structure could not have survived. For a family firm which commenced to operate without previous experience of the trade only in 1869, it was a remarkable achievement.

The extremely fierce degree of competition carried on indiscriminately by diplomatic and commercial means is also apparent. Goldie perceived that monopoly, backed by administrative methods, was the most satisfactory way of exploiting the Niger trade. The same conditions applied to the Delta, particularly when the equilibrium attained by confining the trade to the coastal middlemen was upset, and the Europeans began to penetrate the interior. Monopoly took longer to arrive in the Oil Rivers; it could not be enforced administratively as in the main river, and the embittered rivalry of the competing firms inhibited common action, but the strength of the objective forces making for it are shown by the fact that in spite of these obstacles, an adequate cartel system among the big competitors had been achieved by 1900. The progress towards it by even the beginning of that decade is shown by the fate of Higate Brothers, who, though at odds with the Royal Niger Company, received no support or assistance from the African Association. The whole system had become much more tightly organised since 1870, for though Higate Brothers appear to have had some of the characteristics of Miller Brothers as regards commercial enterprise, they were wholly unable to repeat their achievement. The possibilities of the palm oil trade when practised under/

under conditions of virtual monopoly are shown by the fact that in the years after its agreement with Millers and the Royal Niger Co., the Association made big profits up to 1914 in every year except 1908. Founders shares ranged as high as 475%, and at a nominal value of £8 sold for £200 each. (1)

Outside the Niger area the impression is received of a thinly-spread trade, and a frequent struggle to survive on the part of the firms engaged in it. Even Millers intended at one point to close down their Gold Coast business, and by 1900 trade was languishing there again. There is at least a possibility that Taylor Laughland were spending their energy to no purpose in trying to hold on to Matabeleland, and that they leased a bad bargain even in strictly commercial terms. It is scarcely to be thought that the island could have been the key to such immense wealth on the Sierra Leone mainland as the firm believed. Again, McIvers failed to survive the decline of the short-lived wild rubber boom. The first three firms discussed were of some importance to West African development in the nineteenth century, and Millers of great importance. The other two were merely marginal.

2. East and South African Firms

(a) The African Lakes Company

The only other Glasgow firm of an importance comparable with Millers was the African Lakes Co., but its significance derived from considerations of a very different order to the commercial abilities of the West African merchants. The African Lakes Co. was before the public eye to a much greater extent than Millers, owing chiefly to the fact that the conceptions behind its existence were entirely different. It was founded as much as a philanthropic as a commercial concern/

(1) H.U.A.C. p. 84.

concern, and such title-deeds were reflected in its directorship and activities.

The account which follows is based upon the Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Committee records preserved in the National Library of Scotland; on certain material in the Companies Registration Office, Edinburgh; on material in the Public Record Office, and on the previous work of A.J. Hanna, R. Oliver and A. Ross, relating to the Missions and the over-all history of Nyasaland. The African Lakes Corporation, the existing successor to the African Lakes Company, stated that the records of its predecessor were not available. (1)

The region of the East African Lakes system was attractive to European interest for a variety of reasons. It was believed by most to be a healthy and fertile region; it was, by African standards, heavily populated, and consequently a centre of the East African slave trade. Lastly, it had been the locus of David Livingstone's last journeys, and appeared to offer hopeful prospects for missionary enterprise.

Consequently, following Livingstone's death, three separate missionary bodies tried to establish themselves in the region of Lake Nyasa, with the intention of developing his work there. Following the failure of an attempt by the Universities Mission, the Free Church established a mission at Livingstonia, on the western shore of the lake, in 1875, to be followed shortly thereafter by a Church of Scotland Mission in the highlands of the River Shire which flows from the southern point of the lake to join the Zambesi. This, from/

(1) "The African Lakes Corporation assures me that it has not troubled to preserve the records of its predecessor, the African Lakes Co." - A.J. Hanna "The Beginnings of Nyasaland and North East Rhodesia". O.U.P. 1956.

from Livingstone's birthplace, was called Blantyre.

The foundation of the African Lakes Company followed from these events. James Stevenson of Hailie⁽¹⁾ addressed a meeting of the Free Church Foreign Missions Committee on the question of a "Commercial Adventure in Central Africa"⁽²⁾. This plan Stevenson had been asked to bring before the British Association in Glasgow, and it had the support of that body's economic section. The venture was to have the support of Sir William Mackinnon, Mr. James Young of Kelly, and others, and surveys were already under way. It would endeavour to co-operate with all the missions and especially that of the Free Church, but while the promoters were willing to risk their money in this way, they reserved to themselves the right to discover the best means of using it. The Committee for its part, "promised to see what the Free Church could do in the way of establishing a station at the north end of Lake Nyasa".

The Livingstonia Central Africa Co. was incorporated on June 21, 1878, with twelve shareholders and three directors, John Stephen the shipbuilder, James Young Junr., and James Stevenson, who remained Chairman during the Company's life-span. Of the shareholders, seven were Glasgow men, four from Edinburgh, and one from Kirkcudbrightshire.⁽³⁾ The purpose of the company was to develop trade and legitimate commerce in the region of the Zambesi and Great Lakes. Livingstone himself as is well known had stressed strongly the importance of such initiatives, linking it specifically with missionary work:

"Instead of trying to carry civilisation to the interior and thereby open up Africa to the sympathies and succour of Christians I am attempting to establish the system of Africans proceeding on commercial speculations to the Coast. They/

(1) See below.

(2) Church of Scotland Mission records in National Library, Edinburgh. File No. 7872. Minute of Stevenson's Statement, n.d.

(3) C.R.O. File No. 833.

"They learn in a short time to appreciate the power of Europeans, and the inference naturally flows: 'if those who have so much power and wisdom believe and value the truths of religion, how much more we'". (1)

The nominal capital was £20,000 in shares of £250, of which £6,000 was subscribed by the twelve shareholders in equal proportions. (2)

Two brothers, John and Frederick L.M. Moir, also shareholders, were appointed joint managers, to

".... superintend the route between Quilimane on the coast via Blantyre and Lake Nyasa, to circumnavigate that lake and to start a branch line up the Zambesi, up to Tete and other lines as they might open up". (3)

Thus began the career of the African Lakes Company, destined to play an important role in the eventual British acquisition of Nyasaland. Although it included on its board of three directors two successful businessmen, its Chairman, Stevenson, and John Stephen, Chairman of Stephens the Clyde shipbuilders, it was never a commercial success, and its shareholders hardly ever received a dividend. In fact, the Company stumbled from crisis to crisis, and it found no raw materials in its area of operations which could be exploited in a thoroughgoing and consistent manner. (4) It was kept afloat only by various short-term expedients and manoeuvres; its only reliable sphere of trade was the missionary market.

Together with the naturally occurring problems faced by the Company, other, more contingent, considerations worsened its position and prospects. While the West Coast firms were content to take for granted and accept the social systems prevailing among the Africans with/

- (1) David Livingstone, African Journal, July 1, 1855, from "Livingstone's African Journals, 1853-56", Ed. I. Schapera, Chatto & Windus, 1963.
- (2) C. of S. File No. 8021. Memorandum on Livingstonia Co., n.d.
- (3) F.L.M. Moir, "After Livingstone" (Hodder & Staughton, n.d.) p.9.
- (4) In fact the main export of Nyasaland since the British protectorate has been labour.

with whom they traded, the promoters of the African Lakes Company were committed to collaborate with the missionaries in introducing European cultural norms, and to attacking the slave trade, which affronted their religious susceptibilities, not to mention their desire to introduce wage-labour relations.⁽¹⁾ The African Lakes Company thereby became involved in local diplomacy and wars which were not even motivated by commercial ends, and such small profits as the company made were drained into activities of this sort, reaping no economic benefit in the result. Though it would be going beyond the evidence to say that the management was incompetent, it was at least questionable. The importance of the Company lies solely in the role it played as a buttress for the missionary establishment, and in the partition diplomacy of Central Africa.

A year after the foundation of the Livingstonia Co. prospects still appeared to be hopeful. The company possessed a steam launch suitable for navigation of the Shiré and Zambesi, and for transport on the lake itself an arrangement was made with the Livingstonia Mission for use of their vessel the 'Ilala'⁽²⁾, a single-screw, shallow-draught steamer built by Yarrow & Hedly in 1875,⁽³⁾ and a 65 mile road had been constructed past the Shiré cataracts. Arrangements had been made with both the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions to manage the purchase of their supplies. There is also speculation in this document that trade might be drawn towards the company if events in Egypt closed the Nile route. Nevertheless it was felt that more capital was needed to exploit the possibilities, and it was proposed to increase the nominal capital from £20,000 to £100,000, by creating 350 shares/

(1) F.L.M. Moir, Op.cit. p. 175.

(2) C. of S. no. 8021. Memorandum loc.cit.

(3) C. of S. no. 7872. John Stephen to Rev. Whitehouse, 10.3.80.

350 shares of £250.

In June, 1881, the Livingstonia Company became the African Lakes Company. Written into its Articles of Association were the objects of carrying on trade of every conceivable description, and of defending itself against attack.⁽¹⁾ The African headquarters of the company was sited at Mandala in the Shiré highlands, one mile from Blantyre on 7,000 acres of ground bought from Kapene of Soche.⁽²⁾ According to Moir the African Lakes Company tried to cultivate oranges, bananas, indigo, cinnamon, cocoa, cotton, tea, cerea rubber and para rubber, all with varying success.⁽³⁾ Para rubber was successfully planted at Vizara on the western shore of the lake, and coffee was successful for a time until the glut in the world market. Modest tobacco plantations were established, and the Africans encouraged to grow oil seed in the hope of repeating a trade already established on the Zambesi by French and Dutch firms.

However, the main local product in which the company was interested appears to have been ivory, and such gains as were made came mainly from this source:

"All this ivory (shot by F. Moir) went without deduction to the credit of the company. Indeed, in those early days when we were so heavily handicapped in our transport work by the deterioration of the steel hull of our first steamer, the large sums of money realised for ivory did much to keep the Company in funds".⁽⁴⁾

It was several years, however, before the African Lakes Company was able to pay even a modest dividend. A balance sheet for 1884 gives the following situation:

Abstract Balance Sheet Dec. 31, 1884/

- (1) C. of S. No. 8021. A.L.C. memo. and Articles of Association 2.6.81.
- (2) Moir, op.cit. p. 46.
- (3) Ibid. p. 86-7.
- (4) Ibid. p. 110.

Abstract Balance Sheet Dec. 31, 1884⁽¹⁾

Bills payable	£2484:19:4	Goods in Africa	£7653
		Steamboat	1723
Accounts due - Africa	1844:17:3	Property at Mandala & Matopa	1365
Britain	590:14:0	" " Quilimane	41
		Coffee Plantation	329
Due to Bank of Scotland	923:1:10	Money owed - Africa	4615
		" " Britain	2341
		Cash - Africa	200
		" Britain	15

Balance loss - £58: 9: 3d.

Abstract Profit and Loss Account

Interest account	£189:16:0	Balance of Profit from 1883	£863:6:5
African Managers' Salaries, etc.	841: 3:1	Profit (gross) for 1884	<u>209:3:5</u>
Secretary's salary	<u>100: 0:0</u>	Balance loss	£58:9:3
	£1130:19:1		

At the beginning of that year trade had been disrupted when a certain Fenwick, by Moir's account a former employee of the Company, lost his life after having shot and killed an important African chief, Chipatula of the Makalolo, and the African Lakes Company, refusing to pay compensation to Chipatula's successor, had its steamer, the 'Lady Nyasa' seized and looted.⁽²⁾ An outsider's view of what lay behind these events comes from a Dr. James Rankin, who wrote in the 'Glasgow Herald' in July, 1884, that the African Lakes Company by its greed was solely responsible for the Shiré hostilities, and its agents were only preserved from attack by the respect in which the Blantyre Mission was held. He also alleged that some time previously the followers of Ramakukan, the paramount Makalolo chief, had shot an elephant with the company's/

(1) C. of S. no. 8021

(2) Moir, op.cit. p. 128-30

company's guns and powder, but had been refused the tusk which Ramakukan claimed, though the chief had finally got it by taking advantage of the company's difficulties. Finally Rankin accused the A.L.C. of being responsible for Fenwick's death, having employed him on his way home, despite his known bad character. (1) •

A reply from the company's secretary, William Ewing, was published some days later, justifying John Moir's refusal to surrender the tusk to Ramakukan because the latter had stolen a quantity of goods, and had only received it eventually because of his good offices after the Fenwick affair; Ewing denying that Fenwick had been employed by the company when he killed Chipatula. (2)

Undeterred, Rankin declared that Ramakukan had not stolen the A.L.C. goods, rather he had confiscated them as a reprisal for persistent poaching, nor had Ramakukan given the A.L.C. the benefit of his good offices after Chipatula's death; he had extended them only to the missions, who had felt no need to fortify themselves during the disturbances, whereas Mandala had done so though it was only a mile from Blantyre. Finally he recalled that three years previously he had charged the A.L.C. with trafficking in gunpowder, a charge denied at the time but subsequently confirmed. (3) No reply by Ewing to these accusations was printed. Moir says that in the settlement with the Makalolo, the A.L.C. eventually had to pay. (4)

Things had no-wise improved by the beginning of 1886. A directors report of February 23rd of that year (5) refers to two occasions on which the stock of their steamers had been seized in the/

(1) G.H. 16.7.84

(2) G.H. 18.7.84

(3) G.H. 22.7.84

(4) Moir, op.cit. p.131.

(5) C. of S. no. 8021, signed by Ewing.

the course of African warfare not directly involving the company, and heavy losses had only been averted by salary cuts and a fortunate legacy, while a shortage of capital prevented normal trading operations being carried on, e.g. ivory could not be transported. It was proposed therefore to increase the capital once more, and a prospectus issued in this sense sets out the positive gains which the African Lakes Company thought worth emphasising. Twelve trading depots with Europeans in charge were now established on the rivers and Lake Nyasa along a route of 1,400 miles. It was hoped to open a further station halfway between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyka, and so link up with the Congo route. The company claimed to have prevented the liquor traffic in its area, and to have shipped 40,815 lbs. of ivory, to have been making treaties in anticipation of Government protection, hoping that by the Anglo Portuguese Treaty the Company would be favoured by a low tariff, and a cessation of Portuguese advance up the Shiré. In conclusion, the prospectus expresses disappointment that no assistance had been received from any of the leading figures connected with the philanthropic societies. At this point the Company had 277 shares taken up by twentyone shareholders, nine of whom were Glasgow men with 139 shares. (1)

In 1886 for the first time a small dividend - of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ - was realised (2) and the improvement continued in the following year, though it remained marginal. The Directors' report for July, 1887, (3) sets nett profit at £551:13:2, which together with the previous year's balance gave a credit of £898, of which a dividend of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ was to absorb £433:5:2. A new boat, the 'James Stevenson', had been established on the lower river, and a contract placed for a new screw steamer/

(1) C.R.O. File No. 833.

(2) Moir, opccit. p.175.

(3) C. of S. 8021, loc.cit.12.7.87.

steamer to be pre-fabricated on Lake Nyasa. A new press had been despatched to Africa to continue the Company's manufacture of groundnut oil, and coffee plantations were in operation.

The improved results of 1886 and the first half of 1887 were soon eliminated by fresh difficulties. In 1887 the Company began to quarrel with one of its main customers, the Livingstonia Mission under Dr. Robert Laws. Laws complained that the accounts received from the company were incomplete and/or incorrect. The dispute centred round the Mission's share of the working expenses of the 'Ilala'. Laws refused to pay until he got a full statement, and the A.L.C. was forced to admit that one could not be provided.⁽¹⁾ The Mission account for 1886 remained unpaid for so long that the Company was seriously embarrassed, and had to suspend shipment of goods. Moir calculated that the loss to the African Lakes Company was in the region of £2,000,⁽²⁾ a fact which vividly illustrates how thin was the margin on which the company was working.

To these troubles was added a private war which broke out at the end of the year. At the north end of the Lake, the A.L.C. depot for the ivory trade, Karonga, was attacked by Arabs who objected to the company's interference with their slave-trading activities.

The attack was repulsed, but many station buildings were destroyed,⁽³⁾ yet the company could probably have prosecuted the war to a successful conclusion but for two factors. In the first place, supplies of arms and ammunition destined for Karonga were detained by the Portuguese in Mozambique, and in the second place the directors failed to get the support from the British public to which they felt they were entitled. A Directors' report of October, 1889, by which time/

(1) C. of S. No. 7914. Letters of Robt. Laws, 1887-88.

(2) Ibid. Letter of F. Moir, n.d.

(3) Moir, op.cit. p. 133-8.

by which time the war was over through the mediation of Harry Johnston, makes this plain. During 1888 the expenses of the fighting were met by a defence fund subscribed by two of the directors, and one leading shareholder, but, "notwithstanding steady exertions" by the directors the fund was not supported by the shareholders and the public, for although the Company claimed to have the support of the British Government, some friends of the missionaries and the company were perturbed by the private nature of the war.⁽¹⁾ At this point, the African Lakes Company had cash in hand of 1/11d, and an overdraft of £1,198:4:9d⁽²⁾. While the war had disrupted the ivory trade at the north end, the station and stockade were destroyed, and "hundreds of square miles of fertile country were relapsing into wilderness".⁽³⁾

By this time the Company had become involved as a factor in the ambitions of Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company, and was receiving overtures from the Imperial British East Africa Co. The report quoted above noted that the A.L.C. was placing itself in contact with the B.S.A.C. "about to enter upon its task of civilisation", and in October of the same year, Ewing, the A.L.C. secretary, mentioned to Anderson of the Foreign Office that he had been approached by Mackinnon with proposals for "very liberal terms of fusion" on the basis that each firm would push into Tanganyka, I.B.E.A. from the north and the A.L.C. from the south. Anderson thought Ewing was "rather excited" about the overture, but could not act without the knowledge of the B.S.A.C.⁽⁴⁾ According to Moir's account, Rhodes, and his henchman, Rochfort McGuire, met the A.L.C. directors on Stevenson's yacht/

(1) C. of S. no. 8021, Directors' report, 15.11.89.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Moir, op.cit. p.141. In 1887 the proportion of Glasgow shareholders in the Company declined. Out of 435 shares issued, 192 were held by thirteen Glasgow shareholders out of a total of fifty-three - C.R.O. File No. 833.

(4) F.O. 84/2005. Memo by Anderson, 25.10.89.

yacht, the "Fire-Fay", on June 26, 1889, and agreed to buy the A.L.C. property and assets for B.S.A.C. shares.

It was in 1889 also that the company tried to diversify its activities in Nyasaland away from trade to mineral prospecting. For this purpose a subsidiary company, the Scottish Exploration Co. was set up, ⁽¹⁾ with the aim of "...prospecting for gold and other metals and minerals and any other products and things in Nyasaland and other parts of Africa", and also to promote practically every type of concession or commercial activity.

The capital of the Scottish Exploration Co. was £3,000 in £1 shares, of the seven subscribers, F. Moir and W. Ewing holding 100 shares each, John Stephen 150, Gilbert Beith and John Moir 200, and J.C. White and James Stevenson 250. There were four directors, the Moirs, Ewing as secretary, and Alex Mitchell who was not a shareholder.

This company commenced operations by hiring a civil and mining engineer, Charles Antonieski, to prospect for gold in Nyasaland, with authority to purchase up to £1,500 worth of equipment for the purpose, and to work for eighteen months, reporting monthly. Should gold or minerals be found, a mining company with £100,000 capital was to be formed, and Antonieski was to assist in its flotation.

Four months later the S.E.C. had thirteen shareholders, including Cecil Rhodes with 100 shares, and remained in this position until wound up on November 18, 1891. Presumably Antonieski was unsuccessful. ⁽²⁾

In the/

(1) C.R.O. File no. 1794.

(2) According to A.J. Hanna, the A.L.C. registered another failure in 1890 when it might have taken advantage of the war between Germans and Arabs which blocked the normal trade routes, and seized the opportunity to become the sole exporter of ivory. However the chance was missed. Hanna, "The Beginnings of Nyasaland" op.cit. p. 162.

In the meantime negotiations had been proceeding for a union in some degree between the A.L.C. and the B.S.A.C. From the point of view of the Scottish company, such a merger would give them the power and standing in Nyasaland which they sought, for there were conditions written-in to the eventual agreement to retain effective control of Nyasaland affairs in Glasgow, while Rhodes' purpose had of course nothing to do with the A.L.C.'s non-existent financial attractiveness. On the contrary, the B.S.A.C. officials looked on it with distaste as an inconvenient but necessary preliminary to getting the area of their Charter extended into the Lakes region. For instance, Albert Grey, of the London Board of the B.S.A.C., wrote when a practical alternative seemed to offer itself,

"The difficulties of the situation in Nyasaland because of Scotch jealousies and cussedness, make it in my opinion most desirable that we should support Bruce's proposal to facilitate the Government taking over Nyasaland it enables us to look forward to the profitable inheritance of Trans-Zambesia without the incubus of a Scotch Director".⁽¹⁾

Initially the African Lakes Co. had appeared to seek a Charter for itself. On May 2, 1889, a meeting was held in Glasgow at which such a course was unanimously approved.⁽²⁾ According to Oliver, however, this demand was not entirely serious, but had been suggested by Salisbury as a means of impressing the Portuguese, who coveted Nyasaland, with the strength of feeling in Britain against their claims. In any event, negotiations with the B.S.A.C. commenced the following month.

They did not proceed in a particularly smooth fashion. The B.S.A.C. at first agreed to allow the A.L.C. to subscribe for £20,000 out of £2000,000 of B.S.A.C. shares independently of any other arrangement, then reneged on this, and unilaterally reduced the A.L.C. apportionment to 5,000 shares, while increasing the total/

(1) Quoted in R. Oliver, op.cit. p. 187.

(2) Ibid. p. 151.

total number of B.S.A.C. shares to be allocated generally, an action which caused great resentment among the A.L.C. Directors.⁽¹⁾

In spite of these frictions, the terms of an agreement looking towards final amalgamation were eventually settled in April, 1890. The B.S.A.C. was to take up at par up to 639 A.L.C. shares in exchange for its own, and to reserve until the end of May 1895 of its shares for subscription by the A.L.C. at par. The key clause of the agreement was no. 5, for under it the B.S.A.C. was to provide £20,000 towards the Lakes Company's capital account by taking up 400 shares at £50 each, and also by, "... expending out of revenue Account a sum not exceeding £9,000 a year as the Directors of the Lakes Co. may reasonably deem necessary for the Administration of the Country north of the Zambesi", and following eventual amalgamation, "...the affairs of Nyasaland shall ... be dealt with and managed by a Committee of Shareholders acting in Scotland", which was to consist of five members nominated by the former A.L.C. Shareholders in the United companies, except for the B.S.A.C. in its role of A.L.C. shareholder.

Two further provisions promised the former A.L.C. subscribers a standing right to one director on the amalgamated board, and provided that in the event of any dispute as to the proper time to carry through the amalgamation, the Secretary of State should act as arbitrator. The agreement was signed by James Stevenson and John Stephen on behalf of the A.L.C.⁽²⁾

The agreement was not effective in gaining its objectives from the point of view of either company. The A.L.C. directors hoped that the promised £20,000 would relieve their company's financial embarrassment/

(1) F.O. 84/2079, print of correspondence between A.L.C. and B.S.A.C. encl. in Ewing to F.O. 14.4.90.

(2) F.O. 84/2094. Memo of Agreement encl. with memo. by H.P. Anderson, 1.11.90.

embarrassment, as, "our balance on December, 1889, showed £10,000 of our capital account gone by war and stoppage of trade",⁽¹⁾ but the B.S.A.C. refused to pay the first instalment of £5,000 until they were chartered in October, and this "was too late and too insufficient to set the concern going again, as Mr. Johnston's report abundantly proved".⁽²⁾ Not until a further year had passed was the remaining £15,000 received, which "meant starvation to the Company for eighteen months, and the utmost inconvenience to the Missions."

Even more serious for the A.L.C's position, the Foreign Office on learning the terms of this agreement, immediately objected that the proposed £9,000 subsidy for administrative purposes was illegal, the A.L.C. being merely a trading company and having no official authority of any kind.⁽³⁾ At the same time, Harry Johnston, the B.S.A.C's likely choice for Administrator in the event of Nyasaland coming under Chartered rule, violently objected to any arrangement which would result in his administering Nyasaland on behalf of the A.L.C: "The Glasgow board are not capable of administering British Central Africa". "I judge the A.L. Co. utterly unfitted to be trusted with governing powers".⁽⁴⁾ The eventual outcome of these two considerations was the transfer in 1891 (to Johnston personally) of the £9,000 subsidy, formerly promised to the A.L.C., in his capacity as "Commissioner and Consul General for the territories under British influence to the north of the Zambesi", and as administrator for the B.S.A.C. territory (later Northern Rhodesia) outside the limits of the British Central Africa Protectorate (Nyasaland).⁽⁵⁾

(1) F.C. 84/2250 Stevenson to A.L. Bruce, 12.5.92, encl. in memo. by H.P. Anderson, 26.5.92.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Oliver, op.cit. p. 184.

(4) Ibid. p. 183-4.

(5) Ibid. p. 189-90.

(Nyasaland).

The existence of the A.L.C. apart from any activities on its part, therefore had important consequences, and largely determined the form of government in Nyasaland. Its presence could not be held to have prevented a Portuguese annexation, rather the Missions were the chief factor in retaining this area in the British sphere, but it was the inability of the B.S.A.C. to absorb the company which prevented its charter being extended to the lake; the A.L.C. was at once too weak to be given direct responsibility, and too significant to be ignored. The Glasgow company did come within measurable distance of governing a part of Africa in its own right, though had it achieved this it could hardly have been more successful than the Imperial British East Africa Co. in East Africa and Uganda, in view of the state of its finances and organisation. Had it taken over as a subordinate part of the much stronger British South Africa Co. it is impossible to speculate what might have happened.

The direct British protectorate in Nyasaland was possible only because of the B.S.A.C. subsidy⁽¹⁾, the Treasury having refused to find the money, and was paid in the hope of absorbing Nyasaland at a later date into the Chartered sphere,⁽²⁾ a circumstance which however never materialised.

Although the B.S.A.C. never got the Protectorate, it managed finally to acquire the A.L.C. in 1893, though only after an apparent total breakdown in relations the previous year.

Writing to his fellow director, A.L. Bruce, in the letter already quoted,⁽³⁾ Stevenson expressed a belief that the B.S.A.C.'s purpose in keeping the A.L.C. short of money was to get rid of the Nyasaland Committee/

(1) Ibid. p. 190.

(2) Grey to Cawston, 20.11.90, quoted in Oliver, op.cit. p. 187.

(3) F.O. 84/2250, 12.5.92.

Committee and to bring a Cape concern directly into Nyasaland, the B.S.A.C. Board having apparently informed him that they would not recognise the northern Committee, and had refused categorically to meet Johnston's administrative expenses incurred with the A.L.C., suggesting that if the "Scotch friends" of the Lakes Co. cared to buy back the B.S.A.C. interest in the A.L.C. (nominally £50,000) the B.S.A.C. would buy the A.L.C. land and claims for £13,000 plus the sums subsequently paid to Johnston.

".....The Chartered Company as practically holding all the share capital in the Lakes Co. instruct me to say that they repudiate emphatically any attempt on the part of the Directors of the Lakes Co. to incur this liability when obviously the means for meeting it are not forthcoming, and while the Chartered Co. are not prepared to incur any outlay for trading, transport or other services north of the Zambesi. Your Directors must understand that if they incur any liabilities without the sanction of their shareholders, they must do so at their individual personal risk".(1)

Stevenson therefore denounced this "crooked policy", also accusing Rhodes of disregarding the interests of the Missions, and looking for Government assistance was determined to resist any attempt by the B.S.A.C. to wind up his company, and had even approached Mackinnon again: "I wrote to Sir William Mackinnon to see whether your former scheme of £30,000 preference stock being taken in the Lakes Co. would hold good now....."(2)

Another memorandum by Anderson sums up the F.O. assessment of the situation:

"As far as I can make out the history, the (A.L.C.) are in the power of the (B.S.A.C.), who, having got them in their power wish to get rid of the Scotch Board which they have engaged to have for Nyasaland, get rid also of the Nyasaland responsibility, wind up the Lakes Co. and hand over the whole as a going concern to Mosenthal's Bechuanaland Co. The Scotchmen resent this and fight hard. The Chartered Co. threaten to starve them out and get rid of them.....Bruce said that if the Lakes Co. were cornered they would wind up and form an independent company to contest a Masenthal monopoly. This they might do if they could find the money, but the Scotchmen do not open their purses readily". (3)

- (1) F.O. 84/2250 B.S.A.C. to A. Watt, 11.5.92, encl. with memo by Anderson, 26.5.92.
- (2) Ibid. Stevenson to Bruce 12.5.92.
- (3) F.O. 84/2250. 26.5.92.

It would seem that Rhodes, having failed to attain the original aim of the amalgamation idea, i.e. the extension of the B.S.A.C. Charter to cover Nyasaland, was now intent on forcing the A.L.C., as a nuisance, out of existence.

It is not clear how the problems were resolved, but the agreement finally reached retained the A.L.C. as a separate entity under B.S.A.C. ownership. A prospectus for the new body, the African Lakes Trading Corporation (dated only 1893)⁽¹⁾ showed proposed capital to be £150,000 divided into 137,500 "A" shares of £1 each, and 12,500 similar "B" shares, the latter to have no voting rights. Of these 150,000 shares, the B.S.A.C. was to have 12,000 of the "A" and all the "B" category, the remainder to be offered for public subscription. The directors were to be Bruce, Ewing and Stephen, with F. Moir, secretary, and the prospectus expressed confidence that the Nyasaland trade would improve now the area was a British protectorate with gunboats on lakes and rivers. Whereas the old company was not able to take advantage of trade prospects, it was thought that the new, with increased capital, could succeed. The B.S.A.C. achieved its desire to have most of the land concessions owned by the former company, but returned all other property and assets to the African Lakes Trading Corporation.

The B.S.A.C. became the proprietor of some $2\frac{3}{4}$ million acres in Nyasaland north of the River Rukuva, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres in the region of the Stevenson Road, as well as exclusive mineral rights in Marimba, Central and South Angoniland and in the territories of the Mwasi, Kuzungu and Undi, west of the lake. In addition the B.S.A.C. acquired 20,000 acres near Matope and 840 in Mlanje, along with 500 at Mandala, and some minor acquisitions. The Corporation, however, retained 6,000 acres at Karonga, 6,000 at Fife, 6,000 at Kituna/

(1) C. of S. no. 8021.

Kituna, 2,000 at Leopard Bay, 2,000 at Chirawa, 2,000 at Mweru, 1,500 at Liwonde, 5,500 at Mandala, 5,000 in Angoniland, 3,000 at Matope, and some minor holdings, along with 4,200 acres at Mlanje which were sold by the A.L.C. to John Moir when he lost his post of manager. (1)

On September 15, 1893, the new company was established, adding to the directors mentioned in the prospectus, James Stevenson, Robert Gourlay of the Bank of Scotland, Robert S. Allan and R.C. Allan, Shipowners. In May the following year it dropped the word "Trading" from its title. (2)

Under the new regime the commercial performance of the reconstructed company appears indeed to have improved. In 1894 the dividend was 10%, and from 1895 to 1900 7½%. (3) A letter to the Board from Duncan Beaton, a sub-manager in Africa, of March 26, 1895 (4) asserts that the Corporation were the largest traders throughout Central Africa, with agencies for the Union Steamship Co., the Aberdeen line steamers, all the planters in Central Africa save one, and all the mission stations, as well as holding an Admiralty contract to supply the gunboats, and one with Johnson and the B.S.A.C. for first refusal of all transport work on the rivers and lakes, which was seldom refused. Although two rival companies, the African International Flotilla & Transport Co. and Sharrar's Zambesi Traffic Co. had set up in competition they were doing poorly.

There can be little doubt that more settled circumstances produced a more favourable environment for commercial activity, nevertheless, the poor results achieved by the A.L.C. prior to 1893 cannot be attributed simply to natural difficulties, the ill-will of the B.S.A.C. or other/

(1) A.J. Hanna, "The Beginnings of Nyasaland....." op.cit. p. 178.

(2) C.R.O. File No. 2547.

(3) Stock Exchange Yearbook.

(4) C. of S. no. 7914.

or other factors beyond the Company's control as Moir appears to have believed:

"... Any profits made during the first years were absorbed in prospecting, founding stations, repairing steamers corroded by Zambesi water, and in losses incurred by native risings..... Had peace continued our plans for an efficient trading and transport business promised well. But the Arabs launched their attack on Karonga, and the whole resources of the Company were devoted to the necessary though unremunerative task of defending the European and native inhabitants from ruthless invasion".(1)

Such an estimate takes no account of mismanagement, under-capitalisation, ineffectual sharp practice. The evidence on this latter point, if not conclusive, is at least very suggestive.

According to Joseph Thomson, the renowned explorer:

"It is made up entirely of good intentions, good aims, great schemes for the benefit of the natives, and lives in a perfect atmosphere of philanthropy and religion, while they utterly fail to carry out their commercial engagements, and do things which would ruin the reputation of any third-rate house, while giving their employees starvation wages and housing them in the most miserable fashion....."(2)

"A more rotten commercial concern which contrives to make a big noise and cackle in the world I have never seen".(3)

Harry Johnston was even harsher in his judgments:

"..... the riff-raff of Glasgow is not the best material with which to develop the commerce of British Central Africa".(4)

The accusations made in the Scottish newspapers were never, so far as can be ascertained, effectively answered. Moir relates⁽⁵⁾ that when the Stevenson Road was being constructed, the "Natives through whose gardens the road was led....added considerably to the work and worry".

The attempt by the Company to exercise administrative power in Nyasaland was strongly resented by both British settlers, and the Church/

(1) Moir, op.cit. p. 175.

(2) Thomson to Rhodes, 1890. Quoted in A.J. Hanna, "The Story of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland" Faber, 1960, p.

(3) Thomson to Rhodes, 1890. Quoted in Hanna "The Beginnings of Nyasaland....." op.cit. p. 87.

(4) Johnston to H.P. Anderson, 21.1.93. F.O. 2/54. Quoted in Hanna "The Beginnings of Nyasaland....." p.88.

(5) Moir, op.cit. p.66.

Church of Scotland missionaries, who wrote of the "manifest incapacity of the Lakes Co.....for undertaking any such administration"⁽¹⁾, and also the Africans.

In August, 1885, John Moir informed Acting-Consul Goodrich that the chiefs of the Nyasa district had put themselves under A.L.C. protection, and had submitted copies of eight documents dated in May. In November Hawes confronted Moir with Ramakukan at Mandala, where the African chief denounced the documents.⁽²⁾ McMurtie, the Convenor of the Church of Scotland Missions Committee, told William Ewing to abrogate a number of agreements, and refused to recognise any concessions to the Missions contained in them.⁽³⁾

However, the Foreign Office horror at the idea appears somewhat inconsistent, considering that Goldie's Charter was primarily based on powers his company had acquired independently by a process of treaty-making before it had any official recognition.

Perhaps the most dubious aspect of the African Lakes Company's work was their land claims, and Harry Johnston's review of them brought to light a situation in which the company claimed 140,000 acres for £2:13:- distributed among four persons of no authority, while the claims were generally inferior to the most spurious ones of the private settlers.⁽⁴⁾ Johnston wrote, "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".⁽⁵⁾

It is difficult to imagine that without the special status given to the Company through its connexion with the missionary interests and the support it could attract for that reason it could have survived very long./

- (1) Consul Hawkes to Rosebery, 30.3.86. F.O. 84/1720. Quoted in Andrew Ross "The Origins and Development of the Church of Scotland Mission, Blantyre, Nyasaland, 1878-1926", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1968, p. 156-7. Also Oliver, op.cit. p. 184.
- (2) A.J. Hanna "The Beginnings of Nyasaland...." op.cit. p. 83-5.
- (3) Ross, op.cit. p. 159.
- (4) Oliver, op.cit. p.222, 224.
- (5) Ibid. p. 200.

very long. As an ordinary commercial venture it was not a success.

There is some evidence that the leading promoter of the African Lakes Company, James Stevenson, conceived it as the beginning of something much more ambitious than a trading company confined to the Lakes. An address read by him to the Glasgow Philosophical Society in 1883, and published as a pamphlet, "The Water Highways of the Interior of Africa"⁽¹⁾, makes some attempt to discuss Africa as an economic unit, and propounds an ambitious scheme to solve transportation problems on a continental scale.

Stevenson proposed linking all the main waterways of Africa using the Lakes system as a base, from which, extending outwards, the Lakes, already linked with the Zambesi could be put in communication with the Nile and Congo, and the Nile connected to the Red Sea by railway to the port of Suakin. As Stevenson incorrectly believed the Wele, an affluent of the Ubangi, to flow into Lake Chad, he hoped to complete his system by connecting this stream with the Nile through the river Jur, and thus link up with West Africa and the Niger. In practice, Stevenson had already begun to implement his scheme by causing the "Stevenson Road" to be built in the early eighties between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyka.

Such a project, Stevenson believed, would enable the great economic potential of Africa to be exploited effectively. He saw a great future in particular for wild rubber, and in cotton from the southern Egyptian Sudan:

"The alluvial plains of the Sudan are of high productiveness, and if our Government can see its way to restore order, there would be a splendid field for enterprise - employing of course native labour".

Stevenson was also conscious of the problem of a labour supply, a question on which the African Lakes Company had practical experience. On the "Stevenson Road" the Africans, according to Stevenson's pamphlet/

(1) Available from the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

pamphlet, were "working with a will on a wage in cloth costing 1s 10d per week". He connected this with the general humanitarian argument against slave raiding:

"Taking the longest view there is some danger of the hopes that are entertained of the value of new markets in Africa being frustrated from the industrial population being destroyed, and warlike tribes only being left",

though every cloud has a silver lining,

"There can be no doubt that races crushed as they have been will now be more amenable than ever to kindly and civilising influences".

Stevenson's general interest in the opening of under-developed territory is also shown in the major part he played in founding the Scottish Geographical Society.⁽¹⁾ He was one of the leading Scottish publicists in this field, having as a young man conversed with Mehemet Ali on the question of Egyptian cotton. He was also a successful businessman in more conventional fields if not in Africa. Born in 1822, he left £200,000 in bequests at his death in 1903; was Lord Dean of Guild in Glasgow, and known in his family as "Croesus".⁽²⁾

(b) Buffels Land & Mining Co., Ltd., etc.

Of the numerous mining companies operating in South Africa in 1900, only three were registered outside London or South Africa itself.⁽³⁾ Of these, two belonged to Glasgow, and of one, the Buffels Land & Mining Co., Ltd., some documentary record exists. It was of no political and little commercial importance.

This company's career, which commenced in 1889, was attended by small success. The object of its incorporation, with a nominal capital/

(1) See below.

(2) "The Stevenson Family, a Record of the Descendants of James Stevenson, Burgess of Paisley in 1752". Compiled by Huw Shannon Stevenson. Privately printed 1965.

(3) African Annual and Traders Year Book, 1901, apparently only published for one year.

capital of £200,000 in £1 shares was primarily to acquire certain properties, mainly in the Rustenberg district of the Transvaal, belonging to one, John Kemsley, amounting to 30,000 acres, for the purposes of mining, stockbreeding, roadwork and property speculation.⁽¹⁾

Of the six original subscribers, none appears to have had any other association with Africa. The Chairman was R. Feldtmann, and the Secretary John Murray. Kemsley was paid £12,000 for his property and received the value fifty/fifty in shares and cash.

The first entry for the company in the Stock Exchange Year Book of 1891 struck a fairly optimistic note. £180,000 of the capital had been allocated and paid, and prospecting operations for gold and other minerals had commenced. The latest price per share was quoted as 8/-. Within two years, however, the directors were finding it difficult to keep the company afloat. The Stock Exchange Year Book for 1892 reported calls on shares in arrears for £21,068, and the "latest price" declined to 2/6d, while the Stock Exchange Year Book for 1893, after noting that "expansion had been reduced to a low level" quoted the Company Report of December, 1891, to the effect that,

"The directors believe that these retrenchments warrant them in hoping that the balance of funds at their disposal will not be absorbed, and that they will be enabled to wait till the farms appreciate sufficiently in value by the improvements being made upon them, and by the extension of railways, to allow of their being re-sold at fair prices or leased in town lots or otherwise".⁽²⁾

At the end of 1891 the Company was in debt to the extent of £7116⁽³⁾ increasing during the following year to £8513, with a cash balance of £1114, while the report for 1891-2 stated that:

"During the past twelve months the special aim of the directors and of their manager has been to increase the agricultural value of the Bechuanaland farms by irrigation, and by bringing fresh lands under cultivation so far as was compatible with a limited outlay".⁽⁴⁾

- (1) C.R.O. File no. 1897. Certificate of Incorporation 20.9.89.
- (2) Stock Exchange Year Book 1893.
- (3) Ibid. 1894.
- (4) Ibid.

The years following saw a continually maintained deficit to the end of the century; £9,280 for 1892-3, £10,515 for 1893-4, £11,596 for 1894-5, £12,528 for 1895-6, £12,924 for 1896-7 and £13,621 for 1897-8, with a cash balance at the end of the latter year of £248. It is to be presumed that this money was employed in mining operations or land speculations which failed to cover their costs. The Year Book for 1895 reported that the company had leased or rented out some of its property; some of the lands were being farmed by other parties, and certain gold discoveries were being tested, and the entry for 1897 indicated that, "Farming operations are in progress and a little prospecting is being done".

The natural conclusion of such circumstances arrived in 1900, when the company was finally wound up, ⁽¹⁾ with the liquidator giving consent to the registration of a new company, the "New Buffels Land and Mining Co., Ltd."

The immense mineral wealth discovered in South Africa, which began to be seriously exploited in this period, naturally produced a great deal of speculation in land and mining, most of which was, in the nature of things, ephemeral, and the companies hastily formed to promote it doomed to failure. Buffels Land Company appears to have come into this category, and it is in no way remarkable that it was eventually liquidated; rather it is more remarkable that, never paying a dividend, and running a continuous deficit, it managed to hold out for as long as it did.

Of the other Glasgow mining company mentioned in the African Annual and Traders Year Book, there is no record in the Stock Exchange Year/

(1) C.R.O. loc.cit. resolutions of 14.4.1900.

Year Book or in the Companies Registration Office. Nor is it possible to give any details of Glasgow Companies trading with North Africa - Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco - known to exist under the names of Pirrie Foote & Company⁽¹⁾ and Ligat Brothers. These are known only from references in the minutes of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. None appear to have been public companies, and a search of the Government files pertaining to North Africa shows no trace of them.

(1) There is a letter in the "Glasgow Herald" of June 14, 1884, by John Pirrie of this company, protesting against French claims on Morocco.

Part 2

Firms with Glasgow Connexions and Glasgow Firms
with subordinate African Interests

a) The British and African Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.

Although founded as a Glasgow company, and retaining its registered office there throughout its separate existence, the British & African Co. transferred both its management and activity to Liverpool within six years of its establishment. Eight years later it came under the effectual management of Alfred Lewis Jones, and thereafter formed the main component of his shipping empire. A fairly complete outline of the history of this firm is presented in P.N. Davis' "Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade",⁽¹⁾ and the following account is based upon it, with reference also to the Company's documents preserved in the Company Registration Office, Edinburgh, a brief sketch from an article in the magazine "Sea Breezes" of September, 1948, by Leonard C. Fay, and certain P.R.O. records.

It is not entirely accidental that the British & African Co. was established in the same year as Miller Brothers, 1869. Both were to some extent a reflection of the increasing volume of trade between Britain and West Africa. The multiplication of small traders in West Africa had been encouraged by the provision of a regular steamship service through Macgregor Laird's African Steamship Co., founded in 1852, but by the late sixties this company, with its seven ships of 8630 tons⁽²⁾ in 1869 could no longer effectively handle the volume of shipping.⁽³⁾ Although cargo was being left behind/

(1) M.A. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1963.

(2) Ibid. Elder Dempster Fleet summary, appendix p. 251.

(3) Ibid. p. 41.

behind on every voyage, the directors nevertheless refused to extend the fleet, being content with the fact that it was sufficient for the mail contract.⁽¹⁾

The nominal capital of the British & African Co. on its foundation was £200,000 in 400 shares. Of its 53 original shareholders, 32 resided in Glasgow or Paisley, and 13 in Liverpool or Cheshire.⁽²⁾ Within two years of the company's foundation Thomas Coats, the Paisley thread manufacturer, a director, held the largest number of shares (30), and he and his family continued to possess the largest single block until the company was amalgamated in 1900⁽³⁾ but after 1884 policy was determined in the first place, not by the directors but by Alfred Jones, the head of Elder Dempster, managers of the line.

The firm of Elder Dempster & Co. was established in Liverpool specifically to act as agents for the Glasgow line, John Dempster having been persuaded to leave Fletcher and Parr, the A.S.C. agents for the purpose,⁽⁴⁾ and business was commenced with three vessels, the "Bonny", "Roquelle" and "Congo," ordered from Fairfield's shipyard,⁽⁵⁾ to institute a monthly service between Glasgow, Liverpool, London and West Africa.

The company having met with immediate success, a further three ships, the "Liberia", "Volta" and "Loanda" were ordered, and by the time Alfred Jones became the manager for Fletcher and Parr in 1872, the rival companies were roughly the same size, 8 ships and 11,547 tons for the A.S.C. as against 8 ships and 10,052 for the British & African Steam Navigation Co.⁽⁶⁾

Finding/

- (1) Ibid. loc.cit.
- (2) C.R.O. file no. E 672d. List of Shareholders.
- (3) Ibid. Other directors were A. Elder, J. Dempster, J.B. Mirrilees, and J. Wilson.
- (4) Davis, op.cit. p. 42.
- (5) "Sea Breezes", loc.cit.
- (6) Davis, op.cit. p. 45.

Finding their competition disadvantageous, the two lines agreed in the same year to split the market by despatching ships at "equidistant dates", and renewed the agreement the following year with the proviso that the ships of each firm were to sail alternately every Saturday. (1)

As previously indicated, sailing by the company from Glasgow ended in 1874. By this time, as well as the more regular trade, the company was doing an extensive business in the shipment of Kroomen, labourers from the Kroo coast of Liberia, highly prized as employees because of their skill in seamanship, to other points on the coast. Accusations were laid against the company by the Liberian Government in 1875 that it was dealing dishonestly with the labourers, calling at unauthorised points on the Kroo coast to pick them up, then ill-treating them on ship and selling them to the highest bidder. (2) Both allegations were strongly denied by the company, which claimed that the Liberian Government was making them as a cover for its own crimes, and its attempt to restrict the ports of disembarkation for Krooboys to Cape Palmas was said to have been done in order to more effectively collect taxes and fleece them when they brought their wages ashore. The company admitted to calling at unauthorised ports, but did not see any good reason to desist from this practice. It provided tables showing that in 1875 it transported 1,962 Liberians from five ports in their country to other parts of West Africa, as far south as Ambrizette in Angola, and carried 2,060 on the reverse journey. The following year 1,547 were taken outwards and 1,758 brought back, as well as a further 1,907 Kroomen carried to Sao Thome in 1876 under an arrangements with Portuguese subjects. (3)

The Foreign/

(1) Ibid. p. 46.

(2) F.O. 84/1498 B. & A.S.N.C. to F.O. 28.3.77.

(3) Ibid.

The Foreign Office expressed agreement with the British & African Steam Navigation Company's interpretation of the situation, and indicated that if the Liberian Government was incapable of enforcing its own laws, the British Government would not do it for them. (1)

In the early eighties, collaborating with the A.S.C. the company defeated two attempts by rival lines to establish themselves in the West African trade, the first in 1881 instituted by a small London firm, the West African Steam Navigation Co., using charter ships (2), and a more formidable effort two years later by the Anglo African Steamship Co., also based on London and using chartered ships. The British & African Co. and the A.S.C. won because of superior experience, ability to cut freights, long-term contracts, and the fact that many of the West African merchants were shareholders in the two lines.

In 1883 the British & African Steamship Co. was reorganised as a limited company, with an increase in capital (3) to £750,000 in £50 shares. At this point the chairman was William McOnie, the other directors A. Elder, J.B. Mirillees, W.R. Watson and J. Wilson. (4) £650,000 of the new capital was issued by 1884. (5)

The picture presented of the Company's development to this point would appear to be one of consistent advance and efficient management, with a steadily growing fleet, to a point where challenges by new rivals could be beaten off, and to a size of fleet twice as big in terms both of numbers and tonnage as its established competitor. (6)

The accession of Alfred Jones to the senior partnership of Elder, Dempster, managers of the British & African Co., gave him virtual control of the line which had "no accounts with anyone except through their Liverpool agents", (7) and six years later he also brought the A.S.C./

(1) Ibid. Minute by J. Paunceforte.

(2) Davis, op.cit. p. 53.

(3) C.R.O. loc.cit. 24.4.83.

(4) S.E.Y.B. 1884.

(5) Ibid.

(6) See table below.

(7) Petition of B & ASNC to Lords of Council, 22.6.91, quoted in Davis

A.S.C. under his management⁽¹⁾, and commenced the construction of his nearly complete monopoly of West African shipping, maintained by the Conference system, which divided the market and prevented competition between the British lines and Woermann of Hamburg, and the deferred rebates scheme which kept individual shippers tied to the Elder Dempster lines.

As early as 1883 the potential threat had been perceived when John Holt suggested to William Couper that the merchants should form their own shipping line,⁽²⁾ and in the following year approached George Miller in the same sense,⁽³⁾ but in both cases these efforts came to nothing. Holt's further unsuccessful efforts to break it in the nineties have already been noted, and in 1891 Jones had the Company objects altered so as to allow it to carry on to trading as well as shipping business, and thus challenge the merchants in their own sphere.⁽⁴⁾

The monopoly became nearly complete in 1896 when both the African Association and the Royal Niger Company lost the private fleets they still maintained. Goldie got rid of his when he realised his Charter would not be renewed, and Jones proceeded to make a verbal agreement with Holt whereby the shipping companies would receive the Association fleet in return for certain concessions on shipping terms. Jones then broke the agreement having got the African Association ships.⁽⁵⁾ The African Association tried to buy their way into the shipping company from 1898, (Jones had shares in the Association)⁽⁶⁾ acquiring 40 shares in that year, and possessing 2,160 out of 39,000 in 1899, 2,492 out of 4,500 in 1900, the third largest/

(1) Davis, op.cit. p. 89-90.

(2) Ibid. p. 66.

(3) Ibid. p. 67.

(4) Ibid. p. 84, and C.R.O. loc. cit. 4.2.91. resolution.

(5) Davis, op. cit. p. 117-22. See above.

(6) C.O. 879/62 (C.P.) West Africa Currency Committee. Evidence of A. Jones.

largest single holding⁽¹⁾. Millers, on the other hand, do not appear to have bought any shares.

In 1900, Jones became owner as well as manager of the British & Africa Steam Navigation Co., buying it out complete for £800,000, having set up a new company to buy out the shareholders in the original, whose liquidators were A. Elder, J. Dempster, J. Wilson, J.B. Mirillees, Thomas Davidson and David Murray.⁽²⁾ The Company had been one of the most successful of Glasgow enterprises operating in Africa, as the price paid for it by Jones demonstrates, together with the following tables:

Dividend, 1884 - 1898. (Source, Stock Exchange Year Book)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dividend</u>
1884	4%
1885	"
1886	10/- per share, and £1:2:6 from underwriting account
1887	10/- " " " 18/- " " "
1888	£1:16:0 per share
1889	7½%
1890	"
1891	"
1892	8½%
1893	9% and special 10% bonus
1894	5% " " 1% "
1895	6%
1896	7½%
1897	10%
1898	12%

(1) Davis, op. cit. p. 261

(2) C.R.O. loc.cit.

Fleet summary, 1869 - 1900. (Source, Davis op. cit. p. 252-5.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ships</u>	<u>Tons</u>
1869	4	5313
1870	7	8427
1871	7	8427
1872	8	10052
1873	8	10052
1874	10	12760
1875	9	12597
1876	12	16782
1877	12	16782
1878	15	20728
1879	16	21259
1880	18	24298
1881	18	24298
1882	18	25069
1883	20	28669
1884	24	35245
1885	23	34956
1886	23	34956
1887	23	34956
1888	23	34956
1889	24	38615
1890	22	35260
1891	24	41889
1892	24	41889
1893	24	46466
1894	25	51340
1895	25	50194
1896	25	48056
1897	23	44742
1898	23	47520
1899	25	53838
1900	26	54453

b) Clan Line Steamers

Clan Line Steamers, as demonstrated in Chapter I were responsible for carrying the vast bulk of goods shipped between Glasgow and South Africa/

South Africa in the last two decades of the century. The Clan Line was inaugurated in 1876 with the partnership of Charles Cayzer and William Irvine at Liverpool, ⁽¹⁾ founded to participate in the India trade, the first ships sailing between Glasgow, Liverpool and Bombay, the initial voyage being that of the "Clan Alpine", built by Stephens of Linthouse in October, 1878. ⁽²⁾

"A year or so later a number of Glasgow and Liverpool shippers brought to the notice of the Clan Line that so far as South Africa was concerned there were no shipping facilities in Scotland, or in the north of England, and they promised support if a service were started from the Clyde and the Mersey, to avoid the cost of having their goods transported to southern ports". ⁽³⁾

In June, 1890, Clan Line Steamers, Ltd. was registered as a limited company in Scotland, ⁽⁴⁾ but entries for it do not appear in the Stock Exchange Year Book, and the present company affirm that their records for this period are not suitable for inspection. It is therefore not possible to give any precise indication of the commercial success of these operations, but the continuing near-monopoly position of the company indicated in the "Clyde Bill of Entry", and the frequency of the sailings could scarcely have meant anything other than an acceptable level of profit.

It is not possible to determine whether the Clan Line maintained its position as the sole regular line sailing from Glasgow to Africa because of a lack of potential competitors, or whether, like Jones Company, it had to struggle with rivals endeavouring to enter the trade. The South African trade posed special problems, Capetown at this point being the only port "with pretensions to harbour works". At the others the vessels were obliged to discharge in open roadsteads, and the Clan Line steamers were specially equipped to handle cargo in these circumstances. ⁽⁵⁾

- (1) Clan Line Public Relations Dept. release.
- (2) Clan Line Steamers Ltd. private communication.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Clan Line Steamers communication.

c) The Forbes Reef Mining Co.

The Forbes Reef Mining Co. is considered here on account of a Paisley director who sat on its Board, John Polson of the firm of Brown & Polson, cornflour manufacturers, in Paisley. (1) Polson, who appears to have promoted energetically the interests of this Company, though it had no connexion with his main line of business, was born in 1825. The firm of Brown & Polson, Ltd. were not able to provide any information on his career, and the only source for his life appears to be a book published by one, William S. Murphy, in 1901, comprising reprints of articles on Glasgow industrialists in the "Glasgow Herald", under the title "Captains of Industry", which does not mention his association with the mining company. According to this he was the discoverer of cornflour, made by powdering the residue of maize after extraction of the oily constituents, and established on this basis the Brown & Polson firm, formerly devoted to muslin manufacture and bleaching, dying a wealthy man in 1900.

The Forbes Reef Company itself was first registered in August, 1885, with a capital of £110,000, to acquire properties in Swaziland, and in January, 1889, re-registered with increased capital to carry on larger scale operations. After this reconstruction had taken place it possessed an authorised capital of £400,000 in £1 shares, all issued and fully paid up.

The enterprise was not on the whole a successful one, though initially things looked promising, and for the year 1887-88 paid a 10% dividend.

From the record presented in the Stock Exchange Year Book it would appear that over the decade following its reconstruction, the company, founded in the main to seek gold, succeeded in carrying on mining/

(1) Directory of Directors, 1890.

mining operations, but failed to do so at an economic level. It seems to have been a serious undertaking and not a mere speculative enterprise, for in 1889, having obtained gold to the value of £13,299, it suspended operations to carry out further development. The main shaft was enlarged and deepened. To the end of 1889 about £40,000 was spent on machinery and new works, resulting in an increase from 40 to 80 stamps. In November, 1890, crushing was recommenced on a small scale, and 303 ozs. of gold obtained from 1050 tons of surface soil and quartz.⁽¹⁾ Meantime a proportion of the company's property had been sold to the Southern Forbes Reef Gold Mining Co. for £160,000, but the company must have decided to resume them, for at a special meeting of October 17, 1890, a £20,000 increase in capital was authorised for this purpose, an operation which involved also the amalgamation of the two companies.⁽²⁾

Further capital developments were undertaken during 1890, £4,252 being spent. Late in this year the net proceeds of bullion were £3,278, and the profit and loss account for the same period showed a debit of £11,677, the total deficit for 1890 being £16,041. After four months crushing in 1891, yielding 1,644 ozs. gold, operations were discontinued, "attention was then given entirely to development"⁽³⁾.

By the end of the year, £7,781 worth of gold had been obtained, resulting in a net loss to the company of £5,956, its total deficit now standing at £21,998, and the company had resold part of its machinery (presumably unused for the makers took it back at the same price) worth £3,668.

In 1892, £3,133 of gold was produced, a significant decrease on the/

(1) S.E.Y.B. 1891.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. 1892.

the previous year's figure⁽¹⁾, resulting in a net loss of £1,606, a further loss of £4,740 having been made on the sale of electrical plant.

Though £2,181 was spent on the capital account during 1892, the increased difficulties the Company was facing are indicated by the fact that while in the first ten months of 1892 6,565 tons of soil and quartz yielded 2,893 ozs. gold, in the equivalent period for the following year a much greater quantity of raw material, 15,489 tons, gave only 2,385 ozs., a fall of well over 50% in percentage yield, and at the end of 1893 it was decided to reconstruct the company to give one new share, with 18/- credited as paid for every old share,⁽²⁾ though in the event the new shares were issued against four of the old.⁽³⁾

The Forbes Reef Co. took an extremely serious view of the possibility, raised first in 1889 and finally accomplished in 1893, that the British Government would transfer the protectorate of Swaziland to the Transvaal, and Polson played a significant part in the public agitation conducted against such an outcome, making it his particular concern to win the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce for the Company's point of view, an undertaking in which he was eventually unsuccessful.⁽⁴⁾ So far as the directors' motives were concerned, the possibility of being subject to Transvaal taxation, and put in closer proximity to Boer land hunters would appear to be adequate explanation.

For two years following the reconstruction there seems to have been a slight improvement in the Company's fortunes; the value of bullion/

- (1) S.E.Y.B. 1894 - S.E.Y.B. 1893 says the figure for 1891 was £7,781, S.E.Y.B. 1894 puts it at £11,929.
- (2) S.E.Y.B. 1894.
- (3) Ibid. 1895.
- (4) See below, Chapter III.

bullion obtained in 1893 was £9,737, and the share price had risen to 4/- from a level of 6d at the previous report.⁽¹⁾ In the Year Book for 1896 the Transvaal properties were said to cover 52,000 acres, and the gold obtained for the year 1894 to amount to £8,263, giving a loss for the year of £2,378.

The Forbes Reef Company never paid a dividend after its first, and after ten years of operation its prospects had regressed rather than improved. The income from its mining operations, though not negligible, were insufficient to cover operating costs, let alone the substantial degree of capital investment undertaken by it. In 1897 Polson left the board, and for the last three years of the century an entry appears in the Year Book listing no directors, and recording all work to have been suspended, and in 1900 it went into liquidation.

d) Cape Juby

An enterprise connected with Glasgow only in the person of its founder, Donald Mackenzie, was the settlement in the eighties at Cape Juby, on the coast of what is now Mauritania.

Mackenzie had the idea of diverting the trans-Saharan trade of the Western Soudan from the Mediterranean ports to Cape Juby by opening a line of communication between the latter point and the Niger bend. His hopes were most sanguine; he estimated the population of the Western Soudan at 38 million, and the North Africa-Soudan trade to be worth £4 million per annum, which by the construction of the new route could be increased to £12 million, making Cape Juby the emporium for the whole of the inhabitants south of the Atlas Mountains, and incidentally destroying the slave trade. An even more ambitious project conceived by him was to create a giant/

(1) S.E.Y.B. 1895 and 94.

giant lake in the Western Sahara by letting the sea into the El Juiff depression, thereby creating water communications nearly to Timbuctu - though there is no evidence he discussed the scheme with that other promoter of African water communications, James Stevenson.

With the rather unenthusiastic support of the British Government⁽¹⁾ Mackenzie made several journeys to Cape Juby between 1876 and 1880, negotiating with the local ruler as an independent potentate, to the great indignation of the Sultan of Morocco who claimed the area, and raising the suspicion of the Spanish authorities in the Canaries. In April, 1879, the settlement was definitely established, and christened Port Victoria, but in June, 1880, in spite of their previous friendly disposition, the local inhabitants attacked the settlement, allegedly instigated by the Moroccan authorities.

Previous to his visit in 1880, Mackenzie had set up the "North West African Co., Ltd." and according to the "Times" of August 9, 1880, the settlement was still functioning while the Spanish at Teneriffe accused the British of having completely disrupted trade at Mogadir.

Without reaching the heights originally dreamed of, the settlement continued to exist, and Mackenzie in 1892 was to lecture on it to the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.⁽²⁾

e) The Royal Niger Company

In addition to the interest held by Miller Bros. in the Royal Niger Company, a very considerable block of shares was owned by Glasgow/

(1) The material relating to Mackenzie's project is contained in P.R.O. F.O.84/1500, further developments in F.O.99/261-3, 99/271, 99/298, 99/310, 99/390-1.

(2) Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of Foreign Affairs Committee, 15.4.92.

Glasgow individuals generally, a much higher proportion than would be likely to be due to chance.

The first list of shareholders for the National African Co. dated November 21, 1882, indicates 43 Glasgow shareholders holding 20,184 shares out of a total of 78,756 shares issued, at this date, well over 25%. The Miller family had 4,035 of these 20,000, and the Coats family 4,249. In subsequent years the proportion of shares held in Glasgow fell to about one fifth, and remained at this level for the remainder of the century. The list for 1886 names 47 Glasgow holdings with 21,121 out of 97,675 issued shares, the Millers having 6,259 and the Coats 3,845. At the end of the decade the Glasgow holdings had increased marginally, to 21,735 shares, the Miller family holding somewhat less of them, 5,809, and the Coats declining by 75. R. Cowan McKinnon, of Taylor Laughland, was recorded as possessing 70 shares.

At the end of the century, (1899), the Glasgow shareholders numbered 36, with 21,996 shares out of a total issued capital of 102,708 shares. The Miller family by this time owned 9,674, a considerable proportion of the Glasgow holding, and only one member of the Coats family, Peter, was still a shareholder, with 870 shares. R.C. McKinnon no longer featured on the list. (1)

Of the seven companies considered in Part I of this Chapter, five were established in West Africa, primarily in the Niger region. Such a situation may be accounted for by the fact that while the area in question was one of the few in Africa, and the only one in the tropical belt which produced marketable commodities on a scale to make it really attractive from an economic viewpoint, at the same time the nearest major English port to Glasgow was Liverpool, which/

(1) R.J.S.C. file no. 38949, shareholders lists.

which at all times handled the bulk of West African shipping, and after 1884 did so almost absolutely. Of the two most economically advanced areas outside the tropics, South Africa and Egypt, there does not seem to have been any Glasgow business interest at all in the latter so far as can be discovered, despite the fact that along with South Africa it was the only part of the continent which carried on a direct regular trade from Glasgow. Such being the case, and since the conditions of trade in Egypt were not greatly different so far as is known from those elsewhere in North Africa, it is difficult to account for the fact that no Glasgow companies were involved at the local level as in Algeria and Tunisia. South Africa was of course farther away, but it perhaps surprising that no Glasgow trading firm appears to have taken advantage of the Clan Line's services to commence operations in South Africa, though it is always possible that one or two may have existed without leaving any record. The special character of the West African market also emerges from the fact that the companies established there were generally the most successful and viable. Apart from the extremely prosperous Miller Bros. and British & African Steam Navigation Co., the Glasgow members of the African Association, Couper Johnstone and Taylor Laughland, though not attaining great size or importance, continued throughout the period as well-established and respectable enterprises.

The economic trend in Africa during the period studied was towards concentration and the domination of the African economy by large privileged groups, and the division of the available African markets. This trend applied to the R.N.C., the B.S.A.C., I.B.E.A., and outside the British sphere to the French and Portuguese colonies and the Congo Free State. The economic environment was not, on the whole/

whole, favourable to small independent enterprises, as the fates of the A.L.C., Buffels, McIvers, Higate Bros. and Forbes Reef Company testify. The A.L.C. was to discover, like its larger contemporary, the I.B.E.A., that when there was no opportunity of exploiting minerals or other easily available raw material in high demand, the concentration of the population, and the level of development of the exchange economy in East Africa was insufficient to make the enterprise pay for itself when simply based on miscellaneous trade with the Africans. (1) Even the West African firms found difficulty in maintaining satisfactory profits in face of the degree of competition prevailing there. Before the nineteenth century was out, therefore, nearly all these companies were defunct, like Buffels, the Forbes Reef Co., presumably Higate Bros. and McIver soon to be, or absorbed into larger units like the other West African traders, the British & African Steam Navigation Co. or the African Lakes Co.

Two of the Glasgow based companies, namely Millers and the A.L.C. played important roles in determining the political future of Africa, though in different fashions and with very differing motives. That Nigeria became a British rather than a French or German colony was due in the first place to the predominance of British merchants on the Oil Rivers, and the presence of the R.N.C. on the Niger. Millers were at the heart of both undertakings, but it can be said with confidence that the attitude of the firm's founders towards the imperial factor was wholly commercial. The Oil Rivers merchants were subject to two contradictory considerations. On the one hand they distrusted direct governmental supervision and colonial annexation because it brought restriction, 'red tape' and taxes, on the other a British presence was required collectively by the merchants/

(1) Apart from the presence of A.L. Bruce of the A.L.C. on its Board, there was no Glasgow interest of any note in I.B.E.A.

merchants to hold the Africans consistently to their contracts, while individual firms tried to enlist it from time to time on their own behalf against European or African rivals. In the initial stages the system of informal Consular supervision had been found adequate, and was reinforced by gunboat visitations, and by Courts of Equity at the various palm oil towns on which sat both European traders and African chiefs. By the early eighties, however, this structure, pressed by foreign encroachment and more embittered rivalry, could no longer maintain the burdens placed on it,⁽¹⁾ and gave way to more direct intervention in the shape of the Niger Districts Protectorate in 1885.

Millers' attitude towards these developments seems to have been determined almost wholly by their immediate interests at any given point. In the early seventies they called for the Consul's intervention backed by armed force against the inhabitants of Brass who were interfering with their trade. Fifteen years later they were stout upholders of King Ja Ja's autonomy, defending his right in practice to regulate trade as he saw fit, i.e. in the interests of Miller Bros. Shortly afterwards Millers were in league with their opponents of the African Association to procure an extension of the Royal Niger Co. charter to the Oil Rivers, a solution which would have given the merchants the maximum of control combined with the minimum of outside interference, then switched their policy to opposition when the Africans and sections of British opinion were thoroughly roused against the plan. Millers in fact were in favour of any system of control which brought advantage to them, whether it was that of the British Consul, an African chief, or a Chartered company, and at the end of the century were seeking Government contracts for their newly established bank.

As regards/

(1) See J.D. Hargreaves "Prelude to the Partition of West Africa" (Macmillan 1963) for the course of these developments.

As regards the African Lakes Co. there is nothing to show that it was promoted with the conscious intention of placing the Lakes area under British or European sovereignty, though such an outcome was certainly implicit in Stevenson's continuous water transport schemes. Such an undertaking, had it been feasible, could not possibly have been executed in a continent still under African control, but even at the local level the A.L.C. found they could not carry on their trading functions without accepting political involvement. Agreements had to be negotiated with African chiefs, and a modus vivendi reached in which the company was, in practice, from the African viewpoint, treated as a sovereign power in the same way as the B.S.A.C. negotiated with Lobengula. Stevenson wrote that the A.L.C. made treaties "by which its authority was recognised over these districts".⁽¹⁾ Even the Foreign Office, in denying the company's claims to exercise jurisdiction noted its responsibility for its own defence,⁽²⁾ and the right to defend itself was in fact written into its articles of incorporation while trading disputes could lead to hostilities, as shown in the case of Chipatula. Further, an attitude had to be adopted with regard to the slave trade, and the decisions of the company were to involve it in warfare, while the attempted exclusion of liquor from its sphere made it responsible for the behaviour of Europeans.

On the basis of such experience it is hardly surprising that the company should have desired to attempt the organisation of its market as others were doing, by aspiring to formal rule in its sphere of interest, and realising that it was of too little account to merit its own Charter, sought amalgamation with the B.S.A.C. on terms/

(1) James Stevenson, "The Arab in Central Africa" pamphlet 16 pp. 1888, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

(2) Oliver, op.cit. p. 184-5.

terms which would have left its Glasgow directors in practical control of Nyasaland. It is evident, however, that the African Lakes Company's real resources were incapable of justifying such pretensions, and the actual outcome of its efforts to avoid Portuguese rule on the one hand, and domination by the B.S.A.C. on the other, was to make Nyasaland a British protectorate under the regime of H.H. Johnston. The final result may be said to have been caused by the African Lakes Company, though unwillingly by them.

It may therefore be said in estimating the influence exerted by Glasgow businessmen⁽¹⁾ and enterprise on African development that in the economic sphere it was of very considerable significance, and in the political played a role that was far from negligible.

(1) It must be admitted that outside the context of their business activities the individuals discussed in this Chapter are, with the exception of Stevenson, rather shadowy figures. It is not possible to find details of their doings in other fields than commerce, and none of them seem to have been active in municipal life.

CHAPTER III

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1. The Chamber in the Late Nineteenth Century

Having examined the careers and development of the different Glasgow firms and business houses operating in Africa, the attitude of the commercial community as a whole, including those not directly involved in African affairs, may now be considered. The most likely forum for the expression of such viewpoints and their reflection in practical activity is the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the collective organisation of Glasgow businessmen, and one which was appealed to from time to time by its member firms or outside interests to initiate activity on one or other aspect of commercial policy in Africa.

The Glasgow Chamber was the oldest in the country, founded in 1783, mainly through the agency of Patrick Colquhoun to promote the city's trade and industry in general, and specifically to counter the very serious effects of the American War of Independence on the Glasgow tobacco trade.⁽¹⁾ Although in its full title the body was designated the "Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures", during the period dealt with, its concerns, from the evidence of its records, appear to have been predominantly mercantile, though it is not possible to say how far this was a reflection of its then composition, which cannot be ascertained. The Glasgow firms of most account in African affairs, - Miller Bros., Couper Johnstone, Taylor Laughland, - were members of it, though never represented on its Board of Directors at this time/

(1) "The Foundation of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in 1783"
H. Hamilton. Scottish Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 1.
March 1954.

at this time.

The constitution of the Chamber did not change significantly between the years 1870 and 1900. The members elected at the Annual Meeting each January a Board of Directors, a percentage of whose members retired by rotation every year, and which met monthly. As well as the Annual Meeting in January, there were also three other quarterly meetings of the membership. During the seventies the Board had a number of sub-committees, e.g. the Committee on India and China, the Committee on Shipping Dues and the Mails. These appear to have been ad hoc bodies, and their records have not survived. In 1881 the structure was reorganised and two permanent committees, for foreign and home affairs respectively, replaced the previous sub-committees.

The materials used in compiling this chapter are the minutes of the Directors' meetings, the minutes of the Foreign Affairs Committee from 1881, and the published Annual Reports, supplemented by correspondence with Government departments preserved in the Public Records Office. For the period in question these are the only records which exist, the more ephemeral current material such as letters, etc. has not been preserved. The technique of minute-taking remained unchanged throughout the period, reporting each separate matter brought to the attention of the Directors, generally through the medium of correspondence, occasionally on the initiative of an individual director; a brief indication of the nature of the business in question and the decision adopted, along with the reasons for so doing. There is no indication of what was said by specific individuals except on questions of very special moment, when points made in the discussion were recorded. Memorials to the Government are generally copied in full in the minutes, but not letters from it, or those passing/

passing between the Chamber and other bodies. These minutes, therefore, have obvious limitations, but though inadequate, nevertheless give an indication of the attitude and beliefs of the Directors of the Chamber to the Partition of Africa and their actions in relation to it, which, since they do not appear to have been challenged at any point, may be assumed to have satisfied the members of the Chamber at large.

At the same time these records allow a comparison to be made of the Glasgow Chamber with other Chambers of Commerce in the U.K. on these issues, both through the reactions recorded to approaches, and correspondence from other Chambers on African questions, and by comparison of the Glasgow memorials to the Government with those of similar bodies elsewhere, at times when British merchants, or philanthropic or other associations demanding Government assistance or action, sought the support and good offices of the leading Chambers of Commerce in the U.K.

Throughout almost the entire period under study the over-riding concern, one might almost say obsession, of the Directors as reflected in their records was the generalised recession in trade, and the characteristics of the British economy and of Glasgow business, which were believed to be contributing to a situation in which foreign competition could not be met effectively. A large number of the Presidential addresses to the Annual Meetings were developed along such lines. (1)

Certain aspects of this situation and proposals for dealing with it cropped up repeatedly in the Chamber discussions - the price of labour/

(1) See Annual Reports for 1874, 1877, 1879, 1882, 1884, 1895, 1896, 1897, incl. report of the Annual Meeting of the year following. Reports available in Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

labour, the question of improving technical and business education, of decimalising the currency and the weights and measures, of the institution of a bimetallic currency as an answer to the gold shortage, of improving the River Clyde navigation, the performance of the Scottish railways and transport generally. In regard to foreign and colonial affairs the question of tariffs, duties and sugar bounties outweighed every other consideration. It might almost be said that policy on foreign issues was considered exclusively from this angle, a not wholly unsurprising phenomenon considering that the Chamber was an organisation of businessmen, and foreign tariffs were the most obvious symptom of the commercial troubles. The Chamber's policy in this respect was wholly consistent, one of wholehearted support for the continuation of Free Trade as a national policy, reiterated time and again in Presidential addresses, and hence rigid opposition to the introduction of any sort of protection. This stand was continued under presidents of both political parties, although the newspaper of the Glasgow Conservatives, the "Glasgow News", was vociferously hostile to Free Trade.

A typical and representative statement of the Chamber's policy was the Presidential address given by Paul Rottenburg at the Annual Meeting of 1897, which the Chamber thought worth while to reproduce as a pamphlet. Rottenburg castigated conservatism in methods, and the failure to adapt to the requirements of overseas customers as the key failings of British industry, and argued for far reaching reforms including decimalisation, but, "Whatever these changes are they ought not to be retrograde movements towards protection, towards obsolete fiscal legislation, towards old standards, old currency laws", and justifying the principle of free imports cited the classical economic doctrine that, "cheap food is the elementary condition of Good/

good value of labour".⁽¹⁾

In the words of the Chamber of Commerce Journal in 1968, "There is little evidence that(political)... disputes affected the Chamber"⁽²⁾ during this period. The majority of those Presidents of whom anything is known appear to have been Liberals, but two of the most outstanding, Sir James King, (1878-9), a **dyes**stuffs manufacturer, and Sir James Bain, (1885-6), an iron merchant, were leading Glasgow Conservatives,⁽³⁾ the latter being head of the Conservative Association, an unsuccessful Conservative candidate in 1880, and after leaving Glasgow, Conservative M.P. for Whitehaven in 1891. No difference in the policy of the Chamber is discernible under their leadership, and King was said to have been "trusted by radicals" and by Free churchmen, although he was an elder of the Established church. It may be said without too much inaccuracy on the basis of the available information that the Chamber, on commercial and economic questions, reflected the ethos of businessmen whose outlook had been moulded by the "Manchester School" of political economy. On more straightforwardly political questions there is only one example of a collective pronouncement by the Chamber which gives an idea of the attitudes held by the majority of its active members. In April, 1886, John Polson of Paisley - later to figure as a director of a mining company in South Africa - urged the Chamber to consider the Home Rule Bill for Ireland, and at the Quarterly Meeting on April 19th it was moved that the Chamber petition against the Bill. An attempt was made to block this by having the motion ruled out of order, on the grounds that it was political, but the President refused, and the motion was carried by a "large majority".⁽⁴⁾ The formal grounds for petitioning against the Home Rule Bill/

- (1) P. Rottenburg, Presidential Address 1897, Chamber Annual Report for 1896.
- (2) Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Journal, June 1968, "Sir James King".
- (3) Chamber of Commerce Journal, June & August, 1968. In 1968 the "Journal" contained a series of profiles of Nineteenth Century Presidents.
- (4) Annual Report for 1886.

Home Rule Bill were given as that it would be detrimental to trade and industry in Ireland and contrary to the interests of the U.K., but it may be doubted how far strictly commercial considerations determined the members' vote in this particular instance. The tendency towards political conservatism which might be indicated by this vote does not seem, however, to have had any marked influence on the Chamber's attitude to imperial and colonial questions.

To quote the Chamber "Journal" once again, "It remains true that much more is known in Glasgow about its Tobacco Merchants of 1780 than about its manufacturers and merchants of 1880"⁽¹⁾, but there can be little doubt that the leading figures in the Chamber of Commerce were also men of standing in the city at large. Two Presidents of the Chamber in this period also became Lord Provosts, the already mentioned Sir James King, Lord Provost in 1886, and Sir James Bain, Lord Provost in 1874. The former was indeed of such reputation that he accepted nomination to a vacant seat on the Corporation six months before his election as Lord Provost only on the understanding that he would be appointed to that office when the incumbent, William McOnie, retired. He was also Dean of Guild in 1875, and in 1879 Dean of the Faculties at Glasgow University, and a Deputy Lieutenant for Stirlingshire. It appears however that with the exception of Sir James Bain, the politically active Chamber Presidents preferred to confine themselves to the Glasgow milieu. King repeatedly refused to stand as a Conservative candidate, as likewise did James White (President in 1874-5), a chemical manufacturer, and J.C. Bolton (President in 1876-7), an East India Merchant, for the Liberals.

Nevertheless, whatever the attainments and reputation of these personalities, their position was not absolutely undisputed. There were/

(1) "Journal", August, 1968.

were complaints during the 1880s that the Chamber and its Directors were unrepresentative of Glasgow commercial life. At the Annual Meeting of 1884 a motion was introduced to reorganise the administration in order, so it was claimed, to prevent the Chamber being dominated as hitherto by an unrepresentative and self-perpetuating clique.⁽¹⁾ After some discussion the motion was dropped, and with some organisational wrangling during the following year, a compromise was adopted at an Extraordinary General Meeting immediately following the 1885 Annual Meeting.⁽²⁾ A little more light is thrown on the situation by a "Glasgow Herald" editorial on the September, 1884, Quarterly Meeting; "To a very large proportion of our businessmen the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce is nothing but a name", and "Its performances fall far short of what they might be".⁽³⁾ Unfortunately more detailed information on this aspect is lacking, but it is sufficient to indicate that as a guide to the feelings of the business community generally, the Chamber of Commerce must be regarded with a certain amount of caution.

The methods by which the Board might hope to make effective its points of view on national policy, or advance the interests of firms which it believed to have a justified claim to consideration were limited, and consisted of little more than letters or memorials to appropriate ministries, backed up on rare occasions by a deputation. In relation to these methods, the most noticeable fact is the reluctance which the Directors displayed to take such initiatives, and the frequency with which requests from outside bodies or individuals for support or action on their behalf were "laid on the table", a phrase indicating no further action. This was particularly the case in relation to African affairs, and could indicate on the one hand/

- (1) Annual Report for 1883.
- (2) Annual Report for 1884.
- (3) "Glasgow Herald" 27.9.84.

hand a lack of interest or concern by the Board, or on the other, a feeling that their influence would be devalued if approaches were too frequently made. At any event, in marked contrast to the Liverpool Chamber with its African Section, the Glasgow Chamber was not a centre for promoting the interests of its members with African connexions, and the Directors appear to have held themselves aloof from the activities of the Liverpool, London and Manchester Chambers along such lines. Indeed, many of the suggestions for action, or approaches to the Government on African matters which were turned down by the Directors, originated from these three Chambers.

The efforts of the Board, when it dealt with African questions, were thus directed, in a discriminating fashion, towards securing the most favourable conditions for the advance of British trade and commercial activity; conditions identified with free trade and the absence of tariffs. Imperial policies were throughout considered in this particular light; the Directors were no advocates of annexing territory on principle, but were prepared to advocate or approve it in individual instances if it seemed to be in the best interests of British commerce. In most cases this was in response to a real or imagined threat from foreign powers, and the danger that some part of Africa might be closed to British enterprise.

Although it has been shown that Glasgow entrepreneurs were as much to the fore as anybody in exploiting new opportunities opening up in Africa, the official representative of Glasgow business was not behind them in the same fashion in which it was in Liverpool. If the Glasgow Chamber could be described as "imperialist" in any sense, it was so only in a negative and self-defensive manner, and approved or advocated the use of British state power usually only when British subjects were meeting with extraordinary difficulties out of the normal run of commercial risks. There appears to have been no conception on their/

their part that the Government should consider a policy of deliberate State backing on principle. It was recognised that other powers followed such policies, but the Chamber consciously repudiated them as a false and short-sighted method of maintaining commercial prosperity. From 1890 or so there are, in conformity with the feeling of the times, occasional expressions by the Directors of what might be called imperialist sentiments, but these do not substantially modify the general picture, and there is no reflection in the Chamber's work of the taste of the Scottish Churches for missionary activity apart from perfunctory references to Christianity and civilisation in connexion with Uganda, or the debate on the West African liquor question. Probably the Directors did not regard it as relevant to their business.

In this chapter an attempt will be made, treating each of the three decades separately, to indicate the development of the above policies as the theme which persists through nearly all the Directors' deliberations on all the geographical regions of Africa, North Africa, West Africa, the Congo, East Africa and South Africa, as well as in their consideration of such questions as transport and communications and the economic development of Africa, illustrating the assumptions contained in it that British trade would automatically seek any open market, the fear that foreign annexation might close or restrict them, the advocacy of pragmatic measures including annexation by Britain to overcome this problem, combined with caution and hesitation in pressing for either the Chamber's own ideas in this respect, or the claims of its members injured by such foreign activities.

2.

The Seventies

In the eighteenthseventies business relating to Africa had only very marginal notice from the Chamber, and none of the few items which concerned it had any connexion with Imperialism or European expansion. Nothing appears in the records relating to the Ashanti or Zulu wars, or the steady encroachment on Egyptian sovereignty. The question of the exchange of the Gambia in return for French African territory has only a most cursory mention, and Millers do not appear to have referred to the Chamber any of the problems they faced in the Niger Delta during the seventies. Those entries during this decade which refer to Africa concern mostly technical aspects of trade, and they occupy a minimum of space in the minute book.

a) Transport and Communications. The largest single number of references to any matter connected with Africa concerns the Suez Canal. Throughout 1872 the Directors expressed their concern over an attempt by the Suez Canal Co. to increase its scale of dues charges.⁽¹⁾ The Committee on Shipping Dues, to which the question was remitted, at first advised the Directors to express no opinion, but to bring the matter through the usual channels before the mercantile public⁽²⁾, but two months later in July, after the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce had claimed that the rise was "contrary to all normal usage", and represented a breach by the Company of the Egyptian Government concession, a letter was sent to Lord Granville requesting him to use his influence to have the decision reversed.⁽³⁾

After some misunderstanding, the Foreign Office wrote in September that it was "in communication with the appropriate parties". The question was still before the Directors in December when they requested information /

(1) D.M. 8.4.72.

(2) D.M. 13.5.72.

(3) D.M. 8.7.72.

information from the Government on a court action whereby a French shipping company had sued and defeated the Canal Co. over the dues question, whereupon de Lesseps had come back with an Egyptian Government ruling that the Canal Co. had a right to interpret the regulations. (1)

The Government replied in January, 1873, that British representatives would attend a conference in Constantinople on the dues question. (2)

Communications in the African area were again the subject of a decision by the Directors in September, 1873, when in response to a petition from certain (unnamed) shippers, the Directors memorialised the Government to have two navigation lights fixed on the East African coast at Cape Gardafui and Ras Hafun. (3)

A different aspect of communications was raised in February of the same year when the Directors reported a letter from a "group of South Africans" alleging dissatisfaction at the terms on which the Union Steam Ship Co. operated, and expressing indignation at not being consulted before the contract was re-negotiated. After remission to the Mails committee, the Board did in fact send a petition in the requested terms (4) and the Annual Report for 1873 notes that "as a result of representations" a House of Commons Committee had had discussions with the Company, who agreed to reduce the freights between the Cape and Zanzibar from £26,000 to £20,000 per annum. (5)

b) North Africa. A point of more general significance arising in the same year concerned the Moroccan tariff regulations. A letter to the Chamberlain April asked the Directors to urge upon a British envoy, Sir John Hay, about to make an official visit to Morocco, to persuade the Moroccan/

(1) D.M. 9.12.72.

(2) D.M. 13.1.73.

(3) D.M. 17.9.73.

(4) D.M. 10.2.73.

(5) Annual Meeting, 1874.

Moroccan Government to end restrictions on British trade. The letter was passed on to the India and China Committee - an interesting comment on the relative significance of Africa in the Directors' view - which reported that since Sir John Hay was already en route to Morocco, it could not recommend any move by the Directors. (1)

c) The Congo. In 1876 Glasgow figured prominently in the attempt made to set up a British branch of King Leopold II's Association Internationale Africaine. (2) There is some confusion, however, as to what extent the Chamber of Commerce was involved. According to the documents studied by P.A. Roekyens, (3) two newspaper sources, one Belgian, the other English, indicate that the Chamber sponsored the foundation meeting of the Glasgow branch of the A.I.A. A private report from two of Leopold's emissaries who came to Britain to review the situation states, however, that it was not the Chamber of Commerce "but a meeting of merchants". (4)

According to the "Glasgow News" of November 13, this meeting constituted a "Special meeting" of the Chamber. Since the Chamber records do not themselves mention the meeting, it would appear at least likely that if members of the Chamber were prominent in organising it, that they did so in an unofficial capacity.

d) West and East Africa. Two other questions relating to Africa arose during the seventies. In February, 1876, papers relating to the cession of the Gambia were brought to the attention of the Directors. Nothing however was done, the papers were "laid on the table", (5) a procedure followed very frequently in relation to African questions/

(1) D.M. 14.4.73, 12.5.73.

(2) See Chapter 4.

(3) See "Les Debuts de l'Oeuvre Africaine de Leopold II" by P.A. Roekyens, published by the "Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales", Brussels, 1955.

(4) Lambermont & Griendl to K. Leopold II, 30.11.76, Roekyens, op. Cit. p. 189.

(5) D.M. 14.2.76.

questions in subsequent years, and one which indicated that the Directors declined to take any action. The other incident concerned East Africa. Late in 1876 one of the Directors, a Patrick Playfair, brought up the fact that the Portuguese customs on the Zambesi exacted dues of 40% on goods in transit to Lake Nyasa. Believing that 5% would be a more reasonable charge, the Board undertook to raise it with the Foreign Office, ⁽¹⁾ and shortly afterwards made a similar complaint to Lord Derby that the Portuguese authorities in Angola had issued a proclamation restricting navigation to and from Angola to Portuguese vessels. On February 7, 1877, Lord Derby replied that the objectionable proclamation had been withdrawn, and the Governor of Angola instructed to give all possible assistance to commerce. ⁽²⁾

Such was the extent of business concerning Africa dealt with by the Chamber during the Seventies, as reflected in the minutes of its Directors' meetings, while in the Annual Reports and the records of the Annual General Meetings for these years there is not - apart from the Suez Canal - a single reference to Africa other than the two lighthouses in 1873.

The recurrent theme of the Annual Reports after 1874 is the severely depressed state of world trade, and the evil prospects for commerce. This is coupled with frequent exhortations on the need to seek new markets, but Africa, it appears, was never discussed, or even referred to as a possible field for these "new markets", despite the very considerable contemporary achievements of Miller Bros. in the Oil Rivers. The businessmen of the Glasgow Chamber were, according to all the evidence, very committed adherents of the free-trade doctrine, for the defence and extension of this principle was/

(1) D.M. 10.10.76.

(2) D.M. 12.2.77.

was presented at every Annual Meeting as the panacea for all commercial ills.⁽¹⁾ In the African items dealt with by the directors during the Seventies this point is reflected in the attitude to the Portuguese dues and the Hay mission to Morocco. It is a theme which becomes most significant in the following twenty years.

3. The Eighties

Although, not unexpectedly, African affairs began to feature more prominently in the Chamber's minutes during the 1880's, it is noteworthy that the Directors behaved in a most cautious and reserved fashion when dealing with these questions. This is in marked contrast to other Chambers in the British Isles, notably these in Manchester and Liverpool which readily adopted partisan positions towards African issues. This fact is apparent through comparison of the Glasgow memorials to the Government with those of other Chambers, preserved in the Public Record Office, and by the communications between the Glasgow Chamber and the others recorded in the minutes. According to J. Flint's study of Sir George Goldie⁽²⁾ and Peter Davis' of Sir Alfred Jones⁽³⁾, the Liverpool Chamber, and in particular its African Section, was a major strongpoint for the firms competing in the Niger Delta; the R.N.C., the African Association, the Steamship Lines, and was used as an instrument of policy by whichever faction controlled the Chamber at a particular time, while in Manchester, the Chamber of Commerce was for a long time under the dominating influence of James Hutton, a businessman closely involved in African affairs, an associate of Goldie, Leopold II and William McKinnon.

The Glasgow/

(1) Annual Meetings, 1878, 1880, 1883, 1887, etc.

(2) J. Flint, "Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria".

(3) P.N. Davis, "Sir Alfred Jones and the Development of West African Trade" - M.A. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1963.

The Glasgow Chamber by contrast appears as a collective body to have held itself aloof from direct involvement in the quarrels and frictions generated between the different firms and syndicates, governments and individuals. Approaches made by various interests for the Chamber's support in pursuit of their claims and schemes - usually for approaches to the Government on the firm's behalf - were frequently rebuffed, or taken up only in a very formal manner. The Directors' central strategy seems to have been to preserve good relations with the Government at all costs. Their (infrequent) disagreements with government policy were expressed always in the politest of terms, and they firmly declined to pursue any line of action in the face of expressed government determination. Nevertheless the Directors frequently called upon the representatives of the various firms involved for advice when an item concerning Africa was under discussion, though they do not appear to have allowed themselves to be controlled by it.

One consistent line of policy is, as previously, detectable through the records, - an adherence to free-trade doctrines; but it would be incorrect to imply that in regard to Africa the Chamber pursued this as an active and consistent policy. Rather it was applied as a formula to particular questions drawn to the Directors' notice by individual interests, or general public debate. Not pursuing a fixed objective, the Chamber reacted to problems as they arose.

So far as can be ascertained from the minutes of the Directors' meetings and those of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce did not conceive the progress of events in Africa as a unified political process, a partition in which Britain must hurry to seize its legitimate share. Issues were treated as they arose, entirely on an ad hoc basis. It would be safe to say that the
Directors/

Directors were generally distrustful of expansion by foreign states, but their response to it was far from being a vigorous counter-policy of British expansionism. Instead, preservation of the status quo was generally advocated, or a satisfactory accommodation with the new colonial power.

In this decade much of the African business was handled by the Foreign Affairs Committee established in 1881. The Directors hardly ever failed to accept its recommendations on matter which were referred to it, and only very exceptionally is any issue minuted as being brought to a vote. The same kind of functioning was repeated at other levels, for at the Annual Meetings reports and recommendations from the Directors nearly always went unchallenged.

The areas of the continent most frequently under discussion in the eighties are North Africa, West Africa, the Congo and South Africa. East Africa is hardly referred to during this decade. With North Africa the questions arising do not directly relate as a rule to imperial expansion. Those in other areas do.

a) Transport & Communications, North Africa. The most significant event occurring in North Africa during this decade was the occupation of Egypt in 1882. The Directors, however, do not seem to have taken much official notice of this event, even despite the growing trade between Glasgow and Egypt. Only one brief reference occurs, ⁽¹⁾ when in August it is reported that a deputation had visited the President of the Chamber urging him to use his influence in the way of keeping the canal open. The President reported to the meeting that he had communicated with Dilke and received a satisfactory reply by telegraph. A reference to this is included in the Annual Report for 1882.

Further business regarding the canal arose in July, 1883, when strong/

(1) D.M. 14.8.82.

strong feelings were expressed among the Directors over the question of the attitudes to be adopted towards the agreement that the British Government had negotiated with de Lesseps to increase the Canal dues. The Foreign Affairs Committee had to convene a special meeting of the Directors to consider the question.⁽¹⁾ Six of these felt that the terms were adequate, but ten voted for a resolution calling for better ones to be negotiated. Some indeed favoured the idea of petitioning the Government not to ratify the agreement, but this suggestion was not adopted, and it was agreed merely to transmit the terms of the resolution to the Foreign Office.⁽²⁾

On October 3, 1884, the Foreign Affairs Committee decided to make no move to assist the London Chamber to obstruct an agreement between de Lesseps and the Shipowners Committee, to which the London Chamber had objections.⁽³⁾ Nearly a year later, in July 1885,⁽⁴⁾ a further letter from the London Chamber drew attention to the obstructive French behaviour on the Suez Canal Commission in Paris and on the Sanitary Commission at Rome, and urged the Glasgow Chamber to support its own resolution calling on the Government to do all in its power to prevent obstructions to the British flag in the Canal. This communication was allowed to "lie on the table".⁽⁵⁾ From these references it can be gathered that the Directors did not consider any aspect of the Egyptian crisis except in cases where the Canal was involved.

Other North African business dealt with Algeria and Morocco. In March, 1880, the Directors were memorialising Salisbury to use his influence with the French to have Algerian ports opened to British shipping⁽⁶⁾/

- (1) Foreign Affairs Committee, 19.7.83. D.M. 23.7.83.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) F.A.C. 30.1.84.
- (4) D.M. 13.7.85.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) D.M. 8.3.80.

shipping.

Over the matter of trade with Morocco, the Board showed a willingness to approach the Government in an effort to get the conditions of trade relaxed, combined with a reluctance to press the point once the Government had replied. On May 11, 1885, the Chamber memorialised the Foreign Office requesting negotiations to abrogate the Anglo-Moorish Convention of 1856, a Convention which restricted the export of cattle, grain and minerals. The memorial had some remarks to make about the oppressive and uncommercial attitudes of the Moorish government.⁽¹⁾ This action was taken in response to a letter from the London Chamber of Commerce, which the Directors had passed on to Pirrie Foote & Co., the main Glasgow merchants trading with Morocco, for their comments.⁽²⁾ A reply from the Foreign Office on June 8 informed the Chamber that the matter was receiving attention.⁽³⁾

Three years later, in March, 1888, a London firm, Makins, suggested that the Glasgow Chamber join them in proposing to the Government that "certain steps" be taken regarding Morocco at a great-power Conference about to be held in Madrid.⁽⁴⁾ The Directors maintained, however, that it was not their business, despite the fact that the memorial in which Makins had made their proposals had been earlier passed on by the Directors to Pirrie Foote, who expressed agreement with its aims.⁽⁵⁾

b) The Congo. During the decade of the 1880's no African issue rates more space in the Chamber records than the partition of the Congo mouth, first in relation to the Anglo-Portuguese treaty, and later in connexion with the subsequent diplomatic activity.

As early as December, 1882, certain Directors expressed a sense of disturbance/

- (1) D.M. 11.5.85.
- (2) D.M. 19.1.85. F.A.C. 10.4.85: 11.5.85.
- (3) D.M. 8.6.85.
- (4) D.M. 12.3.88. F.A.C. 2.3.88.
- (5) Ibid.

of disturbance at the acquisitions being made on the Congo and in West Africa by Portugal and France, and the possible effects on trade resulting from this. It was agreed to memorialise the Foreign Office and passed on to the F.A.C. to draw up the memorial,⁽¹⁾ which noted that de Brazza was making treaties on the Upper Congo while Portugal claimed the river mouth. The memorial explained the fear that such proceedings might adversely affect the considerable British commerce in that region, and prove damaging to the growing markets so necessary to combat the growing depression. The solution proposed is the preservation of native sovereignty.

A formal acknowledgment of the memorial is recorded for January, 1883,⁽²⁾ and in March letters were received from Crieff and from the Manchester Chamber on this subject.⁽³⁾

In December, 1883, in response to a request for information by the Foreign Office regarding British trade at Landana north of the Congo mouth, reportedly seized by the Portuguese, the Directors sent a memorial conveying the information⁽⁴⁾ which expressed great concern, and advised the Government to put pressure on Portugal.⁽⁵⁾

Nevertheless, the Chamber of Commerce was not unalterably opposed to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty when it was signed in 1884. It is apparent from the course of their discussion that the Directors would have wished to approve the Treaty, but felt unable to do so owing to certain objectionable clauses relating to the proposed tariff rate.

On March 10, 1884, a motion was introduced in the Directors' meeting condemning the Treaty and remitted to the F.A.C. for consideration⁽⁶⁾.

On March 14 the F.A.C. convened a meeting at which representatives of Glasgow/

- (1) D.M. 11.12.82. F.A.C. 20.12.82.
- (2) D.M. 8.1.83.
- (3) D.M. 12.3.83.
- (4) Not traceable in F.O. files.
- (5) D.M. 10.12.83. 24.12.83.
- (6) D.M. 10.3.84.

of Glasgow firms dealing with Africa were present by invitation, George Miller for Miller Bros., R. Cowan McKinnon for Taylor Laughland and J. Gumprecht of Gumprecht & Stewart. Further discussion was however adjourned to March 21, when the outsiders were once more invited and it was agreed unanimously that the proposed Portuguese tariff was objectionable, but that if a guarantee was written into the Treaty that tariffs would never exceed 10%, and that any disputes arising would be settled by international arbitration, the Chamber could be recommended to withdraw its objections. (1)

In conformity with these decisions John McLaren, the President of the Chamber, wrote to the Foreign Under-Secretary, Fitzmaurice, expressing the general fear that the new Portuguese tariff would be higher than the 10% ad valorem, which the Foreign Office had assured the Manchester Chamber (2) was all that would be charged. McLaren called for a revised tariff framed by experts to be written into the Treaty, explicitly excluding textiles from anything higher than 10% ad valorem, any disputes to be settled by an international tribunal, or at least an Anglo-Portuguese Commission. McLaren's letter goes on to suggest that if these points are gained the Chamber would favour the Treaty.

The Foreign Office replied on 31st March that after conversations at Lisbon between the British Ambassador and the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Portugal would accept the principle of 10% on everything except tobacco, brandy, gunpowder and guns. It is suggested that the Chamber should send a deputation to the Foreign Office after Easter, but the Chamber's proposal for a mixed Commission is not mentioned. (3)

On April 10th the Foreign Affairs Committee met to approve a report/

(1) F.A.C. 14.3.84. 21.3.84.

(2) P.R.O. F.O. 84/1810, 24.3.84, McLaren to Fitzmaurice,

(3) Ibid. 15.3.84, F.O. to Manchester Chamber.

(3) Ibid. F.O. to Chamber.

report by some of their number which "reports against the Treaty as being seriously opposed to the interests of British commerce". This report continued to lay emphasis on the necessity of an international tribunal, and asserted that any State holding the Congo ought to do so for the benefit of all Nations.⁽¹⁾ The report was conveyed to the Directors along with the outcome of the correspondence with Fitzmaurice and backed its view on the international tribunal proposal with the assertion that this could help secure "freedom of trade and equal rights". A deputation was appointed to wait on Lord Edward Fitzmaurice.⁽²⁾

A letter by McLaren to Lord Granville on April 15th notes regretfully that there was no mention of the International Commission in the previous Foreign Office reply of March 31, and describes the meeting of the Chamber on April 15, which resolved that due to the practices of Portuguese officials, "under these circumstances the Directors of this Chamber are constrained to express themselves against the Treaty as being opposed to the interests of British commerce."⁽³⁾

A report in the "Glasgow Herald" of 16 April gives further information on this meeting. A speech was made by one, David Guthrie, who favoured the Treaty except for the single point of the commission, on the grounds that it was bad for the Congo to fall into the hands of big protectionist countries, while international control would lead to disputes and eventual seizure by the stronger powers. Small nations were therefore best as locum tenens, while the Treaty guaranteed freedom of navigation on the river. Guthrie ended his speech with the observation that other treaties settling affairs in Central Africa were likely to follow this one, and that the Government could/

(1) F.A.C. 10.4.84.

(2) D.M. 11.4.84.

(3) P.R.O. F.O. 84/1810 15.4.84, McLaren to Granville.

could be trusted to act in the country's best interests, being more aware of the situation than any laymen.⁽¹⁾ Guthrie himself, John Gumprecht and Renny Watson were to comprise the proposed deputation. The deputation was postponed from its originally intended date,⁽²⁾ but on May 12 the Directors received a report that Lord Edward Fitzmaurice had been interviewed and informed the deputation that no early ratification of the Treaty was expected, as negotiations with foreign powers were continuing.⁽³⁾

A letter was reported on June 9 from the Congo District Defence Association of Liverpool, requesting the Chamber to send representatives for a deputation to Lord Granville. The Directors, however, in view of the Chamber's earlier deputation recommended no action, and on June 20 the Foreign Affairs Committee reported to them a letter from the same body intimating that the deputation had been postponed indefinitely.⁽⁴⁾

To all intents and purposes this was the end of the Chamber's relationship with the Congo question. On February 9, 1885, a letter from the Manchester Chamber urged the Glasgow one to support a deputation "on the subject of the Portuguese claim to hold the mouth of the Congo".⁽⁵⁾ Before acting the Directors wanted "more information", and on February 23 deemed it expedient to take no further action until they had a report of the Berlin Congress.⁽⁶⁾ In the meantime the F.A.C. likewise delayed consideration of a report of Portuguese action on the Congo until information was available on the outcome of the Berlin Congress.⁽⁷⁾

It can be seen that the stand taken on the Treaty by the Glasgow Chamber/

- (1) G.H. 16.4.84.
- (2) F.O. 84/1810 23.4.84, McLaren to F.O.
- (3) D.M. 12.5.84.
- (4) D.M. 9.6.84. F.A.C. 20.6.84.
- (5) D.M. 9.2.85.
- (6) D.M. 23.2.85.
- (7) F.A.C. 20.2.85.

Chamber was not wholly in tune with that of other principal Chambers in the U.K., most of whom were implacably opposed to the Treaty.⁽¹⁾ This may be considered all the more surprising in view of the fact that the Chairman of the British India Line, Sir William Mackinnon, a close friend and energetic lobbyist for Leopold II was a native of West Scotland, had a Glasgow office for his British India Line, and together with James Hutton of Manchester played the principal part in organising opposition to the Treaty in Britain.

However, while the emphasis in the Directors' statements is on the desirability of international control, of the need for an occupying European power to do so "in trust for all Nations" - a formula closely corresponding to that publicised by the Association Internationale du Congo - it is seen that the Chamber was prepared to approve the Treaty if certain modifications were made, and an actual exponent of Portuguese rule, Guthrie, was a member of the 3-man delegation appointed to hold discussions with the Foreign Office. There is no mention at any point in the records or correspondence of the A.I.C. and certainly no statement in its favour, nor any indication of what the Chamber thought of the ultimate Berlin settlement.⁽²⁾ Any hint of a direct connexion between Mackinnon and the Chamber is conspicuous by its absence; there is no trace of any correspondence between them either in the Chamber records or Mackinnon's own papers.⁽³⁾ The approach in 1884 from the Manchester Chamber, which may be presumed to have originated with Hutton was rejected.

In short, there is no reason to believe that the attitudes of the Glasgow Directors towards the Congo question was motivated by anything other than a straightforward concern about the possibility of increased/

(1) See P.R.O. 84/1810-11.

(2) It is not mentioned in the Annual Report for 1885.

(3) Preserved in the London School of Oriental and African Studies.

increased impositions on the trade of British firms if the area fell under Portuguese control.

c) West Africa. Next to the Congo, affairs of West Africa received most attention from the Directors, reflecting the difficulties in general of trade in that region, and the particular ones raised by interference, or fear of it, of foreign governments in the trade of their newly acquired territories. The earliest instance occurred in 1883, at a time when the question of the future of the Niger was being sharply posed, with the British firms united in the National African Co. striving towards a monopoly on the lower river, and the French showing sufficient interest in the area to press the British Government into a decision to annex the Oil Rivers. (1)

On November 12 a letter from the Manchester Chamber urged Glasgow to join in a joint demarche to the Government for an understanding with other governments on neutrality and freedom of navigation on the Niger and adjacent territory. (2) This was taken up by the Directors, and following a report by the Foreign Affairs Committee a memorial despatched to the Government, expressing great concern at the possibility of any restriction on the Niger trade. (3)

The following year, when the issue was before the Berlin Congress, the Foreign Affairs Committee considered the reported fact that the French at Berlin intended to introduce the question of internationalising the lower Niger, but having been informed that the French had dropped the proposal "on the remonstrances of the British Government", the Committee decided that no action was called for. (4)

In the same period the Directors had occasion to once more voice their concern for the future of free trade in West Africa. When the German/

(1) Flint, op.cit.

(2) D.M. 12.11.83.

(3) D.M. 10.12.83.

(4) F.A.C. 30.11.84. D.M. 10.11.84.

German Government annexed the Cameroons in late 1884. A memorial of November 3, 1884, viewed this event with "alarm and anxiety", explaining that while two German firms had been active there from 5-10 years, six English firms had been on the spot from 30-40 years, and further that the natives had recently applied for annexation to Britain. The memorial expressed the hope that the Foreign Office could get the German claim withdrawn, but if not, at least procure an agreement preventing the introduction of differential duties. (1)

Later events in West Africa during the eighties which fell under the Chamber's notice were less significant. In June, 1885, the inhabitants of Freetown, Sierra Leone, sent a memorial to the Chamber asking it to petition the Government to be more active in promoting local development in the colony, in terms of measures to suppress the slave trade, protect traders and the roads into the interior, to negotiate with the French for the preservation of peace in the northern rivers, and to send expeditions to open up the interior. This document was allowed to "lie on the table". (2)

In October, 1885, at the instigation of the British and African Steam Navigation Co., the Directors were complaining to the Foreign Office that trade in the Bight of Benin and the Oil Rivers was being seriously disrupted by the lack of Consular staff in that region, and the fact that the Consul had not been at his post for several months (3). A year earlier a similar complaint had been before the Chamber. (4)

The Government reply in the latter instance assured the Directors that every effort would be made to put the British protectorate under proper supervision; unfortunately the Consular staff had been decimated by sickness.

The Annual/

- (1) D.M. 13.10.84, 10.11.84. F.A.C. 30.10.84.
- (2) F.A.C. 2.6.85. D.M. 10.6.85.
- (3) D.M. 12.10.85, 29.10.85.
- (4) D.M. 14.4.84, 14.7.84.

The Annual Report for 1888 contains reference to the fact that in response to letters from the Liverpool Chamber, the Manchester Chamber, Taylor Laughland and W.B. McIver, the Colonial Office was memorialised on the question of a trade agreement entered into between a Frenchman and the rulers of Abeokuta in Yorabaland to the west of the lower Niger, which it was feared would divert a large trade away from Lagos to Porto Novo in Dahomey.

The final piece of business concerning West Africa in the eighties was a letter from the London Chamber asking for Glasgow support in making representations to the Government to negotiate spheres of interest in west and north-west Africa with France.⁽¹⁾ The Foreign Affairs Committee briefed the Directors to reply that the Chamber had already made representations to this effect.⁽²⁾

Fear of French commercial rivalry exhibited itself again in March, 1886, when the Directors expressed anxiety lest the treaty forced on Madagascar by the French should cut across previous trading rights held by Britain in regard to the island.⁽³⁾

d) South Africa. A considerable extension of British influence and commercial interests into Swaziland from the late 1880's⁽⁴⁾ was brought under the Chamber's notice through the agency of J. Polson, a Paisley director of one of the mining companies involved, the Forbes Reef Co. which felt itself threatened by possibility of a Boer protectorate over Swaziland. In this case the Chamber appears to have been willing to give generalised assistance, as was normally the case when any market seemed to be in danger of being closed to British commerce.

In April, 1889, a number of interested parties including the London Chamber wrote soliciting the Chamber's co-operation in pressing upon/

(1) D.M. 10.12.88.

(2) F.A.C. 21.12.88. D.M. 14.1.89. There is no trace of the "previous representations".

(3) D.M. 23.3.86, 12.4.86. F.A.C. 9.4.86.

(4) See Brian Marwick "The Swazi" O.U.P. 1940, for an account.

upon the Government the necessity of appointing a British Resident in Swaziland. The Directors on the F.A.C. were sufficiently concerned to recommend acceptance in a partial fashion - the Foreign Office should be memorialised to take all action to protect British persons and property there, and to ensure that no monopolies were instituted in the territory, but despite the fact that some members were in favour of backing the requests and demanding a British Resident, the Committee decided that it should not call for any particular and specific course of action. (1) When the question came up from the Foreign Affairs Committee to the Directors' Meeting on May 13, these proposals were endorsed, and it was decided in addition that if the President of the Chamber should be in London at the appropriate time he might attend a proposed deputation to the Foreign Office on the subject. (2) A memorial was therefore sent in the above terms in June, with the additional point that unrestricted trade ought to be maintained with the native states in the area. However when the issue recurred later in the year, and the Directors were asked to follow up their earlier initiative by supporting a demand for more detailed and specific action, they declined to do so.

On November 11, 1889, the Directors considered a letter from Polson - Polson himself being present - for support in convening a meeting in London to protest against Swaziland being allowed to fall under Boer protection. The Directors, however, decided to defer any action until after the said meeting had been held, and remitted the matter to the Foreign Affairs Committee with this in mind. (3) On December 9 the F.A.C. considered a number of letters, from the London and Edinburgh Chambers, and from Polson, all pressing for support to the/

- (1) F.A.C. 10.5.89.
- (2) D.M. 13.5.89.
- (3) D.M. 11.11.89.

the demand for a British protectorate in Swaziland. The Committee refused to commit itself. On the basis that Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, had promised the Edinburgh and London Chambers that all interested persons would be given the opportunity to discuss matters with the Foreign Office before any action was taken in respect of the report to be presented by Francis de Winton, the British Commissioner investigating the situation, it was decided to recommend no action, and not to hear Polson until they had considered de Winton's report.⁽¹⁾ On the same day the Directors endorsed this recommendation, thus setting the tone to be adopted on subsequent occasions when the question recurred in the nineties - refusal to intervene in any way on the grounds that the Government was in control of the situation.⁽²⁾ Not that this implied any opposition in principle on the Directors' part to the extension of British protection over the surface of Africa. At the Annual Meeting of 1889, a resolution unanimously approved the extension of British power to the Zambesi.

e) Millers, Chamber Policy. Two events in Africa during the 1880's of some significance for Glasgow interests are noticeably absent from the Chamber's deliberations, the deportation of King Ja Ja from Opobo, and the chartering of the Royal Niger Co.

Although Miller Bros. raised a lively agitation over the Ja Ja affair, wrote innumerable letters to the Foreign Office and published a pamphlet setting out their case, there is no record that they ever sought support from the Chamber. This is surprising, as there is some evidence that the Directors tended to rely on Millers' advice in West African affairs in preference to that of their competitors.

There was apparently nothing raised either in regard to the issue of the Royal Niger Company Charter in 1886, where again Miller Bros. were/

(1) F.A.C. 9.12.89.

(2) D.M. 9.12.89.

were closely involved. This is less surprising as it was the policy of Goldie and his directors to press for his Charter in private negotiations and avoid public fuss as much as possible. (1)

The Chamber could not be said to have displayed a very intense concern for the interests of Glasgow firms which found themselves disadvantaged in one way or another by the process of events in Africa during this decade.

One circumstance appeared to be capable of pricking the Directors to action - a threat real or implied to freedom of trade by the erection of tariff barriers in Africa, or the restriction of British commerce by a foreign power. In such circumstances the Directors were willing to urge upon the Government a particular course of action, not excluding annexation, but always in an extremely reserved fashion. In this respect the Glasgow Chamber behaved in a manner quite different from other Chambers, and in view of the extremely cool attitude displayed by the Glasgow Directors towards requests by the others for joint approaches to the Government, it is almost to be wondered why they kept on trying.

4.

The Nineties

In most respects the policies followed by the Directors during the eighteen-nineties represent a continuation of those applied in the previous twenty years, while a substantially greater attention is paid to African affairs. References to the continent become increasingly frequent in the minutes of the Directors' meetings and those of the Foreign Affairs Committee. The number of individual items relating to Africa is more than twice that for the eighties. The same trend is evident in the Annual Reports. In 1892, out of nine items dealing with foreign/

(1) Flint, op.cit.

foreign affairs, five refer to Africa.

It is likely that this was due in a very large measure to the quickening tempo of European activity on the continent, the annexations and delimitations of spheres of influence currently taking place. More than two-thirds of the references are for the years 1890-96, a period when expansions and partitions were proceeding at a particularly brisk pace. The majority of issues dealt with by the Chamber during the period 1890-1900 derive directly or indirectly from this situation, being of a political nature or concerned with the economic development of newly acquired lands.

Only a small number of items in this decade originate from old-established commercial activities of no political significance. The most important category of these relates to communications between Europe and Africa, and these are now considered. The general tenor of the records on these subjects indicates an unwillingness on the part of the Directors to become involved in the internal disputes of various sections of the African business community.

a) Transport and Communications. From the Capetown Chamber of Commerce in 1894, the Wolverhampton Chamber in 1896, and the South African Mercantile Association in 1897 came requests for support in pressing for cheaper freight rates between Britain and South Africa, and help in ending the monopoly of the shipping rings⁽¹⁾ whereby shippers were tied to a particular shipping line by a system of deferred rebates on cargo which were forfeited if the shipowner used a competing line, and where competition between the lines was eliminated by the Conference system. This process had become an international phenomenon by the 1890s, and applied to all regions of the globe. The pioneer of the system had been Alfred Lewis Jones,⁽²⁾ and the pressure/

(1) D.M. 8.10.94, 12.7.97, 8.4.98.

(2) See P.N. Davies, op.cit. for a description of Jones's methods.

pressure, referred to in Chapter II, which he exerted on the West African firms was derived from his control of the shipping through this system. Although the rings and the Conference system primarily benefitted the established shipowners, and discriminated most severely against any new lines trying to enter the market, it was not universally unpopular. Those who shipped in small amounts were said to like it for the relative stability it ensured in freight rates. Its main opponents were big shippers like Miller Bros., the Royal Niger Co. or John Holt, but they, as indicated, were unable to combine against Jones.

The stand taken by the Directors in this instance is interesting for they were quite adamant in refusing to take any action, and in this case it was not merely a matter of caution, for the Foreign Affairs Committee went out of its way to justify the rings: "This principle...includes...pools, corners, trusts, syndicates and associations for exclusive dealing. This dealing extends to many important articles of trade". The minute then quotes as examples Insurance Companies, the Scottish Banks, the Co-operative Societies, licensing laws, trade unions and employers associations. "Looking to the foregoing and to the wealth and influence of the men who are involved... this Committee does not see hope at present of successful steps being taken to overthrow the system".⁽¹⁾

This unusually rigid attitude would tend to indicate that the views of the shipping interests - at least in matters where they were directly concerned - played at this point a substantial part in determining the Chamber's policy. Though not referred to in the Chamber minutes, it is worth noting that one of the major South African shipping lines, the Clan Line, was based on Glasgow and involved in the Conference system/

(1) F.A.C. 30.7.97.

system, but it is impossible to say what weight this may have had in this decision, one which would indicate that the monopolies of shipping rings were not considered incompatible with the idea of free trade in general. Interestingly though, the Chamber had reversed its opinion by 1909. When it met to consider the evidence to be presented to the Royal Commission on Shipping Rings of that year, the majority voted after a sharp debate to oppose the rings and the Conference system, while at the decisive meeting most if not all of the shipping interests in the Chamber voted against this stand. (1)

In 1895 the Cape Town Chamber requested support in obtaining more stringent measures to put a stop to the pilfering of goods bound for Cape Town, which, it was claimed, occurred between factory and ship in Britain. The Home Affairs Committee, to which the issue was referred, asked Cape Town to send details of each pilfering, as they did not accept that the crimes always took place in Britain. This was the end of the matter (2) but the Cape Coast Chamber was in touch with Glasgow in 1900 when the complaint was made that its members were obliged to pay duty on empty containers. However, when the matter came up for consideration, the Directors stated that it had been settled, and in any case was not their province. (3)

In 1891, 93 and 98, the Plymouth and Southampton Chambers of Commerce both tried to enlist Glasgow's support in their dispute over which of these towns should handle the Cape Town mails. Glasgow repeatedly refused to be involved (4) and did likewise when Liverpool Chamber of Commerce complained in 1892 and 93 of the rates of telegraph charges to West Africa. The African Direct Telegraph Co., it said, was charging higher prices to British customers than to French and Portuguese/

- (1) Royal Commission on Shipping Rings 1909. Cmd. 4668-4670.
- (2) D.M. 10.5.97.
- (3) D.M. 12.2.1900, 12.3.1900.
- (4) D.M. 8.6.91, 13.7.91, 14.9.91, 10.4.93, 14.11.98.

Portuguese, the Government having neglected to negotiate lower rates as the others had done. The Board expressed its sympathy but declined to take any action. (1)

b) South Africa. Only one of the issues taken up during the eighties continued to assume any significance for the Chamber in the nineties, this being the Swaziland question. In these ten years this tiny territory accounted for nearly as much space in the Minutes as the rest of South Africa, and much more than East Africa. By 1892, according to Polson, the Forbes Reef Co. had investments of £200,000 in the country, and a concession on one-eighth of its land, mainly for gold mining. (2)

By that year the anti-Transvaal agitation, now centred round the Swaziland Committee formed in London, was concerned especially with propoganda and proposals for a railway from the harbour at Sardwana to Swaziland to give the territory economic self-sufficiency. Letters containing requests for the Chamber's support in this were received in May and September, but the Directors, feeling in the first instance that the British Government would be sympathetic to "judicious enterprise" in any case, and in the second that the British Commissioner in Swaziland was to issue a report on the territory but had not yet done so, took no notice. (3)

The attitude changed, however, after Polson in February, 1893, addressed a Foreign Affairs Committee meeting entirely devoted to Africa. In the course of it he asserted that previously, "British policy towards Swaziland was the result of the expression of opinion at that time by Chambers of Commerce and the mercantile community as to the value of Swaziland in connexion with British interests." (4)

Presumably he put his case well, for after another letter from the Swaziland/

(1) D.M. 9.5.92, 8.5.93.

(2) F.A.C. 20.2.93.

(3) D.M. 9.5.92, 13.6.92, 12.12.92.

F.A.C. 17.5.92, 21.11.92.

(4) F.A.C. 20.2.93.

Swaziland Committee the Directors in April decided to send a memorial to the Foreign Office, expressing anxiety over Swaziland's future as much capital was invested there, and many British persons had bought lands or concessions. Since the Swazis were said to favour British rule it was maintained that the British protectorate should be continued.⁽¹⁾

The answer, received in April, denied that any British protectorate existed over Swaziland since that would have been contrary to the 1884 agreement with the Transvaal, but claimed that in any agreement reached, British interests would be protected. After this the Board apparently felt that it had done enough, for at a special meeting in November, 1894, despite Polson's urging it to make representations to the Government against Swaziland's transfer to the Transvaal, and the similar feelings of one director, Seligman, all the others voted to take no further action.⁽²⁾

c) Tariffs. The central preoccupation of tariff and protection remained no less pressing for the Directors. By the 1890s the British Free Trade system was becoming increasingly isolated in a tariff-organised world. Systematic protectionism was pursued as the declared policy of the German Government with apparent effectiveness in terms of economic performance. In the early 1880s Jules Ferry as French Premier had propounded the idea of the French Empire as a protectionist imperial unit. The Mackinley Tariff of 1890 marked a decisive turn towards protectionism on the part of the U.S.A. In Germany and the United States the trend towards industrial and financial concentration was considerably assisted by protection, which therefore had the support of influential business sections. To a very large extent, therefore, the Directors and the Foreign Affairs Committee, in their desire/

(1) D.M. 10.4.93. F.A.C. 13.3.93, 18.4.93.

(2) D.M. . 28.4.93, 15.11.94.

desire to prevent foreign protectionist policies being applied to foreign colonies were battling against the tide, yet a reading of the relevant minutes would indicate that this was considered even more alarming than foreign annexation of previously unclaimed territory.

This concern is illustrated by items relating to:

(i) Tunisia.

(ii) Madagascar.

(iii) Ivory Coast.

(iv) West Africa in general.

(i) In July, 1890, Manchester Chamber of Commerce wrote that an Anglo-French Convention then under negotiation might result in the abrogation of the Anglo-Tunisian treaty, under which British goods entered that country under a lower tariff than existed in France or her other dependencies. Deciding that any such cancellation would be a severe blow to a trade in which Glasgow merchants were interested, the Foreign Affairs Committee recommended that a memorial be despatched to the Foreign Office. (1) This was done in August, claiming that it was not only the Tunisian trade which was in question, but that many

".....British products found their way into Algeria and other countries, and that this trade was on the increase and would doubtless further increase on the completion of the Canal and harbour works presently in construction at Tunis and its outport La Goulette". (2)

A month later the Foreign Office replied that no change was contemplated in the tariff. (3)

In 1898 the issue of this convention came up again when the Glasgow firm, D. Ligat & Sons, complained that the French administration in Tunis was breaking it by charging an 8% duty on cotton yarn and certain classes of cotton goods, whereas the agreement had stipulated 5% ad valorem/

(1) F.A.C. 28.7.90. 6.8.90.

(2) D.M. 11.8.90

(3) D.M. 8.9.90.

5% ad valorem charge on all cotton textiles. Receiving representations from the Chamber, the Foreign Office replied that it had instructed the Ambassador in Paris to raise the question.⁽¹⁾ The correspondence between the Foreign Office and Sir E. Monson, the British Ambassador in Paris⁽²⁾ indicates that the French justified their attitude on their interpretation of the word "cottonades" in the Convention, which they held to exclude the named articles. This interpretation was disputed by the British, and finally a compromise arrived at by which cotton yarns continued to be charged at 8%, but the other items were brought within the scope of the 5% tariff.⁽³⁾

(ii) A very similar incident occurred in connexion with Madagascar in 1896. According to a letter received from the Manchester Chamber that April, the French were threatening abrogation of the commercial treaty signed between the previously independent Madagascar and other powers, including Britain. The letter requested Glasgow's support, but as the Directors understood the Foreign Office had the matter in hand they decided that no further action was called for.⁽⁴⁾

(iii) In 1894 the Directors were informed by the Liverpool Chamber that a memorial had been sent to the Foreign Office protesting against the monopoly given to a Frenchman to export mahogany from the Ivory Coast, and R. Cowan McKinnon of Taylor Laughland wrote in the same terms. The Board decided to postpone action until the Government had replied to the Liverpool memorial, and the minutes do not refer to the matter again.⁽⁵⁾

(iv) At the beginning of 1898 the Directors, urged by the British Chamber, supported a protest against French differential duties in the West African region, and suggested that the matter be raised before the/

- (1) D.M. 14.2.98.
- (2) P.R.O. F.O. 27/3451.
- (3) Ibid. Monson to F.O. 5.5.98.
- (4) D.M. 13.4.96.
- (5) D.M. 12.2.94.

the Anglo-French Commission then sitting in Paris. The Foreign Office however pointed out that such a matter was not within the Commission's competence, and in any case the French would certainly have nothing to do with the idea, being extremely keen for French preferences in French colonies. (1) The sympathy of the Directors to this sort of approach is clearly brought out in the minutes, and their concern and alarm at any hint of commercial restrictions is made apparent. Only in one of these instances, that of Madagascar, did they positively decline to act, and then only because, they claimed, the matter was being dealt with adequately.

d) West Africa. In the nineties, as before, West Africa figured prominently in the Directors' deliberations and proposals on the continent. As a rule, the aspect which appears to have been uppermost in their minds in these cases was the possibility of monopoly and trade restriction, domestic or foreign, being introduced under cover of extended French or British influence.

(i) The delimitation of the Sierra Leone boundary caused the Chamber to call a special Board meeting in November, 1891. It was attended by representatives of the British and African Steam Navigation Co., Miller Bros. and Taylor Laughland, and met to consider a letter from Liverpool Chamber indicating that it had requested the Government to ensure that when the boundary was settled by the Anglo-French Commission then sitting it should be ensured that the French did not restrict trade in areas opened up by British enterprise, as had happened previously on the Gambia. The intention was to follow up the request with a deputation to Lord Salisbury, and Glasgow Chamber was invited to provide a representative, and, if possible, a Member of Parliament on it.

The businessmen present at the meeting strongly urged the
Directors/

(1) D.M. 8.11.97. 10.1.98. 14.2.98.

Directors to endorse the approach not only with reference to Sierra Leone, but to hinterlands of all British territories in West and South West Africa. It was unanimously agreed therefore to send a memorial and join the deputation,

"....being satisfied of the great and general importance of securing freedom of access to the interior of Africa from the British Colonial possessions on its seaboard, and having regard to the large interest which Glasgow merchants have in this matter".(1)

The deputation was seen, not by Lord Salisbury, but by Lord Knutsford of the Colonial Office on December 8, 1891, and included representatives of the London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham Chambers, as well as that of Glasgow. (2) The Glasgow representative is not named, and is not reported as having spoken.

The deputation does not appear to have been very successful in its aims. Two letters subsequently came from the Foreign Office, the first to state that the Boundary Commission was not concerned with access to the interior, the second on the reception of the deputation, while in between, Liverpool wrote to regret the results of the demarche. Thereupon the Board, following a recommendation from the Foreign Affairs Committee that no action be taken until the Commission reported, decided in February, 1892, to take the matter no further. (3)

(ii) The Matabele affair (4) came before the Chamber in March, 1892, when R. Cowan McKinnon reported to the Directors that he was in correspondence with the Government. The meeting decided to wait upon the result. This was arrived at in June when the Board meeting of that month had a letter from McKinnon before them, stating that the Government had admitted the validity of the firm's lease. (5) For reasons/

(1) D.M. 25.11.91.

(2) F.O. 84/2266, Knutsford to F.O. printed enclosure.

(3) D.M. 14.12.91, 11.1.92, 8.2.92. F.A.C. 1.2.92.

(4) See Chapter 2.

(5) D.M. 14.3.92, 13.6.92, 8.8.92.

reasons which are not explained the Directors decided in August to take no further action. McKinnon does not appear to have pressed them any further.

The threat of foreign annexations to British commerce was not, however, the only aspect of imperial expansion in West Africa considered by the Chamber.

(iii) In the case of Ashanti, the Chamber attempted to use its influence on the Government to urge direct annexation of a region still independent, but recognised by foreign powers as lying within the British sphere of influence. This resulted from the fact that in January, 1894, Taylor Laughland, Miller Bros. and W.B. McIver informed the Directors that they had sent a memorial to the Foreign Office calling for annexation of Ashanti and the frontier region of the Gold Coast, and appealing for support in this initiative. At a special meeting in the same month the proposal was agreed to, and a memorial sent, pointing out that increased revenue from the region would pay the expenses of conquest and administration. In February of the following year the London Chamber sent details of the interference to trade practised by the Ashanti, and asked for support in representations to the Government. In reply to a query from the Chamber, the Foreign Office reported in April that no satisfaction had been received from the Ashanti, though the Governor of the Gold Coast was looking into the matter. Then in August, 1895, Taylor Laughland, Millers, McIver and the British & African Steam Navigation Co. urged the Directors to again request annexation of Ashanti, or at least the installation there of a British Commissioner. This was agreed to.⁽¹⁾ Ashanti was eventually annexed in 1896.

The question of Ashanti cropped up once more in 1900, when the London/

(1) D.M. 8.1.94, 22.1.94, 11.2.95, 8.4.95, 12.8.95.

London Chamber wrote on the subject of native land rights, and the disposal of Ashanti lands after the late rebellion. There is no indication, however, of the content of this letter, and the matter was not pursued. (1)

(iv) Although Millers, as previously noted, do not appear to have tried to enlist the Chamber's support for their campaign on behalf of Ja Ja, the Directors were obliged to give attention to a later stage of the commercial struggle in the Niger Delta. As recorded in Chapter 2, the Delta firms planned in 1888-90 to secure themselves a Charter for the Oil Rivers, either in collaboration with Goldie or independently, and in April, 1890, documents arrived from Liverpool on the proposals for a separate Oil Rivers Charter, and the alternative of Crown Colony government in that region. Not surprisingly, in view of the Chamber's relations with Millers who were at this point opposed to a Charter, which was admitted to be restrictive in intention, the Directors had no hesitation in deciding to submit a memorial against the proposed Charter, claiming that, from its foundation the Chamber had constantly maintained that, "universal freedom in Trade and Commerce is the best and truest policy of the Nations", and noted that while Chartered companies might be applicable in exceptional cases, this was not one of them. (2)

These proceedings were, however, not well regarded by all the Chamber's constituent members, as a letter from the firm of Couper Johnstone to the Foreign Office makes plain. (3) Couper Johnstone were of course members of the Liverpool African Association, Miller's rivals, and the letter is written on A.A. notepaper. William Couper points out that only Millers' advice was sought; Couper Johnstone and Taylor Laughland were not asked for their views. The Chamber is then accused of/

(1) D.M. 11.6.1900.

(2) D.M. 14.4.90, 21.4.90, 25.4.90, 8.9.90.

(3) F.O. 84/2080. Wm. Couper to F.O. 29.4.90.

of assuming without evidence that the Charter was to be contrary to free trade and in favour of monopoly, though the Directors were quite well disposed to the amalgamation of the Scottish railway interests, and hints that the Chamber's Directors were unrepresentative of the commercial community. The Foreign Office acknowledged this letter without comment.⁽¹⁾ The Charter was not granted.

(v) Questions associated with monopoly in the Niger regions arose again in February, 1892, when the Board considered a letter from Liverpool which, expressing alarm at the possible acquisition of unappropriated West African hinterland by undesirable parties, called on the Government; "...to anticipate the advantages likely to accrue to other powers from the activity of foreign explorers or to Chartered Companies (obviously the Royal Niger Co. was being hinted at) who.... obtain possession of territory vitally important to British colonisation", urged that, these territories, "Should not be placed under the exclusive protection of any but British Imperial rule".⁽²⁾

The Directors called a special meeting in the same month at which it was decided to send a memorial to the Colonial Office along these lines which, while carefully avoiding any mention of Chartered Companies, stated that the Chamber, "...considered it of great importance in the interests of commerce that absolute freedom of trade should be preserved in these regions".⁽³⁾

It was not prepared, however, to go any further than this. A subsequent communication from Liverpool in April was shelved until the Glasgow Chamber judged the Government had had time to consider the former's original memorial, although it "appreciated the importance of the question".⁽⁴⁾

In June/

- (1) Ibid.
- (2) D.M. 15.2.92.
- (3) D.M. 14.3.92. F.A.C. 12.2.92.
- (4) D.M. 14.4.92, 9.5.92.

In June Liverpool made a fresh approach, stating that it would send further material, "also on the subject of the Royal Niger Co.'s jurisdiction over the hinterland of Lagos", and that it would continue to press for British Commissioners to be sent to Jebu Ode and Abeokuta. Glasgow declared on this that it was, "desirable to await the issue of this correspondence" (between Liverpool and the Government), hence it would do nothing in the meantime. (1)

(vi) In August, 1893, when the traders were making their last bid against Goldie, the Liverpool Chamber sent some material on the R.N.C. Charter, and next month asked for co-operation against "abuses which are alleged to exist" under it. (2)

The Directors decided that they had insufficient information to act, and when news came from Manchester Chamber in November that it proposed to take some (unspecified) action, the Board felt that the Government could be relied upon to give all traders access to the Niger, and hence declined to support it. (3)

(vii) None of these questions, relating to annexation and monopoly, aroused so much passion and controversy among the Directors as the proposals to restrict the liquor trade in this region.

The issue came to the fore when a letter from the Colonial Office was considered in April, 1896, informing of proposed regulations on the West African spirit trade and requesting comments. (4) The matter was referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee, and its Chairman, G.H. Dick, prepared a digest of the documents under consideration, which was copied into the minute book, occupying nine pages. It is the longest single item with reference to Africa in the entire 30 years under discussion.

The digest/

- (1) D.M. 13.6.92, 8.8.92.
- (2) D.M. 14.8.93.
- (3) D.M. 11.9.93, 8.11.93.
- (4) D.M. 13.4.96.

The digest claims that nowhere is any benefit claimed to the natives. Even Liverpool, the seat of the trade, excuses rather than defends it, and does so on the grounds that,

- 1) The customs revenue derived from it is a Government necessity.
- 2) British merchants cannot carry on without it, and
- 3) If British merchants do not deal in it, others will do so.

Dick reluctantly admits that the first point is valid - spirits are 17% of West African imports - but rejects the others. On the second, moral grounds should take precedence over commercial ones, and on the third, British spirits were being driven out by foreign ones in any case so there would be no great loss. The figures he gave were as follows:-

1894 - Imports from Britain 179,176 gallons.

" " " foreign countries 2,631,428 gallons.

He is also optimistic that if the liquor trade were abolished it might well be replaced by cottons.

Chamberlain had asked for comments on three alternative proposals:-

- (1) a fixed quota on spirit imports.
- (2) a Government monopoly
- (3) increased import duties.

There was no disagreement among the Committee as to the pernicious nature of the trade, but sharp dispute arose on the best means to restrict it. Dick was fiercely in favour of the second solution, but the Committee eventually recommended that:

- (1) The Government should implement existing regulations more effectively.
- (2) It should restrict the trade as far as possible in its own possessions, and impose a restrictive duty in concert with other powers if possible.

Representatives of the African trade in Glasgow believed the West/

West African liquor trade to be of no vital importance to Scottish distillers. (1)

Dick found no seconder at the Directors' meeting in June, 1896, for his proposal in support of a Government monopoly, and the Committee's suggestions were adopted instead. At the Board meeting in July, Dick tried to get the decision reconsidered, but failed. (2) The Chamber appears to have wished to avoid any very revolutionary solutions but obviously felt strongly enough about the question to allow their feelings about the demon drink to override commercial considerations. (viii) Four relatively trivial items complete the picture of the Chamber's business on West Africa in the Nineties.

In April, 1891, consideration was given to a request from Lagos Chamber of Commerce to assist in getting the Colonial Office to open up roads in the interior, and to appoint a travelling commissioner in these regions. No action was taken. (3)

In 1893 the authorities at Lagos issued regulations relating to the import of "folded woven goods", which W.B. McIver claimed would divert the traffic to Dahomey. The Chamber, although, it approved the principle behind the regulations, therefore urged the Government to apply them leniently at first. The Colonial Office having agreed to do so, the Directors expressed themselves satisfied with its reply. In 1894 these regulations were extended to the Gold Coast. McIver wrote to the Chamber on this - presumably in condemnation though the minutes do not specifically say so - but no action was taken of any kind. (4)

Similarly in 1896 and 97 the Directors were informed that adulteration was being practised on rubber goods at Lagos. It was judged/

- (1) F.A.C. 5.5.96.
- (2) D.M. 27.7.96
- (3) D.M. 20.4.91.
- (4) D.M. 13.3.93.

judged to take no action other than to keep the matter in view. Likewise action was refused when Manchester Chamber passed on its protests at the high prices being demanded at Lagos by the African Banking Group for the supply of silver coins. (1)

e) Economic Development in Africa. On consideration of the Chamber's attitude towards the continent as a whole, it may be said that though free trade remained the prime consideration, more sympathy than previously was expressed during this decade for imperialist ideas as such. This may be gathered from various statements already quoted, and these now to be considered, of the alleged benefits, not confined to free commercial intercourse, claimed to flow from British Imperial expansion. It was made explicit in a remark of the President when addressing the Annual General Meeting of 1896 he stated that, "The policy which attaches great importance to colonial expansion is guided by true instinct". He went on to refer to the need for markets, the danger of foreign tariffs, and the idea of colonies as raw-material appendages. (2)

One thing which emerges is that the Directors were most anxious to see economic development undertaken in the new territories, and were quick to recommend it. Railways were naturally considered as essential instruments of such development, and discussion of possible railway construction in various parts of Africa occupies a fair amount of space in the minutes.

Not only were the Directors keen to see development undertaken, but they frequently expressed confidence in its feasibility. They seem to have had a high opinion of commercial prospects in Africa, and to conceive of many opportunities existing if only conditions could be made right for grasping them.

Examples/

(1) D.M. 11.7.92, 11.12.96, 11.1.97. F.A.C. 5.1.97.

(2) Annual Report for 1895.

Examples of this general attitude are shown in references to:-

(i) Uganda and East Africa, (ii) Mashonaland, (iii) Morocco,

and references to transport problems relate to:-

(i) Uganda, (ii) West Africa, (iii) Nyasaland.

(i) On the Uganda question, the Chamber's attitude was fully in conformity with public opinion in opposing a British withdrawal. In November, 1892, an urgent memorial went to the Foreign Office strongly deprecating any idea of withdrawing Government support from "agencies active in the region of the Upper Nile". This, it was argued, was a field of British enterprise which it would be disastrous to abandon. The possibility of the slave trade reviving on British withdrawal was emphasised, and the need to protect British residents stressed,

"..... Imperial interest (are) at stake in the region assigned as the sphere of British influence in Eastern and Equatorial Africa at the Brussels Conference of 1889-90.

Suppression of the slave trade in Africa can be better accomplished by the civilisation of the interior than by the present method of maintaining armed cruisers....., not only will the important progress made in civilisation be lost but the lives of Europeans in these territories will be placed in jeopardy and a most deplorable extension of the slave trade.... will result".

Then the memorial went on to assert that the Government should give aid to the Imperial British East Africa Co. because of its philanthropic nature. It had incurred a great deal of necessary expense in activities which were not remunerative, but were necessary to establish "civilisation", and the beneficent effects of British power in this region ought to be maintained,

"The Imperial British East Africa Co. is presently involved in an enterprise necessarily involving large outlay without immediate return, and so far as their labour and responsibility tend to the general benefit of British trade and interests, it seems reasonable that in this trying epoch of the Company's existence, the Government should afford its powerful aid".(1)

The Foreign Office minute on the memorial merely notes acknowledgment. (2)

The records give no hint that William Mackinnon's influence was involved/

(1) D.M. 2.11.92.

(2) F.O. 84/2192, 2.11.92.

involved, and given the prevailing state of public opinion on this issue as reflected in the massive volume of protests which the proposal to withdraw produced, ⁽¹⁾ there is no need to assume it.

(ii) In January, 1893, the Chamber arranged to hear an address entitled "Mashonaland considered as a new market for British manufacturers" from a Mr. Maund who had lived there. He spoke of the civilising influence of the British South Africa Co. in opening up Mashonaland to trade and affording new markets for Glasgow manufacturers. Also, the country was suitable for settlers, and a new railway was under construction. ⁽²⁾

Some time afterwards the Chamber arranged for another meeting, this time on Matabeleland, by one of Rhodes officials. He, however, forgot to arrive. ⁽³⁾

(iii) The Board became involved in discussions over extending trade in the then independent Regency of Morocco, through contact with Donald McKenzie of the Cape Juby enterprise ⁽⁴⁾ supported by Pirrie, Foote & Co.

In May, 1892, McKenzie, temporarily in Glasgow, addressed the Chamber, and was of the opinion that the British Embassy about to visit the country should press for internal reforms and liberalisation of trade. He was supported in this by Pirrie.

The following month McKenzie suggested that the Chamber approach the Government with the idea that the Embassy be used to negotiate a new commercial treaty, and at the Quarterly Meeting of the Chamber in July, a resolution moved by McIver expressed satisfaction at the Government having opened a postal agency and vice-consulate at Fez, and the hope that it would continue to open up trade. In view of their conviction that the Government would pursue these aims, the

Directors/

(1) Ibid.

(2) D.M. 21.1.93.

(3) D.M. 8.1.94, 29.1.94.

(4) See above, Ch.2.

Directors decided that it was unnecessary to send a memorial, but the Foreign Affairs Committee agreed to transmit to the Foreign Office the resolution passed by the Quarterly Meeting.

The Morocco negotiations fell through. The head of the mission, C.B. Euan-Smith, returned to Britain, and it was suggested to the Directors that he be invited to Glasgow to speak to the Chamber, but in view of the fact that "negotiations with Morocco might be resumed", the Board rejected the suggestion.

In February, 1893, McIver sent a letter asking for certain resolutions (unidentified) to be sent to the Foreign Office. The Foreign Affairs Committee decided, however, that since a new envoy had been appointed, it would be wrong to take any action, and the Directors confirmed this stand. ⁽¹⁾

Transport

(1) Some months before the memorial in favour of I.B.E.A. was sent out, a letter from that organisation was received asking for the Chamber's help in getting the Government to guarantee interest in the railway - to cost £2 million - that it wanted to build from the coast to the interior. I.B.E.A. denied any intention of monopolising the trade created by this line of communication. The Directors decided to postpone a decision until they heard an address by a Mr. Jepson, a lieutenant of H.M. Stanley, which duly took place in February, 1892. He gave a glowing account of trade prospects in East Africa, but the Board were still cautious at this point, despite their vigorous support for I.B.E.A. later in the year. They decided to postpone action till the survey for the line was completed. ⁽²⁾

(ii) The Liverpool Chamber in December, 1894, invited Glasgow to join a deputation/

(1) D.M. 17.5.92, 13.6.92, 25.7.92, 8.8.92, 12.12.92, 13.2.93, 13.3.93.
F.A.C. 1.8.92, 20.2.93.

(2) D.M. 11.1.92, 12.2.92, 14.3.92. F.A.C. 1.2.92.

a deputation to the Colonial Office in favour of a railway in West Africa, having previously sent a memorial to that effect. The invitation was accepted. The deputation was postponed, however, and when Lord Ripon eventually received it he did so sympathetically, but could only announce his powerlessness in view of the imminent change in government.

In September, 1895, Chamberlain, the new Colonial Secretary, sent to the Chamber, on condition of non-publication, part of a secret report on the proposed railway which it had been decided in fact to build, from Iddo Island to Otta. (1)

(iii) In May, 1899, the Blantyre, Nyasaland, Chamber of Commerce asked for Glasgow's support in getting a railway laid between Central Africa and the Coast. In June, the Foreign Affairs Committee having considered in detail the estimated cost, profit, local products and the importance of imperial interests, recommended sending a memorial, adding that since the survey was complete the Government should proceed. (2)

A further point of some interest is that in August, 1898, Manchester Chamber brought forward the idea of forming a permanent committee of businessmen interested in Africa, for the purpose of advising the Government. The Directors replied in September that though they approved of the idea it would not be right for Glasgow, having fewer African interests than Liverpool or Manchester (a questionable assertion) to participate directly. At the same time they would like to be kept informed of any specific proposals. (3)

It would be of interest to discover if Joseph Chamberlain made any effort to enlist the Chamber's support for his imperial ideas, or sought/

(1) D.M. 12.11.94, 12.9.95.

(2) D.M. 8.5.99, 12.6.99.

(3) D.M. 8.8.98, 12.9.98.

or sought its advice on any aspect of Colonial development. However, no such correspondence between himself and the Chamber is recorded. On the contrary, so far as Africa is concerned, the number of relevant items drops off significantly during his tenure of the Colonial Office. There is no mention of the Jameson Raid, nor of the Fashoda Crisis, and only an oblique reference to the outbreak of the Boer War. (1)

5. Conclusion

The policies pursued by the Directors of this institution over the three decades studied, when African questions came before them, show a great degree of consistency. The difference between Glasgow and certain other British Chambers concerned with such questions is soon apparent. Glasgow was far less willing to solicit the Government or to initiate action to promote commercial developments in this sphere. The Glasgow Chamber also appears to have reflected national public or business opinion on African questions less readily than the others, e.g. its opposition to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty was reluctant, and it never became a mouthpiece for the local African entrepreneurs or one of their factions as Liverpool and Manchester did, though Miller Bros. appear to have had a fair amount of influence, and their advice to have been preferred when there were conflicting points of view.

The essential position of the Directors, commitment to free trade, did not vary, though it was adapted to changing circumstances. During this period the Board was certainly not unsympathetic to annexations, for while they were sometimes advocated, it never issued any statement opposing them. On the other hand it could not be described as rabidly imperialistic, and the records give no sense of great pride in the establishment and expansion of a world-wide empire. A point of view on Afridan/

(1) D.M. 10.10.99.

on African policy as such is never articulated, or an attitude to imperialism clearly defined.

The Chamber's policy remained a calculating, and, except on the liquor issue, commercial one, the protection, where it thought it justified, of British and especially Glaswegian interests on the continent, these interests being interpreted generally as freedom from interference with their commercial activity. "Free trade" was the guiding light followed, and remained so during the thirty years, though the Chairman at the 1897 Annual General Meeting admitted that there were strong arguments for protection, this remained the Board's cardinal principle, officially at least. From time to time it was willing to recommend annexations and extensions of imperial rule on the grounds of protecting this policy when foreign advances seemed to threaten it. In the Directors' view, free trade was not seen as incomparable with the extension of British political hegemony, though it was believed to be so for other nations.

The Chamber, however, was sparing in the use of such influence as it possessed, even to the extent of refusing to support Taylor Laughland over the Matacong Island affair. In general though it was willing to take up subjects of importance to Glasgow merchants active at a number of points on the African continent, without subordinating its collective judgment to theirs.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC OPINION - FORMATION & DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the manner in which the economic and political penetration and division of Africa by Europeans in the years 1870-1900 was perceived and evaluated by articulate public opinion in the City of Glasgow, outwith the hitherto considered firms or individuals immediately involved, or those commercial bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce, which because of their position as the representative of the African firms and the business community at large, had a direct interest in the question.

The main question to be considered is to what extent an "imperialist" ethos existed or was generated, whether the activities and annexations of the European governments were regarded as part of a coherent and systematic policy, and the construction of a tropical empire looked on as the long-term goal, or whether the events of the partition were seen rather in the light of opportunist expedients, evolved pragmatically in response to particular situations. Over a period of the three decades covering the "Scramble" it would be expected that the outlook prevalent in any sector of public opinion would alter substantially, and what is in question is not a series of single viewpoints maintained over the entire period, but the development of opinion within the framework indicated.

Secondly, the question of evaluation is to be considered, whether imperial expansion in Africa met with approval or disapproval, among which groups respectively, and, in the former case, what justifications were advanced for such policies, in the second, with what arguments they were combatted. Thirdly, there is the question, irrespective of approval or disapproval, of how public opinion regarded imperial expansion/

expansion as being motivated on the part of its practitioners, to what interests the partition of Africa was ascribed, to praiseworthy enterprise, to capitalist banditry, to philanthropic considerations, or the diplomatic need to forestall rivals. Lastly, of particular concern is the problem of how far in Glasgow the African continent was believed to be an economic asset to European enterprise, and to justify from that point of view the energy spent partitioning it.

Two different considerations must be dealt with; in the first place the reaction of public opinion in Glasgow to issues with which the Glasgow establishments previously discussed were directly involved, and whether any special notice was taken in the City of the efforts of Glasgow businessmen to develop trade and production in Africa; in the second place, the public reaction to the general process of partition, and the acts done in the course of it by the British Government, by foreign Governments, and by private organisations and individuals, domestic and foreign.

In view of the fairly substantial degree of Glasgow interests in Africa, it is to be expected that significant bodies of opinion would exist desiring to exercise influence over the course of events whenever these interests were affected by particular developments, and would endeavour to promote their viewpoints by one means or another. Such a body was the Chamber of Commerce, already considered.

Furthermore, it is to be expected that there would exist in Glasgow, in a form appropriate to its position in the country and political traditions, a reflection of the national political, moral and ideological climate generated around overseas expansion during these years, and attitudes formed corresponding to the position of those who held them as pro or anti-imperialists, Liberals or Conservatives, free traders or protectionists.

In order/

In order to survey the range of public opinion, consideration will therefore be given to:

- 1) The originators of public opinion so far as they can be determined.
- 2) The degree of concern evoked over areas and aspects where Glasgow interests were specifically involved.
- 3) Attitudes to the general progress of the partition.

1) Originators of Public Opinion

(a) Firms Commencing with the firms and business houses actually at work in Africa, there is surprisingly little evidence of any serious effort on their part to win public support for policies and actions favourable to their interests. The absence of primary evidence in this respect is reinforced by lack of any reference to such action in the contemporary press.

On the other hand, there is little doubt that the Scottish Churches were a most effective lobby, and evidence that Lord Salisbury feared the influence of the Nyasaland missionaries, and that his policy was affected by this consideration.⁽¹⁾ The A.L.C. itself seems to have indulged in little direct propaganda, though more than the other companies. Miller Bros., Taylor Laughland, Higate Bros., Forbes Reef, who had some reason to try to make a public case on their own behalf seem in general to have preferred to advance their claims by private approach to influential institutions or individuals.

(b) Institutions Public institutions which did not have a direct interest of their own in Africa, but became involved in the Continent's affairs in one way or another because of the nature of their activities, included, apart from the Chamber of Commerce, the Scottish Geographical Society, later the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. Events in Africa provided the main impetus for its formation, a fact mentioned in/

(1) See Oliver, op.cit. p. 150.

in his introductory article to its publication, the Scottish Geographical Magazine, by its editor, A. Silva White, who went out of his way to stress the commercial and practical motivations which lay behind the establishment of the Society. The foundation meeting took place in Edinburgh in late 1884, the inaugural address, on the subject of "Central Africa and the Congo Basin", being delivered by H.M. Stanley on November 3, 1884. Among its officers were William Mackinnon, a Vice-President, James Stevenson and A.L. Bruce as treasurer. Honorary members included Leopold II, Stanley and Joseph Thomson the explorer. (1)

The Scottish Geographical Society was primarily based in Edinburgh, but it possessed a large and flourishing Glasgow branch, also opened by Stanley on November 8, 1884, with Stevenson as its Chairman. (2) Throughout the remainder of the century, lectures and articles on African affairs were frequently held and published by this body, many originating in Glasgow, but all of a general rather than local significance.

The organised labour movement, which might have had an opinion on the subject was, it appears, at this juncture totally uninterested in Imperial affairs, and never discussed them. (3) There existed in Glasgow until 1876 an organisation known as the Glasgow Emancipation Society. Although the last meeting of this body, called on February 2, 1876, was held to protest against the Fugitive Slave Ordinance issued by the British Government with respect to East Africa, it had nothing other to do with Africa after 1870, and in fact during the last years of its existence was practically defunct. It was founded in 1833/

(1) Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol.1, Jan-March, 1885.

(2) Ibid., & Vol.1, April June, 1885.

(3) The basis for this statement is information supplied by Dr. Hamish Fraser of the Dept. of Economic History, University of Strathclyde, who has made a study of the labour movement in Glasgow during this period.

in 1833 and was mainly concerned with American slavery. When this issue disappeared it did very little further. Among the fairly extensive list of personalities invited to the Society's final meeting, no-one appears who was subsequently prominent in African affairs. (1)

(c) Newspapers. The most complete indication of the progress of public opinion is gained from its main vehicle, the daily press, and for a large part of this period there were published in Glasgow three morning papers over a wide spectrum of political outlook, ranging from radical Liberal to right-wing Conservative.

The first mentioned trend was represented by the "North British Daily Mail", first established in 1847, and in the seventies under the proprietorship of the firm of Gunn and Cameron. In 1874 Dr. Charles Cameron was editor of the paper, and in that year was elected as one of the Liberal M.Ps. for Glasgow, handing over the editorship to James R. Manners. (2)

In political stance the "Mail" was Gladstonian, criticizing the Liberal Prime Minister only when he was believed to be giving too much away to his political opponents. In all senses the paper was, during the seventies and eighties, vigorously anti-imperialist, opposing, with few exceptions, every territorial expansion or informal extension of British state power, and was no less hostile, on the whole, to foreign annexations. It frequently questioned the motives and condemned the economic interests of those who pressed for extension of British territorial control. After 1892, however, there followed a more or less complete reversal of this position, and a much greater inclination to imperialist sentiments. The change did not take place abruptly or irrationally/

(1) Minutes of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, 1833-1876, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

(2) "Reminiscences of Editors, Reporters and Printers", by Andrew Hird, printed for private circulation, 1890, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

irrationally. While the "Mail's" conception of basic national interests remained unchanged, new circumstances called out a different response.⁽¹⁾ In view of Dr. Cameron's position as an M.P., the views of the "Mail" must be regarded as in relative harmony with those of a substantial body of Glasgow electors.

The "Glasgow News" in contrast adopted a stridently pro-imperialist line, expressed in vigorously abusive language. It was launched by West of Scotland Conservatives in September, 1873,⁽²⁾ who installed an Englishman, Frederick Wicks, as its manager and editor under the aegis of the "Glasgow and West of Scotland Newspaper Co. Ltd."⁽³⁾

"It was known to be largely subsidised by wealthy members of the Conservative Party, yet, notwithstanding this it never made much headway. The purses that liberally gave of their contents gradually closed, and after large expenditure and some years of effort it went out of sight".⁽⁴⁾

The date of the paper's demise was in fact 1888, when it was discontinued for the sake of its evening partner, the "Glasgow Evening News". The "Glasgow News" supported every expansionist venture, and from its earliest days advocated expansion in Africa whenever the subject was raised.

The third newspaper, the "Glasgow Herald", prided itself upon being the representative and spokesman for commercial opinion and interests in Glasgow, having been founded with such aims in mind in the late eighteenth century. Its editor in 1870 was William Jack, the Professor of Natural Philosophy in Owens College, Manchester. His place was taken in 1875 by James Hastie Stoddart, the "Herald's" manager, who was succeeded on his death in 1888 by Charles Gilchrist Russell.⁽⁵⁾ /

(1) The North British Daily Mail ceased publication in 1900.

(2) Andrew Aird, op.cit.

(3) "Fifty years of Newspaper Life, 1845-95" by Andrew Sinclair of the "Glasgow Herald", printed for private circulation, n.d. Mitchell Library.

(4) Andrew Aird, op.cit.

(5) History of the "Glasgow Herald". A.Ewing. (Outrams, 1949)

Russell.

In general, the "Herald" gave critical support to Gladstone and the Liberals until its opposition to Irish Home Rule induced it to support the Unionists when the Liberal Party split in 1886. During the earlier part of the period it considered the possibilities of territorial expansion in Africa utopian and undesirable, when this became a practicable proposition the "Glasgow Herald" was in general pro-imperialist, and even on occasion hysterically so, though normally its editorial policies were in opposition to what were considered the wilder adventures, while supporting British penetration of the Continent in general.

In virtue of its position as the leading organ of the city's commercial interests, and its more established position⁽¹⁾ it will be more fully and frequently referred to in this chapter than the other two publications.

(d) Individuals When dealing with the part single individuals played in moulding opinion in this field, the most notable fact is an absence rather than a presence. It was to be expected that Sir William Mackinnon would have been prominent in his home area in view of his connexions with Africa, his role as a propagandist for King Leopold II, and his place in the Scottish Geographical Society, but so far as evidence is available, from his own papers, from the Chamber of Commerce records and from the press, it would appear that Mackinnon did very little to raise public support in Glasgow for the ventures with which he was associated. The Chamber of Commerce opposition to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884 appears to have been adopted without any encouragement from Mackinnon, to have been made along different lines to that which Leopold, Mackinnon and Hutton were advocating. In the campaign/

(1) The normal size of the "Herald" at this time was 12 pages, of the other two newspapers, 8 pages.

campaign for the retention of Uganda by the Imperial British East Africa Co. in 1892-3, letters were written to the Glasgow press, as to that in other places, by Mackinnon's partisans, and a circular sent to the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, as to others, but there is no evidence of special efforts being made in Glasgow, and while open public meetings on this question took place in many cities, none would seem to have been held in Glasgow.

The only Glasgow political figure who appears to have had any specific interest in African affairs was Dr. Charles Cameron, the proprietor of the "North British Daily Mail", who spoke in the House from time to time on such matters. Alexander Low Bruce was a prominent Scottish Unionist⁽¹⁾ but was resident in Edinburgh.

2. Specific Glasgow Involvement

Apart from Taylor Laughland's approach to the Chamber of Commerce over Matabeleland, and John Polson's over Swaziland, there is no trace of any agitation in Glasgow, or any expression of opinion in the Press on these issues or that of Ja Ja, or the exclusion of Higate Bros. from the Forcados river.

There is, on the other hand, a fair amount of comment on events in Nyasaland, the accusations made against the A.L.C. by Dr. Rankin having been referred to already,⁽²⁾ but the "Herald" did not comment editorially on them. The most sensational incident regarding Nyasaland was the "Blantyre Atrocity". This incident concerned an allegation, by a certain Dr. Chirnside⁽³⁾, later admitted to be substantially true, that the Established Church of Scotland Mission at Blantyre in the Shire highland, assuming illegal authority, had executed an African and imprisoned others in atrocious conditions.

Dr. Cameron/

(1) Scottish Geographical Magazine, Obituary, January 1894.

(2) See above, Chapter III.

(3) "Discreditable Disclosures", by Andrew Chirnside, 1880. F.O. 84/1568.

Dr. Cameron, in the House of Commons moved for an Address to the Queen to prevent uncommissioned persons assuming authority over natives. He withdrew when Sir Charles Dilke, on behalf of the Government, promised to take the matter up.⁽¹⁾ The "Glasgow Herald", like the "Mail", endorsed the Church commission's censure against the missionary concerned, and argued strongly against any assumption of secular authority by missionary settlements.⁽²⁾

As indicated above, from the late eighties, antagonism and frontier problems began to develop between missionaries and A.L.C. on the one hand, and the Portuguese on the other. In May, 1889, Cameron put down a question in the House as to whether a British Consul had been imprisoned by the Portuguese for complicity in importing war rockets for use by British subjects against Arab slavers on Lake Nyasa. The answer he received was that the individual in question was an unpaid vice-consul, and had been imprisoned on a charge of introducing dangerous explosives, but released on bail. At the same time Cameron wished to know whether it was true that the Portuguese Foreign Ministry had maintained the Portuguese claim to control the Zambesi navigation and to extend its influence inland, and whether the British Government acknowledged these rights. The British Government did, but claimed the right for British ships to navigate the river, and while having no objection to the extension of Portuguese settlement inland, insisted that British settlers were not to be disturbed in areas hitherto outside Portuguese control.⁽³⁾

The Glasgow newspapers did not comment upon, or even report, the meeting held in Glasgow on May 2, 1889, at which it was agreed to seek a Charter for the A.L.C., but a month later the "Herald" wrote approvingly/

(1) Hansard, July 2, 1880.

(2) G.H. and D.M., 5.3.81. The "Glasgow News" did not comment.

(3) Hansard, 7.5.89, 9.5.89.

approvingly of the idea, and "...what may be possible.... if the Glasgow company....be endowed with Imperial privileges".⁽¹⁾ When the question of frontier delimitation between the British and Portuguese spheres was under consideration, the "Herald" had little enough to say about the missionaries or their work, and while referring to British interests in trade, settlement and religion, treated the question in terms rather of a governmental matter between Portugal and Britain, criticising the Draft Treaty for allegedly separating the spheres of the African Lakes Co. and the British South Africa. Co.⁽²⁾

Subsequent editorials stressed the fairness and accommodating attitude of the British Government to the Portuguese, noted that the British portion was suitable for settlement and concluded that if, in terms of the agreement, the Portuguese share was ever to come on the market,

"The question of Delagoa Bay and the entire basin of the Zambesi, not to speak of the territory on both sides of the river for nearly 700 miles from its mouth, would be of immense advantage to our settlers both in the Lake region and in Mashonaland. It would give them complete command of the means of access from the coast, and assure complete freedom of trade and communication for the whole distance from the northern frontier of the East Africa Company's sphere of operation to the Cape of Good Hope".⁽³⁾

By this time, territorial expansion and annexation of regions suitable for settlement were being treated by the "Glasgow Herald" as a praiseworthy policy, while the "Mail" in this instance regretted that Portugal was likely to be left in control of the Zambesi, and British colonists would have to pay for access to the river;⁽⁴⁾ the treaty, too favourable to Portugal, being "a scandalous surrender of British interests".⁽⁵⁾

There is nothing to be found in the Glasgow newspapers relating specifically/

- (1) G.H. 6.6.89.
- (2) G.H. 16.5.91.
- (3) G.H. 9.6.91.
- (4) N.B.D.M. 21.3.91.
- (5) Ibid. 4.6.91.

specifically to any of the Glasgow businesses in Africa, no discussion for example of the Niger or Oil Rivers trade, of the British & African Steam Navigation Co. sailings or their discontinuation in 1874, but in September, 1888, by way of greeting the foundation of the Imperial British East Africa Co. there was an extended eulogy in the "Glasgow Herald" on Glasgow enterprise in Africa:

"Glasgow and the West of Scotland seem to have a special commission for the opening up of Africa.....Livingstone's work on the Zambesi has been followed up by a Glasgow Company and by Missionaries chiefly supported by the subscriptions of Glasgow Free Churchmen..... The trade of the West Coast is very largely in the hands of Glasgow merchants, and it was a Glasgow firm that paved the way for the formation of the Royal Niger Company..... Mr. William Mackinnon has been one of the most active co-operators with the King of the Belgians in his philanthropic scheme of reclamation for Central Africa by means of a Free State". (1)

As will be evident, commercial enterprise as such was seldom or never disapproved. The difficulties, as seen by the Press, lay in its feasibility, and the question of the most effective and moral means to promote it.

3. Attitudes to Partition in general

(a) The Seventies

- (i) Livingstone, - Ashanti, - Sir Bartle Frere and the Partition of Africa.

Livingstone. In the early 1870's, public sentiment regarding African events, as expressed in the Glasgow newspapers, was still in an unformed and inconsistent state. Its development may be most readily studied with reference to notable events and happenings on the continent, commencing with the final achievements and death of the explorer and missionary, David Livingstone.

The significance of Livingstone's work for trade and commerce did not pass entirely unnoticed in Glasgow, yet it was not much emphasised/

(1) G.H. 10.9.88.

emphasised in published comment, precedence being given to its scientific, humanitarian and religious aspects. In an editorial of 24 January, 1872, condemning government parsimony in refusing to subsidise generously a relief expedition for the explorer, the "Glasgow Herald" speaks only of "science and Christianity", and makes no mention of trade. An article on his geographical discoveries in June, 1872⁽¹⁾ notes that as a result, "a new country will hereafter be opened to European enterprise". In October, 1872, on the occasion of H.M. Stanley visiting Glasgow, the Lord Provost, toasting him, referred to commercial possibilities⁽²⁾ and did so again at a meeting in August, 1874, to discuss the erection of a memorial,⁽³⁾ but the comments on Livingstone's death in the "Herald" and "Mail" made no mention of commerce at all, but discussed his career entirely in terms of geographical knowledge and religion⁽⁴⁾ without suggesting that it might be a useful preliminary to European colonial expansion in the area.

Ashanti The year of 1873 saw the outbreak of the Ashanti war, followed by the Ashanti invasion of the Gold Coast settlements, and the counter-invasion of Ashanti territory by Sir Garnet Wolseley's troops. It was taken for granted that the Ashanti had to be defeated in order to protect the Gold Coast settlements, but the columns of the "Glasgow Herald" expressed some puzzlement as to what policy should be adopted towards Ashanti thereafter. Maintaining against certain unnamed critics the premise that the Gold Coast must be kept for its value as a commercial depot, - "...if we do not want to be driven off the Gold Coast we must make up our minds to convince the inhabitants of that part of the world of the danger of meddling with us" - yet the "Herald" argued that if the Ashanti capital, Kumasi, was captured the British/

(1) G.H. 22.6.72.

(2) G.H. 24.10.72.

(3) G.H. 2.8.74.

(4) G.H. & N.B.D.M. 31.1.74.

British would not want to keep it, for to establish themselves 200 miles inland of their ships, their only secure and permanent base, would be to put themselves at the mercy of a "pestilential climate and savage enemy",⁽¹⁾ while unforeseen consequences might ensue; "The annexation of Ashanti would involve ere long the subjugation of Dahomey and it again (sic) the subjugation of some neighbouring States"⁽²⁾ claimed a later editorial.

The "Herald" felt nevertheless that the status quo could not simply be restored once the Ashanti were defeated, and in March, 1874, had come around to the view that some extension of British influence in Ashanti was necessary, and a British resident should be established at Kumasi: "...more authority over more black men is thrust upon us as an inevitable consequence of the victories which have resulted from the mysterious mess of the Ashanti war. We cannot shirk our responsibilities"⁽³⁾ - a point of view hardly consistent with the one last quoted.

The "North British Daily Mail", though sympathetically committed to British troops in action; "worthy of the highest praise and commendation"⁽⁴⁾, - was wholly opposed to the war in principle; - "most unnecessary quarrel" - and considered that Britain should never have taken over the Dutch forts at Elmina, an action contrary to the spirit of the 1865 Parliamentary Select Committee which had recommended as great a detente as possible in West Africa. Thus the Editor was aghast at the idea of extending West African possessions, and favoured total withdrawal, which he thought would assist trade by removing Government officials and Customs Houses.⁽⁵⁾

Sir Bartle Frere and the Partition: In January, 1874, Sir Bartle

Frere/

- (1) G.H. 17.9.73.
- (2) G.H. 19.2.74.
- (3) G.H. 9.3.74.
- (4) N.B.D.M. 13.3.74.
- (5) N.B.D.M. 10.3.74.

Frere, the famous Indian administrator, diplomat, and later instigator of the Zulu War, made a remarkable speech in Edinburgh on the theme of Livingstone and Africa. The essence of his argument was that imperial expansion was, on several grounds including manifest destiny, and economic advantage, both inevitable and desirable, and therefore ought to be undertaken in an organised and planned manner rather than being left to haphazard chance. He therefore advocated not only the annexation of Ashanti but the partition of the entire continent. (1)

According to Frere there were three possible courses, - to try to leave Africa entirely alone, to found an African empire "by the process of involuntary advance of the thin red line", or to take a decision in principle to intervene where necessary. Whichever policy was adopted, he claimed, the result would be the same, for the policy of dissociation would result in arbitrary action by local rulers against British nationals leading to expensive wars, as with Abyssinia in the sixties, while with an attempt to pursue a static policy, as in the case of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, the British presence itself would inevitably produce circumstances where intervention became necessary; "the instructions of home Governments and the determination of the most obedient of their servants only suffice to increase the force of these circumstances which drive the red line onwards", a point of view which anticipates some of the more recent theories of imperialism.

British national duty was therefore "...simply the duty of ruling, a duty laid on us by our superior power and an inevitable concomitant of the advantages which our civilisation has given us". Furthermore, while Frere saw a bright future for indirect rule, especially in Zanzibar, nevertheless, "the land must be governed according to our ideas, not the old uncivilised ideas of barbarian rulers", and he was convinced that this/

(1) G.H. 6.1.74.

this imperial destiny was above all a British one, the Egyptians and the Moors being confined to the North, and the French and Portuguese to the limited areas then in their possession.

Public opinion, Frere believed, would never permit British governments to refuse protection to merchants attracted by the richness of the continent, and attempts at non-interference would inevitably lead to a policy of conquest, - a very acute foresight it may be said.

Commenting on the speech the "Glasgow Herald" began with the remark that, "Sir Bartle Frere has the courage to tell us that we ought to annex Africa to the British Empire....." The editorial tone is to suggest that Frere's ideas are not to be taken quite seriously:

"It is a wonderful picture that Sir Bartle Frere brings before the imagination of the British taxpayer.....The negro races are capable of great endurance, and under European orders they could do great works. The natural resources of Africa are illimitable, and they have hardly been drawn upon at all".

Nevertheless it was felt that Frere had made at least one valid point:

"It will cost us tons of treasure and thousands of British lives before we can civilise Africa.....(but) it is equally clear that we ought not to let ourselves drift into the African continent without something like consciousness of where we are going and a clear view as to the propriety of going there....."

However, "we confess we cannot help doubting whether destiny is driving us quite so fast as Sir Bartle Frere thinks it is to the conquest of the torrid zone".⁽¹⁾

The Conservative paper, the "Glasgow News", welcomed the speech but treated it under a relatively narrow aspect. While welcoming Frere's reminder of "national Honour and national Duty", and noting that in circumstances where the British came into contact with "inferior races" "we must accept our position as a governing race", the editorial concentrated on using the terms of Frere's argument to castigate the Government/

(1) G.H. 7.1.74.

Government in relation to Ashanti where the "News" claimed it had refused to be responsible for protection and maintaining order; then when the situation got out of hand making a ferocious punitive expedition, and smashing the native power it could have usefully manipulated. (1)

The "Mail", while admiring Frere for his humanity, philanthropy, and his administration in India, which might have led him to, "over-estimate the duty of this country in regard to colonisation", specifically repudiated any special British imperial mission:

"Africa may not yet have a future of its own among civilised nations and we may do our part, but we have hardly a pre-empire right to govern it either for its own benefit or for our own".

In regard to the particular case of Ashanti, "...it does not follow that because their own aggressions bring upon them duly merited chastisement that it is thenceforth our duty to undertake the task of ruling them". (2)

It may therefore be said that while the "Mail" questioned Frere's basic assumption of a natural European right to rule underdeveloped regions, his then startlingly original proposals for the annexation of large bits of Africa did not find a significant response even from the conservative organ.

(ii) Leopold II and Glasgow: In 1876 Frere was again in Scotland as the principal speaker at a meeting called to institute a Glasgow section of Association Internationale Africaine (A.I.A.) the organisation which King Leopold II had founded earlier in the year at Brussels, ostensibly to promote geographical discovery and philanthropy in Africa, but in reality as a cover for his colonising schemes.

Formed on November 10, 1876, the Glasgow organisation was in fact the first and only British branch of the A.I.A. The meeting was called/

(1) G.H. 7.1.74.

(2) N.B.D.M. 9.1.74.

called at Frere's suggestion, and he was acting on Leopold's behalf. However he was being discreet, and the meeting was not called on the direct initiative of the A.I.A., and the organisation set up was an autonomous body not formally linked with the Association, though acknowledging its patronage.⁽¹⁾ It is not clear why Frere chose to act in Glasgow in particular, though from the tenor of the meeting the activities of the Scottish missionaries and their business backers in Nyasaland may well have had something to do with it. At this time Leopold's eyes had not yet turned to the Congo, and his interest was focused on East Africa, generally held at this point to be the most promising part of the continent, in a commercial sense. It is possible also that on this occasion William Mackinnon's influence may have been involved, as he was present at the meeting and elected to the committee formed.

As indicated previously, the records are contradictory as to whether the meeting was called officially by the Chamber of Commerce or independently of it, but it was in any case held on the Chamber's premises, and attended by its president and other influential Glasgow businessmen. In his address Frere explained Leopold's scheme as being to establish communication facilities for all travellers in Africa in the form of an international society open to all, like the Red Cross. Possibly with an eye to Scottish religious susceptibilities, he stressed that all Christians should co-operate in such a worthy enterprise regardless of denomination and without sectarian rancour, and he did not fail to mention hopeful commercial prospects.

Having listened to Frere, the meeting resolved to approve Leopold's plan and to form a Scottish branch of the (as yet non-existent) British National Society, and further agreed to memorialise the Foreign Secretary/

(1) "Les Debuts de l'Oeuvre Africaine de Leopold II" by P.A. Roekyens, p. 183, published by the "Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales", Brussels, 1955.

Secretary to get in touch with the Scottish Missions and Dr. Kirk, the British Consul at Zanzibar, to consider the possibility of a road linking Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyka⁽¹⁾ and to construct a road from the north end of Lake Nyasa to the coast at Cape Delgado.

The committee elected to carry out the meeting's resolutions included the Lord Provost, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, James White of Overtoun, James Stevenson, William Mackinnon, A.L. Bruce and four M.Ps., John Ramsay, Alex. Whitelaw, George Anderson and Charles Cameron.⁽²⁾

The Committee having been formed, King Leopold was concerned to bring it under his own control, and to this end despatched two envoys, Lambemont and Baron Greindl, to Britain to contact Frere and explain the monarch's requirements.⁽³⁾ Frere was amenable, and it was explained to him that,

"Without wishing to direct the way in which it should proceed, it was permissible to state that it would be useful to bring the Scottish Committee into relations with the executive committee in Brussels, whether directly or through the intermediary of the English National Committee".⁽⁴⁾

Frere was confident that the Glasgow branch would be integrated into scheme, stating that,

"....the Scottish branch will not only communicate to the executive committee, but will place itself under its protection and direction. Nevertheless contact could not be established until the Scottish branch had been organised and the English Committee which must serve as its organ had started to function"⁽⁵⁾

Thus two principal points sought by Leopold were gained; the Glasgow branch would come under his control and would contribute financially to the A.I.A. expenses⁽⁶⁾, and "Sir Bartle Frere (said) that/

(1) Later realised at the Stevenson Road. See above.

(2) G.H., G.N., N.B.D.M. 11.11.76.

(3) Roekyens, loc.cit.

(4) Roekyens, loc.cit. Report to Leopold, by Lambemont & Greindl, 30.11.76. (translation)

(5) Ibid. p. 182.

(6) Ibid. p. 189.

that at the meeting.....Commercial interests came well behind religious ones". (1)

The only one of the three newspapers to comment editorially on the meeting was the "Glasgow News" in whose opinion, "The civilisation of Africa is rapidly taking its place as the most important question of the day", and in the course of congratulating Leopold asserted that the time had come to extend discovery and commercial activity in Africa. (2)

The Glasgow committee however was fated to play no part in such extension, for,

"when they came to examine the constitution of the International Association they found that the Roman Catholic powers would have a majority of votes, Belgium and other small powers having so many that the subscribers would be raising money for them to pay away".

The committee was accordingly dissolved. (3)

(iii) Egypt and South Africa: During the Seventies the steady encroachment by foreign financial and political influences on Egyptian sovereignty, due to the massive indebtedness of the Egyptian monarchy, was noted with varying reactions in the Glasgow press. The news of the Suez Canal share purchases by Disraeli caused the "Herald" to quote with approval the statement of a Col. Mure, M.P. that Britain had adopted a policy to secure "such a hold on Egypt as will make her eventually as much a part of our interest in the East as our Indian Empire itself". (4) The paper claimed that such sentiments expressed the feelings of the country, and foreshadowed future policies with the remark that if Egypt "sinks under financial difficulties", she must be sustained by Britain and not allowed to fall to other powers. (5)

Consistent/

(1) Ibid. p. 190.

(2) G.N. 13.11.76.

(3) F.O. 84/1810, James C. Stevenson to Lord E. Fitzmaurice, 15.5.84.

(4) G.H. 7.12.75.

(5) Ibid.

Consistent with such an attitude, the "Herald" advocated on the occasion of the Egyptian financial crisis early the following^{year}/that the country should be taken over if it went bankrupt. "Some power would certainly acquire a predominating influence in Egypt, and it will not be held that we could safely allow any other power than Britain to do so".⁽¹⁾ In the following year it was argued that: "It may reasonably be believed that an improvement will be affected in time on Egyptian finance if European power, patience and capital are allowed a fair field and abundance of favour".

The "Glasgow Herald's" attitude was however somewhat different when the political crisis in February, 1879, provoked the British Government into sending a gunboat to Egypt. The "Herald" combatted a current rumour that the British intervention was connected with the bondholders. If the French Government had such an attitude that was their own affair, but the British moves had been made purely with the safety of the Suez Canal in mind.⁽²⁾

By the end of the first stage of the crisis in April, 1879, when the Khedive Ismail, at Bismarck's demand, abandoned his attempt to unilaterally alter certain of the financial arrangements imposed upon him by the European powers, the editorial line appears to have changed. On April 11, 1879, the "Herald" was taking it for granted that Britain and France would intervene, but warned that the two states would make a mistake if they simply acted as the bondholders' bailiffs. Something must be done to raise the standards of the population. But by April 29 the editorial expressed itself as horrified at the Sultan's offer to depose the Khedive, his nominal vassal, and implied that the latter, having merely exercised his sovereignty, the European states must put up with it, while in discussing the Khedival surrender to Bismarck/

(1) G.H. 7.1.76.
(2) G.H. 26.2.79.

Bismarck the "Herald" argued that despite major interests, Britain did not have exclusive rights to settle Egyptian affairs as she wished, and should not seize the country for fear of offending France.

A month later the Khedive, having tried again to depose the European government, was deposed on European instructions in favour of his son, by the Sultan. The "Herald" believed that British and French policies were dissimilar, for while "Nothing is more certain than that the mainspring of French policy is the rights of the bondholders....." "....what this country wants is that Egypt should be well governed, which she cannot be so long as the people are taxed to starvation point", and Egypt, for the sake of internal stability should not be obliged to pay all debts.⁽¹⁾ At the same time the "Herald" was worried by the legal implications of the Powers' action, and on what principles they should exercise control over the new Khedive Tewfik. The "Herald" did not believe that the British Government would act simply as the bondholders' agent, but wondered how it could answer for that of France. Still, if the French were determined on intervention, the paper could see no alternative for the British Government, if it wished to preserve its position, than to go along with this.⁽²⁾

The attitude assumed by the "Glasgow News" was altogether cruder and more straightforward.

"Nothing short of an almost complete transfer of the administration of the country into European hands will effectually demonstrate (the Khedive's determination to pay his debts)"⁽³⁾

".... it may be said without exaggeration that the railways and the port of Alexandria are completely withdrawn from the Egyptians and handed bodily over to Europeans. Nothing could be more satisfactory than this".⁽⁴⁾

The "Daily Mail" believed that the deposition could be justified if a firm and clear-sighted programme of social reform was put into effect/

- (1) G.H. 23.6.97.
- (2) G.H. 27.6.79.
- (3) G.N. 14.11.76
- (4) G.N. 29.11.76.

effect, but feared that this would not be done, and that the consequences of Disraeli committing Britain to a "divided protectorate" with France would be "incalculably serious",⁽¹⁾ and expressed fears that any improved government resulting from Khedive Ismail's deposition would merely grind the peasantry more scientifically for the bondholders' benefit.

At the end of the Seventies the focus of British colonial activity in Africa was in South Africa, with the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 and the Zulu war of 1879. The "Glasgow Herald" was an advocate of the then widely canvassed policy of Colonial Federation in South Africa on Canadian lines, and considered these events entirely in terms of the safeguarding of the established British Colonies.

Thus it approved the annexation of the Transvaal on the grounds that the chronic political instability of this state, and its provocations against the Africans made it a source of disorder among the natives, stimulated their hostility and created disturbances which would spread to the British colonies.⁽²⁾ Similarly this newspaper, while not

demonstrating any chauvinistic enthusiasm, considered it right to destroy the Zulu military power,⁽³⁾ though it did not agree with the immediate policies which had precipitated the war, and did not pretend that the colonists and Bartle Frere had not behaved aggressively.⁽⁴⁾

Nor was the problem to be solved by further expansion:

"At present the colonists have far more territory than they care to defend; it would be absurd to make any addition to it if that can be avoided". However,

"We may condemn as we like the policy which he (Frere) made us carry out, but being where we are it cannot entirely be thrown overboard".

The "Glasgow News" on the other hand rejoiced in British expansion and victories, and considered the fates of Boers and Zulus likewise well/

(1) N.B.D.M. 28.6.79.

(2) G.H. 21.9.76, 1.6.77, 6.3.79, 24.4.77.

(3) G.H. 19.2.79, 21.5.79.

(4) G.H. 19.2.79.

well deserved on account of their allegedly barbarous habits and incapacity for civilisation, but the "Mail" abhorred both policies: "such a senseless war" - "This untoward conflict" - "unluckily there seems to be small desire on our side for encouraging any overtures towards peace".⁽¹⁾

(iv) The Commercial Outlook in the Seventies: In this particular decade, a time when the economic penetration of Africa by Europe was beginning to develop in a serious fashion, certain individuals were keenly aware of the relationship between the slave trade, which still flourished in East Africa, commercial activity and the questions of the local labour supply necessary if far-reaching economic development was to be achieved. The problem was from time to time discussed in the columns of the "Glasgow Herald" and the slave trade considered in this aspect as well as the purely humanitarian one, most specifically in an editorial in 1873 on the anti-slave trade treaty Bartle Frere had just negotiated with the Sultan of Zanzibar⁽²⁾ where the "Herald" lamented the impossibility of industry and commerce being developed in the interior because of the effects of slave trading. Two months earlier it had reprinted one of Frere's letters to the Foreign Office, enthusing over the good results achieved by using free labour on a clove estate on Zanzibar itself.⁽³⁾

In November, 1873, a further editorial on the East African slave trade and the difficulty of suppressing it was printed. The problem of what to do with liberated slaves was also treated, and the consideration advanced of founding an east coast settlement on the lines of Sierra Leone where they could be used, or even of bringing about European settlement in that area.⁽⁴⁾

These points were taken up some days later in a letter by William Couper/

- (1) N.B.D.M. 25.6.79.
- (2) G.H. 18.6.73.
- (3) G.H. 10.4.73.
- (4) G.H. 8.11.73.

Couper of Couper Johnstone, who suggested that the liberated slaves be taken to Natal where a labour shortage existed⁽¹⁾ and an anonymous correspondent two days later proposed sending them to the West Indies to supplant or supplement coolie labour in that region.⁽²⁾

Even regardless of the special difficulty created by the slave trade, the question of commercial relations and labour supply in African conditions remained a serious problem, arising most obviously when a breakdown in relations led to hostilities. Referring to the Ashanti war the editorial writer noted that, "...our object is to trade with Africa and we don't wish to promote our trade by plundering and slaughtering our customers".⁽³⁾ Some months later a Glasgow expatriate in Natal, David Leslie, compared the situation in South Africa with that on the West Coast. A letter written by him to the London "Times", and reprinted in the "Herald" of January 5, 1874, attributed the recent Kaffir rebellion to overcrowding from population multiplication due to peaceful British rule. He argued that if the Africans were to do useful work Forster's Education Act must be applied to them, the missionary activities were inadequate. The following day another letter from Leslie appeared in the "Herald" itself, advocating a policy of "native reservations or locations" as the only way in which uneducated Africans could live, and endorsing the severe native policy followed in Natal on the grounds that it secured peace and order, apart from being cheap. Contrasting this situation with that prevailing in West Africa, Leslie claimed that British policy had caused great demoralisation among the Africans by holding only trading posts. Instead the British should seize Ashanti itself and establish the colony headquarters there, building a railway/

(1) G.H. 11.11.73.
(2) G.H. 13.11.73.
(3) G.H. 17.9.73.

railway from the coast for the purpose. A thorough beating followed by "just but firm" rule would soon reconcile the Ashanti to British government.

"The natives of Africa, East and West, are born traders. It is about trade that the quarrels on the West principally arise. Give them peace and security - by conquering them - and an immense trade with the interior would result. Adopt the system at work in Natal where one tribe keeps the other in check, and we should have a magnificent dependency in West Africa, easily and inexpensively ruled, with prospects for commerce scarcely to be equalled, except perhaps in China".(1)

On January 13 the "Herald" published a letter in reply to Leslie's by W.H. Drummond of Appin, Argyllshire, asserting that the British would undoubtedly choose the course in Ashanti which at one and the same time ameliorated the native condition and "enables us to throw open a vast and lucrative trade to our manufacturers and merchants".(2)

The writer came out against Leslie's policy of reserves on the grounds that these discouraged the Africans from wage labour, which in consequence, in South Africa had to be imported from as far away as India. He developed this by arguing that the cultural cohesion of the African tribes should be utterly destroyed; "it would undoubtedly be better to scatter and mix them up" - so as to make them more amenable to European employment. If this were done in Ashanti it would stimulate an influx of capital and immigration, and soon there would be sufficient Europeans to "hold them in awe".

"A source of expense and anxiety (will) become an outlet for emigration and ultimately the centre of a large and valuable trade".

Further references to Ashanti from the "Herald" itself concluded in May that the British must civilise the negroes, teach them to work and protect them while doing so⁽³⁾ and noted in the following year that/

- (1) G.H. 6.1.74.
- (2) G.H. 13.1.74.
- (3) G.H. 6.5.74.

that, "...who can say that the lessons of Kumasi and the Congo will not have astonishing results in opening up Africa and improving her people?"⁽¹⁾

In regard to "improving her people", the Rev. Dr. Duff advising a Glasgow institution, the "Ladies Society for Female Education in India and Kaffaria", displayed as early as 1872 attitudes somewhat similar to those of Leslie and Drummond. Expressing great hostility to African social customs, he claimed that;

"Owing to a great variety of causes the probability was that the British Government in spite of itself, and however reluctantly, would ere long find itself under the absolute necessity of taking upon itself the supervision of the peace and happiness of all that dwell between the Cape of Good Hope and the Tropic of Capricorn, if not the Zambesi river".⁽²⁾

One particular attribute of European civilisation in Africa was provoking unease even in 1870. An anonymous letter to the "Herald" of October 6, 1870, denounced the spirit trade in West Africa, recited its horrors and accused Glasgow of being involved - an accurate charge if the figures given in the Clyde Bill of Entry are to be believed.⁽³⁾ There followed some days later a long editorial upon this subject, pointing out the contradiction between free commerce and spiritual uplift, especially in view of the fact that the trader tended to follow the missionary.

"The duty of Christian communities with reference to the uncivilised and heathen tribes of mankind.....would seem to be to teach them more reasonable ways of thinking and purer habits of living and to wean them.....from their sad idolatries".⁽⁴⁾

The editorial did not see any permanent solution to the problem apart from prohibiting the export of adulterated spirits, a procedure which should be enforced by legislation.⁽⁵⁾

There/

- (1) G.H. 6.11.75. The reference to the Congo is to a punitive expedition against pirates at the river mouth in September, 1875.
- (2) G.H. 25.1.72.
- (3) See above, Chapter 1.
- (4) G.H. 12.10.70.
- (5) Ibid.

There can be little doubt that the journalists of the "Herald" were aware of emerging commercial possibilities in Africa - the diamond diggings in the Orange Free State were frequently discussed and reported on⁽¹⁾ and a letter was printed suggesting a scheme for the economic development of South Africa through mixed farming. In May, 1873, a letter was published from a J. Cruikshank, advocating that the commercial future of Morocco should be safeguarded from French and Spanish rapacity by extending to it British diplomatic protection, and claiming that the Chambers of Commerce in Manchester, Liverpool and London were all waiting to see what Glasgow would do,⁽²⁾ and in September, 1871, the paper had published an editorial on the centenary of Mungo Park, praising him as a pioneer of commerce in Africa - in the steps of which religion and science must follow.⁽³⁾

(b) The Second Phase, 1880 - 85

- (i) South Africa - Egypt, Tunis & Madagascar - Germany - The Congo, the Niger and the Berlin Conference - The Sudan.

South Africa: The first major African issue to confront the public in the 1880s was the declaration of independence by the Boers, and their defeat of British forces at Majuba Hill in February, 1881. The resulting settlement, which conceded virtual independence to the Transvaal was accepted without enthusiasm by the "Herald", "It will be allowed...on the whole that the nation may accept these terms".⁽⁴⁾ Mr. Wicks of the "Glasgow News", and presumably the sections of opinion for which he spoke, were left full of outraged indignation at the Government's cowardice, while from the opposite end of the political spectrum the summary of South African affairs in 1882, printed in the "Mail" at the close of the year, is worth quoting at length/

- (1) e.g. G.H. 11.1.72.
(2) G.N. 16.5.73. See also Chapter III.
(3) G.H. 16.9.71.
(4) G.H. 23.3.81.

length, both as a typical example of the attitudes generally taken by this newspaper, and for the light which it sheds, if true, on the occurrences in South Africa.

"...but the chief source of peril there is the readiness of Sir Theophilus Shepstone to fall in with the plans and schemes of land speculators. Strange stories are told in Natal as to who prompted him to annex the Transvaal, and why he listened so readily to the tempters. It is said that the former Republic was ruined because the Cape Commercial Bank was induced to stop its credit, and that one of the two wire-pullers who were behind the scenes opened private letters in the Post Office at Pretoria, after the annexation, which were interesting to him in his business capacity. The same person, it is alleged, supplied money to Sir Theophilus Shepstone for the necessary public expenditure, and he prepared the case for annexation in the shape of financial statements which were submitted to the official sent out by the Colonial Office to investigate the matter. It is further believed that a knowledge of these facts had something to do with the resolve of Mr. Gladstone to annul an iniquitous transaction which would have benefitted nobody but a mere handful of adventurers, but which cost many hundreds of brave soldiers their lives. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who was knighted through Lord Carnarvon's influence because he was the only man in Natal and the Cape Colony who supported his lordship's eccentric policy of Confederation, is hated and distrusted everywhere in South Africa, and it is very much to be desired that the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, will see his way to getting rid of him altogether". (1)

Egypt: It is commonly agreed that the occupation of Egypt by British forces in 1882 marked a turning point in the partition of Africa, indeed Messrs. R. Robinson, J. Gallagher and A. Denny in their "Africa and the Victorians" (Macmillan, 1961) argue that it precipitated the Scramble, and that its consequences determined the entire subsequent course of events.

So far as Glasgow is concerned, the crisis and the period following it definitely marks a shift in publicly expressed attitudes towards a much greater concern with imperial and imperialist policy in relation to Africa. An awareness emerges of Africa as a large potential territory of unknown riches to be claimed by the major powers; an increased appreciation develops that if these same riches are/

(1) N.B.D.M. 30.12.82.

are to be exploited by trade and commerce, that trade has to be backed by armed strength. A consciousness grows that foreign powers are moving in a similar direction, and that a failure by the British to participate vigorously might well lead to exclusion.

The Egyptian crisis began in September, 1881, with an army mutiny against a Government whose indebtedness had deprived it of all independence vis-a-vis the European powers, had subjected the country to the "Dual Control" of Britain and France, and was taxing its people extortionately and inequitably in order to "meet the coupon". By February, 1882, the populist army leader, Arabi Pasha, had been advanced to the Ministry of War, and by May was the effective leader of the country with the Khedive reduced to impotence. The outbreak of anti-European riots in Alexandria in June, together with Arabi's attempt to fortify the city led to its bombardment, and occupation by a British squadron in July, and was followed by a full-scale invasion which defeated Arabi's forces at Tel-el-Kebir in September, and restored the Khedive under unofficial British protection, the French Chamber having in the meantime refused, out of dissatisfaction with its Government's handling of the crisis, to participate in the intervention.

For reasons differing in each case, all three newspapers expressed themselves as being in favour of British military intervention, the "Glasgow Herald" because it held that to be the only feasible solution to an impossible situation threatening basic British interests. The "Glasgow News", the main venom of whose editorials was directed at the Government for its hesitations and delays, demanded invasion because of its taste for forcible action, and the unilateral assertion of British power. The "North British Daily Mail" approved on legalistic grounds, that the Khedive was the legitimate sovereign of Egypt/

of Egypt and Arabi an usurper without popular backing.

In the case of the "Herald" however its eventual attitude was not immediately defined. In the initial stages of the crisis it argued explicitly against intervention: "No one who has any regard for peace can entertain the idea of England and France intervening either jointly or singly",⁽¹⁾ while the editorial of September 30 saw no reason why Britain and France should not settle the crisis amicably.

A few days after this the attitude had changed considerably, and on October 4, speculating on the possibility of a plot to overthrow foreign domination, the "Herald" stated that if such was the case Britain and France must combine to crush it, and more definitely on November 10 it was argued that the two countries should use as forcible means as necessary to prevent upsets in Egypt. This opinion was repeated when Arabi became Minister of War, for in the event of bloodshed occurring, "...it would manifestly be the duty of the two allied powers to make a forcible intervention for the sake not so much of themselves, or even of Egypt, but of humanity". However a hope still remained that "patient and painstaking diplomacy" might resolve the situation.⁽²⁾

The editorial of May 11, 1882, marked the final move to a wholly interventionist stance, with the recommendation that Britain and France should jointly prepare for intervention and send a naval squadron to Egypt. On June 2, even before the Alexandria riots, the "Herald" was calling on the European powers to demand the exile of Arabi and the other army leaders. In July it was hoping that Arabi would defy the British ultimatum to dismantle his fortifications at Alexandria, as this would provide a pretext for bombarding the town/

(1) 14.9.81.

(2) G.H. 4.2.82.

town, the awe which it was expected that a bombardment would arouse in the Egyptians being seen at this point as a possible alternative to a difficult occupation. The eventual invasion was welcomed enthusiastically⁽¹⁾ with sneers at parliamentary critics, and the "Herald" proclaimed some days later that if similar situations were "dealt with on the same principle hereafter the Mohamedan world will have learnt a lesson which it will not soon forget".⁽²⁾

According to the "Glasgow News", the British Government's policy "combines all the disadvantages of intervention with those of non-intervention",⁽³⁾ a reference to the extreme reluctance with which the Government appeared to go about the intervention. It went so far as to interpret the Alexandria bombardment as a victory for the Egyptians, as they had succeeded in withdrawing their forces and leaving nothing but a ruined city to the British⁽⁴⁾, and contested the claim that the Egyptians were demoralised by the action, as being made only by the "highly moral imbeciles in the Cabinet".⁽⁵⁾ Not only was Wicks for striking at Egypt. The suggestion had been made that Turkish troops be sent to Egypt instead of European; he proposed that the Government should veto the idea and threaten to bombard Constantinople if the Turks tried to implement it.

During the height of the crisis, from July to September, only the "Glasgow News" was indelicate enough to discuss the position of the bondholders in the Egyptian debt. It did so in order to sneer at the Government for saying that while the bondholders' claims as a whole were included in the Government's purposes, no special preference was being made for British creditors.⁽⁶⁾ Presumably the "Glasgow News"/

(1) G.H. 17.8.82.

(2) G.H. 15.9.82.

(3) G.N. 15.7.82.

(4) G.N. 14.7.82.

(5) Ibid.

(6) 17.8.82.

"Glasgow News" was of the opinion that the Government ought to intervene on their behalf rather than on that of foreign ones.

Arabi having been crushed and the country occupied, the "News" commented that, "for better or worse we must remain masters of Egypt".⁽¹⁾

The "Daily Mail" was a fervent supporter of Gladstone, and the possibility exists that its support for the intervention was dependent upon the fact that Gladstone was responsible for it. Certainly its editorials echoed its reports of Gladstone's parliamentary speeches, and in course of arguing that Arabi must be sooner or later subjugated contrasted "the wise but energetic caution of the Government and the rash heedlessness and recklessness of the Tory Party".⁽²⁾

The "Mail" justified the Alexandria bombardment on the grounds that Arabi, a usurper, was the de facto ruler of Egypt, and hence the shelling could not be construed as an act of war against either the Khedive or the Sultan⁽³⁾ and denounced the Pasha as "this man who dreams of becoming an Arab-Napoleon,"⁽⁴⁾ wholly discredited by the burning and massacre at Alexandria.⁽⁵⁾ The swift collapse of the Egyptians before Garnet Wolseley's troops proved in the eyes of the "Mail" that Arabi was not "the head of a great national movement".⁽⁶⁾

A somewhat eccentric point of view was put forward on John Bright's resignation from the Cabinet in July. The "Mail" held that it was the best thing in the circumstances as his high principles made him unfitted for the sordid work of Cabinet business.⁽⁷⁾

Though well after the event, the "Mail" was prepared to quote British/

- (1) G.N. 15.9.82.
- (2) N.B.D.M. 10.7.84.
- (3) N.B.D.M. 2.7.82.
- (4) N.B.D.M. 7.7.82.
- (5) N.B.D.M. 14.7.82.
- (6) N.B.D.M. 16.9.82.
- (7) N.B.D.M. 17.7.82.

British trade interests in Egypt as a further justification. An editorial of July 25, 1884, notes combined British trade with Egypt to be 58% of the total compared with 42% for the rest of the world, and individual figures showing that Britain supplied Egypt with all coal and cotton yarn as well as 96% of cotton goods, took 69% of all her raw cotton, 90% of her cotton seed, 90 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of beans and 86% of wheat.

"This great preponderance of British trade is a fact that must be kept steadily in view in the settlement of our relations with Egypt. Though the control of the market does not carry with it of right the control of the government of the country, it gives us a claim to take measures for the protection of our interests in proportion to their extent."

An interesting sidelight on the newspapers' reactions, was that all three remained firmly convinced that the Sultan was the real instigator of the crisis in order to recover his authority in Egypt, and Arabi Pasha nothing more than his pawn.

On one other fundamental aspect of the crisis the three newspapers were in basic agreement, though in this instance as well the "Glasgow Herald" reversed its original position. The question arose early on of the degree of co-operation which should be sought between the British and French Governments, and while concerned at the extent of French chauvinism, the "Herald's" main worry in September, 1881⁽¹⁾ was over the possible strain which any crisis might place on Anglo-French co-operation, and was assuming in October and November that any action must be a joint one⁽²⁾, but in the latter editorial there was also annoyance at the way in which French chauvinism was threatening stability in Egypt. In May, 1882, the necessity for maintaining the Dual Control was again emphasised,⁽³⁾ but once the Egyptians began to fortify Alexandria in July, for the first time the idea of a unilateral British intervention was seriously propounded, and the "Herald"/

(1) G.H. 13.9.81.

(2) G.H. 4.10.81, 10.11.81.

(3) G.H. 16.5.82.

"Herald" convinced that the Government would act without either the French or Turks, if necessary. (1)

At first condemning the French hesitancy, the "Herald" at a later stage denounced ^{France} for its belligerency; aghast at Gambetta's preaching of a general anti-Moslem crusade, the paper was convinced that such attitudes disqualified the French from leadership in the crisis, which must henceforth fall on the British (2), and by the end of July expressed open relief at the defeat in the Chamber of the Freycinet government, an event which ensured that France could not jointly invade Egypt with Britain. France was held to be unfit for such a position after her previous behaviour:

"(she is not)....the proper ally for a country which has such a stake in Egypt and which has a definite mission there. The crisis in France....should so far as this country is concerned mean only one thing.....They must cause to be done in Egypt more quickly and more thoroughly what the nation has now made up its mind must be done at all hazards".(3)

After the victory at Tel-el-Kebir the editorial comment was that Britain should keep the advantages she had won, maintain her "supreme authority" and "Special position", while neither Turks, French, nor the concert of Europe could have much of a voice in what was to follow. (4)

So far as the "Glasgow Herald" was concerned, the main consequence of the invasion was to have given the British Government complete control of the Egyptian situation, and its greatest anxiety thereafter was that France be excluded from any participation in the administrative reconstruction of the country. Britain should not deprive other powers of their rights "so far as they can be made to fit in with our necessities" (5)/

(1) G.H. 10.7.82.

(2) 13.7.82.

(3) 31.7.82.

(4) Ibid.

(5) G.H. 19.9.82.

necessities", but at the same time Britain should quickly impose its own political structure on Egypt, ignoring France or the Concert of Powers since, "the maintenance of 'undoubted paramountcy' in Egypt is absolutely necessary to this country for its own sake as well as for that of the world and of civilisation".⁽¹⁾

A year later the "Glasgow Herald" was coming round to the view that the occupation would be prolonged indefinitely, and trusted that it would result in complete British hegemony:

"..... is there one man in ten.... who does not believe and hope that when our troops finally leave Egypt they will leave it as much Anglicised from top to bottom of its administrative framework as if it were openly and formally under Lord Dufferin's favourite 'masterful hand of a British resident.'"⁽²⁾

Early in the following year the Egyptian ministry under Cherif Pasha, unable to fulfil the demands made on it, and particularly incensed by the then British policy of abandoning the Sudan to the Mahdi, resigned. The "Herald's" comment on this was that:

"Nubar Pasha (Cherif's successor) will make a good stepping stone from native to direct British government in Egypt Sir Evelyn Baring will govern the country through him..... besides the appointment of....Mr. Clifford Lloyd to be Under-Minister for the Interior shows that the political officering of Egypt by Englishmen has even formally begun".⁽³⁾

The editorial went on to express the opinion that French opposition to the British policy was the best recommendation it could have since, "It means once and for all the direct assumption of authority over, and responsibility for Egypt".⁽⁴⁾

It was consistent with such attitudes that the "Herald" should have been alarmed at a provisional agreement made in June, 1884, between Britain and France under which evacuation was fixed for 1887, and increased powers given to the "Caisse de la Dette Publique" on which/

(1) G.H. 22.12.82.

(2) G.H. 10.8.83.

(3) G.H. 11.1.84.

(4) Ibid.

which the French had representation, and dismissed the French pledge not to occupy Egypt as meaningless since "it will be found worth nothing should it be convenient to forget it".⁽¹⁾

A serious attempt to sort out the Egyptian financial tangle complicated as it was by intervention and British over-rule, was made at an international conference in July, 1884. Before the Conference even met the "Herald" was sounding warnings on the dangers of making concessions to the French. The editorial of May 28 noted the implications in a ministerial speech that a time limit might be set for the occupation, and international financial control permitted, and warned that this would give France an entry into Egyptian affairs. In June the "Herald" was seriously frightened that the Government would permit foreign control over a proposed £8 million loan to Egypt,⁽²⁾ but early in August was able to express unmitigated relief at the failure of the Conference:

"(The Government) has put down its foot..... on any control but the single and undivided control of Great Britain. There are only two courses.....the scuttling out, and the assumption of supreme guiding authority. The former course is forbidden....the latter being alone possible....." ⁽³⁾

The editorial went on to suggest an ultimate aim for British policy, "We are now within a distance.....of the undoubted paramountcy of Great Britain in Egypt being proclaimed in formal international documents".⁽⁴⁾

The attempt to establish international financial control having collapsed, the British Government then put forward its own proposals for the future of the Egyptian debt and revenue. In commenting on them, the "Herald" editorial suggested that annexation of the country by Britain would increase public confidence in the Egyptian debt and would/

(1) G.H. 24.6.84.

(2) G.H. 19.6.84.

(3) G.H. 4.8.84.

(4) Ibid.

would on that basis find eventual acceptance by the European powers. (1)

The agreement eventually reached between Britain and the Powers in March, 1885, stipulated a reduction in the Egyptian coupon, a £9 million loan with an international guarantee, the status of the Suez Canal to be settled by an international commission, the fixing of Egyptian government expenditure at £5,537,000 per annum, and a plan for a further conference on Egyptian finance if Britain could not solve the problem in two years. The "Herald" was not too happy with such a solution:

"The two points in the original French proposals....that were considered most objectionable....were the proposals for a Multiple Control and a Commission d'Enquete. Does it not seem as if the Convention contained the germ of the one and held out the prospect of the other?" (2)

The experience of more than a year did not convince the "Herald" of the merits of this solution. In July, 1886, it was argued that Baring, the Consul-General sent to supervise the administration, had been a failure owing to the restrictions under which he had to operate and, in the hope that Salisbury would be more acceptable to the Powers than Gladstone, called again for annexation. (3)

There was no doubt at any point with the "Glasgow News" on the question of British collaboration with foreign Governments:

"We have been hampered all along by the French partnership. But for that unlucky alliance we might have settled the Egyptian difficulty long ago in a way that would have strengthened our hold on the country, and settled for many years to come the absurd claims of other Powers to a political interest therein.....If however we are to do all the fighting we must see that we obtain all the spoils..... We must have no European Congress deliberating as to what shall be done in Egypt." (4)

The argument was then advanced that European consent to single-handed British intervention should be understood as an implicit admission that/

(1) G.H. 22.9.84.

(2) G.H. 19.3.85.

(3) G.H. 19.7.86.

(4) G.N. 7.7.82.

that only Britain had political rights in Egypt. For the "News" the Freycinet defeat proved the uselessness of regulating British policy so as to conciliate the French. (1)

The victory having been won, the "News" was strengthened in its conviction that Britain should have sole responsibility, since Britain was the only country which the Concert of Europe had been willing to see intervene.

"Neither we nor Europe can go back to the status quo ante which is played out and done with for ever. Neither we nor Europe can set up any kind of European Commission to deal with Egypt since everybody knows that it would be inefficient for its proper purpose and fatally efficient as a means of stirring up strife".(2)

"If we have any right to Egypt.....it stands upon.....the necessity for maintaining our imperial position, not only by way of self-protection, but in fulfilment of our solemn responsibilities towards the people of India.....The same reasons which justify our interference justify our obtaining complete and final possession".(3)

The paper was most afraid that despite the "magnificent position which the British had acquired", the "cowardice of our rulers" would make them ridiculous in the eyes of Europe and lose every advantage. (4)

In contrast to the "Glasgow Herald" which viewed the question of entirely from the question of European confidence, (5) the "Glasgow News" gave attention to the burdens which the Egyptian debt placed on the local population, particularly the peasantry, and considered that this fact was relevant to any eventual solution. Thus the editorial of July 3, 1884, castigated Gladstone's proposals for the Egyptian land tax, and his failure to demand a reduction of the interest on the debt secured by the Khedival Daira and Domain estates. Gladstone's stated reason for this attitude was that the estates had been/

(1) G.N. 31.7.82.

(2) G.N. 16.9.82.

(3) G.N. 18.9.82.

(4) G.N. 19.9.82.

(5) The "Herald" did refer, once, in general terms to the bondholders sharing the "burden" of Egypt" by accepting a reduction in interest.
24.11.84.

been mortgaged in exceptional circumstances requiring absolute security:

"This is Gladstone for the fact that the lands and loans upon them are entirely in the hands of a Jew ring, which our Government is afraid or unwilling for some other reason to offend. Until this country shakes off the influence of these monster bondholders who have already squeezed millions in hard cash out of Egypt, no scheme we may propose can be anything but a sham".(1)

Later in the month another editorial detailed the oppressions of the peasants, and criticised the Government savagely for upholding the bondholders' interests, asserting that, "...the Government..... employed all its forces to suppress a national revolt against the foreign vampires", (2) - a staggering reversal of the paper's former estimate of the Arabi revolt, which can hardly be accounted for on any other assumption than that the editor consciously sought any pretext whatever on which to attack the Liberal Government, even when these were flagrantly contradictory, and also showed that the "News" was prepared to assume viewpoints on subsidiary issues, such as the bondholders, apparently at odds with its stand on the main question, British occupation, justifying the occupation in terms of an emotional chauvinism which could apparently reconcile the interests of the British State and the Egyptian peasants at the bondholders' expense, (3) while the "Herald" confined itself to relatively unemotional calculations of British interests.

In August a new justification was advanced for annexation, that the prosperity which would follow sound government and honest administration would enable French and German claims to be satisfied, and the debt liquidated with relative speed. (4)

The Conservatives appear to have been the only political group in Glasgow/

(1) G.N. 3.7.84.

(2) G.N. 22.7.84.

(3) Note however the argument used on 17.8.82. See above.

(4) G.N. 6.8.84.

in Glasgow to have tried to support the attitude of their press spokesmen with a public meeting on the Egyptian question. This was organised on the title of "The Egyptian Muddle", and addressed by an Alexander Baird of Urie who had worked under the Khedive five years previously. None of the personalities mentioned include those otherwise known to be connected with African affairs.⁽¹⁾

Although from a knowledge of its position generally on public affairs the "North British Daily Mail" would be expected to have shown a "Gladstonian" international attitude, and a particular concern for the Government to act in accordance with the "Concert of Europe", yet this was not the case. Referring to the French Government in July, 1882,⁽²⁾ the "Mail" held that the crisis ".....simply shows that France is not qualified to deal with a situation affecting intimately her position in Egypt, but at the same time she refuses to withdraw from a semblance of active intervention".

It followed from this that the "Mail" was opposed to the revival of the Dual Control after the occupation, dismissing it as weak and ineffective in itself, and made more so by the instability of French governments. Britain instead should have a "dominant influence" though to be used in consultation with Europe.

Although convinced of the need for British intervention in Egypt, and the desirability of undertaking it without French assistance, the "Mail", unlike the other two papers, was at a loss as to what course to follow thereafter. Robinson, Gallagher and Denny demonstrate in their already mentioned work, "Africa and the Victorians", that in its consensus of opinion regarding Egypt the Liberal Party had pious hopes of resolving the situation in a manner which would enable a withdrawal to be made, but no coherent policy which might have achieved/

(1) G.H. and G.N. 4.3.84.

(2) N.B.D.M. 7.7.82.

achieved such an outcome. The "Mail" appears to have reflected this position faithfully. The idea of annexation was abhorrent: "Rash and reckless counsellors have urged the Government formally to annex Egypt or at least set up a protectorate there...(but) to set up a British protectorate would alienate France, Italy and Austria". It was remembered that "violation of nationality" had provided the basis for Arabi's revolt.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless the "Mail" believed that Britain must still remodel the whole administrative structure in Egypt⁽²⁾ and take steps to clear out corrupt officials, yet:

"This is not in the least a suggestion that there should be annexation or protection. It is perfectly possible to set up a political control just as it was easy to create a financial one, and the latter presented difficulties in order to maintain it which will not be found in the case of a rigid inspection of the Budget, the taxation, the education and the administration of justice in the country".⁽³⁾

The failure of the London Conference on Egyptian finances in July, 1884, was attributed solely to French bad faith,⁽⁴⁾ the British handling of which was "astute and honest".⁽⁵⁾

Without becoming so emotional over the fate of the Egyptian peasants as the "Glasgow News", the "Mail" too believed that the burden of debt interest on Egypt must be reduced, objecting to the "needy foreigners who prey upon the vitals of the Khedive's people",⁽⁶⁾ and while advocating that any new loan to Egypt should have a European guarantee, yet denounced the "Caisse de la Dette" as "destructive of good government", and hoped that Lord Granville would veto a proposal to give Germany and Russia seats on it as, "extending that foreign tutelage which is and always has been the curse of Egypt".

In complete/

- (1) N.B.D.M. 18.9.82.
- (2) N.B.D.M. 21.12.82.
- (3) N.B.D.M. 26.12.82.
- (4) N.B.D.M. 4.8.84.
- (5) N.B.D.M. 5.8.84.
- (6) N.B.D.M. 11.12.84.

In complete contradiction to what it had said in December, 1884, the "Mail" was by January, 1885, without explaining its change of front, opposed to the idea of a European guarantee for the Egyptian loan, and even coming round to the idea of unimpeded British control:

".....if ever Great Britain is to build up a strong and stable system of government in Cairo it must be through men like Sir Evelyn Baring who know exactly what they want, and who proceed to get it without always observing the cumbrous delicacies of oriental etiquette".(1)

The eventual compromise agreement of March, 1885, was thought to be "good so far as it goes", (2) and while expressing reservations about certain aspects, - the priority of meeting the coupon, the international guarantee, Egyptian administrative practices - the "Mail" was "bound to confess that we do not know how the Government could have made better terms". (3)

In the event therefore, in spite of the wholly different justifications they cited in support of their attitudes, the three newspapers found themselves in basic agreement on the two most fundamental aspects of the crisis and its long-term solution; - the necessity of British armed intervention, and the need to exclude the French from any significant share in the operations, though the "Glasgow Herald" did not originally hold to either of these points of view, and the "Glasgow News" regularly reviled the Government for being insufficiently attached to them. At bottom, all three showed the same implicit conception of the essential British interest, the need to maintain political stability, and a co-operative regime in an area where British supremacy, especially in view of the Suez Canal was, to use the modern jargon, "not negotiable". United on the basic principle, opinion diverged on the most effective means of maintaining/

(1) N.B.D.M. 20.1.85.

(2) N.B.D.M. 9.3.85.

(3) N.B.D.M. 20.3.85.

maintaining it, and while the "Herald" and "News" favoured outright British annexation of Egypt, the "Mail", though confusedly, opposed such a course.

It was by no means accidental that the role of the French should have been regarded in such a light by the newspapers, rather it was entirely consistent with the unanimous attitude displayed by them towards French colonial ventures, hostility and derision.

French Imperialism: This ^{attitude} emerged very clearly in comment on the French acquisition of Tunisia and Madagascar, events immediately preceding and contemporary with the Egyptian crisis. The unconscious irony of the "Glasgow Herald" leader-writer's statement of February 14, 1881, "Nor do we believe that France intends to seize Tunis any more than England is likely to seize Egypt", was succeeded by sarcastic references to the French "civilising mission" and French creditors, (1) following this by stigmatising the invasion as an "act of aggression", the "most ominous and reactionary event which has taken place ...since ...the war with Germany" (2) which gave way to even stronger language:

"....violence and duplicity.... shameless fraud.... unscrupulous filibuster..... the ruler of a state with which a quarrel had not even been picked was forced to sign away his kingdom in the face of an ostentatious violence." (3)

Although in general opposed to British intervention of any sort between France and the Bey, the "Herald" hoped that the Government would take action if the French violated any British rights.

With respect to Madagascar, the "Herald" was even more denunciatory in view of the fact that British interests were believed to be more closely involved than in Tunisia, and the Madagascans to be making progress in "civilisation and Christianity". The French demand to the Madagascan government for a protectorate over the north west coast of the island/

(1) G.H. 12.5.81.

(2) G.H. 14.5.81.

(3) G.H. 17.5.81.

of the island, for 99 year leases of land to Europeans, and their insults to Malagasay envoys in Paris was "bad and shameless",⁽¹⁾ and the attack on the island was "as discreditable and unprovoked a piece of aggression as the present generation has witnessed".⁽²⁾ Taking up an argument made by W.E. Forster in a speech to the Colonial Institute that Britain should have no objections to French colonialism so long as the French respected the principles of justice and equity, the "Herald" replied that this was precisely the point. France ignored the rights of other nations and maltreated the natives. The operations in Tunisia under the republic were as bad as those in Algeria under the monarchy, and so long as France behaved thus other people were bound to protest.⁽³⁾ The "Herald" was furthermore extremely critical of the British Government's acquiescence in the French acts, mentioning the rumour that the Government was doing so on the basis of a quid pro quo for its Egyptian policy, with the following comment:

"But that our Government should wink at - far less make the basis of a bargain - the most barefaced aggression - aggression which must affect our own interests - in order that we may enjoy in peace the rights, such as they are, which we have acquired elsewhere is not to be thought for a moment".⁽⁴⁾

When the Malagasays eventually accepted a French treaty late in 1885, the "Herald" still thought a vigorous British intervention would be in order, by appointing a Consul-General to Madagascar and preventing the ratification of the treaty.⁽⁵⁾

The "News" and the "Mail" were critical in a similar tone of the French actions in Tunisia and Madagascar, the "Mail" describing the invasion of the island as an example of the "semi-piratical licence which M. Ferry allows his lieutenants"⁽⁶⁾, but while also disapproving, the "News"/

- (1) G.H. 30.11.82.
- (2) G.H. 5.5.84.
- (3) G.H. 12.6.84.
- (4) G.H. 8.12.82.
- (5) G.H. 24.12.85.
- (6) N.B.D.M. 2.9.84.

the "News" was emphatically certain that Britain could on no account afford to get involved with France on behalf of the Queen of Madagascar.⁽¹⁾ The "Mail" made no mention of the alleged understanding between Britain and France.

German Imperialism: During the seventies the question of partitioning Africa among the European powers had been raised occasionally as a speculation. By the time the Egyptian crisis had settled down it was becoming a practical issue, one on which the Glasgow newspapers and public opinion began to define their standpoints. The consideration which appeared to them to be the dominant one was, judging from the evidence, fear of British exclusion from the territories claimed by foreign powers. When annexation by Britain was approved this was on the whole regarded at this stage, as a necessary response to the foreign threat rather than a process desirable in itself. The feelings evoked by the German colonial ventures in the year 1884, and the question of the Congo, help to illustrate this point. It was in fact the German action which provoked the "Glasgow Herald" into general discussion of imperialism.

Even before the main German colonial initiative of 1884, the "Herald" was categorising her as being definitely a colonial power, citing the case of Angra Pequena in South West Africa, Bismarck's involvement in the Congo negotiations, and his reception of the Transvaal ambassador in Berlin; and making the point that such factors should be kept in mind when considering the possibility of a German alliance as an alternative to the much strained one with France. Although hostility was expressed to the German annexation of South West Africa, this being regarded as a "natural" British preserve,⁽²⁾ in respect of West Africa "there is room both for German and for British enterprise/

(1) G.N. 16.8.82.

(2) G.H. 11.8.84.

enterprise if only a proper arrangement can be made".⁽¹⁾ The sudden rise of Germany as a colonial power was attributed to population pressures seeking an outlet, which the German Government by creating colonies hoped to divert from the U.S.A.⁽²⁾, developing this shortly after into the proposition that the success of the Social Democrats in the 1884 Reichstag elections gave Germany the choice only between colonisation and socialism. While the present German colonies were held to be inadequate for this purpose, the "Herald" warned that the Germans had their eye on South Africa.⁽³⁾

The first editorial reference of the "Glasgow News" to German imperialism was in character, to contrast Bismarck's vigour with the fecklessness of the British Foreign Office.⁽⁴⁾ The German drive for colonies was held to be quite legitimate, an example to be emulated by the British Government, which should abandon Free Trade and establish exclusive markets for British manufacturers,⁽⁵⁾ while the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce was castigated on November 11, 1884, for devoting its meeting to the West African annexations instead of opposing Joseph Chamberlain's policy on merchant shipping.

So far as the "Mail" was concerned the fuss made over the German colonial initiatives seemed misplaced. The delay in answering Bismarck's correspondence, which had led to some unpleasantness between the two governments when South West Africa was annexed, was hotly condemned by the "News", but by the "Mail" blamed primarily on the South Africans. As for South West Africa itself; "The place is not worth quarrelling about, and if Prince Bismarck wants it there is no particular reason why he should not have it",⁽⁶⁾ while on West Africa/

- (1) G.H. 25.8.84.
- (2) G.H. 17.7.84.
- (3) G.H. 11.11.84.
- (4) G.N. 30.7.84.
- (5) G.N. 5.12.84.
- (6) N.B.D.M. 26.12.84.

Africa the paper at first discounted reports of German annexation, and did not comment when they were confirmed.

The Congo: The diplomatic manoeuvres surrounding the fate of the Congo, culminating in its acquisition by King Leopold II at the Berlin Conference in 1884-5, loomed much larger in the thoughts of the Glasgow journalists than did the German annexations. Once more the over-riding fear was that of France which appears in nearly every discussion of the issue.

Like most outsiders who gave any thought to the question, the "Glasgow Herald" did not at first consider the King of the Belgians a serious contender for the sovereignty of the Congo Mouth. The editorials of October 20, 1882, and April 16, 1883, expressed general approval for what was known of his enterprise; to open a way "peacefully and permanently" for "the trader, the missionary and the scientific explorer", and unlike its two contemporaries, understood that there was a distinction between Leopold's Congo organisation, the Association Internationale du Congo (A.I.C.) and the earlier "philanthropic" A.I.A. which had been allowed to die quietly in the meantime, but the similarity of whose name Leopold found most convenient.

However, any more extensive pretensions by the A.I.C. were dismissed in an editorial of April 4, 1883, and the "real danger" pinpointed as France. On this basis the "Glasgow Herald" gave its approval to the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of February, 1884, which in return for tariff concessions by Portugal recognised ancient Portuguese claims on the river mouth. Since other powers would have objected to a British annexation, and since:

"....the absolute "internationalisation" or neutralisation of the Congo seems out of the question what better course for this country could have been adopted than the establishment at the mouth of the Congo of a small and comparatively weak power like Portugal".

The editorial/

The editorial ends with the significant remark that, "...the real control.....will....rest with the more powerful and important of the partners in this working arrangement".⁽¹⁾

This attitude was maintained, with disapproval of the intransigent attitude against the Treaty adopted by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce under the influence of Leopold's friend, James Hutton.⁽²⁾

Though a weak nation like Portugal did not endanger the opening of Central Africa, "A great military power like France, which has already indicated designs on the Upper Congo by countenancing the petty annexations of M. de Brazza, would be a serious danger".⁽³⁾ At the same time, the "Herald" for some reason believing that the A.I.C. claims covered only the Upper Congo, recommended that Britain should take them also under his protection in the hope of eventually succeeding to them in the future. "It will be open to, if not incumbent upon Great Britain to protect or absorb it".⁽⁴⁾ The shipwreck of the Treaty on Bismarck's disapproval was met with regret.⁽⁵⁾

The "Daily Mail" also approved of the Treaty, "a very laudable attempt to put an end to a long-disputed question",⁽⁶⁾ but the most astonishing voice in favour was that of James Stevenson, member of the Free Church, spiritual descendant of David Livingstone, implacable^{enemy} of the slave trade and Chairman of the African Lakes Co.. the object of Portuguese hostility in East Africa. In a letter of April 16, 1884, to Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, the Foreign Under-Secretary, he declared himself in favour of the Treaty. The territory recognised as Portuguese was not very large, the 3% transit duties in Mozambique had worked well enough, and the proposed 10% tariff would not be much/

(1) G.H. 6.3.84.

(2) G.H. 21.3.84.

(3) G.H. 21.4.84.

(4) G.H. 13.3.84.

(5) G.H. 19.5.84.

(6) N.B.D.M. 13.2.85.

much worse than that of South Africa:

"As the Treaty permanently secures the coasting trade on 1500 miles of East African coast (perhaps a point influencing Stevenson's attitude) and that of five of the great water highways - mere prejudice should not be allowed to guide our opinion upon it".(1)

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church thought in a similar vein;

"In return for the recognition by Great Britain of Portugal, leaving the great highway of the Upper Congo quite free, Portugal will open up the Zambesi river to the world, and her claim to sovereignty will cease at the Shiré, at arms length from our missionaries on Lake Nyasa.....The opinion of so skilled an expert on this subject as James Stevenson, Esq., one of our number, is of peculiar value".(2)

The main determinant of their attitude would seem to have been the Portuguese concessions in East Africa.

The "Glasgow Herald's" feelings towards the A.I.C. became ones of active hostility when, in order to secure French recognition of his organisation's diplomatic status, Leopold gave the French Government the right of pre-emption of its territory should it be dissolved.

"The Association, far from being international, will develop - or degenerate - into a purely French company, and then the annexation of its territories to those of the Republic will only be a question of time.....The subscribers to it gave their money in the belief that it would be used for the benefit of all nations, and indeed humanity, and not for the advantage of one particular State.....If the International Association allows France a right of pre-emption it ceases to be international, and its territory ceases to be its own. The Upper Congo becomes a No Man's Land once more, which this country has at least as good a right to enter and occupy as any other".(3)

On these grounds the "Herald" once more condemned the Manchester Chamber of Commerce's unqualified support for the A.I.C.⁽⁴⁾ and only came/

(1) F.O. 84/1810. Stevenson to Fitzmaurice, 16.4.84.

(2) Ibid. encl. in Jas. C. Stevenson to Fitzmaurice, 15.5.84.

(3) G.H. 21.5.84.

(4) G.H. 26.1.85.

came round reluctantly to support the A.I.C. claims as a lesser evil than an uncontrolled scramble for the river, probably resulting in substantial French gains,⁽¹⁾ remarking that, "the scramble for Africa is perhaps unavoidable".

The "Glasgow News" approved of the A.I.C (Which it habitually termed the A.I.A.) in a somewhat contemptuous fashion as "tinged with Utopian fantasies".⁽²⁾

"It is not too much to say that the International Association has been regarded with suspicion, and that its motives and plans were of an order calculated to lead ordinary merchants to look askance at its operations. In these days of public companies, each and all professing to have benevolence as their primary object, and as a rule trading upon the sentimental predilections of a public which likes to know that its dividends are tinged by a species of universal amelioration, an Association whose prospectus claims are plentifully besprinkled with the words benevolence, charity, philanthropy, the spirit of peace, goodwill to all men, and progress is, we regret to say, doomed to be looked upon and treated, if not as a gigantic fraud, at least as an insane idea".⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, arguing that at all costs the Congo must be kept out of the hands of restrictionist powers like France and Portugal, the "Glasgow News" came out in favour of Britain supporting the A.I.C. despite the French rights of pre-emption, which could be precluded by converting it into a "recognised and responsible agent of commercial Europe.....every nation concerned ought to have representatives on its Council."⁽⁴⁾ The "News" was bitterly opposed to the Portuguese Treaty, and even while voicing its suspicion of the A.I.C's philanthropy, wrote that,

"We have repeatedly protested against the folly of the Government acknowledging for a single moment the right of Portugal to interfere with the commerce of the Congo..... to cede to the Portuguese an iota of their claims woulddestroy the work of the most earnest and unselfish civilising agency the world has ever known".⁽⁵⁾

The "Mail"/

- (1) G.H. 18.12.84. 5.2.85.
- (2) G.N. 19.9.84.
- (3) G.N. 19.9.84.
- (4) G.N. 20.9.84.
- (5) G.N. 19.9.84.

The "Mail" likewise favoured the A.I.C. as the sovereign power for the Congo, though not its pre-emption agreement with France.⁽¹⁾

The Berlin Conference of 1884-5, which was called at Bismarck's initiative, and brought together representatives of the European powers and the U.S.A., settled the fate of the Congo. The Conference also debated the status of the other great tropical African waterway, the Niger, and here the "Glasgow Herald" wished to concede nothing of the British position. In regard to the Niger the editorial stated that, "Its complete internationalisation would be something like Mr. Henry George's Land Nationalisation.....nothing better than legalised robbery".⁽²⁾ Thus the "Herald" welcomed the eventual acceptance by the powers of British domination, and the proclamation of the "Niger Districts" as a British protectorate.⁽³⁾ The "News" was also pleased at the Berlin formulas for Niger navigation⁽⁴⁾ while the "Mail" too argued that Britain should reserve its rights on the Niger.⁽⁵⁾

From the events in tropical Africa during 1884, and the Berlin Conference, all the newspapers drew lessons for the future of Africa as a whole. Commentators were now coming round to the view that the political situation had altered so drastically that in future it would be for the European powers a case of "every man for himself", though if some sort of international control and supervision of the process could be achieved, so much the better, while as a colonial neighbour, Germany was preferred to France. According to the "Herald", noting that 4500 out of 7000 miles of African coast had been partitioned among existing claimants, leaving 2500 to be divided some day,

"If there is to be emulation among leading states of the world as to which shall do the most to civilise this great and virgin region, there ought to be some agreement as to the division of the work, so that there may be no ugly rush and no disorderly squabbling/

(1) N.B.D.M. 22.10.84. 18.12.84.

(2) G.H. 18.10.84.

(3) G.H. 9.11.84. 9.6.85.

(4) G.N. 19.12.84.

(5) N.B.D.M. 22.10.84.

squabbling among the rival colonising expeditions calculated to embroil the nations". (1)

The "Glasgow News" explicitly stated in relation to the Berlin Conference that the main thing was to ensure freedom of navigation on the main rivers. The question of sovereignty was of secondary importance⁽²⁾ and the possession of African coast was only valuable in so far as it permitted trade with the interior,⁽³⁾ but the implication of the doctrine was that French and Portuguese sovereignty on the rivers was unacceptable as these were restrictionist powers, thus the extension of British influence was to be sought.

"The future of Africa is British.....It is our destiny to civilise Africa. By that work.....will our race capacity be tested. By that work...will our island story be crowned with eternal greatness".(4)

The "Mail" had much less to say on the subject than either of the other two papers. It too considered an accelerating process of annexation in Africa was now inevitable, "...it is on this side of Africa that the scramble for sovereignty will be greatest among colonising powers"⁽⁵⁾, and that some international regulation for it was to be welcomed⁽⁶⁾, mentioning the fact in passing that in any settlement, African rights were likely to be disregarded.⁽⁷⁾

A basic unity of principle is once more detectable in the three papers, the protection of established British interests on the Niger, the Congo or elsewhere in Africa was believed to be the paramount consideration. This was now, except in the case of the "Mail", much more clearly linked with outright advocacy of annexation, yet even in the "Glasgow News", let alone the "Glasgow Herald", there lingered a regret that such a situation had come to pass, and annoyance/

(1) G.H. 25.8.84.

(2) G.N. 19.11.84.

(3) G.N. 20.9.84.

(4) G.N. 19.12.84.

(5) N.B.D.M. 27.11.84.

(6) N.B.D.M. 22.10.84.

(7) N.B.D.M. 11.11.84.

annoyance at the machinations of foreign powers for bringing it about. Except in the special case of Egypt, territorial acquisition was still not seen as something entirely desirable in itself.

Gordon and the Sudan: It would, however, be giving a very distorted picture to suggest that the partition of the continent, and speculation on the future of the tropical regions was the aspect of African affairs which most absorbed public opinion during 1884. Compared to the violent controversy over the British Government's action in the Egyptian Sudan it was very much in the background.

The revolt of the Sudanese tribesmen under the leadership of the Mahdi in 1883-4 soon annihilated the Egyptian forces and destroyed the fragile structure of Egyptian empire in that region, leaving only a few isolated and besieged garrisons, as at Khartoum, to represent the former Egyptian power.

The first intention of the British Government, its hands full with the aftermath of the Egyptian occupation, was to abandon the Sudan to the Mahdi. The "Herald" approved of such a course as a necessary step to re-conquering it in the future.⁽¹⁾ General Gordon's mission to extricate the trapped Egyptian garrisons was condemned because it went unarmed and was hastily organised.⁽²⁾ It called for his rescue once he was besieged in Khartoum, and argued that the relief expedition should also re-conquer the Sudan.⁽³⁾ This demand was repeated in rather hysterical terms after Gordon's death was reported in February, 1885⁽⁴⁾, but by May the "Herald" had come round to accepting that abandonment was the only sensible course.⁽⁵⁾

The "Glasgow News" too was at first opposed to reconquering the Sudan as this "would be fatal to the best interests of Egypt".⁽⁶⁾

Since/

- (1) G.H. 11.1.84.
- (2) G.H. 5.2.84.
- (3) G.H. 27.8.84.
- (4) G.H. 16.2.85.
- (5) G.H. 18.5.85.
- (6) G.N. 25.8.84.

Since its attitude was determined more by its opposition to the Liberal Government than by the merits of the local question, it was at first cool to Gordon's expedition and hinted he might be insane,⁽¹⁾ but very quickly this switched to passionate commitment to Gordon and the retention of Khartoum. On Gordon's death it published an edition in a black border, demanding a bloody revenge and the permanent occupation of the Sudan.⁽²⁾ It objected to the eventual withdrawal on the grounds that, "We cannot hold Egypt without holding Khartoum. That the Government did not see this till now is the cause of our present troubles".⁽³⁾ The far-sighted editor had not seen it either, judging from his comment of August 25 the previous year, but consistency in argument was never the strong point of the "Glasgow News".

The "Mail" was emphatically opposed to any British interference in the Sudan, which provided the only occasion on which it expressed criticism of Gladstone for giving in to jingo clamour at the expense of sound Liberal policy. It argued that Gordon had invited his fate by exceeding orders, and pointed out that the Government had never even tried to negotiate with the Mahdi for the release of the Egyptian garrisons. It was bitter against the calls for revenge, and applauded the eventual evacuation as a triumph for Liberal principles:

"This evacuation of the Sudan was of course the policy of the Government from the very beginning, and only the quixotic Gordon mission and its tragic failure caused a wavering in its maintenance or a delay in its execution. Happily common sense and the pressure of events have restored the firmness of Ministers and re-established the wise policy of evacuation".⁽⁴⁾

It is perhaps surprising in view of the public feeling on the subject that what appears to have been the only public meeting called in Glasgow/

(1) G.N. 20.9.84.

(2) G.N. 10.2.85.

(3) G.N. 13.2.85.

(4) N.B.D.M. 1.5.85.

in Glasgow over the Sudan was organised by the Liberals after Gordon's death had been reported, to call for withdrawal. The leading speaker was John Morley, followed by Dr. Charles Cameron who traced the problem back to Disraeli's involvement in the Dual Control. "In sending Gordon to the Sudan the Government committed as false and fatal a step as their original involvement in Egyptian finance".⁽¹⁾ So far as the Glasgow press was concerned, Gordon's memory does not seem to have remained green, and his name was hardly re-invoked in its columns before the time when the Anglo-Egyptian forces under Kitchener reconquered the Sudan.

(ii) The Commercial Prospects: Africa's position as a potential economic asset was, in Glasgow in the middle eighties, a topic of widespread discussion, stimulated by the speeches of H.M. Stanley, three of which in late 1884 dwelt on this theme; to the London Chamber of Commerce on September 18, to the Manchester Chamber on October 21, and to the Scottish Geographical Society in December. Commenting on his performances the "Herald" suggested that the commercial prospects for Africa were being over-rated: "He carried away his Manchester audience with visions of the interminable yards of calico which are required for the moral regeneration of the natives of the Congo basin", but

"...Some people seem to think that the only thing to do is to "annex" or "open up" a country and the orders will at once flow out in ceaseless streams to Manchester and Glasgow and Birmingham and Sheffield. Trade is elastic but it has no such balloon-like capacity of rapid expansion. It must grow, and, as a rule, the more slowly it grows the sounder it is".⁽²⁾

The "Glasgow News" was similarly sceptical of Stanley's visions of: "...a region teeming with millions of blacks all ready to barter invaluable ivory, palm oil, rubber and such-like rudimentary commodities for the cotton handkerchiefs of Manchester, the cutlery of Birmingham and the fiery liquids produced in such abundance throughout the United Kingdom".⁽³⁾

This/

- (1) N.B.D.M. 11.2.85.
- (2) G.H. 23.10.84.
- (3) G.N. 19.9.84.

This editorial stressed the geographical difficulties of exploiting trade on the Congo at least until a railway was constructed past its cataracts. Until such time, Stanley is quoted as stating, "the whole of the million square miles now inaccessible and unmarketable is not worth a silver florin".⁽¹⁾ However, on the occasions when it was arguing against French or Portuguese possession of the river, the "News" was happy to dwell on the rich commercial possibilities which would be lost in that event; "Neither...can be trusted to keep the gates of a great commercial highway 3,000 miles in length, opening up a country of enormous fertility and peopled by tribes of remarkable commercial aptitude".⁽²⁾

The "Mail" for its part, does not appear to have noticed Stanley's speculations or commented on them.

The newspapers may have had their reservations, but on January 8, 1886, the noted Scottish explorer of Africa, Joseph Thomson, speaking to the Scottish Geographical Society's Glasgow branch, made a detailed and documented refutation of Stanley's and similar theses. He pointed out that over-optimistic expectations of African trade had not been justified, that nothing could be got from the Congo which could not be got more cheaply elsewhere,⁽³⁾ while East Africa was unsuitable for settlement, none of its products other than the nearly exhausted wild rubber was in wide demand. The soil was poor, the climate ferocious and the labour supply unreliable. As for the African Lakes Co. - that was dependent on the market provided by the missionaries, and could not survive without them.

An unambiguous connexion between governmental support, territorial annexation and improved trade prospects was propounded in a letter to the "Glasgow Herald"/

(1) Ibid.

(2) G.N. 20.9.84.

(3) With some forethought Thomson noted that the "only hope" for the A.I.C. would be to exploit the territory on a monopoly basis.

the "Glasgow Herald" of November 15, 1884, signed only "Merchant" and headed "Glasgow". The writer claimed to have tried to establish a branch of his (unspecified) business in Porto Novo, West Africa, in 1880, but failed because of the king's persecution of British entrepreneurs. He asserted that trade in West Africa prospered under British government and died under French, and denied the popular view that the acquisition of colonies was expensive to home government; "The Gold Coast and Lagos governments have both had yearly surpluses for some time", despite the disadvantages of a light traffic and foreign possessions scattered between the British. He complained, however, that despite the expense of maintaining Consuls and warships on the coast, "British traders can, less than traders of any other nation, rely on Government support against outrage to the person or pillage of goods", and that the officials were more concerned to avoid action than to protect British merchants, "...no matter at what loss to the trader and consequent loss to manufacturer and workman".⁽¹⁾ The letter contains a straightforward argument for a more vigorous policy of economic imperialism, and it is much to be regretted that its author is not identifiable.

North Africa too was discussed as a possible field for British enterprise, and certain of the problems publicised. It has been noted that the papers saw a bright commercial future for Egypt under British administration. This was taken up in a more specific manner in a "Glasgow Herald" letter of May 23, 1883, signed "Scoto-Egyptian". The writer diagnosed the primary need of Egypt as capital, of which there was practically none, save that in the hands of "Greek and Syrian usurers". Therefore,

".....what is now most urgently wanted in Egypt to emancipate the people from the bondage of the usurers is the introduction of associated/

(1) G.H. 15.11.84.

of associated British capital such as has so successfully been established in Scotland in connexion with America and the colonies. No country in the world presents a safer or more profitable field for loan or investment companies than Egypt".

The safety and profitability were said to be secured by the British presence and the registration of mortgages in the Mixed Courts, while borrowers on land would willingly pay rates of interest which would appear to them to be moderate, and so the investment companies, "...may be the means of developing Egyptian agriculture to an extent few people at home here can realise and increase our supply of Egyptian cotton twofold".⁽¹⁾

At the other end of North Africa the colonial policies pursued by the French Government were held to be doing enormous damage to British trade. A letter in the "Glasgow Herald" of June, 14, 1884, by John Pirrie of Pirrie Foote, the Glasgow house which did business there, complained that the French tariff practically excluded British goods from Algeria. "A grievous wrong is thereby done to the natives of Algeria and also to this country". The situation was particularly annoying as a considerable British trade was done with neighbouring Morocco. Now France was uttering threats against Morocco as well, and therefore:

"When France seizes on countries with which England trades surely we are entitled to demand that our manufactures shall be admitted, as before, on as favourable terms as those of France or of any other country".

In this case, however, the idea of British annexation as a remedy was not put forward. The subject of Morocco came up again in the "Herald" during December of that year, when the editor was alarmed at rumours that the British representative in Morocco, Sir John Drummond Hay, far from encouraging British commerce, was backing up the Sultan in his economically obscurantist ways of excluding foreigners as much as/

(1) G.H. 23.5.83.

as much as possible. (1)

The overall picture of public opinion on the economic importance of Africa which emerges from these sources is that its future value was likely to be considerable, and should be protected for Britain by political means of one sort or another, but by no means fully persuaded that the continent was some kind of Eldorado, or, to use a currently fashionable phrase "a new America".

(c) The Uganda Crisis and its Antecedents

I.B.E.A. - the diplomatic agreements, - Uganda.

It was after the Egyptian and Sudanese events that concepts of imperial destiny began to come prominently to the fore, a development which may be said to have been complete by the time of the next major crisis in African affairs, the Uganda question of 1892-3.

The problem originated in the fact that the Imperial British East Africa Co. had invaded Uganda, but finding the occupation beyond its strained resources, began to agitate for British Government support in order to hold it; support which was grudged by the Gladstone government but vociferously demanded by public opinion. (2)

During the preceding period the "Glasgow Herald" had watched with approval the extension of British influence in East Africa. The events leading to the Uganda crisis began in 1888 when I.B.E.A. received a royal charter to govern and exploit commercially territory in East Africa, formerly claimed by the Sultan of Zanzibar and assigned by him to German and British "spheres of influence" in 1886.

Initially the "Glasgow Herald" was somewhat sour towards I.B.E.A.'s pretensions. On the first rumours of the forthcoming Charter it was/

(1) G.H. 27.11.84.

(2) File no. 84/2192 in the F.O. records contains a multitude of resolutions opposing withdrawal, received from public bodies in the British Isles. See also the Uganda Journal Vol. 18 No. 2 Sept. 1954 p. 292. "British Public Opinion & the Uganda Question", by Anthony Low.

was described as a shocking breach of the 1886 Convention which had been intended as a "self denying ordinance on the part of Britain and Germany, and if it was to be violated within a year of its signature it should be abrogated."⁽¹⁾

That however was the last critical remark by the "Glasgow Herald" about I.B.E.A. and the launching of the company the following year was greeted in glowing terms:

"....another great scheme has just been launched in which two of our fellow-countrymen (2) once more have prominence....
....This enterprise which has been quietly maturing for some time.....is one of the most important which has been launched under British auspices for a long time.....Its political and philanthropic aspects are even more important".⁽³⁾

It was hailed as a potential destroyer of the slave trade and on behalf of "those who feel that the hope of regenerating Africa rests solely in a wholesome and active commerce"⁽⁴⁾ and the "Herald" decided on August 14, 1889, that Chartered Companies with administrative functions were the best means to "open up" Africa.

Not much notice was taken of the Anglo-German Treaty of July 1, 1890, which reaffirmed and extended the division of the Sultan of Zanzibar's realms among Germany and Britain and made Zanzibar itself a British protectorate, other than to regret that no route had been left open between the two British companies, I.B.E.A. in the north, and the A.L.C. in the south.⁽⁵⁾ It was further believed that the German East Africa Co. was trying to cut out Britain and encroach as much as possible on I.B.E.A. territory.

These happenings, together with a simultaneous Anglo-French agreement in West Africa, stimulated reflections on the general course/

(1) G.H. 30.9.87.

(2) i.e. William Mackinnon and Sir John Kirk.

(3) G.H. 10.9.88.

(4) G.H. 6.6.89.

(5) G.H. 9.7.90.

course of events, "...it reveals a chain of consistent, coherent effort to deal rationally and calmly with the great African problem.."(1) though one off-key note is sounded, "The Anglo-French agreement.... marks another step in the peaceful conquest of Africa, although also another instance of the presentation by one nation to another of territory properly belonging to neither".(2)

Discussion in the editorial columns of the possible I.B.E.A. withdrawal from Uganda followed on a letter to the paper by George S. Mackenzie, the Company's administrator in Africa, who deployed a broad front of argument against withdrawal. In the front rank he placed the suppression of the slave trade, followed by the acquisition of a valuable market for cotton and wool, and went on to declare that in occupying Uganda the Company had performed a public service as its own commercial interests were restricted to a ten-mile wide strip of coastline, and claimed that I.B.E.A. had been responsible for getting the Zanzibar protectorate for Britain.(3)

The following day the "Herald" printed an editorial endorsing these arguments, and continued to repeat them at intervals, adding that withdrawal would be followed by an Arab takeover, and destruction of the missionaries, as well as the loss of some very fine commercial prospects. As the Company was said to have made considerable sacrifice to hold Uganda, the "Herald" approved of Mackinnon's plea for the Government to guarantee the interest on a railway line from the coast to Lake Victoria.

The untenability of the Company's position having become obvious, the demand was raised for a full British protectorate and compensation to I.B.E.A. for the losses it had sustained. The "Glasgow Herald" sympathised fully. The retention of Uganda was necessary in the interests/

- (1) G.H. 9.8.90.
- (2) G.H. 12.8.90.
- (3) G.H. 28.9.92.

interests of Civilisation, Christianity, trade, the maintenance of law and order, and the extinction of the slave trade. Furthermore, the proposed railway should be built without delay and I.B.E.A. generously compensated:

"The references to the Company in the House of Commons yesterday were neither complimentary nor accurate. It is a monstrous mis-statement to say that they have failed in every part of their enterprise.....private interests must not be refused their just claims for compensation".(1)

Two years later the "Herald" still voiced support for this railway, whose birth was preceded by singularly long and tortuous discussion. One criticism made of it was that the Uganda trade was small. The "Herald" dismissed this argument with the remark that if such were the case, the "eager race" by European powers for parts of the African hinterland would have been a "stupendous folly", but in fact, "...there is evidence both of the great trading possibilities of the vast region....and of the value which our German neighbours attach to their acquisitions in the same quarter".(2)

In its comment on the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty, the "Mail" was writing on "Uganda which is ours already", "Zanzibar which was ours five years ago", "Witu which was filched from us", and at first was also well-disposed towards I.B.E.A. because of what it might do to checkmate the East African slave trade, and supported Mackinnon's demand for a railway subsidy on the same grounds.(3) At the commencement of Lugard's operations in Uganda it was against withdrawal, though regretting the creation of a situation which made a British military presence necessary. However, by the time the Company was pressing for Government aid to maintain its occupation, the "Mail" was militantly hostile to I.B.E.A. and all its works:

"We say at once that we regret that the Government have adopted this method of getting out of the tangle left them by the Tories/

(1) G.H. 2.6.94.

(2) G.H. 2.7.96.

(3) N.B.D.M. 21.5.91.

Tories. The directors of the British East Africa Co. are men of wealth, well able to meet the responsibilities which they have wantonly incurred.....We do not stop to enquire why the Tory directors of the Company did not attack the Tory Government.....So that all rivalry might be excluded the Company sent an armed expedition to occupy the country. The leader of that expedition engaged in political action, took the side of a party, exceeded his commission by acting in the name of the British Government, took part in sanguinary warfare, ended the peaceful work of the missionaries, put their lives in peril and rendered the commercial enterprise of the Company unsuccessful.....they have the audacity to say that the preservation of the peace which they disturbed is the duty of the British Government, that the interests which were originally meant to be the interests of the shareholders are 'purely national and imperial'.

The Uganda expedition comes clearly within the filibustering class. It was organised by private adventurers for the seizure of territory, 'in the interests of its shareholders'. It employed armed force. It disturbed order. It made war. It checked the advance of Christianity and civilisation. It threatens to leave anarchy behind it. And its authors say that for all this the British Government are responsible! The Government should have done nothing for the Uganda filibusters⁽¹⁾.

In 1894, having asserted that "it has been demonstrated both in East and South Africa that the machinery of a Chartered Co. is far from being an ideal or even a safe way of controlling and extending imperial responsibilities", the "Mail" extended a lukewarm welcome to the British protectorate; "We have no doubt that the Government has exercised a wise discretion in all respects".⁽²⁾

In 1892, the "Glasgow News" was defunct, but its quasi-successor, the "Glasgow Evening News", which commented seldom on foreign affairs, briefly noticing the situation, opposed evacuation on the grounds that it would be wrong to withdraw a protection originally extended in the name of Britain. In Glasgow, unlike many towns and cities throughout the country, there appears to have been no public meeting organised to pass resolutions for the retention of Uganda.

The sentiments of the "Glasgow Herald" could now be described as fully imperialist in tone, and favourable to any imperial agency. The "Mail"/

(1) N.B.D.M. 1.10.92.

(2) N.B.D.M. 13.4.94.

"Mail" still maintained its antagonism to private enterprise in this field, but no longer called for government dissociation as it had done over the Sudan.

(d) The Last Phase

The Sudan - Fashoda - South Africa and the Boer War.

The Sudan and Fashoda: The last major crisis of the century in tropical Africa was the confrontation of Sir Herbert Kitchener with the French Major Marchand on the banks of the Nile at Fashoda, following Kitchener's re-conquest of the Sudan.

In their assessments of these events, the "Glasgow Herald" and the "Daily Mail" were practically indistinguishable. It would seem that the "Mail", at some point following the Uganda settlement had adopted a wholeheartedly imperialist stance. Its adherence to the Liberal Party remained unquestioned however, and it may be that its view was determined by the influential position in Party policy which the "Liberal Imperialists" had acquired. The editor was a strong admirer of Rosebery. Though it approved fully of the re-conquest of the Sudan, the "Mail" editorials during the campaign were full of admiration for the reckless courage displayed by the Dervishes, and regretted the extent of the slaughter at Omdurman. The "Glasgow Herald" however was almost hysterically delighted at the bloodshed:

".....if it be objected that it is vicarious vengeance with a vengeance then we shall retort that the world is as well rid of these thousands as of any robber horde, and that there could be no more perfect atonement for the abandonment of the Sudan thirteen years ago than the rooting out of that nest of scoundrelism where the Khalifa Abdullabi has all these years sheltered the scum of the Sudan".(1)

In contrast, the "Herald" comments on the Fashoda crisis itself were considerably more temperate than those of the "Mail", and deplored the "growth and exhibition in this country of a temper which no wise/

(1) G.H. 5.9.98.

no wise man can contemplate with equanimity",⁽¹⁾ even going so far as to declare "...one need not shrink from the idea of a French enclave on the Nile similar to those recently established on the lower Niger",⁽²⁾ while the "Mail" on the contrary was of the opinion that, "No man but a Frenchman will seek to maintain for a moment that the attempt of France to seize Egyptian territory is anything but an act of brigandage", and described it as; "This unscrupulous invasion of an Egyptian province".⁽³⁾

In tones reminiscent of the "Glasgow News", the "Daily Mail" mocked the Salisbury government for its reluctance to maintain British interests in face of the foreigner, and sarcastically recalled a long list of "graceful concessions" by Salisbury around the world, declaring, "...if the Salisbury Government have any patriotism or any self respect they will insist upon the expedition being immediately withdrawn.....The whole country cries 'Oh for one hour of Rosebery'".⁽⁴⁾

South Africa: There were probably more similarities than differences in the attitudes of the "Glasgow Herald" and the "Daily Mail" towards affairs in South Africa in the years following the Zulu War and the restoration of the Transvaal's independence. Both believed that the main line of British policy should be directed towards ensuring that the colonists were defended against the Africans, whether from outside attack or internal uprising, while at the same time inducing the South Africans to bear a fair share of the burden of defence; and both strongly criticised the settlement made with the Zulus after Cetewayo's defeat when Zululand was divided up among thirteen rival kinglets as productive of much disorder and threatening to weaken British paramount authority over the Africans/

(1) G.H. 27.9.98.

(2) Ibid.

(3) N.B.D.M. 27.9.98.

(4) Ibid.

the Africans. The most notable difference in opinion was their respective views of the Boers. To the "Mail" in the eighties and early nineties they were "a nation rightly struggling to be free", though uneasiness over their behaviour towards the Africans was expressed from time to time. The "Glasgow Herald" was markedly unsympathetic, and the "Glasgow News", while it existed, ferociously hostile.

Both the newspapers further had a high opinion of the British South Africa Co. and its annexation of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. The "Herald" comment on the opening of the campaign against the Matabele ~~tribe~~ in 1893 assumed an unusually brutal tone:

"Vast tracts of primitive country are not to be illuminated by civilisation without some revolt of the powers of darkness.....in savage warfare it is often necessary to punish first and try afterwards".(1)

The "Mail" was less partisan but agreed on essentials:

"There are many episodes connected with the Matabele war which reflect credit on the dash and enterprise of the British Colonist.....but there are other features of the Matabele campaign....which do not altogether appeal to our sympathy or enthusiasm....however....it has long been obvious that the administration of the newly acquired territories had best be entrusted to the Chartered Company".(2)

No argument was advanced, however, to demonstrate in what way the B.S.A.C. behaviour was essentially different from that of I.B.E.A., and why it justified a Charter when the latter company did not. It is to be wondered whether the editor remembered what had appeared in his own paper in October, 1892, about the "Uganda Filibusters".

Over the Jameson Raid, the "Mail" was in fact more indulgent towards Dr. Jameson than the "Herald", which denounced the adventure in strong terms, and acknowledged that capitalists on the Rand had conspired with officials of the B.S.A.C. against the Transvaal government⁽³⁾/

(1) G.H. 7.10.93.

(2) N.B.D.M. 29.5.94.

(3) G.H. 7.1.96.

government, while the "Mail", though not approving what Jameson had done, was to write that; "We have faith in Dr. Jameson's word as that of a man of honour, and when he declares that 'it was only to save and protect them that I moved', we believe him".(1)

It was therefore consistent with the attitudes of both papers by the end of the century that the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and the Transvaal should have found them both firmly committed to the British Government's position. According to the "Herald":

"We now say without hesitation that it is the plain duty of H.M.G. to put an end to this intolerable condition of things, and to take measures to prevent any independent or semi-independent state in South Africa from ever again disturbing the peace of the Empire".(2)

Nevertheless it was prepared to publish four letters in October, 1899, condemning the war, as against six printed in favour. One of these letters was written by John Polson of Paisley, very likely the director of the Forbes Reef Co., who traced the root of the trouble to Gladstone's promise in the Midlothian campaign of 1879, of independence for the Boers, and quoting 'Scots friends' in the Transvaal, "we pray for war".(3)

While concluding that much of the blame lay with the British Government and Joseph Chamberlain, and deploring intransigence on both sides, the sentiment expressed by the "Mail" was that once war commenced "the voice of Party must be silent", and the British Government should "vindicate the imperial title to supremacy in South Africa". Furthermore it was argued that Transvaal independence must be liquidated once the Boers were defeated, as "the gift of independence" had been "grossly abused".(4)

On October 1, 1899, there was a meeting in the City Hall in support of the war, and a resolution supporting the Government was seconded/

(1) N.B.D.M. 8.1.86.

(2) G.H. 11.10.89.

(3) G.H. 13.10.99.

(4) N.B.D.M. 11.10.99. 12.10.99.

seconded by Andrew Bonar Law.

(e) The Development of Public Attitudes

Assuming that the editorial lines of the newspapers studied give a reasonably accurate reflection of the state of informed public opinion in Glasgow, the development of its attitudes towards the African continent is not very much different from what would be expected, and in line with what is known of the progress of public opinion generally.

The desire to develop Africa commercially, - and also Asia and other underdeveloped regions - and to protect British interests there is consistent from first to last on all hands, but the judgment of the most effective means to achieve this end changed drastically over the course of thirty years.

In the seventies the prevailing outlook was that the requirements of the situation were satisfied by cultural influence and the minimum involvement in terms of power, with the intervention of the British state an ultimate sanction to be used only in the last instance - what might be called the Palmerstonian heritage or the "Imperialism of Free Trade". It is of interest to note that Disraeli's renowned Crystal Palace speech of 1873, often taken as the first Conservative Party announcement of an imperialist perspective, and the symptom of a fundamental change of attitude from the former policy, was discussed by the papers wholly in terms of closer unity between Britain and existing possessions. The idea of increasing the empire was not even alluded to in their comments.

These propositions are less true of the "Glasgow News" than the other newspapers, for it was much more disposed to a "forward" policy, and indeed, also a resolute opponent of Free Trade from an early date, or at least "the one-sided Free Trade to which for so many years this country/

country has sacrificed every consideration of self-interest and common sense",⁽¹⁾ and demanded a modification in commercial policy. While the "Herald" and the "Mail" saw British annexation of African territory primarily as a method of preserving free trade from the protectionist proclivities of Portugal and France, the implication of the "Glasgow News" argument was for the transformation of colonies into exclusive spheres of interest.

By 1886 the "Herald" and "Mail" were speaking of the "scramble" and had endorsed the partition but regretted the developments which had rendered it necessary. In 1893, the "Glasgow Herald" was arguing with reference to the rivalry of France and Spain in Morocco that Africa would have long since been "opened up to development by European energy" but for the mutual jealousies of the Powers.⁽²⁾ By the late nineties, however, the common attitude of imperial celebration prevailed on both papers, and the acquisition of as much of Africa as possible/^{was} proposed as a manifest destiny for Great Britain. Such other expressions outside the press of public opinion on these issues as are recorded and discussed above, do nothing to contradict this outline picture.

To sum up, the Glasgow Conservatives, as reflected in their organ, the "Glasgow News", seem to have favoured imperial expansion in principle, though in many cases their views were no doubt formed simply to take a contrary stand to the Liberal governments which proclaimed their anti-expansionism.

Other sections of opinion were, in the seventies and up to the Egyptian crisis, opposed to annexation or the acquisition of spheres of influence through State power, but identified the extension of commercial and cultural influences with social benefit to the Africans. The importance/

(1) G.N. 13.7.84.

(2) G.H. 5.10.93.

The importance of religious sentiment cannot be neglected, witness the missionary efforts and the formation of the African Lakes Co., not to mention sectarian attitudes which could affect actions considerably, and did so in the case of the Glasgow branch of the A.I.A. Later on, all were to accept in a greater or lesser degree the necessity of partition, and European government in view of the changed situation.

No Glasgow men, and certainly none with African interests, were significant in the counsels of either political party; nor were there individuals like Hutton in Manchester, Chamberlain in Birmingham, or even John Holt in Liverpool, who were vigorous and nationally renowned propagandists. Mackinnon, who might have come into this category, appears to have had no interest in Glasgow affairs, or to have mobilised opinion there for his point of view.

The Glasgow commentators could not act, they could only react to what was being done by others, and they did so in the fashion discussed above. The justifications advanced for their broad support of Government policy in relation to Africa were, apart from the commercial ones, first of all humanitarian, the suppression of the slave trade and slavery as an institution, the protection of missionaries and their converts, the extension of civilisation and the extirpation of barbarous practices.

These considerations however took second place to the necessity of forestalling foreign annexation, which was regarded, particularly on the part of France and Portugal, less so in the case of Germany and the Congo Free State, with extreme alarm on account of the protectionist and tariff policies followed by these states. Accusations against Liberal Governments for weakness in this respect were the stock-in-trade of the "Glasgow News", and true to its Liberal partisanship, the "Mail" in 1890 was condemning Lord Salisbury for inadequacy/

inadequacy in meeting this challenge.⁽¹⁾ French colonisation and imperial initiatives were universally regarded with extreme disapproval, and all three newspapers were scathing in their comments on French colonial methods and practices. They were denounced as bombastic, brutal and chauvinistic. The most adequate generalisation is probably that the Partition of Africa was among all sections looked on as an irreversible expansion of European cultural and economic structures into a part of the world hitherto unfortunate enough to have missed them. In 1897 the "Glasgow Herald" dismissed anti-imperialist sentiment as not only mistaken but irrelevant:

"But such race-movements as are going on all over Africa at the present moment have been in process all through the history of civilisation, and the protests against them are purely academic and absolutely futile".⁽²⁾

In such circumstances the Partition was accepted as inevitable, despite reservations on the part of some about the form it took, while the protection of the British position as a world power dependent on open markets was regarded as the political priority.

(1) N.B.D.M. 8.8.90.
(2) G.H. 24.2.97.

C O N C L U S I O N

It is necessary to conclude that in spite of the material interests possessed in Africa by persons from Glasgow, and the wide-ranging discussions provoked in the public media by African developments between 1870 and 1900 there was no structural unity of these various elements.

It has been shown that the flow of trade between Glasgow and the African continent was almost wholly independent of the operations of the Glasgow-based firms which pursued their operations in Africa itself. Among these firms themselves there was no sort of unity or common purpose, far less a co-ordinating organisation defining their function as African enterprises. Apart from the membership of Taylor Laughland and Couper Johnstone in the African Association - of Liverpool - they acted entirely in isolation and independence. Finally, there does not appear to have been any direct connexion between the interests of these firms and the sentiments expressed on African affairs by recorded public opinion.

The reasons for the entry into the African market of the various firms studied do not appear to be in any way mysterious. The two Glasgow members of the African Association were traders of relatively long standing in West Africa. The entry of Miller Bros. into the palm-oil trade would seem to have been merely an example of entrepreneurs moving to exploit a market which was already in existence, and paying satisfactory dividends to the participants in it - mainly Liverpool firms - but whose full potentiality was retarded by an obsolete commercial structure. Similarly it is reasonable to assume that the mining companies in South Africa were motivated by the greatly expanded/

expanded possibilities in mineral exploitation available there at that point. Likewise, the incentive to the African Lakes Company, while differing in some respects from those of the other companies, was straightforward. The hope of financial gain on the part of its founders was reinforced by the philanthropic and religious considerations associated with Livingstone's tradition; it was founded explicitly to serve the interests of the missionary settlements along with those of the aboriginal inhabitants.

Involvement in political dealing, and even the exercise of political power, grew naturally out of the circumstances of commerce in Africa. In the case of the Chartered companies, the R.N.C., I.B.E.A. and the B.S.A.C., such power was formalised and confirmed by the British Government. At a less elevated level the Glasgow firms, excepting the mining companies, were involved in similar practices. The close association of Miller Bros. with the affairs of King Ja Ja has been described, as have the measures taken to counter this by the African Association and the part played in them by its Glasgow members. The efforts made by the A.L.C. to assume political authority in Nyasaland, and to acquire a Charter legitimising it, have also been discussed.

At one level the political activities of these firms refer to their links with African rulers and their extra-commercial methods of attacking rival traders; at another it refers to their relations with the imperial power when suing for its protection on the one hand, or working to escape its surveillance on the other. In more than one case in which Glasgow firms were involved, direct British rule was imposed as the only way left to mediate and arbitrate the disputes and vendettas of quarrelling interests. On the Niger Delta a British protectorate was proclaimed after the plan to extend the Chartered government/

government to that area, a plan favoured by the R.N.C. and temporarily by the African Association, proved unacceptable to the local Africans and the shipping interests. The peculiar British protectorate in Nyasaland was an answer to the conflicting claims of the B.S.A.C., the missionaries, the A.L.C. and the Portuguese Government. The subsequent careers of the companies after the imposition of imperial over-rule were frequently a process of adaption to this situation; for example the combination of Millers, the African Association and the R.N.C. in an effort to secure government contracts and concessions in banking and other fields. The balance of evidence in the case of the companies studied would suggest that they did not have from the beginning the conscious and deliberate intention of using State power as a battering-ram to break down the obstacles which confronted them. Imperialism was not an explicit objective of their plans or activities; but it may be possible to argue that it was implicit in the situation in the sense of being an unavoidable outcome of their conflicts. The aim of the entrepreneurs was - in the main - to make money, but the political consequences of their acts escaped them, and even occasionally meant disaster when the Government abandoned them to their fate, as happened to Taylor Laughland over Matacong island.

No evidence whatever exists indicating the presence in Glasgow of what might be called an "African Lobby", either as a Glasgow-based grouping or in association with trends elsewhere. Evidence which might suggest the existence of such a grouping has been sought with particular care. None was found. Glasgow, in fact, despite an occasional laudatory editorial in the "Glasgow Herald", does not seem to have shown much interest in the fate of its African businessmen. They were undoubtedly a minor part of the City's commercial life, and this neglect may well have been furthered by the fact that, unlike the Liverpool/

Liverpool merchants they were not organised in any kind of association. This rudimentary level of concern prevailed both in the business community, so far as the Chamber of Commerce was representative of opinion there, and also, apparently, in the educated community at large, as shown by the local press. A partial exception in this instance might be made for the African Lakes Co. on account of its relations with the churches, yet even in that case the support given to the Company was with reservations. The churches were always concerned with the missions before the commercial enterprise, and were not wholly in accord with the A.L.C. either as a business project or a political force; as illustrated in the first case by Laws dispute over the delivery of supplies to Livingstonia; and in the second by the missionaries mistrust of the A.L.C's pretensions to govern Nyasaland. Nor do any of the churches seem to have offered assistance to the Company when it was enmeshed in its quarrels with the B.S.A.D. and Stevenson does not seem to have suggested approaching them.

Nevertheless, while no discernible connexion existed between Glasgow business and Glasgow opinion in regard to Africa, still their relation was not one of total indifference. They are linked by certain common assumptions, a certain convergence in outlook. As pointed out in Chapter IV, a number of fundamental presuppositions underlay the widely diverging and rapidly changing opinions held about Africa in different sections of the Glasgow community. Although little notice was taken of the actual existing companies, it was accepted on all hands that commerce was a necessary and important element in the European presence in Africa. There was an implicit belief that British business would rightly seek outlets in all regions and parts of the world where it had not yet found them, and a general, though not universal, belief in the value of Africa as a field for enterprise.

Combined/

Combined with these positions, and detectable in the contemporary press went the unstated presumption of a hegemony of the British Empire in world affairs, which may be defined as the right to see all questions of material importance settled in ways satisfactory to British interests, whether they concerned the borders of Afghanistan, the future of the Suez Canal, or the electoral procedures in the Transvaal. Under such circumstances British subjects could operate satisfactorily in areas not directly under British governance, but the preservation of this happy situation implied the maintenance of British prestige at all costs, - prestige which was violated when, for example, Egyptians overthrew a British-supported Government, when Dervishes murdered a British general, or Portuguese encroached on a British sphere of interest. In such cases the use of armed force would on the whole be approved enthusiastically as a method of redressing the balance, and annexation or occupation accepted with more or less enthusiasm as the consequence of military proceedings. The same perspective also characterised the most frequently expressed attitude towards annexations carried out, as in West Africa, to forestall foreign appropriation, or concluded as part of a package deal with a rival power, as in the Sultan of Zanzibar's territories. This attitude regarded annexation not as a first but as a second choice, forced on the Government by the unworthy failure of France or Germany to play the game and admit British merchants and their goods to their territories on equal terms with their own nationals. In contrast, colonial ventures by other nations were often condemned outright by all sections of opinion on humanitarian grounds; for example the French protectorate over Madagascar. A further important component of this ideology was the concern for the propagation of European culture and religion, reflected in the desire to extirpate the slave trade and repress offensive social customs/

customs among the Africans, objectives which, when resisted, appear to have provoked a deep sense of outrage.

The foregoing generalisations are drawn from a study of the Glasgow situation, but the contents of the massive output of petitions and memorials from all over the United Kingdom in 1892 demanding the annexation of Uganda indicate the prevalence of similar states of mind elsewhere, and also demonstrate that the assumptions discussed above could at times motivate a level of public activity which was a significant if not decisive factor in settling the Government's course.

In any given event, of course, the responsibility for declaring a particular territory under British sovereignty lay with the Government and particular and local considerations may account for it, - e.g. the need to exclude a French presence from the Nile or a German one from South Africa. However, it is also necessary to consider the social climate and political atmosphere which made the partition of Africa and other places appear to be an acceptable line of policy, and enabled it to be carried out, and on the whole welcomed by the majority of the public. If it should prove that the considerations which applied to Glasgow were valid throughout Britain, this would indicate that a satisfactory explanation for the colonising activity of these years is to be found more in the deeply rooted practices, traditions and outlook of the nation and State adapting to a changing situation than in the immediate exigencies of economics or diplomacy.

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