The Geography and Economic Development of British Central Africa: Discussion

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purely philanthropic in these matters—we do not enter upon such enterprises with the sole view of benefiting the African: we have our own purposes to serve, but they must be served in such a way as to operate to the advantage of all. I have little hesitation in replying that our occupation has had the best results, and from all points of view. So far as our own interests are concerned we have opened up a promising part of Tropical Africa. Where nothing of commercial value or use existed, we find to-day flourishing plantations of cotton, tobacco, and other products, comfortable homesteads, and thriving European settlers, many of them with wives and families. A new country is being developed as a field for British enterprise. From the African's point of view, instead of raids, slavery, oppression, and the entire absence of security for property or person, we find peace, freedom, and a contented and thoroughly satisfied native population. In place of the old disinclination to own or to acquire anything of value lest it should prove to be the cause of strife, robbery, and bloodshed, we now have many natives who have taken to the rearing of live-stock, and to the planting of cotton and other marketable crops. I venture to say that there is not a native in British Central Africa, who, if asked, would not tell you how much better off he is and how much he prefers the life of to-day to that of the old times.

As to the future, it is one of much promise. Given a country with a very fair climate, rich soil, and an abundant supply of cheap labour, all that the steadily increasing number of European settlers ask is for better facilities for transport—railways and roads. There can be no better investment in the interest of British commerce than the provision of railways for such of our Colonial possessions as have products to export. Even the short existing line in its first working year paid expenses and had a surplus of profit.

In African Colonies the largest question of all is the "Native question." In British Central Africa at present all is well in regard to this. The native population is satisfied with things as they are. But as the Europeans increase in number—and from one cause or another, agricultural and mineral development, their number may very rapidly increase—the needs and requirements of the native must never be overlooked, nor subordinated to those of the Europeans. These are not only questions of what is right and what is wrong. There is the still greater question of what is expedient. So long as we treat our native populations in Africa justly and fairly, and deal with them frankly, openly, and sympathetically, we have little to fear.

Sir LEWIS BEAUMONT, Vice-President (before the paper): Owing to the unavoidable absence of Lord Curzon, I have very unexpectedly been asked to take the chair. I have to introduce to you the lecturer, Sir Alfred Sharpe, who must be well known to a great many here present. Sir Alfred may be said to have begun his official career in the Fiji islands many years ago. Then from Fiji he went to Central Africa, mainly in pursuit of big game. Sir Harry
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Johnston, who was the British representative at that time, soon recognized his value, and invited him to join the administration in Central Africa, and Sir Alfred's work was so very important that in the end he became the Governor, retiring only this year. I am sure all that he has to tell us will be most interesting.

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON: I really only came here to-night to renew my acquaintance with a region in which I was once interested, and also to mark my remembrance of seven years' comradeship with the lecturer in laying the foundation of this Protectorate. I have not anything novel to say about the geography of this region, except, perhaps, to insist on the fact that when we have even succeeded in mapping any one region of Africa, or the rest of the world, we are not to suppose that its geographical research is at an end. On the contrary, in Nyasaland especially, we are only just beginning our real researches. I only say this in case there are young men present who are going out to take up such work as Sir Alfred Sharpe and I have done in the past; that they should not think there is nothing left for them to discover and lay bare, because I believe we are on the threshold there of very important discoveries. I would strongly impress upon them, above all, the importance of geological investigations, even those which perhaps are not immediately profitable, but which would reveal much of the past history of Africa, its fauna and flora. In the north part of Nyasaland especially, it is believed, from what indications we have, that very remarkable revelations could be made as to the fauna and flora of South Central Africa in Mesozoic times.

But the few words I should like to add to this evening's discussion would be rather about the lecturer than the lecture. I feel that Sir Alfred Sharpe has not perhaps done himself justice in his lecture. Through his characteristic modesty, he has perhaps wished to give you something as purely geographical as possible, and very properly has avoided matters which would be treated more appropriately at the Royal Colonial Institute; but I wish he could have let himself go and have told you a few of his extraordinary adventures in Central Africa. I think few people, from my knowledge of him, have gone through more remarkable scenes and have hazarded greater dangers and staked their lives more frequently than Alfred Sharpe, and invariably he has done so through disinterested motives. He came as a shooter of big game; he wished to see something of the north end of Lake Nyasa, and hearing that the African Lakes Company was involved in a war with the Arab slave-traders—a war in which Sir Frederick Lugard played a very notable part—Sharpe went as a volunteer and was wounded. He came back when his wound was healed, and more by accident than design we met, at a time when I was very hard up for an assistant. I had cherished great schemes, great enough to justify my ambitious title of "British Central Africa," applied to what has now shrunk to Nyasaland; and one of the men to whom I looked to assist me broke down in health and had to go away; the other, Mr. John Nicoll, had to accompany me to the seat of the Arab war. But I wanted somebody perhaps more adventurous, more daring, more able to make bricks without straw; I wanted almost an impossibility, a phoenix, and that presented itself quite suddenly in the person of Sir Alfred Sharpe. I landed on the shores of the Elephant marsh to try and shoot some big game as food for my boatmen, managed to bring down a waterbuck, and had straightaway got out my sketch-book to sketch it, when some one leaned over my shoulder and said, "Very good sketch that." I looked up, and I guessed it must be Sharpe. There were very few Europeans about in those days, and I think in an hour's time we

made our plans, and he agreed to start for the heart of Africa, if need be. I could give him little money and practically no advice, and no men of any practical value. He got fifteen porters, and with these and a small quantity of trade goods he made one of the most remarkable marches in the history of the development of Africa. He walked all the way from the Shire Highlands to the southern part of Congoland, calling on the way at the upper Zambezi to secure that before the Portuguese could get there. He hoisted the British flag near Zumbo, and secured to us a free way up from the south to the north. Then he continued this wonderful march until he reached Lake Bangweulu and Lake Mweru and the Mweru swamp, and so he went into Katanga—the scarcely known country in those days of Katanga, ruled by an adventurer named Msiri. He would have secured, so far as these treaties went, Katanga for the British flag but for various political considerations; so the British Central Africa which had been further extended northwards by Mr. Swann's and my own treaties was truncated, and finally became the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as you see them to-day.

I would close my remarks by hoping that Sir Alfred Sharpe may set to work now and write down a record of the very remarkable years which he has spent working for the British Empire in Central Africa between 1887 and 1911.

Mr. WILSON FOX: I feel sure you will forgive my temerity in following, in questions relating to British Central Africa, such giants in the work of exploration and administration as Sir Alfred Sharpe and Sir Harry Johnston, and it would be impertinent upon my part to do more than thank them for the extremely interesting narrations they have given us. But I should like to make some further reference to one who I think should always be mentioned in connection with the development of those regions—I refer to the name of Cecil Rhodes. I have the less hesitation in making these remarks because no two men have done more to forward the great work of Cecil Rhodes than Sir Harry Johnston and Sir Alfred Sharpe. In the early days of British Central Africa a contribution paid by the British South Africa Company largely enabled that work of expanding British rule to be carried on. If you consult the maps in your hand you will see that, while the greater portion of the territory to which Sir Alfred Sharpe has directed your attention this evening lies in Northern Rhodesia, his address really has been devoted to Nyasaland only. Now, I should not like you to go away this evening feeling that the only work that has been done has been carried out by the British Government in Nyasaland, and I feel sure that Sir Alfred Sharpe will endorse the statement that a very great work has been and is still being carried on in those regions by the British South Africa Company. I may remind you that the only telegraph line in Nyasaland was entirely constructed by the British South Africa Company, and that until comparatively recently the only railway was the great trunk line adjacent to those territories. As administrator of Nyasaland, Sir Alfred Sharpe had full acquaintance with, and I feel sure he recognizes the great work that was done by, the British South Africa Company's many officials who have been carrying on the task of extending civilization in those regions, and in this connection I should like to refer to the late Mr. Codrington, who was originally recommended to the British South Africa Company by Sir Alfred Sharpe. He was followed by the present administrator, Mr. Wallace, who is well known to the Society, and has prepared the best map yet published of North-Eastern Rhodesia. I should like to endorse every word that has fallen from Sir Alfred Sharpe with regard to the policy that should be pursued to the native inhabitants. That policy has always been the policy of the British South Africa Company, and I regret

that it is not being to-day entirely followed in Nyasaland. There is one geographical fact that has interested me very much to which I should like to draw your attention, and that is the very peculiar conformation of those regions caused by the great rift which extends from the extreme north-west point of the Loangwe river, trends in a south-easterly direction, and then runs along the Zambezi to the Victoria falls. This is a very extraordinary fact that a trough extends across Africa at that point for a distance of about 700 miles. It is almost a straight line, and in many places both sides are precipitous; this has been one of the great difficulties which has affected the development of the regions of British Central Africa which lie to the east of that trough. It has made the extension of railways difficult, and will continue for many years to come to make the development of the eastern regions of North Rhodesia independent of that of the Western regions. It is that physical fact which makes us welcome the projects for railway extension that will, I hope, eventually end in the connection between Nyasaland and Beira, which has been mainly developed through the efforts of the British South Africa Company and Cecil Rhodes. You must pardon the enthusiasm of one who has devoted a great many years to the consideration of the problems of those regions in regard to which Sir Alfred Sharpe has addressed us to-night.

Mr. J. H. WEST SHEANE: It is very kind of the chairman to refer to the work of Mr. Gouldsbury and myself, 'The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia,' and we thank you very much for your kind reference. I should like most heartily to endorse everything Sir Alfred Sharpe has said as regards the economic development of British Central Africa, and I would especially refer to that portion which he has not dealt with so specifically, that is the greater portion of British Central Africa—North-Eastern Rhodesia. The whole future of British Central Africa is bound up with the improvement of the transport facilities, and one may say that the whole welfare of the country depends on adequate railway construction. By the enterprise of the British South Africa Company, the southern part of North-Eastern Rhodesia has been rendered more accessible by the railway, which has been continued—the Katanga railway—from the Victoria Falls right up almost to touch Lake Bangweulu, and of course that helps the planters and other people to export their cotton from the southern portion of North-Eastern Rhodesia. It is to be hoped that the Shire Highlands railway that Sir Alfred Sharpe has outlined as possibly soon to be extended to Beira will do a great deal, not only for Nyasaland, but also for the adjacent part of North-Eastern Rhodesia. The rich soil of North-Eastern Rhodesia offers so many possibilities for the cultivation of tropical products that it is really difficult to select any special product which you can say will be a staple industry of the future. But one may confidently assert that in rubber and cotton we have two products which will each become a great industry of the future; and I would like to emphasize the fact especially that both rubber and cotton are indigenous. For instance, the Basenga tribe for many hundred years have cultivated good cotton. There are several thousand acres under cultivation in North-Eastern Rhodesia, and the results have been very successful indeed. The Abassi and Afffi varieties have been cultivated with very great success, and samples have been sent home recently and fetched up to the price of 1s. 2d. a lb., which I need hardly say is a very high price. One may turn now from cotton to the question of rubber. Landolphina vines are to be found in abundance all over the greater part of Northern Rhodesia, and why is this so? The reason is because the British South Africa Company have protected those vines during the last seven years by a Rubber Ordinance, and the vines are now developed. In the

Wemba district alone Mr. J. de Jong, of the Agricultural Department, recently reported upon five large rubber forests which he had visited. Mr. de Jong estimated that these forests were about 21,000 acres in extent and contained approximately some 800,000 vines. It would be easy to split up these forest areas and make them into payable rubber estates, and these natural *Landolphia* vines could easily with a little cultivation be developed into a very valuable asset. It must be remembered that not only are these natural assets available, but the planters have planted some 400 acres with Ceará rubber near Fort Jamieson, which is doing well. In conclusion, I would like to mention some of the other natural products, such as tobacco, gum copal, fibre, including *sansieviera*, and very valuable timber. All these things should ultimately prove of great value and ultimately great resources of the country.

Sir CLEMENT HILL: I think we have had a lecture and discussions to-night which are somewhat unusual in this hall; they belong not so much to absolute geography as to "applied" geography. You have seen to-night the results which flow from the efforts of explorers and what they have done in these out-of-the-way countries. You see from them that geography is not the dry study which some people think it, but that it is a real, practical, living study which leads up to these very great results which we have seen in the development of what is now Nyasaland, lately British Central Africa. I have been privileged to take part in the official development of that country with Sir Alfred Sharpe and Sir Harry Johnston. They are amongst the greatest modern geographers who have settled these questions, which, to use a Latin phrase, *Solvuntur ambulando*: they had to do it by walking, so that they should study with their geographical instincts and their geographical knowledge these countries which were then absolutely unknown to any of us. It is to them that we owe the development that now exists, and the possibility that the young men of this side can go and settle in safety and security and with the prospects of making money in the countries which were occupied solely by the slave-traders. I won't detain you for more than one word more, but I do not think that anybody should mention British Central Africa and its old days without alluding to the names of Horace Waller and Sir John Kirk. They shared the glory of the discovery with Livingstone; it was to them, with him, that we owe these discoveries. Sir John Kirk, though he has only recently resigned the Foreign Secretaryship of the Society, is still amongst us to help us by his advice and to guide us by his counsels. It is of material importance to ensure that travellers are certain of a good welcome here when they come home, and that the fruits of their labours will grow and ripen before us, and that we should learn how to profit by them and benefit by their examples.

Sir ALFRED SHARPE: With regard to what Mr. Wilson Fox said about Mr. Rhodes, I can only say I am with him down to the ground. I did not refer to Mr. Rhodes in detail in this paper because I did not want to go into history, and it was a geographical paper—"applied" geography, as Sir Clement Hill said. Perhaps I ought to have said more; if I ought, then I apologize humbly, and I can only say now that the whole of the expansion north of the Zambezi, not only in Nyasaland but in the north-east and north-west Rhodesia, and also the expansion which is going on in the Katanga portion of the Congo Free State, is due entirely to Mr. Cecil Rhodes—in the commencement, I mean. One other remark. I also agree with Mr. Wilson Fox in what he said as to native policy, as carried out in Northern Rhodesia, with regard to the treatment of natives. The lines on which this is carried out are practically those initiated by the late Mr. Codrington; and they could not be

better. One reason why I can say this is that my eldest son is a native commissioner in that country under the Chartered Company!

Sir LEWIS BEAUMONT: It only remains for me to say how much we have enjoyed and how much interested we have been in this lecture, and what a very happy inspiration it was of Sir Harry Johnston to address his remarks chiefly to telling us more of the lecturer than of what he had to say. There is no doubt that throughout the whole lecture it was quite evident that Sir Alfred Sharpe was keeping himself modestly in the background, and I think it was a very fortunate thing that Sir Harry Johnston let in the light upon so much that he has done. I am sure that I shall be expressing your wishes and voicing your feelings when I say that we thank Sir Alfred Sharpe most cordially for his very interesting and able lecture.

MEASUREMENT IN ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY: ITS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE.

By B. C. WALLIS.

A WELL-KNOWN dictum of Lord Kelvin asserts that only when we are able to give quantitative expression to our conclusions do we really know something about our subject.

In the face of this dictum, it is perhaps a matter of surprise that geographers, especially those whose main work deals with economic geography, have not, as yet, attempted to make such measurements in their field of knowledge as will make it possible to state the facts of economic geography quantitatively. Elementary botany is descriptive and qualitative, more advanced work is quantitative and precise, and the most advanced work in botany involves greater precision and more accurate measurement. Economic geography is, at present, descriptive and qualitative.

In the realm of human activity which is surveyed by the geographer, not the least important area of investigation is that which is related to the world's work. It falls within the province of the economic geographer to state, regarding the raw materials of industry and the finished products of the factory, not only where they are produced, but why they are produced in such places, and there does not appear at this moment to exist any reasoned account which states how much is produced and why so much is produced at any place. The present attitude towards quantitative statements is solely one of *illustration*. When an author quotes numerical values he does so merely as suggestions of the importance of the matter in hand; he does not suggest that there is any element of constancy in his values, and as often as not he relegates them to a footnote. He states that such things occur at such and such places, and explains this distribution by reference to the great divisions of the world into natural regions; he fails to carry his work a stage further and to differentiate between different examples of the same region which produce the same articles in different degrees. It, therefore, appears that economic geography is ripe for fuller development; an illustration will make this clear. The geographer, as a man of science, is interested in the growing of cotton, for example, to