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CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN
"SCIENCES HUMAINES, SOCIALES
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THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

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COLONIAL TRANSPORT POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT IN CAMEROON: A HISTORICAL SYNTHESSES 1884-1961.

*A Thesis submitted in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the award
of Doctorat / PhD Degree in History*

Specialisation: **Economic History**

By

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DEDICATION

To my parents of Blessed memory, Cecilia Etchi-Takem Akombi and
Simon Tarhbey Akombi

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors that conditioned the development of communication infrastructure in colonial Cameroon. It focuses on the political, economic and social policies that guided the development of such infrastructure under the German, British and the French colonial powers in Cameroon from 1884 to 1961. The study further outlined the impact of these policies on the colonial enterprise and its stakeholders in Cameroon. The central argument of this study is that, colonial communication infrastructures in Cameroon were targeted towards the economic exploitation of the resources of the indigenous people. The corollaries of this argument are that, colonial communication infrastructure were designed to offer access to sources of raw materials. The study also contends that colonial communication infrastructure in Cameroon were established to link up the Coastal Region and the different Hinterland Regions of Cameroon for economic purposes. In the exploration of the various themes and facts related to our central argument, the research findings indicate that roads were constructed only in areas where European interests were paramount and linked to sources of raw materials. Concrete road extension was for the purpose of opening feeder routes for the transportation of raw materials from the interior to the coast. The study also reveals that the construction of the Tiko-Douala road was for the transportation of raw materials from the South West Region to the industries and port of Douala. It further reveals that the link up of trunk "A" National roads with the political capital was to enhanced regional integration and created employment within the entire country. In data collection, we implemented the methodology used in Anthropology and Sociology especially in the collection of oral material through interviews. Through these interviews oral information was obtained from informants, based in the regions, who are knowledgeable on the subject. The secondary sources included the identification of books, articles and journals which had a bearing on some of the aspects on the topic. The data collected was analysed using both the thematic and chronological approaches. This was to ensure that the entire discourse follows a historical logic. The analytical, narrative and descriptive methods were variably used in the write up. We also illustrated the work with maps, plates and tables in different chapters.

RÉSUMÉ

La présente étude porte sur l'analyse des facteurs qui ont déterminé le développement des infrastructures routières au Cameroun à l'époque coloniale, suite au partage de l'Afrique par les colons européens. Elle met l'accent sur les mesures politiques, économiques et sociales qui ont orienté le développement de ces infrastructures sous les administrations coloniales allemande, britannique et française au Cameroun de 1884 à 1961. L'étude présente en outre l'impact de ces politiques sur l'entreprise coloniale et ses acteurs au Cameroun. L'argument central énoncé est que les infrastructures routières qui existaient au Cameroun à cette époque visaient l'exploitation des ressources appartenant aux populations autochtones. Lesdites infrastructures étaient donc mises en place dans l'objectif de donner accès aux sources de matières premières. Notre étude soutient donc que ces infrastructures étaient construites pour relier l'arrière-pays à la région côtière du Cameroun pour des raisons d'ordre économique. Suite à l'analyse des différents thèmes et faits relatifs à notre argument central, les résultats de nos recherches indiquent que les routes n'étaient construites que dans les zones où primaient les intérêts européens, et desservaient les sources d'approvisionnement en matières premières. L'extension du réseau routier avait pour but la construction des routes de desserte pour le transport des matières premières de l'arrière-pays vers la zone côtière. Notre étude révèle par ailleurs que l'axe Tiko-Douala n'était pas construit pour la seule raison de réunifier le Cameroun occidental et le Cameroun oriental, mais également pour permettre le transport des matières premières de la Région du Sud-Ouest à destination des industries et du port de Douala. Bien plus, elle démontre que le fait de relier les routes nationales à la capital politique a contribué au renforcement de l'intégration régionale et à la création des emplois à travers le pays. Cette étude a procédé par l'analyse critique des sources primaires et secondaires. Il s'agissait de collecter les données provenant de livres, d'articles et de revues en relation avec certains aspects ayant trait au sujet. Nous avons commencé par un examen critique des sources secondaires traitant de thèmes plus larges en matières de politiques de transport et d'infrastructures en Afrique. Dans la rédaction, nous avons adopté un mélange d'approches thématiques et chronologiques. Alors que la première avait pour objet principal la description des thèmes et les politiques de transport par rapport à leur adaptation au changement, la seconde situait les questions sur le discours en fonction d'un chronogramme historique.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

C.D.C:	Cameroon Development Corporation
CAMAIR:	Cameroon Airlines
CEC:	Colonial Economic Committee
CEMAC:	Economic Community of Central African States
CFC:	Chemins de fer du Cameroun
DO:	Divisional Officer
FAA:	Federal Aviation Administration
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IASA:	International Aviation Safety Assessment
IATA:	International Air Transport Association
IGN:	Institut Géographique National
MTO:	Multimodal Transport Operator
NAB:	National Archives Buea
ONPC:	Cameroon National Ports Authority
REGIFERCAM:	Régie Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Cameroun
SDO:	Senior Divisional Officer
TRAPP:	Groupement d'Entreprises Trap-Strabag Belfinger + Berger
UDC:	Unitateral Declaration of Independence
WAPV:	West African Plantation Society Victoria

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background

The colonial system came into being because a number of people in Western Europe, with certain ideologies in religion, social policy, politics and economic, came into contact with African peoples holding different ideas and living under a different system.¹ Never in the History of Africa did so many changes occur with such speed as they did between 1880 and 1935. Indeed, the most fundamental and dramatic of these changes took place in the shorter period from 1890-1910, a period that saw the conquest and occupation of virtually the whole continent of Africa by imperial powers and the establishment of the colonial system. The period after 1910 was essentially one of consolidation and exploitation of the continent.² The pace of this drama was truly astonishing for as late as 1880 only very limited areas of Africa had come under direct rule of the Europeans. In the whole of West Africa, only the island and coastal areas of Senegal, the town of Freetown and its environs (now Sierra Leone) the Southern part of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), the coastal area of Abidjan in Ivory Coast and Porto Novo in Dahomey (now Benin) and the island of Lagos present day Nigeria, had come under the direct rule of Europeans.

In North Africa, it was only Algeria that by 1880 had been colonized by the French. Not an inch of the whole of East Africa had come under the control of any European power, while only the coastal stretches of Mozambique and Angola of the whole of Central Africa were being ruled by the Portuguese. It was only in Southern Africa that foreign rule had not been firmly implemented but had even been extended to a considerable distance in land. In fact, by as late as 1880s about Eighty Percent of the continent of Africa was being ruled by her own kings, Queens, clans and lineage heads in empires, kingdoms, communities and polities of various sizes and shapes.³

It is worth noting that before the colonial era, a great deal of commercial activities went on between African States. Long distance and caravan trading activities were common features of Africa's economy. But with the establishment of colonialism, such inter-African short and distance trade were discouraged and shifted all together, as

¹ Adu Boahen: African and the Colonial Challenge, A General History of Africa VII, P.I University of California press, 1985, p.1.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Walter Rodney opines that: “*the arbitrary political boundaries of each colony were generally taken to mean the limit of the economies and as the flow of trade from each colony was re-oriented towards the metropolitan countries*”.

Definition of Key Terms in the Study

Colonialism

This was the process whereby European countries scramble for colonies in Africa. In fact imperialism is essentially an economic phenomenon and it does not necessarily lead to direct political control or colonisation. However, Africa was the victim of colonisation. In the period of the notorious scramble for Africa, European interest in Africa led to the acquisition of colonies. They consciously acquired many areas not for immediate exploitation but with an eye to the future. Each European nation that had these short-term and long term economic interest ran up its own flag in different parts of Africa and established colonial rule. Prior to the year 1884, Germany had no interest in the acquisition of oversea colonies. She was concerned with her internal reorganisation especially after her unification in 1871. Bismarck was interested in the industrialisation of Germany and wanted the country to become the greatest European power at the time. In 1884, Germany suddenly became interested in the acquisition of territories. Through the influence of Bismarck, the Berlin colonial conference took place from 1884 to 1885. Germany after 1884 became actively involved in the scramble and partition of Africa. The territories which were finally annexed by Germany included Cameroon, Tanganyika, Togoland and German South West Africa (Namibia).⁴ As regard the context of the study, the focus is on the development of transport policies by the Germans who were the pioneer colonial masters of Cameroon followed by the British and the French.

⁴ V. J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Buea Cameroon 1996, p.58.

Transport and Transport Policy

The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines transport as a situation when people or goods are moved from one place to another. Transport policies in the context of the present study refers to those policy instruments that were put in place by the colonialists to guide construction of communication infrastructure. These policies guided construction of roads by defeated indigenes in the interior and maintenance of roads by colonial administration. After 1900, roads of permanent character were constructed from the coast to the hinterlands. In the course of road construction, many bridges over difficult terrain were constructed. In water transport, some rivers were cleared of dead trees, sand bars and at some points rivers were connected to roads. There was also the construction of railway transport. The first railway line, the Northern Railway, Nordbahn, was controlled by the company. It ran from Bonaberi to Nkongsamba and covered a distance of 160 kilometres. The construction of the Nordbahn gave the Kamerun-Eisenbahn Gesellschaft certain privileges with regard to land acquisition in the vicinity of the railway. Another railway line was constructed from Douala to Widimenge on the Nyong River, on the way to Yaounde. The Germans had plans to extend the railway line to Adamawa and beyond to Chad but were prevented from accomplishing their mission by the out break of the First World War. Taking into cognizance that Transport is important as an enabler of development, colonial transport policies in Cameroon was an essential development initiative in nation building.

Development

Development on the other hand can be physical or technological development. A balance view of development comprised of cultural, personal and physical aspects of the society. Development can be defined as the sustained improvement of an entire society and social system towards a better and more just life. The distinction between the concept of development should be made from the limited concept of economic development which considers only material progress. According to Rodney,⁵ development in human society is a many sided process. Development should be of continuing utility to mankind and the process of developing should be thought of as a continuing process and not as one that is static. Physical development includes man

⁵ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Panaf Press, 2005, p.1.

made goods produced by the use of technology. In order to judge the level of physical development of any nation, one needs to assess the positive function and utility of natural and man made resources in relation to the citizens of the nation.

Indeed, man made resources result from the application of technology. If natural resources are harnessed to provide food, shelter, health and protection for the citizens, that is if resources are employed to produce positive consequences for citizens and for other peoples with whom citizens interact, there is physical development. Technology is required for the production of communication equipment and transportation equipment. It was in this direction that during the German annexation of Cameroon, there was the development of communication network through man made resources and by the use of technology. It is within this framework of development that this work was initiated to assess the role of colonial transport policies in the Development of Cameroon within a particular time frame. Its main objective is to establish the view that colonial transport policies were not geared at nation building but meant to facilitate colonial exploitation. There is limited literature on the colonial transport policies, since the departure of the colonial masters and their contributions in nation building in Cameroon.⁶

Theoretical Framework

According to Charles Horton Cooleys *The Theory of Transportation*, throughout the struggle of transportation agents to overcome natural obstacles and make the best use of natural forces, the general result has been a continuous if not steady advance in the fundamental mechanical requirements such as speed, economy and independence of natural obstacles. To develop to a greater extent the ideas suggested above would be to write the technical history of transportation. Every change in the construction of the way, from the primitive track through the jungle to the most elaborate of modern systems of railway construction, has its definite relation to physical conditions and arises out of the interaction between these conditions and the need for various sorts of transportation. Following this theory, the physical conditions and the interest of the colonialist determined the type of transport communication been developed at a given

⁶ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Panaf Press, 2005, p.1.

instance. In some areas roads were constructed. In some railways and seaports.⁷ The characteristic of all this development is that progress in one sort of transportation depends in some measure upon that of others; that there is a general interdependence. The construction of wheels, as we have seen, was well known in antiquity, but they did not come into general use for land transportation until modern times, and this was only in certain countries; the use of wheels had to await better roads. Roads linked to the railways and seaports with each one contributing to the development of the other. No one of these can develop independently. Different kinds of land transportation depend upon one another; the traffic of city streets and country roads could not be maintained without railroads, nor railroads without it. In a very marked degree, land and water transport are mutually dependent. Steamship conveyance would probably have amounted to little without the contemporary development of railroads, and railroad conveyance certainly could not be what it is without steamships.⁸

Another fact, familiar in experience and characteristic of the whole progress of transportation, is that the newer and better method does not entirely supplant the old, but relegates it to a certain limited field. Speaking somewhat broadly, all the varieties of transportation that ever flourished may still be found at the present day. Human strength, both on land and water, still serves very important purposes of conveyance; porters, row-boats, canoes and the like are not, and probably never will be, dispensed with. So with sailing, in all stages of its development; from the single square sail of woven rushes to the full-rigged ship. Carriage on the backs of beasts of burden is still much in use, and transportation on common roads in wagons and the like is as important in its way as that of rail-roads. The case is analogous to the familiar fact of biology that numerous stages and types of development, from the one-celled animal or plant up to the highest forms, are represented by surviving species.⁹

Among the permanent differences between the functions of land and water carriage, an important one is that which arises from the fact that men, speaking generally, do not live upon the water; it can support no permanent population upon its surface. Water transportation is therefore always a means of connecting land with land.

⁷ Charles Horton Cooleys, *The Theory of Transportation. Sociological Theory and Social Research*; selected Papers of Charles Horton Cooley. Originally Published in Publication of the American Economic Association 1894.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

There is on the water none of that peculiar radial development of local transportation that is so marked upon land. As a rule no permanent roads can be made upon the water, and in case, there can be no marked tendency to take indirect routes simply because they have already been used.

Another difference that remains constant throughout the history of transportation is that movement by water is, from a purely mechanical point of view, always the more economical of the two. That is to say, leaving aside the questions of speed or convenience, the movement of a given weight or bulk for a given distance has always required less force by water than by land. In other words, whenever there has been a choice between the two, water transportation has been, as it still is, the cheapest. The land offers far greater resistance to movement because its rough and refractory surface must be subdued at great expense. If at any period land movement has had precedence it must have been because it was swifter, or because waterways were not at hand, or for some other advantage that prevailed over its greater expense of force.

The question whether land or water transport was the more important at various epochs is difficult or impossible to answer, not only because the facts are somewhat obscure, but still more because there is no simple test of relative importance. Thus, land transportation might be the swifter and carry the greater value of goods while water movement was cheaper and carried the greater bulk. Moreover, the real, that is, the social efficiency of transportation, as distinguished from the mechanical, is relative to social conditions and not easily subject to measurement.¹⁰

The weight of facts seems to show that river transportation and land carriage upon camels and other beasts were the earliest means of international trade, and that maritime commerce, even along the coasts, did not arise until a much later period. For the belief that caravan commerce arose before the coastal trade the chief grounds of probability are the relatively advanced condition of the arts implied in shipbuilding, the very favorable conditions offered for the development of international communication by the migratory life of pastoral nations, and other considerations of a similar character. History does not answer the question, since its very dawn saw the areas separating the civilizations then existing, whether waters or arid plains, traversed by the vehicles of

¹⁰ Charles Horton Cooleys, *The Theory of Transportation. Sociological Theory and Social Research*; Selected Papers of Charles Horton Cooley. Originally Published in Publication of the American Economic Association 1894.

transportation-the gulfs, seas and rivers by vessels, the deserts and steppes by caravans of freighted camels.¹¹

Statement of the Problem

The survival of the colonial enterprises in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular was highly dependent on a number of contingent factors. The creation of a viable transport system remained one of the most pressing demands of the colonists particularly given that Africa was so enclaved that made movement difficult. There was the need to establish roads that would facilitate colonial penetration and pacification. Again, there was the need to link areas rich in raw materials with the sea ports, so as to ease export. It was against this backdrop that railway lines, motor roads, air ways and other forms of transportation networks were created. The putting in place of a communication network was not intended to ease movements among Cameroonians rather it was necessitated by the desire to facilitate the colonial machinery. Roads were created only in areas where colonial interests were mostly stake. Roads were established linking raw material sources to the coast and areas of labour supply to the plantations.

The colonial transport enterprise was a multifaceted venture that had several implications on the colonies. Firstly securing labour for the construction of these roads was a major problem. Force labour was employed in certain occasions to secure labour for the construction of roads. In other occasions, the requirements to pay taxes in European currencies forced indigenes to cede their labour for the construction of roads so as to be able to secure money for their taxes. The construction of roads or communication infrastructure even though had some incidental benefits, it was grossly an exploitative venture because it facilitated the carting away of raw materials. Both human and natural resources were exploited. Human labour was exploited in road construction projects and the roads constructed enhanced transportation of raw materials from the interior to the coast for shipment to Europe.

¹¹ Charles Horton Cooleys, *The Theory of Transportation. Sociological Theory and Social Research*; selected Papers of Charles Horton Cooley. Originally Published in Publication of the American Economic Association 1894.

Objectives of the Study

Generally the study focuses on the colonial transport policies in Cameroon under the Germans, British and the French. It is aimed at looking at the factors that guided colonial transport policies, the level of execution of these policies and its implications on development. Thus the specific objectives are;

- 1) To examine the factors that guided colonial transport policies under the Germans, British and French.
- 2) To look at the areas where transportation networks were established and why.
- 3) To examine some of the difficulties that were encountered in the process of the construction of these transport infrastructures.
- 4) To analyze the impact of colonial transport policies on the development of the colonies.

Main Research Question

- What was the motivation behind the German, British and French colonial transport policies in Cameroon?

Specific Research Questions

- 1) What were the principles that guided colonial transport policies?
- 2) What factors influenced colonial choices in the construction of roads, railways and sea ports?
- 3) How were road networks directly linked to sources of raw material?
- 4) What were the problems associated with the colonial transport system?
- 5) An appraisal of colonialists policies and practices.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis in this study is hinged on the argument that; colonial communication infrastructures in Cameroon were targeted towards the economic exploitation of the resources of the indigenous people. The corollaries of this argument are that, colonial

communication infrastructure were designed to offer access to sources of raw materials. The colonial communication infrastructure in Cameroon were established to link up the Coastal Region and the different Hinterland Regions of Cameroon for economic purposes

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is rooted in the historical events that characterised the colonial Cameroon. A lot has been written on the colonial transport policies of many African countries but these works have exclusively focused only on the contemporary transport and infrastructure network. Colonial transport policies and impact on development is still largely unexploited and this is what makes the current research important. The current study is very relevant in many attempts to construct or reconstruct the colonial history of Cameroon because transport was a very relevant tool of colonial exploits. A lot would have been recorded in intelligence and assessment Reports left behind by the colonialists on colonial policies and their activities as a whole. It is important to mention that these reports were written by Europeans from a European perspective and there is the need to revisit these reports and reinterpret the issues from the African perspective. This explains why topics of this nature are quite very relevant. For example Europeans will argue that the construction of roads was to disenclave the continent. But from the perspective of this research the roads were meant to facilitate exploitation. There is the need to debunk Eurocentrism and that is why studies of this nature are quite relevant.

Secondly, perusing through the colonial records and some of the secondary sources that exists on the colonial History of Cameroon, it was discovered that there is a yawning gap in the literature that exist on colonial transport policies. Not much has been written on this topic, few authors have touched on colonial transport policies in passing with no detail accounts. It is the yawning gap that makes the current research very important.

Reading through this work, one will be able to discover the hidden agenda behind the construction of colonial transport infrastructure. One will be able to know the true reasons for which roads were constructed to which directions and why. The reader

will equally be able to know why some areas were developed and others remained permanently enclaved. Roads were constructed linking areas of raw material to the coast. In the absence of any raw material, no roads were constructed. So reading through this work one will clearly establish why roads were constructed in some places and not in others.

Scope and Delimitation

The study is titled: “Colonial Transport Policies and Economic Development in Cameroon: Historical Syntheses 1884-1961”. The study begins from the year 1884 and ends in 1961. The year 1884, was the period so many European countries occupy colonies in Africa when Germany occupied Cameroon. Our focus is during the period of German annexation of Cameroon and the various transport policies and infrastructure they put in place when they established their trading companies in the coastal region of Cameroon. The study also covers the period when Britain and France came on the scene after the defeat of the Germans from Cameroon, and how they carried out transport policies and infrastructure in Cameroon up to the year 1961. The territory Cameroon is situated in the central part of Africa commonly referred to as Africa in miniature. It is composed of many ethnic groups of the Bantu. Cameroon is situated in the heart of the African continent, between Equatorial Africa and the Guinea lands of West Africa. Cameroon lies between the East African plateau and the Atlantic coast. It is a coastal country and rests upon the Bight of Biafra, where the West African coastline turns southwards toward southern Africa.¹²

The Cameroon territory stretches from the Atlantic coast northwards to the Lake Chad basin, and southwards to the tributaries of the River Congo. It lies between the Congo and the Niger River basins and shares the physical characteristics of both. While the north of the territory forms an integral part of Western Sudan, the South forms an integral part of Equatorial Africa. Physically, the territory contains a little of all the natural regions that make up Africa and also, a representation of the different peoples of Africa; for these two reasons, Cameroon has frequently been referred to as ‘*Africa in miniature*’. As a state, it shares boundaries with Nigeria in the West and northwest,

¹² V. G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol 1 from Prehistoric Times to the 19th Century*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989, p.7.

Chad in the northeast, Central Africa Republic in the east, and Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea in the South.¹³ That is why we have chosen to limit our work to 1961 when transport infrastructures in Cameroon were already well established despite some huddles faced by this sector.

Literature Review

A study of this nature requires the exploitation of what previous research works on the subject have done in other parts of the world so as to determine the level of research and to acquaint ourselves with the different methodologies, approaches and conclusions arrived at on the subject. A lot of scholarly works have been written on colonial transport policies in many parts of Africa but little has been done in Cameroon as far as this study is concerned.

Runji highlights the performance of transport policies focusing on the main transport modes in some selected Anglophone and Francophone countries in 2013.¹⁴ His analysis however, excludes maritime and aviation. His objective was to convey and point out the need for more transformational and pragmatic policy objectives and strategies in an effort to enhance efficiency and competitiveness. His work that was augmented by SSATP and World Bank was carried out in six sub-saharan countries. Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana and Zambia. The challenges faced by these countries in the transport sector are not different from those of Cameroon in the period of the current study. In addition to Runji's work the present study is going to discuss maritime and aviation transport policies.

Roberto and Steven demonstrate the link between mine deposit and the development of transport infrastructure.¹⁵ Roads were built not to disenclave and develop the colony but to facilitate the extraction of raw materials. Mines to-coast transport infrastructures were developed to ease the transportation of mines. This, inadvertently or otherwise influenced the pattern of trade in the colonies. The result was

¹³V. G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol 1 from Prehistoric Times to the 19th Century*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989, p.7.

¹⁴ Justin Runji, "Africa Transport Policy Performance Review: The Need for More Robust Transport Policies", SSATP Africa Transport Policy Program Working Paper No. 103, 2015.

¹⁵ Roberto Bonfatti and Steven Poelhekke, *From Minie to Coast: Transport Infrastructure and the Direction fo Trade in Developing Countries*, University of Nottingham, April 3, 2014.

disenclaved development with the coastal regions developing to the neglect of the interior. This work is useful to the current research as it informs the colonial consideration in the development of transport networks in Cameroon.

Our main findings are that coastal destinations with more mines import less than average from neighbours and this effect is stronger when the observed mine-to-coast infrastructure overlaps with city-port corridors (and has therefore a strong potential to affect trade costs). However, this effect disappears (or is reversed) for landlocked destinations, where the mine-to-coast infrastructure will be usable to import from at least some neighbours. Furthermore, this effect is specific to mines and not to oil and grassfields, arguably because pipelines cannot possibly be used to trade other commodities. We discuss the welfare implications of our results, and relate them to the debate on the economic legacy of colonialism and the recent surge of Chinese investments in Africa.¹⁶

Recent research suggests that isolation from regional and international markets has contributed significantly to poverty in many Sub-Saharan African countries. Numerous empirical studies identify poor transport infrastructure and border restrictions as significant deterrents to trade expansion. In response, the African Development Bank has proposed an integrated network of functional roads for the subcontinent. Drawing on new econometric results, this paper quantifies the trade-expansion potential and costs of such a network. We use spatial network analysis techniques to identify a network of primary roads connecting all Sub-Saharan capitals and other cities with populations over 500,000. We estimate current overland trade flows in the network, using econometrically-estimated gravity model parameters, road transport quality indicators, actual road distances, and estimates of economic scale for cities in the network.

Marie et al in their article, asserts that many investments in infrastructure are built on the belief that they will ineluctably lead to poverty reduction and income generation. This has entailed massive aid-financed projects in roads in developing countries. However, the lack of robust evaluations and a comprehensive theoretical framework could raise questions about current strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Using the second Cameroonian national household survey (Enquête Camerounaise Auprès des

¹⁶ Roberto Bonfatti and Steven Poelhekke, *From Minie to Coast: Transport Infrastructure and the Direction fo Trade in Developing Countries*, University of Nottingham, April 3, 2014.

Ménages II, 2001) and the Cameroon case study, this paper demonstrates that investing uniformly in tarred roads in Africa is likely to have a much lower impact on poverty than expected. Isolation from a tarred road is found to have no direct impact on consumption expenditures in Cameroon. The only impact is an indirect one in the access to labour activities. This paper reasserts the fact that access to roads is only one factor contributing to poverty reduction (and not necessarily the most important in many cases). Considering that increase in non-farming activities is the main driver for poverty reduction in rural Africa, the results contribute to the idea that emphasis on road investments should be given to locations where non-farming activities could be developed, which does mean that the last mile in rural areas should not be probably a road.¹⁷

This paper assesses gender specific needs and proposes policy responses to reduce gender rural transport related burdens in Cameroon. Using an illustrative approach based on goods practices, the paper presents (1) an assessment of gender disparities in Cameroon's rural transport strategy based on market distribution of foodstuffs as well as child and maternal health care services and (2) different action needs that ensure the inclusion of gender issues in establishing Cameroon's rural transport strategy. Specific transport facilities by and for "Bayam-sellam", training rural women on mastering road construction materials and putting in place a community transport system for emergencies in maternal and child health care are the main proposals voiced to ensure that rural transport policy is more gender inclusive.

The main roads, highway, railway of many black tropical African countries are inherited from colonial period. If seaway were the first to be developed, the path for portage become the second main conveyance infrastructure put in place by colonial powers and that was recorded durably in occupied territories. Colonial masters proceed by great domains and great plantation building. Main products dispatched from hinterland towards the coast were done by foot. This situation justified the two main concession hold by Germans in Cameroon in which rubber, palm oil and banana were the main products. Thus, the comparison between these paths and modern road and highways shows that the modern arterials are a copy of the former colonial paths. The

¹⁷ Marie Gachassin et al, *The impact of Roads on Poverty Reduction: A case Study of Cameroon*. University Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne France.

situation seems to explain the poor creativity and innovation skills of black African governments and illustrated the weak road network since the independence.

Ogunbodede in his paper attempts a cursory review of urban road transportation system in Nigeria from 1960 to 2006 (a period of 46 years). The paper adopts exploratory method of research to examine and discuss relevant issues of interest in the history of Nigeria road transport system in six sections. According to the author it was discovered that urban road transport system in Nigeria is inefficient and grossly inadequate even after 46 years of becoming independent from Colonial Rule. The paper suggested the construction of more motor-able roads within cities in order to increase the network; encourage increased public and private participation in the provision of transport services within cities and inter-cities transport system. The adoption of motorcycle as public mode of transportation in cities should be institutionalized since the users are constrained to use this means of transportation in the absence of alternative. However, policies guiding the regulations and use of this mode should be formulated and monitored so that its use would not impact negatively on the commuters' mobility rights and lives. Similarly, government should provide enabling environment that would guaranty efficient and adequate movement of vehicles in cities. This work throws light on our study in that they are limited just within the same scope.¹⁸

Nwachukwu and Abuoma in their paper, asserts that Transportation proved a major instrument in the hands of the colonial government in Nigeria which enabled them attain their objective of making the colony an export-based economy. Enormous tons of goods left the country through the transport network that connected the produce centres with the coasts. One of the means of transportation that played a very important role in the trend was the railway. According to them a lot of literature exist on the effects of the colonial infrastructure on the Nigerian colonial economy. However, some serve as eulogy while others are more critical. This informs the need for an objective examination of a particular area of infrastructural development. Adopting the thematic method of analysis, their work attempts a holistic approach towards discussing the colonial rail transport infrastructure development in colonial Nigeria. This work has

¹⁸ Ogunbodede E. F., "Urban Road Transportation in Nigeria From 1960 to 2000 Problems, Prospects And Challenges, Ethiopian journal of Environmental Studies and Management" Vol.1 No.1 March 2008. Department of Geography And Planning Sciences, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State Nigeria.

gone further to provide an impetus to our study by portraying British Colonial transport that was also carried out in British Cameroon.¹⁹

Alan Winters et al in their Recent research suggests that isolation from regional and international markets has contributed significantly to poverty in many Sub-Saharan African countries. According to them Numerous empirical studies identify poor transport infrastructure and border restrictions as significant deterrents to trade expansion. In response, the African Development Bank has proposed an integrated network of functional roads for the subcontinent.

Drawing on new econometric results, this paper quantifies the trade-expansion potential and costs of such a network. We use spatial network analysis techniques to identify a network of primary roads connecting all Sub-Saharan capitals and other cities with populations over 500,000. We estimate current overland trade flows in the network, using econometrically-estimated gravity model parameters, road transport quality indicators, actual road distances, and estimates of economic scale for cities in the network. Then we simulate the effect of feasible continental upgrading by setting network transport quality at a level that is functional, but less highly-developed than existing roads in countries like South Africa and Botswana. We assess the costs of upgrading with econometric evidence from a large World Bank database of road project costs in Africa.

Moreover, using a standard approach to forecast error estimation, we derive a range of potential benefits and costs. Our baseline results indicate that continental network upgrading would expand overland trade by about \$250 billion over 15 years, with major direct and indirect benefits for the rural poor. Financing the program would require about \$20 billion for initial upgrading and \$1 billion annually for maintenance. We conclude with a discussion of supporting institutional arrangements and the potential cost of implementing them.²⁰ This work is importance to our study because it identifies poor transport infrastructure and border restrictions as significant deterrents to trade expansion.

¹⁹ Nwachukwu J. Obiakor and Abuoma .C. Agajelu, British Colonial Economic Policies and Infrastructure in Nigeria: The Rail Transport Example, 1898-1960, IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities Vol.2 No.3, August 2016. A Publication of the Augustinian Institute in Collaboration with AATREPSCHOLARS.

²⁰ Alan Winters et al, "Road Network Upgrading and Overland Trade Expansion in Sub-Saharan", Piet Buys Uwe Deichmann David Wheeler Development Research Group World Bank February 2006.

Valerie Ongolo and Boniface Ngah Epo assess gender specific needs and propose policy responses to reduce gendered rural transport related burdens in Cameroon. Using an illustrative approach based on good practices, the paper presents (1) an assessment of gender disparities in Cameroon's rural transport strategy based on market distribution of foodstuffs as well as child and maternal health care services and (2) different actions needs that ensure the inclusion of gender issues in establishing Cameroon's rural transport strategy. Specific transport facilities by and for "Bayamsellams", training rural women on mastering road construction materials and putting in place a community transport system for emergencies in maternal and child health care are the main proposals underscored to ensure that rural transport policy should be more gender inclusive.²¹

Mesmin Tchindjang et al in their article, asserts that the main roads, highways, railway of many black tropical African countries are inherited from the colonial period. If seaway were the first to be developed, the path for portage became the second main conveyance infrastructure put in place by colonial powers and that was recorded durably in occupied territories. Colonial masters proceed by great domains and great plantation building. Main products dispatched from hinterland towards the coast were done on foot. This situation justified the two main concession held by Germans in Cameroon in which rubber, palm oil and banana were the main products. Thus, the comparison between these paths and modern roads and highways show that the modern arterials are a copy of the former colonial paths. The situation seems to explain the poor creativity and innovation skills of black African governments and illustrated the weak road network since independence.²²

Ambe in his article, addresses the implications of colonial spatial development policies and deteriorating economic conditions for urban public transportation in Cameroon. As for him, the colonial transport system was meant to facilitate the movement of essential raw materials from the hinter lands to the metropolitan countries

²¹ Valerie Ongolo Zogo et al, "Assessing Gender Inclusion in Cameroon's Rural Transport", *Journal of African Transformation*, Volume 1, No.2, 2016.

²² Mesmin Tchindjang et al, "Mapping of main Artery Network and Colonial Portage in Cameroon 1900-1940", University of Yaounde I, Department of Geography, Yaounde Cameroon.

via sea; while the urban system sought to promote residential segregation along racial or class lines as well as rigidly compartmentalized land use activities.

Indeed, both systems which had been inherited by the country's indigenous authorities have contributed significantly to problems ranging from accentuating the cost of maintaining existing and developing new, transportation infrastructure, creating difficulties for intermodal coordination as a means of improving economic productivity and efficiency. He argued that the problems have been compounded by negative trends in the country's economy, as well as by measures adopted to reverse these trends, steps capable of improving the performance of the country's urban public transportation system despite the said problems are suggested.²³

Walter Gam Nkwi in his article focuses on the preponderant role played by water transport in the form of rivers and ports during the colonial period. Although Africa is not blessed with much navigable rivers and natural deep ports, the Colonial administration as well as the population of Cameroon depended so much on rivers and ports for their physical mobility, transportation of bulky goods, mails migration and above all European consumer goods which came in from Europe and were head loaded into the hinterlands. Therefore rivers and ports played economic, social and political roles. Despite these important roles, the place of rivers and ports has been relegated to footnotes in historical narratives of Cameroon.²⁴ The paper therefore, aims at lifting rivers and ports from the footnotes of Cameroon history into the text. It confronts the importance of such a technological system to both the colonial administration and the indigenous population. What were the type of goods that were transported via rivers and ports? More crucial to the essay is the importance of the ports in the development of the cities and the migration of people into areas where ports were found. In what ways do we linked the ports and rivers to the global mobility of goods and modernity?

The author further highlights that in Africa and the world over, water transport had been very crucial for the movements of goods and people. The Dutch Social historian, Jan-Bart Gewald, in his study of Zambia and other Southern African countries, notes that even before colonial rule, canoes were found on Lakes Mweru, Bangweulu and Tangayika, where they were primarily used in the bulk transport of

²³ Ambe J. Njoh, Colonial Spatial Development Policies, Economic Instability and Urban Public Transportation in Cameroon in *Cities* 14(3):133-143 oct, 02, 2015.

²⁴ Walter Gam Nkwi, *Ogirisi: a New Journal of African Studies* Vol. 13, 2017.

goods destined for the East African coast. On the Luapula river system, a series of societies and economies developed that was dependent on fishing and also used the river for transport. (Gewald, 2009: 26-27). Either in the North, Central and West Africa, rivers and ports played almost the same functions. Much has been noted about rivers in Africa like Rivers Niger, Nile, Limpopo, Zambia, just to name but a few. These rivers played the roles of transporting people from one place to another at a time when bridges were still under construction. Rivers also provided food in the form of fish to its indigenous peoples. Hopkins (1973: 43) maintains that fishing was a very important activity which took place on the waters of River Niger and Lake Chad. He further maintains that specialized communities of fishermen are known to have developed in this region with technological knowledge of carving canoes and reading the tides. Rivers have played cradle to world civilizations. For instance, the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates are well known for generating the first civilizations (Marvin and Perry, 1989).

Other rivers have been subjects of diplomacy. Following the Berlin West African conference of 1884 the Niger-Benue became international rivers (Fanso, 1989:21) Furthermore, Hassan and Rasheedy (2007: 25-27) and Webster and Boahen (1980), have done some excellent work on the Nile and Niger and how it influenced Egyptian foreign policy. Economics was directly linked to diplomacy and rivalry among European powers. The exploration of the Senegal and Niger rivers raised great hopes among traders and imperialist back in Europe. One of the diplomats attested that, “The long sought for highway into central Africa was at length found in rivers Nile and Niger. To the merchant, it offered a boundless field of enterprise, to the manufacturer, an extensive market for his goods” (Webster and Boahen, 1980: 53). The discovery of the mouth of River Niger coincided with the abolition and suppression of trans Atlantic slave trade, when new commodities and new markets had to be found to replace the lost ones.

The Europeans tried to fill the gap by trading along the Senegal and the Niger rivers. Between 1817 and 1840, for instance, the French tried to establish plantations along the Senegal and between 1818 and 1821 they built forts on the River Senegal at Bakel, Dagone and Richard Toll. In 1832, the British and the Americans also each sent out an expedition to travel up the Niger and set up trading stations on its banks for the purpose of collecting the various products of the country. Other expeditions by British

merchants followed in 1836 and 1840 and 1841 the abolitionists led by Fowell Buxton persuaded the British government to send a carefully prepared expedition to establish legitimate trade and set up experimental farms in order to overthrow the slave trade. As a matter of fact the interest of the British traders before 1880 were highly concentrated mainly in along river Niger where the palm oil trade, which together with groundnuts was the only major produce of West Africa of interest to Europe at the time (Crowder, 1968; Webster and Boahen, 1973) All these efforts by the British, French and Americans ended up in fiasco partly because of the resistance from traditional rulers, middlemen and the high death rate of shipping crews.

Ports were not a new invention by the colonial regimes in Africa. As a matter of fact many fishing ports existed in many parts of the African and Cameroon coast and it was on this that the colonial administration improved on the harbours to facilitate bigger launches to anchor. During the colonial period in West Africa almost everywhere on the coastline ports developed to take new directions. During the era of slave trade, these ports were used for the shipment of slaves to the Americas. During the so called legitimate trade, these ports played the role of delivering modern merchandise from Africa to Europe and vice versa. In a period when airports were absent, ports played the role of transporting people and goods to further distant spaces. In Cameroon, the author focused on Victoria and Tiko ports.

Apart from the work of Walter Gam Nkwi, which focuses on the Tiko and Victoria ports in their colonial context under the British colonial administration, colonial transport policies in the domain of road and aviation transport have remained a *Tabula rasa* in the historiography of Cameroon. This is a gap which this thesis sets to fill. From the above literature of transport policies in Africa and Cameroon in particular, as exploited by various researchers in Africa and Cameroon, it was seen that little or nothing has been done in the area of colonial transport policies in Cameroon, that is why we have embarked on this study.

Sources and Methodology

This work was realized through a critical exploitation of primary and secondary sources. This embodied the identification of data from books, journals articles which are

connected to some of the aspects of our work. We began by a critical review of secondary sources handling broader themes of transport and infrastructure policies in Africa. We also identified and explored and exploited a good number of secondary sources dealing with transport network in the University of Yaounde I, Central library, “Circle d’Histoire Geographie et Archeologie” and the British Council Libraries where we were able to pick out valuable articles having a bearing on the topic. Secondary sources were complemented with a number of unpublished materials in form of thesis, dissertations, long essays and unpublished manuscripts. There was a rich deal of this material in the libraries of the Department of History and the Faculty of Arts, Letter and Social Sciences of the University of Yaounde I. We also got some material on certain pertinent issues on some of the aspects developed in this work from the Library of the University of Bamenda.

The above sources were reinforced by archival materials from the National Archives Buea and the Provincial (Now regional) Archives Bamenda. We introduced broad themes to guide the informants and proceeded by constant probing for emphasis and clarification. In the write-up, we adopted a blend of the thematic and chronological approaches. While the former performed the main function of describing themes and aspects of transport policies with regards to its adaptation to change; the latter situated the issues on discourse according to a historical time frame.

The method employed embodied the narrative, explanatory and descriptive approaches. We made an attempt to ensure that each of these approaches used, suited the theme or themes developed. In certain sections, the approaches were used interchangeably with the overall aim of ensuring clarity in our expressions in the interpretation of our evidences. The sources exploited have been variedly acknowledged in the footnotes and bibliographical references. Where the explanation or description of some issues warranted a detailed understanding but were considered capable of disturbing the consistent comprehension of the text, we tried as much as possible, to provide explanatory footnotes. This notwithstanding, in the course of our research and construction, we encountered a number of problems.

Problems Encountered

In the Buea National Archives and the Bamenda Regional Archives. Some of the files had suffered dilapidation that made reading difficult. To solve this problem this researcher relied on secondary sources to comprehend what was gathered at the archive. The socio-political crises that rocked the two Anglophone regions (North West and South West Regions) that started in November 21, 2016 also is a major problem to this research work. This researcher was treated with contempt and a lot of disdain in many public places in the course of collecting information. A glaring example of this mistreatment was at the Yaounde Military Base (Base Aérienne) where this researcher was prevented from taking snap shots of the Airport. The military authorities there asked me to go to the Minister Delegate for Defence for an authorization to snap the Airport.

This researcher equally identified and criticized a good number of secondary material dealing with transport policies from the University of Yaounde I, Central library and the British Council Libraries where he was able to sort out few valuable articles connected to our topic. The main problem this researcher encountered was that there are no valuable published books on colonial transport policies in Cameroon, and to overcome this situation we relied mostly on internet and archival sources. The above sources were reinforced by archival materials from the National Archives Buea and the Provincial (Now regional) Archives Bamenda.

Lay out of the Study

The work is divided into Five Chapters excluding the General Introduction and conclusion. The general introduction handles the statement of the problem, aims and objectives, hypothesis, significance of the study, scope and delimitation, sources and methodology, problems encountered, review of general and specific literature and the theoretical considerations. Chapter One provides the background to the study by setting down the general principles of colonial transport policies in Africa. The Berlin conference and the theory of effective occupation. The need to get a strong hold of the interior by the colonialists. The chapter further highlights the need to dislodge the exploitation networks of coastal middlemen, which they deemed exploitative. Apart

from the hinterland theory other generally accepted guidelines have been examined under this chapter of the work.

Chapter Two examines German annexation of Cameroon in 1884 and the transport policies they implanted from 1884 to 1916. It further outlines the principles that guided German transport policies in Cameroon. There is a critical examination of other transport means that were introduced by the Germans, roads and railway construction and ultimately the indigenous response vis-à-vis these transport policies:

Chapter Three analyses the development of communication infrastructure in the British Southern Cameroons by Britain during the mandate, trusteeship periods, 1916-1961. It focuses on the construction of roads and labour recruitments for the projects. Transport policies in the British Southern Cameroons was partly influenced by the British administrative policy, the indirect rule system. Some roads were constructed linking the administrative headquarters as well as the centres of extraction and the seaports. Thus communication infrastructure was developed where the colonialists stand to benefit.

Chapter Four examines the French mandate and the trusteeship system and the development of communication networks in French Cameroon from 1922-1960. It is centred on the principles which guided French policies towards the development of communication networks in French Cameroon. The chapter also underscores the French policy of corvee and road construction, the development of ports and finally the indigenous response towards those policies.

Chapter Five presents an impact assessment of colonialists policies and practices in Cameroon and nation building with emphasis laid on the economic and social development of the territory.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COLONIAL TRANSPORT POLICIES IN AFRICA

1.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the general principles that guided the institution of colonial transport policies in Africa during the colonization period. The chapter further presents the Berlin Conference and theory of effective occupation of Africa, the occupation of the adjacent hinterlands expanding from the coast, the need to get a strong hold of the interior. This will be further portrayed during the German annexation of Cameroon in 1884. Apart from the hinterland theory other generally accepted guidelines have been examined under this chapter of the work.

1.1 The Berlin West African Conference, Theory of Effective Occupation and Impact on Colonial Transport Policy

The Berlin West African Conference of 15 November 1884 to 26 February 1885 had profound impact on colonial transport policy. The conference was summoned by the German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck and the French Prime Minister, Jules Ferry. The primary aim of the conference was to settle colonial disputes between European powers and lay down modalities for the peaceful partition and occupation of Africa by European powers. At the end of the deliberations the participants arrived at certain decisions which were contained in the Berlin Act Signed on 26 February 1885. Prominent among these decisions with direct influence on European Colonial transport policies in Africa in general and German, British and French transport policies in Africa were the principle of notification, hinterland theory and the principle of effective occupation.

The principle of notification was defined in article 34 of the Berlin Act. It stated unequivocally that any power laying claim to any territory on the African coastline must officially inform the other powers involved in the scramble. The essence of notification was to prevent rivalry between European powers. By the same token, it announced vacancies in other parts of Africa. It encouraged a European movement into the interior.

The initial determinant of the transport policy in this context was the natural environment, the geographical setting in the different parts of Cameroon determined German transport policy in the early years of their administration in Cameroon. Transport development for the occupation of the interior was justified by the hinterland theory of the Berlin Act.

The hinterland theory stated in principle that any European power occupying any part of the African Coastline has the right to occupy its interior. This was because the interior was both the source of raw materials to the Europeans and a market for their manufactures. The availability of different types of raw materials orchestrated European movement into the interior. Movement into the interior was difficult given the absence of communication infrastructure. The interior of Cameroon was blessed with raw materials like rubber, cocoa, palm fruits, palm kernel and timber. The importance of these raw materials caused the Germans to build bridges, roads, railroads and sea ports to facilitate the extraction of raw materials. The roads opened up the interior for German exploitation and equally gave them control of the coast and interior as was given in the principle of effective occupation.

The principle of effective occupation was contained in Article 34 of the Berlin Act directing claims to territories that must be backed with effective occupation. In other words, the signatory powers were obliged to ensure the establishment of their authority in the region occupied by them on the coast of the African continent. The authority must be sufficient enough to protect the existing rights and as the claim may be freedom of trade. This was the most important clause to lay claim to a territory in Africa. Effective occupation implied a total control of political, economic and social life of the territory. This necessitated penetration into the interior of the African continent. Penetration made the development of transport and communication networks a compelling colonial duty. The type of transport facility was dictated by the economic interest of the colonial master. The economic interest of the colonialists was primordial in determining the type of transport facility at any given instance. The benefits to the Africans was incidental.

The conference ended with modaties for effective occupation of territories, the free navigation of the Congo Basin, the Benue river and the effective administration of the hinterlands. The conference recognized the Congo Free state. It was handed over to

King Leopold II to administer. The conference equally laid down rules and regulations for the acquisition of colonies in Africa. By this, the Europeans arrogated to themselves proprietary rights over the African continent. The creation of the Congo Free State gave King Leopold II of Belgium administrative rights over the territory. He immediately set to work, to determine transport policies that would meet his economic interest in the area.

It is worth noting, that the French participation with Britain in the dual control of Egypt in 1879, the dispatch of Savorgnan de Brazza to the Congo and the ratification of his treaties with Chief Makoko of the Bateke, and the revival of French colonial initiative in Tunisia and Madagascar. Such moves on the part of these powers between 1876 and 1880 gave a clear indication that they were all committed to colonial expansion and establish formal control of Africa. Finally Britain and Germany were obliged to abandon their preference for informal control and imperialism in favour of a formal policy leading to annexations of Southern, East and West Africa from the end of 1883 onwards. The German initiative, for instance, culminated in the annexation of South West Africa, Togoland, the Cameroons, and German East Africa, which in turn further accelerated the pace of the scramble. Early in the 1880s, the scramble was under way, and it was out of fear of being pushed out of Africa altogether that Portugal proposed the summoning of an international conference to settle the territorial disputes in Central Africa.¹

In fact, prior to the Berlin Act; imperialist powers had acquired spheres of influence in Africa in a variety of ways through settlement, exploration, the establishment of commercial posts, missionary settlements, the occupation of strategic areas, and by enacting treaties with some African rulers.² Following the conference, the power of such treaties became the most important method of carrying out the theoretical, partition of the continent. These treaties took two forms, those between Africans and Europeans, and bilateral agreements between the Europeans themselves. The Afro-European treaties were basically of two kinds. Firstly, they included the slave trade and commercial treaties; which had generated friction, that led to European political interference in African affairs. Secondly, there were political treaties under which

¹ Webster, J.B. Boahan, A.A., *The Growth of African Civilisation: The Revolutionary Years West Africa Since 1800*. London: Longman, 1980.

² Ibid.

African rulers either purportedly surrendered sovereignty in exchange for their protection, or undertook not to sign further treaties with other European nations.³

These political treaties were on vogue during the period. They were made either by representatives of European governments or by those of private organizations which later transferred them to their respective governments. If any imperialist government accepted them, such territories in question were usually annexed or declared a protectorate; if on the other hand, it suspected their authenticity, or if it felt constrained by the vicissitudes of “Weltpolitik” to exercise caution, these treaties were used for bargaining purposes during bilateral European negotiations. Africans on the other hand, signed such engagement for a number of reasons, but mainly because of the people’s interests. In some cases, they desired relations with Europeans because they hoped that the prestige of such a relationship would endow them with certain political advantages when dealing with their neighbours. Sometimes a weak African state would desire a treaty with a European power in the hope of using it to renounce allegiance to another African state that claimed sovereignty over it.⁴

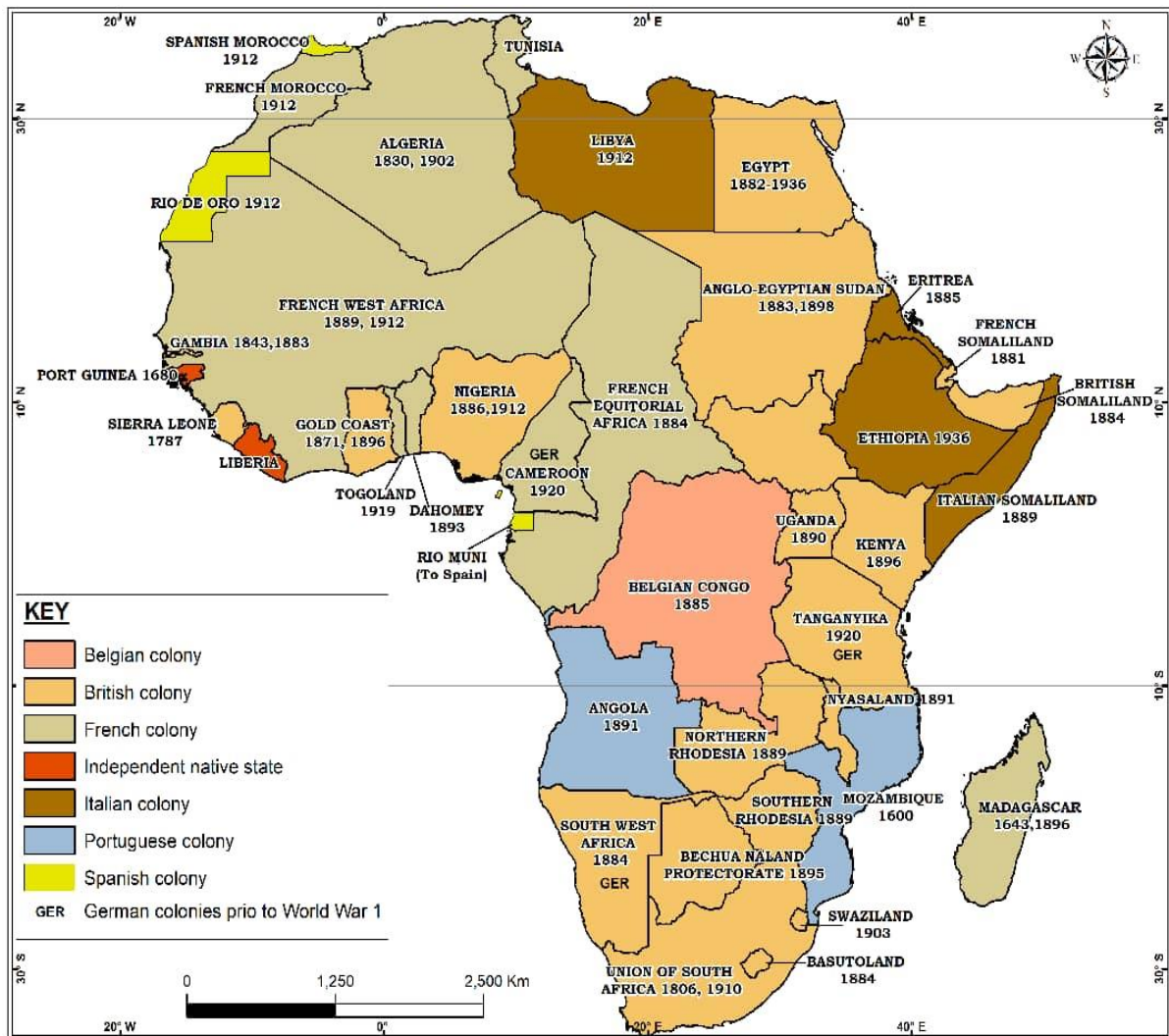
Besides, African sovereign would also desire a treaty in the hope of using it to keep recalcitrant subject states in line. Sometimes a treaty with one European nation was seen by some African states as a means of preserving their independence, which was threatened by Lord Lugard because, in essence his own treaties were fraudulently obtained! These are just some of the multiple treaties that got Africa into the drag net of European control and manipulation. By the way, mention should be made about the Emir of Nupe in what is now Nigeria to lieutenant L.A.A. Mizon to form an alliance with him against the Royal Niger Company, with whom he had a dispute. This is an example of an African sovereign’s desire to seek the help of a European power against another European power threatening its independence.⁵ The new geopolitical map of Africa that evolved after about a generation of systematic boundary planting and military occupation was quite different from what it had been in 1879. European powers had partitioned the continent into some forty political units. Map 1 on the next page portrays the partition of Africa during the Berlin West African Conference.

³Webster, J.B. Boahan, A.A., *The Growth of African Civilisation: The Revolutionary Years West Africa Since 1800*. London: Longman, 1980.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Map 1: The Partition of Africa during the Berlin West African Conference.



Source: Author's Research Collection, Bamenda 11/10/2017. Adapted from the map of the partition of Africa 1914.

The new boundaries were regarded by some scholars as unacceptable because they were considered to be arbitrary, artificial, precipitated haphazard and distorted the national pre-European political order. Although the conquest of Africa by European powers was accomplished with relative ease, their occupation and the establishment of the administration had to follow.

The acquisition of a sphere of influence through a treaty was usually the first stage in the occupation of an African state by a European power. If such a treaty was not contested by any other European power, the incumbent gradually turned its treaty rights into sovereign rights. A sphere of influence arose, in the first instance, by a unilateral declaration; it became a reality only when it was accepted or not contested by other

European powers. Often spheres of influence were contested, but these territorial difficulties and boundary disputes were eventually settled and ratified through mutual agreements between two or more imperialist powers operating in the same region. The limits of these territorial settlements were determined, as closely as possible, by a natural boundary, or, where no such a boundary existed, by longitude and latitude.⁶

The Anglo-German Treaty of 29th April and 7th May 1885 that defined the ‘spheres of action’ of both countries in certain parts of Africa was regarded as perhaps the first serious application of the spheres of influence theory in modern times. By a series of similar treaties, agreements and conventions, the paper partition of Africa was virtually concluded by the end of the Century. The Anglo-German Delimitation Treaty of 1st November 1886, as an example, was particularly significant. It placed Zanzibar and most of its dependencies within Britain’s sphere of influence. On the other hand, it ensured Germany’s political influence in East Africa, thereby providing official recognition of the breach of Britain's monopoly in the area. In effect the treaty thus partitioned the Omani empire.⁷

In the same vein, the terms of the subsequent clarificatory agreement of 1887, Britain undertook ‘to discourage British annexations in the area of the German Sphere of Influence, on the basis that the German Government will equally discourage German annexations in the area of the British Sphere’. It was further agreed that if either country occupied the coast, ‘the other could not, without consent, occupy unclaimed regions in the rear’. The vagueness of these hinterland arrangements regarding the westward ‘sphere of influence’ of both countries led to the famous Heligoland Treaty of 1890 which concluded comprehensively the partition of East Africa. Most significantly, it reserved Uganda for Britain; thereby destroying Britain’s illusion of a Cape-to-Cairo route, because Heligoland was handed to Germany and then put an end to the independence of Zanzibar. The Anglo-German Treaties of 1890 and 1893 and the Anglo-Italian Treaty of 1891, put together, recognized the Upper Nile as falling within the British sphere of influence.⁸

⁶ A. Adu Boahen, *General History of Africa VII, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, University of California Press 1985.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, to the South, the Franco-Portuguese Treaty of 1886, the German-Portuguese Treaty of 1886, and the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty 1891 all recognized Portugal's influence in Angola and Mozambique as well as delimiting the British sphere in Central Africa. The Anglo-Congo Free State Treaty of 1894 was equally significant because it settled the limits of the Congo Free State in such a way that it acted as a buffer between French territories, the Nile Valley and provided the British a Cape-to-Cairo corridor from Uganda via Lake Tanganyika withdrawn in June because of German protest. In West Africa, the most important arrangements were the Say-Barruwa Agreement of 1890 and the Niger Convention of 1898 by which Britain and France concluded the partition of that region.⁹

Finally, the Anglo-French Convention of 21st March 1899 settled the Egyptian question while the Peace of Vereeniging 1902, ended the Anglo-Boer war - confirmed, temporarily, at any rate, British supremacy in South Africa. How legitimate were the political treaties with African rulers, and the bilateral European agreements on which the partition and conquest of Africa was based? Infact, this suggests the conclusion that some of them were legally indefensible, some morally bankrupt, while others were procured legally. Nevertheless, they were essentially political acts defensible only in the context of European positive law, which used force as the basis of all law. Even where Africans openly sought treaty arrangements with Europeans, their decisions were invariably based on their perceptions of Europeans strength. There were occasions, too, when Africans who suspected the Europeans' motives for seeking treaties and refused to engaged into such agreements, were induced, through unbearable pressures, none the less to do so.¹⁰

The modern doctrine of hinterland', Salisbury observed in 1896, with its inevitable contradictions, indicates the uninformed and unstable condition of international law as applied to territorial claims resting on constructive occupation or control. In other words, a claim of sovereignty in Africa can only be maintained by real occupation of the territory claimed. And since the notion of effective occupation with which the vast majority of some African states were unfamiliar and their understanding of these treaties with Europeans generated fundamental contradiction with one another.

⁹ A. Adu Boahen, *General History of Africa VII, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, University of California Press, 1985.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

A conflictual situation was bound to occur on both sides. Thus, the stage was set for the systematic military occupation of the hinterland by the European powers.¹¹

1.1.1 The Conference, Resolutions and Final Act

The conference agreed among other things that a European nation had to occupy a territory effectively in order to claim it and there upon must notify other powers attending the conference. This was to be done by the establishment of an administration and such territories should fly the flag of the said country. They also agreed that there should be freedom of trade in the Congo basin and freedom of navigation of the people of all nations on the Niger and Congo rivers, and it was agreed that slavery still practiced by Africans and Arabs be abolished. Through this free access into the interior of Africa by traders, missionaries and other agents were guaranteed. The document containing these resolutions was ratified by the representatives of the participating countries.¹²

As a result, when Europeans rushed to occupy territories, they ignored both natural and cultural frontiers and drew up artificial boundary lines against the irregular lines of natural boundaries such as rivers and mountains. Most of the decisions reached at did not solve the problem of the partitioning of Africa. By declaring navigation and trade on the Niger and Congo basin free to all states, no mechanism was put in place to protect this and as a result, Leopold II and Goldie established monopolies in this same area keeping other states out of trade and navigation. The initial goal of the Berlin conference was to allow free access to all nations and in a bid discourage slavery by encouraging trade on other items or by establishing socializing institutions that could discourage the act.¹³

In fact, freedom of commerce was envisaged only for the basin and the mouths of the Congo not for the Niger river, or for other territory in Africa whether already under colonial rule or yet to be colonised. Freedom of navigation on the Niger had already arguably been put beyond the remit of the Conference given Britain's then

¹¹A. Adu Boahen, *General History of Africa VII, Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, University of California Press 1985.

¹² V.J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe: Press book, 1996. p. 66.

¹³ Ibid.

recently-established authority there, and the concern for effective occupation applied to ‘new occupations’ and then only on the coastline of which little remained unclaimed. It was also clear that the multilateral agenda only dealt with some of the latent issues, others would come to be addressed through the conclusion of a series of side agreements that disposed of the various conflicting claims that had already arisen in relation to territory adjacent to the Congo river, and particularly those between Portugal, France and the (AIC). There was inevitably, the fraught question of the status of the (AIC) and its claims to sovereignty.¹⁴

Once convened, the Conference ran over a period of three months between 15 November 1884 and 26 February 1885. The outcome was the adoption of a General Act signed and ratified by all participants with the exception of the US, the overt purpose of which was to secure the development of trade and civilization in certain regions in Africa while obviating the misunderstandings and disputes, which might in future arise from new acts of occupation on the coast of Africa and furthering the moral and material well-being of the native populations. The General Act contained four ‘Declarations and two ‘Acts of Navigation’ relating to the Congo and Niger respectively arranged in seven chapters and 38 separate articles.¹⁵

In addition to the two ‘Acts of Navigation’ both of which were loosely modelled upon the regimes of navigation for the Danube and the Rhine, the General Act had four main features. First, it established a regime of free trade in the ‘hydrographic’ basin of the Congo stretching across the middle of Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean from 5° North to the mouth of the Zambezi in the South. Any power exercising sovereign rights in relation to such territory would have to allow ‘all flags’ equal access to the coastline, territories, rivers and lakes in question. They would be prohibited from establishing monopolies or discrimination against foreigners, and goods were to be free of all import and transit duties subject only to such taxation as might be levied ‘as fair compensation for expenditure in the interest of trade.’¹⁶

¹⁴ V.J Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.66.

¹⁵ Mathew Craven *Between Law and History: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade* 2015.

¹⁶ Mathew Craven *Between Law and History: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade* 2015.

Secondly the powers all agreed to watch over the preservation of the native tribes and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to assist in the suppression of slavery and especially Slave Trade. Thirdly, the powers decided to respect the neutrality of the Congo basin and committed themselves to lend their good offices to enable such territory in case of war to be considered as belonging to a non-belligerent state. Finally, the General Act committed any power acquiring coastal territory on the African continent to notify all other powers of it claim and establish such authority, necessary to ensure within those territories the protection of vested rights and for the application of free trade according to its terms.¹⁷

According to Crowe the General Act of the Berlin Conference did not, partition Africa, nor did it survive as a formal instrument beyond 1919. By that stage it had already been supplemented by the Brussels General Act of 1890, which sought to suppress Slave Trade in the entirety of Africa and placed restrictions on the trade in firearms and liquor. An appended declaration also amended the terms of Article 4 of the Berlin General Act by permitting the imposition of duties on imports. While the Berlin General Act was for a period to be routinely invoked in disputes with the Congo Free State over matters of commercial freedom and the treatment of natives, it was also a point of discussion shortly prior to the annexation of the Congo by Belgium.¹⁸

Its formal duration seemed largely short-lived with the ratification of the treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye of 1919, which purported to supersede the General Act in its entirety. At the same time even if the General Act did not *per se* underscore for Africa's partition, one cannot claim that the Conference was irrelevant for that purpose. In the first place it was apparent that the act of convening the Conference had itself encouraged prospective participating powers to extend their claims as far as possible in order to strengthen their respective territories. France had arguably led the way with its controversial ratification of the Brazza-Makoko treaty in 1882, but it was followed swiftly by other powers.¹⁹

¹⁷ Mathew Craven *Between Law and History: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade* 2015.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Germany proceeded to proclaim protectorates over Togoland on 5th July 1884 and Cameroon on 14th July 1884 and established its authority in Angra Pequena. Britain for its part belatedly dispatched Consul Hewett on a treaty-making mission to the Niger Delta though the Conference was still in session, the explorer, Joseph Thomson was on mission in Northern Nigeria making treaties on behalf of the National African Company that later became the Royal Niger Company in Sokoto and Gandu. Carl Peters was busy concluding treaties in East Africa on behalf of Society for German Colonisation *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* with a view to eventually acquiring a Charter from the German government.²⁰

More significantly perhaps two ‘side agreements’ were also concluded and appended to the text of the General Act between the (AIC) and respectively France and Portugal both of which contained significant provisions delimiting respective frontiers between their colonial possessions. Supplementing those agreements was a host of ‘Declarations’ and ‘Conventions’ that were finalised in the course of the Conference. They provided, in one form or another for the recognition of the (AIC) such that, by the time the General Act was signed, the (AIC) itself was able to adhere belatedly to the General Act itself. That was a move that formalised the participation of the main beneficiary of the Conference but arguably cemented the reputation of the Conference as having organised Africa’s partition. The government of the Congo Free State as the (AIC) was to become on 19th July 1885 was thereafter able to claim and exercise sovereignty over the vast proportion of the ‘conventional basin of the Congo.’²¹

If the success of the regime envisaged for the Congo Basin seemed to hinge upon it to be recognized as an internationalised ‘non-sovereign’ space, then the subsequent establishment of King Leopold’s Congo Free State which later became the object of colonial reform campaigns and bitter criticism in both Britain and France might be considered the principal point of its failure. Rather Van Eysinga’s ‘highly internationalised regime’ governed by principles of freedom of commerce and

²⁰ Mathew Craven *Between Law and History: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade* 2015.

²¹ *Ibid.*

neutrality, emerged as a notoriously brutal regime marked by violence, slavery and the institution of public monopolies.²²

As Ferry had noted from the outset, there was always an enduring tension between, the desire to promote free trade and, a recognition that some agency had to put in place the conditions for it to operate. For freedom of commerce to become the 'rule' in Central Africa, it all depended upon the creation of the requisite infrastructure ports, warehouses, roads, railways and telegraph systems. This was especially true in respect of the Congo in which it was recognised that effectively to open the interior to trade depended upon the construction of a railway around the cataracts between Vivi and Stanley Pool.²³

In order for such facilities to be created, it was necessary for investments from European markets and such investments would only be obtainable with security concerning the physical integrity of the investments and the possibility of recuperating costs through charges and levies on transported merchandise. Furthermore, security could not be guaranteed through the mere exercise of consular jurisdiction but required the full framework of sovereignty, a system of police, a government, an administration, a system of civil and criminal justice and the development of an auxiliary knowledge of the physical and human geography of the region. If, in other words, commercial expansion was to take place, it could only do so through the establishment of colonial rule backed by a right to levy the tariffs and taxes necessary to cover administrative expenses.²⁴

The establishment of Leopold's Congo Free State as the predominant power in Central Africa, was not altogether an expression of the failure of the internationalised regime, but rather a logical extension. To begin with, it was clear that without it, trade would have relied on the old systems of African middle-men and confined largely to activities on the coastline. Some agency at least, had to take responsibility for the transport infrastructure around cataracts. It was the (AIC) of the Congo Free State, that was tasked with the duty of opening up the continent to international trade. It was not a

²² Fage, J.; Roberts Donnelly; Roland Anthony Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

colony as such, as there was no metropolitan power to which it was responsible nor indeed was it a state formed, like Liberia or Sierra Leone, as a result of settlements.²⁵

Leopold's Congo Free State came into existence under conditions that were plausibly designed to render colonial rule unappealing by having certain inevitable consequences. In the first instance, the financial condition under which the new Congo Free State operated to encouraged Leopold, early enough to seek a re-negotiation of the provisions relating to the restrictions on tariffs. He did that in 1889 by organising a conference in Brussels overtly concerned with the task of putting in place an effective means of implementing the abolition of slavery mentioned in the Berlin General Act, as he also sought and obtained, a modification of the tariff regime, allowing the imposition of an import tariff of 10 per cent.²⁶

However, tariff reforms, seem not to have been sufficient on their own and Leopold was therefore prompted to embark upon a range of other initiatives that were later to lead to the formation of the Congo Reform Association, the publication of the famous Casement Report and the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry in 1904-05. In September 1891, a domanical regime was put in place granting the state ownership of all 'vacant land', and asserting in the process, state ownership over all ivory and rubber. Traders who bought such products from natives were liable to charges of possessing stolen goods. In the same vein, the administration was to institute a system of labour service instead of direct taxation in which the natives had to work for the administration a certain number of hours of 'public labour' every week in the form of portorage, paddling or the production of rubber, enforced under notoriously brutal conditions.²⁷

Finally, Leopold resorted to seek a substantial loan from the Belgian government in exchange to bequeath, upon his death, his possessions in the Congo to the Belgian State. The very financial restrictions that were designed to ensure freedom of commerce did little other than place a premium upon the ever imaginative and violent extraction of wealth from the colony. It also resulted in the effective monopolisation of trade under the command of Leopold and the various concessionaires to whom 'vacant land' had been leased. In that sense, the demand for commercial freedom seemed to

²⁵ Fage, J.; Roberts Donnelly; Roland Anthony Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

exhaust itself under the conditions for its own establishment especially similarly like the demand for the internationalisation of the Congo was subverted through the logic of its own ends. The old conundrum that long engaged historians of the era whether trade followed the flag or vice versa missed the essential point.²⁸

1.1.2 German Occupation of Cameroon

Before 1884, Germany was reluctant in the acquisition of overseas territory. Germany was rather concerned with her internal reorganization especially after her unification in 1871. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was interested in the industrialization of Germany and wanted the country to become the greatest European power at that time. In 1884, Germany became interested in the acquisition of territories in Africa. Through the influence of Otto von Bismarck, the Berlin Colonial Conference was held in 1884 to 1885. Germany after 1884 became actively involved in the scramble and partition of Africa. The territories which were finally occupied in Africa included Cameroon, Tanganyika, Togoland and German South West Africa known as Namibia.²⁹ Although Otto von Bismarck was initially opposed to the acquisition of colonies by Germany. He believed very strongly that it was inappropriate for Germany to become actively involved in the administration of a colony. Rather he expected that the initiative overseas should be taken by economic interests with the state playing a subordinating role. Bismarck's vision was that Germany should become a European and not a world power. He was more concerned with industrializing the country, building a strong navy and manufacturing arms in order to compete effectively with Britain. After 1884, he became the colonial man and was at the forefront of organizing a conference which was intended to map out strategies for the partition of the continent.³⁰

1.2 Reasons for German Occupation of Cameroon

The British reluctance to annex Cameroon made German traders in the territories to pressure their home government for an annexation. The traders also believed that

²⁸ Fage, J.; Roberts Donnelly; Roland Anthony Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

²⁹ V.J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Buea 1996 p.58.

³⁰ Ibid.

German annexation would give them better and more permanent protection than the British annexation. At the same period, the German traders in the territory were faced with stiff competition from French traders. Through their chief representative in the territory, Adolph Woermann of the Woermann firm, they requested the annexation of the territory by Germany. Woermann in seeking the German annexation of the territory, wanted to break the middleman monopoly of trade that was enjoyed by the Duala. He also wanted to open plantations in the Cameroons and also expand his shipping links. Beside that German traders wanted their country to join the colonial race and acquire spheres of influence.³¹

They had realized that Cameroon was the most important area for German trade and the traders believed that by annexing Cameroon, the high debts which the coastal middlemen owed them would be paid. There was also the influence of the Colonial society. Founded in 1882 and later joined by the Pan-German League and the Navy League founded in 1890 and 1899 respectively, all in favour of German acquisition of colonies. Gradually, Bismarck eventually supported colonization essentially for prestige purposes and in order to make Germany acquire spheres of influence. All of these were closely linked with the pressure of a growing population on limited resources in an economy which was closely dependent on overseas trade.³²

1.2.1 The British and French Manoeuvres in North Africa

Both Britain and France were interested in Egypt but only one of them could control Egypt. German interests in Morocco were frustrated by Britain and France because France was interested in acquiring Morocco to the detriment of Germany. From all these, Bismarck finally decided in 1883 that Germany should negotiate treaties with the chiefs of Cameroon. In 1883 as well, Britain also decided in favour of the annexation of the Cameroons. The change in the British position was largely due to the fact that after 1882, France started concluding treaties and commercial conventions with the natives along the Niger and the Congo.

³¹ Fage, J.; Roberts Donnelly; Roland Anthony Oliver, *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

³² Ibid.

By the terms of these treaties and conventions, French traders began excluding British traders from trading in certain areas along the coast which annoyed the British. Before 1882, Britain and France respected the unstated agreement to avoid empire building but the British colonial policy in Egypt was antagonizing the French. They rejected the agreement and went on to acquire political and commercial zones of influence along the Niger, Benue, Senegal and the Congo. This was made clear by the French Minister of Marine and Colonies. He described the new French policy as one intended to ensure the freedom of French trade. It thus ensured the signing of political and commercial conventions.

The British of course, looked at the French policy differently. On 11th July 1883, the Head of the British Consular and African Department, Percy Anderson described the French policy as one which was antagonistic to British policy. The policy was also described as progressing sluggishly, feverishly though it never ceased. The findings of the fact-finding mission undertaken by Consul Hewett confirmed the new French policy towards acquiring spheres of influence on the West African coast. It revealed that, the French were busy signing treaties with the kings of Cameroon. This alarmed the British Foreign Office, especially when kings Akwa and Bell informed the British in April 1883 that the French had signed a treaty with king “Pass All” of Malimba. Hewett therefore left for Cameroon with treaty forms which the chiefs were to sign secretly in order to protect British commercial interests in the territory. On 6 July 1884, Hewett sent Captain Brooke of HMS Opal to Cameroon with some of the treaty forms while visiting the Coast of Nigeria.³³

1.2.2 German Cliché in the Cameroons

At Big Batanga in the Cameroons, Brooke got the news of the movement of the German ship, the Moewe in the region and he quickly dispatched Lieutenant Moore to Douala to inform the kings and chiefs not to sign any treaty until the arrival of Consul Hewett from Nigeria. As the British were issuing commands on the high seas, Bismarck had earlier in February 1884 instructed Dr. Gustav Nachtigal to go to Africa and safeguard the interests of German traders there. It was until 19 April 1884 that Bismarck informed

³³ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.60.

the British Foreign Office about Nachtigal's mission to West Africa. The British Foreign Office was told that Dr. Nachtigal was going to complete the information which was in possession of the German Foreign Office at Berlin on the state of German trade on that coast. The British Government was asked to assist Nachtigal wherever need be.³⁴

The British underrated Bismarck's schemes and gave him the opportunity to annex Cameroon. He later drafted a letter to Nachtigal in which he was instructed to take the coast between Bimbia and Cape St. John. He was also instructed to hoist the German flag and to declare that German firms had signed treaties with the chiefs. While Nachtigal's was on his way to Douala, the representative of the Woermann firm in Douala, Edward Schmidt received a confidential letter from Adolf Woermann in Hamburg. In the note, he was instructed to work secretly with Johannes Voss, who was the agent of Jantzen and Thormaehlen in Douala, in negotiating treaty terms with the Duala chiefs. Schmidt was instructed to prove to the kings that they would benefit a lot if they were protected by the Kaiser of Germany. He was to finish all preparations before the English became aware of them and prevent them. The confidential letter further instructed Schmidt to get the cession of very extensive lands as private property especially those suitable for plantations. This land was intended to be re-sold later.³⁵

The contested territory of the Cameroons was limited to the coast whose main and most influential settlement, Douala was controlled by two great families: the Akwa and the Bell. The Akwa clan was ruled by King Akwa (Ngando Mpondo) and Jim Ekwalla of Deido. Meanwhile the Bell clan was ruled by King Bell (Ndumba Lobe) on the left flank of the Wouri River and Prince Lock Priso (Kuma Mbape) on the right bank of Hickory town present day Bonaberi. Within the two great families, the princes of Deido tried to demonstrate their independence from King Bell and Akwa.³⁶

1.2.3 Conclusion

This chapter examined the general principles of colonial transport policies in Africa that outlined the theory of effective occupation of Africa by the European countries and

³⁴ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.60.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

impact on colonial transport policy. It also portrayed the manner through which the conference was carried out and the resolutions taken during the conference. The chapter further examined how German occupation of Cameroon after the Berlin conference as one of its colonies in Africa came about, and the reasons behind the German occupation of Cameroon. The Chapter also dwelled on the British and French plan in North Africa during the partition and the German coup in the Cameroons. It asserted that the occupation of Cameroon by the Germans during the partition of Africa was basically for commercial purposes.

CHAPTER TWO

GERMAN ANNEXATION OF KAMERUN, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PLANTATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on German annexation of Kamerun and the German policy orientation towards the construction of communication infrastructure. It examines German policies towards road, railway and ports construction. Reasons for the construction of those facilities and the methods and mechanisms that were applied to realize these projects constitutes the core arguments in this chapter of the work

2.1 The Build up to German Annexation of Kamerun

The Germans played an eminent role during the period of colonialism in the annexation of territories in Africa. During the nineteenth century, the slave trade was abolished on the coast following treaties signed between the British and the coastal Duala chiefs in June 1840. The abolition of the slave led to the introduction of the legitimate trade in the coast of Kamerun. It soon transformed the coast of Kamerun into flourishing trading area. The British established trading companies such as the Ambas Bay Company, R & W. Kings and the John Holt Company. Success in trade attracted other European powers, France and Germany. The French traders concentrated their activities on the coast South of Douala. The Germans later created the Carl and Woermann firm and the Jantzen Thornvahlen firm. The presence of these firms led to trade competition between the European powers at the coast of Kamerun. In the face of this competition the Duala Coastal people preferred a British annexation of their territory.¹

¹ Shirley G. Ardener, Eye-Witness to Annexation of Cameroon, Cameroon 1883-1887, Ministry of Primary Education and West Cameroon Antiquities Commission, p. 19.

The Duala choice for a British annexation of their territory was motivated by number of reasons. The Duala were convinced by the three European powers, the British were the most powerful to protect them. The latter had fought hard to abolish the slave trade, introduced the legitimate trade and established the court of equity and Douala to settle trade disputes between European and African traders. Equally, the British had successfully restored law and order in their Calabar, a neighbouring territory to Douala. It convinced the Duala that utmost protection could only come from Britain. On this count, they preferred a British annexation of their territory.²

On 7 August 1879, led by King Akwa the coastal Duala chiefs wrote a letter addressed to the Queen of England requesting a British annexation of their territory.

Dearest Madam,

We your servants have join together and thought its better to write to you a nice loving letter which will tell you about all our wishes. We wish to have your laws in our towns. We want to have every fashion altered, also we will do according to your consuls word. Plenty wars here in our country. Plenty murder and plenty idol worshippers. Perhaps these lines of our writing will look to you as an idle tale. We have spoken to the English Consul plenty times about having an English government here. We never have answer from you,so we wish to write ourselves. When we heard about Calabar River, how they have all English laws in their towns, and how they have put away all their superstitions, oh we shall be very glad to be like Calabar now.³

This letter was signed by king Akwa, Prince Dido Acqua, Prince Black, Prince Joe Garner and Prince Lawton. In March 1881, king Bell sent a letter to the British Consul, Hewett on the same subject, complaining again that he was always writing and getting no answer. On the 6th of November 1882, kings Bell and Akwa applied to Gladstone once more, saying we want our country governed by British Government and stating that they were tired of all their disputes ending in war and loss of life.⁴

Among other reasons, the British expressed their desire to have British laws in their land and the restoration of the authority of the chief threatened by some of their subjects. The Queen was not moved by this letter occasioning the writing of the second letter, an initiative led by King Bell in March 1881 and yet the third in November 1881.

²Shirley G. Ardener, *Eye-Witness to Annexation of Cameroon, Cameroon 1883-1887*, Ministry of Primary Education and West Cameroon Antiquities Commission, p. 19.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

In spite of these official and other unofficial request, Britain was reluctant to annex Kamerun.⁵

Britain was initially reluctant to officially take over the administration of Kamerun. They were over confident in the numerous trade and friendship treaties they had signed with the coastal people. To Britain, the Kameruns shall always be for Britain. They had also wrongly thought that no European power was interested in Kamerun. This was obviously influenced by an open German support for British annexation of Kamerun in the 1870s. Over and above all else was the British traditional colonial philosophy of profit maximisation and cost minimisation. To Britain, the Cameroons was poor and could not independently run the cost of its administration. Taking over Kamerun would definitely be a colonial burden for which Britain was not ready. These considerations accounted for the British reluctance to annex Kamerun. The reluctance of the British was a cause to celebrate for the Germans who came from behind inspite of British preponderance at the coast, annexed the territory in July 1884.⁶

(a) Reasons for German Penetration into the Interior

There were some reasons that accounted for German penetration into the interior. In fact, the Germans wanted to implement the hinterland theory of Berlin conference. The theory guides that any nation occupying any part of the African coastline had the right to go into the interior. The shortage of labour in the coastal areas, the Germans wanted to get enough workers from the interior for the plantations, which they had opened in the 1890s. Abundant labour existed in the interior because the population there was larger and resistant than that of the coastal areas. People from the hinterland were needed by the German traders to serve as porters who transported goods from the interior to the coastal region. The Germans were angered by the British and French from exploiting the trade advantages in the interior of Cameroon through the River Benue and River Congo respectively. This forced the Germans to open their own access routes into the interior using Kamerun rivers. The Berlin conference and the

⁵ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*. Limbe: Pressbook, 1989, p. 89.

⁶ Ibid.

hinterland theory paved the way for the effective occupation of Kamerun by the Germans. They constructed roads, railway and telephone lines in the territory.⁷

After this successful conquest, it was necessary to emphasize economically the conquered territory. The German metropolis did not haggle over the means of this development in spite of the unwillingness of the local populations. The policy of development, though philanthropic proceeds with firmness and this declaration of Dr. Soft (on September 2, 1913) gives all the content of it: “the colonies will thrive with natives for them and not in spite of them and against them”. The economic development passes obligatorily by the creation of the companies, scientific research and the realization of an assessment of the riches and potentialities of the occupied territory. It makes it possible to organize a rational and methodical exploitation of the country, and in this direction, very early agriculture held the first place in the German strategy and it remained nowadays the first sectors of the GDP of Kamerun. Also, since 1890, a company of exploitation is born: the *Gesellschaft Nordwest-Kamerun* " with a concession of 100000km² and extending from Sanaga to the British border in Nigeria.

In November 1898, a new company settled in the south with 50000km²: the “*Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun*”. These companies took the name of concessions. After the formula of concessions followed by those of the plantations, there were grouped in company such as the Victoria company born in 1895 with a capital of 2500000 Francs (5000US \$) of the time and the Bibundi company (1500000 francs of capital, 3000 USS). The development is such as one count in 1913 in Kamerun: 58 plantations, 195 European employees, 17827 Kamerunians employees on more than 28225 hectares cultivated. The main cultivated crops were: banana, cocoa, coffee and the hevea (rubber). Timber exploitation follows closely agriculture (8000t of mahogany tree for 400000 marks of receipts in 1913). The exploitation of ivory in addition to the production of the cotton and the development of cattle rearing and breeding in Northern Kamerun came latter. There was also the practice of force labour and portorage in the hinterland.

⁷ Mveng Engelbert, *Histoire du Cameroun*. Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde 1985.

2.1.1 German Annexation of Kamerun

The Germans played an important role in the annexation of territories in Africa and particularly Kamerun. The German traders were actively pressing for annexation of Kamerun from their own government, Bismarck was at first not willing to comply that the British had been willing to annex Kamerun. Some twelve years earlier he had been quite lukewarm saying; he want no colonies. According to him colonies were good for nothing but to supply stations. For us in Germany colonial business would like silken sables in the noble families of Poland who have no shirts to their backs.

However, times were changing, Adolf Woermann had been exerting strong pressure in Germany for a colonial policy. He submitted a memorandum in 1883, calling for cession by Spain to Germany of Fernando Po and of parts of Rio Muni, as well as urging on the government the disadvantages of Germany of a British annexation of Kamerun. The advantages he hoped for was the expansion of his shipping line; the establishment of plantations, which would be favoured under Germany and not Britain or French colonial rule; and profit from land speculation. Bismarck still hesitated, but in November 1883, he went so far as to agree to support the establishment of a consular service, a warship patrol negotiations for a coaling station in Fernando Po, and trade treaties with the chiefs but not annexation.

In the year 1884, the explorer, Dr. Gustav Nachtigal, was appointed to assist this project, he was sent to Africa to study German trade and the prospect for a coaling station; to look into British intentions as to annexations in West Africa; and to secure the rights of German merchants on foreign territory, as well as signing treaties with the chiefs of independent areas. The German foreign office asked the British Government to assist Nachtigal while he was on the coast. Before Nachtigal arrives Africa, Bismarck haven been influenced by merchants towards colonial policy, decided on 28th April 1884 to draft a new despatch to Nachtigal, instructing him to take the coast between Bimbia and Cape St. John to hoist the German flag, and to declare that the German firms had signed treaties with the chiefs. Nachtigal hasten to the coast and his companion Max Buchner streamed into the Cameroon estuary in July 1884.

After annexation of the territory Kamerun, Germany became Kamerun's main trading partner. Between 1903 and 1912, Germany imported from Cameroon not less than 60% of Kamerun's exportable products and Kamerun imported not less than 80% of her needs from Germany in the same period.⁸ The British, the French and the majority of the coastal inhabitants of Kamerun were taken by surprise by the German annexation. Except for the French, Consul Hewett being informed of the annexation decided to sail straight to Douala to verify the validity of the annexation, but before he left, he instructed Thomas Lewis to annex Victoria as an integral part of her Majesty's domination and hoist the British flag. He held meetings with German officials together with chiefs, but failed to convince King Bell to change his mind. He later drafted letters to the Douala chiefs expressing shock that after their application for British protection they went further and accepted another power.⁹

In fact, King Bell replied that, he had signed the German treaty because he and his chiefs received no final answer to their numerous requests for British protection. Those who did not sign the treaty opposed the German annexation.¹⁰ British Missionaries and traders protested vehemently against the German annexation and requested for the cancellation of the annexation treaty. The Missionaries argued that the entire Kamerun District was British, and that the Germans had acquired it by intrigues. The traders on their part argued that the German treaty, which was negotiated in the dark, violated an Anglo-German treaty signed with the chiefs in 1883 confirming that every one in Kamerun would be happy if the territory was under British control.¹¹ They considered it their own victory over Great Britain. The Germans had in mind, French treaties with the chiefs of Maliba and other Villages in Douala.

On the part of the indigenous population, violence erupted between those who favoured and those who were against the German annexation. Some of King Bell's people rose against him, forcing him and his family to take refuge in the bush and to seek for German protection. There was also an outbreak of hostilities towards the Germans which resulted in many wounded and a few killed on both sides. In 1885 Chancellor Bismarck admitted in the German parliament, that there was fighting in Kamerun

⁸ Ngoh, *History Of Cameroon Since 1800*, 1996, p. 84.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ V.G Fanson, *Cameroon History For Secondary Schools and Colleges, The Colonial and Post Colonial Periods*, Vol. 2, 1989, p.17.

¹¹ Ibid.

between the indigenes and the Germans, caused by the British Consul, missionaries and traders. The chancellor warned that Germany would take her responsibility in Kamerun seriously. Some Cameroonians who supported German annexation began to volunteer to the German army and were sent abroad for training.¹²

The Germans decided to act forcefully to put an end to all anti-German activities and propaganda in Kamerun. They threatened to banish all British nationals if they continued to take side in any way with the hostile indigenes. German authorities began to search and to destroy the homes of British nationals whom they suspected of arming or inciting the indigenes. They tried to make the position of the missionaries and British traders uncomfortable, with the hope of sending them away from the territory. They began to talk about bringing German Missionaries to replace the British Missionaries in the territory. Attempts by the Germans and the British to increase their respective protectorates of Douala and Victoria resulted in a major scramble for possession of more Kamerun land.¹³

German Penetration of the Interior and the Consolidation of German Rule

The territory actually occupied in the summer of 1884 was confined to the coastal region; but there was no intention on the part of the Germans to restrict their interest to that narrow strip of land. From the very beginning the Germans were afraid of being shut off from the interior and its trade by the English, whose treaty-making activities directed by that purpose was the order of the day. The riches of Kamerun that had attracted the Europeans to the territory were found but in the interior. Their movement into the interior for trade was restricted by the coastal middlemen. For years it had been the wish of European traders to free themselves of these profiteering middlemen and to have direct commercial contact with the interior.

The German Government interest to open the interior was not for the purpose of satisfying mere curiosity about geography; they were made by German traders with far more tangible objects in mind than that. The value of Adamawa, the name given to the extensive region of the hinterland lying north and south of the Benue River, had been known to German traders for many years, not only by reason of the goods that came

¹² V.G Fanzo, *Cameroon History For Secondary Schools and Colleges, The Colonial and Post Colonial Periods* Vol.2 1989 p.17.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.17.

from that region but also from the reports made by the explorers who had been there. In the 1850's Barth had worked in the interior for the Royal Geographical Society of London. In the sixties G. Rohlfs and in the years 1869-73 Gustav Nachtigal had explored those lands and reported on their value. In 1879 and later in 1882-83 Flegel, German explorer and trader, had entered Adamawa by way of the Niger and Benue Rivers, and was so much impressed by the opportunities for trade that he sought to organize a German trading company for its exploitation. The interior of the Kameruns assumed an exaggerated importance and value in the eyes of the German traders because of the reports of the huge profits made by the natives who had the monopoly of the middleman's trade or *wischenhandel*, as the Germans called it. In their acceptance of German rule in 1884 the Duala monopolists had no intention of surrendering this profitable trade to the white man; its protection from white interference was assured in the treaty made with the German traders and later ratified by Nachtigal.

It was quite certain that, in their desire to protect this trade, the Duala rulers would have rejected Hewett's proposed treaty, had the English consul arrived earlier than Nachtigal. The great profits in the trade were contributed by the natives in the hinterland and by the whites on the coast. It was not to be wondered at that the Duala people gave up their primitive agriculture and all other forms of economic activity for the advantages to be derived from that trade.¹⁴ As a consequence, they had come to depend in very large measure on imported foods, which they bought from the white traders. Assisted by the jungle and by a knowledge of the routes into the hinterland, the monopolists could with ease prevent whites from getting access to the interior markets unless they were accompanied by a military escort. Superior weapons acquired by trade with the white men assured the monopolists of means to keep natives of the interior from reaching the coast for direct trade with the whites.

Infact, the first Europeans who moved into the interior testified the low costs of palm products and ivory as compared with the prices paid to the Duala middlemen on the coast. And it was not long before the Germans regretted their promise to Kings Bell and Akwa about the protection of their trade. How to circumvent that trade became more and more the talk of the traders with the passing of time other factors were to make the interior appear even more valuable. Beginning 1885, when plantations were

¹⁴ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

being developed by the white men, the shortage of labour for the plantations directed attention toward the interior as a source of labour-supply. Workers were also needed as porters, since the portage was the only means of transportation supplied by the indigenes in that part of the world. When it was learned later that a good deal of the trade of the interior, kept flowing to the whites on the coast by the native monopoly and by natural barriers, went north to the advantage of the English in Nigeria or south to the advantage of the French in the Upper Congo region, Germans redoubled their efforts to get that trade for themselves.¹⁵

Moreover, the Clause on freedom of trade and navigation on the Congo Basin and the Niger was not fully respected by King Leopold II of Belgium and France respectively. Germany could not easily check British and French trading activities in the interior. Efforts were made to persuade indigenous traders in the interior to bring their goods to the coast instead of taking them north or south to the English or French. It was not an easy task to discover the best routes into the hinterland and to construct roads to facilitate commercial intercourse. The costs were far too great for private trading companies to bear. The rivers were navigable only for a few miles, since mountain barriers created falls that prevented approach by water. Indigenes too fought hard to defend their middleman monopoly. Soldiers were used to open up the way into the interior. Given the prevailing circumstance, portage was the principal means of transport in the early part of their administration in Kamerun.

The costs of suppressing the clashes deprived the colonial administration of funds for the construction of roads for the development of transport facilities. The request for funds for the Socialist and Centrist opposition to imperialism and its costs. To meet this doctrinaire opposition devices of various kinds had to be used; such appropriations were said to be for scientific purposes or to crush slave trade in the interior. Traders tried to get missionaries settled in the interior so that the military protection given them and their humanitarian work would be available for traders venturing inland. Flegel and Staudinger had worked in 1885 to get into the hinterland by way of the Niger and Benue Rivers, only to be thwarted in their labours by Bismarck's treaty of 1886 with England extending to Yola the boundary between English and German territories. This decision forced the Germans to limit their earliest activity to

¹⁵ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

the coastal regions and to find overland routes then into the interior. Early explorations by the Germans were near the coast.

In this work in 1884-85 Nachtigal employed two Swedes, Knutson and Valdau, whose knowledge of the country near Mt. Cameroon made them valuable agents of Germany in the treaty-making contest with Consul White and Rogozinski. Buchner, who represented the German Government in the Cameroons for nearly one year, and Hugo Zoller, a German journalist employed by the Kolnereitung, explored and made treaties in the hinterland of Duala toward the mountains. In December 1885 Governor Soden sent Puttkamer and Krabbes to study Mt. Cameroon and to establish relations with the tribes there by informing them that the Germans were now in control of their country and to give chieftains flags as symbols of the German authority they were to exercise in the future.

Puttkamer raised the German flag at Buea, which, by reason of its location on the slope of Mt. Cameroon and for its excellent climate, was later to become the capital of the German colony. The people here were told that their treaty with Rogozinski was no longer valid by virtue of the understanding between England and Germany and that the whole mountain as well as the people had become German. A German geologist named Schwarz worked in the region beyond Mt. Cameroon in the winter of 1885-86.¹⁶ Another explorer was Zintgraff, who in 1886-87 explored the country that lay between the sources of the Cameroon River and the Rio del Rey. Wherever the Germans went, they had palavers with the indigenes, informed them of their new duties, gave them flags as symbols of German rule, settled disputes, gave recognition to chieftains, and warned them that henceforth they had no right to put any person to death. These earliest explorations had interesting results.

The lower slopes of Mt. Cameroon had a rich soil suitable for plantations. But Victoria was still in English hands. This barred easy access to the mountain. It was also learned that Rio del Rey was not river, a discovery that made necessary a clearer definition of the boundary line between German and English possessions. Germans found they had reason to suspect the activities of Sir Harry H. Johnston among the indigenes in what was claimed to be German territory. The presence of English traders

¹⁶ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

in the area behind Mt. Cameroon was displeasing to the Germans, who tried to interest German traders in the exploitation of the region. The effort was made in vain, for the latter had no desire to trade where they would have to meet the competition of Calabar native monopolists or of English traders and where the exact boundaries between English and German claims had not been marked. These early explorations did not touch the real hinterland of the colony. Since the German Government at home discouraged efforts to exploit the hinterland by way of the Niger in competition with the English or by way of the Congo in competition with the French, Governor Soden felt that the best policy was to work gradually from the coast toward the interior and to establish friendly relations with the native kings in the immediate neighbourhood.

Besides, some German traders did not like this cautious policy, having a preference for the speedy opening of the interior to trade; they wanted the Government to send in expeditions; they stood ready to aid, but only with advice. Money they would not give, although they offered to sell the Government at cost whatever goods it needed in its dealings with the indigenes. It was with aid of such qualified sort that the governor wondered whether it might not better be labelled good business. From what place the best route into the interior could be found was a matter of some debate. The first one to have a plan was Zintgraff, who had already been exploring near Mt. Cameroon and who always had plans for everything to the irritation of colonial officials. In 1887 he worked out a scheme for a line of stations running into the interior by way of the high plateau beyond the mountain, where he thought an excellent road could be made for trading caravans. Such a route, he reasoned, would draw native trade from the interior to the coast. All the details with estimates of costs were worked out and presented to Bismarck.¹⁷ The great costs of the proposal naturally turned the Government against it; but permission was given to Zintgraff to establish one of the proposed stations at Barombi, not far from the Mungo River.

In addition, Zintgraff hoped that this station would become a centre of scientific research and of trade with the interior and that Germans stationed here might persuade indigenes of the interior to carry their goods to the coast. Later, in 1889, and farther in the interior, Zintgraff founded another station, at Bali, where he swore 'blood friendship' with the indigenous king, who promised to supply workers and soldiers for German

¹⁷ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

needs. From Bali late in 1889 Zintgraff made a hazardous journey over the highlands to Ibi on the Benue River. He was lost to the world for seven months, during which it was believed that he had been killed by natives. On this trip he made efforts to enter Adamawa; but he was checked by hostile natives who would not allow him passage through their territory. Not to be defeated by black man or white, Zintgraff wrote in April 1890 to Chancellor Goprivi to urge that a German agent under the consul in Lagos be stationed at Yola on the Benue. Later he had plans for an expedition to go to the Schari River. He did most of his work, however, near Bali, where he had the support of the trading firm of Jantzen & Thormahlen. Here he committed the serious mistake of arming two thousand indigenes, who were to aid him in an expedition into Adamawa.

This expedition was never carried out; instead, in troubles that later broke out these very guns were used in expelling the Germans from this part of the Kameruns. By 1894 the Germans had to give up all thought of getting into the interior by this northern overland route and attention was turned to possible routes farther south. While Zintgraff was busy with his schemes in the north, Kund and Tappenbeck, whose names had already become known because of their Congo explorations, were at work in the south. They made their first trip into the interior in 1888, only to be driven back by a shortage of food and by the opposition of the Bakoko people, who were to fight Germans many years in defence of their monopoly of trade between the interior and the coast. A later expedition resulted in discoveries that reveal much about the generally prevailing ignorance of African geography.

Moreover, Explorers found that the Sanaga River and the Nyong River were not open to navigation and that the Benue River and the Congo River were farther away from the coast than people had believed. They erected a station at Yaounde on the high plateau of the interior at a distance of twenty-two days' journey from the coast. It was the first German centre in the interior of the Kameruns and, in time, became the most important post as a bulwark against advancing Islam, as a centre of trade, as a point for sending expeditions in all directions into the interior, and as a place for tapping the trade of the interior and diverting its flow from the English in the north and the French in the south to the Germans on the coast.¹⁸

¹⁸ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

Expeditions into the interior were few because the home Government was unwilling to ask a hostile Reichstag for the huge funds necessary. Traders were not satisfied with the slow progress being made; so, thought was given to schemes for speeding up the conquest of the interior without burdening the home Government too much. To the argument of the colonial opposition that traders as the beneficiaries of these expeditions should bear the costs the German trading houses had objections. The firms of Woermann and Jantzen & Thormahlen expressed great unwillingness to explore the interior so long as rival traders, white and black, followed them and deprived them of the trade for which they were asked to make these sacrifices. Even the rivalry between these two firms was a problem that made co-operation difficult when not impossible.

In a letter to Bismarck in April 1889 Woermann said that for a grant of exclusive trading rights in a clearly defined region on the Upper Malimba (or Sanaga) River he would open a station at Edea, would seek to develop trade with the interior, and would even make efforts to have the soil cultivated. From explorers' reports he thought he had reason to believe that the area offered great commercial possibilities, which had not been developed because no trading firm had wanted to bear the large costs needed to open the region merely to have rivals step in and deprive the pioneers of the trade to which their sacrifices entitled them. If such a monopoly were granted for a period of years, Woermann said that he would be willing to pay an export tax on the goods sent out from his exclusive zone in addition to the import duties he was already paying on goods coming to his firm in the colony.

The issue placed before the German Government by this Hamburg trader was a difficult one in view of the written promise given to England in the summer of 1885 that there would be freedom of trade without discrimination against anyone. Kusserow, the Prussian representative in Hamburg who handled Berlin's negotiations with the Hamburg traders, decided after a conference with them that the principle of freedom of trade would not be violated if monopolies of the kind sought by Woermann were made equally available to all traders in the colony. Lengthy discussion in the colony and in Berlin led eventually to decrees permitting such monopolies to those who desired them and to the granting of those asked for by Woermann and Jantzen & Thormahlen. The areas for the exercise of these exclusive rights were defined and the Government

promised the two firms to keep out rivals. After getting these monopolies the two German firms decided to send a trading caravan into the interior with Curt Morgen.¹⁹

As successor of the explorer Tappenbeck, he had been in Yaounde, where a German botanist named Zenker was sole representative of German authority. The latter, for long periods cut off from the coast by the hostile Bakoko, had made a name for himself at this solitary island station. He had married a native woman by whom he had several children, had worked tactfully to get and to keep the good will of the Yaounde people, and had made excellent studies of the native languages and of the plant and animal life in the surrounding country. It was in April 1890 that Morgen was commissioned by the governor to open a way, over the opposition of native monopolists, for white traders and for the trading caravan being equipped by the two German trading houses. The latter wanted access to the huge stocks of ivory reported in store at Yaounde and in Ngila, a town farther north.

Besides, to avert all possibility of dispute on this mission, the traders worked out a rigid agreement affecting their special interests; they had also an understanding with Morgen, to whom was given the absolute command of the expedition. The caravan returned late in 1890 with a good deal of ivory; but it had failed to purchase any at Ngila, whose king was too busy with war to have time for trade. Morgen went on beyond Yaounde and arrived, at length, at Ibi on the Benue, having passed through the important native cities of Ngila, Joko, Tibati, and Banjo in Adamawa. This expedition gave the Germans their first knowledge of inner Kamerun. Morgen's efforts to establish German control in the area by asking the Moslem princes to accept German flags met with the reply that no such relation could be entered into without the prior approval of the Emir of Yola, who was the feudal overlord of these rulers of Adamawa and was, in turn, vassal to the Sultan of Sokoto in north-western Nigeria.

Indeed, for the first time, the Germans realized to what degree England might interfere in the affairs of the hinterland of the Cameroons by direct control of Yola and Sokoto and by her indirect control of the princes of Adamawa. Just when the Germans learned of the importance of Yola and of English influence there, it was also discovered that the French were hard at work establishing territorial claims between the Congo

¹⁹ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

River and Lake Chad. French treaties here would set a limit to German expansion in the hinterland of the Kamerun. In the summer of 1890 the French and English made an agreement defining their respective boundaries near the Chad.²⁰ By now it was clear that the French were becoming unusually active in the colonial sphere. At home French colonial opinion was being organized with the formation in November 1890 of the (Comite de l'Afrique Francaise); in Central Africa expeditions were being undertaken or planned under such leaders as Gholet, Mizon, Grampel, Monteil, Dybowski, Maistre, Brazza, and others.

The only officially defined boundary between French and German territory was the Cameroons' southern one, running up the Campo River and ending ultimately at 15 degrees east longitude. The Germans were eager to extend their territorial acquisitions beyond this theoretical eastern boundary, but the fear was now real that the French would prevent such expansion. In fact, it was possible that the French might establish claims west of that degree line. colonial opinion in Germany began to bestir itself when it was realized that the best German claims in this region fell 280 kilometres short of 15 degrees east longitude. Steps were now taken to establish claims in the eastern hinterland of the Kamerun. There began what The Times of London called a 'race for the Chad', in which the participants were France, England, and Germany.

The head of the colonial administration in Germany, Dr. Kayser, wanted to send out an expedition to establish claims for Germany and to get a footing on the Chad, which exerted a mysterious attraction on European powers. He talked matters over with the inventive Zintgraff, who had a scheme for an expedition to the Schari River, which flowed into the Chad. Zintgraff estimated the costs of such an expedition at 300,000 marks; but Chancellor Caprivi, quite indifferent to colonial ventures, would have nothing to do with an enterprise that was to be so costly and could have no immediate returns. The chancellor was willing to spend only very small sums on Africa. Governor Zimmerer in the Cameroons could see no value in an expedition to the Chad, which, he felt, would merely quiet a certain body of opinion in Germany and have no other advantage. Kayser, the head of the colonial Division of the German Foreign Office, wanted an expedition sent to Chad to establish claims; he also wanted roads and stations constructed in the interior of the Cameroons to make travel easy and safe.

²⁰ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

Confronted with the problem of getting necessary funds, he apparently decided to avoid asking the Reichstag for grants and went ahead with arrangements for a secret loan from the Hamburg traders, who would be almost the sole beneficiaries of the scheme, for the accomplishment of these aims.²¹ The Kaiser was to borrow the money in the name of the **Kamerun** and future levies on that colony's budgets were to repay the loan. Had the plan succeeded, the Reichstag would have lost a good deal of its control over colonial finances. But the secret got out. The Reichstag thereupon made a loan to the **Kamerun**, but made certain that no such trick in the future should deprive it of its functions. Now that funds were available steps were taken to send out an expedition in 1891.

However, Morgen was selected as best fitted to command it; but illness in his family made it impossible for him to accept the charge. The command was then given to Gravenreuth. He was an officer who had had some experience in East Africa and was at the point of leading an expedition into southern **Kamerun** to put down rebellion and to establish German control with the aid of several hundred Dahomeans, whom he had purchased from a king in Dahomey. The latter had captured them and was fattening them for sacrificial slaughter when Graven-reuth arrived in search of possible soldiers for his campaign. Before starting on the Chad expedition, Gravenreuth let himself be persuaded to lead troops against the rebellious of Buea people; and in this campaign he was killed in November 1891. The command of the Chad mission was then given to Ramsay, who never got started because he felt he did not have sufficient soldiers and carriers for such an undertaking.

Due to lack of funds and men likewise made it impossible for Ramsay to carry out an expedition into south- eastern **Kamerun**. Ramsay placed the blame for the failure of the Chad plans on both Chancellor Caprivi and Governor Zimmerer, whose lack of interest resulted in Germany's having no valid claims in the far interior at the time boundary negotiations began with the French. The governor wanted to save money and was quite content to confine activity in the **Kamerun** to the region of the coast only; he felt that efforts to establish control in the interior should be very slow and gradual so that native hostility would not be aroused. There were others who similarly preferred the method of peaceful penetration with missionaries preceding the trader.

²¹Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

Woermann shared those ideas, and one of the interesting phases of his Cameroons activity was his aid to German Catholics in beginning their missionary activity at Edea, where he had a factory. Thus, it was largely the indifference of Caprivi and Zimmerer that accounted for Germany's lack of territorial claims in the hinterland. The French in the meantime had been exploring a good deal. By 1893 it seemed likely that the Kamerun eastern frontier would be determined by a straight line running from Yola in the north to the easternmost point of the southern boundary at 15 degrees east longitude.²² Some feared that the French might establish valid claims even west of that line.

There was reason for worry in the summer of 1893, when both England and France began talking to Germany about defining boundaries. Several German expeditions were then engaged in efforts to establish claims for Germany in anticipation of these boundary negotiations, especially with France. A private expedition, under the command of Uechtritz, had been sent out by the Colonial Society in an effort to get for Germany by treaty those legal claims for which an indifferent Government had been unwilling to make any sacrifices. High hopes were held that this expedition would get far into the interior and succeed in winning large areas of territory for the Kamerun. But the French were also actively engaged in treaty-making with natives and had gained concessions in Yola that proved very disturbing to both Germans and English.

It was fortunate for Germany that at this moment the opportunity came for defining boundaries with England beyond Yola. In these negotiations, which began in the summer of 1893, there was some dispute about Yola, whose emir-controlled Adamawa through his vassals and which had great advantages for both the English and the Germans. The Germans made no great fight for the possession of this town, because of the compensating advantages offered by the treaty. By extending the boundary from Yola to the Chad, this agreement constituted a recognition of German claims in a region where no explorers had been and where no treaties with natives existed. Regrettable as Yola's loss was for Germany, it was a triumph to have claims to territory as far as the Chad.

²² Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

In 1886, when the boundary with Nigeria was extended to Yola, the Germans thought they would never reach the Chad. People who wanted Germany to possess Yola were most critical of the treaty with England, which was signed November 14th, 1893. This surrender seemed doubtly reprehensible at that time, for long and serious disputes had been going on over English interference with Germans trading on the Niger River. German bitterness against England was somewhat sweetened by assurances of aid to the Colonial Society's expedition travelling up the Niger. The English were quite ready to aid anybody in a position to thwart French activity in regions uncomfortably close to the Niger.²³

Negotiations with France over boundaries in the hinterland of the Kamerun began in July 1893. When the negotiations began, the Germans had only the weakest of claims, but they made the most of them. Paul Staudinger, who had striven to interest Germans in Adamawa ever since his travels there in the company of Flegel, wanted the negotiations with France delayed until the expedition of the Colonial Society could establish treaty claims in the region. The Kolonialgesellschaft knew that negotiations with the French were going on and petitioned that Germany demand territory beyond 15 degrees east longitude as well as access to navigable branches of the Congo River. The excellent legal claims of the French based on treaty with the natives and the fact that the French had the only available information regarding that part of Africa gave France all the advantages in the negotiations. But the French did not press their claims as strongly as they might have done; they were too eager to have Germany recognize their right to a foothold on the Chad and to access to the Benue and Niger Rivers through the Mao Kebbi. The Germans were equally determined to maintain the hold they had on the Chad by virtue of the English treaty, which they published as soon as possible after its signature to show the French what rights they had.

When Christmas came in 1893, colonial groups in Germany demanded that negotiations with France over the boundaries be broken off. Excited colonial opinion in both countries made demands and carried on propaganda that proved highly embarrassing. During a halt in conversations in the Christmas and New Year holidays, a very important meeting of interested people was held in the Foreign Office to discuss the German position. The Colonial Society repeated its request that parleys be post-

²³ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

poned until its expedition under Uechtritz could make treaties extending German claims beyond 15 degrees east longitude. Others feared that, while Germany waited for these doubtful achievements, the French would begin the exploitation of the region already claimed, and that the French explorer Julien, with his knowledge of Arabic, would have a great advantage over Uechtritz in the making of treaties with the natives.²⁴ The outcome of the conference was the difficult decision to resume negotiations with the French on January 6th, 1894, without waiting to hear from Uechtritz. After the negotiators had agreed on the boundaries on February 4th, 1894, rumours of the results became known and efforts were made by individuals and by organizations to prevent the acceptance of the treaty, which was said to surrender too much to the French.

In February the English Government protested through Malet against the rumour that Germany was planning to give the French access to the Benue, a position which, it was argued, the French would use only to annoy the English. 'Her Majesty's Government would deplore any such cession which they could not look upon as a friendly act,' in consideration of the recent assistance given by England to Germany in that region. Members of the Pan-German League learned of the essential points of the treaty and fought ratification. They objected to any cession of territory to France west of 15 degrees east longitude. One branch of the Pan-German League, from Elberfeld, protested February 24th that this cession of territory to the French made impossible any union of East and West Africa; it demanded that the agreement should not be accepted. The Pan-German League carried on a well-organized campaign against the treaty, distributing formal protests for signature and for presentation to the Government against the 'concessions' made to France.

The treaty that gave the Kamerun her form and size until 1911 was signed March 15th, 1894. In anticipation of the protests sure to come from opponents of the accord, the publication of the treaty was accompanied by an official apology for it. An attempt was made to show that under the agreement Germany gained many advantages. This view was upheld even by Uechtritz and his companion Passarge, the men sent to Africa by the Colonial Society; they said that the treaty procured for Germany what could not be acquired in any other way. The most curious protest came from Italy, where the treaty was felt injurious to Italian Mediterranean policy by cutting into the

²⁴ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

hinterland of Tripoli. Now that the **Kamerun** was bounded on all sides, there remained the task of exploring the colony and of establishing German rule. How the interior should be opened to white exploitation and administration occasioned discussion that revealed differences of opinion over method.

The **Kamerun** leading trader, Adolf Woermann, opposed military expeditions that would arouse native hostility; he preferred a more cautious and a more gradual policy. He suggested in the middle nineties that missionaries be used in this work: their peaceful methods and their non-commercial goals would break down any animosity against the white man. Woermann had succeeded in persuading German Catholic missionaries to settle at Edea, where he had a factory and was developing the trade. Not long after the missionaries were at work there, the Government recognized the place as an important centre of administration. Woermann hoped that missionaries could be persuaded to labour in the interior at Ngaundere. The Colonial Division of the Foreign Office hoped also that missionaries would soon get into the interior.²⁵

Chancellor Hohenlohe and Governor Puttkamer were both more interested than their respective predecessors in developing the **Kamerun**. Puttkamer said, however, that it was utterly Utopian to establish Christian mission stations in the Mohammedan centres of Adamawa. He opposed Zintgraff's northern route into the interior through the highlands and pointed out the difficulties in the Niger-Benue water route, which Staudinger always favoured. His suggestion was that a direct way from the coast be found, perhaps along the Sanaga River and its Mbam tributary. His enthusiasm, which the home Government repeatedly felt it necessary to restrain, made him desire to be the head of an expedition to discover a possible route into the interior. Those who tried to carry out his plan found it impracticable because of nature's barriers and impossible because of natives hostility. But Puttkamer never lost interest in this question; he was convinced, as he once said, that the essence of all colonial problems was transportation and that the first man to solve that problem would win the game. It was in the governorship of Puttkamer that most of the interior was subjected to German control. The method was largely military; the agents in the middle nineties were Kamptz and Dominik, working in the regions near Tibati and Yaounde.

²⁵ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

With the establishment of German authority in the interior the Moslem Haussas, the great traders of the hinterland, inquired about the possibilities of direct trade with the Germans on the coast. These people had formerly taken their goods north to English Yola. Dominik was very much interested in the diversion of this trade to the Germans on the coast; to that end he wanted to construct roads and to assure the Hausa of adequate protection against natives who would certainly oppose this attack on their trade monopolies. Puttkamer became interested and thought of going to Ngila and Yaounde for a conference with the Hausa on the matter. In March 1895 he was able to report that for the first time Hausa had come to the coast from Yaounde. To facilitate the flow of this trade in its new channels he recommended the construction of a railroad from Kribi to Yaounde, a suggestion often made but never adopted. Puttkamer never lost his enthusiasm for developing the colony commercially. Under him German rule was rapidly extended into the interior, often too rapidly for the peace of the colony.

In December 1895 the alarming report was made that a Belgian trading company had established posts in south-eastern Kamerun, in an area that was German by the terms of the treaty of 1894 with France. On a trip to Yaounde in 1897 Governor Puttkamer heard natives speak of whites who lived and traded in a region said to be several days' journey east and south-east of Yaounde. But it was not until 1898 that the first German explorer arrived there. It was Carnap-Quernheimb, head of the Yaounde station, whose explorations took him east from Yaounde to the Sanaga River, the course of which he followed to its junction with the Dschah or Ngoko River.

The good news he brought of the region's wealth in rubber and ivory was coupled with the unpleasant report that French, Belgians, and Dutch were exploiting it. Goods went out by way of the Congo River, and the French collected the export tax that was permitted by the Berlin Conference in 1885. The Germans were disturbed by this loss of colonial wealth and revenue, and took steps to erect stations and factories for the administration and exploitation of the region. Behind the drive to establish German rule in the interior was the very active Colonial Society, which adopted the recommendations of a committee appointed to study the question and granted 25,000 marks to put the scheme of exploration and exploitation into operation. With this force driving it, the Government persuaded the society to delay action while it took its own steps in these distant parts of the colony.

In south-eastern **Kamerun**, in December 1898, Dr. Plehn was commissioned by Governor Puttkamer to erect a station on the Ngoko River, to institute a government, and to collect the export duties, fees, and taxes that had hitherto gone to the French faced with the hopeless problem of getting necessary funds from a reluctant Reichstag, the colonial administration in Germany decided that the development and exploitation of that-part of the colony could best be achieved by private enterprise. Into the hands of a private trading organization created for the purpose, the Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun, the Government relinquished the task of exploitation, exploration, and road-making in an area greater than that of Bavaria. Special privileges were likewise conferred which turned out in practice to be monopolistic and which aroused a bitter opposition in Germany. The hope of the Government in making this unusual concession was to attract into this distant region private capital that had been hesitant in the past. Such was its defence against the charges made by critics of the grant. The aid given by the Government to the concessionnaires in south-eastern **Kamerun** drew additional criticism from German traders who found themselves barred from trade there by agents of the Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun.²⁶

The greatest obstacle to the profitable exploitation of the large and distant area was the lack of easy transportation. The Congo River could be and was used; but difficulties with the French over navigation as well as the very high costs of freightage made desirable the discovery and utilization of some better route. The over land mite from Kribi on the coast to Yaounde was developed very early. The construction of a half-way station at Lolodorf offered both white and Hausa traders protection against attack by hostile natives; and the completion of a road from Edea to Lolodorf brought Yaounde and inner **Kamerun** closer in point of time to the centre of administration at Duala. The chief problem was to find a practicable route by water and land between Yaounde and the rubber and ivory of south-eastern **Kamerun**. This was one of the goals of those who explored the eastern parts of the colony: Stein in 1902, Engelhardt in 1903, and Scheunemann in 1904. While they explored, they made valuable discoveries of additional rubber and ivory, and of populous regions that promised an adequate supply of workers to meet the colony's constant labour shortage. Stein taught natives the best methods of preparing rubber for the trade and even planted palm trees, whose

²⁶ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

products elsewhere had been greatly profitable to traders. At last a suitable route was discovered into the far interior. It went up the Nyong River, navigable in the interior for a large distance, to a point where only one day's overland march was necessary to reach the navigable Dume River. Much time would pass, however, before roads could be constructed and streams could be cleared for safe navigation by the removal of dead timber and other obstructions. Until then little profit could be expected from the exploitation of places that in 1904 lay forty-five days' journey from the coast.

For central Kamerun they created in July 1899 a private organization called the Gesellschaft Nordwest-Kamerun. The size of its concession, its structure, its obligations and general character resembled those of the Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun. In addition to the task of exploring and developing the area of its enormous concession it had a special obligation to contribute to the explorations planned for the region nearer the Chad. Excellent but costly work in exploring its own territory was carried out by Ramsay. Of all groups in Germany it was the Colonial Society that worked hardest to persuade the Government to establish control near the Chad.²⁷

The society was so anxious that Germans establish themselves in this region that it was ready to spend money for its own expedition here. The hesitancy of the Government in doing anything troubled ardent colonialists. Either working as an organization with a large and impressive membership or operating through active members like Staudinger and Passage, the society continuously exerted pressure on the Government to get action. When nothing happened by 1899, the society considered sending its own expedition to Garoua, where conditions were to determine whether an attempt ought to be made to go beyond toward the Chad.

The French were unusually active in that region, where in the fall of 1897 the fact of their great Central African Empire was symbolized in the meeting of three explorers arriving from different directions: Gentil from the Congo, Crampel from French West Africa, and Monteil from Algeria. The devastation caused by Rabbeh, the native ruler of Dikoa, just before 1900 led the Kolonialgesellschaft to intensify its efforts for a colonial budget large enough to cover the costs of subjecting all the cameroons to peaceful German control. The German Government had not been wholly

²⁷ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

inactive in the interior during this period. In 1899 Kamptz finally captured the Fulbe city of Tibati, whose prince or lamido was one of the numerous vassals of the Emir of Yola. In 1901 Dominik was sent to the Upper Benue. He placed garrisons in Garoua and Maroua.

The English capture of Yola in September 1901 and the attempt to set up a puppet emir made the appearance of Germans in Adamawa opportune in view of the feudal influence exerted over the interior of the Cameroons by the ruler at Yola. In his work Dominik was assisted by Pavel, who had come overland through Adamawa to Garoua. Serious differences with the French and the English had to be settled. The English had been persuading natives to leave German territory and to settle in English territory. The tact that settled that question also effected the retirement of the French from Dikoa, of which they had taken possession after their defeat of Rabbeh in 1900, although it was not definitely known until 1904 that this important city was actually inside the German boundaries. The long-talked-of expedition of the Kolonialgesellschaft was sent out in 1902 under the dual leadership of Bauer and Waldow. In September it arrived at Garoua, where it erected a trading station in the hope of attracting the trade that had gone hitherto to the English at Yola.

The expedition was also interested in prospecting for minerals and in discovering other products that might make this part of the Kamerun worth exploiting. To facilitate trade, it arranged with English authorities in Nigeria for the erection of warehouses on the Niger so that German goods might be stored without paying toll. Governor Puttkamer visited the Upper Benue and made provision for the administration of the territory. Germans thought it an advantage that the Fulbe prince at Garoua felt no obligation of loyalty to the new emir at Yola, puppet successor to the one driven out by the English in September 1901. With English influence thus weakened in Adamawa, the Germans set up their own administrative machinery. It was deemed necessary to rule in Adamawa through the Moslem princes, whose nomadic ancestors had conquered the land early in the nineteenth century, German authority was advisory, exercised through resident agents appointed to guide the princes, who were to meet regularly for the determination of policies in the lands they ruled.²⁸

²⁸ Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

By 1905 the Kamerun was fairly well explored and generally subjected to German control. There still remained the difficult task of precisely marking the frontiers, kilometre by kilometre. There still remained much work in local exploration and in local military measures to establish complete control. Such work was carried out by heads of stations and of military posts in the interior. After 1905 the colony's exploitation came more and more to occupy the traders and the Government; and increasing attention was given to the construction of roads, to a solution of the labour shortage, and to other matters bearing on the economic development of the colony. In the precise definition of boundaries the greatest problem was with the French in the south. The line, determined in a general way by the agreements of 1885 and 1894, remained unmarked to the great confusion of trade and government.

The French and German traders, rivals for ivory and rubber and labourers, charged one another with working in territory where they had no right to trade. Complaints were made that in an effort to gain commercial advantage over German rivals, the French smuggled arms and liquor into the Kamerun in defiance of the law. And the French on their side of the unmarked line made like charges against German traders. The Kamerun Government feared that it was losing income because these French traders paid no fees for trade licences and because natives avoided the payment of taxes by claiming residence in French territory. Charges and counter-charges were made of offers to induce natives in the territory of one country to settle in that of the other to furnish labour to those exploiting the rubber wealth of the disputed regions. For the French, if not for the Germans, part of this problem was solved in 1900, when France ceded the Muni territory to the Spanish Government, retaining only the right of pre-emption in case of future sale.

In anticipation of an agreement with France over the rest of the southern boundary the German Government inquired of various German firms if they had any special wishes to be considered in the final delimitation of that line. One answer, that of the Association of West African Traders, recommended in July 1907 that efforts be made to acquire the rich rubber region lying east of the Spanish colony of Muni. No heed was paid to this request, however, in the boundary agreement of April 1908, which

marked in the jungle what had been only a very uncertain line since the agreement made in 1894.²⁹

The greatest change in the territory of the **Kamerun** came about in 1911, when, as compensation for the surrender of existing rights in Morocco, Germany obtained from France the cession of considerable territory in the French Congo. The area of the colony was enlarged fifty per cent. The increase would have been even greater had the original scheme of Germany's foreign secretary, Kiderlen-Wachter, been successful. He had coveted the whole of French Congo. Realizing that the French would be unwilling to make Germany so large a territorial concession, he was prepared in the summer of 1911 to ease the way for the French by offering as compensation all of Togo and parts of the **Kamerun**, especially that peculiar geographic conformation in north-eastern **Kamerun** known as the 'duck bill'. Such an offer would make it possible for French officials to defend the cession of their entire Congo colony by arguing that France had made an exchange but no surrender of territory.

It was difficult to discover where Kiderlen-Wachter got the idea that Germany would benefit by the scheme he had in mind. So far as documentary material goes, there is almost no evidence that colonialists wanted what the German foreign secretary was trying to obtain for the **Kamerun**, to be sure, in 1907 there were some traders who desired to acquire rich rubber country east of Spanish Muni in the pending definition of boundaries with France. In July 1911, when there was discussion of compensation for the surrender of German rights in Morocco, one **Kamerun** trader, Pagenstecher by name, wrote to Colonial Secretary Lindequist about the 'unnatural' southern boundaries of the colony, which he thought might be rectified by acquiring the country extending from Libreville to the Sanaga River. He also thought that Germany would benefit by acquiring Spanish Fernando Po and the 'misgoverned' colony of Muni. Apart from these isolated suggestions of commercial interest in French Congo, one finds only open hostility to Kiderlen-Wachter's scheme when well-grounded rumour informed the public about it.³⁰

It is clear from the general dissatisfaction evoked by the 1911 treaty between Germany and France that colonial opinion in Germany had no desire for the annexation

²⁹Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

³⁰Ibid, pp. 80-101.

of any territory in the French Congo. People pointed out that the region suffered greatly from sleeping sickness, which would become a most serious matter for the Kamerun; that the ruthless exploitation of the area by the French concessionnaires had made the region valueless; that the country was a great financial burden to the French Government; that the absence of roads, the small population, and the almost continuously inundated lands rendered hopeless the prospect of successful commercial exploitation. Governor Gleim of the Kamerun opposed any bargain that involved the surrender of Kamerun territory near the Chad in exchange for parts of French Congo.

The German Colonial Society was openly opposed to the plan. Opposition was most outspoken against the suggestion that Togo was to be surrendered. Outstanding colonial experts felt that compensation for surrendered rights in Morocco should be sought in the French colony of Dahomey, which was self-supporting and would not add to the expense of Germany's colonial government. Active Pan-Germanists carried on propaganda against any surrender of rights in Morocco, where they wished to have Germany establish a colony.

It seems that Kiderlen-Wachter's plan of 1911 was the creature of his own understanding of Germany's future colonial interest in Africa. It is significant that he did not consult Lindequist of the Kolonialamt and that the colonial secretary resigned in protest against this snub and against a colonial deal that he felt unable to defend. The foreign secretary was interested in the creation of a great German Mittel afrika, to be realized in a union of the Kamerun, French Congo, Belgian Congo, German East Africa, Portuguese Angola, and German South-West Africa. It was this scheme that he described in a memorandum for the Kaiser, who had not been in complete sympathy with the handling of matters in the summer of 1911. The foreign minister was ready to resign if the Kaiser refused to support him in his negotiations with France.³¹

Kiderlen-Wachter failed to obtain from France all that he had hoped for. Protracted negotiations led at last to a compromise, which was embodied in formal agreements November 4th, 1911. Germany surrendered her rights in Morocco and the 'duck bill' in the Kamerun; in return she obtained territory in the French Congo. In the apology for the treaty published at the same time it was pointed out that the size of the

³¹Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

Kamerun was increased fifty per cent and that so large an area must ipso facto have a great commercial future; much was made of the fact that at two points the Kamerun was given access to the Congo. The French virtually surrendered their rights of pre-emption in Belgian Congo and in Spanish Muni. The Government tried to minimize the special rights that remained in the hands of the French concessions, for the latter were allowed to continue the exercise of practically monopolistic privileges by the warrant of their charters from the French Government. On behalf of the accord it was also affirmed that it represented the beginning of a new era of understanding with France. Great opposition met the publication of the treaty terms. Lindequist resigned his post as colonial secretary in protest; had it been possible, he would have resigned earlier. For this action he was warmly praised by the Colonial Society, which saw no economic value whatsoever in the new territory and thought it wholly inadequate as compensation for the rights surrendered in Morocco.

The special privileges, amounting to monopoly, allowed to remain in the hands of French concessionaires, drew fire from members of the Reichstag and from an organization called the Deutsche Kongo Liga. The latter worked for the withdrawal of these special rights, which contravened, it was said, the freedom of trade guaranteed by the Congo Act of 1885. In this organization traders were joined by missionaries and by professors, many of whom said that they became members to protect the interests of the natives who had suffered from the French exploiters. Chambers of commerce in the Kamerun attacked the treaty. Members of the colony's council (Gouvernementsrat) objected to French Congo, to the special privileges that the French there continued to enjoy, and to the great sums of money required for the exploration of the country and for the erection of machinery for its administration.

The council also felt that the colony had been so little considered in the negotiations with France that demands were intensified for greater self-government for the Kamerun and for an increase in the powers of the Gouvernementsrat. Members of the German Reichstag felt that the legislative body in Germany had not been consulted in the making in January 1912. Dr. Solf, the new colonial secretary, admitted the correctness of the charges against the agreement with France and spoke of making an effort to get additional territory from France. No evidence has been found that such effort was made. One of the complications in the dispute over the value of the new territory was the lack of information about it. *Neu-Kamerun* by Karl Ritter, published

by the Kolonialamt in 1912, gave a dark picture of the region. In 1913 a book appeared, *Neu-Kamerun*, by Emil Zimmermann. Its author had had some experience in that part of Africa on a boundary commission; he gave a brighter picture than Ritter, who had never been there and wrote his account from French sources. The treaty; in fact, the treaty was submitted to the Reichstag merely for its information, since it possessed not even the right of ratification.³²

The result was a large number of motions to give the Reichstag a constitutional role in the negotiation and ratification of similar treaties in the future. In spite of protests the treaty was unchanged. And at Berne, September 28th, 1912, Ramsay signed an accord with representatives of France for the piecemeal surrender by the French of the ceded territory. Provision was made for cession in four parts, the first on October 1st, 1912, and the last on June 1st, 1913. A *modus vivendi* was worked out with respect to the French concessions in the new territory. Reference has already been made to Muni, which became Spanish in 1900 after an agreement between Spain and France, the latter retaining the right of pre-emption. Between the Kamerun and Muni typical boundary disputes arose, like those already described in the case of French and English boundaries. The Germans naturally expected the Spanish to observe the boundary established with the French in the agreement of 1885, the only existing definition of a boundary with Muni territory. Stories were told of trade rivalry along the undefined frontier, of Spanish interference with German boats in the northern half of the campo River, and of similar troubles. Natives sought by either Spanish or German colonial authorities claimed to be residents in the territory of the other. Some Germans thought that the only remedy was Germany's possession of the colony. Others added that Germany should also have Fernando Po, where pre-emption rights were held by Germans. In 1911, when it became known that Spain and France had some intention of partitioning Morocco, there was a demand that Spain cede Fernando Po to Germany as compensation for rights abandoned in Morocco. But all that Germany got was the right of pre-emption to Muni; and she never succeeded in getting a clear definition of boundaries with her Spanish neighbour in Southern Cameroons.³³

³²Rudin H.R. *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914, A case Study in modern Imperialism*. Yale University New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 80-101.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-101.

Once the British realised they had lost Kamerun, the Germans consolidated their position in Cameroon. The main areas of economic development during the German period were plantations and agriculture, the transportation and communication networks and trade. The economy of Kamerun under the German colonial administration was in the hands of the German commercial firm of Hamburg which wanted to establish a commercial colony, *Hadelskolonie*, in Cameroon. The economic policy of the *Handelskolonie* was determined essentially by the economic interests of the German market. Before the Germans annexed Kamerun, some German firms were already doing big business in Kamerun. The two most important of these firms were the Woermann and the Jantzen and Thomahlen firms. Many German firms and plantations became established in Kamerun after 1884.³⁴

In order to facilitate the exploitation of Cameroonians, the Germans instituted the *Kolonial Wirtschaftliches Komitee*, the Colonial Economic Committee in 1889. The Colonial Economic Committee C.E.C was a child of the Committee for the Importation of products from German colonies which was founded in 1897. The prominent members of this committee included Professor Wohltmann, Thomahlen of the Hamburg trading firm and Scarlach of the *Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun*. The C.E.C was funded by the German Colonial society, the German Ministry of the Interior and by contributions from the German public.

Infact, it designated sub-committees to study special problems and the *Die Botanische Zentralstelle*, the Central Botanical Bureau, was chiefly concerned with scientific research.³⁵ Before the Germans annexed Kamerun the main crops that were cultivated by the natives included rubber and palm oil from palm kernels. The cultivation of cocoa and coffee in Kamerun was introduced by the German commercial firms. After 1897, Zintgraft with the aid of Wohltmann created the *Westafrikanische pflanzungsgesellschaft* in Victoria, the West African Plantation in Victoria (W.A.P.V). This plantation had a working capital of 2.5 million marks. By the year 1916, there were already many German firms in Kamerun which include the Hamburg West African Plantation Company in Victoria, which was founded in 1897. The main products of the company were cocoa and rubber. Its major stations were Neutagel, Molyko, Bolivamba,

³⁴ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*. p.81.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Isoka, Moli, Malende and Toli.³⁶ The Prince Alfred Plantation company which belonged to the WAPV and was situated at Misselele. It grew cocoa, coffee and rubber.³⁷

The German Rubber Company, *Deutsche Kautschukaktien-gesellschaft* which was founded in 1907 with its headquarters in Ekona. Its main stations were at Lisoka, Kuke, Muscha, Boands, Pobo and Small and Big Pundu. The main crops that were produced were cocoa, rubber and palm oil. The Meanja Rubber Plantation, *Kautschukpflanzung Meanja* was founded in 1903. Its main station was at Meanja. The main crops that were grown were rubber and cocoa. The Germans were also very interested in the growing of fruits. The African Fruit Company, *Afikanische Frucht Compagnie* was founded in 1912. Its main plantation was at Tiko. The Bimbia Plantation Company was founded in 1906 and was sold to C. Woermann.³⁸

The Moliwe Plantation Company, *Moliwe pflanzungs-Gesellschaft* was founded in 1899 and the main crops that were grown were cocoa and rubber. Its main plantation was at Moliwe but it also had a plantation at Dibongo near Edea. The Berlin West African Company, *West Afrikanische pflanzungs Gesellschaft* Bibundi was founded in 1897 with its headquarters in Bibundi. The company grew cocoa, rubber and oil palms. This company had connections with W.A.P.V. Other plantations included the Idenau Plantation which grew cocoa, rubber and oil palms. The Debundscha Plantation, founded in 1905 grew cocoa and rubber. There was the *Oschelhausen* Plantation which was founded in 1904. It grew cocoa, rubber and oil palms. The Hilfer Plantation was involved in the growing of cocoa, rubber and oil palms. Though the Bali Rubber and Cocoa Estate Ltd was an English Company, it was locally managed by German and Austrian employees, and it grew cocoa and rubber.³⁹

2.1.2 German Economic Policy and the Establishment of Plantations

The Germans played a significant role in the establishment of plantations in Kamerun. In 1898, Julius Sharlach, a Hamburg financier and other investors, backed by German banks and by Belgian Congo concerns, created the *Gesellschaft für Sudkamerun GSK*,

³⁶ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.82.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, p.81.

³⁹ Ibid.

which received an enormous concession comprising some million hectares. The Gesellschaft für Northwest Kamerun GNK another major concessionaire, obtained a princely stake in Kamerun. Jesco Von Puttkamer, the Governor of Kamerun 1895-1907 felt that Africans were naturally idle. Besides African forest, farming was incompatible with economic progress, tending only to devastate the land; therefore if the country were not to continue to vegetate in a state of unculture, capitalists would have to be encouraged to invest their money in plantations. Deeply impressed by the cocoa and coffee plantations he had seen on the Portuguese islands of Sao Tome, Puttkamer resolved to introduce agricultural enterprise of a similar kind in Kamerun, and made the required land grants to German pioneers.⁴⁰

Initially work on the plantations was bitterly unpopular because mortality was high among the Africans, and their pay was poor, besides generally bad treatment. Consequently plantations were unable to secure sufficient voluntary workers and the Government began to recruit workers by force. These exactions were sometimes accompanied by vicious cruelty which provoked widespread resistance in many parts of Southern Cameroons. Government repression resulted in loss of lives in battle and even more died through disease and famine. The introduction of money stimulated economic activity. While some enterprising coastmen joined trading caravans into the interior, where literate Africans, who were often immigrants from Gabon or Gold Coast set up ware houses to collect rubber in exchange for merchandise, Hausa merchants benefited from the German pax by extending their operations from the north to the forest region and the coast. Here these northerners exchanged meat for rubber which they then sold to the Germans.

Moreover, it did not take long for the Germans to discover that coercion entailed severe economic costs, in addition to the fact that their ability to govern by naked force was strictly limited by staff inadequacies. German abuses in Kamerun were criticized by the Basel Mission which condemned the concessions, although the Catholic Pallotine Mission defended Puttkamer. German merchants and British traders like John Holt censured concessionary monopolies. German Parliamentary opposition came from the social Democrats and the centre as well as from various conservatives, including the

⁴⁰ L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977 p.167.

Pan-Germans, who objected to the stake held by foreign capitalists in German concessionary companies.⁴¹

In Kamerun the chiefs were reluctant to send their best men to work in European employment, and often dispatched the weakest they could find. The GSK and the GNK suffered and had to reduce their stakes, while wild rubber collection had to compete with superior rubber from well run plantations in southeast Asia. Such an economy of coercion produced widespread inter-white disension with plantation managers, merchants and officials competing for the available supplies of manpower. They sometimes censured each other in unmeasured terms. These problems combined to provoke demands that Cameroonians be looked upon as economic men rather than as merely savages.⁴²

The calls for reform grew louder with the passage of time. The reformers were agreed that German entrepreneurs should benefit both Africans and their own shareholders by relying less on coercion and more on economic incentives. Africans ought to be valued as wage workers as producers of cash crops, and as potential customers capable of buying German goods. According to the reformers, successful colonization could not be undertaken on the cheap, because the development of the empire required an extensive logistic infrastructure including the creation of ports and railways. Lastly, scientific research was needed by the businessmen and the planter. The Administrators too had to be reformed. The German administration had to be professionalized and made more efficient so that a district commissioner should be a specialist in African administration, not just an expert in law and order or a labour recruiter for local German entrepreneurs.⁴³ Had the First World War not broke out the history of German colonialism would have had a different image today.

The Berlin Conference which devoted the myth of the division of Africa stipulates three conditions to the effective possession of a country, the country does not belong to anybody and it is necessary to distinguish in this case: right of property and right of political sovereignty. The main occupant must keep under control the whole territory. The formal taking possession should be expressed by the effective presence of

⁴¹ L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977 p.167.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

the colonist and the fight against slavery and the promotion of the indigenous welfare and the development of the country. From these principles, the last indeed determined the major occupation of Kamerun territory by the Germans. This possession was done in three ways: the coast, the hinterland and the north of the country. The occupation also proceeds by three modes: negotiations and treaties, penetrations and installations, military expeditions and conquests. Whatever its mode, the occupation of Kamerun was effective since 1902 thanks to major Hans Dominik who organized the conquest of the country.

2.1.3 German Plantations and the Establishment of Transport Facilities

The Germans also portrayed an important role in the establishment of transport facilities in Kamerun. The Germans established the plantation economy in Kamerun to meet the needs of the capitalist economy in Europe. In this case Cameroonian peasants were not part of it, and they gained nothing directly from it. It was therefore not surprising that between the wars, the economy of the Southern Cameroons was entirely in the hands of capitalist expatriates, without a supporting peasant sector. The demand for tropical plantations was created by the trade depression of the late nineteenth century, and this demand was revived whenever expatriate business interests felt their prosperity and security threatened by the commercial fluctuations of the early colonial period.⁴⁴ Trade in the early days of German Kamerun took the form of gathering wild rubber, palm products and ivory in exchange for European goods. This demanded large number of gatherers and porters. Moreso supplies of wild products under such a system were unpredictable.

In such circumstances, the Germans began to think that they might do better to grow for themselves the rubber, palm kernels, palm oil and other products which were so difficult to obtain by ordinary trade means. It was also thought that plantation methods would produce a better quality of products because of better supervision and by the easier introduction of better strains of trees and crops.⁴⁵ This optimistic view about plantations was put to test by the Woermann firm in partnership with the firm of Jantzen Thormahlen soon after the colonisation of Kamerun. Other Germans followed

⁴⁴ A.G Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, p.211.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

their methods so that by 1913, there were 195 Europeans engaged in plantations which were in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions. In addition to palm products, cocoa and eventually bananas were also produced.

The introduction of the plantation into the Southern Cameroons created a dual economy, which means an economy with two distinctly different sectors, one a traditional subsistence, custom bound sector practising backward and inefficient methods of production, and the other, a modern technologically advanced, export oriented enclave created by the injection of massive doses of foreign capital in search of investment opportunities. It was argued that since the enclave sector operates under efficient management, using advanced modern techniques, output in that sector expands quickly. The stimulus of development leads to a rapid increase of population which was faster than capital accumulation from profit ploughback. Thus the enclave sector finds it difficult to absorb the steady flow of population because it was employing capital intensive and therefore labour displacing techniques. But the redundant labour finds its way back into the subsistence sector with improved ideas and methods.⁴⁶

During the First World War, when Kamerun fell to the allied forces, German planters and Estate Managers escaped or were interned. In the absence of these Germans, the plantations soon became derelict, and in order to prevent the looting of plantation assets and if possible to save them from ruin, the British authorities created a plantation department to preserve the plantations, employ labourers who were unable to return to their homes owing to the war and who, if allowed to remain in idleness on the plantations, would have caused damage and proved a source of embarrassment to the administration; and to collect and dispose of the cocoa crop whereby funds were to be generated to carry out the first two duties.⁴⁷

This arrangement remained in force until 1922 when the League of Nations Mandate came into operation, and the British decided that it would be in the best interest of the territory and its inhabitants to turn the plantations into the hands of private European concerns. Commenting on the issue, the Lt. Governor of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria, H.C. Moorhouse, declared that the future prosperity of the Victoria Division depended on the fate of the plantations. According to him the

⁴⁶ Simon Joseph Epale, *Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon, 1885-1975; A study in Agrarian Capitalism*, New York: Vantage Press 1985 p.4.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

plantations should be taken over by European and American companies, which alone would have sufficient capital and experience to maintain them at their past high level of efficiency.⁴⁸ As to the possibility of returning the lands to their earlier tribal owners, MoorHouse was categorical in his rejection of the ideas. He argued that it would be impracticable to split up the plantations into small plots for native owners who had neither the capital nor experience to manage the plantation. If such a thing were to happen, the plantation economy would be ruined.⁴⁹

The British recognised the land sales made by the German Government as conferring rights similar to free-hold under English law, and ruled out the idea of returning the plantations to their previous German owners. Thereafter in 1923, non-Germans were sought to buy the plantations. But initial effort to sell the estates were in the main, fruitless and only a small number of lots was sold. Generally the London merchants proved indifferent, even to favourable conditions of sale which excluded ex-enemy nationals Germans or their agents from consideration. Most of the potential buyers were unwilling to put up the large sums of money needed both for the initial purchase and for the necessary subsequent development.⁵⁰

In such circumstances, the British Government decided to re-advertise the plantations without discrimination, for sale on 24th and 25th November 1924. When this came, more than 207,000 of the 264,000 acres that had once been in German hands were repurchased by them. The remainder went to British, Dutch and Swiss firms.⁵¹ To check the recession a condition for the purchase of ex-enemy estates was that purchasers were to undertake, under pain of stated penalties to bring into cultivation, a stated number of acres annually. On such terms the Germans returned to the territory and took possession of the plantations in March 1925.⁵² The Germans returned in full force, so that by 1925 they already outnumbered the other European groups. By 1938, their numbers had increased to three times those of British nationals in the territory.⁵³ In 1926, 136 of the 219 Europeans in the Cameroons Province were Germans, with only 71 British. In 1938, the figures included 265 Germans, 74 British, 27 Dutch, 23 Swiss, 12

⁴⁸ Simon Joseph Epale, *Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon, 1885-1975; A study in Agrarian Capitalism*, New York: Vantage Press 1985 p.4.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See Victor T. Levine, *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independence*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1964 p.121.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² David E. Gardinier, *The British in the Cameroons, 1919-1939* p. 548.

⁵³ Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate* p.123.

Italianns, and 6 Americans in a total of 436 Europeans. A survey of plantation owners in 1936 showed that Germans owned 293,678 acres, British 19053 and Swiss 263.⁵⁴

In the aspect of productivity, the German managers and technicians were able to have the plantations operating at pre-war capacity within two years of their return. They also expanded their operations, and enlarged the port facilities at Tiko and Victoria. By 1927, the plantations employed 13,000 Africans, and in 1935 they employed 15,691. Germany took all of the territory's bananas and most of its cocoa, palm products and rubber with almost all produce being shipped in German ships. In return Germany supplied a majority of the imports, mostly equipments for the plantations and consumer goods sold to the Africans from the planters own stores.⁵⁵ In other words, while Britain ruled the Southern Cameroons politically, Germany controlled the territory economically.

Despite the boom in plantation operations, the territory and its African inhabitants derived but a small share of the proceeds from these operations in view of the low duties, taxes and wages which the German owners paid. The League of Nations Permanent Mandate Commission was informed in 1936 that 95 percent of the profits from the banana trade, which was the territory chief export were going to Europeans. The P.M.C held firmly that Africans were not sharing in the increasing prosperity of the territory, but the British replied that the question of natives getting the full benefit of trade revival was one of economic and it was difficult to see what useful measures the administration could take to ensure it; This reply was typical of the prevailing British economic policy which ruled out most types of government intervention in the economy, either regulatory or positive. It was therefore not surprising, that the plantations brought few benefits to the Africans other than employment for several thousands of them.⁵⁶

The generalities of this thesis were supported by the Divisional Officer for Victoria in 1941. He frowned at the fact that, after the First World War, the indigenes played no role in the sale and purchase of the plantations. According to him, the indigenes derived no benefit whatsoever and the government of Nigeria just managed a little. The result was that not only was irreparable harm done to the indigenous people

⁵⁴ Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate* p.123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

both morally and materially, but also the resources derived from the activities of the plantations were not used in the smallest degree to develop the area in which they were situated. Instead unfortunately, they were used to rearm the Germans, and the material development of the Cameroons lagged far behind that of Southern Nigeria.⁵⁷

Because the British Southern Cameroons was so closely linked to the German economy through the German owned plantations, the out break of the Second World War, in which Germany was a leading antagonist to Britain, had an adverse effect on the British Cameroons. Germany had been the main importer of Kamerun bananas except for the shipment being sent to Britain a month in order to obtain sterling for use on the plantations. When the war broke out, this service ceased. Of great importance was the fact that history repeated itself because the German owned plantations were again taken over by the custodian of enemy property just as had been the case in 1916. When the Second World War ended in 1945, the general thesis of British policy was that the plantations should never again be allowed to fall into German hands as had been the case after the First World War. Administrative Officers were angry that the wealth of the plantations had been used by their German masters to rearm Germany in between the wars.⁵⁸

The out come was the establishment of the Cameroons Development Corporation CDC as from 1st January 1947 with its functions being cultivation and stock raising, the construction maintenance and improvement of communications and the operation of transport undertakings; dealing in merchandise and produce of all kinds as producer, manufacturer, importer or exporter; provision for the religious, educational and general social welfare of its employees; and research and experimental work.⁵⁹ Since then, the CDC has stood the test of time so much so that it is today still the greatest employer, and its activities are still the greatest stimulus of economic activity in Southern Cameroon.

The porterage system and forced labour was largely practiced by the Germans in the hinterland regions of Kamerun. There exist an economic development in a country without a minimum means of transportation roads. Consequently, one can understand

⁵⁷ Cameroon Archives, Buea, File No. Qd/a 1941/1 Administration of the Cameroons: Future of Cameroons Plantations, District Officer, Victoria, to the Senior Resident, Cameroons Province, Buea.

⁵⁸ C.A.B., File No. Qd/a 1941/1 Administration of the Cameroons.

⁵⁹ The Colonial Office, Report on the Cameroons Under United Kingdom Trusteeship for the Year 1947, London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1948 p.31.

the development of portage throughout the Kamerun territory. When we look upon the number of employees used in the plantations, the report/ratio is high: 1 employee for less than 2 hectares. One can consequently realise all the eagerness of German on the portage in spite of their philanthropic feelings. Thus, the portage appears impossible to circumvent and it constitutes the main way used at the first years of exploitations.

Indeed, it was a true plague for Kamerun, because, in spite of the abolition of slavery, this drudgery together with forced labour were often practised under inhuman conditions and the tracks of caravans of that time were marked out with corpses. The portage begins in 1891, as soon as, after the creation of the first German concession and it will remain long-lived during and after the First World War (1914-1918). Nevertheless, it allowed the development of the road network and the railway in Kamerun. Thus, on the axis Yaounde - Kribi (300km) in 1913, Mveng (1985) announces 80000 carriers which will connect the hinterland to the coast. It adds that one saw passing daily to Lolodorf (coming from Yokadouma, 600km with distance), nearly 1000 carriers charged with rubber. Dealing with road network in 1918, shows well three principal axes by which passed the labour forced: a very long Northern axis, close to 1000km, Eastern axis is more than 600km and a southern axis is reduced to some 300km. According to Bopda (2003), these large axes determined the principal and secondary axes of mobilization of the colonial labour forced in Kamerun.⁶⁰

German Establishment of Road Transport in Kamerun

The Germans played a significant role in the establishment of road transport network in Kamerun. During the German period in Kamerun, there was the need to create roads in order to ease transportation of their goods. In 1912, the Yaounde-Kribi road was completely done and Kribi-Ebolowa followed little afterwards. The creation of an automobile company in 1912 created a program of equipment which creates road in all the districts of Kamerun (from the South to the North). Consequently, the principal centres of Kamerun were connected by seasonal roads with concrete bridges. Actually, the contemporary Cameroonian road network depends mostly on this time. Outside the roads, the railroad was an impressive project. For German colonists, it was necessary to carry out the Douala-Chad line, because the German possessions in Africa had already a railway. It is the case of Togo which aligned in 1912, 300km of railway, of Eastern

⁶⁰ Mveng Engelbert L Histoire du Cameroun Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde 1985.

Africa under German rules (1350 km) and of the South Western Africa (2100km). Through this report, we can understand the poor integration of Central African countries that have any transborder railway.

Nevertheless, the first stage was the creation of the Buea-Victoria axis because of the plantations. In 1903, a company of the railroads was created known as “Kamerun Eisenbalm Gesellschaft” with two junctions at the beginning of Douala: Douala-Moungo junction to connect the exploitation of the plantations to the coast (axis Mbanga Kumba which still remains Junction Douala-Nkongsamba (1911), which is removed nowadays. The railroad of the Centre will be born during the War of 1914, it was this line which was to join Chad passing by Yaounde. Trans-Cameroonian railway project was also created to follow this line, later it arrived Ngaoundere without joining Chad. That constitutes a great loss of earnings for Cameroon which did not always know how to make profitable its strategic position in the heart of the African continent. The river transport occupied at the time a dominating place and the concession Sud Kamerun will be connected to Stanley Pool (Middle Congo) by Sangha and Congo while Ivindo and Ogoue open the way towards the interior of Gabon.

In the north, one joined Chad by Logone and Chari while Benue river, tributary of Niger offers a perfect connection for the Atlantic coast to the point and give birth in 1914 in Hamburg to the “Niger-Benue Transport Gesellschaft”. With the development of the railway, terrestrial and maritime transport, the Trade is flourishing and the general trade of Cameroon in 1907 represents 33187000 marks from which 15891000 comes from the exportation, whose Rubber constitutes the basic product (more than 7641000). Consequently, the financial organizations took interest in Kamerun which brought in 1913 its first bank: the “Deutsch West Afrikanische Bank”. Germany will continue the equipment of Cameroon by the telephone and telegraphic lines: 1166km of telephone lines, 107 of telegraph lines and 712km of telegraph cables in 1912.⁶¹

The main imports of Kamerun from Germany were mostly manufactured goods. At first these products, especially alcohol were destructive and valueless. These imported products were profitable to the German business interests. In 1885 Adolph Woermann affirms this in clear terms when he said that if the Germans were to feel very much for the Negro, then they would prohibit the exportation of alcohol to Africa. He

⁶¹ Mveng Engelbert L’Histoire du Cameroun Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde 1985, p. 316.

went further to say that it was through the exportation of alcohol that firms were able to maintain a navigation line to Africa which was advantageous to the German industry. From Kamerun, the Germans imported agricultural products.

These products included palm oil, palm kernels, rubber, ivory, timber and cocoa. Kamerun imported cloth, liquor, arms, gun powder and other manufactured goods. Other imports included materials for the construction of roads and railways, steel, iron, machines, food and medical supplies.⁶² These products replaced the destructive products which had initially dominated Kamerun imports. Germany imported from Kamerun not less than sixty percent of Kamerun exportable products and Kamerun imported not less than eighty percent of her needs from Germany in the same period. In the course of achieving their goals, the German plantation owners encountered difficulties. Most workers in the plantations in the South came from the Grassfields. There was the difficulty with transportation of products since Cameroon had a poor communication network.⁶³

2.2.1. Labour Processes in the Construction of Communication Infrastructure

Forced labour was one of the most frequently commented aspects of colonial rule on the African continent and doubtlessly one of the least systematically analyzed. While the study of early modern Atlantic slavery has led in recent years to a popular debate on the issue of compensation, thus becoming an established field of study and even the subject of a kind of popular debate, involuntary labour under European Colonial Regimes of the late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries has never found a more sustained interest, either from researchers or from the broader public. With the exception of some particular scandals mostly from the early decades of the Twentieth Century, we find few elaborated case studies, and the comparative study of compulsory labour as element of the colonial systems.⁶⁴ Forced labour was common under colonial rule. European administrations were in urgent need of cheap resources to build up systems of transport and communication within the newly conquered regions of the African continent, to create, and to maintain an infrastructure. While in the earlier periods of colonial

⁶² Mveng Engelbert L' Histoire du Cameroun Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde 1985, p. 316.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Alexander Keese, *Forced Labour: An Afro-European heritage in Sub Saharan Africa, 1930-1975*.

domination, much of African involuntary manpower was employed for the transport of goods and individuals literally on the shoulders of involuntary workers, the interwar period was characterized by a shift towards road construction and road maintenance.

All European colonial systems were built on similar routines based on exploitation of natural resources. Before the Second World War, there was little inclination in Lisbon, Paris, London, Madrid or Brussels, to channel public funds into a modernization process within the colonies. Despite the prospects of a second, more benign, colonial occupation after 1945, the problem did not immediately disappear from the agenda. Still in 1945, millions of Africans suffered from forced labour, and although the period after the war met with legal reforms and the removal of labour obligations, the process of the abolition of these techniques was slow and uneven. Forced labour was mobilized through different techniques. Some relied on state of the art principles of tax extraction: they were even combined with tax instruments that became increasingly efficient in African colonies during the interwar period. In this case, Africans had to pay an additional 'tax' through physical labour, during a particular number of days per year.⁶⁵

Other colonial techniques such as unemployment were defined as vagrancy, which the authorities in European countries had traditionally deployed in several periods and regions. 'Unemployed Africans' including nearly everyone who had what was defined as an 'insufficient' engagement in agrarian subsistence labour during some period of the harvest cycles in rural regions could be drafted and sent into public labour. Again, in other cases, the responsibility was given to loyal auxiliaries of the colonial powers, namely, local chiefs. In these cases, 'forced labour' could be redefined as 'traditional labour', since, supposedly, it now was the 'traditional native representative' who was in charge of regulating the practice. All these techniques could also be used to pressure locals into accepting underpaid contracts with plantations owners, in a desperate attempt by the local populations at avoiding hard labour on the roads or in other construction projects.⁶⁶

Faced with such hardships, African populations were of course not passive. While in the interwar period, violent resistance against compulsory forms of labour was

⁶⁵Alexander Keese, *Forced Labour: An Afro-European heritage in Sub Saharan Africa, 1930-1975*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

less typical than in other phases of the European presence on the African continent, it did not entirely disappear. Moreover, even under the impression of superior means of domination in the hands of European officials, African labourers developed their own forms of resistance. Mass flight movements and individual disappearance; border crossing activities or informal deals struck between fleeing persons and local administrators who had a reputation for not being interested in forced labour, these and other reactions created a colonial situation in which in many rural areas locals were constantly on the move. From this perspective, resistance through flight was not a rare exception, but a normal aspect in the lives of African individuals under colonial rule. Forced labour destabilized local societies and compelled locals to move. Its repercussions were likely to be found even in the postcolonial period.⁶⁷

Workers in the plantations opened by the Germans came mainly from the locality where the plantations were found and from the grassfields. The fon of Bali, Galega I provided workers for the Westafrikanische Pflanzungsgesellschaft Victoria. As a reward for this service, he received a yearly gift of 300 marks. Galega also benefited from the workers he sent down south. He received from them capitation. In other cases, the German plantation owners paid each chief two marks for each worker that the chief recruited. The colonizers also used force in recruiting workers. Some chiefs who were intransigent to the demands of the colonizers for labour were usually punished. Governor Von Puttkamer even passed a decree to the effect that an entire village could be reduced to ashes if the villagers escaped when recruiting officers called around.⁶⁸ Plate 1 below portrays German and Force Labour in Kamerun.

⁶⁷Alexander Keese, *Forced Labour: An Afro-European heritage in Sub Saharan Africa, 1930-1975*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Plate 1: German Forced Labour in Kamerun

Source: Author's Research Collection National Archives Buea 2018.

In an effort to encourage the flow of private capital into infrastructure development in the interior, the government granted two charter trade companies monopolies covering almost half of the territory's land surface. The Gesellschaft Nord-West Kamerun was granted an area of almost 2.5 million acres, and the Gesellschaft Sud Kamerun received a territory of almost 2 million acres. In exchange for the exclusive monopoly

of trade within these areas, the companies agreed to explore the region, to build bridges and roads, and to encourage settlement. In actual practice, the companies did little beyond that necessary for their own trade purposes. Neither was a financial success.

They did, however, provide a major injection of capital into the colony equal to one-fifth of the total German investment during the entire colonial period. The development of a transportation network was one of the administration's chief interests. Although plantations and charter companies constructed a limited number of roads, the government was the major builder of surface transport routes. After 1900 pacified groups were required to expand and maintain the road system and bridges in their region. By the end of the German administration, there were about 300 miles of roads suitable for mechanized vehicles, but the country remained heavily dependent upon human porters.⁶⁹

Railroad construction was initially totally dependent upon private investment. Until the turn of the century, the only track was of narrow gauge, laid by plantation owners on their holdings. In 1906 the German government approved funding for loans aiding private construction of 100 miles of track, known as the Nordbahn, from Bonaberi near Douala to northeast Nkongsamba. This service was opened in 1911. The government itself undertook construction of a railroad line the Mittel landbahn of about 225 miles from Douala east to Windenmeng, but in 1914 less than 100 miles had been completed.⁷⁰

From the very beginning of German occupation, the construction of roads were a great necessity. The defeated groups were used in the construction and maintenance of roads by the colonial administration. After 1900, roads of a permanent character were constructed from the coast to the hinterland. In the course of road construction, many bridges over difficult terrain were constructed. The very first vehicle in Kamerun was used in 1905. In 1913, the first long journey by automobile occurred between Kribi and Yaounde, a distance of over 280km, in 11 hours. In water transport, some rivers were

⁶⁹ Alexander Keese, *Forced Labour: An Afro-European heritage in Sub Saharan Africa, 1930-1975*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

cleared of dead trees, sand bars and at some points rivers were connected to roads.⁷¹ The Germans laid a lot of emphasis on railway construction.

The first railway line, the Northern Railway, Nordbahn, was controlled by the Kamerun-Eisenbahn Gesellschaft and was constructed by Leze and Company. It ran from Bonaberi to Nkongsamba and it covered a distance of 160km. The construction of the Nordbahn gave the Kamerun-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft certain privileges with regard to land acquisition in the vicinity of the railway. The Nordbahn was opened to traffic in 1911 and in 1912, the gross traffic receipt was 618,323 marks (£30,916) and in 1913 it was 951,911 marks (£47,595). Another railway line was constructed from Douala to Widimenge on the Nyong River, on the way to Yaounde. The Germans had plans to extend from accomplishing their mission by the outbreak of the First World War. The second line, called the central line was to start from Douala to Yaounde passing through the Sanaga area. Plate 2 depicts a Ferryboat on river Mbam during the German period

Plate 2: Ferryboat on River Mbam before the Construction of the Bridge.



Source: Author's Research Collection, National Archives Buea 2017.

On 13 March 1908, the German Government submitted a plan for the construction of a railway line in Kamerun to the Reichstag. This line, the Midland Railway or Mittellandbahn, was approved by the Reichstag. It was agreed that the 360km section from Douala to Widimenge would be completed by 1913, would carry 12,000 metric tons of goods in 1911 and 16,000 metric tons in 1913. The total traffic revenue was

⁷¹ Ngoh *History of Cameroon Since 1800 1996*, p.86.

estimated at 2,106,000 marks or £103,033. In the estimate that was made in 1908, it was calculated that the construction would cost 1,840,000 marks (£90,020) but the 1912 estimate put the cost at 7,200,000 marks or £352,250.⁷²

Indeed, the railway delayed because the firm that was charged with the construction was given the order to execute only the Douala-Edea line in March 1909. The German government limited the first contract to the Douala-Edea section instead of increasing the length. The contract for the Douala-Bidjoka section was only signed in 1912. The conditions of the terrain were very difficult. The hard work under very trying conditions was strongly resented by the natives.

Interest in permanent roads came when the possibilities of the automobile appeared promising. Difficult terrain made necessary the construction of an unusually large number of bridges for the new roads. In 1904, when roads and bridges were few, some firms expressed a willingness to construct a bridge at an important point in Southern Cameroons provided permission would be granted for the collection of tolls and provided the Government itself would undertake the construction of the roads. To make cheap transportation possible much attention was devoted to the streams of the colony, some of which, it was thought, could be used for navigation after they had been cleared of dead trees, sand bars, and other hindrances to navigation.

Technical commissions made a study of all transportation, including that by water. It was found that the Nyong River in the interior of Southern Cameroons was Navigable to a point where an overland portage of only 75Km led to the upper Dschah River, a branch of the Congo said to be navigable for about 150 kilometres. By the use of this suggested route, people hoped for a road-and-river connexion from Kribi on the coast to the eastern frontier. One of the great advantages of the cession of territory made to the Kamerun by France in 1911 was the fact that the colony was thereby given direct navigable access to the Congo River, a consideration that made the Colonial Society abandon its opposition to the treaty. The ceded area itself was poorly provided with roads, and their construction became one of the first tasks of the German colonial administration. Transportation on the Congo was always expensive, almost prohibitively so. For the transportation of heavy freight into the hinterland the Niger-Benue system offered the best of possible routes, and in 1914 there were reports that the

⁷² Ngoh *History of Cameroon Since 1800* 1996, p.86.

Woermann Line and other steamship lines were engaged in the organization of a company giving regular service to Garoua. Railroads were first suggested in the middle nineties, just when overland trade with the interior was being first developed. Adolf Woermann began then the *Kolonialzeitung* in 1914. He stressed Kamerun need of railroads. At the same time the conviction developed that the streams in the interior did not offer any solution to the problem of transportation.

In Germany, the *Kolonialgesellschaft* and its Economic Committee took active part in winning public opinion and the Reichstag to a support of railroads in the colonies. Added incentive came with the completion of the railroad between Leopoldville and Matadi in the Belgian Congo in 1898, because interested Germans began talking about making a special arrangement with this railway for the transport of goods to south-eastern Cameroons. The demand for a railroad became fairly general, although a few people had great misgivings about the more extensive use of liquor in the interior when railroads would make its transportation less costly.

In Germany also, the *Kolonialgesellschaft* and its Economic Committee took active part in winning public opinion and the Reichstag to a support of railroads in the colonies. In 1901-2 financiers and others interested in the construction of a railroad in the Kamerun got their preliminary concession from the Government, having the promise of a permanent one after a route with all necessary details had been given official approval. Their plan called for the construction of a line from Victoria into the hinterland of mount Cameroon. It was abandoned in 1901 because of a wish not to compete with the narrow-gauge railroad being built by the large Victoria Plantation company. In 1904 the actual survey of a second route was begun in the colony. It was to be constructed from Bonaberi, the native village across the Cameroon River from Douala, and was to run north-east into the Manenguba hills.⁷³

In addition, the actual survey discovered that the railroad would cost a good deal because swamps, ravines, and hills necessitated numerous bridges and devious routings. The backers of the project were unwilling to run the risk that so expensive a railway should fail and they therefore asked the Government to guarantee the investment of the Kamerun Eisenbahngesellschaft against loss. A bill for that purpose was such talk led the Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun to propose that it be given a monopoly of transportation

⁷³ Ngoh, V.J. *History of Cameroon, Since 1800, 1996.*

from Stanley Pool to Ngoko. For the story of this agreement with the German Government see colonial archives, Gesellschaften presented in the spring of 1905 to the Reichstag, where it ran into sharp criticism. The opposition said that the bill was introduced late in the session to prevent a careful study of its merits. It was sent to die in committee as far as that session was concerned. Attack was directed by critics against the bankers and others financing the railway company for their questionable practices in the project. On May 4th, 1906, however, the bill guaranteeing the investment against loss was passed.

The Kamerun first railroad, which was the only privately owned railway in all the German colonies, was to go from Bonaberi to Nkongsamba, a distance of 160 kilometres. It was to be ready in four years, although the chancellor was empowered to grant an extension of time if need arose. The railway company received large blocks of land for itself along the right way as well as certain mineral rights. The material used in the construction of the railroad was allowed to enter the colony duty-free and for the ninety years of the concession the property of the railway was to be free of taxes. In 1907 the railway company that had acquired the concession made, with the approval of the Kolonialamt, a contract with the Deutsche Kolonial Eisenbahnbau- und Betriebs gesellschaft for the actual construction of the line.

The actual operation of the railway, which was called the Nordbahn, began May 25th, 1911, and was so successful that dividends were paid in the years 1912 and 1913. As a banker and as minister of colonies, Dernburg believed that only the construction of railroads could make the colonies pay. The result of his interest in railways was an agreement early in 1909 between the Kolonialamt and the Kolonial Eisenbahnbau- und Betriebsgesellschaft for the construction of a second line, called the Mittellandbahn, running from Duala and an effort was to be made to keep costs within a total estimate of 44,000,000 marks. In a supplementary budget in 1908 the Reichstag made a four-million-mark loan to the colony for first construction on the railroad, of which the military as well as the commercial advantages were stressed. It was pointed out that the railway would penetrate a region rich in palm oil and rubber. Other loans were made in subsequent budgets for work on the railroad. Original plans called for a line 360 kilometres long; by December 1913 only 150 kilometres had been finished. For that

length, however, operation had commenced and the budgets of 1913 and 1914 counted on railroad income of 3000 marks and 10,000 marks respectively.⁷⁴

Relations with natives were effected in a number of ways by the construction of railways in the colony. At Bonaberi, the terminus of the Nordbahn, land belonging to whites and natives had to be expropriated, but it was effected with little difficulty. Although the expropriation of land in Douala in 1911 was not directly the result of the building of a railway station there, it is nevertheless true that such construction had an indirect influence on that policy, which resulted in native protests that came dangerously near rebellion. The most serious problem was the need of workers in the construction of the railroad. In this matter, the Government found itself in competition with others in the colony who wanted workers for their needs. Planters and traders caused the Government a good deal of embarrassment by attacking its labour policies and by exaggerating reports of the conditions under which those natives worked. It was true that in certain swampy places railroad construction was accompanied by a high death rate among the natives.

Officials knew of these conditions and laboured with such success to improve them that the death rate was eventually reduced below one per cent. In 1912 planters and traders went so far as to say in a session of the council that no approval of a grant for the railway would be given until the Government supplied both traders and planters with workers. The Kamerun colonialists were not satisfied with the two rail-ways that the colony had. It was often pointed out that the Cameroons had the smallest railroad mileage of all German colonies in Africa. Some critics asserted that the railways did not follow the most profitable routes into the interior of the colony. Demands were made continually for extensions of the lines toward the Chad or to the eastern frontier. In 1914 studies were being made for a possible extension of the Mittellandbahn into Adamawa toward the Chad, to the eastern boundary of the colony, and into the land recently ceded by France, although fear was again expressed that the extension of the line would mean only a wider colonial market for European liquor. With the railroads making easy transportation into the high plateau of the interior, there was talk of moving the colony's

⁷⁴ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon, Since 1800, 1996.*

capital from Buea, not to Douala as many desired, but to some healthier and more central location in the interior easily reached by rail.⁷⁵

The chamber of commerce in Kribi had the greatest complaint to make regarding the two railroads. Kribi was a great trade centre, the busy terminus for trading caravans moving to and from the interior. Commercial interests here felt that a railway, a Sudbahn, should be constructed from that port into the interior. The favour shown Douala by making that rival trading centre the terminus for both of the colony's lines seemed unfair discrimination against Kribi. As early as 1907, when the colony's second rail- road was under consideration, traders in Kribi asked that the proposed line begin at Kribi; and great was the disappointment when Dernburg decided in favour of Douala instead, because of its excellent harbour, wharves, and special advantages for transporting soldiers into the interior in case of need. Kribi's criticism of the Government increased; charges were made of official discrimination against Southern Cameroons. And it was from Kribi that demands were heard for greater colonial independence.⁷⁶

There were three railways each one included the 74 kilometre narrow-gauge railway belonging to the Victoria Plantation and used in that region for rather general transportation. Bonaberi, the terminus of the Nordbahn, lay across the river from Douala. Plate 3 portrays the Douala-Edea Railway line.

⁷⁵ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon, Since 1800, 1996.*

⁷⁶ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon, Since 1800, 1996.*

Plate 3: Showing Douala-Edea Railway Line

Source: Author's Research Collection, Yaounde 08/08/2017.

As a matter of fact, before the coming of the Germans, Kamerun could only boast of several foot paths linking one village to the other. There was greater contact between the villages and ethnic groups in the north than was in the South. Two factors were responsible for this; the use of animal transport such as Camels, horses, Oxen and donkeys, for transporting people and goods in the north was easier than trekking and head portering in the South; and the open nature of the grassland area, in the north was easier to cross than the forest in the South.⁷⁷

The greater ease of movement in the north was an important factor which made it possible for rulers to administer vast territories which formed part of their empires. Ancient empires or early civilization in Kamerun were established in the northern part of the country. The western grassland areas also saw the formation of smaller, but cohesive geopolitical units referred to as fondoms. In the South where transport was either on foot or dug out canoes, there were no large geopolitical units that could be compared to those of the northern and Western grassland areas. During the thirty two years of German rule, Kamerun had a few narrow roads with solidly built bridges across rivers and streams. The roads linked one settlement to the other. Although they served

⁷⁷ Ngoh *History of Cameroon Since 1800 1996*, p.86.

mainly the interest of the colonialists, they were constructed at the expense of indigenous hard labour and high human toil.⁷⁸

The Germans were also devoted to water transportation. Some rivers were made navigable after they were cleared of dead trees, sand bars and other hindrances. River routes were connected at some points to roads. After the successful occupation of Kamerun by the Germans, it was necessary to emphasize economically the conquered territory. The German metropolis did not bargain over the means of this development in spite of the unwillingness of the local populations. The policy of development, though philanthropic proceeds with firmness and this declaration of Dr. Soft gives all the content of it: “the colonies will thrive with natives for them and not in spite of them and against them”. The economic development passes obligatorily by the creation of the companies, scientific research and the realization of an assessment of the richness and potentialities of the occupied territory.

It makes it possible to organize a rational and methodical exploitation of the country, and in this direction, very early agriculture held the first place in the German strategy and it remained nowadays the first sectors of the GDP of Kamerun . Also, since 1890, a company of exploitation was born: the Gesellschaft Nord west-Kamerun with a concession of 100000km² and extending from Sanaga to the British border in Nigeria. In November 1898, a new company settled in the south with 50000km²: the “Gesellschaft Süd-Kamerun”.

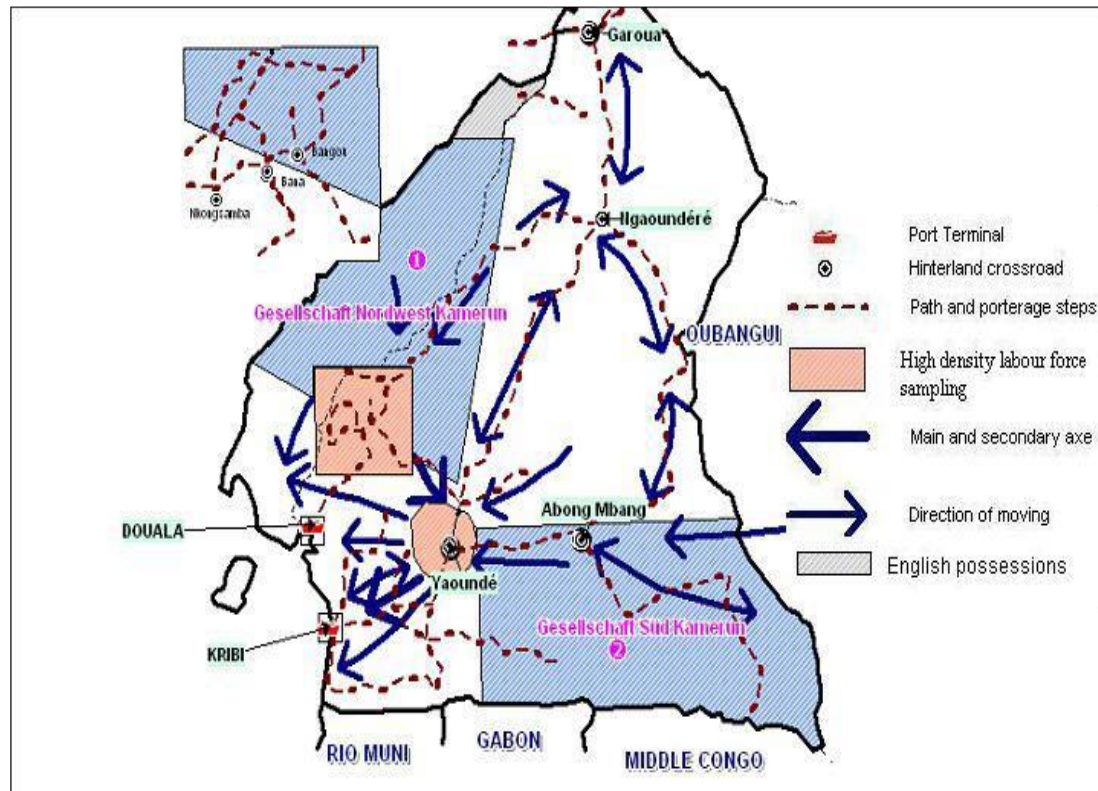
These companies took the name of concessions. After the formular of concessions followed by those of the plantations, there were grouped in companies such as the Victoria company born in 1895 with a capital of 2500000 Francs (5000US \$) at the time and the Bibundi company (1500000 francs of capital, 3000 USS). The development was as follows in 1913 in Kamerun: 58 plantations, 195 European employees, 17827 Kamerunians employees on more than 28225 hectares cultivated. The main cultivated crops were: banana, cocoa, coffee and the hevea (rubber). Timber exploitation follows closely agriculture (8000t of mahogany tree for 400000 marks of receipts in 1913). The exploitation of ivory in addition to the production of the cotton and the development of cattle rearing and breeding in Northern Cameroon came latter.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Map 2 below shows the major axes of German Porterage and Labour force in Cameroon (1891-1920)

Map 2: Major axes of German Porterage and Labour Force in Kamerun

(1891-1920)



Source: Author's Research Collection, Buea, (NAB) 1891-1920.

There exists an economic development in a country without a minimum means of transportation. Consequently, one can understand the development of portage throughout the Kamerun territory. The number of employees used in the plantations, and the report/ratio was high: 1 employee for less than 2 hectares. One can consequently realise all the eagerness of German on the portage in spite of their philanthropic feelings. Thus, the portage appears impossible to circumvent and it constitutes the main way used at the first years of exploitations. It was a true plague for Cameroon, because, in spite of the abolition of slavery, this drudgery together with labour force were often practiced under inhuman conditions and the tracks of caravans of that time were marked out with corpses.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Ngoh *History of Cameroon Since 1800 1996*, p.58.

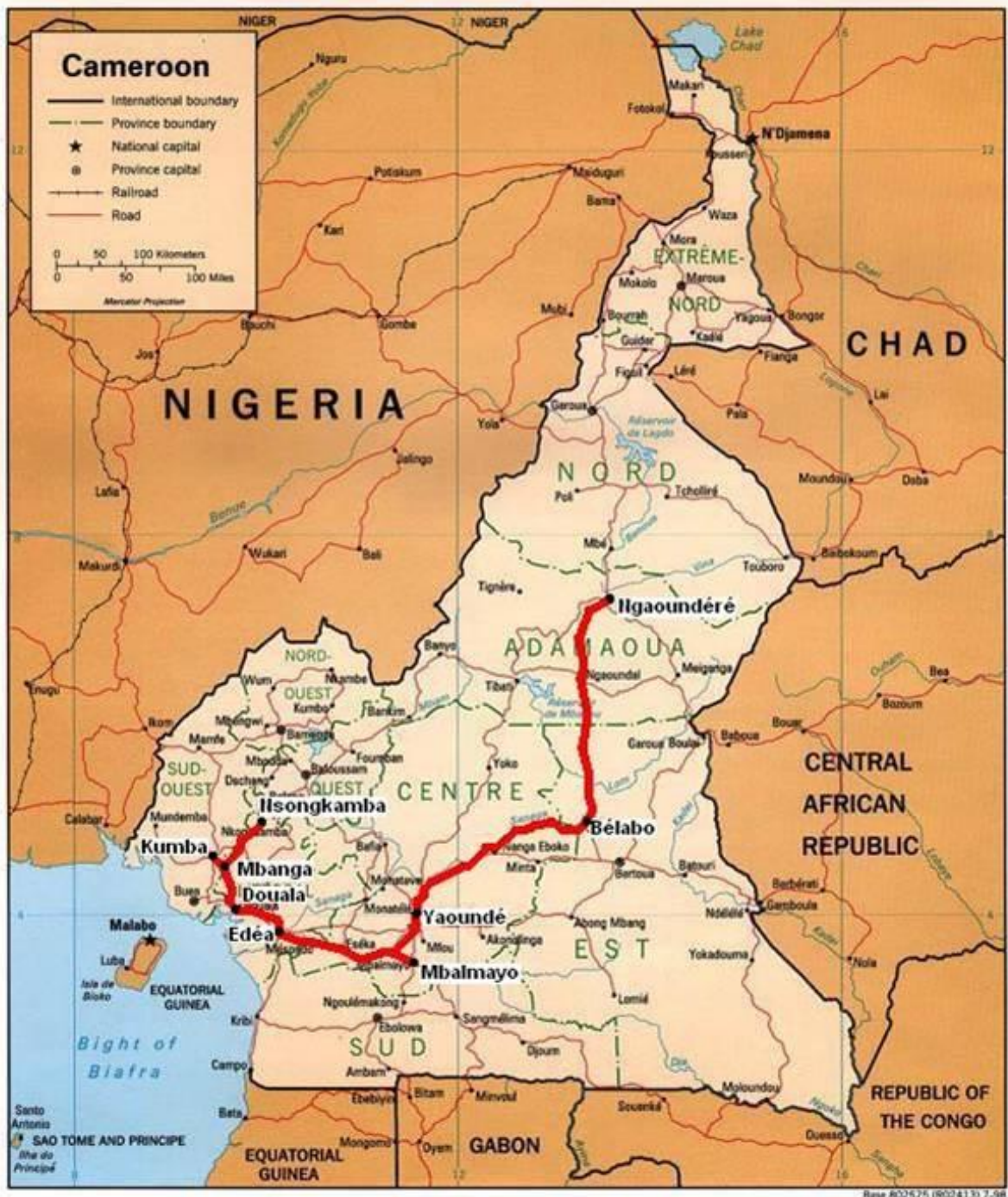
The portage begins in 1891, as soon as after the creation of the first German concession and it remained long-lived during and after the First World War (1914-1918). Nevertheless, it allowed the development of the road network and the railway in Kamerun. Thus, on the axis Yaounde - Kribi in 1913 about 80000 carriers connected the hinterland to the coast. It adds that one saw passing daily to Lolodorf coming from Yokadouma, 600km with distance, nearly 1000 carriers charged with rubber. There was also the road network in 1918, that shows three principal axes by which labour forced used to pass: a very long Northern axis, close to 1000km, Eastern axis was more than 600km and a Southern axis was reduced to some 300km.⁸⁰

According to Bopda, these large axis determined the principal and secondary axis of mobilization of the colonial labour force in Kamerun. Germany had no colonial policy in Kamerun as such. Her overriding interest in the territory was the intensive exploitation of its natural resources to feed the expanding industries of Germany. In the coastal areas where German authority was highly entrenched, the Germans ruled directly. In the interior, the story was different. The protectorate was vast and communication network poor, the construction of road network was not pronounced except in the coastal region where their plantations were located.⁸¹ Map 3 portrays colonial Kamerun railway Network.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.86.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Map 3: Colonial Cameroon Railway Network



Source: Author's Research Collection, National Geographic Center Yaounde, 10/08/2017.2.3.4

German wish that the Haussas come to the coast with the goods procured in the interior, a desire quite natural at a time when the whites were just getting into the interior and when the lack of roads and the risk of attack made all hinterland trade of doubtful venture. When the German traders became active in the interior, their attitude

toward the Haussa underwent a change. These Muslems, who had their settlements in many native villages of the interior, competed with the Germans; and the whites sought to make trade as difficult as possible for them by minimizing their many advantages. In 1912 whites asked that the fees for pedlars' licences be doubled for the Haussa, from fifty to one hundred marks, because of the competition they gave European traders.

The governor refused to do that and pointed to one of the great benefits of that trade to the colony; namely, that the Haussa brought cattle and meat from the northern parts of the Kamerun to the south and thus reduced the amount of cannibalism that prevailed. Since slavery was permitted by Islam, the Haussa had much lower transportation costs than the Christians in a region where all carrying was by man back. In 1913 one German trader expressed the hope that the Haussa would be forced to obey the terms of the carriers' decree with its limitations on the loads borne by each carrier; his proposal would have taken another advantage from the Muslems.

It was also argued against the Haussa traders that they took the resources from the Cameroons north to Nigeria, where the English got the benefit and not the Germans. Traders also made the charge that the Haussa engaged in the slave trade and that they sold human beings to the cannibals of Southern Cameroons. Traders also criticized the special privileges enjoyed by the French concessions under the terms of the 1911 Moroccan accord in that part of French Congo ceded to Germany and an organization was formed in Germany to get rid of those unusual rights. Yola had been the most important centre of trade in the north. The Germans set up Garoua in competition and it became increasingly important as a point of export for the colony's goods. From a few thousand marks in 1907 that trade jumped to over one million marks in 1911. The Germans suffered something of a blow in 1911, when the English bought out the one German trading house in Garoua.⁸²

There was also much criticism of people in neighbouring English, French, and Spanish territory; it was charged that they smuggled arms and liquor into the Cameroons and took trade from the Germans, who could not trade in arms and had to pay high tariff rates and big licence fees before engaging in the liquor trade. Traders seemed always to have grievances against the Government. They objected to the recruiting of workers for the planters or for the railroads, because they needed natives to

⁸² Ngoh V. J., *History of Cameroon, Since 1800*, 1996.

carry cargo to and from the coast as well as to gather the rubber, palm oil, and other products in the regions near their homes. Traders did not hesitate to make it appear that a good deal of cruelty accompanied the recruiting of workers and that conditions of work on the private plantations or on the railroads were so bad that very high death rates resulted.

Traders stood for the liberal principle of voluntary labour, of letting natives remain at home and retain their family life and customs. They had the comforting assurance that such humane suggestions would not rob them of the labourers they needed. There was great complaint against the Government's efforts to regulate carrying by limiting loads and by requiring better treatment of carriers. When the Government found it advisable to quarantine a given area against traders or their carriers because of smallpox or sleeping sickness, traders often disregarded the official prohibition and entered the forbidden zone in the hope that the notices would keep out competitors.

Even when the Government required that natives be whipped less frequently, there were those who said that the ultimate effect of such a policy would be a relaxation of discipline and serious harm to investments in the colony. One is struck by the great inconsistency of traders in their criticism of and demands upon the Government. They demanded the right to sell arms and gunpowder at the same time that they expected the Government to protect them from native violence; they asked the Government to require a better grade of rubber in an effort to improve quality and get higher prices, yet they would not submit to Government inspection of rubber; they demanded additional personnel or made other suggestions involving increased costs in the administration of the colony.⁸³

The treatment of native workers is often made the final test of a colonial system, just as the treatment of workers has come to be the test of nearly every economic system. The character of that treatment depends on the type of economic exploitation going on in a colony. It is evident that the large-scale mining of gold or copper in any backward region is bound to produce a greater shock on native life than planting or trading. Kamerun might be congratulated for not having minerals that would require their employment in mines. In the main, workers were needed for the plantations, for the transportation of traders' goods, and for the clearing of jungle for

⁸³ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon, Since 1800*, 1996.

railroads. The employment of large numbers of white men for such tasks in tropical Africa was unthinkable. It is worth noting that, very early the Germans realized that the best asset they had for the exploitation of the resources of the Kamerun was the native, for without this labour nothing could be done.⁸⁴

The problem was always a serious one, for there was always a shortage of workers, from the early days, when the colony was confined to the coast, to 1914, when control had been extended into the interior; for by that year the expansion of trade and plantations had increased the demand for labour beyond the apparent available supply in the colony. Competition for the workers was keen, especially between traders and planters, whose needs differed considerably. The traders wanted carriers, for manback was the only method supplied by nature for the transport of goods to and from the coast. The lack of draught animals in Southern Cameroons was due to sleeping sickness, which caused experiments with horses, donkeys, and oxen to fail.⁸⁵

Numerous proposals were made to solve these problems, but they were all unsuccessful. There was nothing to do but wait for the gradual solution of the question in the construction of the railroads, the improvement of roads and bridges, and the clearing of rivers for navigation. In the meantime, the needs of trade expanded, until by 1913 about 80,000 carriers' men, women, and children were engaged in transporting goods for the white man on the Kribi-Yaounde road alone. Traders' needs, however, were not restricted to transportation; it was most important for them that natives remain at home in numbers sufficiently large to furnish gatherers of rubber, palm products, ivory, and other commodities for the European market. Because of their need of carriers and gatherers of wild produce in the Kamerun, traders opposed measures that interfered with the Colonial archives. After the traders and the planters, the third great employer of labour was the Kamerun Government, which needed natives as couriers, as carriers for expeditions, and as workers on the rail-roads, for which alone several thousand were required. These increasing needs of the Government, of traders, and of planters for labourers, were the cause of a continuous shortage in the colony.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Harry. R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884-1914: a case study in modern imperialism*, New Haven Yale University Press 1938, p. 315.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

To develop the resources of the Kamerun in accordance with the ideas of the culture from which they came, the European found it necessary to employ force to make natives work; and proceeded with all available means to impose the attitudes and institutions of their northern climate upon those of tropical Africa. In this effort to make natives work, Christian missionaries played an interesting and significant part. Missionaries were much concerned with the indigenes laziness, which was frequently spoken of as the cardinal sin of Africans. Without much thought of historical Christianity, it was assumed that work was a test of a man's character and, therefore, a moral necessity. Some Christian missionaries even believed that a blow could be dealt with by converting indigenes to a different attitude toward work.⁸⁷

After the interior was opened up and subjected to German control, traders and others looked for their labour supply there. In 1898 the Government was asked to get such workers in the interior and to have them sign contracts for a three-year or even a five-year period. Thus, the Kamerun had to supply the workers for its own exploitation. The great labour needs could not be solved by the few volunteers who were moved to work by a desire for arms or liquor or by the delicate operation of inner compulsions deriving from Christian conviction. Those who wanted workers had an additional grievance against the Government when restrictions, amounting almost to a prohibition, on the sale of arms and of liquor cut down the number of those who volunteered. No other means was left but to require indigenes to work, by force if necessary. Work came to be a penalty imposed on those condemned to serve jail sentences for their crimes and misdemeanours. Obviously, imprisonment by itself was no hardship for an indigene; by itself it meant merely that the prisoners, as wards of the state, had at last been relieved of life's hardest responsibilities.⁸⁸

By requiring prisoners to work, it was possible to make a jail sentence a penalty for crime and not a reward. Just as crime was thus capitalized for commercial benefit, so also the wrath of natives who attacked Germans in the interior. Most of the fighting in the Kamerun was due to indigenes attacks on German trading caravans, which destroyed the monopoly of trade that indigenes enjoyed and wished to maintain. In the Nineties and even later a score or two of peace treaties with defeated tribes

⁸⁷ Harry. R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884-1914: a case study in modern imperialism*, New Haven Yale University Press 1938, p. 315.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

exacted of the vanquished a pledge to supply workers, numbered by scores or by hundreds, for a specified period. An interesting suggestion about workers was made in 1899 by Governor Puttkamer, who wrote to Dominik, busy at the time in conquering Adamawa, that slaves of conquered ethnic principalities should not be set free as formerly, but should be sent with their families to the coast, where they could obtain work as free labourers. This suggestion resembled an early proposal that slaves be bought and be given the opportunity of working ten years for their freedom.⁸⁹

Often, in addition to or in lieu of getting workers in this way, the Government required of defeated natives specific work such as the construction of roads and their upkeep, which was the commonest form of work exacted of the conquered. The use of taxation as a means of forcing indigenes to work for white men in order to obtain money for the tax was a typical method of colonial powers for dealing with the labour problem. It was not until 1902 that this method of forcing indigenes to work was seriously considered for the Kamerun, When the decree went into effect on July 1st, 1903, it was only for the administrative district of Douala. Persons unable to pay the tax were required to perform work that was to be determined by the local official. Under Governor Seitz it was specifically provided that such work would have to be of a public character. But in the revision of the decree in 1913 it was provided that workers unable to pay the tax could be handed over to private employers, who would pay the tax of the delinquent.⁹⁰

Explorers at work in the interior reported the discovery of populous areas that seemed likely sources of labour-supply. In time Bali, Fouban, and Yaounde became the leading centres supplying labour to the plantations. Their great advantage was that natives in those regions of the interior were accustomed to an agricultural life and had less disinclination toward work than natives elsewhere. In some instances explorers or representatives of plantations made contracts with chieftains for the supply of workers in specified numbers and for specified periods. According to one description, which seems too good to be true, when a chieftain was called on to get workers, a meeting of the members of the Ethnic group took place and only those who volunteered for work were taken to the coast under the terms of a contract made with each individual worker.

⁸⁹Harry. R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884-1914: a case study in modern imperialism*, New Haven Yale University Press 1938, p. 315.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

The indigenes were persuaded to sign contracts to work for a given period of time, running from six to eighteen months, with higher pay for the longer terms. The contracts contained definite stipulations as to hours, wages, and the like. Such contracts were arranged by planters themselves and often by officials.⁹¹

The traders had good reason for urging the Government to give up anything like forced labour and recruiting and for recommending voluntary labour instead. The many questions arising in connexion with carrying were regulated by decree in the spring of 1908. It provided that carriers be grown people, capable of doing the work. The load was fixed at thirty kilograms with an allowance of five additional kilograms for the personal needs of the carriers. The load had been set at twenty-five kilograms, but the chamber of commerce succeeded in getting it raised to thirty. Possibly the Government felt that some concession had to be made to these traders, who had wanted and got no railway into the interior and were forced to rely on manback for transportation. In the discussion of the amount of the load some people opposed a fixed limit; they argued that the size should depend on the route of the carriers' caravan, of this decree the Government had wanted one reserve carrier for every six regular carriers; the compromise reached in the decree was one reserve for every ten, in case any were incapacitated by illness during the march.⁹²

Every caravan was required to have a qualified indigene as its leader, responsible for keeping the caravan together, for keeping order along the route, and for keeping the caravan to schedule time. Such leaders had to be trustworthy indigene, and they could serve as leaders only when provided by the Government with a certificate of fitness. Caravans had to have sufficient food with them or sufficient means for purchasing it; the amount of money necessary for food was a matter to be worked out by heads of administrative districts in order to protect villages along the routes as well as the carriers. Such villages were to supply food in amounts and at prices to be officially determined; they could refuse to do so only when they had exemption granted for cause by the Government. Routes had to be worked out for the caravans to make certain that food was available along the way.⁹³

⁹¹ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, 1938.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Where rest-houses had been erected as shelter for the night, carriers were forbidden to spend the nights in neighbouring villages. Where there were no rest-houses, villages had to supply shelter for the night at a fixed price for each carrier. The leaders of the caravans had many responsibilities; to keep their men from acts of violence, to follow the prescribed route, to see that the rest-houses were made clean when vacated, and to report illness and death among the carriers as well as the existence of epidemics along the line of march. Employers of carriers were under obligation to inform their caravan leaders of these regulations and to keep caravans from areas barred to commerce by reason of native disturbances or epidemics of disease. Leaders who failed to observe the regulations were punished by being deprived of the certificates which qualified them for such position and for the higher pay that went with their greater responsibility. In a large number of decrees over the years the Government laid down for all parts of the colony schedules that fixed the number of days (including rest-days) required by caravans to cover the main routes.⁹⁴

Where there were no such routes or schedules, it was understood that three to four marching hours would constitute a day's work. When new roads or new bridges cut down the time allotment for specific routes, new schedules were prepared. The Government determined the amount of money to be spent for the food of each carrier, the price varying with the place. At the same time the Government sought to persuade indigenes to have farms along caravan routes, especially at the crossroads, to produce foods for sale to carriers. In 1913 and 1914 attempts were made to tighten these carrying regulations. All such efforts were opposed by traders of southern Cameroons, who said that the evils were really due to the Government's recruiting of workers for the railways and for the plantations and to its refusal to construct any railway into the hinterland from Kribi, whose trade at times exceeded that of Douala.⁹⁵

Behind these detailed regulations it was possible to see what difficulties had risen in the employment of carriers. The shortage of food had often been a serious cause of violence between carriers and villagers. Instances had been noted where caravans were too large for the available food supply of the region through which they were sent. Now and then carriers faced actual starvation and would have died of hunger had they not pillaged farms and villages for food. It was possible that carriers were at fault in

⁹⁴Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, 1938.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

some instances, when the money given them had been spent for other things than food or when armed caravans simply plundered villages for food and women without paying for them. In self-protection the villagers naturally fought back; and serious consequences threatened at times. Governor Seitz, interested as no other governor in indigenous welfare, wanted to protect such villages against the carriers. He warned firms about their responsibilities and instructed local administrators to give the villagers the protection they needed. Attacks by carriers on indigenous women was another serious matter. Long discussion and debate over these problems preceded the issuance of the 1908 decree on carrying. A decree regulating the use of canoes and the employment of native rowers for water transportation was issued in 1907.⁹⁶

In the enforcement of these regulations the Government did not always have the support of the traders. The latter often disregarded the zones quarantined because of indigenous disturbances or because of smallpox or other disease. There was much criticism of the number of written reports required by the Government, of the testing of carriers' loads by officials at critical places, of the halting of caravans because necessary papers were not in order. The difficulty of getting good leaders for caravans often led traders to refrain from reporting to the Government the names of those who transgressed the regulations. Co-operation with the Government became a matter of great reluctance, especially when the world rubber crisis tempted traders in Southern Cameroons to an even greater disregard of the decrees. Traders also complained that their Hausa competitors were not required to obey the terms of the 1908 decree but could load down the members of their families or their slaves without any interference whatever from the Government. Traders were angry because the Government would not give them the disciplinary power they wanted in order to prevent the thefts and the gambling that caused them great property losses and because the Government refused to recover the property stolen.⁹⁷

In addition to these matters, came one question of greater gravity, that of the health of the carriers and of the colony in general. Disregard of the quarantines on restricted zones because of smallpox or other epidemic diseases led to the spread of disease wherever the carriers went. In 1908 an inoculation station was maintained at Lolodorf, an important point on the Kribi-Yaounde caravan route where over one

⁹⁶ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, 1938.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

thousand carriers passed daily. In 1909 a decree required that all employers of indigenous labour arrange to have their workers vaccinated. The spread of venereal disease by carriers was another very serious problem against which there was hardly anything to be done. Wages paid to native workers varied according to the length of service and the character of the work performed. Average wages for workers were eight to nine marks a month. This pay was in addition to the food, shelter, and medical care that the employers had to give their employees.⁹⁸

In general, indigenes who were contracted to work for only six months received a pay of six marks a month; those contracting for twelve and eighteen months received eight and nine marks a month respectively. It is impossible to ascertain just what real wages were because employers preferred to pay indigenes in cheap European goods, despite the official decrees ordering payment of wages in cash. In the early days of the Botanical Garden at Victoria the Government found it necessary to add a bottle of rum to the regular pay to keep indigenes at work. It was reported in 1908 that carriers took their pay in rum at Kribi, and in such quantities that traders themselves did not try to sell rum in the interior. Some indigenes wanted guns and gunpowder as their pay for performing work. Interested in fair dealing for the natives and in the introduction of money to simplify the payment of taxes and fines, the Government tried by a series of rulings to have workers paid in cash. But white employers, especially the traders, fought the proposals, which were not in operation even in 1914. One of the arguments used against paying workers in cash was that chieftain would take the money because they regarded the carriers as slaves.⁹⁹

Indigenous workers were not given their full pay at the end of each month or other regular period. Usually 50 percent, was withheld and allowed to accumulate for the workers, who got it when their contracts expired. When workers died, provision was made for the payment of the accumulated wages to the nearest of kin. The reason for holding back the pay of workers was to keep them from running away, a purpose that was not always achieved. Defenders of this method of payment found support in other arguments. They claimed that the method was a guarantee that the native would have something to show for his labour at the end of the period of work; indigenes getting full pay were inclined to spend their money on liquor, on women, in such was said to be the

⁹⁸Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, 1938.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

practice in 1905-6. gambling, or in the purchase of worthless articles that would be gone by the time they were to return home. Workers who received their accumulated pay, usually in the form of goods 'purchased' in the plantation's factories, returned home to be envied by their fellow- villagers for their great wealth.¹⁰⁰

Colonial Wage Labourers

There was a limit to the extent to which the colonial states could enforce its wishes in the vast world of farming, it could be much more coercive when it came to labour recruitment. Colonial governments got involved in labour recruitment for a variety of reasons. In some cases they needed the labour for their own projects. For instance, much of the early road and railway building was done with forced labour. Most colonial governments at same time used forced labour of some sort, which says much about the colonial state. When colonial governments first arrived in continent, wage labour was almost unknown. In the absence of money, it was difficult, though not impossible to recruit voluntary labour. In some places labour was paid with post harvest beer parties, in much the same way that you might buy pizza and beer for the people who help you paint your apartment or move.¹⁰¹

Big farmers might do this to recruit extra labour for the harvest, as a means of permanently supporting a group of employees, it would not work. To get around this, farmers relied on labour drawn from kingship groups and slaves. Neither of these options was open to the colonial state. States had no kin, and even if colonial government did not rush to outlaw slavery, they were not willing to formally purchase slaves. So getting labour for projects like building a road or a bridge was often accomplished by requiring local people to work on the bridge. In some cases this would be done informally by low level colonial officials who simply made demands of local chiefs or villages. In other places, there were formal systems of forced labour in which the state required of every man a certain amount of labour per year.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, 1938.

¹⁰¹ Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, New Haven C.T University Press, 1980. M.N. Persiani, *Port Cities and Intertraders*, Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Another approach that colonial states used to obtain necessary labour was to pay wages. This only worked, though if people either needed the money or wanted it. Here taxation could play a role just as it had with the transition to cash cropping. If colonized people had no use for the money issued by the state, collecting taxes in cash rather than in kind could compel people to work for wages. Bear in mind that in many places there was nothing to buy with money in the very early part of the colonial period. In central Africa and Cameroon, at the turn of the century, for instance, there were neither sufficient tax collectors nor enough of retail market for anyone to want cash. When the German built the railway in the plantation region, they had to bring workers from Europe.¹⁰³

They could neither entice nor coerce local labour. Interestingly, many of the workers who came to work on the railways stayed on rather than going back to Germany when their contracts were finished. Some of these Germans then became small scale retailers, opening shops in places where there had been no shops before. In so doing they helped to create a reason for people to want cash. Their role as pioneers in the retail trade helped to monetize the Cameroonian economy and helped to stimulate an interest in cash crops and wage labour. It is worth noting that this was not part of the plan when the British brought in labour, rather it was an unintended consequence.¹⁰⁴

The other and in many ways more important, source of demand for labour was European owned business. In places where there were significant numbers of European settlers, colonial states were faced with the task of providing labour for their farms and businesses. Although almost every colony had some European business and farms, a few places stand out as centers of this type of activity. In Cameroon the German and later the British and French owned plantations, in the Kenya highlands there was a large population of mostly British settlers who were engaged in growing coffee or sisal. In other parts of the colonial world, African farmers also needed labour. In the region where colonial governments found themselves, they were engaged in sometime frantic hunt for labour that often spilled across the colonial frontiers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, New Haven C.T University Press, 1980. M.N. Persian, *Port Cities and Intertraders*, Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

This scramble to find labour was complicated by the abolition of slavery. One of the ways that colonialism in Africa was justified to voting publics was that imperialism was needed to stamp out the evils of slavery. However sincerely this objective might have been, once in power colonial regimes were reluctant to abruptly end slavery. Colonial officials relied on the cooperation of African elites to rule their colonies. In many cases they also depended on tax revenue from farms staffed by slaves. So despite the frequent demands of home country public opinion, the people in charge in the colonies did not rush into abolition and when they finally got around to it, they tried to minimize the economic and social upheaval associated with abolition.¹⁰⁶

Internal economic activity in colonial Cameroon was localized and regional in the sense that people simply exchanged the products with what they needed from their neighbours. In other words trade was by barter. Eventhough a product might travel a long distance;this did not mean that the traders covered long distances. Rather goods were relayed over long distances in a series of trade exchanges. The areas of the Kamerun became an economic entity with the arrival of the Europeans. Until then, agriculture was for subsistence purposes, and any surpluses were exchanged with neighbours for basic wants. Although the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach the Cameroons Coast, they failed to establish any fixed stations on the coast. The Portuguese operated from Sao Tome island from which they sent ships to visit their ware houses at the mouths of various coastal rivers.

They did not undertake any extensive exploration of the Kamerun hinterland because they were contented with their lucrative ivory and gold trade along the Gold Coast. Other conditions to the detriment of trade with the Cameroon Coast were dense coastal mangrove forests, humidity,insect borne diseases and the hostility of the coastal tribes. However by 1493, the Portuguese had begun to colonize both Sao Tome and Fernando Po, thus placing the Cameroon Coast within frequent contact by Europeans. By 1520, Portuguese settlers had developed first class sugar plantations worked by slaves bought along the coast.¹⁰⁷

Thereafter the Portuguese became the most important suppliers of slaves for the expanding plantations of the New World. To facilitate this trade, Fernando Po and Sao

¹⁰⁶ Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, New Haven C.T University Press, 1980.M.N. Persian, *Port Cities and Intertraders*, Baltimore; Johns Hopkins Univesity Press,1998.

¹⁰⁷ Victor T. Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* 1958 p.41.

Tome were converted into collection point from which slaves could be conveniently shipped to America. Other European countries, led by the Dutch, broke the Portuguese monopoly toward the beginning of the seventeenth century. As such by 1642, the Dutch had captured Sao Tome and were threatening Fernando Po by establishing a trading post at the mouth of the Rio dos Cameroes. With the growth of the slave trade during the seventh and eighteenth centuries the Dutch and Portuguese were joined by the French, English, Swedish, Danish and Brandenburger slavers in visiting the Cameroon coast in search of human Cargo. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Calabar about eighty miles West of Mount Cameroon, Bimbia, Douala on the Rio dos Cameroes, and Rio del Rey had become famous as centres where slaves were sold and from where they were shipped abroad.¹⁰⁸

However Europeans made no effort to establish permanent footholds despite the frequency of their visits. Instead most of them remained aboard ship, dealing with the coastal tribes that served as middlemen. The Douala and Bakweri were the most prominent of the coastal tribes, and they obtained slaves and aided in the distribution of goods brought by the Europeans. The prosperity of the slave trade did not completely eliminate other forms of trade. In about 1614, Samuel Braun, a Dutchman described the products of the province of Amboise, the present Fako Division, as being the exchange of accarin or aggrey, a bluish coral-like rock, on payment of cowries.¹⁰⁹ This rock was exchange in the Gold Coast for gold. The Kamerun coast also supplied ivory to the outside world. As for the major commodity slaves, a slave could be bought for two handfuls of cowries or three measures of spanish wine. In 1732, John Barbot, another European, described the Kamerun coast as:

The territory of Ambozes comprehend several villages on the west of Cape Cameroon amongst which are those of Cegis, Bodi and Bodiwa, where there is a little trade for slaves and accory(aggry). The Hollanders trade there most of all Europeans and export slaves for the same sorts of goods they used to import at Rio del Rey.¹¹⁰

When the slave trade ended in the nineteenth century, Victoria became very prominent because a squadron of the British Navy was based at Man O war Bay, four miles from

¹⁰⁸ Victor T. Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* 1958 p.41.

¹⁰⁹ Victoria Centenary Committee, *Victoria: Southern Cameroons*, 1958, Victoria Basel Mission Book Depot, 1958 p.41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Victoria, to hunt down slavers. With the suppression of slave trade, legitimate trade began to grow, being frequently based on the same harbour of Clarence Cove which sheltered the Navy on Fernando Po. One of the earliest British traders to the 19th century Kamerun, was John Holt. He first settled at Fernando Po and from there set up the first venture on the mainland at Bimbia in 1869, and the firm of John Holt remained an important factor in the trade and economy of the British Cameroons up to independence. Other British early companies which were later taken over by the UAC were the Amba Bay Trading company and R and W King and company which was established in the French Cameroons in 1695.

The German firm of Woermann had a branch in Victoria in Saker's day and the President of the Council Samuel Brew was its local agent.¹¹¹ The transition from the slave trade to legitimate trade was not easy for both Europeans and Africans. Therefore, merchants on the coast were as dependent on the goodwill of their customers as were missionaries on the goodwill of local chiefs and the trust of their flocks. Traders adjusted their activities to the vagaries of the market, and therefore had little occasion to stand upon their dignity. No wonder that one of Africa's most popular imports during the 1870's and early 1880's was cheap liquor, and German Gin became a favourite article of commerce in many parts of West Africa. Of equal importance was the traffic in firearms, with the Hanseatic firms never hesitating to sell guns to Africans. However Germany's pre-colonial trade in guns and spirits became unpopular not only with missionaries and humanitarians but also with hard line imperialists who thought that rifles would render Africans insolent and schnapps would make them lazy. But the Hamburg pioneers thought otherwise. As long as they confined their activities to the coast of Cameroon, the Hamburg traders had little desire for official supervision or for governance by the home authorities.¹¹²

For now, focus was eliminating traders from rival countries. For instance Britain was concerned more with keeping out French traders than with colonization, even though British and German traders favoured the declaration of a protectorate. In 1883, Hewett, the British Consul, discovered that French activities came in from King Bell and Akwa, John Holt of Liverpool, English traders in Manchester, and from the African

¹¹¹ Victor T. Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* 1958, p.41.

¹¹² L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977, p.22.

Association of Liverpool. They expressed fears that the French were aiming at territorial annexation near Lagos and near Big Batanga below Douala. While opposed to annexation in the case of Kamerun, Britain had no desire to see the French acquire any advantages at English political establishment felt that a decision should be taken as to:

Whether the time has come in the interests of British commerce, to acquire the certainty by annexation, protectorate, international engagements or neutrality or any other means, that foreign nations will not interfere with our free trade.¹¹³

While the British wavered, the pattern of trade began to change. The demand for raw materials for German industries increased the volume of commerce as the Germans purchased increased quantities of tropical goods, especially palm oil, used as a raw material for the manufacture of soap and candles. To handle this increase in trade, the firm of woermann, a Hamburg concern with trading posts along the coast of Cameroon, established a regular shipping line to West Africa in 1882.¹¹⁴ At the same time, the world slump of the 1870s and 1880s made it necessary for the old notions of indirect influence to be reconsidered. When prices fell, the more aggressive German traders were impelled to push inland in order to reduce costs and beat competition by circumventing local African monopolies. In these circumstances, the Douala, once German allies, became obstacles to German firms, and German commercial houses like Woermann looked to direct German protection and territorial expansion. This was especially so because German traders were too few to bear the cost of government. For this reason Bismarck took the decisive step in 1884 to annex Cameroon.¹¹⁵

2.3 The Outbreak of the First World War and the End of German Rule

When the First World War broke out, Germany found herself fighting a two-front war in Cameroon. The British attacked on the West from neighbouring Nigeria and the French on the East from French Equatorial Africa. German forces were crushed in the middle. The last stronghold Mora which was defended by Captain Von Raben fell on February 20th 1916 where Germany lost Cameroon. France and Britain then partitioned the territory as their war booty, along their respective combat zones. The target now

¹¹³ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*, p.24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* p.25.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

was, who was to take Douala. The town had been jointly wrested from the Germans in 1914 and provisionally placed under an uneasy Anglo-French condominium,¹¹⁶ headed by Britain's Brigadier-General Charles Dobell. In 1915 it had been agreed to maintain the condominium until the collapse of German resistance in the territory.¹¹⁷

The question as to which power was to acquire Douala, which had been jointly conquered, delayed the partition of Kamerun. Surprisingly Britain surrendered Douala to France. The question as to who was to own Douala having been resolved, the way became clear to carve out the territory along the respective combat zones of the two powers. Britain's secretary of state for the colonies, Lancelot Oliphant and France's Minister for the colonies, George Picot, met in London on the 4th of March 1916 and provisionally partitioned Kamerun along what came to be known as the Picot Line.

On March 29th 1916 the partition agreement was initiated in Douala and the condominium was liquidated. France made away with the lion's share of the spoils. Britain was afraid of incurring great financial responsibilities over another colonial territory. Her main concern was to secure what she regarded as better boundaries for her vast territory of Nigeria. This explains why Britain was contented with only a tiny strip of Kamerun. The Supreme Council made up of Lloyd George for Britain, Georges Clemenceau for France, Woodrow Wilson for the United States of America, and Orlando for Italy, acting as de facto international government, met in Paris and agreed to allow Britain and France to make a joint declaration to the League of Nations with regards to the future of Kamerun. On 28th of June 1919 the Treaty of Versailles was concluded and Germany ratified.

Two weeks later, on 10th July 1919 Britain and France made their joint declaration (the Milner-Simon Agreement) confirming the partition of Cameroon which had already been carried out in March 1916. They undertook to administer their respective spheres in accordance with article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant. The future of Kamerun was decided by Britain and France and not the League. The terms of the mandate formulated for Cameroon by Britain and France were approved by the

¹¹⁶ The condominium was placed directly under the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay.

¹¹⁷ On the 24th of September 1915, the French Foreign Minister M. Delacasse sent a letter to the British Ambassador in Paris saying that until the allied offensive has broken the German resistance, the administration of the occupied zones of the country by the forces under General Dobell shall devolve on the military authorities assisted by civil servants delegated for this purpose and chosen from the neighbouring English and French colonies.

League's Council on the 20th of July 1922. But the mandate did not come into force until September 29th 1923.

The Germans had made an impalpable impact in the country from 1884-1916. The Cultural impression of the Germans who prior to the British who had administered the territory was reflected to varying degrees in the life of Southern Cameroonians on the whole, nostalgia for German rule was demonstrated especially along the coastal towns of Victoria, Buea and Tiko and throughout the plantation. Of the 264.000 acres of "enemy" (of the enemy plantation land advertised by the British Government in 1924, the German alone brought back 207.000 by 1939 they were two hundred and eighty-five Germans most of whom were members of the Nazi party compared to 86 British nationals in a territory that was supposedly British.¹¹⁸

Subsequently, the Germans overwhelmingly dominated the cocoa, banana and rubber plantations employing well over 25.000 workers, as well as controlled all import and export business in "British" Southern Cameroons. This was very unlike French Mandated East Cameroon. Where all ex-enemy, German plantations had wholly been bought over by Frenchmen explicitly to obliterate any lingering notions or influence of the erstwhile, Germans colonial masters in the territory.¹¹⁹ In order words, the back bone of the economy and the totality of the proletariat were in the hands of the Germans in Southern Cameroons. Even on the spiritual plane, all foreign nationals of the Baptist Missionaries were either pure Germans or Swiss-Germans, as were all.¹²⁰ Baptist missionaries were also Germans or Italians. Ironically, therefore, the British became an indistinct and a far from effective minority in their own mandated territory.

In between the Wars Britain had played a minimum care taker role and never failed in any way and at any time to demonstrate the awareness of its tenuous hold on the mandated territories of Southern Cameroons. It failed positively to create any serious economic, social, cultural or political influence on the territory or on inhabitants. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, scores of Cameroonian veterans of World War II offered to serve in the side of the Axis powers in the German army. Even

¹¹⁸ Ndi "The Second World War in Southern Cameroon and it's impact on Mission State relations, 1939-1950" In *Africa and the Second World War*.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Henry Mbain, 77, Plantation Worker, Tiko, 06 November 2016.

¹²⁰ Interview with Eballe Moses Elangwe, 74, Retired CDC Worker, Limbe 21st June 2016.

worst all along the coast people freely toasted to Adolf Hitler the “Führer” at social gatherings, sang the German national victories of the War in Europe.¹²¹

The chief secretary analyzing this ominous situation doubted the chances of the British administration gaining any cooperation from the natives were the Germans to enter Southern Cameroons. Britain was barely reaping what it had sowed all along in the territory after two decades of benign neglect. In fact, the apathy only heightened with the progress of the war. Although in its chequered history Cameroon went through only 30 years of German rule and some forty of Anglo-Nigerian administration, the British mandate period was also overwhelmingly dominated by German influence, though without legal title. Consequently, German influence sank deeper into the people for it was these memories that were conjured and became beacons for reunification at independence in 1961.¹²²

This explain the nostalgic “K” factor in the spelling of Kamerun after the German appellation. All the early Southern Cameroonian political parties adopted “K” and included the KUNC, KNC, KPP, KNDP and OK. Similarly, worth mentioning is the fact that the KNC and KPP on changing their platforms in 1959 from reunification with French Cameroon to integration with Nigeria equally reverted to Cameroons with a “C” discarding the “K” in their names. The coalition then became the CPNC.¹²³ Were the issue of impacting the so-called “Anglo-Saxon Culture” to have been determined simply by the length of time Britain administered a giving colony, then it should have been most apparent in Eastern Nigeria with which Southern Cameroons was jointly rule as an integral part and which by the way was a region of the federation of Nigeria, Britain’s original dependency from 1884-1960. Interestingly, this was not exactly the case because of its policy of indirect rule which stressed the paramountcy of African interest.

Actually, throughout the Federation of Nigeria, Southern Cameroonian citizens were noted for their honesty, reliability and diligence. This is testified by the fact that where ever they found employment, whether in the public or private sectors, Cameroonians were invariably entrusted with posts of responsibility and generally rose

¹²¹ Interview with Adamou Abo Hamon, 85, Retired Civil Servant, Garoua, 24 April 2016.

¹²² Ibid Killinary and Rathbone.

¹²³ During the Eastern regional crisis in 1953, Southern Cameroonian members both in the Regional and Federal Houses of Representatives in Nigeria declared. “Benevolent Neutrality” in Nigeria politics. See Mbile Eyewitness, pp. 44-76.

to the top. A quick glance at the personalities who were taken over from Nigeria at reunification in the civil service, army, the police force and education amply illustrated this point.¹²⁴ For that matter, ever recruits absconding from the Nigerian army in 1939-40, told the plain truth maintaining that they did not understand why they had to fight in the war. It was in order to raise this flagging loyalty of Southern Cameroonians to the Union Jack, that it was hurriedly arranged for the Governor General of Nigeria to make a special visit to the territory in 1943-44, within the Second World War; as while Cameroonians recruits were deserting at Calabar, those at home displayed generalized apathy for the war cause.¹²⁵

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the German annexation of Kamerun. The annexation of the territory was followed by their penetration into the interior. The activities of the British and the French, particularly, diverting interior trade to their favour and the presence of fertile soils in the interior compelled German movement into the interior. The presence of plantations, their physical location and produce determined the type of transport facility that was constructed. The construction of roads, railways and ports was done both by the government and the plantation concessions. The labour for the construction was supplied by the local indigenous communities. By the end of the German rule in Cameroon, they had constructed a good number of roads, ports and northern railway had been opened to traffic in 1911. The next chapter shall examine British colonial transport policies in the Southern Cameroons.

¹²⁴ Interview with Sakwe Paul 76, Retired CDC Worker, Limbe, 10 June 2016.

¹²⁵ Rathbone and Killingray, the Second World War.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BRITISH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN BRITISH SOUTHERN CAMEROON, 1916-1961

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the development of transport infrastructure in the British Southern Cameroons by Britain during the mandate, trusteeship periods, 1916-1961. It focuses on the construction of roads and labour recruitment for the projects. Transport policies in the British Southern Cameroons was partly influenced by the British administrative policy, the indirect rule system. Some roads were constructed linking the administrative headquarters as well as the centres of extraction and the seaports. Thus transport infrastructure was developed where the colonialists stand to benefit.

3.2 British Colonial Transport Policy

Britain played a significant role in the establishment of colonial transport policies in Cameroon. It is worth mentioning that, following Article 9 of the Mandate and on the Foreign jurisdictions Act of 1890, Britain enacted Laws under which Cameroon was to be administered as though she formed part of the protectorate of Nigeria.¹ There were two cornerstones of British colonial policy; Indirect rule and trade. Britain perhaps more than any other colonial power, saw her colonial possessions mainly as a source of raw materials to feed her booming industries as well as an outlet for her surplus industrial products. Hence the success of any colonial possession which Britain had was measured by the stimulus it gave to British commerce. So long as British mercantile interest was preserved, it was believed that liberty and self development could best be secured to the indigenes by leaving them free to manage their own affairs through their own rulers, proportionately to their degree of advancement under the guidance of the British staff, and subject to the laws and policy of the administration. The British policy of Indirect Rule was often associated with that Veteran British colonial master, Lord Lugard, who

¹ Interview with Zacheus Nchindo 75, Business man, Bamenda 2015.

served the British Empire so well in East and West Africa. Indirect rule was however not uniformly applied to all British colonial territories.²

Besides, it was a system by which the British colonial administration governed the colonised peoples through their own traditional institutions, Indirect Rule was applied in varying degrees depending on the circumstances and degree of advancement of each territory. The British maintained traditional institutions and acted merely as supervisors of indigenous affairs. One effect of this administration was that it encouraged ethnic allegiances; for within a given territory the various ethnic groups behaved as though they were states within a state. Whereas direct rule has the advantage of fostering a national spirit in the indigenes, indirect rule militated against national consciousness.

History has shown that the former Belgian and French possessions in Africa are not less torn by ethnic strife than the former British territories. The system of indirect rule was however flexible and inculcated a sense of responsibility in the indigenes. Their traditional institutions were adapted for the purposes of local government or indigenous administration.³ These traditional institutions were left almost intact so that they may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by the traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded or modified as they may be on the advice of the British officers, and by the general advice and control of those officers.⁴

Traditional chiefs were integrated into the colonial administrative hierarchy. The Governor General appointed by a Royal Commission was the highest authority answerable to and representative of His Majesty in the colony. He appointed and dismissed officers of the colonial service. He assented to or refused to assent to Bills passed by the local legislative council. He had the power to grant pardons and remit penalties. He was only controlled by His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. He was incharge of the whole territory; occupied Government House and was styled, His Excellency. Under the Governor General was the Lieutenant Governor who assumed the administrative charge of group of provinces for which he was responsible.

²Interview with Zacheus Nchindo 75, Business man, Bamenda 2015.

³ Idem.

⁴ Latham, G. C., Indirect Rule and Education in E. Africa, AFRICA, Vol. 7, No. 4. p. 423.

However below him was the Resident who assumed the administrative charge of a province. He was responsible for the efficiency of the public service in his courts. He supervised and guided the native rulers and acted as sympathetic adviser and counsellor to the indigenous chief, being careful not to interfere so as to lower his prestige, or cause him to lose interest in his work.⁵ Beneath the Resident were Divisional Officers. Every province was divided into Divisions, each under a Divisional Officer. Upon the D.O.s largely depended the maintenance of law and order in the Divisions. So far as the masses of the colonised people were concerned, the administration was mainly carried on by the D.Os for they wielded considerable power in their Divisions. The policy of indirect rule was a reflection of Britain's proverbial conservatism as well as her aristocratic tradition.⁶

It was however not until 1922 that indirect rule was introduced in British Southern Cameroons. The territory was administered from Lagos, seat of the British colonial administration for the Cameroons and Nigeria,⁷ Britain's knowledge of the territory was very sketchy. The clan Council of the Chief constituted the Native Authority. In fact they acted as instruments of Government having responsibility for the management of their own affairs and promotion of development at the local level such as building bridges and the digging of roads. But the territory was very poorly developed. Infrastructure and means of communication were deplorable, only a few miles of narrow motorable roads existed. Most of them were impassable during the rainy season. Compulsory labour also existed in British Cameroons; although not in its dehumanizing form as in French Cameroon. The British view was that the object of compulsory labour was purely educative because it was a necessity to carry on the work of administration and development only where labour cannot otherwise be procured for public works of an essential and urgent nature.⁸

The Indirect Rule as a system of colonial administration was instituted whereby the colonial authorities ruled the indigenous people through their local rulers under the supervision of British administrators known as Resident and District Officers. The policy was first introduced in Northern Nigeria by a Governor General known as Lord Frederick Lugard. One of the main reasons that induced Britain to introduce the policy of

⁵ Lugard, *Dual Mandate* p.201.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Carlson Anyangwe, *The Cameroon Judicial System*, University of Yaounde, 1987, p.60.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.61.

Indirect Rule in Southern Cameroon was due to the lack of roads and other transport infrastructures. As earlier mentioned many areas in British Cameroon were inaccessible because there were little or no roads, rivers were not navigable and the territory was covered by thick forest and characterized by mountains and valleys. When the British took over the administration from the Germans, they only had to improve on the road network set up by the Germans in the coastal and the hinterland regions of Cameroon.⁹

3.1 British Economic Policy and Road Construction in Southern Cameroons.

The British colonialist portrayed an eminent role in the establishment of road construction network in Southern Cameroons. The main trend of economy which Britain followed in the Southern Cameroons was the open economy. The characteristics of an open economy were firstly that it exports a limited range of agriculture and mineral products in exchange for a variety of manufactures, chiefly consumer goods. The Southern Cameroons exported Bananas, Palm Produce, Rubber, Timber and later, tea, Coffee and Cocoa in exchange for manufactured goods. Secondly expatriate interests usually dominate one or more sectors of the open economy. As such, German planters dominated plantation agriculture during the mandate while British firms like the UAC and Holt controlled commerce during the Trusteeship. Thirdly in an open economy, industrial powers exert considerable influence on the domestic policy of the host country, or in the case of colonies they control it completely. Their aim was usually to assist the flow of primary products, and to keep the door open for sale of manufactured goods. Between the wars, the Germans controlled not only the plantations but also the import and export of the British Southern Cameroons. In such an economy, tariffs were kept low, though differential duties and quotas were sometimes imposed in order to restrict the entry of goods manufactured by rival industrial powers. Except for this, there were few if any, restrictions on the volume of imports apart from the limit set by the purchasing power of local consumers.¹⁰ They effectively control imports from rival countries, the British improved on the existing sea ports in the Southern Cameroons.

⁹ Interview with Sekwe Paul, 76, Retired C.D.C Worker, Limbe, 2016.

¹⁰ A.G Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, p.168.

The fourth aspect of the open economy was that the metropolitan power aimed at minimising its fiscal obligations and expects its colonies to balance their budgets without external assistance. It was for these reasons that Britain chose to administer the Southern Cameroons as a Province of Nigeria. In the fifth place the monetary system of an open economy was an appendage of that of the major power, while banking facilities were fashioned to finance the activities of expatriate firms. Thus, the open economy assisted the development of trade with the major power, without involving that power in any monetary responsibilities towards its colony or satellite trading partner.¹¹ It was in such circumstances that Britain was not prepared to give the Southern Cameroons the golden key of the Bank of England if the Cameroons chose independence instead of association with Nigeria. By associating with Nigeria, Britain stayed away from the responsibility of constructing roads in the territory.

It was clear that the open economy created a situation in which the colony depended on the metropolitan power to play the economic tune. This relationship produces a growth rate that was determined by two major variables such as the size of export proceeds and the income elasticity of demand for imports, that is the large responsiveness of demand for imports to changes in income. Furthermore, export proceeded from a high proportion of national income, though far less than the earnings from a high proportion of national economic activities, and were commonly subjected to pronounced fluctuations. The open economy also suffered from instability as a result from variations in supply caused by changes in the weather and by adverse political conditions. Another cause of instability was the factors governing the demand for tropical agricultural products in the industrial countries.¹² The demand for agricultural products influenced road construction as they mostly linked the plantations to the ports.

Unlike other parts of West Africa, the Southern Cameroons had to accept the world price as given, even though the world needed her cocoa and palm produce. The money generated from exports was spent on imported consumer goods whose prices were again dictated by the metropolitan powers. In perspective, the Southern Cameroons economy was patterned to serve the European economies. Therefore, the open economy responded readily to external influences so that any increase or decrease

¹¹ A.G Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*, p.168.

¹² *Ibid.*

in export earnings was accompanied by a roughly parallel movement in expenditure on consumer imports as put forward by A.G Hopkins:

Quantitative changes occur easily enough, but qualitative, structural transformation is far more difficult. The circularity of the system is reinforced by restrictions on volume of investment, which is limited by the level of export earnings, by the tendency for capital to be leaked abroad, by the cautious nature of bank lending policy, by the colonial tradition of maintaining a balanced budget, and by the conservative attitude of the large expatriate firms. Such investment as there is in an open economy tends to be directed into the existing export sector rather than towards new projects outside it.¹³

The importance of roads was never in doubt at the beginning of colonial venture. Speaking of German rule, Rudin makes the point unequivocally. ‘Roads were an administrative, commercial, and military necessity from the beginning of the occupation of the colonial territory’. The interest of British colonial authorities in widening the roads was to overcome the disadvantages of the carrier system and reduce the cost of running the colony to its barest minimum, with the colony bearing the cost. Before colonialism the only system of transport available was portage, estimated the cost of a porter, including subsistence on the return journey and a margin for sickness and supervision, at three shillings per ton mile.¹⁴ According to him, a common error is to make the road too broad, and so to deprive it of shade.¹⁵

For this number of reasons roads became a top priority for the colonial enterprise in Africa. British colonial administrators in Cameroon spent enormous efforts justifying not only the inevitability but the desirability of ‘good’ roads, first, in the Cameroon Province and second in the Bamenda Province.¹⁶ The development of roads in the Cameroons stretching from Victoria to Bamenda was essential for the survival of the coastal plantations. Labour was insufficient in the immediate plantation settlements but in abundance in the Bamenda Division. The construction of roads from Victoria to Bamenda was to ensure the movement of labour from area of surplus to area of lack. This sanctioned the need for road between Victoria and Bamenda whose plan was disclosed by the secretary of state for colonies. From the perspective of the Cameroon Province, writing about the main trunk road linking Bamenda, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, stated: “I have the honour to inform you that my council of

¹³ Colonial Road Construction in the Bamenda Division 1920.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Interview with Isaiah Megne 80, Retired trader, Bamenda, 2016.

¹⁶ Interview with Anyangwe Richard 53, Director of Bamenda Airport, Bamenda 2017.

Ministers has recently had under review the adequacy of present plans for the improvement of the Federal Trunk Road A4 which runs from Victoria to Bamenda”.¹⁷

The road network which was the spinal cord of all land communications in the Southern part of the Cameroons Trust Territory must be given priority, the opening of an all-season artery from Bamenda to the Eastern Region boundary and to the coastal ports of Victoria and Tiko is undoubtedly the prime necessity among all others at the present time. The road will be equally valuable in facilitating the movements of country’s produce from the food-surplus space of the Bamenda Highlands towards the densely populated Eastern Region. In other words, Lennox-Boyd was justifying road construction on economic grounds: roads were needed to evacuate raw materials from the hinterland to the coast and the Eastern region of Nigeria. In 1960, Kenneth E. Berill, the British economic adviser to Southern Cameroons government in a letter to J.O Field, Commissioner of the Cameroons, said: ‘the most important form of communication in the territory is the road. Every commentator in the territory stressed the importance of roads as the key to the future’.¹⁸

Indeed, the two quotations do not leave any doubt. The road was justified on the grounds of exporting food from Bamenda to the Eastern Region of Nigeria. It symbolized newness and development. As in the case of the Lunda-Ndembu people studied by Prichett, ‘food emerged increasingly as the key to maintaining the caravan system. The Grasslands of Bamenda plateau support large herds of Fulani cattle and sheep, goats and chickens are plentiful and cheap. In the coastal regions, there is a very large demand for foodstuffs of all kinds which at present has to be met largely by imported rice and Norwegian stock fish. Cattle, goats and sheep are brought down in caravans by Hausa traders all through the short dry season in spite of the difficulties of the unbridged rivers, deep ravines and dense forest.’¹⁹

The Bamenda Province had approximately 400,000 people, 75% of whom belonged to virile hardworking Ethnic groups. In spite of their primitive conditions of social life and ignorance of the world thousands of their young men voluntarily travel from 100 to 200 miles from the interior highlands to work on the plantations or to bring produce to the factories on the rivers and the coast. This proves that these Ethnic groups

¹⁷ Interview with Anyangwe Richard 53, Director of Bamenda Airport, Bamenda 2017.

¹⁸ Interview with Zacheus Nchindo 75, Business man, Bamenda 2015.

¹⁹ *Idem*.

were eager to take advantage of a social and commercial development which can only be brought to their homes by road. Apart from foodstuffs and cattle which were found in the region, the D.O. saw the need for a wider road differently. According to him, the Bamenda Province had a population of about 400,000 people and most of those people were mobile despite the obstacles in their way such as wild forest and fast flowing rivers.²⁰

It is worth mentioning that if the Bamenda Province was linked by a wider road, it was an opportunity for those strong people to increase in numbers and go down to work in coastal plantations. With hindsight, it can be seen that the Report was written in a typical post-enlightenment creed which was largely pegged on insidious racist ideologies. The language supported the view that, it was difficult to understand that indigenous people were addressed as 'primitive ethnic groups' who were ignorant of the world. Before colonialism Africa and Africans were people living within their own type of civilization. Writing in 1941, Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies said: A report by O.J. Voelker of the Agricultural Department who made a special survey of the whole Bamenda area revealed that the area was one of the richest agricultural areas in West Africa and its climate was suitable for the cultivation of certain sub tropical crops.²¹

The high quality of grazing is shown by the presence of large herds of excellent cattle totalling over 150,000 heads. The population of Bamenda area was estimated at above 300,000, physical fitness in West Africa but the area lacks a good road network to link it with the coastal and Eastern Regions. Moyne was right: It was because of the rich agricultural potential of the region due to its healthy sub-tropical climate, its dense and physically fit population. In fact, there was the necessity for a wider road to connect Bamenda and the coastal area. All over the British West Africa, the construction of roads was justified in terms of exporting the raw materials from the particular areas in which they were found..²²

²⁰ Interview with Zacheus Nchindo 75, Business man, Bamenda 2015.

²¹ Idem.

²² Idem.

The Bamenda Province was very backward in road communication: it was its most pressing problem. Many people remained locked behind mountains, without an outlet to markets. They were deprived of the civilising influences and advantages which roads brought in their wake, so many of them, the most valuable of them all, the youth, leave home for the excitement of the south, a permanent loss to the economic productivity of this area. With that agenda, the British colonial administration saw the connection of the Bamenda area as an absolute necessity. Further 'artery' roads that were to link Bamenda to the interior were also seen as necessary if the colonial enterprise was to succeed in terms of 'development' and 'progress'. The views of the various colonial officers, first and foremost were revealing of the colonial situation. In Africa under British control, the colonial venture was justified by one idea and ideology Indirect Rule.²³

It became relevant and important because Lugard wanted each colony to pay for itself, and this meant that the cost of any project carried out in the colony was to be borne by the Africans and not the British tax payer. The colony would be self-sufficient as far as the costs of the colonial administration were concerned. Webster & Boahen have rightly maintained that because roads were to be largely constructed with local funds, development was slowed down not because there were no finances but instead because the British deliberately held back development funds. Roads therefore were to be constructed with cheap labour.²⁴

Road construction constituted a major problem in the Southern Cameroons, with every colonial government trying to leave its mark along the path of progress in road construction. From 1958 to 1960, towards the end of Trusteeship, the principal Trunk A roads in the Southern Cameroons, for which money for construction and maintenance was provided by Federal Government of Nigeria, comprised of 470 miles of which 19 miles had a 22 feet wide bituminous surface, 84 miles of a 12 feet wide bituminous surface and 367 miles of a gravel surface. The most important line of communication in the territory was the trunk road linking the port of Victoria in the South with Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda province.²⁵ The Trunk B roads were maintained from money

²³Interview with Zacheus Nchindo 75, Business man, Bamenda 2015.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ Victor Bong Amaazee, *The Economic History of the British Southern Cameroons 1998*, p.40.

provided by the Southern Cameroons Government, and they totaled 201 miles.²⁶ In 1958 contracts were in progress to construct permanent bridges and roads from Kumba to Tombel (20 miles), and from Kumba to Mbonge (30 miles) at the cost of £ 250,000 and £500,000 respectively. Contracts for the construction of a new road and bridges from Bakebe through Fontem to the French Cameroons frontier (40 miles).²⁷

All these works, for Trunk road A improvements, were carefully engineered both in regard to alignment and the structural adequacy of carriage way and bridges. A soils testing laboratory employing modern equipment was established near Kumba to ensure that the best available materials were used in adequate but economical quantities to provide a durable and trouble free road surface.²⁸ It was estimated that there were about 450 miles of roads maintained by Native Administration in 1958. Most of these roads were built by local authorities, often with voluntary labour and with little or no outside financial assistance. Yet the demand for roads were increasing tremendously.²⁹

The communication services in the Southern Cameroons were very limited due to lack of funds. There were six post offices with Telegraph services serving the main towns, and a number of Postal Agencies ran by local Village Authorities, serving outlying areas. The main Post Offices were situated at Buea, Victoria, Tiko, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda. A radio Telegraph system operated between Buea-Lagos, and Buea-Mamfe-Bamenda. The Buea-Lagos circuit linked up with Nigerian circuits, and the United Kingdoms. Telephone exchanges existed in Victoria, Tiko, Buea and Kumba, with interconnecting trunk lines. The telephone exchange was reinforced by a daily airmail service from Tiko to Lagos, connecting with Nigerian services, the United Kingdom and other countries. As a result the average time for first class mail to and from the United Kingdom was three days.³⁰

Radio and Broadcasting started in the Southern Cameroons in 1957. The plans for beginning a Broadcasting service in the Southern Cameroons had begun as soon as the territory had ceased to be part of Eastern Nigeria. Therefore, the first batch of Cameroonians to man the service were immediately sent for training and they returned

²⁶ Interview with Atanga W. Clement 56, Former Mayor of Santa, Santa 2017.

²⁷ National Archive Buea, Rc/1945) I Bakebe-Tali-Fontem-Dschang road-correspondence concerning 1945 to 1957.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Interview with Tita Doh, 75, farmer, Bali, 2016.

³⁰ Idem.

in 1957 to start work. The first building to house broadcasting in the Southern Cameroons was the famous West Farm House in Buea. It had originally been built by a German family during German rule. Thereafter, it underwent all kinds of changes in usage and ownership. It was sometimes used as a Rest House. When the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) needed housing for broadcasting in the Southern Cameroons, West Farm House was a natural choice, and on 21st January 1958, it was officially opened as a Broadcasting House by Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, who was then Leader of Government Business.³¹

Broadcasting House Buea consisted of an up-to-date studio by the standards of the time, a control room, engineering workshops and offices. It also had ample space in which its activities could be expanded. Initially programmes produced in the Southern Cameroons were recorded on tape, the tape was flown to Lagos, and the programme was broadcast on the National transmitter. But later on, the N.B.C. installed a transmitter in the Southern Cameroons, so that a real Regional Programme was established, bringing the Region into equality with the Northern, Eastern and Western Regions of Nigeria.³²

The period which saw the presence of the French and British in Cameroon was marked by the construction of roads which concentrated in the South, where the sea ports were located. Settlement in the South during the colonial period became more accessible than those in the north, partially because of the large-scale expansion of tree crop farming. The importance of roads was never in doubt at the beginning of colonial venture. Speaking of German rule, Rudin makes the point unequivocally.³³ 'Roads were an administrative, commercial, and military necessity from the beginning of the occupation of the colonial territory'.

The British maintained the German existing roads and created other new roads. The interest of British colonial authorities in widening the roads was to overcome the disadvantages of the carrier system and reduce the cost of running the colony to its barest minimum, with the colony bearing the cost. Before colonialism the only system

³¹ Victor Bong Amaazee, *The Economic History of the British Southern Cameroons 1998*, p. 41.

³² *Ibid*, p. 41.

³³ Rudin. H.R, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1814-1940, A Case Study of Modern Imperialism*, New York, Green Woods Press 1968, p.237.

of transport available was portage.³⁴ Lugard estimated the cost of a porter, including subsistence on the return journey and a margin for sickness and supervision, at three shillings per ton mile. Lugard further laid down some principles following which the roads should be constructed. According to him,

A common error is to make the road too broad, and so to deprive it of shade. A 24-ft track of metal if required is ample (...) it is a matter of the first importance to interest the native administrations in road construction, and to train native road makers who should be capable of directing the work under occasional supervision, leaving the bridging to be done by the public works department (Lugard, 1926: 475).³⁵

Thus, for a number of reasons roads became a top priority for the colonial enterprise in Africa.

3.2.1 Road Transport Development in Bamenda Division

The British colonialists also played an important role in the development of transport network in the Bamenda division. The only motorable road that connected the Bamenda Division with the coastal region during the British period in the Southern Cameroons passes through Nkongsamba into the region.³⁶ Indeed, graded roads were constructed from Bamenda to Nso through Ndop in order to enhance communication between these areas. All these except the Bambui section needed redigging and bridging to be motorable. The bridging of Kumbo road was completed within three months. It was also recommended that plank bridges be put down on the Bafut and Bambui sections. The Band road needed the renewal of one enlarge bridge and the construction of five small ones to make it motorable as soon as the deviation was surveyed out in Bande town.³⁷

Tweed, Assistant District Officer surveyed a new line into the station from the Bali area and suggested that the Befang road should join it thus eliminating the present Bamenda hill. The present road from Bali was impassable in the rainy season but it seemed a pity that the excellent roads from the North should be abandoned for the sake

³⁴ Rudin. H.R, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1814-1940, A Case Study of Modern Imperialism*, New York, Green Woods Press 1968, p. 1926.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ National Archive Buea, 102/1918 Rc/a(1918) I, Road foreman for Bamenda Division request for victoria Division.

³⁷ Assistant District Officer 16th March 1926.

of the one hundred yards of cutting that needs special perfection. A motor cycle road was dug from Bambui to Bikom and then to Weh and Befang with a branch to Esu. It was hoped to make this road passable for a light car and the road be made motorable in 1927.³⁸

The KuK and Befang road were both incomplete, thus the new line for the upper section of the former and the lower section of the latter remained to be dug. The bottom part of the MME hill was altered without orders and was changed. In fact there were many alteration and improvements in addition to these, such as approaches to streams so that it would scarcely be passable. The above road connects with the German road to Befang, the road needs improvement although the gradient were good. It was dug from the river Frighan and was made passable. There were four rivers in this station that could not be bridged by a single span but it was made passable to have two span bridges resting on wooden piles. The French Political Officers seemed successfully to employ this method in bridging the larger rivers.³⁹

The road from Kumbo to Nsob required digging and bridging, thus Hawkersworth, Assistant District Officer considered that a road could be run through to the Nsungli court. For administrative purposes as well as the encouragement of trade. The inner circle Bikom, Wum, Bafut and the outer Kumbo, Nsungli, Fonfuka and Esu. These roads coincide with the main trade routes. Between Fonfuka and Esu the country was not known but appeared feasible from a distance. The only possible difficulty was the climb from the Katsina valley to Munken. One urgent need was planks and timber. Fortunately, there was the availability of saws. Earth timber and planks were improved by storing.⁴⁰

British colonial administrators in Cameroon spent enormous efforts justifying not only the inevitability but the desirability of 'good' roads, first, in the British Southern Cameroon and second in the Bamenda Province. From the perspective of the British Southern Cameroon, writing about the main trunk road linking Bamenda and the entire British Southern Cameroon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, stated:

³⁸ Assistant District Officer 16th March 1926.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

I have the honour to inform you that my council of Ministers have recently had under review the adequacy of present plans for the improvement of the Federal Trunk Road A4 which runs from Victoria to Bamenda. This road which is the spinal cord of all land communications in the Southern part of the Cameroons Trust Territory must be given priority (...) the opening of a all-season artery from Bamenda to the Eastern Region boundary and to the coastal ports of Victoria and Tiko is undoubtedly the prime necessity among all others at the present time (...) The road will be equally valuable in facilitating the movements of country's produce from the food-surplus space of the Bamenda Highlands towards the densely populated Eastern Region.⁴¹

In other words, Lennox-Boyd was justifying road construction on economic grounds: roads were needed to evacuate raw materials from the hinterland to the coast and the Eastern Region of Nigeria. In 1960, Kenneth E. Berill, the British economic adviser to Southern Cameroons government in a letter to J.O Field, Commissioner of the Cameroons, said: 'the most important form of communication in the territory was the road. Every commentator in the territory stressed the importance of roads as the key to the future.'⁴² The two quotations do not leave any doubt. The road was justified on the grounds of exporting food from Bamenda to the Eastern Region of Nigeria. All over the British West Africa, the construction of roads was justified in terms of exporting the raw materials from the particular areas in which they were found as justified by, the report of SDO on road communication in Bamenda Division that.⁴³

The Division is very backward in road communication: it is the most pressing problem. Many people remain locked behind mountains, their economic urges stymied at the outset for lack of an outlet to markets. They are deprived of the civilising influences and advantages which roads bring in their wake, so many of them, the most valuable of them all, the youth, leave home for the excitement of the south, a permanent loss to the economic productivity of this area (...).⁴⁴

With that agenda, the British colonial administration saw the connection of the Bamenda area as absolutely important. Further 'artery' roads that were to link Bamenda to the interior were also seen as necessary if the colonial enterprise was to succeed in terms of 'development' and 'progress'. The views of the various colonial officers, first and foremost are revealing of the colonial situation. One of those roads that were to

⁴¹ File RC 1956/2 Cameroons Road Programme Policy (NAB); Also see Co 583/248/11 Cameroon Report; on Road communication (PRO).

⁴² File QC (1960) Kenneth E. Berill to J.O Fields, The Economy of the Southern Cameroons: A Report submitted to J.O Fields Commissioner of Southern Cameroons 25/August 1960 (NAB).55

⁴³ Rodney, 1981: 165-172; Hallett, 1999: 60-61; Ayandele et al., 1971: 157-162; Webster & Boa-Although.

⁴⁴ File NW/Fa.1950/1 Tours and visit of Senior Officers to the Bamenda Province. Re-Touring Notes(Bamenda Provincial Archives)

connect Bamenda into the interior was the Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom road. Plate 4 below Shows the Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom Road.

Plate 4: Showing Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom Road



Source: Cameroon under British Administration 1948 report/road Construction Kom, Wum Division.⁴⁵

3.3 Bamenda-Njinikom Road 1928 to 1954

The road construction policy of the British colonial administration was similar to that of their German predecessors in that labour was supplied by the indigenes.⁴⁶ The difference was that in Kom as elsewhere Native Authorities (NAs), were in charge of road construction with labour supplied by the Fon. The Kom road was surveyed in 1924 by British civil engineers, but heavy rains delayed the beginning of work until 1928.⁴⁷ In this connection, it was stated, ‘the new trace for the Bamenda-Njinikom road has been inspected and an alternative alignment suggested, it will be impossible deciding

⁴⁵ National Archives Buea, 255. Vol II Rc/a (1926) I Roads in Cameroon Province general

⁴⁶ The Germans annexed Cameroon in 1884 and by 1889 they had penetrated the interior and reached the Bamenda Grassfields. In their economic development they constructed earth roads which were just enough for either horse-drawn carts or motor cycles. The roads therefore were mostly narrow and could not carry any reasonable traffic. The British continued in the same tracks but widened and constructed bridges.

⁴⁷ File Ba (1924/2 Report for the League of Nations (NAB);File Ba (1923) Report for the League of Nations (NAB)

which alignment is more preferable until after the rains'.⁴⁸ In practice, each Fon was assigned to a portion of the road. The first stretch of the road was from Mbzinguo to Belo.

Indeed, the road was constructed in phases and the labour was generally controlled by the Fon and his traditional council. One informant who actively participated in the construction stated that there were always more than one hundred and fifty people working on the project at a time. He claimed that at one time the people of Njinikom threatened to stop the construction because of hard labour and their priest, Rev. Fr. Ivo Stockman of the Catholic mission pressured them not to do so.⁴⁹ The road signified progress and the missionaries were also agents of progress. They worked hand in glove with the colonial regime. The Reverend Father took the road seriously and therefore worked hard to convince his parishioners to participate in its construction. The labourers were supervised by foremen, who were selected and recruited by the NA.⁵⁰ It was a common phenomenon that on the eve of commencement of the work the Fon sent out the town crier to announce it to the villagers. All adults were obliged to participate. One of the people who observed the construction of the road was Henry Mbain. He was born in 1940 at Anjin, Kom..⁵¹

According to him the village police, the *nikangsii*, were ordered to ensure that there were no absentees and any such absentees were fined from £1 to £2:15s13 by the Fon and the traditional council. The role of the Fon and his council stated that the success of the colonial enterprise depended on the aid of Africans.⁵² Chilver stated that the Fon's collaboration was due to the promises which the British made to reward those who collaborated with them with salaries paid to them from Native Authorities treasuries.⁵³

⁴⁸ File Cb 1924/2 Quarterly Reports on the Bamenda Division, Cameroons Province, March 1924-September 1927(NAB); File Cb (1928/2) Bamenda Division Annual Report for the year ending December 1928(NAB); Annual Reports for Bamenda Division for the year 1932,1933,1934-35,1937 and 1939(NAB).⁵⁷

⁴⁹ See File Cb (1928)2 Annual Report for Bamenda Division,1930 by L. L. Cantle; R. M. W. Duncan and N.C. Denton; File Sd (1930)2 Fr. Stockman to the Resident 1930(NAB).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See File Cb (1928)2 Annual Report for Bamenda Division,1930 by L. L. Cantle; R. M. W. Duncan and N.C. Denton; File Sd (1930)2 Fr. Stockman to the Resident 1930(NAB).

While supporting Chilver,⁵⁴ maintains that ‘the bulk of road mileage in British Africa was constructed by local authorities which were a euphemism for chiefs or Native Authorities who legitimated forced labour’. The road in itself was a material token of ‘modernization’ a point which Fermin-Sellers confirms with a study of the Fon of Akum, Cameroon. The period between the wars was the heyday of ‘industrialization’ and ‘modernisation’ in the African colonies and road construction was in line with such policies. Modernisation and/or industrialization symbolized social change and the Bamenda-Njinikom road fell within such an ideology. The traditional political elite, the Fon and his traditional council, was however reinforced in the interest of the colonial regime.

Amongst the indigenous population, the powers were reduced because the Fon was now taking instructions from the colonial official which was not the case before colonialism. Such processes could be part of what some scholars have seen as the transition from tradition to modernity.⁵⁵ Yet it is important to note that the role of the Fon portrays that for technology to take root in Kom it needed to be accepted through negotiation with the colonial administration. In fact, a wider road led to an increase in the geographical mobility of Kom people and development of the region. This was widely confirmed by the support of the people. The enthusiasm of Bamenda Grasslanders in general and Kom in particular is reflected in the words of the Resident of the Province that:

There has been an immense enthusiasm for road construction since the first motor vehicle arrived in Bamenda two years ago. In the forest regions of Mamfe, Kumba and Victoria, this enthusiasm is inspired by the people’s intense dislike for everything on head load and their determination not to carry them a day longer than necessary. Among the Bamenda grassland tribes, there is no particular objection to head loads but this is fully balanced by the eagerness of an intelligent virile people to have their share of the good things in a world which is just beginning to open for them (...).⁵⁶

To say that the Bamenda people were virile and enthusiastic could not be denied but the claim that people were just beginning to have a share of the good things in a world which was starting to open for them is debatable. Bamenda area had been opened to the outside world since the 19th Century. Most of the slaves exported from the Bight of

⁵⁴ Cooper 1996: 56.

⁵⁵ Odetola & Ademola, 1985:211.

⁵⁶ File Rc/a (1929)1 Native administrative roads: Tour of the resident in Cameroons9NAB).

Biafra came from the Bamenda Grasslands.⁵⁷ This is corroborated by the oral testimonies of merchants and traders who traded with Eastern Nigeria, Yola and Makurdi.

The statement of colonial officials was however merely defending the colonial ideology which claimed that colonialism was spreading civilisation among primitive Africans and Asians. At the same time however, and more importantly, ‘the enthusiasm’ displayed by the people was an indication that they had accepted and interpreted the ideology and were willing to adapt it because they, as Ferguson maintains about the Zambians in the Copperbelt, expected modern things to be brought by roads.⁵⁸ The road itself represented the coexistence of ‘newness’ with ‘oldness. The enthusiasm of the people was noted by the commissioner of Southern Cameroons in 1958 when he said that ‘The Njinikom road was built by community effort and is a praiseworthy effort because all men and women came out at any one time for its construction.’⁵⁹

The people realised the implications of widening footpaths for wider and new roads. In their perception, the road of newness, was better. The wider road could take more people not moving in a caravan straight line. Some informants claimed that the idea was better and so the road was in effect far better than the footpaths which they once travelled to Bamenda and beyond. *Kfaang* meant many things to Kom people. It denoted newness, innovation and novelty in thinking and doing, and the material benefits which were their result. The construction of the road showed that *Kfaang* was internalized although almost invariably externally derived. The most important characteristic meaning of *kfaang*, therefore was that which was ‘new’, and foreign-derived, or simply something internally generated that is not the characteristic Kom way of seeing and doing.⁶⁰

The mass enthusiasm of the people for road construction indicated *kfaang* in the thinking and in doing. Consequently, to most of the people of Kom *kfaang* was that which was new, good and durable. The fact that the people recognised *kfaang* and admired the road as such was two sides of the same coin. For the colonial regime, the

⁵⁷ Austen & Derrick, 1999; Rowlands, 1979 and Warnier, 1985.

⁵⁸ Ferguson, 1999:13.

⁵⁹ File NW/Fa.1958/1 Commissioner of the Cameroons inspection notes-Bamenda, Nkambe and Wum Division 29 April-12 May 1958 (Bamenda Provincial Archives).

⁶⁰ File NW/Fa.1958/1 Commissioner of the Cameroons inspection notes-Bamenda, Nkambe and Wum Division 29 April-12 May 1958 (Bamenda Provincial Archives).

construction of the Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom road had a different motivation. It was designed to link with the Bamenda ring road via Bambui and eventually to Kom in order to draw labour and abundant raw materials from there. Fondom had a total population of 13,454 in 1927 out of a population of 287,748 for the whole of Bamenda Province. In addition, there were raw materials like cattle, timber, rice, Irish potatoes, corn and beans.⁶¹

This meant that the road was justified on economic grounds and mobility was just one of them. Writing about roads, McPhee has confirmed that had the roads not served an economic purpose in the colonial situation, they would have been abandoned. In the construction of the road, men provided most of the labour. But their work was supplemented with that of women, in contrast to Wrigley's assertion that 'mostly African males had to turn out to make the road'. The construction of roads by women has not been adequately acknowledged in the research on road construction in colonial Africa. In Kom experience women were assigned to feed workers and five women usually fed at least 15 to 35 men. Nayah Bih was one of the women who fed the men in road construction.⁶²

According to her, women 'willingly' and 'enthusiastically' did their work as they felt that they were welcoming *kfaang*. She also claimed that their enthusiasm and willingness was especially great on days that the construction did not conflict with farm work. Children fetched potable water.⁶³ The willingness of women was not ignored in colonial reports. The chief Commissioner of Southern Cameroon worked happily but also that their labour alone could not be sufficient because women could not constitute an adequate labour force, 'without detriment to their subsistence farming and domestic duties'.⁶⁴ In other words, although women were willing to work on the road construction, their other duties, especially farming, and other domestic chores, were all a limiting factor. Women performed most if not all the subsistence agriculture in Kom and the colonial report was right to note that it was a significant limitation on their role

⁶¹ File NW/Fa.1958/1 Commissioner of the Cameroons inspection notes-Bamenda, Nkambe and Wum Division 29 April-12 May 1958 (Bamenda Provincial Archives).

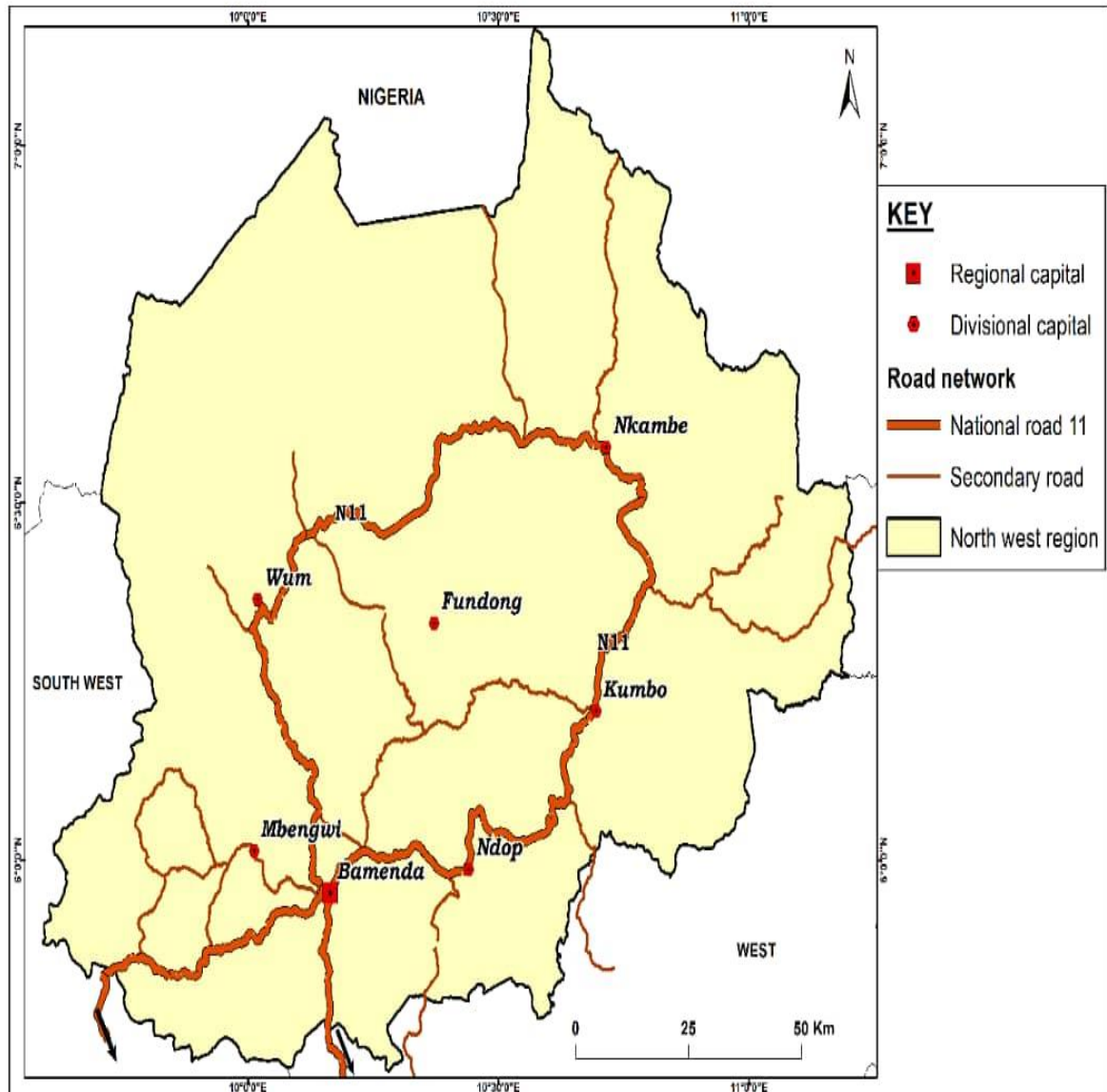
⁶² The ring road was designed to link Bamenda-Nso-Nkambe-Wum-Bamenda. See Bamenda Annual Reports for 1948,50 and 1951(NAB).

⁶³ File C1 1966/1 Economics and Political Reports Menchum Division,1966-1972(NAB).

⁶⁴ File NW/FA/1937/1, Inspection Notes by His Honour the chief Commissioner, Sir Benard Carr (Bamenda Provincial Archives, Bamenda), 60.

in road construction. Map 4 and plate 5 below depicts the secondary roads that was constructed in Kom linking Wum, Bamenda and Kumbo.

Map 4: Bamenda Ring Road in the North West Region



Source: Author's Research Collection, Bamenda 11/10/2017.

Plate 5: Local Road Construction in Bamenda Division.



Source: Author's Research Collection, National Archive Buea, 15 October 2018.

By 1949 the Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom road had reached Belo, but the bridges were of wood. Consequently, only light vehicles and motor-cycles could reach Belo. The big River *Mughom* was finally bridged in 1952. The road was opened in March 1954 and traffic could reach Njinikom. In 1959 it reached Fundong.

3.4 Njinikom-Fundong-Laikom Road 1955 to 1959

The last section of the road connected Njinikom with Fundong and was completed under the auspices of Community Development, an institution with indigenous membership for executing projects which the colonial administration considered 'useful' to people.⁶⁵ This section was the most difficult because of the rough topography. The population was most enthusiastic about completing it. The D.O. was

⁶⁵ File Rc (1954), Roads in the Bamenda Divisions Secretary, Eastern Provinces of Nigeria P.T. Barton to the Resident Bamenda Province, 14th May 1953(NAB).

also happy with the construction of the road and the commitment of the population to it.

Writing in 1956, the Resident of Bamenda Division, A.B. Westmacott, stated:

Everywhere in the Bamenda Province there are miles of roads constructed by the people. But it is the realms of Community Development that the most spectacular progress has been made in the province. In fact, the strides made here are so tremendous that they far outstrip the capabilities of the Government funds. Everywhere in the province, there are miles of road which have been dug by the enthusiastic people but which are not motorable for their entire lengths because there are no funds to construct the bridges and culverts (...) The road at Njinikom under construction to link Fundong descends about 1000 feet to a river in about 2 miles of twisting road, and then ascending over 1,500 feet up the other side of the valley on its way towards Fundong. It is important and certain that their leaders should be congratulated on the energetic and determined manner in which they have attacked their self-imposed task. It must be remembered, too, that Community Development forms a very cheap way of completing capital works and should be encouraged by the provision of funds, if only for that reason.⁶⁶

The report gives the impression that the entire Bamenda Grasslands population was engaged in road construction but even casual observation indicates that motorable roads were not found every where, as the D.O. reported. Much later roads reached remote areas of Kom but the hilly topography still prevented the people from enjoying the provision of more motorable roads, and bridle paths were in use. Road construction required much skilled and semi-skilled labour. The Njinikom- Fundong road employed eleven bricklayers, twelve headmen, three motor boys and two hundred and fifteen labourers.⁶⁷

In fact, the numbers were only indicative because the number of women and 'water boys' were not mentioned in the records. For instance, one of the foremen on this road was Simon Akainda. Born in 1930, he attended St. Anthony's Primary School Njinikom from 1943 to 1951 and obtained a Standard Six Certificate. He was awarded a scholarship to study building engineering in Kaduna Polytechnic, Nigeria, from 1952 to 1954. When he returned home he was first employed as a road surveyor and later as a Headman, and claims that throughout the construction of that road there was no time

⁶⁶ File Rc (1956) Annual Reports for Bamenda Division, 1956, 1957 and 1958 (NAB); File AB, Report by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Trusteeship for the year 1952 (NAB).

⁶⁷ File W.D.159Ci (1954) 3Wum Divisional Native Authority (NAB).

when there were less than fifty water boys whose duties was only to fetch water for the workers. There were also as many as forty women who fed the labourers.⁶⁸

The participation in road construction by Kom people was not simply because the people wanted to construct a new highway. It was because they understood that the new road would facilitate their mobility and transportation of their produce to the Bamenda region. On the other hand, bridges and roads if they were considered as technologies appeared relevant because they contributed, directly or indirectly to development and connects the towns together.

The road linking Njinikom with Fundong was completed in 1959. In 1960 the D.O. noted with satisfaction that Kom and Bamenda were finally linked by a motorable road but that Kom was yet to be linked to other areas due to their economic potentials and to the main road linking with Bamenda.⁶⁹ The Bamenda-Njinikom-Kom road ran through three major villages: Belo, Njinikom and Fundong. These villages were nodal points which connected places and people. The main road and its different arteries covered an estimated 350 kilometres. Kom was soon to be criss-crossed by a network of roads linking areas where food and raw materials were found. These road networks were in turn linked to other areas, which included Anyajua-Babungo-Belo, Mbueni-Kikfuini- Njinikom, Fundong, Fujua-Abuh-Ngwaah-Laikom.

The road construction that were accomplished during this period in this area, and the entire road from Bamenda through Babanki and Njinikom up to Laikom were all dug and widened. In many places fresh traces were created and a new road dug. The road at the outskirts of Njinikom branches off at Yang and passed close to the Bikom school till the Bikom boundary with Bafume. The road from Laikom leading to the school was all dug and widened and many of the zig-zag portions cut and a reasonable gradient effected.

Continuing onwards from the Bikom-Bafume boundary the road passing through Kuk, Weh, Wum and Mbelifang, a branch to Esu was all constructed. It was nothing but a stoney track, particularly after Babanki and the steep ascent up to Laikom was now a 16 to 18 foot road suitable for motor bicycle and light car traffic. The

⁶⁸ File NW/FA/1937/1 Inspection Notes by Chief Commissioner, Sir Bernad Carr 62.

⁶⁹ File NW/AC (1960)/1/BK Historical Notes Bamenda Grassfields, Bamenda Provincial Archives, Bamenda; File Gc/b(1960)1 Handing over Notes, Bamenda Division (NAB):Gc/h(1961)1 Handing over notes D.O Wum Division (NAB).

spontaneous offer of the chief of Bikom was the beginning of the scheme, and then all the chiefs in the Wum area took up the project with enthusiasm.⁷⁰ The credit for this work was due to the untiring energy and perseverance of Sharwood Smith who worked from dawn to dusk finding new traces and supervising the labour.

Plenty of labour was available, but there was as sheep with shephard, unless properly handled, and Sharwood Smith handling of them was a triumph of organisation. The labour was divided into companies under the supervision of roadsakers working on the various sections of the road. Every available pick and shovel was sent from Bamenda and the blacksmith of the chief of Bikom were urgently engaged in forging excellent home-made hoes specially for the occasion. The chief feature of this work was the cooperation of the chiefs and the willingness of the native to work. It was in this way claimed that a motor road was constructed, but it was not too much to claim that by the close of the dry season a political Officer was able to take a car through Bikom to Wum.

3.5 Ngwaah-Abuh-Fujua-Fundong Road.

The Ngwaah-Abuh-Fundong road was constructed by labour from Abuh, Ngwaah and Meli. As in other areas of road construction in Kom the work was performed mostly in the dry season. The Fon, *nkwifoyn*, and traditional council mobilized the population for the project. The importance was that ultimately it linked Laikom which was the traditional seat of the Fondom. The importance of that road to the economy of British Cameroons cannot be overemphasized. According to government demographic surveys Kom, had a population of between 92,379 and 160,000, half of it in the area connected by the road. Of that population, males of working age were about 40,000.⁷¹ The Fundong area was also a great producer of Arabica coffee which had been introduced into Kom in the early 1930s from Nkongsamba by a trader. Between 1959 and 1969 the Fundong area cultivated 1,814,614 kilograms of coffee.

⁷⁰ Extract from Bamenda Administration 1925.

⁷¹ Demographic Survey for Menchum Division, 1966-1970. Delegation of Housing and Town Planning.

Moreover, out of that quantity, Ngwaah and Abuh produced over 907,321 kilograms. Kengo has argued that most of the roads in Bamenda Province were welcomed by the colonial authorities on the ground of providing roads to coffee farms, and this was exactly the case with Fundong. On the other hand, the climate of Fujua favored cattle-rearing by the Fulanis.⁷² At an altitude of 1600 meters above sea level the area was free of tse tse flies which caused trypanosomiasis. Cattle rearing was introduced in the first half of the 20th Century by the Fulanis who supplied milk to the administrators. By 1936, there were an estimated 100,000 head of cattle in Bamenda Division. Out of these, 40,000 came from Kom before 1966, and 20,000 from the Fujua area.⁷³

3.6 Anyajua-Babungo-Belo Road

The Anyajua-Babungo-Belo road was started in late 1950s to link Anyajua and Babungo with Belo and ultimately with Bamenda. Its construction lasted more than Five Years because of the hilly terrain and torrential rains, which limited road work to the dry season from mid-October to mid-March⁷⁴. The population of Anyajua had risen from 1,750 in 1928 rose to over 3000 in 1956. The logic of that road on the colonial agenda was that Anyajua cultivated potatoes and beans. This road was particularly important for the colonialists because the area produced potatoes and beans. The potatoes had been recently introduced by the Irish missionaries and did well because of the favorable temperature and climate of Anyajua, which is about 1,650 meters above sea level (Winch, 2006). These potatoes were transported to Belo since there was no good road to Belo. From Belo the potatoes and beans were transported to Bamenda.

The nutritional and economic value of potatoes was echoed in the League of Nations report for Bamenda which stated that huge quantities of Irish potatoes were grown and exported to French Cameroon. In the long run the administration hoped to employ an Agricultural Officer to fully develop cultivation of this product with the

⁷² File cb 1917/7 Report No.3-1917,Bamenda Division (Cameroons) Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1917 (NAB).

⁷³ Ja/g(1960)5 Kom Council,1960;Lf/b(1965)1Kom Bum area council monthly returns(NAB);File Ci 1966/1 Economic and Political Reports, Menchum Division,1966-1972(NAB).63.

⁷⁴ Neba, 1897:26.

prospect of supplying European needs in Nigeria and Gold Coast'.⁷⁵ Beans were also grown in great quantities. For instance, between 1958-1968, Anyajua produced more than 20,000 tons of beans, an average of 1,000 tons per annum.

The foodstuffs cultivated in the above mentioned area therefore fed the Europeans and the working population as far as Tiko in Coastal Cameroon and Eastern Nigeria. The road from Babungo to Belo covered 45 kilometers and followed an old pre-colonial track. During the pre-colonial period, kernels, groundnuts and tilapia fish came from Babungo brought in by traders from Kom and Babungo. The construction of that road to link Belo was justified by these rich agricultural potentials. Once these foodstuffs arrived in Belo, they were transported to Bamenda.⁷⁶ Consequently, the construction of the road increased the movement of traders and goods and thus improved the economic and living standards of the people.

There was equally the Mbueni-Njinikom road artery which took more than three decades to complete. Three reasons accounted for this slow progress: Mbueni had a relatively small population which alone could not complete the road on schedule. Secondly, it was the NA which started the construction of the road and when local councils took over NA in 1964, the construction passed to the Kom-Bum Area Council.⁷⁷ The climate of Mbueni and its low-lying swampy nature permitted the cultivation of rice in such large quantities. The major products which came from Mbueni were rice, timber and fish. The colonial records do not show the quantities that were exported from that region but oral sources indicate that much rice and fish were marketed at Njinikom and served the growing population while the rest went to Bamenda. Buildings in both Bamenda and the district headquarters as in Njinikom as a matter of fact the administrative buildings in Njinikom were roofed with timber that came from Mbueni. All these activities helped in changing the area. The second phase of Bamenda-Kom road took place from 1993 to 1998.

The Second Phase of Bamenda-Kom Road Construction.

The second phase of the Bamenda-Kom road began in Bamenda, the Headquarters of the North West Region of Cameroon, and now extends for 72.2 kilometres to the

⁷⁵ File Cb/1939/1 League of Nations Report 1939, Bamenda Division (NAB).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ File Ci (1966)1, Economic and Political Reports, Menchum Division, 1966-1972 (NAB), 64.

western part of the region, and ends in Fundong, the administrative headquarters of Kom. Completed in 1959, the road deteriorated rapidly by the 1990s and was in serious need of repair. Many informants did not believe that the Cameroon government was responsible for the construction of the road. Rather they strongly contended that the German government built it because the Germans were the first European nation to construct roads in the coastal region and the interior in order to transport raw their materials.

In fact, this was due to the fact that people had lost confidence in the Cameroon government. But further research about the widening and re-construction of the Bamenda-Kom road in the 1990s revealed that the Government had secured a loan of DM 52,000,000 from Germany. The agreement which was signed by the Minister of transport, Sadou Hayatou for the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and Friederich Reiche for the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany came into force in April 1987.⁷⁸ After the agreement, a German company, *Groupement d'Énterprise Trap-Strabag Belfinger + Berger* (TRAPP), was given the contract to construct the road. The company first conducted a feasibility study of the Bamenda and Kom road before the actual construction began and concluded that:

(...) The Bamenda-Kom road gives the project region access to the central town of the region and to Cameroon's entire road network. The region and the agricultural sector in the catchment area of the road give the impression of activity. According to information provided by the local authorities there is no above-average migration away from the region. Agriculture seems to be very diversified and intensive and the surface where farming is possible due to the topography seems largely utilized. In socio-economic terms the Bambui-Fundong road has a positive impact on the target group since people now have a safer, considerably faster and cheaper access to the central town of Bamenda and its services. Moreover, the prices of goods imported into the region have declined markedly. Due to the Bamenda-Bambui road large parts of the North-West Province may now benefit from the positive effects generated by the better access to the administrative, social and health facilities of the administrative centre of Bamenda. The poor in the region are also likely to profit from the effects of the project. From today's point of view the project also has a positive impact on women, though the impact is not extraordinary. Any major environmental damage caused by the two roads cannot be identified. The environmental damage caused is usual for normal roads and considered as acceptable. With the reform of the transport system the road maintenance system and its financing was put on a fundamentally new and more efficient basis. The experience

⁷⁸ File Ci (1957).3 Annual Reports for Wum Division for 1955,1956 and 1957(NAB).4)3 Wum Division Native Authorities: United Nations organizations Report (NAB); File Gi.3.Annual Reports for Wum Division,1955,1956 and 1957 (NAB).

gained up to now with the new system is satisfactory. The opening up of the catchment area, which was the intention of the Bambui-Fundong road, has been achieved.⁷⁹

The significance of the road as illustrated by the quotation above underscores the important parts of the region with an increased geographical mobility. The Report also explicitly demonstrated how Kom and its surroundings would benefit from the road project. Above all the feasibility studies showed that the region was to benefit from economic and social amenities. The construction of the road began in 1993 with mostly youth labour. Julius Aghaa Njua was one of the workers on the road as an engineer. He said that initially the construction of the road involved 280 Cameroonians who were employed as drivers, mechanics and other technical jobs, all supervised by fifteen German and thirteen Italian engineers. The labour force of more than 700 included 276 from Kom. The road was completed in 1998 and it had both social and economic consequences for Kom.

3.6.1 Bamenda-Bali Road Construction

According to the Memorandum of the Assistant District Officer, a trace of road was constructed from Enaka to Bali in order to link up up with the Mamfe area. To this effect a map was attached to show the line of the new road and its relative position to the existing road made by the Germans. The necessary bridges and culverts were marked on the map. The present road from Bamenda to Enaka was an unavoidable adjunct to the proposed continuation to Bali and was suitable for all traffic of all kinds, the remainder of the road trace in to Bamenda station as the hill from the Hausa town to the station was the main target for traffic except motor bicycles. A trace of road was later located up to the station plateau about three miles to the West of the station where it joined the Bamenda Bagangu road.⁸⁰

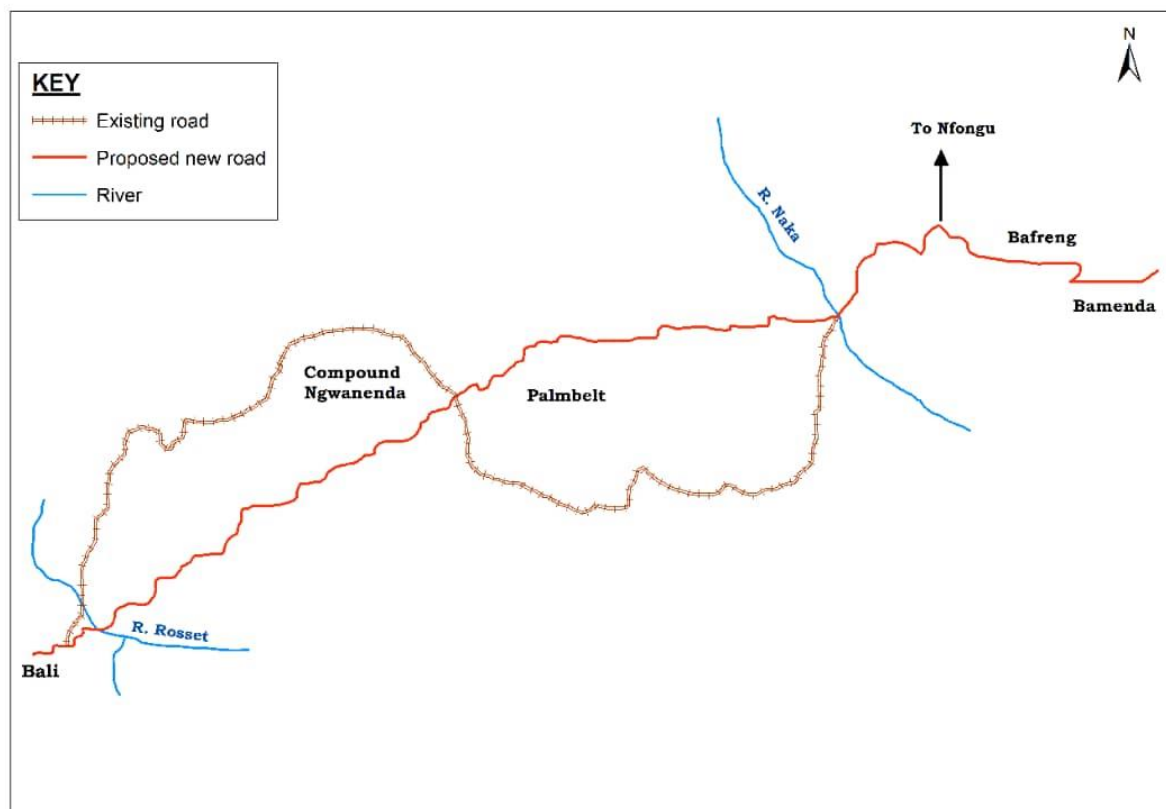
Hunt the Divisional Officer of Bamenda Division made a trace of road of about four miles and the line to Bali was continued, the bridges required were very few and none of them was of a length which could not easily be spanned by joints and planks.

⁷⁹ File Ci (1957).3 Annual Reports for Wum Division for 1955,1956 and 1957(NAB).4)3 Wum Division Native Authorities: United Nations organizations Report (NAB); File Gi.3. Annual Reports for Wum Division,1955,1956 and 1957 (NAB).

⁸⁰ Memorandum from A.E Tweed, Assistant District Officer Bamenda 1923.

The trace of road cleared all the way to Bali and two places on the trace were marked “palm belt” and in both of these a little draining was required but on a very small scale and there were no difficulties to be overcome throughout the route. The river Fossit was crossed to the North of the bridge avoiding the present steep incline into Bali. The distance from Enaka to Bali by the new road was thirteen miles which was two miles further than the present difficult road. Stone culverts with arches of up to three feet in breadth were constructed. Labour was supplied by the chiefs through the indigenes of the areas and the road was fourteen feet in width, ten feet in the centre was lightly metalled in the same way as the French roads and a native path of two feet in width on either side was left unmetalled.⁸¹ Map 6 below is depiction of the Bamenda, Bali stretch of road.

Map 5: Proposed Bamenda-Bali Road



Source: Author's Research Collection, Buea, 1948 (NAB).

The new deviation near Bali town were completed, and a new deviation was completed near Babanki in the Bikom road. The chief of Bafut had some 200 to 300 men working

⁸¹ Memorandum from A.E Tweed, Assistant District Officer Bamenda 1923.

on the main road linking Bafut, broadening and surfacing it. The main Bamenda-Kumbo road was in fair condition. Five new bridges were made and a great improvement on the old ones. The bridge over the river Naka had to be repaired.

3.7. Ossindingi Road Construction

According to the Resident Officer in Bamenda, "I have long suspected that the easiest line for road construction to communicate with Ossindingi and Buea would be through the Banja valley, as confirmed by a reconnaissance made by him." From Banja to Bamenda on an almost direct line, there were practically no obstacles. The route ascends gradually to the watershed of the tributaries of the cross and Benue River and descend gradually to Bamenda. The watershed was a marshy track about a mile in length but as it obviously lies was easy to be drained. The only obstacles were the Naka River and its tributaries, these were as well crossed by the Bamenda Bali Road. The descend from Banja to Wedikum followed the course of Mom rivers and the grade was completely moderate.⁸²

As a rejoinder to the request of Ossindingi road through Bamenda, the Divisional Officer, confirmed the trace of alternative line to Bamenda through Akagbe, Kendem to Wedikum. According to him, he followed the trace from Wedikum, Mbame and noted as follows. The line after crossing the Mo River passed through the Village of Deche, Fossomum and Bagrife and crossed five big hills climbing some 1000ft. The landscape was rolling downs to opened prairies except for patches of forest in the hollows. The trace was cut across the dips at right angles but inspite of its variations kept to the ridge between Deche and Bagrife. The ascends from Wedikum and Mbame were difficult to traced. This stage was not included in the Ossindingi, Bamenda Road.⁸³ From Mbame to Kendem the line for an hour and a half journey was rough, steep and rocky but according to Hunt it was less of an engineering problem than the Bamoa hill. The Germans attempted to create a road there but was difficult due to the fact that the rocks were the major obstacles. From Kendem to Bachuo-Akagbe the country was level and forested and the line met no other difficulty than the crossing at Etuku of the Manyu

⁸² Divisional Officer Bamenda, Cameroon Province, 10th June 1920.

⁸³ Resident Office Ossindige, Cameroons Province 19th February 1921.

River. The possibilities of the different routes for the Ossindige-Bamenda road were thus, working from North to the South,

1) Ossindige-Wedikum in connection with Duncan's Banja route were very difficult owing to the hills and bad surface between Tafu and Numba. II) Ossindige-Wedikum via Mbame was impossible due to the precipitous ascents to the section between Bagrife and Deche. III) Ossindige-Babujang via Mbame, there were no difficulties except for the bridging of the Manyu and the eight hundred feet hill at Mbame. IV) Ossindige via Tinto was very difficult on account of the hills and rivers especially the Bamoa hill.⁸⁴ It followed that the most possible route was that which provides the easiest ascent of the range guarding the Bamenda boundary, and that the path to Babujang via Mbame was the best due to the absence of natural obstacles and its shorter mileage.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the Divisional Officer affirms to the District Officer of Bamenda that he has agreed on the advantage from the trade point of view of a route through Ossindige via Bamenda and Wedikum but it should be done with the aid of an expert view due to the steep hills between Ossindige and Eshobi. The rivers Munyaka, Mpe at Bakumba and Ma at Kwangabi. The hills and stony surface between Tafu and Numba. According to him, his tour of the Eastern portion of the Menka Sub-district concluded that an engineer might run a better trace without undue deviation.

Although Hunt suggested that the line Ossindige-Bachuo-Akagbe-Etuku-Kendem-Mbame and Badjang might prove the best available. As for him the main line from Kendem to Wedikum with a view to approaching the District officer of Bamenda and Banga valley route from this direction should the hills between Kendem and Wedikum prove difficult, a road branch to Wedikum and the Eastern boundary might run from Babujang to the existing Wedikum-Akagbe Eka-Abicha-Menka road.⁸⁶ The palm belt of the Eastern boundary makes desirable the most direct route from Ossindige via Wedikum but the road through Eyang, Tafu, Aiyewawa, and Numba required expert survey to decide whether the numerous deviations should be made to the alternative

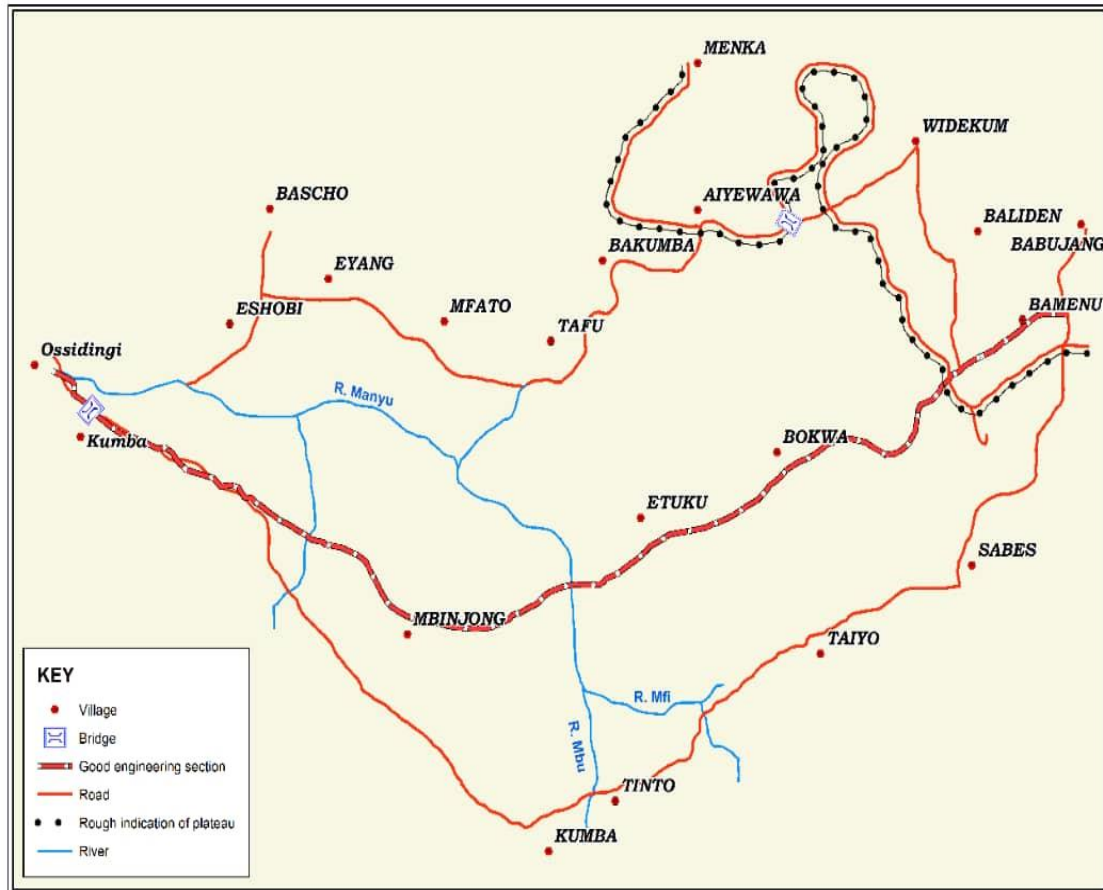
⁸⁴ Resident Office Ossindige, Cameroons Province 19th February 1921.

⁸⁵ Interview with Tantang John 73, Retired Headteacher, Tinto, 12 November 2016.

⁸⁶ *Idem*.

route through Akagbe-Kendem and Babujang.⁸⁷ These roads construction policies through Ossindige and Bamenda can be seen as shown on the Map below.

Map 6: Ossidingi Bamenda through Bali Showing Alternative Routes



Source: Author's Research Collection, Buea, 1948 (NAB).

Since independence more attention has been given to the improvement of this means of transport for the simple fact that the evacuation of the country's crops from their places of cultivation depends essentially on the available roads. The Cameroonian roads are classified into two categories such as Trunk A and Trunk B roads. The Trunk A roads link the major towns of the country. Considering a north South orientation of the Trunk A network, there are four main lines. a) The first line is the Victoria-Nkambe line. It starts from Victoria through Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Kumbo to Nkambe. From Bamenda to Nkambe it continues to Wum and back to Bamenda forming a ring road.

⁸⁷ The District Officer Ossindige, 3rd August 1920.

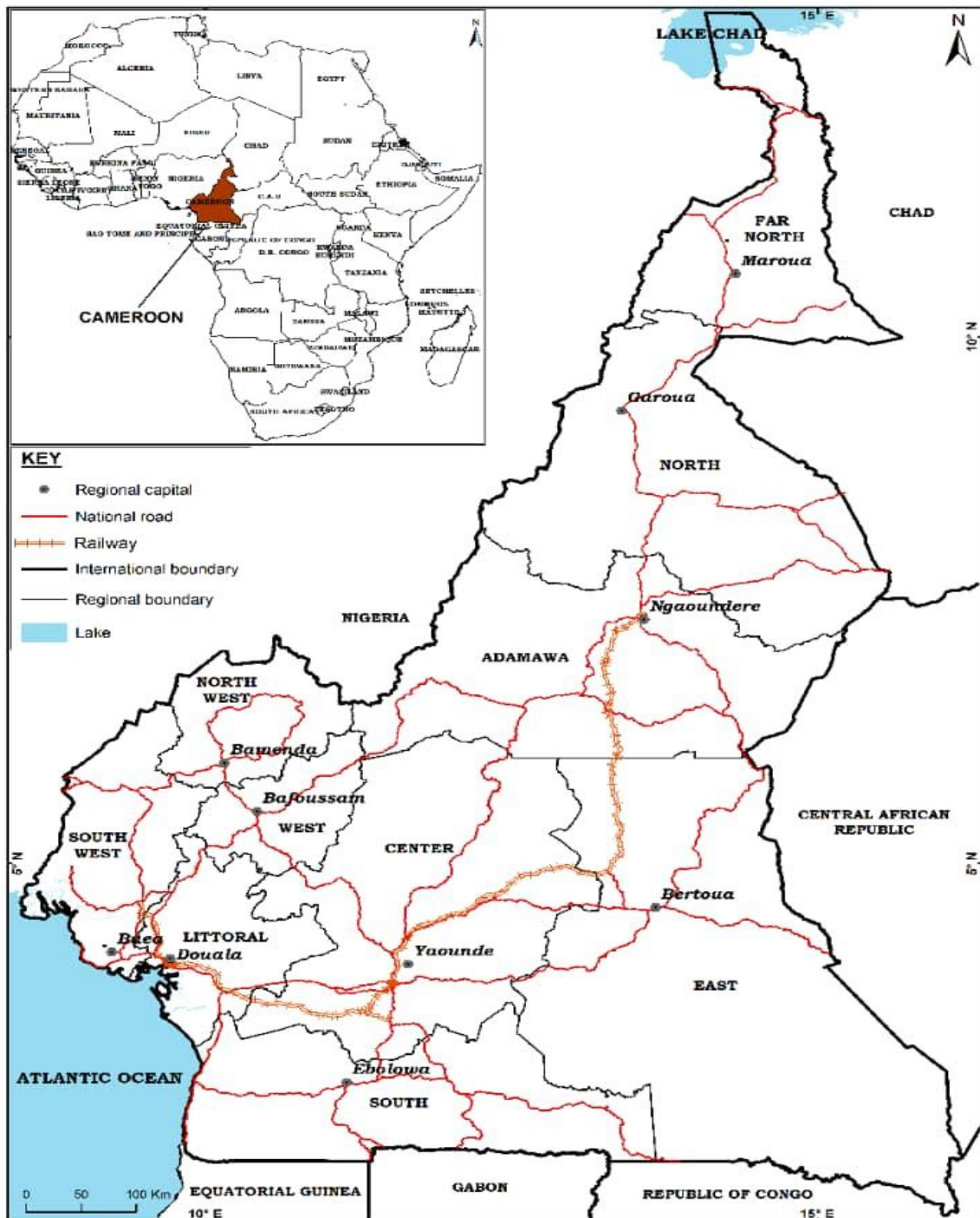
b)The second line starts from Douala to Kousseri, passing through Nkongsamba Bafoussam, Fouban, Banyo, Tibati, Ngaoundere, Garoua and Maroua. c)The third line known as the central line starts from Douala to Yaounde, then up to Yoko and meets the second line to continue to Kousseri. d) The fourth line starts from Douala through Yaounde, Bertoua, Meiganga and meets the second at Ngaoundere. As regard the secondary category known as Trunk B roads, they originate from local communities in the interior of the country and link up to the trunk A roads.⁸⁸

Apart from the roads linking areas within the country,there are others which link the country with the neighbouring states and these are termed TransAfrican roads. The first TransAfrican line;the Lagos-Mombassa (Kenya) line passes through Cameroon. It enters the country through Ekok and passes through Mamfe, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Tibati, Maidougouri to the Central African Republic. The second TransAfrican line known as the coastal line leaves the first one at Bafoussam and passes through Yaounde to Gabon with another line continuing to the Republic of Congo. The third TransAfrican line enters the country in the north, coming from Dakar and passing through Maiduguri in Nigeria, and through some towns of north Cameroon to Ndjamena in Chad. Majority of the roads in the country, especially those in rural areas, have gravelled surfaces so that their viability is mainly seasonal. In recent years many more roads have been constructed, and old ones improved upon. Given the importance of road transport in Cameroon,the government has paid much attention to the opening and improvement of the existing roads.⁸⁹ Map 7 below portrays the colonial Road Network in Cameroon.

⁸⁸ The District Officer Ossindinge, 3rd August 1920.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Map 7: Colonial Road Network in Cameroon.



Source: Author's Research Collection, Nationals Geographic Center Yaounde, 10/08/2017.

3.8 Road Transport Development in Kumba and Mamfe Divisions

The British colonialists also played a significant part in the development of transport facilities in the Kumba and Mamfe divisions. Roads and bridges suffered heavily during

the rainy season but it was possible to effect repairs in most places in the Kumba and Mamfe divisions. Improvements were made on the Kumba-Mbonge Marumba-Macombe road and numerous plank bridges were replaced by those formerly constructed of loge. On the Kumba-Bakossi-Ninong road the five miles of untared road were converted into a road fit for a motor cycle, while in other parts plank bridges were replaced by the original loge.⁹⁰ The District head of Bakossi made an excellent road from Ngab to the frontier and was possible to use a motor car or lorry on this section. In other parts of the region roads were kept cleaned and hammock and other temporary bridges were repaired upon. New ones were constructed, where required and existing ones repaired. The Buea Mamfe road was maintained.⁹¹

During the month of November 1928 the following distances over Native roads were constructed: Kumba Division 69 miles, Mamfe Division 103 miles, Bamenda Division 147 miles. This was rendered motorable during the past two or three years. Both in Victoria and Kumba Divisions no work was done except by labour paid on daily wage at the following rates: Labourers 7d per diem, Skilled Labourers 8d per diem, Road overseers £3 to £6 per month, Bricklayers 2/- to 2/6d per diem, Carpenters 2/- per diem. Labour was paid at the close of each month by an Administrative Officer. Skilled Labourers were those who have worked a year or more for the administration and have acquired some understanding of the work required and how to use the tools supplied.⁹² The only exception to the above rates was that Labourers of the Bakossi ethnic groups working on the Bakossi road construction in their own district received 5d per diem instead of 7d. The cost of making motorable roads for the Native Administration of Victoria and Kumba was not less than £200 per mile.

The situation in road construction between Mamfe and Bamenda Division was rather different. This was because roads were all scares at the beginning of 1928. But by the close of the year about 100 miles of motorable roads were constructed and five major bridges constructed. The main pre-war construction by the Germans were not motorable, but they were throughout most of their length cleared, stumped, formed and ditched. It is these roads that were rendered motorable and the milage of new construction was a very small percentage of the whole. These German roads generally

⁹⁰ Interview with Chief Isaac Koge Mesumbe 91, retired Teacher, Tombel, 3 April 2016.

⁹¹ Extract from Kumba Annual Report 1924.

⁹² Native Administrative roads.

required widening on one side, the surface flaten and bridges and culverts rendered fit for vehicles. New construction was only necessary where deviations were made to obtain better gradients or better approaches to bridge sites.⁹³ Apart from the stick bridges there were numerous, permanent bridges were constructed in Mamfe Division during the year 1928 and 1929.

In fact, these permanent bridges were constructed with labour both skilled and unskilled paid at the ordinary commercial rates of daily wages with materials purchased and transported at commercial prices. They stood the test of an unusually heavy wet season and were likely to stand for many years. Yet their cost forms an astonishing reduction in anything that the Public Works Department were produce. Another bridge was the Bakebe bridge over the Mbu River on the Tali road passing through Tinto, Upper Banyang sub-Division in Manyu Division.⁹⁴ The work took slightly over two months, but had the cement supply been uninterrupted the bridge could have been completed within five or six weeks. The cement for this bridge was transported by the African and Eastern Trade Corporation from Mamfe to the bridge sites at unusually low rates because their lorry was bringing return loads of kernels and the firm was most anxious to have the bridge completed.⁹⁵ Plate 6 below depicts the Bakebe bridge in Mamfe.

⁹³Native Administrative roads.

⁹⁴ Interview with Ntantang Agbor Godfred, 67, Contractor, Tinto, 12 November 2016.

⁹⁵ Idem.

Plate 6: Showing the Bakebe Bridge over the Mbu River, Tinto Upper Banyang Sub-division, Manyu, South West Region.



Source: Author's Research collection, Bakebe, (03/08/2017)

Another kind of cheap bridge which proved of the greatest service in crossing the deep ravines and swift rivers of Mamfe Division was the wire rope suspension bridge.⁹⁶ This measured some 230 feet in length. In July 1929 a second one of 100 feet was completed at Feitok on the Akak road. With regard to Bamenda Division, as in Mamfe and Kumba Division, there was an enormous enthusiasm for road construction because of the availability of motor vehicles in these towns. In the forest regions of Kumba, Mamfe and Victoria, this enthusiasm was inspired by the peoples intense dislike for carrying headloads and their determination not to carry them a day longer than necessary.⁹⁷ It should be noted that the Bakebe Bridge over the river Mbu passing through Tinto, Upper Banyang sub-division and the wire rope suspension bridge in Mamfe were constructed by the Germans. When the Germans were defeated in 1916, the British took over this portion of Cameroon and implanted their administration notably the policy of

⁹⁶ The Provincial Annual Report of 1928.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

indirect rule.⁹⁸ Plate 6 portrays the hanging bridge constructed by the Germans in Mamfe.

**Plate 7: Depicting the wire rope suspension bridge in Mamfe, Constructed in 1904
by the Germans**



Source: Author's Research collection, Mamfe. (04/08/2017)

Among the people of the Bamenda grassland, there was no particular objection to headloads but this was fully balanced by the eagerness of an intelligent people to have their share of the good things in a world which was just beginning to open for them. The people went through a drastic course of compulsory road construction under the German regime. It was not uncommon for them to point to large scale cuttings and embankments on the old German roads as places where many people died. It was this German built military roads which were being converted into motor roads, but there was a great difference in the method between the forced unpaid labour gangs driven to work month after month at the point of bayonet and the voluntary levies.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Interview with Agbor Besong Charles, 82, retired Civil Servant, Mamfe, 12 November 2016.

⁹⁹ Idem.

From Bamenda to Kumbo in the Nso District, this road runs a further 22 miles to Ndu. It was followed by the 68 miles all except 3 miles over the Babanki Tungaw hill. The German built road, were proved by the continuous line of trees planted along the road. In some parts, the trees line both sides of the road but in most parts the necessary widening has removed the trees on one side. A branch of the road was carried to Njinikom in the Kom District. The last section up to the Rest House and from the Rest House to the Roman Catholic Mission was only completed afterward. It was a sign of the reconciliation between the chief of Kom and his christian subject that he drove up in the first vehicle to reach the Mission. The arrival of the lorry was greeted with immense enthusiasm.¹⁰⁰ In many parts of the Njinikom road, owing to the steep gradients deviations from the old German road had to be made but it must be recollected that digging a new road in these open grasslands with very few streams to cross was very different from clearing stumping and leveling virgin forest.

The people on the Bamenda side used the road and it was difficult to refuse assistance to chiefs and people when they asserted their intention of improving their own roads. The Mamfe roads were improved, opened and made possible to maintain them through out the year with a reasonable expenditure of money at ordinary wage rates. In the Bamenda road there was instruction to use the method of payment by mileage with caution and to take care that pressure was not used to produce labour when the enthusiasm for road work was not there.¹⁰¹

Roads and bridges suffered heavily during the rainy seasons but it was possible to effect repairs in most places. Improvements were made on the Kumba-Mbonge Marumba-Macombe road with numerous plank bridges replaced from those formerly constructed in logs. On the Kumba-Bakossi-Ninong road the five miles of unmade road were converted into a road fit for a motor cycle, while in other parts, plank bridges were replaced by original logs. In other parts, roads were kept clean and hammock and other temporary bridges repaired.¹⁰²

The lack of roads and bridges was not really noticeable in Kumba than in Mamfe Division. The most urgent of communications apart from the Bamenda road was to link up Tali with Mamfe. Tweed opted to do this by improving the existing Mamfe to

¹⁰⁰ Annual Report Kom District Bamenda Division 14/11/1929.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² E.J. Arnett, Resident, Cameroon Province.

Kumba road as far as Akak about 20 miles of which 4 miles to Besongabang were already motorable. From Akak link road of about ten miles to Eyang on the main Buea-Bamenda road, to Tali was about some fifteen miles which were to be improved upon. Tweed hoped to carry on the road for about 20 miles to Fontem with a branch to Mbo. This scheme was to tap the rich palm belt country and also link up four Native courts with Mamfe.¹⁰³

Departmental roads were to be constructed and this policy was to contribute to development due to lack of roads in the Division. It was pointed out that the size and number of the rivers was an obstacle to amateur road making. According to Tweed, who had little faith in the completion of the public works departmental road within the near future, the Native Administration road ran parallel and each bridge was to be rebuilt after the wet season. The main aim of the Native Administration road was to connect Tali with Mamfe by a motor road thus making it possible to have a produce buying station at Tali. The increase in the volume of trade and consequent increase in the prosperity of the Natives should be enormous when this road was completed, and a motor service between the two places.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the commercial advantages of this road, it was noticed that the Mamfe, Bakuku, Tali, Mbo and Fontem Native Courts were to be connected by motor road and it was unnecessary to stress the advantages. Another point was that the Natives living in the vicinity of the Anglo-French frontier were no longer able to take their produce to Nkongsamba (French Territory) and nor to bring it to Mamfe which was almost double the distance. This was to decrease the work of the preventive Service and abolish what was at present an undoubted hardship on these Natives.¹⁰⁵ The reconstruction, construction and bridge building were as follows:¹⁰⁶

3.8.1 Buea-Road

There was also the Ediki to Kumba-Road boundary 17 miles, with nine bridges and two of which span 80 long and 100 long. Average length of bridges ranges from 20

¹⁰³ E.J. Arnett, Resident, Cameroon Province.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

concreted with wooden stringers and decking. Complete new road construction constituted of some deviations and grading of about 2.7 miles.

Kumba-Mukonje-Mambanda Road

There was equally the Kumba-Mukonje-Mambanda Road junction, Fiango through Ikiliwindi of about 12 miles, five bridges with double span 70 and 50 long respectively. Average length of bridges 20, concreted with wooden stringers and decking. New stringers and decking were placed on the Menge River three span bridge 80 yards in length.

3.8.2 Kumba-Mbonge Road

There was the Kumba to Kake bridge 2 miles, two bridges, concreted with wooden stringers and decking. The roads were practically motorable with the exception of bridges and the deviations. As regards maintenance and improvements, holes and wheel tracks were laterited where necessary and the roads kept open to motor traffic throughout the year.

3.8.3 Bakossi Road

We also had Mambanda to Mungo 15 miles, 12 miles of this road was dug, 6 miles were motorable in the dry season. With the exception of 2 miles of completely new deviation, the road made followed the line of the old 8 road which was widened to 18 and straightened. Five bridges were completed with concrete and cement blocks. Two of them, a two span 60, bridge and 20 bridge had timber decking. The former also had timber stringers. Four concrete culverts were completed. Six bridges averaging 20 span, two span 30 bridges and one 3span 60 bridges were concrete and cement block abuts built.

3.8.4 Kumba-Mamfe, Kumba-Mundame Road

Four miles of the existing Mamfe road beyond Ikiliwindi were rendered motorable by bridging three bridges with concrete abuts averaging 20 long and five banked up culverts and somewhat improving the worst soft places with stones and laterite. The Mbonge road had large concrete bridge at Kake was completed and its approaches were nearing completion. The Kumba Mundame road one third mile of new deviation that were completed and half mile near Mundame re-made. Considerable lateriting were done on the Kumba Buea and Kumba Mundame roads. Half mile of regrading was done at Banga and the bad hills resurfaced with stones and laterite. Ditches were relug over a large portion of the Buea road.¹⁰⁷

Many roads were constructed in the South at this time.¹⁰⁸ Britain continued with the roads set up by the Germans in the coastal region. They included the administrative roads from Victoria to Buea. The road between Bonadikombo miles 4 from Victoria on the Great North Road and Soppo was maintained by a small group of people paid from the road funds of the Native administration. The executive engineer restored a bridge which was becoming dilapidated posing danger to motor-traffic. The road from Victoria along the sea coast was cleaned by the native administration, including reconstruction of the bridge below the Baptist mission. The Great north road, on its first stage between Buea and Molyko, was connected to the boundary between Dibanda Reserve and the Dibanda section of Moliwe plantation.¹⁰⁹ The feeder road leading from the main road near Dibanda to Tiko was cleaned and foundations put in for some half a mile from the main road.¹¹⁰

Due to lava stream, the coastal road, between Debundcha and Bibundi, were not constructed, because there were no funds allocated for repairs of the bridges.¹¹¹ The Victoria Bimbia road was of little importance, being in the nature of a *cul-de-sac*. For the most part it passes through plantations properties where it was in fair condition. In the Bimbia Reserve it was kept clean by the people, but was very difficult to maintain, as

¹⁰⁷ E.J. Arnett, Resident, Cameroon Province.

¹⁰⁸ File Ci (1957).3 Annual Reports for Wum Division for 1955, 1956 and 1957 (NAB).4)3 Wum Division Native Authorities: United Nations organizations Report (NAB); File Gi.3. Annual Reports for Wum Division, 1955, 1956 and 1957 (NAB).

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Agbor Michael Ayuk, 75, Retired Civil Servant, Buea, 10th June 2016.

¹¹⁰ File Ci (1957).3 Annual Reports for Wum Division for 1955, 1956 and 1957 (NAB).4)3 Wum Division Native Authorities: United Nations organizations Report (NAB); File Gi.3. Annual Reports for Wum Division, 1955, 1956 and 1957 (NAB).

¹¹¹ Interview with Njoki Lisinge Albert, 76, Bricklayer, Buea, 10 June 2016.

it was of a steep grade and consequently suffers badly in the rainy season.¹¹² According to the manager of Bimbia Estate;

The upper part of the first three bridges (going in Bimbia town direction) is in fair condition and the damage in each case has been to the foundation... The fourth bridge over the waterfall stream is liable to collapse if not attended to before the heavy rains set in, for the stone work on one side has completely fallen away and there is also a large hole in the roadway of the bridge.¹¹³

There was as well the Victoria-Ngeme Mokundange road where the Native administration estimated to cost £200 for maintenance. According to Memo No. 473/223/1921 of 29th March 1923 addressed by the Divisional Officer of Victoria Division to the Resident Cameroon Province Buea, I regret that I have no authentic map showing the respective sections of road on plantations and reserve land.

According to the Native Administration, a large portion of this road was in the whole in good repairs, though in places where it was recently been cleaned by the villages.¹¹⁴ I do not consider that this road is of sufficient importance publicly or politically to warrant the expenditure of the somewhat limited Native treasury funds: it is essentially a road used to the plantations. Furthermore, it was at present nothing more than a *cul-de-sac*: between Batoke and Debundsha two large stonework bridges have become completely useless for traffic and their reconstruction. As for the administration, they would be worth, or capable of repairing because it would cost some hundreds of pounds and required expert supervision.

The chiefs were instructed to clean their sections of the road: this was supervised by Native administration Messengers. But now this matter of roads has arisen, the native administration suggested that the plantation management should do their share of cleaning and maintenance, both on the roads mentioned, and on all public roads actually passing through their property; hitherto nothing has been done in this direction if they were to do so (and the German deeds require this work of them) then a little might be saved from the Native Treasury vote for the payment of expert supervision on the reserved portions of the coastal roads.¹¹⁵ According to a letter from the Resident in

¹¹² Extract from Annual Report 1922, Victoria Division.

¹¹³ Deputy Supervisor of plantations.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ The Divisional Officer Victoria Division.

Buea, there are some 205 miles of good motor roads running through the Division, and cannot too strongly urge that a motor car, with a good motor driver with a fair knowledge of running repairs, should be at once sent up for use within the Division, by this the District Officer could get round quickly to inspect his court, it would pay the Government handsomely and would help to some extent to lessen the much felt need of more officers.¹¹⁶

Besides, these roads were constructed by the people, some in the German times, and some in ours, through enormous labour, it is now left for us to show them the good use a road can be put to. The Native administrator further advocates that a road foreman be stationed at Bamenda, as it is impossible to expect the political Officer to look after these roads and bridges with anything appertaining to good resulting and at the same time to carry on their own duties to the best advantage. It might be mentioned that good labour is going to waste for want of supervision and expert advice, the road foreman should be made responsible to the District Officer, for if left on his own, as would be the case in a station so far away from headquarters, the best results would not be obtained.¹¹⁷

There were serious problems associated with road transport in the fact that there existed sharp contrast in population distribution, and low average population density in the country. This means that roads have to pass for long stretches through uninhabited country and so face large initial operation costs. b) Accidented relief such as the presence of the Adamawa plateau and the Western Highlands calls for a lot of excavation of hills and filling up of valleys before roads are well constructed. Moreover, the rugged relief has always led to the construction of winding roads which are always the cause of many fatal car accidents. c) The presence of many rivers necessitating the construction of bridges hindered the passing of roads through certain areas. d) The vast and thick equatorial forest in the south of the country has always presented problems of felling and stumping to the construction of roads.

The many trees hold much water in their leaves after periods of heavy rains. The water keeps dripping for many hours thereby rendering the roads wet and slippery for the greater part of the rainy season. Fallen trees across roads often interrupt the free flow of traffic. Soft soils coupled with a lot of landslides were a serious

¹¹⁶ Extract from Letter No. T.21/T.11/1918 of 10th March 1918 from Resident, Cameroon Province to Secretary, Southern Province.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

problem, especially during the wet season. Most untarred roads, both principal and secondary, became almost impassable because of muddy conditions during the wet season. f) The coastal lands have swampy zones which hinder road construction, especially at the Douala and Ndian lowlands areas.

At first the Bamenda airport only serve the purpose of meteorological centres. Airstrips like the Mamfe, Tiko and Bali have completely gone out of use. The Douala seaport is Cameroons major seaport with capacity of 6,000,000 tons. It consist of a 500m long container terminal, a fishing dock, a timber park, a banana dock, a naval repair unit, a dredging unit, and a section for off shore oil exploration and research. The port is served by 13km of tarred road and 25km of railway.

Other major developed ports are the Kribi deep sea ports which in the colonial period handles mostly timber, and minor ports such as Tiko which handles agricultural raw material produced by the CDC and the Limbe port which handles crude oil and is a major fishing port. The Chad-Cameroon pipeline stretches over 1070km in the South West to North East direction linking Kribi at the coast of the Atlantic Ocean to the Doba oil field in Chad. Within Cameroon it passes through Bipindi, Lolodorf, Ngoumou, Yaounde, Belabo, Meiganga and Touboro. Another pipeline to link Limbe and Douala and to Bamenda has been envisaged. To these forms of Transport can be added the list of Navigable rivers, these include: The Manyu, Wouri, Mungo, Lower Sanaga and Ngoko, which are navigable all year round. The Benue, Logone and Chari and Nyong, which are navigable only for parts of the year. The Manyu and Benue are used to transport merchandise between Cameroon and Nigeria, while the Nyong, Mungo and Wouri serve for the transport of logs and agricultural produce.

The development of transport networks in Cameroon takes into account regional integration with other countries of Africa. This is clearly seen in the road and railway sectors where trans-African networks are equally the states pre-occupation. In the road network sector, two lines of the trans-African road network have been systematically realised. These lines include: The Abakeleke-Ekok-Mamfe-Mombassa line that passes through Ekok, Mamfe, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Tibati and Garoua-Boulai into the Central African Republic. Most of the road axis has been tarred except for the Fouban-Tibati road which had been recently tarred. The coastal line linking Bafoussam-Yaounde-Ebolowa to Gabon is already completed even though the roads do not reflect the initial

prescriptions. This enable the growth of transport vehicles that transport people and goods between one town to the other.

Water Transport Facilities

British Development of Sea Ports and Wharf

The British colonialists also played an important role in the development of water transport facilities in Cameroons. The economic history of the Southern Cameroons could not be completed without a full discussion of the role of shipping. Shipping has been prominent in the economic history of Cameroons right from the days of the Portuguese, Dutch and British traders. While at Douala and Rio del Rey, the old trading hulks combined the functions of factory and wharf, whereas there was non of such things in Victoria. The only harbour was the beach behind the Divisional office. Ocean going ships anchored in the Bay, and people were ferried ashore in small boats. Before the Germans annexed Cameroon, the Baptist Mission had its own small boats making regular visits to Douala, and there was a cutter service across to Fernando Po. The Germans later constructed the old jetty in the Government pier until the end of the Second World War. After the war, the customs Department moved to Bota, where the wharf for the former W.A.P.V. company became the approved Government wharf for the port of Victoria. Although ocean going vessels were still unable to come alongside, the Bota facilities were a considerable improvement on the old port because there were three cranes with one capable of lifting seven tons. There were also 4000 tons of storage space.¹¹⁸ During the German period, Cameroon counts four maritime ports, namely; Douala-Bonaberi, Kribi, Tiko and Bota (Limbe),and one imported river port at Garoua.

3.8.4.1 Douala-Bonaberi Sea Port

Two ports, Douala and Bonaberi handle most of the imports and exports of the Republic of Cameroon. Douala port is located on the left bank of river Wouri. It has a quay of more than 300m long of deep water. On the left bank facing the Douala port, is the Bonaberi port. Both of them are found at the limit of ocean navigation. This limit is set by the long bridge across the Wouri river linking the town of Douala with Bonaberi. The port of Bonaberi has a quay of over 350m. The Douala-Bonaberi port forms the

¹¹⁸ Victor Bong Amaazee, 1998, p.42.

main port of the country's foreign trade. It exports mainly timber and agricultural produce, such as cocoa and coffee, and receives imports which include essentially vehicles and other manufactured goods. The Bonaberi port is noted for handling bananas destined for export. The main problem faced by the Douala-Bonaberi port is silting which calls for huge sums of money to be spent on dredging. Traffic on the Douala-Bonaberi port has been increasing at a great pace, passing from 62,524 tons in 1911 to 3,533,499 tons in 1981. Very important is the fact that in recent years the port has increasingly handled the external trade of Chad and the Central African Republic.

3.8.4.2 Tiko Sea Port (Wharf)

The CDC owes its origin to the system of plantation agriculture that the Germans introduced in Cameroon after annexation of the territory in 1884. The Germans thus seized large tracts of native land and opened plantations in Tiko, Ekona and other areas. The plantations grew a variety of crops. In 1916 after the expulsion of the Germans in Cameroon by the Allied forces, Britain created a body known as the Custodian of Enemy Property to administer the German plantations in the British zone of Cameroon. The Custodian of Enemy property had its main office in Lagos but the management of the Cameroon plantations was entrusted to its branch that was set up in Buea. In 1922, Britain auctioned the plantations which ended in a failure.¹¹⁹

When the Second World War broke out, the Custodian of Enemy Property took over the German plantations in Cameroon, this body managed the plantation from 1939 to 1946 when the CDC was created. The objectives of the CDC were to cultivate a variety of crops for the benefit of the natives of the territory, to conduct export and import trade, to build necessary infrastructure facilities such as roads, railways, ports and wharves. The Germans also built the port of Tiko which under the British required replacement by more modern facilities.

The old wharf had consisted of a wooden pier sufficient for the berthing of one ship. In 1953, a new concrete wharf was constructed outside the old wharf, and it was formally opened on 16th September 1954 by Dr. E. M. L. Endeley. The new wharf which was built and managed by the CDC could take vessels up to 460 feet in length

¹¹⁹ Victor Bong Amaazee, 1998, p.181.

and included a lighter berth capable of taking vessels up to 1000 tons. The transit sheds port included five banana elevators which could lift 2000 stems per hour. There was also a pipe line for the discharge of bulk petrol and fuel oil supplies to the bulk fuel installation in the Tiko Town area. Tiko it self was predominantly a banana port,a development of the 1950s was the shipping of logs. They were rafted down from the Tiko beaches to an anchorage in the creeks just below the wharf, known as Tiko pool. These logs were lashed together in rafts and were then towed to the pool, where they were lifted into the ships by the derricks of the vessels.¹²⁰

Through the wharf cocoa, palm oil, palm kernels and peper were exported. The Tiko wharf took charge of mostly bananas, rubber and timber exportation and imported fertilizers and plantation stores. Between 1947 to 1957 it was estimated that the CDC invested about £7million in its plantations, building factories and wharves. This port was and is accessible through the Bimbria creeks. Like Bonaberi, it served for a long period since colonial period as a banana port, but today it also handles exports of wood and rubber.¹²¹ Plate 7 below is the area view of the Tiko wharf during the British period in Southern Cameroon.

Plate 8: Tiko Wharf during the British Southern Cameroon



Source: Author' s Research Collection, National Archive Buea, 2017.

¹²⁰ Victoria Centenary Committee, *Victoria Southern Cameroons: 1858 to 1958*, (Victoria: Basel Mission Book Depot, 1958 p.57.

¹²¹ Ibid.

3.8.4.3. Bota Sea Port (Wharf)

The port is favourably situated but equipped only with rudimentary facilities. The two ports Tiko and Bota, both handled the imports of the former west Cameroon State. With the reunification of the two federated states, the ports declined drastically almost to the insignificance due to the shift of their economic activities to the Douala-Bonaberi port. Besides government interference in shifting some of the activities, the construction of the reunification road (Tiko-Douala), created a preference for road transport to water transport for many goods. Bota port in particular is a naturally deep sea port which, unlike Douala port, does not experience the phenomenon of mud, sand, and silt accumulations and will hardly need the expensive task of dredging. Presently it only handles the export of cocoa, coffee and kernels from the South-west Province. The Bota wharf handled imports of general cargo such as foodstuff, cement and fertilizers. Special facilities existed for piping palm oil in bulk to a special lighter which transferred oil at sea to larger vessels. In general, most cargo for the southern Cameroons, with the exception of cargo lightered up the cross river to Mamfe from Calabar, was handled at the port of Bota. Bananas were occasionally bay loaded at Victoria when the state of the tides or draught of the ships did not permit full loading of banana boats at Tiko. Plate 8 below depicts the Bota Port during the British era.

Plate 9: Bota Sea Port (Wharf)



Source: Author's Research Collection, Limbe 26/10/2018.

Tiko and Victoria were hosts to ships, since the 19th Century with visits by the John Holt “Maria”. During German rule, the Woermann Line became the most important shipping line in these ports. Although the Woermann Line ships again visited the Cameroons after the First World War, other companies, such as Holland West Africa Lines and Elder Dempster Lines, became of greater importance than before. The Elder Dempster Company, in particular used to send the mail boats “Accra” and “Apapa” to Victoria, and the monthly visits of these ships were a feature of the social life of the port until 1938. After the Second World War, Elder Dempster and Guinea Gulf Lines became the main companies using the port, with respect to the volume of cargo carried banana boats come first.¹²²

The Germans built the first vessel specially constructed for the banana trade just before 1914. After the First World War, the German Laeisz Line ran an increasing number of banana boats to cater for the developing banana plantations. Ships of the Messrs Elders and Fyffes replaced the Laeisz Line after 1939, and this company continued to organise the shipping of fruits from the Cameroons through the ports of Victoria and Tiko through out the period of Trusteeship. Messrs Elders and Fyffes provided the only regular passenger and mail services by sea from the Cameroons to the United Kingdom and their white painted boats anchored in Ambas Bay with almost clock work regularity.¹²³

Other Lines visiting Victoria and Tiko were the Farrel Lines and two former German ships under the flag of the Fyffes Line.¹²⁴ Above all the Government Marine Department, which later became the Ports Authority, was responsible for pilotage to the port of Tiko. Besides the Harbour Master inspected and Licensed all small craft in the Division and maintained two lighthouses at Debundscha and Nachtigal Points, as well as the buoys in the Bimbia River leading to Tiko. The CDC carried out most of the repair works in Victoria Division at slipways at Tiko and Bota. They were able to maintain a fleet of some seventy powered craft and lighters which were owned by the Cameroons Development Corporation CDC.¹²⁵

¹²² Victoria Centenary Committee, *Victoria Southern Cameroons: 1858 to 1958*, (Victoria: Basel Mission Book Depot, 1958) p.57.

¹²³ Ibid, p.57.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

3.8.4.4. Tiko and Victoria Sea Ports

The port of Victoria was founded long before German colonisation by the Baptists Missionaries led by Alfred Saker. The Germans envisaged creating a commercial economy. That ambition was well executed when volcanic soils which are often fertile for agriculture led to the opening of plantations both in Victoria and coastal Cameroon. These plantations produced various agricultural products such as palm oil, rubber, bananas, pepper and cocoa (Epale, 1985; Rudin, 1938; Fanso, 1989). To get these things shipped to Europe water transport became a *sine qua non* and by extension a seaport. Although the Victoria and Tiko seaports were officially opened in the 1880s they reached their heydays only in the 1920s during the British colonial administration. It was during that period that Victoria and Tiko ports became the first ports in the British Southern Cameroons and linked the territory to the global movements of goods and people. The foundation of Victoria was traced to the London Baptist Missionaries who were led by Alfred Saker. On 23 August 1858 Alfred Saker signed a treaty with King William of Bimbia who claimed to have had unlimited powers over the land arranging for its purchase at the cost of £1,800. After the abolition of slave trade in the British Empire in the early 1830s some emancipated slaves from Jamaica pressed for an evangelical mission to return to the African homeland. In England the religious motive was complemented by a search for scientific and economic goals geared towards the opening up of more lands in Africa. In 1841, the Niger Expedition was launched with the primary goal of opening up modern day Nigeria to British traders, missionaries and scientists. The Committee of the London Baptist Missionary Society (LBMS) took advantage of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the British Empire as well as the Niger Expedition and decided that an effort be made to give the light of life to Dark continent and also to atone for the crimes that the English greed had for centuries committed by proclaiming in Africa itself the glad tidings of divine liberty from high (Fanso, 1989).

Consequently, the missionaries left England on 13 October 1840 and reached Fernando Po (Present day Equatorial Guinea) and reached their destination on January 1841. While in Fernando Po they were given an introductory letter by the former Governor of Fernando Po, Lt. Colonel Nicolls. In 1845, the Spanish Consul, General Don Carlos Chacon, arrived Fernando Po with instructions to send the Baptist Missionaries away unless they agreed to stay in a private capacity only. Although they

refused they were allowed to stay unmolested until after 1856 when the Spanish Catholics in Fernando Po made things quite difficult for them. In May 1858 the Spanish Jesuits arrived the island and proclaimed Catholicism the main religion. Thence, Alfred Saker decided to move with his followers in Fernando Po to the mainland opposite the island, this was Bimbia but after he acquired it, he named it Victoria in honour of Queen Victoria of England (Underhill, 1958).

Saker's expulsion from Fernando Po had different but contrasted motives. He was expelled because of religious and to a lesser extend economic motives. His decision to find Victoria was also due to religious and economic motives. Writing about this view, Saker's biographer, Edward Bean Underhill said *inter alia*:

I (Alfred Saker) need a home for our people where a trade may be created and to which commerce may be drawn. I searched for a landing only....Here if Her Majesty's Government sanction and sustained our efforts, can be put , coal stores, provision stores, building yards and every other essential for commerce. Here too a highway may be made into the interior and the native produce be shipped in smooth water for Europe. It will be essentially a religious enlightened colony.... (Underhill, 1958:56)

If well scrutinized, it will be deduce from Saker's words that there were already ingredients of a sea port as early as 1858. Secondly, it also shows that the foundation of Victoria was due to religious as well as economic motives.

The beginnings of Victoria port could be traced to the 1880s when the Germans annexed Cameroon. The Germans envisaged creating a commercial economy. That ambition was well executed when volcanic soils which are often fertile for agriculture led to the opening of plantations both in Victoria and coastal Cameroon. These plantations cultivated various agricultural products such as palm oil, rubber, bananas, pepper and cocoa (Epale, 1985). To get these things shipped to Europe water transport became a *sine qua non* and by extension a seaport. Although the Victoria seaport was officially opened in the 1880s it reached its heydays only in the 1920s during the British colonial administration. It was during that period that Victoria became the first city in the British Southern Cameroons.

Victoria during the British colonial administration was the capital of Victoria Division. It had a land surface of 1,166sq.miles¹²⁶. Victoria became the economic nerve center of many commercial activities. It all began with the opening of commercial firms as well as trading companies. Table 1 shows the number of companies and their nationalities as well as some business magnets that were found in Victoria.

Table 1: Trading Companies and Merchants in Victoria.

Name of Company	Nationality	Nature of Business	Remarks
Woodin and Co. Limited	British	Export and Import	1916 operating a branch in Victoria
John Holt and Co.	British	Export, Import and Retail	Established in Victoria in 1933
Compagnie Forestiere Sangha Oubangui	French	Forestry	Established in 1947
Jacob Adebona	Nigerian	Petty Trader	Had factories in Victoria as early as 1916
J. Lawani Marsha	Nigerian	Retail Petty trader	Established in 1924
Z.P. Thorpe	Sierra Leonean	Retail Petty trader	Established 1924
A.G. Thompson	Togolese	Retail	Established 1923
Body Lawson	Togolese	Trader-Importer/Exporter	Established 1923
S.D. Johnson	Togolese	Importer/Exporter	Established 1922
Sillas Attipo	Liberian	Trader	Established 1923
S. Hays	Sierra-Leonean	Trade	Established 1922
Charles Abbey	Monrovia	Trader	Established 1922
Mpondo Elame alias Freeborn	Douala-Import and Export	Wholesale trader	Established 1922
Grenoulleau	French	Retail	1919
De Bandera	Greek	Retail	1921
Hausa Co.	British	Dealer of goods of German origin	1923

Source: Simon Joseph Epale, *Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon, 1885-1975: A study in Agrarian Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Ventage Press, 1985).

¹²⁶ File Ba (1938) Cameroons Province : Notes for the League of Nations Report 1938.(National Archives Buea (NAB).

From the table above, the interconnectedness with the outside world of Victoria cannot be left in doubt. Victoria was becoming a veritable hub where much commercial activities were taking place. Traders came from West African coast, Greece and France. Most of the companies were British. A closer look at the table also reminds us of Victoria as a portal of globalization. Middell and Naumann (2010:149-170) has observed that such windows through which globalisation is understood could be those places which have acted as centers of world trade or global communication, and have served as entering points for cultural transfer and where institutions and practices for dealing with global connectedness have been developed. The strength of the above scholars suggests that trade was at the center of globalisation. Apart from what is obtained in the table, in 1909 Victoria alone had 18 firms in active operation with 99 European employees and 4, 184 Cameroonian employees.

From Victoria some of the business firms radiated their activities to the hinterlands such as John Holt and United African Company. John Holt was the earliest company to be established in Victoria. This company specialised in buying palm products like kernels and palm oil. These products were very essential for the survival of factories back in Europe. With some of these products margarine was produced. In the 1930s, John Holt already had branches in Kumba and Bamenda all inland cities. The United Africa Company (UAC) was a British company which principally traded in West Africa during the 20th century (Baker, 1996; Fage et.al., 1995). Both companies, which specialised in the exploitation and trading of palm kernels and palm oil which were exported. Although by 1928, there was keen competition between these companies in the 1930s UAC established the oil extracting and kernel cracking machine around Mamfe on the headwaters of River Manyu. The entire palm products passed through Victoria port to Europe.¹²⁷

For a better appreciation of Victoria as a port city it is imperative to understand that it developed during the political transformation of the territory. As a matter of fact, during the mandate and trusteeship period, the port experienced its busiest period. The companies and firms in Table 2 imported various items which included bags and sacks, cement, cigars and cigarettes, cotton piece goods, fish, Kerosene in imperial gallons,

¹²⁷ File, No.156/1930 Ce (1930) 1, Mamfe Division Annual Report 1930; File No. 177/1931, Ce (1931)1 Mamfe Division Annual Report; File No. (1934) 1, Mamfe Divisional Report, 1934; File No. 1781 Ce (1935) 1, Mamfe Division Annual Report (NAB).

motor spirits, rice, bicycles, radios, tilly lamps¹²⁸ just to name but a few. Table II Shows the products which entered through Victoria port between 1933 and 1937.

Table 2: Principal Articles of Import during the Period 1933-1937.

YEARS	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bags and sacks in dozens	5,851	6,090	7,886	7,656	107,975
Cement in tons	326	519	801	1,474	2,373
Cigars and cigarettes in Hds	14, 489	11,934	12,465	13,0009	11,835
Cotton Piece Goods sq. qty	658,355	610,722	1,134,447	1,155,423	1,676,915
Fish Lb	702, 119	649,690	765,516	1,191,187	14,601
Kerosene imp.gallons	43,860	34,572	40,998	73, 560	54,697
Motor Spirit in Imp. Gallons	61, 761	47,438	69,425	78,356	64,837
Rice in cwt	12,938	16,530	19,938	36,601	36,425
Salt	8,939	8,856	10,828	11,085	12,371
Tobacco Lb	21,015	11,040	11,387	19,425	10,923

These imports were matched with exports in the same period. And these articles passed through Victoria port. Table 3 shows the principal articles of export.

¹²⁸ Report by His Majesty Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Cameroons under British Mandate for the year 1937 (NAB).

Table 3: Principal Articles of Export

YEARS	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
	TONS	TONS	TONS	TONS	TONS
Bananas (dried)	533	537	740	455	630
Bananas (fresh)	16,789	22,781	37,752	49,605	55,737
Cocoa	3,608	4,561	4,073	4774	4,796
Kola nuts	/	/	/	/	.43
Palm Kernels	1,617	1,283	1, 418	1,506	1,803
Palm oil	1,837	1,477	1,418	1,648	1,583
Rubber	164	657	1,731	582	725
Wood and Timber unmanufactured	6,560	5,184	3,055	5,142	5,068

Source: Report by His Majesty Government in the United

Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Cameroons under British Mandate for the year 1937 (NAB). Tables 2 and 3 shows how transnational entanglements and global networks have not been limited to particular hubs but rather have involved in the world long before the renewed globalisation was defined (Middell and Nauman, 2010). The table shows the economic and social role which the port played in colonial Cameroon, It was not all about goods moving. Goods which symbolized globalisation and modernity gradually found themselves through ports and harbours before being carried by individual people into their rooms and beyond. These goods were not exported to one country neither was the port of Victoria handling sea vessels from one country. Thus within this period 52 countries docked their ships at the Victoria port with goods of various kinds. Table 4 shows these countries with the value of their imports in pounds.

Table 4: Value of Imports through Victoria Port (1932-1935)

Country of Origin	Consignme nt in £ 1932	Consignme nt in £ 1933	1934	1935	% of total trade
United Kingdom	26, 245	22,879	18,713	26,343	27%
Germany	20,400	22,407	20,954	36,345	38%
France	152	165	262	771	.8%
U.S.A	6,037	4,492	3,657	4,075	4%
Holland	2,863	3,183	1,758	3,394	4%
Japan	811	798	4,145	7,239	8%
Italy	153	168	224	259	.3%
Norway	593	1,849	2,145	2,654	3%
Sweden	12	96	292	199	.2%
Spain	10	23	165	154	.1%
Denmark	70	121	493	465	.5%
Belgium	219	430	515	1,412	1%
Russia	4	3	362	213	.2%
Portugal	61	886	84	195	.2%
Switzerland	5	20	77	107	.1%
Brazil	/	2	127	161	.2%
Austria	/	162	23	52	.05%
Canada	7	36	198	200	.2%
India	595	436	3,262	4,744	5%
Gold Coast	39	106	104	110	.1%
Spanish Possessions	1,819	1,365	1,038	1,597	2%
French Possessions	4,894	4,457	8,890	4,044	4%
South Africa	12	/	/	/	/
Czechoslovakia	/	/	431	639	.7%
Portuguese Possessions	/	/	37	/	/
Belgian Congo	/	2	/	/	/
Sierra Leone	4	/	1	/	/
China	8	/	12	63	.07%

Argentina	/	/	80	201	.2%
Australia	/	/	11	68	.07%
California	/	/	5	28	.03%
Ceylon	/	/	32	48	.05%
Chile	/	/	12	/	/
Delmatia	/	/	3	8	/
East Indies	/	/	67	6	/
Egypt	/	/	28	39	.04%
Esthonia	/	/	129	218	.2%
Greece	/	/	15	26	.03%
Hong Kong	/	/	2	12	/
Iraq	/	/	1	/	/
Kamschatka	/	/	7	9	/
Kenya	/	/	1	1	/
New Zealand	/	/	13	4	/
Poland	/	/	28	58	.05%
Uruguay	/	/	31	26	.03%
British West Indies	/	/	23	52	.05%
Zanzibar	/	/	1	/	/
Straits Settlement	/	/	/	3	/
Jamaica	/	/	/	3	/
Tangayika	/	/	/	1	/
Roumania	/	/	/	8	/
Turkey	/	/	/	1	/
TOTAL	£65,013	£64,086	£68,460	£96,212	

Source: Compiled from League of Nations Reports for the years, 1932, 1933, 1934 and 1935 (NAB).

Table 4 shows that 52 ships from various countries of the world docked at the Victoria port between 1932 and 1935. The United Kingdom and Germany topped the chart of trading activities. Some of the countries fizzled out with less than one percent.

However, a closer look at the table could be very tricky. Out of the 52 countries one wonders why California should be a country and some countries like the French and Portuguese possessions actually mean in the colonial lexicon. Countries like Jamaica, Roumania, Turkey, Zanzibar in the years 1932, 33 and 34 were completely absent and even when they came in their volume of trade was negligible. The only plausible reason to this performance might lie in the fact that Victoria was a literage port which meant that shipment and discharge was expensive.¹²⁹

The countries whose vessels docked in Victoria show that although remotely global, it was a nodal junction in the global world. Victoria had become truly a funnel which globality could be consumed. According to Urry (2000), the emergence of global networks transforms the very nature of social. It can no longer be seen as bounded within national societies. He further maintains that people across the world stage are global consumers of other places and goods. On the other hand Geyer (2010), questions how and where globalisation makes its way into one's country. The role of the Victoria port which attracted more than 50 countries' vessels at its port partly answers this question. Through the port we start to understand the junctures of globalization which became conduits through which global commodities passed through. Once "modern" goods anchored in this port, different actors took further into the hinterlands and put in peoples' houses, kitchens and villages. The role of individuals in the dissemination of modernity could not be down looked.

In fact, the port of Victoria was not only seen in economic terms or in terms of exports and imports. Migrants flooded into the port city in search for jobs and others only to admire the fascination of modernity. Administratively as the capital of Victoria Division migrants flooded into the city. Migrants came in from the hinterlands especially the Bamenda grassfields which included Meta, Bali, Bafut, Wum, Kom, Nso as well as foreigners like Togolese, Creole fishermen especially the Ejaw of Nigeria and Sierra Leoneans. Between 1953 and 1967 the people of Victoria was 33,000.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ File Ba (191962)1 Kenneth E. Berrill, *The Economy of the Southern Cameroons: A Report Submitted to J.O. Fields, Commissioner of Southern Cameroons on 25 August 1960*(NAB).

¹³⁰ Report by His Majesty Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Cameroons under British Mandate for the year 1937 (NAB).

The colonial administration saw the need to construct roads which will help the migration of these people and goods to Victoria and the hinterlands. The importance of roads was never in doubt at the beginning of colonial venture. Speaking of German rule, Rudin (1938:237) makes the point unequivocally. 'Roads were an administrative, commercial, and military necessity from the beginning of the occupation of the colonial territory'. The interest of British colonial authorities in widening the roads was to overcome the disadvantages of the carrier system and reduce the cost of running the colony to its barest minimum, with the colony bearing the cost.

British colonial administrators in Cameroon spent enormous efforts justifying not only the inevitability but the desirability of 'good' roads, first, in the Cameroon Province and second in the Bamenda Province which were to link Victoria. From the perspective of the Cameroon Province, writing about the main trunk road linking Bamenda and Victoria, port Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, stated *inter alia*:

I have the honour to inform you that my council of Ministers has recently had under review the adequacy of present plans for the improvement of the Federal Trunk Road A4 which runs from Victoria to Bamenda. This road which is the spinal cord of all land communications in the Southern part of the Cameroons Trust Territory must be given priority ... the opening of a all-season artery from Bamenda to the Eastern Region boundary and to the coastal ports of Victoria and Tiko is undoubtedly the prime necessity among all others at the present time...¹³¹

In other words, Lennox-Boyd, was justifying road construction on economic grounds: roads were needed to evacuate raw materials from the hinterland to the coastal port and also to allow the movement of people. Every commentator in the territory stressed the importance of roads as the key to the future'.¹³²

The Bamenda Province had a population of about 400,000 people and most of those people were mobile despite the obstacles in their way such as wild forest and fast flowing rivers. If the area were linked by a wider road, it was an opportunity for those strong people to increase in numbers and go down to work in coastal plantations. With

¹³¹ File Rc 1956/2 Cameroons Road Programme Policy (NAB); Also see Public Records Office (PRO) CO 583/248/11 Cameroon Report on Road Communication (NAB).

¹³² File Qc (1960) Kenneth E. Berill to J.O. Fields, The Economy of the Southern Cameroons: A Report Submitted to J.O. Fields Commissioner of Southern Cameroons 25/August 1960 (NAB).

that agenda, the British colonial administration saw the connection of the Bamenda area to the littoral corridor especially Victoria as absolutely important.

Apart from Victoria there was also Tiko port. Tiko was a deep-sea port of considerable size constructed by a German plantation company. Several sea going vessels load and discharged at the port. The most important trading partner of this port was Germany. There was a weekly service between this port and the principal port of Douala¹³³. In comparison with Victoria, the size of trade and the number of vessels which docked at Victoria were by far more than those which docked in Tiko. For instance, in 1936 alone vessels of British, German, Dutch and Norwegian nationalities docked at Tiko port while the same nationalities except American also docked at Victoria. What made the difference in the tonnage of goods. While Victoria registered a net tonnage of 367, 142 Tiko registered 156, 676¹³⁴. In terms of wines and whisky, the quantities differed significantly as the table 5 will illustrate. Meanwhile plate 10 shows a ship which has docked at Tiko port.

Plate 10: The Tiko port



Source: Victoria Southern Cameroons, 1858-1958 (Published for the Victoria Centenary Committee), 54.

¹³³ Report on the Victoria Division, Cameroons Province written for the League of Nations by A.R. Whitmen, District Officer, September 30th, 1921(NAB).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Table 5: Victoria and Tiko Port and importation of goods.

Spirits	Victoria Port	Tiko Port	Total
Ale, beer etc	13, 841	7,693	14,534
Brandy	221	79	300
Gin	1,306	189	1,395
Rum	4	20	24
Whisky	735	88	823
Wines and gallons	2,120	771	2,891
Liquors	43	29	72

Source: File Ba (1930)5, Notes for the League of Nations report, 1930 (NAB)

The above table shows some contrasting relations between Tiko and Victoria in 1930. For instance out of a total of 14,534 tons of ale and beer that entered into the two ports, Victoria port registered 13,841 while Tiko registered 7, 693 making it almost half of what was registered at the Tiko port. Out of 300 tons of brandy, Tiko registered 79 while Victoria registered 221 making a difference of 142 tons. Gin registered a total tonnage of 1,395. Out of this Victoria registered 1,306 while Tiko registered 189 making a difference of 1,117. The exception was only in rum where Tiko registered 20 tons while Victoria registered only 4 in a total of 24.

Besides, Victoria and Tiko as port cities had the trappings of modernity and thus attracted many people for various reasons. For instance, between 1924 and 1953 Victoria population had more than quadrupled from 1,577 inhabitants to 7,000. George Courade estimates that the number of Europeans in Victoria jumped from about 100 in the 1950s to 250 at independence in 1961. Many of them ran department stores and shopping centers like John Holt, R&W King, CCC, ICC and Pritania while the Lebanese tycoon, “Potokri” ran the monopoly in the film industry with two cinema theaters, “Rio” in New Town and “Rivoli” in Gardens.

In addition, many people from the hinterlands, Nigerians and other people from West Africa migrated to Victoria for several reasons. Some came for just simple adventures to see and feel modernity. Some came as labourers in the plantations and ship yards while others were on transit to other parts of West Africa. What was crucial about their lives in Victoria is that they returned to narrate tales about Victoria even when the city had gradually petered out.

I left Kom with my friends, Ndifoyn Awoh and Ngang Chea. Malawa Fuka, Megne, Milibia, Yola Ntu and many others. It took us two days to reach Kubou's compound in OldTown, Bamenda. From Bamenda it took fifteen days to reach Bitoria (sic). We slept at Woyang in Bali; at Bamakwa Sabi and crossed Tang Sabi and spent the night at Fontem junction. From there we stayed at Nguti; Konye. and Kumba. From Kumba we stayed at Mbang Bakundu; Muyuka; Ekona Benge. From Ekona Benge we passed through Molyko and stayed at Bolifamba. Very early we took off from Bolifamba to Bitoria (Victoria) where I saw the steamer carrying bananas and a plain of water. Victoria was the place which I saw wonders. The steamer was having constant smoke coming out from its head and only steaming. The day it was to go, it made a very large sound which you could hear very far from where it was. The whole sky was dark with smoke. From below the sound was different *ahaang ahaang ahaang ahaang*. This meant that its roots that were deep down were already coming up ready to move. When it was to take off finally, I heard a bass sound *huuuuuuuuuuuug; huuuuuuuuuuuuumg; huuuuuuuuuuuuuuung*. At that moment the smoke became thicker and the sky darker while the sea was divided into two parts. It now took off for another world. In fact I wonder aloud and asked myself who on earth could have made such a big thing which could carry all the people from Kom. It was a big surprise to me and looked too big for me. I asked how people get into it. My friends who were already in Bitoria before me, showed how people entered it.¹³⁵

Our informant provides us with a clue as to how many people actually left Kom at any one time for the Victoria. From his story as many as 35 people at a time travelled down to the Coast with divergent ambitions. Some were traders while some were job seekers. Indeed, *salt wata* stories become more revealing metaphors. The stories as we have gathered from Peter bring to light the sensations and fascinations of an encounter. Moving salt water brought not only fish but very big sea water vessels with new cargo which workers spent most of the day unloading. Most of those who did the work were from the Bamenda Grassfields where no sea was to be seen. The waves showed that sea water also journeyed. In the morning the waves were usually low and in the evenings during high tides the waves came back depositing fish. The fish represent a metaphor -- just as the people had migrated to the Coast and would take home *kfaang* which represents the 'fish'.

¹³⁵ Interview with Isidore Ngam, 80, Farmer, Njinikom, November 2016.

After toiling for months and years the people came home with very changed habits. Their language, dress and mode of speaking reflected *modernity*, just as today many Grasslanders from the United States, Europe, Japan and China talk like European and Asian people. They wear long leather boots and cow boy hats, ear rings and even talk to their parents through interpreters; showing off that they have reached the depths of newness. They also come home with stories about the fascinations and sensations of Europe, America and Asia. These stories include obtaining money from machines and slotting in coins for coffee or food, and many fanciful things like luxurious Porsche cars that are available and cheaper to buy there. Both the people who had been to the Coast and to Europe and beyond constitute hierarchies in that they are more 'endowed with modern opportunities and opportunism than the others' (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 267). We cannot lose sight of the fact that these people, whether in the distant past or recently, re-constituted identities of their own.

Tiko had peculiar characteristics apart from the port and its plantations. It was more commercial in outlook than Victoria because of the overwhelming Ibo migrants. People migrated from hinterlands to look for employment and some came back to their areas of origin with stories and what they have learnt in Tiko. Cosmas Nchojie of Kom was one person whose going to Tiko was to have a lasting effect on Kom in terms of the modernity he got from there. He had migrated to Tiko not to work in the plantations but to learn photography. After studying it and gathered some money and bought a camera. He then became the first person in the Kom area to own a pin hole camera which was the talk of the day.¹³⁶ Back in the Kom area, the camera caused panic and frightened people as they were still to understand how somebody's image could be reproduced on a paper.

3.8.4.5. The Sea Ports and Consumption

Hardly has the literature on African ports taken into account the consumption which it generated far and beyond the port. This section gives some anecdotal narratives which buttresses the fact that the ports of Victoria and Tiko in the 1940s and 1950s had its

¹³⁶ Interview with Cosmas Nchoujie, 74, Photographer, Kom, 13 August 2017.

ramifications far beyond the port itself. For instance, those who ventured to Victoria and Tiko remembers thus in the artifacts they acquired especially radios, shoes and eye glasses. The tons of wines and cigarettes as well rums and whisky were not only reserve for the European populations. Africans jumped onto the band wagon of consuming modern things which came through the ports. For instance, the plate 11 below shows some Victoria migrants displaying their modern attributes.

Plate 11: Victoria Migrants displaying their modern attributes.



Source: Victoria Southern Cameroons, 1858-1958 (Published for the Victoria Centenary Committee).

Francis is holding a radio probably a two band transistor. He worked with the Wooding company and the other friends with John Holt in Victoria. Their dressing styles, traditional regalia mixed with ties, eyeglasses and well ironed trousers symbolised a bricolage of a conventional binary-“tradition and “modernity”. The way they crossed their legs shows how they found enduring modernity to embrace such ‘modern’ ways of sitting. Of relevance is the radio. In a world where television sets never existed, to possess a radio (was a status symbol which) made one a king in the eyes of the onlookers. Homes that had radios were centres of attraction for neighbours who came to listen (to the radio) although without understanding but for a few who had been to school. ³⁴.

In the photo below is an anonymous informant who literally adored a radio and told me that in those their days it was a pearl. He had saved money for five years to enable him to purchase the radio at UAC Victoria. Evidently its importance is depicted by the fact that the radio had its own pillow, a status symbol and a sign that he was obsessed with modernity.

Plate 12: Victoria migrant displaying a radio as a pearl.



Source: Anonymous informant with his radio which he bought in UAC shop in Victoria.

What is further intriguing in these returned migrants are concerned is the degree to which they constitute, agents of the modernity, a sort of middling Class. Weintin and Ricardo (2012) have recently published excellent essays in a volume which links the formation of the Middle Class to returning migrants sporting modern dress and habits. This is an important intervention, as we traditionally tend to think of the middling class as a predominantly very western phenomenon. Furthermore we also tend to regard mobile capital, not mobile labour, as an agent of modernization, Contemporary debates about the Multinational Companies and their apologists suggests or argue that the MNC is a blessing for people abroad because it finally brings modernity into their sleepy little villages. What this article shows is that migrant labour

is just as much a factor in the modernization process. More importantly, it shows that “modernity” does not simply invade a village like an unstoppable juggernaut but sneaks in slowly and fits and bursts, carried by myriad actors. Historians and policymakers alike, who are still clinging to the last vestiges of the Modernization Theory, tend to treat mobile capital as the most important agent of modernization, but in Africa, taking the Cameroon western Grassfields as a case study, it was the Africans themselves, more often than not, who brought the trappings of modernity into their villages. In the process, these returnees initiated a fundamental revolution within the hierarchical organizations of their societies. The way returned migrants held the objects which they bought in Victoria close to their “chests” or revered them could as well make one to conclude that these were new forms of fetishes.

Cultural, social or institutional features usually develop in port cities. The migration of people into Victoria and Tiko over the years both European and Africans alike led one to code name these areas as a crossroad of cultures, on one hand, there was the introduction of Christianity through churches and schools. As far as education was concerned as early as 1886 the German Governor Julius von Soden in pursuit of German education policy opened the first school in Victoria in 1887 and the pupils were mentored by Joseph Wilson. According to the 1913 statistics the Victoria school had a pupil population of 257 pupils making it the second largest school in the entire German colony. In 1957, the Victoria Divisional council was a proprietor of six senior primary schools and nine junior primary schools catering for some 1,105 boys and 480 girls. The number of Africans who initially occupied the Victoria settlement from Fernando Po gradually increased as many other groups of people migrated to Victoria. There were Nigerians, French Cameroonians, Togolese, Sierra Leoneans and many other indigenous peoples from the hinterland. These people migrated to enjoy the modernity of the city. The offshoots of these various peoples were the formation of tribal or improvement unions.

Improvement unions as the name came to be known in the post Second World War period had several objectives. Amongst these objectives was the desire of the migrant people to cities who wish to identify with kith and kin and secondly to send money back home to improve the lot of their people. Gradually these improvement unions although it took apolitical stand soon became political pressure groups. The Bakweri Improvement Union, Kom Improvement Union and Nigerian Fishermen Union

all sprout up to identify themselves in Victoria with different and various motives. Thus identity and ethnicity was fast becoming a characteristic feature of the port city of Victoria.

Prostitution occupied a major place in Victoria and Tiko port cities. Women who wanted to enjoy the niceties of the city migrated to Victoria after casting off the yoke of patriarchal and even colonial controls and found themselves in Victoria. Prostitution the World over is one of the oldest professions and has attracted quite interesting studies in recent times (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997; Lukman, *et.al* 2011; Biarritz, 2000; Barrera, 1996; Spaulding and Bewick, 1995; Aderinto, 2010) .The subject has been handled by sociologists, anthropologists and to a lesser extend historians. As a matter of fact, it should be given a deeper historical touch so that its continuities and differences in various contexts may be better understood. The complexities which went with the movement of those who became known as prostitutes in colonial Africa could best be understood within the brackets of globalisation and modernity. Warmington *et.al* (1967) maintains that in 1957 there were many prostitutes in Victoria who were mostly found in the congested immigrant settlements. They went on to assert that Victoria was the most notable centre of prostitution, where the sex ratio in the resident population was 203 males per 100 females, excluding the large population in the plantation that visit these settlement.

River Mungo

The River Mungo has a catchment area of 4,200 square kilometers (app.1, 600 miles). It is 150 kilometers (93 miles) long. It takes its rise from the Rumpi Hills to the North and is fed by tributaries from Mount Kupe and Bakossi mountains. The river is navigable throughout the year for a distance of about 100 kilometers. It empties its waters into the mangrove swamps and the Atlantic Ocean alongside with other Cameroon rivers like Wouri and Dibamba. The flora and fauna of the surroundings of the river was captured by Esser, Chilver and Roschenthaler (2001:45) in the following words:

The banks of the Mungo are magnificently covered with forests... and everything here teems with life. One can see eagles, herons, snakes and monkeys, as well as multicolored parrots on the trees while on the surface of the water there dance butter flies and dragon flies the size of sparrows. Now and then one hears the trumpeting of elephants, the cry of predators, and the melancholy and monotonous honking of the iguana

Point is well taken. Apart from the flora and fauna, the peoples on the banks of river Mungo carry out agriculture and fishing when there are low tides. The partition of Cameroon in 1916 instead of dividing the Mungo people rather witnessed people who frequently crossed the Mungo River for various purposes on both sides of the river. They crossed to attend tribal meetings and to celebrate important events. From time to time, as family obligations or trade required the Mungo of British Cameroons visited their principal town, Bonako on the French side of the boundary¹³⁷. The long history of economic, socio-cultural interactions between the Duala and the Bakweri at the coast and the partitioned Mungo, Balong, Bakossi, and Mbo people inland meant that the boundary was frequently ignored along the River Mungo. Market women such as the “*buyam sellams*” who traded in goods between Southern Cameroons and French Cameroons on a regular basis were always bent on seeing that border restrictions were dismantled (Johnson, 1970: 337; Kah, 2003: 117). The porosity of the boundary implied directly and/or indirectly that these historical communities were always in need to be with their kith and kin across the Mungo River as they had done during the German administration.

In the middle years of the British administration it became apparent to the Resident in Buea that the interaction across the border could not be prevented. The Resident for the Cameroons Province cautioned against the grave consequences of attempting to prevent ethnic immigrants move into both French and British administrative areas (Kah, 2003). The constant movements by these communities into and out of British Southern Cameroons revealed that it was just a matter of time before the artificial boundary gave way to the free movement of culturally, linguistically and historically related peoples, but importantly showed that crossing the river was almost a way of life.¹³⁸

Economically, The River Mungo was important for people who wished to conduct trade on the other side of the river. The plate below shows people either returning from the market or still going to attend it. For them they needed such canoes

¹³⁷ File Ba (5) 1916/2, *Report of His Britannic Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under British Mandate for the Year 1924* (London: H.M.S.O., 1925)(NAB).

¹³⁸ File Tb/1925/1, League of Nations Report for the Cameroons Province; File Tb/1924/1, League of Nations Report for the Cameroons Province; File.Aa/1918/37, Movement of people in the Cameroons Province (NAB).

to overcome the river. The plate below show traders and people returning from the market in the river.

Plate 13: Traders and People returning from the Market in the River.



Source: Victoria Southern Cameroons, 1858-1958 (Published for the Victoria Centenary Committee).

A cursory observation of the photograph shows that many assorted goods were inside the canoe. There were bags of salt and may be cocoa, cocoyams, soap, plantains and bananas. This suggests that the people were either going to the market or coming from it. In either direction it could be assumed that trade was quite possible because of the river.

Plate 14: The Mungo Bridge Christened “Reunification Bridge”



Source: Victoria Southern Cameroons, 1858-1958 (Published for the Victoria Centenary Committee).

One of the greatest technologies which Africans have developed to torpedo their rivers was canoes sometimes often known as dugout canoes. The Dufuna canoe from Nigeria is estimated to be one of the oldest whose age is estimated to be 8000 years old. It is the third oldest worldwide. The well-watered tropical rainforest and woodland regions of sub-Saharan Africa seemed to have provided both the waterways and the trees for such types of canoes, which are commonplace from the Limpopo River basin in the south through East and Central Africa and across to West Africa. African Teak is the timber favoured for their construction, though this comprises a number of different species, and is in short supply in some areas. The African Teak (*Pericopsis elata*,) is a specie of legume in the Fabaceae family and is found in Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Nigeria. These canoes are peddled across deep lakes and rivers or punted through channels in swamps (see *makoro*) or in shallow areas, and are used for transport, fishing and hunting, including, in the past, the very dangerous hunting of hippopotamus In pre-colonial Africa, and especially in the empires of Western Sudan. July (1975: 185) notes that goods which arrived from Timbuctu were usually loaded into canoes with a capacity of twenty or thirty tons and taken three hundred miles upstream to Jenne.

The canoes are peddled by canoe boys. These boys were muscular to enable them performed the labour of taking the canoe both up and downstream. In the central African state of Zambia, Gewald (2009) informs us that the journeys upstream, depended on the muscle power of paddlers, took a minimum of at least ten days travelling time, before the first company administrative centre was reached and allowed for the new administrative officials to adapt to their new terrain, and perhaps more importantly allowed for the paddlers, and by extension their Community, to gain insight into the habits, quirks, attitudes, and characters of the new men being sent to administer. As with the porter age described above, the use of barges and canoes, illustrates once again the dependence of the colonial state being established on the muscle power, if not goodwill, of the local population.

In Cameroon both during the colonial and post colonial periods canoe boys were charged with the duties to paddled across the stream, indigenous people going to the market, farms or attending festivals. The colonial administrators also depended quite much on canoes for their goods to be transported or when they were going on tour. Thus Rivers Manyu, Sanaga, Mungo, Nyong, Benue and Ntem were quite crucial. Apart from just peddling people and goods across these rivers, there canoe mechanics or repairers. Dipoko Joseph was one of the canoe boys whom I contacted during the fieldwork. He was the grandson of Eyemi who had been a canoe boy on the River Mungo. Born in 1944 he claims that he has been doing this job throughout his life. According to him a canoe boy is supposed have a firm knowledge of water currents to enable him master the way to move with his canoe. He should be brave as well.¹³⁹ This same version was repeated by other canoe boys whom I contacted on River Manyu on 30 March 2017. Their story suggests that in addition to their ingenuity and muscles, the water currents played a very vital role to facilitated their job and a knowledge of how the direction which these currents flew also illustrate the African technological know-how long developed before the advent of colonial rule.

Canoe “engineers” commanded even more attention. These were mechanics who were charge with the functions of repairing the canoes when they went bad. Using all types of chronic tools, these are people who are blessed with the intelligence to stitch the boats as if it was cloth. They used different tools to repair canoes depending on the

¹³⁹ Interview with Dipoko Joseph, 76, Canoes boy and Repairer, Mamfe, 23 July, 2017.

nature of the ‘wound’. Along the banks of the navigable rivers, canoe repairing shops are found. For instance, Eyong works as a canoe repairer along the banks of River Manyu. He uses the hammer and copper wire when need arises. According to him, he inherited the profession from his grandfather and now had opened a ‘school’ only to train canoe mechanics. He further maintained he is like motor car mechanic who repairs cars depending on the problem the car encountered. He said:

I have been repairing canoes since 1960 when John Holt was still using the Manyu River. The problems with canoes vary a lot. The wood which canoes are made are not iroko neither are they very hard wood. This type of wood quickly develops holes and water can easily filled the canoe. Sometimes when this happens in the middle of the river when there is no technician, canoe boys are charged with carrying out the water as it enters the canoe. When they finally bring it out here I am in charge of repairing the damage. Depending upon the problem, I can either use copper wire or nails or hammer to adjust the problem. In 1993, the work was so intense that I decided to open a workshop with 10 apprentices (Personal communication, 23 August 2017)

Rivers have been areas that have facilitated the mobility of goods and people. Africa in particular with a few navigable rivers did play political, social and economic roles. European explorers were commanded to break through the interior of Africa and understand the navigability of these rivers. Some of these rivers shaped diplomatic relations in Africa and Europe as well during the period of the scramble and after. In Cameroon the rivers and ports in colonial Cameroon became quite instrumental to the colonial administration. Through them the cost of transport was significantly reduced. It was through rivers that goods and colonial personnel were transported.

Despite the role although with its own limitation that the rivers and ports played, the historiography of Cameroon during that period had glossed over the role. This work has contributed to filling this gap. It has shown that out of the ports many related issues were in place. It has shown that ports were not only about economic transactions. The people who migrated to the areas acquired new cultures, consumed foreign and modern things while prostitution took roots. Rivers in themselves became sites which indigenous technologies facilitated the transportation of goods as well as people. Therefore rivers and ports saw the gradual birth of a middling class. On one hand those who migrated to the port cities and returned with modern goods and on the other hand those who commanded the tides of the rivers and the repairers of the canoes became a social category apart from their peers.

In fact rivers in Cameroon has played commercial, social and cultural roles. The commercial role played by rivers in Cameroon was aptly captured by Ralph Austen and Jonathan Derrick in their *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers: The Duala and their Hinterland, c.1600-1960*. The focus of this book is on the Duala men who had entered the International scenario as merchant brokers in the pre-colonial trade in which they trade in ivory, slaves and palm products but whom under the colonial rule used the advantages which they had gained from earlier rivera in trade to develop cocoa plantations. The authors maintain that the Dualas enjoyed an exclusive access to an extensive network of rivers connecting the coast and the interior. They occupied the focal point of a trading network that extended from Wouri estuary up the various river systems of the Cameroon littoral and their most lucrative activity was bartering goods obtained through canoe expeditions inland in the 19th Century mainly palm oil and kernels plus ivory for imported commodities brought to Douala by European traders. (Austen and Derrick, 1999). This has lucidly shown the economic importance of rivers to the Dualas during the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

Further south, rivers played the role of “communication wires”. The Nyong in the south seems to have offered the greatest advantages, for it was very navigable. Water transport therefore became quite crucial to the colonial administration as their mails and goods were first transported via that medium. As we have argued elsewhere (Nkwi & de Bruijn, 2014:220), all inland mail and other goods came by boat and were then transported further inland. The main stations for this boat transport were Tiko, Victoria, Ikom and Bonaberi. Water tides determined when the launches anchored and set sail. The role played by river transport and the role of interimperial British- French cooperation in transport were further echoed by the Resident of the Cameroons Province, P.V.Young, in the following words:

An alternative which I might suggest and which might take some reconsideration is that all transport by water shall be done via Victoria, Tiko and then to Bonaberi, thence by the French Railway to Nkongsamba by this route an enormous saving of carrier transport is affected...The connections would be as follows: from Calabar there is a monthly boat running to Victoria and very often Tiko, there is the ordinary Mail Steamer Service to Victoria about once in five weeks, from Tiko to Bonaberi there is the French weekly service between Bonaberi and Tiko which leaves every WednesdayIn my own opinion this is the only satisfactory way for mail and packages to be dispatch.¹⁴⁰.

¹⁴⁰ File Bb (1917)1 Flag Post System (NAB).

In 1906 Otto Schkolziger photographed the launch on the waters of Bonaberi with mail and packages.

Plate 15: 1906 Otto Schkolziger



Source: Victoria Southern Cameroons, 1858-1958 (Published for the Victoria Centenary Committee).

In the North of Cameroon River Benue was very important in several ways, first in agriculture and secondly as a transport route. Rising from the Adamawa Plateau the Benue first flows north, then runs in a generally westerly direction until its junction with the Niger Lokoja. At high water, during the months of August and September, the river Benue becomes wide navigable waterways about a mile in width from bank to bank. The flood plains of the Benue and its tributaries received much debris which made the plains of the Benue and its tributaries one of the best farming and grazing lands (Njeuma, 1978). The River Benue provided a large route from Garoua to the Niger River. It was not until the opening of a railway line to Ngaoundere in 1974, traffic on the Benue-Niger route was the lowest cost means of transport available in North Cameroon to the Europeans and indigenous population alike. Long before the

completion of the cement factory at Figuil in late 1960s, the Benue-Niger route had been economic chiefly for the import of fuel and cement and then exported cotton (Nelson, *et. al.*, 1974: 278). Rudin (1938: 104), notes that “whites coming into the interior of the Cameroon were interested in the streams that might make travel easier and the transportation of goods less expensive”. Furthermore, along the Longone and Shari rivers which flew from the south into Lake Chad there was rich farming activities (Rudin, 1938:105).

Socio-culturally some rivers have gotten additional importance because some ethnic groups attached relative importance to their migratory history. Although there is much controversy, the Bassa migrated to their present side between Dibamba, Sanga and Nyong rivers and had moved north along the Wouri and Banen rivers long before the Bakoko and Fang ethnic groups (Johnson, 1970:60). According to Ewumbue-Monono (2015:3) “Most of the villages in the Buea municipality were founded around river sources”. These rivers and springs influenced the cultural history of the people. One of the rivers whose importance in economic and socio-cultural aspects in Cameroon history has been River Mungo.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has examined British colonial Transport policies and development in Cameroon from 1916-1961. The chapter asserts that the British after the Germans were responsible for the establishment of transport network in the Bamenda divisions and also in the Kumba and Mamfe divisions. Though the British colonial period was extremely limited in the region, the extensive, roadless, mountainous Bamenda Division for example, in the 1950s was administered by only four (D.Os) Divisional Officers, who toured the area either on foot or on horseback. They operated from their Government Residential Areas (GRAS), where they barricaded themselves sufficiently distanced from the native quarters and even for purpose of leisure when they would more easily have been disposed to mixing up with the locals, they continued to be cocooned in the Senior Service (SS) clubs, microcosms of Apartheid. Areas of social contact were rare or simply nonexistent. These British officials were therefore at best a source of curiosity whenever they ventured out on tour than people who were expected

to influence the masses with their Anglo-Saxon mores.¹⁴¹ In fact, (Indirect Rule) and its elaboration in euphemistic terminologies and titles, such as the “paramountcy of African interests” or the “Dual mandate” only further prescribed separate development for Cameroonians and Europeans or more appropriately. Hence, to term what emerged at the end of the German-British colonial administration in Southern Cameroons as an “Anglo-Saxon” culture, an idea that in itself would certainly have turned any typical Englishman blue, is total misnomer and a contradiction of terms. Rather, as we have seen, it was an overwhelmingly mission-generated culture zealously defended by the missionaries, catechists and their fervent Christian followers, the bedrock of which was native to the territory. The British contribution to this notion though high-sounding, comprised little more than the intangible coating of administrative and political structure, which for that matter they shared in good measure with the Germans and within which, bonded by a common colonial past, the Southern Cameroons state structures developed. The next chapter shall examine the French and the development of communication infrastructure in French Cameroon 1916-1961.

¹⁴¹ Mary Elizabeth Oake, *No place for a white woman*, Neil Co. Ltd, Edinburgh, nd: also W.E. Newington, *West Coast memories* 1993, an unpublished auto biography.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FRENCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN FRENCH CAMEROON 1916-1961

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the French mandate and the development of communication infrastructure in French Cameroon 1916-1961. It focuses on the principles that guided the French policy towards the development of communication facilities, the French policy of corvée and road construction, the French and construction of railways, France and the development of ports, An assessment of French constructions of communication networks and Indigenous response. It asserts that, the French colonial transport policies in Cameroon as examined from their administration of Cameroon beginning from 1916 to 1961 was basically focus on direct rule. This will be seen in the administration during their period in Cameroon.

4.1 French Colonial Transport Policy

The French played an eminent part in the establishment of colonial transport policies in Africa and particularly in Cameroon. The French considered the African colonies as overseas provinces and consequently the need to pay more attention to these colonies compared to Britain. This impacted on the French approach towards Road Construction and the development of infrastructure. It is worthy to note that for France to have a firm grip over the territory, there was the need for effective administration and this could not be achieved without communication infrastructure. The French used their colonial policy of assimilation and association to institute their transport policy.¹

The partition of Cameroon in March 1916 left Britain and France with a free hand to deal with their respective portions of the territory as they deemed fit. As France was still at war with Germany in Europe, France saw her presence in Cameroon as the military occupation of the territory of an enemy country. Accordingly, France decided

¹ Mveng Engelbert, Histoire du Cameroun, Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde 1985.

to govern her part of Cameroon which became known as French Cameroun in accordance with the Hague Regulation of 1907, Articles 42 to 56 dealing with military authority over the territory of an enemy state. But in taking this view which was infact correct, she ran into difficulties. In the first place the enemy territory does not entail the transfer of sovereignty. There was only a provisional and limited substitution of power by the occupying state vis-à-vis the occupied state in Cameroun. The legal sovereign Germany, having disappeared, the problem arose as to how to exercise the judicial, legislative and administrative powers which in principle normally fall on the legal sovereign. In 1911 France had voluntarily ceded to Germany a strip of territory from French Equatorial Africa to form an integral part of German Kamerun. In 1916, France amputated this strip of territory from French Cameroun and re-absorbed it into French Equatorial Africa made up of Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Tchad and Oubangui-Chari. At local level, the territory was carved out into the same districts as the Germans had done. By a decree of September 5th 1916 Paris appointed a civil Governor, Fourneau, to replace General Aymerich who had hitherto been administering the French Section of the occupied territory.

The Governor was up to 1921 a subordinate Governor, for he was responsible to the Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa based in Brazzaville. France like Britain, used Art. 9 of the mandate to administer French Cameroon along side with her neighbouring colonial possessions as a French colony. However, by a decree of 23rd March 1921, French Cameroun was granted administrative and financial autonomy within French Equatorial Africa. The French Commissaire in Cameroun was granted the rank of full Governor and made the depository of the powers of the French Republic in Cameroun. He received his instructions from the minister for the colonies and was responsible for his actions before the French Government. No legislation passed by the French Government could enter in force until it had been promulgated by the commissaire in the local official Gazette by means of orders. He made all but the most senior appointments in the territory. All correspondence passed through him.²

The administrative functions of his office were assumed by a secretary General. At local level, the day to day running of the territory was carried out by various categories of district officers. But it was the commissaire duty to ensure that French

² Mveng Engelbert, Histoire du Cameroun, Tome II, CEPER, Yaounde, 1985.

colonial policies were successfully pursued in the territory. To accomplish what she considered as her civilizing mission in the colonies, France pursued two basic colonial policies. Civilisation in politico-cultural terms meant assimilation and therefore direct rule. In socio-economic terms it meant resorting to forced labour as a justifiable means to an end, the much vaunted advancement of natives. Assimilation was the cornerstone and substratum of France's colonial policy. It meant fostering the concept of "evolué". A distinction was made between citizens and subjects, a kind of separating the sheep from the goats. A "citoyen" was a Frenchman or a native who had evolved and attained such standard of French culture that has qualified him to be assimilated to a Frenchman. A "sujet" was a native who had not yet been assimilated.

Assimilation was only a transition through an evolutionary process by which the entire indigenous population was to acquire French citizenship. However only few camerounians ever became French citizens. There was really no desire and no wisdom in assimilating every camerounian, making them "citoyens". France still needed "sujet" to do the unclean work, to dig the mines and cultivate the plantations for her. The Mandates Agreement forbade the Mandatory Power to confer her nationality on the indigenes of the mandated territory. But France construed this prohibition as referring to the conferment of French citizenship being granted to individuals.

The policy of assimilation served France very well because it fostered in the colonised people a subservient attitude and enabled France to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards them. The policy of assimilation was a political Trojan horse by which the indigenes were made to depend upon the metropole for virtually everything. It engendered in them the belief that they were incapable of ruling themselves and managing their own affairs, and that their destinies and fate were by some divine providence bound to that of France. Consequently, the French monopolized political and economic power to the exclusion of natives.³

The other phase of French colonial policy in French Cameroon was forced labour. The French often talk of rather glowing terms about their so called "*mise en valeur du Cameroun or l'œuvre de la France au Cameroun*", conveniently forgetting that they inherited an impressive infrastructure from the Germans. They added improvements, but their methods were hardly different from the much criticized

³ Ngoh, V.J., 1884-1984: A Hundred years of History, Yaounde Cameroon, CEPER, 1988.

German methods. Fettered to each other, requisitioned persons. Chiefs were required under pain of destitution and harsh penalties, to supply quotas of men to the French administration, planters were marched to go and work on private plantations, the notorious one was at Dizandue and mines especially at Betare Oya as well as on projects of a public nature such as the completion of the half-finished German railway line to Yaounde.⁴

Cameroonians of the French part of Cameroon worked under slave conditions and were to say the least, quasi-slaves. They were flogged at will, paid starvation wages, poorly fed and lived under extremely poor sanitary conditions. Hundreds died of hard labour and starvation. The tribulation of the natives shocked the world. France however continued to issue categorical denials claiming that the situation had been grossly exaggerated by people envious of her. However, critics of this inhuman policy tenaciously pursued by France in Cameroon have been vindicated by a Cameroonians who himself witnessed these gruesome events and who has poignantly compared them to the woes of the Nazi concentration Camps.⁵

The legal framework of the policy of forced labour was the discredited system known as the *indigénat*. The term forced labour was itself a blanket term. It covered several different legal categories of compulsory work, public compulsory works, prestations or tax in labour for public works, generally levied through the chiefs and redeemable in cash, military conscripted labour, or the “*deuxieme*” contingent of the colonial army, used to carry on public works. There were two systems of forced labour, one to achieve certain economic objectives, the other as means of political coercion. Both were combined in *indigénat* from Togo into Cameroon appeared in a covering letter appended to the decree from M. Daladier French Minister for the Colonies to the President of France, M. Doumergue that reads:

Paris. the 8th 8, 1924

Mr. President,

The Order of the Chancellor of the [German] Empire, dated April 1896, regulated (in the Cameroons under German domination) the application of disciplinary punishment to the natives: the stipulated penalties were imprisonment in irons for a period of 14 days and the cudgel or whip up to the limit of 20 or 25 blows, respectively. Since 14th May 1916, the Commissioner of the Government in the occupied territories of the Cameroon has substituted for the penalties imposed

⁴ Ngoh, V.J. *Cameroon 1884-1984: A Hundred Years of History*, Yaounde, Cameroon, CEPER, 1988, p.51.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.52.

by the German laws penalties more in conformity with our principles of civilization: simple penalties or a fine. Despite certain similarities, the indigenous races which populate the Cameroun present certain apparent differences from those of French Equatorial Africa: their social and moral level seems, on the whole, to be higher. It appears under these conditions, that it is of interest to regulate (by special decree) this important question and suggest [for adoption] the text already proposed for the territory of Togo...⁶

Cameroonians of “citoyen” status were outside the preview of the indigénat. The system applied only to Cameroonians of “sujet” status; that was virtually the entire native population. By way of recompense for serving France, certain categories of “sujets” were however exempted from the indigénat. These were those who had spilled their blood for France by serving in the colonial army together with wives and children, those chiefs who had been anointed and enstooled by the French, those serving in the colonial administration and receiving a stipend, and those who have been decorated with a “médaille militaire”.⁷ But like the other “sujet” they could still be subject to extraordinary penalties such as internment for ten years or more, sequestration of property, and collective fines imposed by the Commissioner where the thought there was menace of insurrection of grave political troubles. The Commissioner alone decided whether there was such a menace.⁸

Under the indigénat French officials imposed disciplinary penalties on the “sujet” for the violation of an alarmingly wide and ill-defined range of trivial acts; such as acts of disorder, acts showing disrespect to a duly authorised officer, failure to provide articles requisitioned for essential public works, giving aid to malefactors, giving aid to natives who have fled their villages.⁹ The penalties were exacted by French administrative officers and were not excessive, being only a maximum of 15 days imprisonment plus a 100 FF fine. But in practice people could be interned for up to ten years such as;

The Indigénat deprived the masses of freedom of speech, association and movement and also rendered them liable to severe punishment for quite minor offences. It was a symbol of French policy designed and superbly calculated to repress the masses in the hope that they would feel the strain and burden of this intrusive code of law and accept French culture and institution for all their worth. The expected result was that the general acceptance of French culture and institution would deter the masses from

⁶ Quoted by Le Vine.

⁷ The fact is satirically quoted in *The Old Man and the Medal* by the Cameroonian novelist Ferdinand Oyono.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Arrêté determining the special infraction of the indigénat in accordance with the Decret of 8th August 1924, in Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence*.

seeking self government... The indigénat only hardened the attitude of the colonial peoples against French policy...¹⁰

The Brazzaville Conference which was held from 30th January 1944 to 8th February 1944, has often been quoted as the watershed in French colonial policy. But the conference brought no fundamental change in French colonial mentality, France continued to see the future of her colonies as tied to her. The Conference made deceptive use of the seductive notions of independence and political advancement. It rejected even the idea of self government or autonomy in the Anglo-saxon sense of the word.¹¹

A decree of 21st August 1930 authorised the use of forced labour for works of a public nature. This was an additional legal basis for requisitioning porters and using them as beasts of burden and for requiring every able bodied subject to work as and where French officials determined as well as employing tax defaulters. The compulsory labour tax known as prestation was additional to the capitation tax which the French imposed on both men and women. The indigénat, corvée and prestation were greatly resented by many natives who, despite attempts by the administration to hem the exodus, continued to fly to neighbouring British Cameroons where they constituted a large emigrant community. The indigénat was abolished in December 1945 and following the International Labour Convention of 1946, forced labour was also abolished by Act No.46-645 of 11th April 1946. But it was not until the passing of the Labour Code for Overseas Territories in 1952 by the law of 15th December 1952 that forced labour ceased in French Cameroun.¹²

4.1.1 France and Construction of Roads

France also played a significant part in the construction of road transport facilities in Cameroon. The French colonial policy of assimilation was design to integrate the resources of the colonies to those of France in order to ease the exploitation of African resources. It was also intended to make the Africans inferior so that they would easily be subjected to forced labour in the construction of roads, ports and harbours. The Tiko

¹⁰ P.Y. Ntamarik, Constitutional Development of the Cameroons since 1914 PhD Thesis London University, 1969 p.78.

¹¹ French policy offered African territories only the possibility of self administration.

¹² Ibid, p.54.

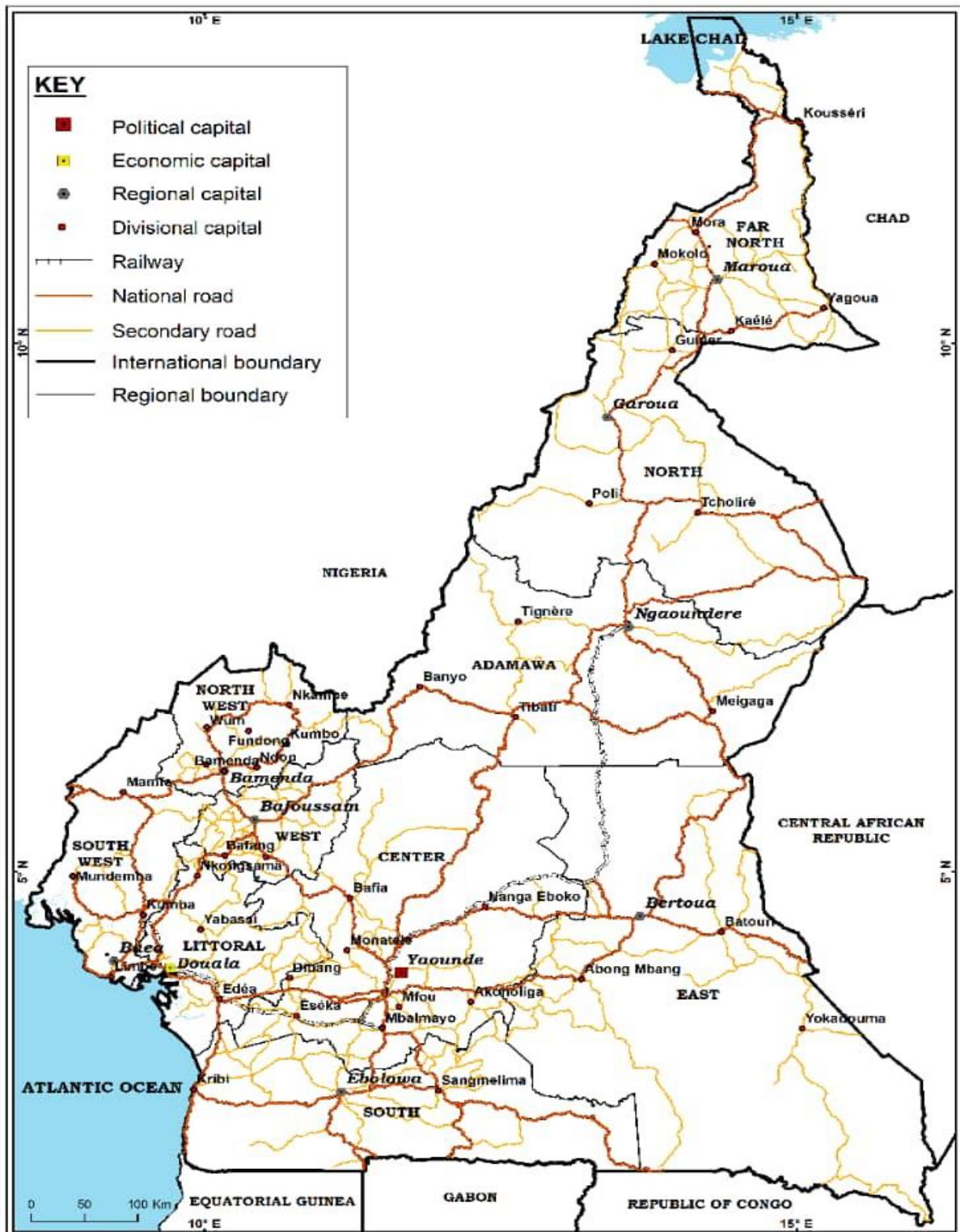
Douala Highway road was constructed after reunification of the two Cameroons. London left West Cameroon with a poor network of roads as compared to French Cameroun. Most of the roads were seasonal as was the case with many roads in French Cameroun. On 10 October 1965, Ahidjo inaugurated work on the modern Douala-Tiko road which was also extended to Victoria. The construction of the road was partly financed by France and work started on both sides. The Tiko Douala road virtually wiped out the physical barrier between British Cameroon and French Cameroun. The government made efforts to bring the North into greater contact with the South by extending the Douala-Yaounde road to the North. Several kilometers of secondary roads were constructed in the North.¹³

Since the year 1966, road infrastructure in Cameroon was greatly improved upon. The road network consisted of 28,000km and in 1982, only 2,671 kms of the road were tarred. The major tarred stretches of road included the Victoria-Douala, Victoria-Kumba, Douala-Yaounde, the Yaounde-Bafoussam while the construction of the Kumba Mamfe road was launched in 1985. The cost of the construction of all categories of roads at the end of the five year plan was 180 billion CFA francs and under the fifth year plan, the cost was estimated at 650 billion CFA Francs. In 1982, the construction of the 230 km Douala-Yaounde road estimated at \$1.1 million per kilometer. The all-weather minimum standard dirt roads in North Cameroon were estimated at \$300,000 per kilometres while asphalt paving increased the cost to \$400,000 per kilometer. The Cameroon government allocated 24.2 billion CFA francs for the section of the Trans-African Highway which was to pass through Cameroon.¹⁴ Map 8 depicts tarred and untared roads and railway lines.

¹³ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.261.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Map 8: Road Map of Cameroon Indicating Paved and Unpaved Roads, Railways Roads and Marine Routes.



Source: Author’s Research Collection, 10/08/2017, National Geographic Center, Yaounde.

Transport network were unevenly distributed over the country. In the domain of road transport, the coastal lowlands, western section of the South Cameroon low plateau of Yaounde and the Northern lowland have the lions share of Cameroons classification of roads. Of the 50.000km of classified roads, the Littoral region has 25 percent, centre 21 percent, North West 16 percent, North and Far North 17 percent while the remaining region have 27 percent. The trunk A national roads link major towns and regional capitals. These include: The Douala-Tiko-Buea axis, the Douala-Tiko-Limbe axis, the Douala-Nkongsamba-Bafoussam axis, the Yaounde-Bafia-Bafoussam road axis, the Yaounde-Nanga Eboko=Belabo-Bertoua axis and the Bafoussam-Bamenda axis and the Ngaoundere-Garoua axis.

Trunk B roads linking divisional headquarters are more numerous; some are tared and others have only patches of tar. Some of these roads include: The Bamenda ring road expected to link Bamenda to Ndop, Kumbo, Nkambe, Wum, Bafut and back to Bamenda. The road has been tarred from Bamenda to Kumbo, some patches are not yet tarred between Kumbo and Wum. The Buea-Kumba-Mamfe-Ekok road. The Buea-Kumba and Mamfe-Ekok sections have been tarred while the section between Kumba and Mamfe has also been tarred. The Bamenda-Batibo-Mamfe-Ekok axis has been tarred and all the segments between Bamenda and Ekok have been tarred. This is to enable and ease economic development between these regions. The feeder roads are mostly untarred farm-to-market roads. They link subdivisional headquarters to the major divisional headquarters.¹⁵

The railway network consist of three segments. The western section linking Douala to Nkongsamba 172km with an extension of 29km to Mbanga and Kumba. The Transcam I links Douala through Edea and Eseka to Yaounde with a branching from Otele to Mbalmayo. The Transcam II links Yaounde through Nanga Eboko, Belabo to Ngaoundere and stretches over a distance of 625km. Plans are under way to extend the network from Mbalmayo to Kribi, Mbalmayo to Mballam and into the central African Republic and from Ngaoundere through Garoua, Maroua and Kousseri to Chad to complete the Trans African railway network. The western highlands proper and the Northern lowlands are not yet linked to the railway network. The functional airports in Cameroon are Douala, Yaounde-Nsimalen, Garoua, Maroua Salak, Bertoua and the two

¹⁵ Mveng Engelbert, Histoire du Cameroun, Tome II CEPER, Yaounde 1985.

military airports in Yaounde and Koutaba. Yaounde-Nsimalen, Douala and Garoua are class 4 international airports capable of receiving the Boeing 747 type of air crafts. The Douala airport covers 16,800 m² with a run way of 2,850 m long. The Bamenda and Bafoussam airport have been renovated to ease transport between these towns and other towns of Cameroon with the Camairco company being the main flight operating.

4.1.2 France and Construction of Railways

France equally played an important role in the construction of railway network in Cameroon. The topography of Cameroon with mountains and dense forest belt made constructing railways to the port at Douala very difficult. The first operating railway constructed by the private West African Planting Society Victoria (WAPV) was 600 mm (1 ft 1158 in) on the Feldbahn line. Initially, this railway plied Zwingenberger Hof in Soppo, near Buea, the colonial capital of German Kamerun to port Victoria, now known as Limbe, from 1901 to 1919. It also offered a passenger service which was later expanded. The second railway that was built is the Douala, Nkongsamba railway, also known as the Northern Railway (Nordbahn) was 160 km (99 miles) long. The third was the Douala, Ngaoundere railway, also known as the Central Railway (Mittellandbahn). These two lines were built in 1,000 mm (3 ft 338 in) meter gauge, setting the standards for future railway construction in Cameroon.

After the 1918 Resolution the major part of Cameroon was handed over to France as a League of Nations mandate, with parts handed to the United Kingdom. The League of Nations “mandate” did not animate the French colonial powers to make greater investment in Cameroon’s railways. Initially, they did nothing more than restore the lines constructed under German rule back to a workable state. The Northern Railway and the Central Railway were merged into the *Chemins de fer de Cameroun* (CFC), but they continued to operate as two separate networks. Construction of the Douala - Mbalmayo railway project was completed by the French authorities, but the route was diverted to Yaoundé, which was reached in 1927. The seat of the colonial administration was then moved there.¹⁶

¹⁶ AICD Railway Data Base.

The closure bridging the gap to Mbalmayo was first achieved by a 600 mm (1 ft 1158 in) railway from Otélé, with Feldbahn locomotion and rolling stock. In 1933 this extension was converted to metre gauge. The change over to diesel operation was accelerated from 1950 because all coal had to be imported from South Africa and this led to repeated irregularities in the course of delivery. In 1955, a structural link was made between the Central Railway and the Northern Railway, via a 12 km (7.5 miles) long section of line and an 1,850 m 6,070 ft long bridge over the Wouri River. After Independence in 1960, the Republic of Cameroon has diverted its initial rail transport efforts to the construction of a 29 km (18 miles) long branch from the Northern Railway to Kumba. This line started operating in 1969. The new Republic's biggest project was a 622 km (386 miles) extension of the Central Railway from Yaoundé to Ngaoundéré. This extension started operating in 1974.

The maximum length of rail network constructed in Cameroon ever is 1,120 km (700 miles). In the 1970s, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) commissioned a new railway similar to, and immediately to the east of, Cameroon's original WAPV network. Reports as to its gauge vary between 600 mm (1 ft 1158 in) and 610 mm (2 ft). A lower level section of the Central Railway was partially refurbished between 1975 and 1983. However, the line was closed beyond Nkongsamba, and some of the tracks removed. Plate 16 portrays colonial locomotive used in Cameroon during the colonial era.¹⁷

Plate 16: Colonial locomotive, previously used in Cameroon



Source: Author's Research Collection, National Archive Buea, 2017

¹⁷ AICD Railway Data Base

The central line of railway was continued after the war to Yaounde. The work lasted from January 1922 to March 1927 and the line measured 134.7km. Within this period, an extension stretched from Otele to Mbalmayo measuring 37km. This extension was later modernized in 1933. After the construction of the Wouri bridge, Bonaberi was then linked to Douala by rail in 1955. In order to reinforce the reunification of the two states of Cameroon, the Western line was extended from Mbanga to Kumba, measuring 29km. Work was completed on this extension in September 1968. Between October 1964 and February 1974 the Transcameroon Line, measuring 622km, was completed in two phases. The first section extended from Yaounde to Belabo (293km) and the second from Belabo to Ngaoundere, measuring 329km. This work was financed by the Cameroon government with loans from France, the U.S.A., Germany, and the European Economic Community.¹⁸

The main line is known as Cameroon Railway Line and it starts from Douala through Yaounde to Ngaoundere. The first part stretching from Douala to Yaounde, known as Transcam I, has completely been reworked in recent years and the distance reduced from 309km to 265km. Transcam II extends from Yaounde to Ngaoundere and measures 622km. The Douala-Nkongsamba Line measures 172km. It serves in the evacuation of plantation products from the Mungo Region to Douala. The short extension of 29km from Kumba carries mainly passengers and agricultural produce to Douala.¹⁹

Railway transport in Cameroon was controlled by the National Railway Company known as REGIFERCAM (*Regie Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Cameroon*). The total rail way length of over 1,170km controlled by the REGIFERCAM is used for the transportation of heavy exports such as timber, bananas, cocoa and coffee from the Mungo region to Douala. From the north the rail carries down groundnuts, cotton, cattle, hides, and skins to the port town of Douala. In the opposite direction it facilitates the transportation and distribution of manufactured products such as cement, fertilizers and heavy building materials to the main towns through which it passes in the north. Petrol and imported new vehicles were and are also transported from Douala to Yaounde and other towns in the north by rail.²⁰ Below is a

¹⁸ Aaron .S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Publishers 1987.

¹⁹ Interview with Albert Ngome Kome 74, Former Minister of Transport, Yaounde, 10 August 2016.

²⁰ Idem.

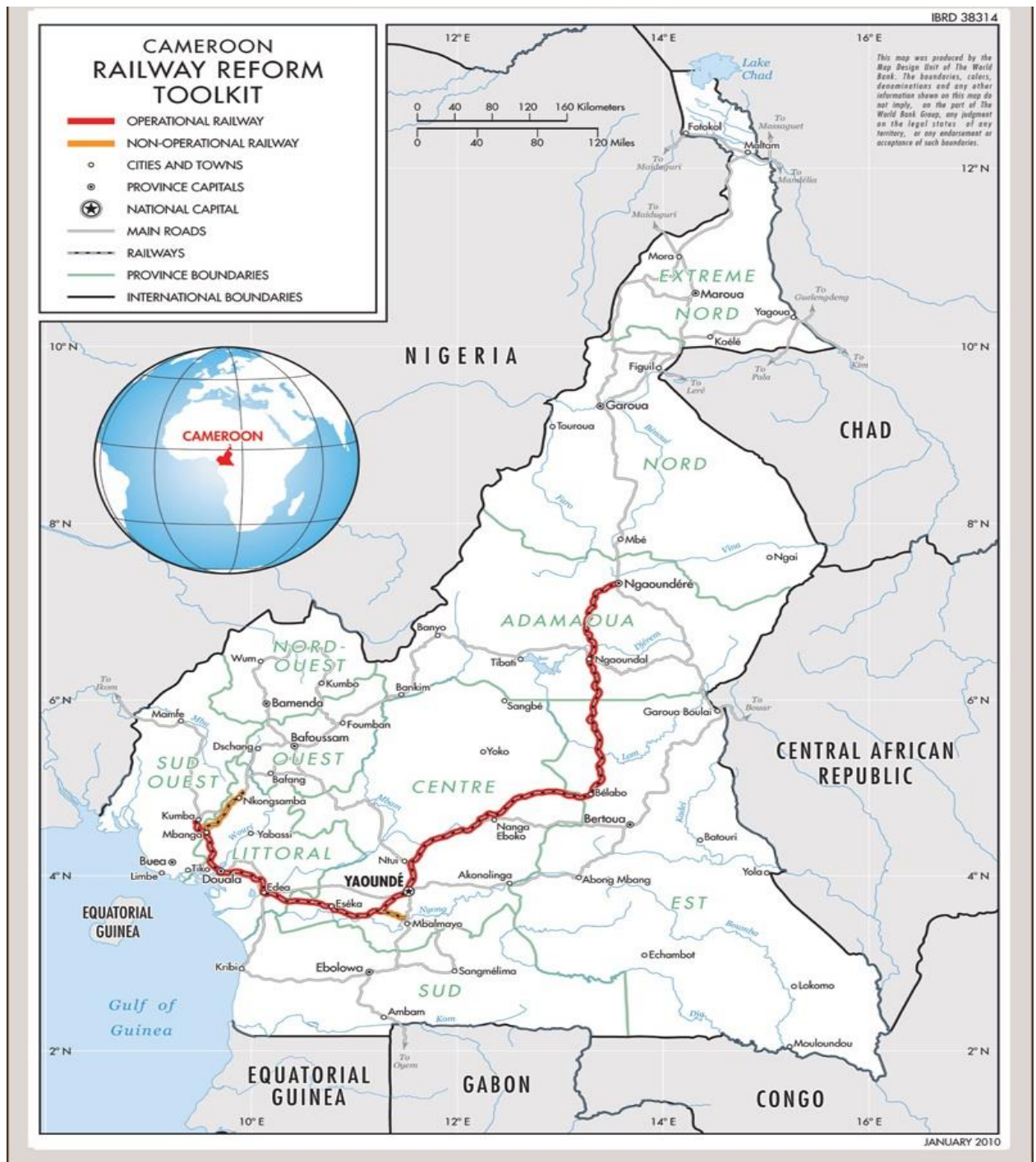
footbridge linking the administrative center to the commercial centre in Yaounde. Underneath is the rail installation and railway material. While map 9 reveals the Cameroon railway reform toolkit.

Plate 17: Footbridge linking the Administrative Center to the Commercial Center, Yaounde, underneath is the Rail Installation and Railway Material



Source: Author's Research collection, Yaounde, 10/08/2017.

Map 9: Cameroon Railway line



Source: Author's Research Collection, 10/08/2017, National Geographic Center, Yaounde.

Besides, facilitating easy and quick movement between the north and south, railway transport also serves as a means of cultural exchange between the peoples of north and south Cameroon. In the South West region narrow gauge railway tracks were

constructed by the Germans for easy transportation of agricultural produce from the plantation zones to their assembly spots. These lines are at Ekona, Missellelle, Meanja, Tiko and Victoria. They are controlled by the C.D.C and not by the REGIFERCAM. Railway lines are concentrated in the most developed regions of Cameroon.²¹ The high relief excludes rail transport from such places as the Bamileke and Bamenda highland areas. The rail functions in the low-lying lands of the southern part of Cameroon. However, it has inevitably cut through rocky hills in the Centre region to pass through dark tunnels before reaching Yaounde.²² Plate 18 portrays the colonial railway lines in Cameroon.

Plate 18: Colonial Railway line in Yaounde



Source: Author's Research collection, Yaounde, 10/08/2017.

The railways of Cameroon perform relatively well by African standards, with good productivity indicators. Cameroon implemented one of the earliest rail concessions in the region CAMRAIL. The concession arrangement has helped to boost operational efficiency and thus traffic, so that labour and rolling stock productivity measures show substantially better performance than the region's major publicly owned railways and compare favorably with other rail concessions in the region. CAMRAIL carries about 60 percent of non-mineral traffic from Douala to the borders with the Central African

²¹ Interview with Toukoum Jean Marc, 53, Syndicate Official (SYNACTURCAM) Yaounde, 10 August 2016.

²² Idem.

Republic and Chad, and it compares favorably with competing bus services on the route from Yaoundé to Ngaoundéré, for which travel by unpaved road becomes difficult in the rainy season. The Labour productivity is '000s traffic units per employee; Locomotive productivity is a millions of traffic units per locomotive; Carriage productivity stands at '000s passenger-kilometers per carriage.²³

Wagon productivity is '000s net tonne-kilometers per wagon. Since 2007 the concessionaire's productivity has improved. The share of working locomotives increased from 76.9 in 2007 to 83.4 percent in 2010. CAMRAIL's debt service coverage ratio rose from 1.4 in 2007 to 2 in 2010. The ratio of staff costs to traffic revenues dropped from 27.6 percent in 2007 to 25.7 in 2010. In 2010, CAMRAIL's sales increased by 5 percent. CAMRAIL is one of the most intensively used networks in Sub-Saharan Africa, at 1.1 million traffic units per route-km, compared to others in the region, which serve well under one million traffic units per year. Nevertheless, CAMRAIL's traffic density is lower than the average for West Africa, and only a fraction of that found in southern Africa and North Africa. By global standards, these kinds of traffic volumes are little more than what might be carried by a moderately busy branch line. Moreover, such low traffic volumes do not generate the revenue needed to finance track rehabilitation and upgrading.²⁴

In the railway sector the trans-African railway network still has a long way to go. The coastal line expected to link Lagos, Mamfe, Kumba, Douala and Mbalmayo to the C.A.R. is still partly achieved. The Lagos Ekok-Kumba line and the Mbalmayo-CAR sections are still under study. The Northern line ends at Ngaoundere. The extension of the railway line from Ngaoundere through Garoua, Maroua and Kousseri to Ndjamena-chad is in project. The distribution of transport network in the country therefore shows a marked pattern. Regions of dense route network connectivity include: the eastern section of the coastal lowlands 25 percent, the western section of the South Cameroon low plateau-Yaounde region 21 percent and the western high lands 16 percent. The region with moderate route network connectivity is the Northern lowlands of Garoua and Maroua regions with 11 percent of the countrys road network. The Southern and Eastern sections of the South Cameroon low plateau, the Adamawa

²³ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

²⁴ AICD railway data base.

plateau and the Ndian-Mamfe depressions have the lowest route network densities. These regions put together, contain 27 percent of the country's road networks.

Transport networks in Cameroon have witnessed a significant growth since the colonial period. These networks have been extended and modernised over the years. For example, the tarred road network rose from 2400km in 1980 to an estimated 4010km in 2000. Between 1960 and 2010, 654km of railway were added to the then existing 518km to give the present 1172km. The number of international airports has risen from one (Douala) in 1960 to three (Douala, Garoua, Yaounde-Nsimalen) in 2014. In the domain of water transport, the port of Douala has been upgraded and a shipyard constructed at Limbe. The Kribi is already completed. Limbe deep seaports is envisaged for upgrading.

There is also some spatial variation of transport network in Cameroon. The regional differences in transport network implantation stem from many factors. First, the differences in relief have resulted in the spatial variation of transport systems in the country. The lowlands, coastal lowlands and Northern lowlands have greatly favoured the implantation of transport systems. The dense network of roads and railways on the coastal lowlands has been favoured by the low-lying relief. The railway network has not yet been extended to the western highlands due to its mountainous nature. Any implantation of the railway in this region would mean creating many tunnels, which makes it difficult.

Differences in vegetation cover had equally been held responsible for the spatial variation of transport systems in Cameroon. The dense equatorial forest in the Ndian/Mamfe depressions and on the Southern and Eastern sections of the south Cameroon low plateau makes it difficult to open up roads. This is compounded by the heavy rainfall averaging 2700mm a year, which makes the soil wet and unfit for meaningful road construction. This is opposed to the Grassfields western Highlands where the Guinea Savannah makes it easier for roads path to be opened.²⁵

Population density is closely linked to transport development. The growth of population necessitates the implantation of transport infrastructures to facilitate the movement of persons and goods. It would be observed therefore that densely populated

²⁵ Aarons Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon* 1987.

regions such as the coastal lowlands have 125 persons/km square. The western section of south Cameroon low plateau 97 persons/km square as well as the moderately populated Diamare plains 76 persons/km square have high route network densities. The coastal lowlands have 25 percent of the countrys roads, 21 percent for the Yaounde region, 16 percent for the western highlands and 11 percent for the Northern lowlands. The sparsely populated regions of Ndian-Mamfe depressions, Adamawa plateau, the Southern-Eastern sections of the South Cameroon Low plateau have very low route network densities often less than 0.6 percent. This is due to the fact that the few scattered settlement do not have a great attraction for route development.

The spatial variation of Cameroons route networks can equally be traced back to the colonial period. The colonial administration concentrated on the development of route infrastructures along the coast of Cameroon where their plantations were located. Any extension was for the purpose of opening feeder routes for the transportation of raw materials from the interior to the coast. Before independence, the coastal lowlands had 383km of railroad. This railway line linked Douala-Nkongsamba 172km, Douala-Eseka 174 km and Otele-Mbalmayo 37km. The extension to kumba, Yaounde and Ngaoundere only came up after independence. The railway line between Ngaoundere and Yaounde, Douala had played a tremendous role in the economic development of Cameroon, in the transportation of both persons and goods.²⁶

This is the same with the seaports of Douala, Tiko, Limbe and Kribi which were opened during the pre-independence period on the coastal lowlands. This historical transport network was equally extended to Yaounde, which became the political capital of Cameroon under the French in 1921. This led to rapid development in transport networks in these regions at the detriment of other regions in the country. The strong communal spirit of the grassfields enabled them to construct many footpaths and motorable roads, which led to a strong concentration of road networks in the region. The disparity in route network density is also the resultant of differences in the level of economic activity.

The industries of the coastal lowlands and the plantations in this region such as CDC, HEVECAM, PAMOL, SOCAPALM and OCB required roads, railways and ports to distribute goods and raw materials. This speed up the development of route networks.

²⁶ Aarons S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Published 1987.

The extension of the railway network to Kumba and Nkongsamba was due to the industries of the coastal industrial region. The 8km extension of the road from Limbe to the SONARA factory was for the purpose of conveying crude oil to Douala. The Tiko Douala reunification road was not only for the purpose of re-uniting West and East Cameroon, but also for the transportation of agricultural raw materials from the Southwest region into the industries and port of Douala. Regions with low level of economic development like the South, Eastern South Cameroon Low plateau, the Mamfe, Ndian depressions and the Adamawa plateau provided little attraction for route development.

4.1.3 France and the Development of Air Transport

France also portrayed an important part in the development of air transport network in Cameroon. This means of transportation is the most recent of all the means to appear in Cameroon. It was in the early 1930s that small planes started touching down on Cameroonian soil. The Aero-club in Douala at the time received its first plane in 1934, and after the second world war air transport gained more importance in the territory. During the period of independence, the country was already linked to Europe by air through the French Air Transport Company, known as UTA. Later Air Afrique was created. It is a multinational air company made up essentially of the countries which had French influence. An agreement by the countries involved was concluded in Yaounde in 1961. Cameroon was a member of the new air company. Air-Afrique effected journeys to Europe and other African countries, and within Cameroon, it served the towns of Douala and Yaounde and provided a link with the north. Journeys to other areas within the country were in the hands of a small company.²⁷

Cameroon withdrew from the multi-national air company, Air-Afrique, on January 22, 1971. On June 4, 1971, the National Assembly sat and voted a law to create the Cameroon airlines Company. The company was thus constituted on July 26, 1971 and it started with a capital of 1,500 million francs CFA, 70% of this amount came from the Cameroon government and 30% came from the French Air Company, Air France. The inaugural flight of this company, Cameroon Airlines, was effected to Paris on

²⁷ Interview with Toukoum Jean Marc, 53, Syndicate Official (SYNACTURCAM) Yaounde, 10 August 2016.

November 1, 1971 in a chartered Boeing 707. From that time on the story of air transport in Cameroon has always been linked to this national company. Cameroon Airlines (CAMAIR). This does not mean that foreign air companies are excluded.

Other international flights to Cameroon also involve the following companies: Air Afrique, UTA (France), Aeroflot (USSR), Sabena (Belgium), Swissair (Switzerland), Iberia (Spain), Ethiopian Airlines, Nigerian Airlines, Air Zaire, Air Gabon, Air Centrafrique, British Caledonia and many others. Since its creation, the capital of Camair was raised to 2,900 million francs by February 1, 1973 and the company acquired its own planes: a Boeing 707 for long distances to Europe; three Boeing 737 for medium distances and a Twin-otter carrying 19 passengers serving the small aero-dromes of the country. The Company acquired a jumbo jet Boeing 747 in 1981 and since then it has continued to expand its services both within Cameroon and abroad.²⁸

Three main lines operated by Cameroon Air-lines, they are the line between Cameroon and Europe, the lines to other African countries, the internal lines of Cameroon. The line between Cameroon and Europe, this line leads to Paris then to Marseilles, Rome in Italy and Geneva in Switzerland. Another line also leads to London. With the expansion of the services new links are being sought in Europe and America. The lines to other African States linked towns in different directions. Cameroon Airlines serves Bangui in the Central African Republic in the east, Libreville and Brazzaville in the South and Lagos in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ndjamenia lies at the terminus of the north-south internal line and does not need special planes to serve it.

The journeys to the west link the capital of countries. From Dakar Camair planes fly to Addis-Abeba passing progressively through Monrovia, Abidjan, Accra, Cotonou, Lagos and back to Douala, from where it goes to Kinshasa, Bujumbura, Nairobi, Addis-Abeba and then to Dakar. The internal lines of Cameroon is the Boeing 737 that assures internal flights between Douala, Yaounde, Ngaoundere, Garoua, Maroua, Yagoua and Ndjamenia in Chad. Towards the western and north-western parts of the country Camair flies to Tiko, Bafoussam, Dschang, Koutaba, Bali, Bamenda and Mamfe.²⁹ To the east

²⁸ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of Cameroon*, Neba Publishers, 1987.

²⁹ Interview with Ntsimi Marie Bernadette, age 60, Chief of Service for Road Transport in the Center Regional Delegation for Transport, Yaounde, 16 August 2017.

the airline serves essentially Batouri and Bertoua. All the lines served by Camair do not bring the same amount of proceeds. Some of them are quite profitable, for example, those to Europe and a few internal lines such as the Douala-Yaounde, Douala-Bafoussam-Yaounde. The others are deficient in passengers and consequently bring losses to the company. Considering, however, that it is a para-public undertaking, the company's aim is not only to maximize profits, but the proceeds should at least be able to pay for the costs involved in rendering the services.³⁰

Given the general improving conditions in air transport around the World and in Cameroon. Cameroon Airlines has had to improve its infrastructure. The run way of most aerodromes have been lengthened, the buildings changed and some airports have been overhauled to receive bigger planes. Consequently, there exist airports of different standards. In order of importance we have (a) The new airport of Douala which is the most modern of all the airports in the country and was the first international airport of Cameroon. This air port was officially inaugurated on June 27,1977 by the head of state president Ahmadou Ahidjo. It has a run way of almost 3km 2,850m. The old airport, adjacent to the new one is still in use, it has a run way of 2.3km. (b) The Garoua airport is the second international airport after Douala. Given the flat nature of the Land around Garoua, the runway of this airport is capable of being stretched for a much longer distance than that of Douala airport. However, Garoua receives fewer planes than even the Yaounde airport which was not an international airport. (C) Yaounde, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Maroua and Ngaoundere at present are the airports capable of receiving medium distance planes such as the Boeing 737. Yaounde airport has a run way of only 1,737m and is also an international airport.³¹ Plate 19 depicts the Douala airport.

³⁰ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Publisher, 1987.

³¹ Interview with Toukoum Jean Marc, 53, Syndicate Official (SYNACTURCAM) Yaounde, 10 August 2016.

Plate 19: The Douala Airport



Source: Author's Research Collection, Douala 20/11/2016.

Cameroon is a natural air-traffic hub for Central Africa, as demonstrated by relatively high traffic levels. With close to a million total seats, Cameroon's traffic was higher than that of the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad, and Congo, but well below that of Nigeria. After Nigeria, Cameroon had the second-highest number of international and intercontinental seats such as: FAA U.S. Federal Aviation Administration; IASA International Aviation Safety Assessment; IATA International Air Transport Association; IOSA IATA International Safety Audit. Data not available. After years of decline, Cameroon's air traffic and connectivity are recovering from the air transport market collapse. Between 2001 and 2007 the number of total seats declined from 1,784,023 to 975,865. In 2009 the total number of seats grew to 1,259,276 seats, an expansion of 30 percent over 2007.³²

In particular, the number of international seats grew by about 50 percent between 2007 and 2009, from 472,089 to 698,360. International connectivity is recovering. Between 2001 and 2007 international city pairs served dropped from 25 to 17. Preliminary numbers show that in 2009 city pairs were 20, showing a slightly recover in the number of international city pairs. As reported to international reservation systems. Cameroon's air market is more competitive than that of other countries in the region. The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index (HHI), a commonly accepted measure of

³² AICD railway data base.

market concentration, it shows that Cameroon has the lowest concentration of services among its neighbors, with the measurement taken before the collapse of Cameroon Airlines. The collapse of Cameroon Airlines was followed by a significant increase in capacity by Royal Air Maroc and Ethiopian airlines, indicative of a more liberalized environment. Cameroon is one of the few African countries that has managed to attract private sector participation in its air transport infrastructure. Between 1993 and 2008, 7 of Cameroon's 14 airports were included in a 15-year joint-management contract involving shared risk between the public and private sector. The contract was co-managed by Aéroports de Paris (34 percent) and the government of Cameroon (24 percent), and other carriers (42 percent).³³

A reduction in transport costs may stimulate the volume of trade, open up new markets, induce new industries to form, and thereby influence the patterns of trade. Trade costs are very high in much of the developing world. In Cameroon for instance, trade costs are four to five times larger than in the United States. The size and implications of intranational trade costs. A significant portion of trade costs in developing countries, especially in African countries, is actually non-physical, reflecting costs and delays associated with border crossing, price mark-ups of non-competitive transport firms, and bribes. For Cameroon, it has been estimated that the costs associated with infrastructure inefficiencies represent a greater tax on exporters than trade policy.³⁴

In Africa generally, delays at borders and ports can last between 10 and 30 hours. The decrease in transport costs was a major driver of the increase in international trade since 1950. Trade strongly depends on transportation networks which had a negative impact on firms' exports find that a one-day decrease in over-land travel time leads to a 7 per cent increase in Africa's exports. Similarly, simulations show that upgrading the primary road network connecting major cities would increase trade within sub-Saharan Africa by \$250 billion over five years. This would cost \$20 billion for the initial upgrade and \$1 billion annually in maintenance, improving transport is found to

³³ Bofinger 2009 Derived from AICD national database downloadable from <http://www.infrastructureafrica.org/acid/tool/data>, 2008.

³⁴ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development, Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017.

have a greater impact on export performance when the country's income level is lower.³⁵

Reduction in trade costs matters because it improves access to markets. Empirically, the effect of city roads is moderately stronger on the value of trade than it is on the weight of the goods traded, which can be interpreted as roads shifting economic activities within cities towards lighter goods in Cameroon. Transport investments may have heterogeneous impacts across space with respect to trade and specialisation. Estimating the impact of transportation infrastructure. American Economic Review finds that colonial railways built in the nineteenth century lowered interregional trade costs and price gaps, increased trade flows, and increased real income per unit of land area during the colonial period. In turn, this increased incomes within regions with railroads, but not always in areas without railroads. The Review of Economic Studies, finds that reducing transport costs can lead to a reduction in industrial growth among connected peripheral regions relative to non-connected areas. Improved transportation may lead to a re-allocation of manufacturing along the transport network.³⁶

Increased trade and productivity result in greater production and higher incomes. In the context of Cameroon, it has been found that infrastructure roads and highways have a positive effect on per capita GDP at the country level. Reducing transport costs significantly increases local GDP but note that the full impact of transport costs on incomes may only emerge slowly over time. Improved transport networks may lead to structural transformation and the shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Lower transportation costs have been shown to cause an increase in the production of high-input crops at the expense of low-input. They also facilitate the adoption of modern farming techniques. Reduced transportation costs may also lead to a shift of production and labour away from the agricultural sector. Improved access to markets in Cameroon has led to a diversification of the economic activities of households, especially among the most isolated households.³⁷

³⁵ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development, Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

The role of road quality investments on economic activity and welfare. Improved road quality increases job creation in the manufacturing sector and triggers an occupational shift from agriculture to manufacturing. In Cameroon, falling transportation costs both decrease the probability of agricultural employment by households, and increase the likelihood of full employment. When transport costs remain high, however, as in the rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, people will remain located near the spatially diffused sources of food production, thus preventing structural transformation by hindering the movement of people out of subsistence into the modern sector. High transport costs may also have direct effects on various dimensions of poverty. This is focused on how poor transport can affect vulnerable groups through reduced trade, adverse labour market outcomes, poor education and health, as well as crime.³⁸

In rural areas of developing countries, there is a general lack of infrastructure investment given its major costs, lack of available funds and lack of political will. Transport costs deter farmers from participating in local markets to sell their cattle, relying instead on farm gate sales, which reduces their income-generating opportunities. There is therefore a large potential for transport infrastructure investments to improve the living standards of the rural poor through better connections to market. Different dimensions of poverty may be impacted. Rural road investments reduce poverty, including through higher agricultural production, higher wages, lower input costs, and higher output prices.³⁹

Regarding the labour market impacts of transport costs, poor physical connections between jobs and residences exacerbate the unemployment and low wages of vulnerable groups and unskilled workers. The main idea is that when the poor are not well connected from jobs, they experience prohibitive commuting or search costs that are detrimental to their finding or holding of a job. The specific case of women, who may have fewer transport options, pay a large share of their income on transport, or face security issues in transport. What do existing household surveys tell us about gender and transportation in developing countries. of the spatial mismatch literature is centred around the United States' case, it is certainly very applicable to the sprawling cities of

³⁸ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development, Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017..

³⁹ Ibid.

the developing world where the disconnection from jobs could be an important contributor to poverty. Upstream to the labour market, transport costs also have an impact on educational opportunities and choices. In the rural areas improving rural roads leads to higher rates of both boys' and girls' enrolment in school.⁴⁰

There are also potential food security and health benefits from better transportation. In a study of West Africa, transport access likely suffer more from food security problems, as evidenced by stunting. This is because food prices are correlated with transport costs related to road quality. In Cameroon, improved market access has been found to have a positive impact on household nutrition. There is also evidence that penetration of rural areas by railroad helps poor communities to be more resilient to negative agricultural productivity shocks threatening the food supply Railroads and the demise of famine in colonial Cameroon. More generally, lowering transportation costs significantly reduces the probability that a household is multi-dimensionally poor through improvements in health, education, and standard of living.⁴¹

Crime in transport is a serious issue in developing countries. This is illustrated by the case of Cameroon public transport which has high incidences of murder. Beyond crime repression, investment in physical infrastructure has an impact on reducing crime. The relation between transport availability and crime location is controversial. Transport has significant social costs, which need to be balanced against potential positive economic impacts. These costs involve negative externalities, ranging from congestion, accidents, impacts on health caused by air pollution, and the easier spread of epidemics, as well as direct costs to the environment such as deforestation, biodiversity loss, and more generally degradation of ecosystems induced by transport infrastructure. In the long run, some of these negative effects may even be harmful to growth. Transport policies thus have a role to play to minimise and mitigate these negative impacts.⁴²

⁴⁰ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development, Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017..

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

4.1.4 France and the Development of Sea Ports

France also played an eminent role in the development of sea ports in Cameroon. The town of Douala is situated in the estuary of the Wouri river, 50 km from the sea. It is an area of commercial activity since the 19th century when works were carried on there to permit trade between the coastal dwellers and traders from Hamburg and Brême. As per certain sources, the area was first developed by a German sailing company “Woermanline” in 1881. With the advent of the first world war that saw German colonies seized, access to the port of Douala was made possible for ships with -4.0 metres draft. The infrastructure consists of a Wharf of 60 metres a dock-shopping, seven private wharves, shops connected by a path of 60 meters. Bonaberi at this time, will be served by a dock-shopping 100 meters long. Well-equipped workshops and a dock floating 900 tons complete. Annual traffic capacity is evaluated at 100 000 tonnes.

After the Germans surrendered, the first objectives of the French who henceforth became the masters extended the railway and equipped the Port of Douala. Extension works stopped in 1922. They at the same time organized activities that centered on specialized services of Ports and inland navigable ways under the colonial public works, that saw the beginning of the slow but sure setting up of institutions under French Administration. At independence in 1960, this structure became the Department of Ports for Navigable Ways under the Ministry of Transport. This later on became the Cameroon National Ports Authority (ONPC) under the Federal Law of 1971.⁴³

This organization functioned for almost 30 years before undergoing reforms based on the 1977 round table discussions. All the partners engaged in port activities were then invited to brainstorm on concrete solutions so as to meet up with the exigencies of the atmosphere at the time. Precisely, it was to meet the challenges for the low demand of port services. Resolutions taken during these deliberations, reinforced by the recommendations of the Committee FAL helped to outline the government policy in that line.

Two ports, Douala and Bonaberi handle most of the imports and exports of the Republic of Cameroon. Douala port is located on the left bank of river Wouri. It has a quay of more than 300m long of deep water. On the left bank facing the Douala port, is

⁴³ Aarons, S Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Publisher, 1987.

the Bonaberi port. Both of them are found at the limit of ocean navigation. This limit is set by the long bridge across the Wouri river linking the town of Douala with Bonaberi. The port of Bonaberi has a quay of over 350m. The Douala-Bonaberi port forms the main port of the country's foreign trade. It exports mainly timber and agricultural produce, such as cocoa and coffee, and receives imports which include essentially vehicles and other manufactured goods. The Bonaberi port is noted for handling bananas destined for export. The main problem faced by the Douala-Bonaberi port is silting which calls for huge sums of money to be spent on dredging. Traffic on the Douala-Bonaberi port has been increasing at a great pace, passing from 62,524 tons in 1911 to 3,533,499 tons in 1981. Very important is the fact that in recent years the port has increasingly handled the external trade of Chad and the Central African Republic. Plate 20 and 21, depicts the Douala port in 1939 and 1945.

Plate 20: Port Authority of Douala (1939)



Source: Author's Research Collection, (NAB) Buea, 26/11/2016.

Plate 21: Port Authority of Douala (1945)



Source: Author's Research Collection, (NAB) Buea, 26/11/2016.

Kribi Sea Port

The port of kribi is located at the indentation zone of the coast at the mouth of the kienke river. Accessibility up to the port is not very easy for large ships. The port of Kribi handles the export of timber logs from the Southern part of the country and cocoa from the region around Ebolowa.

Garoua Sea Port

The port of Garoua is busy only for three months; July, August and September. Even within this time a sudden fall in the water level is capable of making it difficult for water vessels to move. Until the opening of the railway line up to Ngaoundere, traffic on the Benue-Niger route was the easiest and cheapest means of transporting goods to the north. It is noted that since the 1960s the port of Garoua has been declining because of increased competition from road and rail transport.⁴⁴ The port also saw its trade stagnated between 1967 and 1970 because of the Nigerian Civil War. In addition to these problems, trade using the port of Garoua requires payment in non-franc foreign currency for the fact that most of the shipping was in the hands of Nigerian-based

⁴⁴ Aarons S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Neba Publisher, 1987.

companies. Navigable areas of some rivers ends in small ports, such as Yabassi on the Wouri River, Edea on the Sanaga, Mbalmayo and Abong-Mbang on the Nyong River, Kouseri on the Logone River.

Cameroon embarked on a new national ports master plan after the period of independence. The plan is seen as a step toward the development of the Cameroon ports system, which will encompass existing port facilities and a new deep-sea port. Cameroon has managed to attract private sector participation into some sections of the ports. APM Terminals is a stakeholder in the Douala container terminal, having been selected to manage and operate the facility on a concession basis for a period of 15 years beginning in July 2004. The Port Authority of Douala is also a stakeholder. The private sector also has a strong presence in the ownership, management, and operation of the specialized liquid-bulk export terminals. Despite the strong presence of the private sector in container operations in Douala, greater involvement of the private sector could be achieved as part of wider institutional reforms.⁴⁵

Traffic in Cameroon's ports increased substantially in the period 1996–2005 but remained relatively light in comparison with other ports along the western coast of Africa. Container traffic in the port of Douala nearly doubled between 1996 and 2005, rising to a volume of 190,700 TEU in the last year, still short of the capacity of 270,000 TEU. General-cargo traffic also grew substantially in Douala, rising from a level of 3.8 million tonnes in 1995 to 5 million in 2006. Dry-bulk traffic in the port, while smaller in volume than other cargo types, chalked up the highest rate of growth from 100,000 tonnes in 1995 to 500,000 tonnes in 2006. The cargo handled by the port of Douala is comparable to that of the port of Cotonou but behind the level of the ports of Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Lomé Togo, Tema Ghana, Luanda Angola, and Apapa Nigeria. Nonetheless, Douala is the most important regional port of Central Africa, as it handles transit traffic for Central African Republic and Chad.⁴⁶

Compared to other ports on the west coast of Africa, the Douala Port is one of the most efficient, particularly in handling containers. But still it lags behind the average port in Sub-Saharan Africa. Container crane productivity, at 18.5 containers per hour, was the highest among ports along the west coast in 2005, matched only by the port of

⁴⁵ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Abidjan, which may have deteriorated with the return of conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, but not even half the Sub-Saharan African average. Container dwell time and truck turnaround time, at 12 days each, are the lowest in the region, versus 7 days for an average port in Sub-Saharan Africa. After Abidjan, the pre-berth waiting time for containers (1.6 hours) is the lowest among ports in this part of Africa. In the other cargo sectors, performance is consistent with the norms for the region and, as such, there is room for significant improvement as the performance of the ports in this part of the continent trails the average for Sub-Saharan Africa port. Further privatization of the customs clearance system and expansion of the port might help improve the performance of the port of Douala.⁴⁷

4.2 The Development of Telecommunication Network

France equally played an eminent role in the development of telecommunication network in Cameroon. Intelcam, the International Telecommunications Corporation of Cameroon (a corporation jointly owned by Cameroon and some foreign bodies) has the sole power to exploit telecommunication systems in Cameroon. Cameroon has sixty percent of the shares, La Compagnie Francaise des Cables Sous-Marins et Radio has thirty percent and Cable and Wireless Ltd, of British has ten percent. Intelcam aims at studying, installing and exploiting all submarine, radio-electric, terrestrial, spatial and other systems of telecommunication which may enhance the telephone, telex, international telegraph and also external radio transmissions and television of the country. The country is served with both internal and external telecommunication systems. A ground telecommunications station by satellite was set up at Zamengoe, a few kilometres away from the city of Yaounde since 1973. This station makes it possible for Cameroon to be linked to the outside world by phone. Below is an aerial view of the Zamengoe Satellite Station near Yaounde.

⁴⁷ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

Plate 22: Aerial View of the Zamengoe Satellite Ground Station near Yaounde.



Source: Author's Research Collection, National Archive Buea, 2017

There is a television system, Radio stations operate in all the provincial chief towns, including the national station in Yaounde. The provincial stations use English, French and local dialects to reach their audience. The country was well served with national and international newspapers.⁴⁸

4.3 Reasons for the Development of Transport Network in French Cameroon

There are various reasons for the growth of transport networks in Cameroon, these include the economic considerations, economic motive and demographic reasons. The development of transport networks in Cameroon is enhanced by political reasons such as the desire for regional integration. In the road transport sector, the construction of the Tiko-Douala and Bafoussam-Bamenda road axes was due to the desire to link the former West and East Cameroons. The Tiko-Douala road is christened the Reunification road. In Douala and Yaounde, there exists what is known as Boulevard de la Reunification.

⁴⁸ Interview with Toukoum Jean Marc, 53, Syndicate Official (SYNACTURCAM) Yaounde, 10 August 2016.

The Lagos-Mombassa road linking Ekok through Mamfe, Bafoussam, Tibati, Garoua Bulai to the CAR and the coastal line linking Bafoussam, Yaounde, Ebolowa to Gabon are sections of the trans-African road networks aimed at ensuing regional integration within Africa in general and the CEMAC region in particular. This is also the case with the Trans-Cameroon railway line which is projected to continue into Chad and the CAR. Trunk A national roads link the country's regional capital with the political capital Yaounde to ensure regional integration within the country. The development of transport network in Cameroon is also enhanced by economic reasons. Transport network development in Cameroon has been spurred up by economic reasons such as ensuring the link between raw material sources and industry and to boost up both national and international trade.

The Tiko-Douala, Nkongsamba-Douala and Ebolowa-Douala roads as well as the Douala-Ngaoundere and Kumba-Nkongsamba-Douala railways segments are geared towards moving raw materials like timber, cocoa, coffee, rubber, hides and skin, bauxite and cotton to the industries in Yaounde and Douala. The construction of the Limbe-SONARA road and the construction of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline were purposely for the transportation of crude oil. These roads and railways are equally geared at distributing goods both within Cameroon and in the CEMAC zone. The construction of the Douala, Kribi, Tiko and Limbe seaports, are aimed at fostering international trade in raw materials and finished goods. Over 15,100,000m³ of timber, 2,000,000 barrels of crude, 1.5 million tons of manioc were exported in 2004. A hundred thousands tons of bananas, cocoa beans (100,000 tons), coffee (115,000 tons), rubber (18,785 tons), aluminium (53,764 tons) and cotton (77,476 tons) were exported through the port of Douala in 1983-84.⁴⁹

In the demographic phase, the rapid growth of Cameroon's population (2.2) percent necessitates the construction of transport networks to ease the movement of persons and goods. The rapid increase in population 9.4 million in 1975, 10.3 million in 1987 to 19.4 million in 2010 has seen an increase in the number of roads and airports. The road network increase from 130,000km classified and non-classified in 1982 to 50,000km of classified and 95,000km of unclassified roads in 2009. Increase in the demand for the services of transporters led to the upgrading of the Douala international

⁴⁹ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 53, 2017.

airport and the construction of the Yaounde-Nsimalen and Garoua international airports. The number of passengers of the defunct CAMAIR rose from 112,621 in 1971/72 to 415,410 in 1978/79. This number has trippled over the past twenty-five years necessitating the extension of infrastructure.

There is a rapid growth in Urbanisation in that the growth of Cameroons towns and cities necessitates the improvement of public infrastructure including transport systems. In most cities like Bamenda, Yaounde and Douala, roads have to be increased in size and extended to the suburbs to ease movement. In another dimension, the need to curb rural urban migration so as to limit the flow of rural migrants to the towns has necessitated the construction of rural roads to disenclave the rural areas and make life worth living in these areas. The development of transport networks is also due to the availability of building material. This is very evident on the Western highland where the volcanic rocks provide gravel and pebbles for road construction. The oil refinery at Limbe SONARA provides bitumen (tar) used for road construction while the Rivers Sanaga, Mbam, Menchum and others provide sand. Numerous quarries for stone and sand exist in the country from where construction material has been extracted to develop the road network.

Transport network development is equally the outcome of availability of Labour, even though predominantly unskilled. The National School of Public Works (ENSTP) and the National School of Engineering (POLYTECHNIQUE) trained qualified man power to upgrade the colonial transport structures. The creation of the military Engineering sector (Genie Militaire) and the Civil engineering equipment pool (MATGENIE) has fostered the growth of transport infrastructures in the country. The state has also created transport development agencies to oversee the creation and management of the country's transport infrastructure. This include, the National ports Authority (ONPC) whose mission is to manage the country's seaports and carry out maintainance and extension of the infrastructure. The Railway Corporation REGIFERCAM with mission to modernise and extend the colonial railway network. The National council for roads with mission to control and supervise road construction projects.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 53, 2017.

The development of transport networks in Cameroon has promoted industrial development in the country. Raw materials are imported through the Douala seaport. Cotton, hides and skin, limestone and groundnuts are taken to the coastal and central industrial regions for processing. Agricultural raw materials like cocoa, coffee, rubber, palm oil and bananas are evacuated to the industries in Douala via the Tiko-Douala and Nkongsamba-Douala roads. Timber from the East is conveyed to the wood processing industries in Douala and Yaounde through the Trans-Cameroon railway network. These roads, railways, waterways and ports equally help in the distribution of finished goods. Tollgates fees and ports have increased state revenue. The port of Douala generated over 32 billion FCFA per month while the tolls from the Tiko-Douala tollgate are estimated at 300million FCFA per year.

Colonial transport networks have stimulated development in different regions of the country. The adage that 'where a route passes development follows' is quite evident for Cameroon. Numerous towns have grown at railway termini and road junctions. We have Nanga-Eboko, Edea, Eseka, Loum and Otele, which have grown along the Trans-Cam I, Kemkem and Makenene markets which have sprouted along the Bafoussam-Douala and Bafoussam-Yaounde road axes. Rural roads have greatly assisted in disenclaving many regions of Cameroon, they link villages, and subdivisions to major regional capitals. Transport development in Cameroon has opened up great employment opportunities. Cameroons transport sector employs an estimated 12 percent of the countrys active labour force. This includes taxi drivers, those working with the bus services, truck drivers, those working at the ports and in railway stations.⁵¹

It should be worth noting that owing to its strategic location to neighboring Nigeria and Gabon, and as a potential crossing point to the landlocked countries of Central Africa, Chad and the Central African Republic, Cameroon is a natural hub for the region, with the port of Douala as the main entrance. Douala is also the starting point of the CAMRAIL railway, which extends 1,100 kilometers toward Chad but stops short of the border. The Douala-Bangui and the Douala-Ndjamena corridors are essential to the landlocked countries and provide greater trade integration within the subregion of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC). However, Cameroon's transport sector suffers from the absence of a coordinated approach to

⁵¹ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017.

intermodal transport. Because of the poor condition of its road network and delays in the port of Douala, Cameroon's ability to move goods and connect manufacturers and consumers with international markets is one of the lowest in the world.⁵²

Feedback on the logistics "friendliness" of countries is reflected in the Logistics Performance Index LPI. The Logistics Performance Index is based on a worldwide survey of global freight forwarders and express carriers, who provide feedback on the logistics "friendliness" of the countries in which they operate. Cameroon's LPI, at 2.55, ranked 105 out of the 155 countries assessed by the LPI. Even so, it was still above the Sub-Saharan Africa average (2.42) and the highest among Central African countries. Zooming in on the components of the LPI, in the case of Cameroon the quality of trade- and transport-related infrastructure ports, railroads, roads, information technology and the efficiency of clearance speed, simplicity, and predictability of formalities by border control agencies, are the dimensions that received the lowest scores by operators in the country.⁵³

Transporting goods from port to final destination across Central Africa is even more costly than in other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, which are already costly compared to the rest of the developing world. Moving freight along intra-regional corridors in the Central African region costs twice as much as in southern Africa, where distances are significantly longer. Moving a metric ton (tonne) of freight from port to hinterland destination costs between \$230 and \$650 along intra-regional corridors in Central Africa, compared with \$120 to \$270 in southern Africa (AICD 2010b). In fact, transport costs in Central Africa remain among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa at \$0.11 to \$0.26 per tonne-km, compared with \$0.06 to \$0.08 in West Africa, Lomé-Ouagadougou and Cotonou-Niamey and East Africa Mombasa-Kigali and Mombasa-Kampala, and (\$0.05 to \$0.06 in Southern Africa (Durban-Lusaka and Durban-Ndola).⁵⁴

Within Central Africa, there is a huge cost differential in transporting freight between coastal countries (such as Cameroon) and landlocked countries such as (Central African Republic and Chad). This reflects the fact that final destinations in coastal countries tend to be relatively close to the sea, and the costs of crossing an

⁵² Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

international land border are avoided. For these reasons, freight transport costs to and from Cameroon are among the lowest in Central Africa at \$1,379 per container, even if they remain very high in absolute terms. The average time to export and import is 23 and 26 days, respectively.⁵⁵

By comparison, the cost and time of trading to and from the Central African Republic and Chad are substantially higher. For instance, it costs \$8,150 to import a container to Chad and \$5,554 to the Central African Republic. The result is that basic goods are considerably less expensive in the Cameroon than in Chad and the Central Africa Republic. The high costs and lengthy delays in trading to and from the landlocked countries are due to several barriers in the international corridors. Surface transport costs and travel times in the corridor connecting Cameroon to Chad and the Central African Republic (Douala-Ndjamena and Douala-Bangui) are among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Expensive surface transport costs along the corridors account for the bulk of the cost of importing to the Central African Republic. Inland transport cost in the Douala-Bangui, Douala-Ndjamena, Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridors account for up to 65 percent the total cost of importing.⁵⁶

The number of documents required per shipment to export (import) goods. Taken into account are documents required for clearance by government ministries, customs authorities, port and container terminal authorities, health and technical control agencies, and banks. Time to export (import): The time necessary to comply with all procedures required to export (import) goods. If a procedure can be accelerated for an additional cost, the fastest legal procedure is chosen. Cost to export (import): The cost associated with all procedures required to export (import) goods, include the costs for documents, administrative fees for customs clearance and technical control, customs broker fees, terminal-handling charges, and inland transport.⁵⁷

Surface transport costs are highly influenced by the strong presence of freight bureaus and transport associations that prevent truck operators from contracting directly with customers and result in high profit margins for the trucking industry. The regulatory framework based on market sharing, centralized allocation of freight, and

⁵⁵ Claudia N. Berg et al Transport Policies and Development Journal of Development Studies, Volume 53, 2017.

⁵⁶ World Bank report 2010.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

limits on vehicle mileage (around 2,000 kilometers per month versus 12,000 in the developed world) weakens incentives to invest in service quality upgrades. As a result, the truck fleet is largely composed of poorly maintained second-hand trucks that are typically overloaded to obtain maximum revenue from their restricted usage. This is a serious problem in Cameroon, one that results in too many vehicles chasing modest overall freight volumes.⁵⁸

The Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridor is included in the analysis because it runs through Cameroon. Lengthy travel times in the Douala-Bangui and Douala-N'djamena corridors are mainly associated with delays in the port of Douala, which is operating at the limit of its capacity. In transporting an 18-tonne, 40-foot container between Douala and N'djamena took between four weeks and two months. Port procedures are responsible for half of the time required to import to the Central African Republic and Chad. Productivity measures in the port of Douala are at the level of other regional ports, but behind the Sub-Saharan average. Time-consuming regulatory processes related to customs clearance and technical controls account for about one-third of the total time required for clearance. New port investments are on going on Kribi and Limbe but a comprehensive logistics strategy is still missing to address the growing demand for transport services which may further accelerate in the mid-term if some major mining projects materialize. Other non-physical barriers and logistical inefficiencies play a major role in travel times. Surveys of corridor operations reported between 70 and 150 checkpoints (legal and illegal) between Douala and N'djamena and 45 between Douala and Bangui. On a return trip between Douala and N'djamena, transporters pay on average the equivalent of \$580 in legal charges and illegal bribes.⁵⁹

Another major obstacle to trade facilitation in the CEMAC region is institutional weakness at the regional level and to some extent at national level. Due to the physical and non-physical barriers, trade in the sub-region is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa but it is slowly increasing. With inter-regional trade accounting for just 0.5 to 1 percent of the total trade of its member states, the CEMAC sub-region is the least integrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, far behind the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA, 5 percent), the Southern African Development Community (SADC, 10

⁵⁸ Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

percent), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 10 percent), and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA, 15 percent). The annual flows of freight between Cameroon, Chad, and the Central African Republic increased by about 10 percent from 1.31 to 1.43 million tonnes. The bulk of trade flows are from Cameroon to Chad (452,000 tonnes, of which 76,000 tonnes for gasoline and 64,000 for containers) and from the Central African Republic to Cameroon (252,000 tonnes, of which 237,000 tonnes of wood). Flows from Cameroon to the Central African Republic amount to 126,000 tonnes (of which 21,000 tonnes for gasoline and 20,000 for containers) while flows from Chad to Cameroon (57,000 tonnes), mostly involve cotton exports 49,000 tonnes.⁶⁰

In spite of adequate levels of road financing, maintenance activities are poorly planned and ineffective in optimizing the life cycle of road assets during the German, British and French colonial period in Cameroon. A recent audit of the maintenance contracts financed by the country's road maintenance fund found that only about 45 percent of civil works scored good or fair in technical quality. These deficiencies in maintenance have left Cameroon's road network in relatively poor condition. The condition of the country's classified paved road network is below the level of peer countries, with only 52 percent of the classified paved network in good or fair condition versus 68 percent in Africa's resource-rich countries and 82 percent in middle-income countries. The quality of the roads hobbles the private sector. About one in three firms in Cameroon identified roads as a major constraint for doing business, slightly above the average for similar resource-rich countries at 30 percent, but almost twice the level in middle-income countries at 18 percent. The quality of Cameroon's sections of critical regional corridors is also poor, especially when compared with sections in neighboring countries.⁶¹

That weakness prevents landlocked countries from moving goods and people efficiently. Cameroon has sections in four regional corridors: Douala-Bangui, Douala-Ndjamena, Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui, and Nouakchott-Ndjamena. The Cameroon sections of the Douala-Bangui, Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui, and Douala-Ndjamena corridors are still not completely paved. Although some sections of the Douala-Bangui corridor are being upgraded as part of the CEMAC Transport Transit

⁶⁰ Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁶¹ Ibid.

program, about 250 kilometers in Cameroon and 210 kilometers in the Central African Republic are surface pavement treated. All of Cameroon's section in the Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridor 308 kilometers is unpaved (as are 1,000 kilometers in the Congolese side). Only 67 percent of the Douala-Ndjamena corridor is paved. This means that neither the Central African Republic nor Chad can rely on these corridors as all-weather connections to the sea. Furthermore, only 48 percent of the Douala-Bangui corridor, 21 percent of the Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridor, and 52 percent of the Douala-Ndjamena corridor are in good condition.⁶²

In each of these cases the problem seems to lie in the neglect of road quality by Cameroon. Only 30 percent of the Cameroonian section in the Douala-Bangui corridor is in good condition, against 100 percent of the Central African section. A World Bank project currently underway aims to substantially improve the quality and efficiency of this corridor; most recent data suggest that 60 percent of the corridor was in good condition. Similarly, only 56 percent of Cameroon's section of the Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridor is in good condition (and none of the Republic of Congo's section is in good condition), whereas 100 percent of the section in the corridor is located in Cameroon. Clearly, the incentives for Cameroon and other coastal countries to maintain hinterland road corridors are not very strong. Coastal countries' economies are typically concentrated along the coast, making the up-country segments regional public goods.⁶³

The summation of the good, fair, and poor condition not necessarily add up to 100 since there might be some links, the condition of which is unknown. The summation of the paved and unpaved type does not necessarily total 100 as the type of some links may be unknown. Asphalt and surface treatment pavements are considered paved roads. The relatively poor condition of the corridors in the coastal countries calls for further regional coordination and collaboration. The adoption of the Trade and Transport Facilitation Program by the CEMAC member states goes in this direction. The program comprises the implementation of a regional institutional framework; harmonization of national regulations; interconnectivity of customs information technology systems within the region; and implementation of a pilot trade and transport

⁶² Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁶³ Ibid.

facilitation project on the Bangui-Douala (about 1,450 kilometers) and Douala-Ndjamena about 1,850 kilometers corridors.⁶⁴

Traffic levels in Cameroon are low compared with those of peers, making it difficult to justify heavy road engineering in the paved network. Traffic over the paved network is only 1,099 vehicles per day against 1,402 vehicles in the continents resource-rich countries and 2,558 in middle-income countries. Traffic over the unpaved network is 60 vehicles per day, higher than 25 vehicles in resource rich countries, below 75 vehicles in the middle-income countries, but still low in absolute terms. With 16 percent of the paved primary network having an average annual daily traffic of fewer than 300 vehicles, Cameroon's road network shows some evidence of over engineering by close to 18 percent compared with countries with comparable resources. In particular, most of the traffic in the Bangui-Douala and Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridors is concentrated in the fewer-than-300-vehicles-per-day band. Around 53 percent of the Cameroon section of the Douala-Bangui corridor carries fewer than 300 vehicles per day, the estimated minimum economic threshold for paving.⁶⁵

In the case of the Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui corridor, about 70 percent of Cameroon's section carries fewer than 300 vehicles per day. It may be that traffic volumes have been artificially depressed by recent conflicts. The level of traffic over Cameroon's unpaved network justifies the paving of some of its roads. Around 36 percent of the unpaved network in Cameroon carries more than 300 vehicles per day, the estimated minimum economic threshold for paving. Indeed, traffic over the unpaved network in Cameroon, at 60 vehicles per day, is more than twice the average for the resource-rich countries and relatively close to the level for the middle-income countries. Increasing road safety in Cameroon is a significant challenge. A recent study revealed that between 2004 and 2007 the accident rate of 60 deaths per 10,000 vehicles on the Douala–Yaoundé road was times higher than on a similar road in Europe. While human behavior is responsible for three-quarters of the accidents, some infrastructure “black spots” were also identified. Car crashes not only cost lives and cause injuries; they also have an economic cost that adds up to the high transport and transit costs along the corridor. It has been estimated that the direct and indirect impact of deteriorated safety

⁶⁴ Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

conditions in developing countries such as Cameroon typically amount to about 1.5 percent of GDP.⁶⁶

Further implementation of Cameroon's economic reform program complementing exploitation of Cameroon's natural wealth, including its forestry and mining resources notably bauxite, iron, cobalt, nickel, rutile, natural gas, and hydrocarbon products boost growth and increase the demand for port facilities. The capacity of the country's ports is being stretched as demand for services rises, leading to longer transit times to Chad and the Central African Republic. Overall the four ports in Cameroon have a capacity of close to 7 million tonnes per year; they handled in excess of 6 million tonnes of cargo annually with Douala accounting for over 95 percent of this. The available capacity remaining in the port system is relatively tight, and to a significant extent does not match the requirements of modern shipping. The port of Douala is quickly approaching its available capacity, and none of the other public ports offers a viable alternative, at least in their current form, but for Kribi whose construction work has been completed recently.⁶⁷

It is against this background that the formulation of a new national ports master plan that added modern new port capacity is essential. Port and cargo-handling costs in the port of Douala are at the higher end of charges paid along the West African coastline, which in turn are higher than elsewhere in Africa. The handling charge is \$220 per TEU for containers and \$6.5 per tonne of general cargo. To some extent, though Douala is the largest port in terms of volume handled; Kribi is a distant second, followed by the much smaller ports of Limbe and Garoua. thousand Tonnes be viewed as a natural outcome of the tight balance between available capacity and demand and the lack of broad-based institutional reform, which has perpetuated built-in inefficiencies and structural problems. Capacity expansion and wider institutional reforms offer the route to lower port and cargo-handling costs. More generally, the charges levied on Central African ports do not compare favorably with the rest of Africa; let alone with global best practice.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Compared with global best practice, Africa's ports are generally expensive to use and subject to extensive delays. Southern African ports tend to perform somewhat better than those in other regions across a range of parameters. The services provided by Central and West African ports generally cost twice as much as those in other global ports. Unlike in Central Africa, most southern African terminals offer a given number of free days' storage typically up to seven days and thereafter apply a daily storage charge, sometimes on a sliding scale that increases as the number of days increases. Finally, the port of Douala is not yet ISPS-code compliant. In 2006 the port introduced a container scanning device. At the beginning of 2007 new automated customs procedures went into effect. However, the authorities estimate that it will still take a number of years to exit the ISPS blacklist.⁶⁹

4.4 Colonial Transport Network in French Cameroon

Colonial transport policies infrastructures have contributed enormously in the economic, political and social development of Cameroon. Transport is particularly important in the field of development. It is generally recognized that the improvement of transport forms perhaps the most valuable single contribution towards economic, social and political development from markets and ports have equally experienced a type of economic stagnation. More importantly improved and extended transport facilities are necessary to the widening and linking of the market in areas already settled, and in stimulating further production for internal and external trade in a country: cheap and easy transport links markets, brings additional buyers and sellers into contact with one and another. Furthermore, easy transport allows exchange of goods between rural areas and urban centres, thus the rural farmer rise above subsistence level, consuming locally grown food produced in their communities, and also making use of manufactured goods produced in towns. Town residents receive enough food supplies from the rural areas.⁷⁰

Improved means of transport reduces the expensive and tedious task of human portage. It has been estimated that human portage was some nine or ten times expensive as transport by water, Motor vehicles and railway transport. This is so because frequent repetition of transport movements are demanded in a situation where

⁶⁹ Teravaninthorn and Raballand 2009.

⁷⁰ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

only limited amounts can be carried by the individual in each operation; and such movements cannot be used for long distances.⁷¹ Important developments have taken place in Cameroon following the general improvement in the various means of transportation. Export crop production has expanded while trade and cultural exchange between North and South have increased, thanks to improved means of transportation and free movement of the population. Northern dwellers migrated in large numbers to work in the tree crop farms and cities of the coastal region due to available transport facilities, while many Southern traders, technicians and civil servants settle to work in Northern cities. The food demands of these migrants have contributed to the increasing flow of foodstuffs between north and south.⁷² Transportation has also increased the cattle trade between the north and south.

The development of colonial transport policies in Cameroon have profound impact on human activity, such as the improvement in transport infrastructures has increase spatial interaction that is migration, the movements of goods and services, information and messages. Transport facilities in Cameroon has helped to expand trade relationships (both internal and external trade). This is because goods, services and passengers are able to move from one part of the country to the other. Improvements in transport has helped to advance agricultural and industrial output. It is easy for farm inputs to reach the farmers from the markets. Farm products are also easily carried to the market, it also ease the movement of raw material and finished products to where they are needed. Transport infrastructures has helped to increase the growth and changed the structure of urban areas. Some towns or settlements have grown up along communication lines, it has also ease rural urban migration which contributes to urbanisation and urban growth. Transport network has helped in the development of backward or depressed areas because it increases accessibility which favours economic activities like farming and industrialisation.⁷³

In Cameroon transport is relatively high in private sector participation boosting Logistic Performance Index Improving the quality and efficiency of its infrastructure to reduce costs of trade for Chad and the CAR Roads. Average road network density and rural accessibility to all-season roads Fuel levy more than maintenance need norm

⁷¹ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

improving the condition of the road network, in particular in regional corridors, Spending maintenance funds more effectively and securing finance for road rehabilitation, Ports sector reform Private sector participation, Relatively good performance of the port of Douala in the context of west African coast, Expanding the capacity of ports Railways Relatively high performance of CAMRAIL Update rolling stock and rehabilitate tracks Air transport Turnaround of traffic and connectivity.⁷⁴

Competition in market Boosting domestic market Irrigation Large potential for small-scale projects Increasing irrigated area Water and sanitation. Reduced reliance on surface water and open defecation. Improvements in operational performance following sector reform furthering sector reform Closing gaps in access between urban and rural areas, Developing sanitation systems power relatively high access to electricity reform of the sector, which led to the privatization of AES Sonel and increase in connections, increase in generation capacity improving financial and operational performance by AES Sonel Increasing reliability of power supply expanding power trade ICT rapid expansion of the mobile and fixed-line markets furthering reform of the sector expanding internet market.⁷⁵

Cameroon's road density is greater than that of peers. The density of the country's total road network is 72 kilometers per 1,000 km², higher than the average for Africa's resource-rich countries at 59 kilometers per 1000 km². But Cameroon's road density is still behind the level of the continent's middle income countries, which have an average of 318 kilometers per 1,000 km². Twenty-seven percent of Cameroon's rural inhabitants have access to all-season roads, as measured using geographic information system (GIS) tools, slightly above the average GIS rural accessibility in resource-rich countries. But evidence from household surveys suggests that 51 percent of the rural population lives within 2 kilometers of an all-season road. Classified road network density km/1000 km² of land area 38 51 278 GIS rural accessibility of rural population within 2 km from all-season road 26 27.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Household survey rural accessibility of rural pop within 2 km from all-season road 36 51 63 Classified paved road network condition in good or fair condition 68 52 82 Classified unpaved road network condition in good or fair condition 61 65 58 Classified paved road traffic Average annual daily traffic 1,402 1,099 2,558 Classified unpaved road traffic Average annual daily traffic 25 60 75 Primary network over engineering of primary network paved with 300 AADT or less 20 16 18 Primary network under engineering of primary network unpaved with 300 AADT or more 9 36 20. Total network includes the primary, secondary, and tertiary networks. Classified roads are the roads that have been included in the roads legislation as public roads. The existing fuel levy is set at an adequate level to cover road maintenance needs in Cameroon. At 9 cents per liter, Cameroon's fuel levy is relatively high compared with other Sub-Saharan African peers.⁷⁷

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter was focused on the French colonial transport policies in Cameroon. It portrayed the manner in which France undertook the construction of roads, railways, airports, seaports and communication system during the departure of Germans in Cameroon in 1916 and the joint rule of Cameroon between Britain and France. The chapter further examined how the French occupation of Cameroon after the defeat of the Germans led to the creation and completion of the transport network set by the Germans. The Chapter also dwells on the French communication system that has existed right up to present day and has contributed much in building the transport communication network in Cameroon. The next chapter hinges on impact assessment of colonialists policies and practices in Cameroon.

⁷⁷ Aaron S. Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon 1987*, p.147.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF COLONIALISTS POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN CAMEROON

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an impact assessment of Colonialist policies and practices in Cameroon. It is focus on the Germans, British and French that has played a tremendous role in development aspects as far as colonial transport policies are concern. It also examines the imperialistic nature of exploitation in Cameroon during the colonial period. It asserts that, the colonial policies in Cameroon as examined from the colonial perspective of Cameroon beginning from 1884 to 1961 has played a vital role in the development of Cameroon as far as road, railway, air and water transport infrastructures are concern.

5.1 German Colonial Policies and Practices

5.1.1 Economic Development

The Germans played an important role in the economic development of Cameroon. The feature of Germany's economic policies and practices in the exploitation of the Cameroons was the application of science to the problems that arose. The achievement in this respect was made possible, in the final analysis, because of the intelligence of colonial interests operating largely through the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society. Cameroon is but one instance of self interest working in an unusually enlightened way through governmental and other machinery of its own creation to gain the maximum for itself. The Colonial Society worked hard to make it possible to train people both in Germany and in the Cameroons. For linguist, missionary, or trader, languages were taught in the Seminar of Oriental Languages in Berlin or in the Colonial Institute in Hamburg; to planters and others the theory of tropical agriculture and a number of trades were taught in the Colonial School of Witzenhausen. For the great generality of Germans sources of excellent information on the colonies were many: courses in a large number of universities and technical schools, collections in the

museums and in the zoological gardens, and the exhibitions and lectures arranged in all parts of Germany by the Colonial Society.¹

When problems connected with a particular question in the colony needed technical experts for their study and solution, it was the Colonial Society and its Economic Committee that gave money and time to the matter. Whatever funds were necessary to pay for such work came from the Economic Committee, which asked support of those interests in Germany directly concerned in the solution of the particular problem. The committee sent special commissions into the Cameroons to study the exploitation of the colony's forest resources, the improvement of river navigation, the construction of roads, and many other problems connected with the development of the colony. To enable the head of the Botanical Garden in Victoria to deal with questions arising in cocoa production.²

In Cameroon natives were given training in the mission and government schools. At Victoria there was a special agricultural school to prepare natives for work on the plantations. Some instructions were given in the experimental stations or gardens run by military or administrative posts in the interior. No negligible factor in the training of natives was the experience of those employed for a period of time on private plantations. Co-operating with the *Kolonialgesellschaft* and its Economic Committee in Germany in the task of making the colonies pay was the *Botanische Zentralstelle*, which served as a kind of clearing house for experimentation. It arranged to have tropical plants sent to the Cameroon from all parts of the world to determine whether they could be profitably exploited there. If a person became interested in the production of a new article in the colonies, he would naturally turn to this bureau with his request. Such requests came when high prices for certain articles had to be paid to those nations that enjoyed monopolies. Efforts were made as a direct consequence of such demands, to produce tannic acid, resin, wax, indigo, and other things in Cameroon. If someone wondered whether a plant or the bark of a tree had a value that could be exploited for

¹ Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

² Ibid.

profit, samples were sent to this bureau, which had analyses made by interested chemists, pharmacists, and manufacturers.³

Assisting planters in the economic exploitation of the colony was the Botanical Garden at Victoria, founded by Governor Soden. Later, there co-operated with this garden a score or two of stations in the interior, in a system that made possible a good deal of experimentation with variations of altitude, rainfall and soil. After 1913 all this experimental work came within the jurisdiction of one man, specially assigned to supervise it. Numerous meteorological records made at scores of places throughout the colony were tabulated by the botanical station in Victoria. In 1913 a trained meteorologist was sent to Buea to handle all such work and to distribute instruments free to all persons in Cameroon willing to prepare daily weather reports. Experimentation in the raising of cattle and horses in the colony at places free of the tsetse fly came within the supervision of the Botanical Garden of Victoria, which also looked after a number of schools in the interior training natives in agriculture. From the reports published of the work of the Botanical Garden it was seen that experiments were made with about one thousand plants. In the long list the following appear: cinnamon, pepper, vanilla, cardamom, cloves, pimento, tea, fibre plants, silk, cotton, camphor, kapok.⁴

Experiments of many kinds were made with the hope of improving the quality or of increasing the quantity of some of the colony's staple products. Studies were made of soils, of humidity, of the spacing of plants, of the proper times for seeding, fertilizing, and harvesting, of ways and means of combating the pests and blights that injured cocoa production, of cutting rubber trees to get maximum and optimum results, of fermenting cocoa, of discovering better kinds of rubber plants. Even machines for getting an increased quantity of palm oil were tested at the garden. When the results of these experiments in the colony or of studies in Germany revealed that the prospects were good for making profits in the exploitation of a particular commodity, the garden at Victoria then produced seeds or cuttings for sale to those interested. In some years the garden had a good income from this source. When it was desired to interest natives in the production of a particular commodity, the Government distributed free among them

³ Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

⁴ Ibid.

the necessary seeds and cuttings produced here, and agents taught them what was necessary for success with the plants in question.⁵

The Government sought to preserve rubber trees from ruthless waste and to protect the elephant from wanton destruction for ivory. Decrees of the administration required that a certain standard of quality be observed in the production of rubber, palm oil and kernels, and cocoa when they were being made ready for export from Cameroons. Official inspection of the preparation of several articles for export was provided in 1912 and 1913. Trained white men were sent into the bush to give natives instruction in the proper exploitation of the colony's valuable resources, four agents for rubber alone. Various ordinances were directed against the importation of harmful pests. The governor was vested with necessary authority for the protection of the valuable woods in Cameroon. Regulations of many kinds were issued for the protection of the fauna of the colony and one wild game preserve was marked out. The methodical manner in which Germany sought to get the most out of their colony required very close co-operation between private interests and the Government as well as a conviction in official and private circles that the real value of Cameroon lay in its economic resources. The intelligent way in which Germany tried to get the most out of the colony called forth very high praise from the outsiders acquainted with it.⁶

The products that brought the first traders to Cameroon were palm oil, palm kernels, and ivory. For many years they were the only commodities of value exported by the colony. Ivory was in great demand in Germany, where it was used for billiard balls, carvings, piano keys, and trimming for pipes, canes, crutches, furniture, and the like. The supply of ivory in the colony was limited, a fact that was realized too late to prevent its exhaustion. In early trade ivory was obtained by barter from natives who brought it to the coast after getting it in the interior. Sometimes rather large quantity of it came into the possession of traders from natives who left it as security for credit extended to them and who then forfeited it. Getting it directly from natives in the interior, in whose possession explorers reported finding large stocks of it, was impossible because of the monopolists who prevented all direct trade with the

⁵ Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

⁶ Ibid.

hinterland. Reports that Haussa traders carried ivory from Cameroon to Yola in Nigeria disturbed German traders, who wanted the colony's wealth for themselves.⁷

In 1890, before direct trading with the interior was possible on any significant scale, the firm of Jantzen & Thormahlen asked the Government for a monopoly of the colony's ivory. The request was made after the explorer Morgen had reported the discovery of places in the interior where huge stores of it had accumulated. The request was denied by Governor Zimmerer, who was convinced that Cameroons' elephants needed the Government's protective intervention to prevent their extinction. The competition for ivory was very keen among traders, who co-operated only to attack the Government as a rival of private trade in its acquisition. Traders charged that German officials in the colony purchased ivory from natives at low prices and sold it later at high prices. The defence of the Government was that the natives had presented such ivory as gifts, for it was a rule that no official could engage in trade. The greatest source of government-owned stocks was the requirement that all fines be paid in ivory when other means of payment were not available.⁸

The Government reminded critical traders that their opposition to the use of currency in Cameroon was one reason why fines had to be paid in ivory. When large quantities had accumulated from these gifts and fines, it was the practice of the administration to ship the ivory to Hamburg, where it was sold at auction to competing bidders and where the excellent profits made were deposited to the colony's credit. Cameroon' traders asked the Government to hold those auctions in Duala or elsewhere in the colony to give them an opportunity to purchase the ivory when it was sold. They assured the Government that competition among them was an adequate guarantee of a high price. The Government yielded a little and arranged to hold several auctions in the colony.⁹

Other practices and policies of the Government in Cameroon came in for much criticism on the part of traders. Arms and gunpowder had been the customary articles bartered for ivory. When the Government placed its ban on the sale of both, loud cries were heard that the ivory trade was being killed and that it would go to those

⁷Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

violators of law who smuggled arms and powder across the frontiers from neighbouring colonies. Traders accounted for the smaller amounts of ivory exported from the colony by this arms prohibition; whereas the Government tried to argue that existing stocks had merely become depleted through many years of trading. To prevent the extermination of the elephant a series of interesting decrees were passed.¹⁰

In 1906 a decree forbade all trade in ivory tusks under five kilograms in weight, a minimum limit that was reduced to two kilograms by a later decree, November, 1907. This reduction was rendered necessary by the fact that neighbouring colonies accepted the two-kilogram limit and got the tusks not admitted into the trade in the Cameroons. There were many tusks under two kilograms in the possession of natives, who got them because they killed elephants for food rather than for ivory. Trade in these small tusks was illegal in Cameroon; reports said, however, that they found their secret way across frontiers into French hands. On April 15th, 1907, an export tax of two marks a kilogram was placed on ivory. In the Conventional Zone of the Congo a 10 per cent export tax on the value of ivory was the rule. In 1908 a hunting decree restricted the killing of elephants and rhinoceroses with tusks under two kilos.¹¹

Ever since 1900, there had been a regulation in force forbidding under high penalties the taking of elephants by fencing them in or by encircling them with fire. Against these decrees protests came from even the natives; some Douala people complained that the high hunting fees required in the colony were a virtual protection of the elephants that destroyed their cacao and other plantations. Ivory had a varying price in Hamburg and came in varying amounts from the Cameroons, Germany's chief source of supply. In general, the amounts imported from the colony tended to fall off rather sharply. In 1893-94 the value of the exported ivory was 391,042 marks; in 1905, 1,204,675 marks; and in 1912, 536,000 marks.¹²

¹⁰ Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

5.1.2 Palm Oil, Kernels and Cocoa

Palm products, which usually ranked second or third in value among the exports of Cameroon, came from the central parts of the colony. In Germany the oil was used in the manufacture of soap and candles; there was talk of its use in the manufacture of oleomargarine. In the years immediately before and after occupation ivory and palm products were the leading items in Cameroons' trade. It was palm oil and palm kernels that Consul Hewett stressed in 1882, when he was endeavouring to convince the British Government that Cameroon was so valuable that it was wise to establish some form of control there. Like ivory palm oil was brought in the earlier days to the coast by monopolists who got it from natives in the hinterland. Explorers who travelled in the interior often discovered large stands of palm trees and pointed to the exceedingly low cost of the oil there in comparison with the high prices charged on the coast by the native monopolists.¹³

Agreements on fixed minimum prices to be paid the natives failed when higher prices were offered by some trader eager to gain an advantage over his competitors. As trade increased it was inevitable that the palm oil and kernels should come from greater and greater distances in the interior where trees grew wild, creating a problem that only an improved system of transportation could solve. Problems connected with palm products were numerous. Native methods of getting the kernels and especially their practice of cutting down palm trees to make their wine resulted in a rapid destruction of trees and the danger of decreased production. Native methods of expressing the oil from the kernels were much criticized for their wastefulness.¹⁴

In 1902 the colony's head botanist at Victoria reported that natives by their methods recovered only one-third of the oil that the fruit contained. Other problems are indicated by the need of a decree in 1894 threatening with fines and imprisonment any attempt to falsify the weights and the quality of palm oil and kernels. Government and traders co-operated to find a solution for these problems. Explorers in the interior reported to the home government the discovery of places where trees grew in large numbers to warrant serious efforts to exploit them. In 1912 a large stand of palm trees was found in land belonging to the natives between the Wouri and the Mungo Rivers.

¹³ Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Since the natives after consultation with forestry officials wished to exploit the palm products themselves rather than let white men come in, the Government let the natives do it, but under strict regulation for the production of the oil and for the felling of trees for palm wine.¹⁵

The Botanical Garden at Victoria experimented with the colony's. One report said that the price in the interior was only one eighth of that charged on the coast. Woermann did this in 1886. Another factor in early competition was the lack of standards for measuring quantities of palm oil and kernels. many varieties of palm trees to see which was the best; its findings resulted in demands for seeds by planters who had visions of huge profits in palm-tree culture. Official reports in the following years showed that planters turned increasingly to the planting of palm trees. Efforts were made to encourage natives to start palm plantations near the coast; in 1903, in the southern part of Cameroon, government officials required native chieftains to plant palms, twenty-five for each standing hut and fifty for every new one. Government stations in the interior experimented with the trees; and the indefatigable Stein, on his explorations in southern Cameroon, planted seeds of the trees everywhere to discover what soils and climate were best suited to its production.¹⁶

Much attention was given to the question of recovering all the oil from the palm kernels. The colony's botanist, figured out in 1902 just what profits would result from a successful solution of that problem and speculated on the invention of a machine to accomplish it. It was the type of problem for which the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society existed and it offered a total of 17,000 marks in prizes for the invention of the machine. Eighty people participated in the competition and an award was made; but the committee testing the machine in Victoria reported in 1904 that it was not completely successful. As a result of later offerings of prizes for machines a number of successful ones were invented, and the Economic Committee tried to interest white planters in using them on their plantations. Of one machine it was reported in 1907 that it cut the cost of oil production by about 75 per cent. As late as 1912 the larger amount of palm products exported from Cameroon was produced by natives, who

¹⁵Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

¹⁶ Ibid.

gathered the kernels where the trees grew wild and who, after some training, prepared the oil and kernels for trade with the white man.¹⁷

Efforts were made by the Government to encourage natives to have plantations of palms, by instructing them in the method of such exploitation and by inspecting the plantations. It was a difficult task, for the natives found it simpler to gather kernels wherever they found the palm trees growing. By 1913 plantations, with about 2000 hectares devoted to the oil palm, were making successful use of machines; and larger quantities of palm oil and kernels were being exported. In the interior at that date the problem of transportation was still to be solved. Traders complained that natives in the interior refused at times to gather palm kernels and 'bring them to the white man's factories because of their fear of being caught by a recruiting agent and forced to work on some distant plantation or on the government railway. Interest in palm-oil production led to the erection of a soap factory in Douala in 1908. It was reported in 1912 that a syndicate was interested in using palm oil from Cameroon for the manufacture of oleomargarine. The combined value of palm oil and kernels in the trade of Cameroon was very great. In 1891 their value was 2,337,000 marks. Prices of both commodities fluctuated a good deal in the Hamburg market. In 1906 the value of the oil and kernels was 2,958,000 marks and in 1912 it was 6,028,538 marks.¹⁸

The importation of large amounts of cocoa from Central and South America interested some people in its production in Cameroon, where it was planted soon after the German occupation of the colony. Cameroon cocoa was early regarded in Germany as of superior quality and had no difficulty in finding a market. It was not until the latter half of the 'nineties that special efforts were made in Cameroon to produce cocoa on a large scale, although it had been known for some time that conditions for its production were favourable and that the quality was good. In 1897 Dr. Preuss of the Botanical Garden in Victoria reported that the slopes of Mt. Cameroon were excellent for cocoa production. About the same time Governor Puttkamer, encouraged by the production of cocoa on the Portuguese island of Sao Tomé, did all he could to start planting in Cameroon. Technical problems arising in connection with the growing of cocoa and the processing of the bean required scientific study. Since the home administration had no

¹⁷Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914. A case Study in Modern Imperialism*, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

¹⁸ Ibid.

funds to send Dr. Preuss to Central and South America to study conditions of cocoa production, the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society paid for the trip out of its funds. While scientists were thus at work on various technical problems, the governor issued a decree requiring certificates to guarantee for quality and origin before any cacao could leave the colony.¹⁹

Cocoa required moist land, a condition that led to the location of cocoa plantations in areas where malaria was inevitably present. With plantations hundreds of acres in size and with hundreds, even thousands, of workers employed, the great problem became one of maintaining the health of the labourers. In the solution of the many problems that made the growing of cocoa no simple matter the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society, the Botanical Garden, and the plantations co-operated. Cocoa trees required shading for protection against the tropical sun. Since the trees did not commence bearing until the end of four years, it was but natural that the planters should experiment with shade trees that might produce an interim profit. For a while it was thought that rubber trees might be used as shading, since the care that the cocoa trees received would benefit the rubber trees and turn to productive value labour that was otherwise of no immediate worth.²⁰

The plantain or banana plant, however, came to be most frequently used, for it supplied workers on the plantations with their staple food. Like many solutions to problems, this particular one had its disadvantages: the bananas attracted lumbering elephants that did much damage to both the plantain and the cocoa. Care had to be taken that shade trees did not have heavy branches, since severe tropical storms of frequent occurrence broke off branches that ruined the less sturdy cocoa trees. The most serious obstacles to the successful growing of cocoa were a pest *Rindenwanz* and a blight *Braunfdule*. If the fight against the latter was likely to be successful, against the pest the struggle was almost hopeless. The destruction of the pests had to occur at a time when only the minutes study of the bark of the cocoa trees would reveal their presence, a study impossible in trees of even moderate height and a task for which native workers had no understanding or interest. The colony's botanist reported in 1900 that the pests so affected the quality of the cocoa that planters lost interest in its cultivation and were

¹⁹Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

²⁰ Ibid.

turning from it to more profitable and less temperamental products like palm oil, kola, and rubber.²¹ So serious was the problem of these pests by 1905 that there were suggestions of a prohibition against natives having cocoa plantations, which proved to be propagating centres for plant diseases and pests, against which the natives were unwilling to fight. After the collection of the cocoa beans the next step in processing was fermentation, to kill the bean without destroying the enzyme.

The Botanical Garden carried on many experiments to determine how many days of fermentation were needed to give the cocoa its best taste, only to be told after the conclusion of the experiment that the colour of the bean, not its taste, sold it in the Hamburg market. The bitter taste was allowed to remain, with the consequence that Cameroon cocoa had to be used in a mixture with other cocoa. After fermentation, drying was necessary, a difficult operation near Victoria, where the plantations were situated, because of the excessive humidity. Placed on tables to dry, the beans ran the danger of being soaked by a sudden storm and of becoming mildewed later. The invention of an artificial drying process in 1903 solved this problem. In 1899 and 1900 plantations reported that natives stole cocoa, which was then sold. To prevent such thefts a decree was issued requiring that each shipment of cocoa from the colony be accompanied by a certificate of origin. Apparently, the regulation had no effect on stealing, for in the following year the colony's largest plantation, that of Victoria, asked to have its own armed guards to protect itself from losses by theft.²²

In 1908 efforts were made to teach the natives the production of cocoa. Natives who had worked on cocoa plantations knew something of the science and started their own plantations in the interior, but traders claimed that they hesitated to bring their produce to the factories in their fear of being recruited and sent to work. Traders were naturally very much interested in having these natives work on their own plantations for the production of a commodity that only the planters in Cameroon had therefore produced for a European market. Government inspection of these native plantations was instituted to keep the cocoa's quality good. Those who handled Cameroon cocoa in Germany objected to the fact that colonial products had to pay a tariff when entering Germany. As a result of manufacturers' objections and agitation for

²¹Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

²² Ibid.

tariff favour, the Government in 1892 permitted a drawback on the cocoa used in the manufacture of chocolate sold outside Germany. Years later people in the cocoa business in Germany wanted a commercial expert sent to Lisbon, which was a great cocoa market, to keep in touch with conditions there.²³

Energetic efforts were made in Germany to persuade people to purchase chocolate made of Cameroon cocoa. In 1896 Jantzen and Thormahlen were instrumental in organizing a Kamerun Kakao- gesellschaft to sell Cameroon cocoa and made contracts for the purchase of the entire crop from plantations in the colony. Colonial exhibitions travelling throughout Germany to arouse popular interest in the colonies and in colonial products distributed chocolate made of Cameroon cocoa free to all visitors, especially to school children. That the Empress purchased Cameroon chocolate and that the Duchess of Saxony praised its quality were facts capitalized in full advertising value. The campaign for domestic consumption was apparently successful, for it was reported in 1897 that Cameroon chocolate was being sold by retail in more than 650 places. In the last years of Germany's possession of the Cameroons the amount of land devoted to the growing of cocoa increased so that on January 1st, 1912, 10,654 hectares were thus being utilized.²⁴ The price of cocoa in the Hamburg market varied considerably over the years. The total value of the amounts exported were 162,160 marks in 1896-97, 1,280,940 marks in 1905, and 4,242,271 marks in 1912. The native share in the amount produced was rather large, being estimated at one-sixth of the total in the year 1911. It was said that a large part of the production went to England, that much more cocoa would be used when it was produced, and that the profits made were excellent.

5.1.3 Rubber and Cotton

For the thirty years of Cameroons' connection with Germany rubber was the most important article of export from the colony. By 1912 this trade had become so important that the Government was worried about what might happen if the world crisis in rubber destroyed the market for that from the Cameroons. That the colony could produce

²³Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

²⁴ Ibid.

rubber was a discovery made by two Swedish traders in 1883; but it was long before its export became a matter of real importance in the colony's trade. The rubber came from the latex obtained by natives from extensive groves in all parts of the interior, especially in the central and southern regions. Native methods did not result in the highest quality and even threatened the extermination of the rubber-producing trees. As early as 1889 Dr. Preuss, at that time in charge of the scientific station at Barombi, reported that the methods in use would destroy the trees.²⁵

As sources near the coast were destroyed by these ruthless methods, rubber had to come from lengthening distances in the interior, where native monopolists managed the trade and refused to let the Europeans participate in it. It is of interest that in 1889, when private interests wanted the interior of the colony opened and thought that they should be rewarded for their labours to that end, Woermann asked that he be given as his reward the exclusive monopoly of rubber, a request that was not granted. In the far interior, where distance made white supervision over processing impossible, natives often put sand into the rubber to give it weight and in other ways injured its quality. Confronted thus by a decreasing supply near the coast, by the opposition of native monopolists, and by a low-grade quality, the Germans found it necessary to take measures that would solve all the problems.²⁶

In 1898 the Economic Committee, soon to become associated with the Colonial Society, became interested in the question. It was decided to send an expert, Dr. Rudolf Schlechter, to West Africa to study the rubber of Togo and the Cameroons and to look into the feasibility of its large-scale production on plantations. Funds for his support came from a lottery and from thirty-six manufacturers, trading firms, plantations, and others to whom the venture appealed. When Schlechter left Germany, it was pointed out that the German colonies were producing only one-twentieth of the total quantity of rubber then consumed in Germany. The expedition arrived at the conclusion that of many varieties of rubber the *Kickxia elastica*, which grew in large quantities in the colony, offered the best prospects for exploitation. Schlechter worked

²⁵Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

²⁶ Ibid.

out to a very fine point all the costs involved in its production on plantations as well as the best conditions for success in the enterprise.²⁷

The Botanical Garden in Victoria produced the seeds, which planters bought by hundreds of thousands in the hope that rubber would have fewer technical difficulties than the production of cocoa. While planters were thus seeking to produce it near the coast, explorers in the interior made known their discovery of regions rich in wild rubber. The largest discoveries were made in the south-eastern parts of the colony. Anxiety developed as knowledge came that the product was being taken from the colony to the English in the north and to the French in the south. News also of the destructive methods of natives in gathering rubber alarmed the Germans. No doubt much of that destructiveness was the result of the competition between European traders. The situation was felt to be so serious in 1904 that the governor issued a decree imposing fines and jail sentences on those destroying rubber trees.²⁸

Agents were sent into the interior to warn natives against their ruthless methods. Explorers took it upon themselves to instruct the blacks in the best methods of tapping trees for the latex, of ridding the latter of impurities, of preparing lumps of proper size for handling without making the rubber too dry. The Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun, within whose extensive grant most of the rubber in southern Cameroons was produced, also carried on educational work among the natives to this end; it likewise constructed roads to speed the transportation of rubber to the coast. One of the tragic things in the situation in Cameroon was the fact that, after plantations had been busy for several years with *kickxia* plants and before these trees could produce anything, the discovery was made that a better rubber plant was the *hevea brasiliensis*. The advantages of the latter were the facts that it could be grown with less difficulty and that it produced a greater quantity of rubber than the *kickxia* variety. After 1906 the Botanical Garden concerned itself with the distribution of *hevea*, which plantations grew in preference to the other.²⁹

²⁷Rudins H.R., *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*. A case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

The fact that the plantations decided to shift from one tree to another and the fact that extensive areas of rubber were discovered in the interior meant that the Cameroons' exported product was wild and not plantation rubber. The latter was negligible in quantity. In 1911 it amounted to only 10,859 kilos in the colony's total production of 2,707,962 kilos. This situation meant that the exploitation of the colony's most valuable commodity was in the hands of natives, that they had to be instructed in its preparation, that they had to be kept from destroying the trees, and that production required improved transportation. There was much criticism of methods followed by traders seeking rubber. Natives employed by the white man were accused of throwing European goods into the huts of those dwelling in rubber country with a warning that the pedlar would return at a given time and expect a certain amount of rubber for the goods delivered to the native. Some Europeans proposed at one time that a head tax payable in rubber be required in some districts and that the supplies thus accumulated be auctioned by the Government to the white traders.³⁰

To study all phases of rubber production, the Economic Committee had a commission of experts appointed. People in Germany who were interested in the manufacture of rubber contributed money for this special work. To widen the market in Germany when a world over production was being felt, the commission recommended that people in the army, post office, and railway services be told the advantages of waterproof raincoats and other clothing. In the colony the Government undertook to educate the natives in all matters connected with the processing of rubber and with its transportation. It sought to assure a future supply by offering prizes to native chieftains for planting trees. The German Government was interested in making Germany independent of other countries for its needs. Lindequist, the Colonial Secretary, pointed out in 1910 that German colonies produced only one-fifth of the rubber that Germany consumed.³¹

The world crisis in rubber which arose because of the successful plantations in Sumatra and elsewhere in the Far East had a fatal effect on Cameroon. The harassed traders of Cameroons believed their trade would survive if the following evils were eliminated: the lack of roads, the lack of central depots where rubber could be gathered and inspected before acceptance into the trade, the ignorance of natives in its

³⁰ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

³¹ *Ibid.*

preparation, the labour shortage, the long period of time elapsing between processing and shipment from the Cameroon ports. Others found fault with the export tax placed on rubber in 1906, and demanded its abolition as a load too great for an already overburdened industry. The Government's contention was that the commodity came in the main from land belonging to the administration, which ought to derive some income from its property. From a very practical point of view the Government hesitated to surrender the tax, which was producing a large and very necessary for the colony.³²

Most people, especially the Government, took the view that Cameroon rubber would be sure of a market if it were of good quality. On his visit to Cameroon in 1913 Dr. Solf stated that the crisis was due to the traders themselves, for they refused to do anything to improve quality, being content to sell any stuff that passed as rubber. The answer of some firms was that they would refuse to get a better grade until the Government abolished the export tax. When proposals were made for improving the rubber, differences of opinion arose as to how that should be done. Should inspection take place in the interior, where rubber was gathered and processed, or on the coast where it was shipped, or in both places? Traders wanted to be certain that an opportunity would be given them to get rid of existing stocks before any test of quality should be applied. In opposition to any inspection whatsoever traders argued that the rejection of poor rubber in the interior of Cameroon could certainly lead to restlessness among the natives, who could not be made to understand the reasons for such rejection. At last, inspection was provided for and the export tax was temporarily suspended.³³

The costs of inspection were to be paid by a special tax. A complication in Cameroon was the claim of the French producers in the newly ceded territory that, under the terms of the cession, they were exempt from the application of these regulations. The work of inspecting rubber in the interior, of instructing natives in its preparation, of constructing roads to make the export of rubber from the colony follow as soon as possible its acceptance in the interior, of trying to persuade steamship lines to lower freight rates for transportation to Europe, all this was going on when the war broke out in 1914. In 1891 the value of the rubber exported from the colony was 1,234,000 marks. It was then by all odds the leading article of trade, although in succeeding years it was to be threatened more, and more by cocoa and by palm

³² Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

³³ *Ibid.*

products. In 1904 the total value was over 4,000,000 marks; in 1912, 11,472,223 marks.³⁴

When experts reported favourably on samples of cotton sent by Zintgraff to Germany in 1888, hopes were born that Cameroon might be a source of that valuable commodity for Germans. Samples in 1891 received the same favourable analysis. The Colonial Council in Germany then felt that it was time to consider ways and means of encouraging cotton production in Cameroon. Experiments conducted near the coast showed that cotton could not be produced there; the excessive humidity, the small number of sunny days, and the heavy rains were too unfriendly. Interest turned toward the hinterland, where it was believed that ideal conditions could be found. The hope of becoming independent of the United States and of England became a great motive for further experimentation. Curiously, it was a motion of the Chicago branch of the Colonial Society that brought the issue before the annual session of the Society in 1900.³⁵

Interest now began in real earnest. The *Kolonialgesellschaft* in 1900 addressed a petition to the chancellor asking for Government support in an effort to make Germany independent of foreign countries for a large number of products including cotton.' While this agitation was going on in Germany, explorers in Cameroon brought news of the discovery of wild cotton in many places in the interior of northern Cameroon. The consequence of these reports and of the pressure exerted by the Colonial Society was that the Government ordered a number of stations in the interior to conduct experiments. The work was carried on at seven or eight widely separated stations, to take advantage of differences in soil and climate. With the support of the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society the colony's greatest private plantation, that of Victoria began work on cotton near Bali. Seed were distributed by the Botanical Garden among natives in the interior; in 1905 the Colonial Society sent to Garoua 500 kilos of seed and a grinding machine in the hope that native princes in Adamawa might be persuaded to experiment with a new and profitable industry.³⁶

³⁴ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

The *Botanische Zentralstelle* in Berlin had some American and Egyptian cotton sent to Bamum for experimentation in 1906. In this same year a special commission of interested people was formed by the Economic Committee. Large sums of money were at its disposal to arouse interest in Germany and to win Reichstag support for the move to make Germany independent of other countries for her cotton. As a part of its programme the commission sent an expert to Bamum in 1906. The Woermann Line declared itself ready to give free transportation to the first 100 cubic metres of cotton produced in Cameroon. Dernburg was strongly behind this move to make Germany independent of other countries for cotton and annual appropriations were made for the studies and experiments necessary to that end. In 1913 an experimental station in Garoua worked with thirteen varieties of cotton on twenty-one hectares of land devoted to that product alone. Although no success came from these costly efforts to get cotton in Cameroon, Germans apparently felt that they were so near success that the work was going on with increased enthusiasm in 1914, when the budget allotted 1,565,000 marks for further experimentation.³⁷

5.1.4 Ramie and Tobacco

Ramie was a fibre plant that aroused great hopes in Germany when it was thought possible to produce it in Cameroon. Its extensive use in the manufacture of cloth in China and in Japan and its silk-like lustre convinced many people that it would take the place of cotton. Woermann was especially interested in the production of ramie; a ten-year monopoly of the production of the fibre in the colony had been granted to him in 1889. He encouraged numerous studies in its production and participated financially in many experiments with machines (decorticators) for separating the fibres from the bark. In 1896 the Economic Committee began making a serious study of the plant and its possibilities in large-scale production. It arranged in 1899 to get money from its lottery for an expedition to Cameroon for this study.³⁸

³⁷ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Funds also came from interested traders; and it is worth noting that Woermann contributed the largest amount, 1000 marks. While this committee was studying the suitability of the soil for ramie, the Colonial Society offered prizes for the invention of a decorticator. The report of the committee that Cameroons' soil was suitable and that a machine had at last been invented led to the formation of a company in Germany to exploit this new fibre, the use of which was, in the eyes of many people, to revolutionize the whole textile industry. But no success followed. Further experimental studies in the colony reached the conclusion in 1904 that the plant did not grow deeply into the soil and that, as a consequence, it could not survive the dry season. Those who said that ramie was the 'fibre of the future' must continue to say that, for nations are still searching for a successful decorticator.³⁹

At a very early date tobacco attracted the interest of some Germans toward the Cameroons, for it was known as early as 1887 that the colony could produce it. In fact some had actually been exported, although its quality was not of the very best. In 1888 Jantzen & Thormahlen participated in the financing of a Tabaks- gesellschaft, which turned out to be a losing venture in spite of many valiant and costly efforts to make the production of tobacco a success.⁴⁰

A number of plantations experimented with tobacco. Although one plantation produced some that was highly regarded in Germany and commanded in 1894 a higher price than that from Sumatra, this plantation gave up its work in 1898, when one at Bibundi took it up. The plantation complained of the lack of qualified workers and wanted the right to make labour-contracts for periods long enough for them to train natives and to benefit by their training. Governor Puttkamer saw a solution of the problems in the employment on tobacco plantations of the slaves of tribes. The importance given to ramie may be gauged in part from the fact that the Government of India since 1869 has been concerned with the invention of such a machine and offered prizes for one. The matter was of sufficient significance to be considered in a conference of nations at Paris in 1901, when several machines were examined for the discovery of one that would solve the problem. Experiments with tobacco continued until 1903, and then the attempt was discontinued.⁴¹

³⁹ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Explorers going into the interior looked for tobacco as they looked for other commodities of value. Many reports told of its discovery in numerous places and some spoke of an excellent quality. But it was not until 1906-7 that the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society became seriously interested in its production and appointed a special group to make a study of it. It had been reported that some of it was doing well at Yaounde with seed supplied by the Botanical Garden. The Economic Committee studied the experiments being made and issued reports on its findings. In 1910 one planter was said to have raised tobacco successfully and to have made large quantities of cigars, which were sold in the colony. In 1911-12 another planter won the prize offered by the Colonial Society to the one successfully producing a large amount of tobacco.⁴²

After this date interest in tobacco production revived and a number of plantations turned to its cultivation as reports spoke of the tobacco's excellent quality for wrapper purposes. In 1911, 1912, and 1913 three tobacco companies were organized with capital reported at 400,000 marks, 400,000 marks, and 2,600,000 marks respectively. Trade statistics began to show a very rapid increase in the amounts of tobacco exported from Cameroon in the years after 1910. There were those who said that production would have been far greater but for the lack of workers. It is of interest to note that traders and planters complained of the new tobacco plantations, which made the colony's labour shortage more serious. Tobacco was about to become an important article of trade for the colony when the war began.⁴³

5.1.5 Coffee, Kola and Minerals

At one time it seemed possible that coffee might give Cameroon a more than ordinary importance for Germany. Exploring in the interior, Morgen discovered coffee growing wild near Yaounde, samples of which were said to be good. In 1893, Preuss of the Botanical Garden concluded that his experiments with coffee were successful enough to justify the hope for profitable cultivation in Cameroon within five years. With the aid of the garden, which supplied the plants, a number of private plantations tried to raise coffee. The Kamerun Hinterland Gesellschaft, organized in 1898, had a plan for coffee

⁴² Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

plantations along the Sannaga River. Failure was the only outcome of these experiments. It was possible that some pest proved injurious to the plants, for in 1899 the Governor had to forbid the importation of coffee plants that had not been disinfected. In spite of these discouraging results hopes did not die, for attempts to plant coffee continued, nourished by the expectation that some day its cultivation would be a success.⁴⁴

The tonic and stimulating qualities of the kola nut explain why natives chew it and why Europeans want its extract. It figured early in the trade of the colony, but it was not until 1903 that the Economic Committee of the Colonial Society decided to send an expert into the colony to investigate possibilities for its extensive production. At the same time a study was made of more uses for kola in Germany. By 1905 it was becoming a popular article for plantation production. With its cultivation by planters and with the discovery of new sources of supply in northern Cameroons near Bamum, it was exported in larger and larger quantities, although its total value was very small in comparison with the rubber, cocoa, and palm products coming from the colony.⁴⁵

The hope that Cameroon might have mineral resources worth exploiting seems to have first come about 1892, when regulations were issued for prospecting and mining. In the following year fifteen prospecting licences were given out; but no success, however, seems to have justified whatever belief lay behind the requests for such permits. Paul Staudinger, who had explored along the Niger with Flegel and was always working as a member of the *Kolonialrat* in Germany to interest Germans in the development of the resources of Adamawa by way of the Niger and Benue Rivers, argued that copper, silver, and tin could be found in the area. He expressed the fear that the English would exploit these minerals if the Germans did nothing. He was right regarding tin; for in 1903 and 1904 English and German prospectors discovered tin near Banjo. 'As to gold and silver, their existence remained the hope of only a few people.'⁴⁶

The geologist Passage, who like Staudinger wanted to interest the Government in Adamawa, wrote that the geologic nature of the region justified the belief that gold might be found there. The use of iron tools by many people in Cameroon mothered the hope that iron might be discovered in the colony. In 1905 it was asserted that a possible

⁴⁴ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

source might be the Mandara Mountains. Salt from natural wells in different parts of the colony was an important article of trade among the natives of the interior. The ownership of salt springs by the Fulbe princes gave the latter a good income, for they were allowed to select a certain percentage of the herds of cattle that came several times a year to the salt licks.⁴⁷

In 1905 the Gesellschaft Nordwest-Kamerun discovered a marketable grade of mica. Peat was discovered in 1909, but not in sufficient amounts to attract exploitation. Marble and slate were found in Adamawa, but the costs of transportation made thought of their exploitation ridiculous. In 1908 the Economic Committee was ready to encourage the development of all colonial mineral resources and offered to help in sending out qualified experts to make a study of the problems involved. The discovery of petroleum near the Wouri and Mungo Rivers in April 1904 gave rise to some very great hopes. Representatives of the plantation company Victoria made the discovery and formed a short-lived subsidiary company for the exploitation of the oil. In 1907 a second effort was made to get petroleum in the colony. In that year the Government was ready to register mines and their owners; but it was a vain effort, for there was never any mining of mineral resources in Cameroon while the Germans held the colony.⁴⁸

5.1.6 Diverse Products

Many other valuable commodities were found in Cameroon, but their exploitation did not give rise to such trade or hopes as did those already discussed. Ostriches in the north-eastern part of the colony, ground nuts, copal for varnishes: these products were considered important, although no attempts were made to develop them on any extensive scale. A good deal of attention was devoted to the breeding of horses and cattle. To get types of cattle that might be of greatest benefit to Cameroon, the administration imported cattle from Europe and crossed them with native stock. Cattle played a large part in the trade of the Hausas in the hinterland. In 1912 the importation of bananas into Germany from Cameroon began on a large scale. Plantations to grow them were started and in 1914, a special ship for the transportation of bananas from the tropics to Germany was launched at Hamburg. A technical commission of the Economic

⁴⁷ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Committee studied at the same time the practicability of manufacturing flour from the banana.⁴⁹

It was not really until 1905 that serious attention was given to the exploitation of the timber resources of the colony. The Economic Committee and its experts made a report on the woods of Cameroon and concluded that they offered good opportunities for business men. Scores of samples were sent to Germany and examined for their value. Transportation costs made impossible any exploitation of timber at places far from the coast. Near the coast it was different. A company for the exploitation of the Cameroons' forests was founded in 1909 and was given a large concession of land by the Government. The interest of the Government in the conservation and in the scientific exploitation of the precious woods of the colony was manifest in the succeeding years. There was a forestry school in the colony and trained officials were appointed to safeguard the colony's timber. The budget of 1912 dealt at great length with the Cameroons' forests. Increasing amounts of timber were being exported from the colony, and their value increased from 388,000 marks in 1911 to 696,000 marks in 1912.⁵⁰

Cameroon was first of all a German colony in the production of precious woods. Mahogany and Ebony were the most important of the twenty-eight varieties exported in 1912. Sugar, rice, and indigo could be grown in parts of Cameroon, and there were those who hoped that some day the exploitation of these products would prove profitable. In the Botanical Garden experiments were being carried on with a very large variety of other tropical commodities of more or less significance to European countries: tea, jute, hemp, sisal, vanilla, all spices, pimento, pepper, cardamom, soya bean, cinnamon, silk, camphor, wax, cinchona, and others. Investigations were made into the possibilities of distilling alcohol from tropical plants. In Germany, there were chemical institutes seeking by their analytical methods to create new products or to improve the quality or quantity of the old.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

5.2 Social Facilities

The Germans also played an eminent role in the social development of Cameroon, these facilities were established in the domain of health and education. In the sphere of health the following social amenities were noticeable,

5.2.1 Health

The Germans played an important role in the development of social facilities in the domain of health in Cameroon during the colonial era. Health policies of the German Government in the Cameroons were based on the frankly stated principle that the impossibility of employing white men made it necessary to use the natives for the exploitation of natural resources and that it was a duty of the administration, therefore, to keep the natives in the best possible physical condition for work. The policy was commanded by a self-interest enlightened in a high degree and realistic in its expression. Much concern was manifested over reports that the population of the Cameroons was decreasing and much attention was given to factors other than disease that tended to keep the population from increasing. It was known that the people of the interior were seriously affected by the removal of the strongest men for work on the plantations or in railroad construction. The use of both men and women as carriers made it impossible for normal family life to exist and left women no time for bearing and nursing children.⁵²

One of the reasons for the strict regulation of the importation and sale of arms and liquor was the harmful effect of such European 'goods' on native population. The occasional shortage of food, like that in the Dume region in 1909, had its serious influence on population. Polygamy was regarded by some as aiding and by others as checking the growth of the colony's population. The former said that polygamy made it possible for women to bear children and to nurse them while other wives did necessary work in the huts or in the fields; that in monogamous marriages women turned to abortion or weaned their children very early to keep child-bearing and nursing from interfering with the work required of them. The others argued that polygamy kept many

⁵² Rudin HR, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914*, A Case Study on Modern Imperialism, Yale University New Haven, University Press, 1938.

young men from getting wives and having families, and therefore was a check on population.

Besides, the factors affecting population were often of such a nature that measuring their influence is out of the question. But some studies were made in an effort to discover the realities of the situation in the Cameroons. It was learned that the death rate among children in one tribe was 48 per cent. The medical report for the year 1909-10 gave an account of the careful study of the death rate among children in one area, where doctors called in over 1000 native wives and asked them about their children. It was found that 246 of the women were sterile. The questioning of about 700 revealed that they had given birth to a total of 2382 children, 1205 boys and 1177 girls. Of the 821 that had died it was learned that 190 were born dead, 115 died of malaria, none from intestinal diseases, 66 from the lack of mother's milk. A total of 133 abortions was admitted by the 700 women. There is no way of telling whether this situation was typical or unusual for the colony.⁵³

Infact, the low birth rate was a matter of concern to a member of the Woermann family, who offered a prize, of 6000 marks, for the best study leading to practical measures to improve the rate of birth." Efforts to deal with the many causes of the high death rate and the small population met with various and peculiar obstacles; with what success nobody can tell. Because of the high death rate on the plantations the Government insisted that only the healthiest people be recruited in the interior for such work, for it had been charged that chieftains had sometimes sent the weakest members of the tribe for plantation work. A selection of the physically strongest for the plantations would give the latter a better health record; but the fact remains that only the weakest members of the tribe remained at home. What the final effect of this particular practice was on the health of villages in the interior can be imagined only. The Government also suggested that workers be taken from regions where climate and food were most nearly like those of the place of work. When there was talk in 1913-14 of prohibiting the employment of women as carriers, traders protested and blocked favourable action on the suggestion.⁵⁴

⁵³ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The care of workers, whether carriers or planters, was regulated in great detail by a number of decrees. The success of such regulations depended upon the amount of supervision possible; and only a little could be done with the comparatively small staff of trained doctors available in the colony. Rubber traders, fearing great losses from the rubber crisis and from the intense competition that existed, paid little heed to the quarantines placed by the Government around regions suffering from smallpox or other diseases; they were much more concerned about getting compensation from the Government for the losses they suffered when regions were closed to them. Some traders accepted Government regulations in the fight against sleeping sickness on the understanding that traffic through infected areas could be barred except at certain points. Although rigid rulings required plantations to have trained medical men looking after the health of their workers and to have on hand necessary supplies of medicine, supervision was difficult because the administration lacked doctors for such work. It was said that the doctors came too late when they were needed, or came only when an epidemic broke out.

In January 1913, the governor ordered administration doctors to make regular visits to plantations at least every four months to enforce the health decrees. As time went on, regulations for the health of native workers became more rigid. Stress was laid on the need of greater care in the selection of labour recruits and in their transfer to the plantations. On April 27th, 1914, a decree required a report on the number of deaths among plantation workers. Heads of plantations were unwilling to bear all the blame for the high death rates; some complained that they had no disciplinary authority for forcing natives to observe simple rules of health and wondered how they could prevent dysentery in the dry season so long as natives would drink water used for bathing and other purposes. They spoke of the impossibility of isolating natives when there were contagious diseases. Plantation heads complained to the Government that it was difficult to persuade natives to come to a doctor for the first visit, to say nothing about succeeding ones. When such problems arose in dealing with the ills of natives who worked for white men, one can only imagine the greater difficulties that existed where no such contacts were maintained.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*, pp. 345-356.

Moreover, the most serious diseases of the Cameroons requiring the attention of the German doctors were: malaria and black-water fever, smallpox, sleeping sickness, leprosy, dysentery, and venereal diseases. There were other serious ailments like filariasis, beri-beri, tuberculosis, pneumonia, numerous skin diseases, and tumours. Worm diseases were found in all parts of the colony. In some places it was discovered that 100 per cent of the natives had worms and in many instances had the worst form of it, ankylostomiasis. Yellow fever did not exist in the colony, but there was great fear of it after 1911, Leprosy was widespread in the colony although that fact was not known to the administration until rather late. In 1908 Governor Seitz, upon discovering how great a problem leprosy was, took steps to inform chieftains about the serious nature of the disease and began agitating for leper settlements, where the sick were to be treated so well that they would wish to remain there and keep away from settled communities. The annual report for 1909-10 said there were about 20,000 lepers in the colony. In the following year appropriations were made for a campaign against leprosy by erecting homes for the isolation of the lepers, although it was thought to be a hopeless task to get these people away from their villages. Some of the money for fighting leprosy came from the natives themselves.⁵⁶

Malaria was general in the lowlands of the colony, mainly along the coast, where the plantations were, and in the low-lying districts of the interior. In the highlands of northern Cameroons it existed only when brought there from the lowlands. Natives in Buea used to say that they did not wish to come to Victoria because they got fever the nearer they came to the sea, not knowing that they had come into the malarial zone. Most of the plantation workers came from regions free of malaria and they suffered a good deal by having to travel through regions infected with it. Very likely, it was malaria that accounted for a good deal of what the white man called native laziness. Apart from encouraging the extensive use of quinine, the Government limited its fight against the disease to those communities where whites were settled. Pools of water, even those in discarded tins, had to be removed to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes. Such a policy demanded a careful supervision of water tanks that supplied Europeans in Victoria, Duala, and Kribi. There were not many places in the Cameroons where the use of running water made it possible to get rid of tanks. One of the reasons for taking land from the Duala people and moving them away from the European settlements to a

⁵⁶ Ngoh, V.J. *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe: Press Book, 1996.

new native town of their own was the desire to rid the European section of malaria, for it had been discovered that many natives in Duala had the disease.⁵⁷

In addition, Smallpox was found in many parts of the colony also, breaking out now and then into epidemics that spread rapidly. Doctors were busy in 1904-5 inoculating natives. Getting vaccine to regions in the far interior where it was needed often took so long a time that deterioration ruined it by the time of its arrival. Careful arrangements were worked out for the rapid transportation of vaccine from places where it was manufactured into areas where it was needed. When smallpox threatened and quick action was needed, the Government successfully taught natives the method of arm-to-arm vaccination. In 1909 the vaccination of everybody, native and non-native, in the colony was required; areas affected by the disease could be barred to traders. In the interior at stations where there were cattle European doctors had instructions to prepare vaccine and to arrange for its speedy delivery to areas in need of it. In greatest need of vaccination were the carriers who were constantly on the move from place to place and might spread the disease. To prevent such danger the Government had a vaccinating station at Lolodorf on the road between Yaounde and Kribi.

Venereal diseases, especially framboesia, afflicted a large part of the colony's population. Reports were constantly made that these diseases were spreading, being part of the cargo of thousands of carriers. Even among whites an increase of venereal disease was reported in 1909. Polygamy was blamed by some as a cause of the disease's spread among natives, for young men, unable to purchase wives, consorted with prostitutes or with native women whose husbands wanted to earn a little incidental money. Syphilis was introduced into the colony by the white man and was said to be increasing in 1913.

Infact, the disease that caused doctors their greatest concern was sleeping sickness. It was first noticed in Duala in 1906, when some horses that had come from the interior died of it. Immediately a description of the symptoms was sent to doctors elsewhere in the colony along with instructions to observe sick animals closely and to kill immediately those infected with the disease.' In 1907 a prize of 3000 marks was offered for the discovery of a successful way of protecting animals from the tsetse fly; in 1908 the prize was doubled, according to an announcement made by the Colonial

⁵⁷ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

Society. In 1908 the disease was reported near the Chad; in the following year some Douala natives had sleeping sickness.⁵⁸

As in the case of other diseases, its spread was said to be due in large part to native carriers and to the construction of roads that made travel easy. There was general agreement that the disease did not exist in the colony but had been brought in from the outside. By 1911 it was making great gains in south-eastern Cameroons. In regions where the tsetse fly was found officials were instructed to destroy the bushes in swamps and near rivers as a means of combating the pest. To many Germans it was incredible that the Government was interested in 1911 in acquiring French Congo, the supposed home of sleeping sickness, as compensation for the surrender of German rights in Morocco. Reports in succeeding years told of the very rapid spread of the disease in the Cameroons. Increased appropriations for combating it became necessary. Two Doctors fighting sleeping sickness in 1912 numbered five, and five more were added in 1913. Natives were said to be so terrified by the appearance of the disease that they drove those infected with it into the bush to die. Because natives in affected areas had no understanding of the intentions of the Government in treating people having the disease gifts of money were offered to persuade them to come to medical centres for treatment.

The costs of fighting disease in the Cameroons were relatively great. The 1914 budget carried a special appropriation of 650,000 marks for the campaign against disease and was accompanied by a memorandum describing the situation. Most of the money was for the fight against sleeping sickness in the territory just acquired from France. The hope was expressed that sometime in the future there would be an institute in the Cameroons for the study of tropical diseases. Attention was called to the difficulty in getting trained doctors. During 1911-1912 there were only twenty-nine German doctors in the colony: nine were connected with the civil administration and fifteen with the military, and both groups did much work among the natives; the remaining five were engaged to fight sleeping sickness. The lack of medical service in many parts of the colony made the need for additional doctors very great, a need met in part by the 1913 budget, which provided for forty-two doctors.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

The German administration was confronted in Cameroon with the same problems that troubled doctors in other tropical colonies. Natives found it difficult to understand the necessity for medical treatment. They refused to come a second time for treatment, especially if their pains had disappeared after the first visit and allowed them to assume that they had been cured. Instead of telling the white men of insane people, natives kept them in hiding in the hope of placating the evil spirit before it could attack and injure them. In Duala, the centre of European residence and trade, natives were forced to adopt standards of cleanliness that proved a strain on native temperament as well as on German patience. Large and small pools of water had to be destroyed; streets had to be kept clean; dogs were practically forbidden by means of a very high tax; natives walking about after 6.30 at night in certain sections had to carry bright lanterns; dwellings and other buildings had to have lanterns lit outside at night; dancing and the beating of drums were prohibited; and natives were no longer allowed to bury the dead in the huts of the living. After 1911 the Government required building permits in Victoria, Duala, Kribi, and Edea in an effort to prevent the construction of native huts of straw in sections where whites resided. In times of epidemics the Government found it necessary to burn down native buildings, an act difficult for natives to understand.⁶⁰

The high death rates among whites and the rapid turnover of officials and others by reason of ill health made the Government attentive to the needs of the European community. Health considerations caused the removal of the colony's centre of administration from Duala to Buea on Mt. Cameroon, where the climate was favourable. Several hospitals were maintained in the colony by the Government as well as by missionaries. People looked forward to the completion of the railways into the interior in the belief that whites could settle on the high inner plateau. There was much talk of moving the capital again, from Buea to some equally healthy but more central point in the interior that was easily accessible by rail. On its farms the Government raised fresh meat and vegetables and produced dairy supplies for Europeans, but these advantages were not found everywhere in the colony. Much attention was given to the improvement of the homes of whites.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

In its efforts to check the spread of venereal disease or to diminish the consumption of liquor the Government received little co-operation from the whites. The administration was often puzzled by the inconsistency of Europeans who demanded that living conditions be improved for themselves and for the natives but continued to disregard government warnings about their own health and to risk the health of natives by sending carriers into quarantined zones. Figures show that the Government succeeded in cutting down the death rate among whites considerably during the years of German control. In 1912-13, 23 whites died out of a white population ten times as large as that in 1893, when 26 whites died of the 204 then residing in the colony. Long before 1913 conditions had so improved in the Cameroons that women came to live with their husbands and larger numbers of white children were born there.

5.2.2 Education

The Germans also played an eminent role in the development of education in Cameroon during the colonial era. When Woermann worked out the details of an administration for the Cameroons in October 1884, he mentioned the fact that schools would be needed. Bismarck, who had promised the Reichstag that the colonies should cost Germany as little as possible, said that grants for schools could not be made in the first budget but would have to await later consideration. As a result, nothing was done for education until 1886, when Governor Soden asked that two teachers be sent to the Cameroons. Since the creation of an administration for the colony was being placed in the hands of the Hamburg traders, Woermann worked out for Bismarck the general principles of an educational programme. He recommended the teaching of arithmetic, reading and writing German, and some religious instruction; he also suggested an agricultural school to give the natives some idea of the principles involved in tilling the soil.

There was much debate as to how these schools were to be financed. It was the governor's recommendation that natives attending the schools should pay a small fee; others suggested that private interests in Germany be called on to contribute money for the schools; and a third suggestion was that the missionaries be asked to undertake the work of education. As a matter of fact, the Easier Missionary Society began raising money for that purpose. Then the Government suddenly decided that it would not wait and sent out its own teacher to start its first schools. The teacher chosen was a man

named Christaller, who had been recommended by the Easier Mission. After visiting schools in other European colonies on the coast he arrived in the Cameroons in January 1887. There he lived for a while in a factory belonging to the firm of Jantzen & Thormahlen. Assisted by a member of the Bell family, he began his study of the Douala language and had ready in the following year a book of stories for use in teaching the natives their own language. He also prepared a German grammar of the Douala language, the uniform spelling of which was agreed upon by missionaries and Government in 1888.⁶²

The land for the first school was the gift of King Bell; Governor Soden raised some money for its construction in Christaller's homeland in south Germany. By 1888 the school was in operation. In the following year the governor wanted a second school, to be located in that part of Douala known as Deido (Dido). This new school was opened January 1890 with twenty-five students. A few years later a third school was started in Victoria, chiefly at the request of Pastor Joseph Wilson, a native Baptist for whom the Germans always had a liking because of his efforts to win support for Germany among the pro-English natives of that community. Infact, adherence to a consistent school and educational programme was rather difficult because the unfriendly climate caused the death of many teachers. No reliance could be placed on German-speaking natives, of whom there were too few in the colony. To get a teacher for the new school in Victoria it was arranged that Christaller was not satisfied to give natives an elementary education; he wanted to give those who had left school and were already employed by the Government or by traders an opportunity to continue their study of the German language.

In November 1896 he suggested that a library be founded and that a continuation school be organized to help these Negroes. His death from black-water fever in 1896 was a great loss and left the colony temporarily without any white educator to superintend its schools. Governor Puttkamer, who took office in 1895, so displeased with the Douala people that he wanted the Government in 1897 to withdraw from education and to hand over that work to the Easier Mission. As a matter of fact, Christaller's successor was sent to Victoria in 1897 and a part of the Douala educational

⁶² Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

work was taken over by the Easier missionaries after some haggling with the governor over the price to be paid for the school buildings that the Government had constructed. Putt-kamer's dislike of the Douala people is easily accounted for. As monopolists of the hinterland trade they had a big advantage over the white traders as well as over the natives of the interior, aided in a measure by the training they had received in mission and government schools. The governor also objected to the teaching of the Douala dialect in the school at Victoria because he felt that the influence of the Douala tribe was already too great and should be curtailed.⁶³

In 1906 the Government established a school at Garoua in Adamoua and its teacher was a native from Victoria named Steane. The first intention of the administration had been to have a school for the children and relatives of the ruling classes, but the suspicions of the latter forced the Government to admit all classes of people into the school, which started with forty-five students. According to the resident commissioner at Garoua, Strumpell, a good deal of opposition to the school developed among the Moslems, who feared that Christianity was to be taught in the school rather than Mohammedanism. Heads of the Koran schools had much to do with spreading that rumour abroad.

To avoid all appearance of injuring the religious feelings of the people in any way, the Government through Strumpell arranged that the native children in the school should study their own religion and should be compelled to attend religious services in the local mosque every Friday. Arabic was taught in the school to enable the students to understand the Koran, portions of which the Government wished to have translated into German for use in the school. It was the hope of authorities that the school would train interpreters, clerks, and people who could supervise customs houses. Natives were also taught a few crafts as well as some of the elementary principles of agriculture in the garden run by the school.

On 18th December 1907, the educational system in the colony was discussed at Duala in an important conference presided over by Governor Seitz; present were representatives of the Government and missions, including the American Presbyterians. The use of the German language was discussed at great length and the Government

⁶³ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

expressed itself opposed to the use of any other European language in the schools of the colony. There was also a growing opposition to the widespread use of the Douala dialect, which was being taught to many natives outside Duala as their own language. Objections to the Douala dialect were founded in the fear that the wider use of that language would increase the influence of the Douala people, who had become a serious problem to the Government in many ways and were said to be stirring up general opposition to the whites. Governor Seitz insisted that the area be made smaller where the Douala dialect was taught.⁶⁴

To keep up high standards of instruction in German, the Government recommended the appointment of an examining board to visit the schools. A course of study was worked out for the schools in the belief that five years were necessary for proficiency in reading and writing the German language. Arithmetic was given the next important place in the educational programme. The rest of the curriculum contained instruction that began with elements in the immediate environment of the children and led gradually to a study of the geography of Cameroon and later to the geography of the world. Instruction was also given in the history of Germany after 1870; and general science was taught to give natives some knowledge of minerals, the products of plant and animal life, rainfall, barometers, thermometers, and simple machines.

Infact, there was much discussion in this conference of school attendance. The Government favoured compulsory attendance, but it was pointed out that enforcement would be impossible. The conference's final decision was that any chieftain asking for a school should be required to see that children attended regularly. It was also made a requirement that any native desiring official recognition of school attendance in order to obtain work of any kind must attend school for at least 150 days in the fifth year. It was the wish of the Government that children begin school at the age of five or six. In the governorship of Dr. Seitz there was a general tightening of standards and discipline.

On April 25th, 1910, he issued a decree that restated the principle that only German could be the second language taught in the schools. Requirements for attendance were made stricter; students applying for school had to remain there to the

⁶⁴ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

end of the term agreed upon; students leaving school earlier than that must pay for the costs; people keeping students from going to school could be fined. In the following year an order of the acting governor required the payment in advance of six marks tuition in Douala. It cannot be determined whether the purpose of the fee was to compel attendance or whether it was of a punitive character because of the many differences between the administration and the Douala people over the questions of regular taxes and the expropriation of land.⁶⁵

Closer regulation and supervision of the teaching of German in the schools were also ordered by the decree of April 19 10. It provided that mission schools, to get aid from the Government for teaching German, must follow the school plan submitted by the administration and that the amount of financial aid given to the school would depend upon the success of students in passing official examinations in German. For a number of years an average of 20,000 marks was appropriated for the aid of missions in teaching German. Prizes were likewise conferred on native students for proficiency in the use of the language. Because of requests from the council in Cameroon and from the Reichstag the 1914 budget raised the grant for these purposes from the 30,000 marks of 1913 to 60,000 marks; the increase was necessary in part because the American Presbyterian Mission, which hitherto had not accepted the Government's offer of aid in its fear of educational control through the official plan of education, finally accepted it and began sending students to the German examinations. The coming of additional Catholic missions into Cameroon might have been another factor behind the increased appropriation.

The value of having natives able to read and write in native dialects is clear; the difficulty was to choose which dialect should be so used where there were so many of them. The objections of the Government to the wider use of the Douala language in places that had closely related dialects has already been pointed out. In the grasslands of north-western Cameroon there were so many dialects that the various tribes spoke and still do speak pidgin English to make themselves understood by others in their periodic market days. The German Government opposed the use of English and wanted its use to cease in the colony, as a notice of March 31st, 1913, rather angrily demanded. Since

⁶⁵ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

Bali was a very important centre in this part of the Cameroons missionaries decided to put that language into writing and to teach it to the natives; it was impossible as well as purposeless to teach each small tribe its own dialect. But, as in the case of the Douala language, the administration objected because of a fear that the growing power of the Bali ruler was a threat to peoples in that section of the colony: no good could be achieved by increasing the sphere of his influence.⁶⁶

Conferences between the grassland missionaries and the Government in 1912 resulted in a decision to use the Bamum dialect rather than the Bali. In regard to the Bali and Douala dialects the Government would not accept the arguments. Even missionaries working at present in this area find pidgin English essential in their work, of the missionaries that it was convenient for them to make use of the two dialects already reduced to writing. Rather frankly, the administration once said that it liked the policy of the Catholic Mission, which relied on German rather than on native dialects in its work. As a matter of fact there is reason to believe that the Government would have preferred the use of German exclusively; but Protestant missionaries refused to accept that view because they found the native languages indispensable.

The Government did not confine its educational interests to instruction in the reading and writing of German. In 1910 it established its agricultural school at Victoria. In 1913 an important decree regulated the course of study in the school, whose purpose was to train natives for agricultural work in the colony. Enrolled students had to know German and must have completed a course in mission or government schools to qualify for the agricultural school with its required two-year course. In the first year students received free board and tuition; in the second year they were to be paid five marks a month. Upon entering the school a student had to sign a contract with the Government, binding himself to remain in the school for two years and to work for the Government for five years on the conclusion of the course; if he left school before completing the two years' course, he had to pay the Government at the rate of 200 marks for each year in school.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp.345-356.

In Dschang and in Yaounde, there were other agricultural schools. The training that natives received in the experimental gardens attached to stations in the interior and the instruction given to natives in the processing of palm products and in the preparation of rubber for market must be regarded as part of the educational programme of the Government. At Buea there were schools to instruct natives in cabinet-making and upholstering; here a large number of journeymen and apprentices were at work manufacturing furniture, canes, ornamental boxes inlaid with ivory, and similar objects. The Cameroon' budget for 1913 contemplated the erection of three new schools in the hinterland, for it was thought harmful to send boys from the interior to schools on the coast, where they lost contact with their own people; it was felt that schools nearer home would have a closer relationship to the peculiar economic needs of the locality. These three schools would have been in addition to the four regular schools already in operation in 1913: Douala with 362 students, Victoria with 257, Yaounde which had started in 1908 with 76 pupils with 160, and Garoua with 54. In addition to these schools there were also continuation schools in both Victoria and Douala.⁶⁸

It was from this account that the work of the Government for education was not extensive; in fact, there were critics in the Reichstag who said just that. The Government apparently limited its own schools to the number thought necessary for the training of natives to work in the service of the administration. For all other educational work the Government placed its reliance on the missions and granted thousands of marks to them for teaching the German language. This reliance on the missions was criticized in the Reichstag, where the demand was successfully made in 1913 that more money should be spent for education in the colonies. In 1913 the missions had a total of 631 schools with over 40,000 pupils in them distributed as follows: the Baptist Mission with 57 schools and 3151 pupils; the American Presbyterians with 97 schools and 6545 pupils; the German Catholic Mission with 151 schools and 12,532 pupils; and the Easier Mission with 319 schools and 17,833 pupils. In the missionary schools both boys and girls were taught.

Instruction was given not only in Christian studies, in native dialects and in German, but also in shoe-making, tailoring, cabinet-making, brick-making, carpentry,

⁶⁸ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*, pp.345-356.

machinery, sewing, washing, cooking, ironing, and numerous other crafts and arts that would enable native Christians to make a living. It was this practical work in education that had the warm approval of traders and planters, who felt that most other missionary activity was indefensibly sentimental and impractical. Some curious hopes and fears had their source in thoughts about educating the Negro. The Government expressed the hope in its 1913 budget that educated Negroes would need more things than the uneducated and that education would thus lead to an increase in the colony's trade. There were some people who feared that educated natives would take advantage of their ignorant fellows; it was said of the Douala people in this connexion that they knew that every written paper was a great instrument for exploiting uneducated Negroes. There can be no doubt of the fact that one reason for difficulty with the Douala people was that many of these intelligent natives could read and write and had some ideas of their rights, which they defended shrewdly and often with a wit superior to that of ill-tempered officials placed above them.

5.3 British Colonial Policies and Practices

5.3.1 Economic Development Policies

The British played a significant role in the economic development of Southern Cameroon during the colonial period. By 1961, there were approximately 1,000 miles of motorable roads in the Southern Cameroons. Of these 633 miles were government and 442 miles were community roads, with a total density of 23 square miles of road, compared to 7,629 miles of road with a density of 4 square miles in Eastern Nigeria. Moreover, only about a tenth of the roads or about 100 miles were tarred. While the rest, including some of the trunk A roads were passable only in the dry season and closed to traffic in the rainy season. This was the case with the Kumba-Mamfe Road, Mamfe-Bamenda Road, and Bamenda-Nkambe Road.⁶⁹

In order to divert the economy of Southern Cameroons towards Nigeria, the Nigerian government constructed roads between Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon especially between Mamfe and Ikom and between Mamfe and Calabar. This was achieved by bridging the Bansara to link Ikom and Mamfe and the Cross River to link

⁶⁹ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Buea, August 1996.

Calabar and Mamfe. In 1948, the Kumba-Mamfe road was also constructed to link Eastern Nigeria to the production centers in the Kumba and Victoria Divisions. The Mamfe-Bamenda Road and the Bamenda-Nkambe-Wum Road were ignored because they were not of immediate benefit to Nigeria.

In the domain of sea transport, the Sea ports of Tiko and Victoria in the Southern Cameroons were linked to the ports of Calabar and Port Harcourt in Eastern Nigeria by the provision of adequate shipping facilities. Canoes and ships were used to facilitate trade between the ports. There was a weekly sailing trip from Calabar to Victoria and back, the vessel was permitted to carry 4 cabins, 6 saloon and 168 passengers. This was considered to be able to satisfy air transport demands between the two ports. The ports of Tiko and Ekondo-Titi were also used for importation and exportation of goods between Nigeria and Cameroons.

In 1952, the Nigerian Government convinced the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) to link the ports of Tiko and Victoria and the food-producing plantation areas by road. Consequently, a road was constructed from Tombel to below the Mungo River falls. This road eased the evacuation by water down the Mungo River of produce from the fertile areas north of Kumba to the port of Tiko where they were shipped to Calabar to the advantage of Nigeria. Southern Cameroons external trade therefore flowed through Nigerian ports to the advantage of Nigeria.⁷⁰

Air transport in the Southern Cameroons was also neglected. The Tiko Airport was directly connected to the Calabar Airport in Eastern Nigeria. A weekly passenger and mail service between Tiko and Lagos was inaugurated in December 1947 by the West African Airways Corporation. The Tiko Airport remained an appendage of the Nigerian airports until 1954 when some direct link was established with British airports.

The Inadequate transport infrastructure favoured the *Nigerianisation* of the Southern Cameroon economy in several ways. First the Motor transport sector came to be dominated by Igbo boys who worked in the Eastern Region of Nigeria during the wet season and in the Southern Cameroons during the dry season. It was generally more difficult for Cameroonian transporters to find work in the Eastern Region because

⁷⁰ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

they were not familiar with the good road network and the culture of the people. Again, due to the exceptionally poor conditions of the roads, it was a high risk to invest in road transport especially by trailer, bus or taxi. Most transport vehicles in the Southern Cameroons were trucks in which passengers were carried together with goods. Such trucks were easily acquired by Igbo boys through the Calabar and Port Harcourt ports. Popular amongst these Igbo Lorry drivers were Chukuma on the Bamenda-Meta Road and Okoro on the Bamenda-Banso Road. They dictated the transport fares as the indigenes were not involved in the transportation business.⁷¹

The roads in the Southern Cameroons especially the Kumba-Mamfe road were constructed largely with Nigerian labour. They conceived the project and served as road engineers, road overseers, time keepers and general labour. They dominated the Public Work Department in the Southern Cameroons and were better placed to understand the road network and its problems. All roads and ports linked the “colony”, Cameroon to the “motherland”, Nigeria since the economy of the colony was at the service of motherland.

Nigerians also dominated the transport sector because of their long experience in long distance trade and the capital they accumulated from the decades of trade between the Europeans along the coast and the Africans in the interior. By the late 1940s there was an insignificant number of Southern Cameroonian businessmen in the transport sector since they could not compete with the experienced Igbo transporters. The British conclusion that Nigerians dominated the transport sector in the Southern Cameroon because the indigenes were satisfied being hunters and farmers was erroneous and malicious. Nigerians had long invested in long distance trade and in the transportation of goods from the interior to the coastal ports. They constructed and controlled the roads linking Nigeria to Mamfe and then the rest of Cameroon.

In order to dominate the motor transport sector, exploit the indigenes through high transport fares and prevent indigenous entrepreneurs from venturing into the sector, the Nigerians set up a trade union called the Association of Motor Transport Workers with Simon Nwukecha as President and Dickson Ijeoma as Secretary. With headquarter at Tiko, Victoria Division, its other objectives were to regulate the activities of its members and check competition from French. Cameroon transporters.

⁷¹ Nfi J.L. Nigerians on Mission in the British Southern Cameroons, Bamenda, 2014.

Who introduced cheap transport fares in the 1950s.⁷² In 1951 Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon transporters led by Arrey created a rival trade union called Cameroon Motor Transport Union to counter Nigerian domination of the sector. The Igbo union responded by writing a petition to the Resident in Buea against the new union. The Nigerians were determined to chase Cameroonians out of all sectors of the economy.

Inadequate road infrastructure between Cameroon and Nigeria and the presence of the Atlantic Ocean, Cross River and Ndian River made river transport indispensable for trade between the two territories. This geographical obstacle gave the Efik or Ibibio of Calabar, Nigeria an advantage to dominate the river transport because they were familiar with canoe transport. They used their canoes to transport manufactured goods, cash crops and foodstuffs across the Atlantic Ocean, Cross River and Ndian River to and from Oron, Calabar, Port Harcourt, Aba, Onitsha in Nigeria and Tiko, Victoria and Mamfe in Cameroon. Southern Cameroonians were completely ' excluded from this river transport sector.

5.3.2 Trade

The British colonialists equally played an important role in the development of trade in Southern Cameroons. Infact, the direct consequence of poor transport network and Igbo domination of the transport sector was the Nigerionisation of the territory's commerce. Between 1922 and 1954, more than 90 percent of internal trade, export and import trade were in the hands of Nigerians. When in 1921, the Nigerian customs tariff was applied to the Southern Cameroons, the fiscal barrier between the two states shifted to the new border between British and French Cameroons. British Cameroonians and Nigerian traders began to trade freely and competitively between their two states. Trade items included cattle, cocoa, palm oil and kernel, rubber from the Southern Cameroons and manufactured goods such as clothes, drinks, cigarettes and foodstuffs like rice, *gari* and yams from Nigeria.

It should be recalled here that before the administrative union of the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria, Nigeria had experienced a greater degree of economic and

⁷² NAB, File si/1951/9, Cameroon Motor Transport Union, pp. 21-22.

social development and had already produced a viable middle class. Nigerians, especially the Efik and Igbo in Calabar had for several decades played the role of middlemen in trade between Europeans and the groups in the Southern Cameroons through Bayang middlemen. They were therefore more experienced and aggressive in trade than Southern Cameroonians.

Although the class of traders was not well developed in the Southern Cameroons like in Nigeria by 1916, the departure of the Germans greatly disrupted interior trade that flowed towards Douala through the Nkongsamba-Bonaberi railway line. Cameroon traders needed time to adapt to the new orientations and the new trade routes (towards Calabar). On March 2, 1916, the Nigerian Governor-General issued proclamation legalizing silver coins in the British Cameroons to the advantage of Nigerian traders who were already used to it. By the proclamation, all silver coins which were legal tender in Nigeria were to be legal tender for all purposes in British Cameroon and the rate of exchange was one shilling to one mark. The silver coins from Nigeria were not easily accepted in some parts of the British Cameroons.

In Bali, for example the traders preferred brass rods and the marks that were being withdrawn. Another law, the Nigerian Customs Ordinance of March 2, 1917, stipulated that no goods whose exportation was prohibited from Nigeria could be exported from British Cameroons. The change of trade routes, the resistance to the new legal tender and the many and confusing legislatures that guided trade in the Southern Cameroons following the departure of the Germans did not favour the emergence of a business class comparable with that in Nigeria. The union with Nigeria therefore brought together two unequal communities of traders and it was normal that the more experienced community of Nigerian traders excel.⁷³

Nigerian traders had access to bank loans before 1922 and from 1933 when indigenous banks began to feature in Nigeria, opportunities for these loans increased tremendously. In fact, by 1948, there were four indigenous banks in Nigeria: The National Bank of Nigeria, the Agbonmagbe Bank, Nigeria Farmers and Commercial Bank, and African Continental Bank. On the other hand, their Southern Cameroons counterparts could only benefit from loans when the Barclays Bank opened two branches in Victoria and Mamfe in 1954. As a result, igbo traders dominated trade in cash crops

⁷³ NAB, File S1/1951/9, Cameroon Motor Union, pp. 21-22.

(Coffee, Rubber, Palm Kernel and Oil and Cocoa) for expatriate firms and the produce marketing boards because such trade needed sufficient capital.

Apart from the sufficient capital that cash crop trade needed, the marketing and export of these cash crops was in the hand of the Nigerian marketing boards that trusted Nigerian buying agents more than Southern Cameroonians. For example, before 1953, the marketing and export of Cocoa in the territory was the monopoly of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board. This business was largely in the hands of Nigerian who had the capital and means of evacuation and who were trusted and favoured by the authorities of the Board. However, Cameroon traders at the borders with French Cameroon smuggled their trade items to that territory in order to avoid bad routes [within the Southern Cameroons and benefit from the high prices in French Cameroon. The result was that by 1939, only about 21 percent of the cocoa produced in the Southern Cameroons was marketed through Nigeria.⁷⁴

In addition, export trade in the Southern Cameroons was in the hands of British firms such as the United African Company and John Holt. By 1930, these firms with main branches in Nigeria already had sub branches in Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda. The firms brought in larger quantities of European manufactures and so diverted the attention of the local population from having constant contacts with French Cameroon, markets which were in some areas quite close. The firms also bought local produce like cocoa and palm produce from the local farmers who could easily have sold the produce in the French sector, perhaps even at higher prices. A tin of palm kernel was sold in Mamfe in 1950 for about five shillings, at Dschang in the French sector it was double the price.⁷⁵

The participation of the firms in British Cameroons trade increased the potentials of the Cross River and River Ndian as unifying-factors between Nigeria and Southern Cameroons. The firms utilized the two rivers as a means of communication to integrate their commercial activities between the two states. In 1952, 2.114 tons of palm kernels and 116 tons of cocoa were exported from Mamfe to Calabar through the Cross River. The two items valued between 90.000 and 100.000 pounds. In 1952 and 1953 a total of 6.547 tons of palm oil and 2.439 tons of palm kernel were exported

⁷⁴ Aka, *British Southern Cameroons*, p. 41.

⁷⁵ Atem, "Cameroon-Nigeria Relations", p. 237.

through Ndian River to Calabar. The foreign firms gave preference to those who bought in bulk and this favoured the Nigerians because of their capital, superior trade skills and contacts with trade and market centers in Nigeria such as Aba, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Calabar.⁷⁶

Besides, the ports of Calabar and Port Harcourt made Nigeria the source of all manufactured goods sold in the Southern Cameroons. It was through these principal ports in Eastern Nigeria that manufactured goods were imported from Britain. Again, there were no custom barriers between Eastern Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons; instead the Nigerian customs service established along the intra-Cameroons borders since 1916, prevented trade between French Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons thus increasing the chances of Nigerian domination in the Southern Cameroons.

Trade in the Southern Cameroons was carried out in Nigerian-owned trucks and Southern Cameroon traders who relied on head-load transportation and the use of donkeys from the ports of Calabar and Port Harcourt could not survive competition from Igbo truck-owning traders. Nigerians were therefore able to extend their business activities to the remote villages of the territory because they owned almost all the relevant means of transport like canoes and trucks or Lorries.

For these reasons, Nigerian traders were found in almost all the towns, sub-towns, villages and hamlets of the Cameroons. According to the 1953 population census, there were 83, 000 Nigerians in the Southern Cameroons and a majority were in trade and trade related activities. By 1959 they were controlling 85 percent of the trade. They were hawkers, petty traders, drug distributors, liquor vendors, itinerant, tailors, restaurant operators (with Nigerian produced *Gari* and Igbo yams as the main food items), motor mechanics, taxi or truck drivers and shampoo men. Amongst them, Dr. Adiboroja distinguished himself with his "dance group" as he danced on the streets of the major towns promising to shine teeth snow white (often with vim, comet or some unknown cleansing concoction). What was more imperialistic was not the trade alone but the profit motive and the fact that they did everything to coerce the Cameroonians to buy their goods and services. They introduced "touch and buy" and this made them unpopular with the indigenes. Profits from the trade were never invested in Cameroon but were remitted to Eastern Nigeria. They behaved just like the

⁷⁶ NAB File 4175, Vol 11, Gibbons to Chief Secretary, Lagos, 1953, p. 6.

European colonial masters who were out to plunder the colonial economies for the benefit of their motherlands.

5.3.3 Plantation Agriculture

The British colonialists also played an important role in the development of plantation agriculture in Southern Cameroons. When Germany was defeated in Cameroon, her plantations fell under the control of Britain and France. The properties of Germany were confiscated and handed over to the custodian of Enemy property to be administered for the duration of the war. In 1914, there were fifty-eight plantations estates in German Cameroon and almost all were located around Victoria with a few in neighbouring Kumba Division. In 1922, the British government put up the German properties in British Cameroons for auction but the offers were considered not high enough.

Another auction was held from 24-25 November 1924 and the British government, ironically enough, accepted less money for the properties than was offered in 1922. All the German plantations were bought by a London estate agent who actually acted as agent for the former German owners. In addition to land, the sales included, railway system, rolling stock, bridges, Wharves, dwellings and factories. The total cost for all the former German property was £224,670. The plantations were quickly bought at varying prices. For instance the Moliwe Estate which comprised 32,067 acres of land, sixty equipped building, a fully furnished housing section and a hospital was bought for £22,500, the British government had in 1922 rejected an offer of £45,000.⁷⁷

The main activities of the economy of Southern Cameroons were plantation agriculture and subsistence farming. This was especially after 1945 when British Southern Cameroon became a quasi federal with a separate status from the Eastern region of Nigeria. The territory cultivated many crops but exported seven principal agricultural products namely, cocoa, bananas, rubber, oil palm produce, coffee and hides and skins. Although Germany was ousted from Cameroon following the First World War, in 1931, she imported £109,603 worth of commodities from British Cameroons. In 1937, British Cameroons imported 47.57 percent of her imports from

⁷⁷ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Buea, August 1996.

Germany and only 119 percent from Britain. After the Second World War, the Custodian of Enemy Property re-expropriated the German property. In 1946, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) was created by the British Government to take over and manage most of the former German plantations in the British Cameroons.

The CDC was established in 1946 and went operational in 1947. It initially had no working capital. The CDC was created following the passage of two ordinances by the Nigerian Legislature. There were,

-The Ex-Enemy Lands (Cameroons) Ordinance, 1946 (No. 38 of 1946). It provided for the acquisition of lands formerly owned by Germany in the British Mandate of the Cameroons. These lands had been vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property for the duration of World War II. According to the terms of the Ordinance

a)the Governor was to hold them for the use and common benefits of the inhabitants of the territory, and

b)the Governor was to grant leases of his newly acquired land to the CDC which was created by the second Ordinance.

2)The CDC Ordinance, 1946 (No 39 of 1946). This Ordinance provided for the establishment of the Corporation and for the appointment of the Chairman and Members by the Governor.⁷⁸

The CDC was created because of two main reasons. These were, i) the inability of the local population to obtain, unaided, the maximum benefit from the plantations and ii) the desire to have the local population take an active part in the running of the CDC in future years. The Governor of Nigeria paid £850,000 for the ex-German plantation lands and leased them to the CDC. The CDC was established not only to develop the ex-German plantations merely for private gains but also for the common benefit of the inhabitants of the territory as a whole. It was given a wide range of responsibilities which included,

a) the provision of general social welfare to its employee,

b) the payment of direct taxes to the government of Nigeria,

⁷⁸ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

- c) the utilization of all profits for the benefit of the people of the British Cameroons and,
- d) the operation of the CDC on strict business lines

The CDC borrowed from the Nigerian Government and a few overseas corporation. In 1949, the CDC had four oil palm estates. There were in Bota, Moliwe, Mbonge and Ekona. The four palm estate produced a total amount of 1.320 tons of palm oil and 800 tons of palm kernels yearly. The installation of the Pioneer and Stock oil mills of Idenau, Bota and Ekona took place by 1955. Through its Wharve at Bota and Tiko, the CDC handles all exports and imports of Southern Cameroons. The Bota Wharf handle imports of general cargo such as foodstuff, cement and fertilizers. Through the Wharf cocoa, palm oil, palm kernels and pepper were exported. The Tiko Wharf took charge of mostly bananas, rubber and timber exportation and imported fertilizers and plantation stores. Between 1947 and 1957, it was estimated that the CDC invested about £7 million in its plantations, building factories and wharves.⁷⁹

The CDC aided the treasury of the colonial administration through the payment of taxes. In 1957, the corporation paid out £300000 to the Government. This was through Company Tax, Import and Export, Duty, Sales Tax, Rent and surplus profits. Unfortunately, however, until the mid 1950s, the CDC paid its taxes to the Nigerian Government which was not helpful to the economy of British Cameroons. The CDC accounted for 65 percent of the export tonnage of good from British Cameroons in 1958 and 55 percent of the export earnings. In 1953, the International Bank Mission to Southern Cameroons reported that the establishment and operations of the corporation had been of great benefit. This was because it had made available the economic and technical advantages of plantation production and had provided for the social and educational welfare of the workers. The main agricultural products produced by the CDC before 1960 included palm oil and kernels, bananas, rubber and tea. Apart from the CDC, there were other private agricultural enterprises in Southern Cameroons.

Various private enterprises were also involved in the promotion of plantation economy. The most important enterprises included the Elders and Fyffers, the Cadbury and Fry, the Pamol Ltd, the Bai Rubber Estate, the Bwinga Rubber Estate, the Ndian

⁷⁹ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

Oil Palm and the Lobe Banana Estate. The Elders and Fyffes had its main plantations around Tiko-Likomba. Its main produce was banana. In 1947, the company exported 1,281,330 stems of bananas and in 1957 the amount was 4,792,664 stems. After a period of expansion and development, the company witnessed a rapid decline in its products because of the incidence of banana disease. Cadbury and Fry Cameroons was set up in 1954 at Ikiliwindi, Kumba, where the land was suitable for the growth of cocoa. With a labour force of twenty in February 1957, by the end of that year the force had increased to one hundred. Pamol Ltd had its head quarter in Calabar, Nigeria. Its facilities and operations were at Ndian. It had palm oil estates, one banana and two rubber estates.⁸⁰

Bai rubber estate is located about 7kms from Mbonge in Kumba Division. Initially it had an area of 1.600 acres. It had both rubber and cocoa plantations. Between 1928 and 1931, rubber replaced cocoa as the main agricultural product of the company. Bwinga rubber estate is situated at about 4kms from Tiko. In 1931, the enterprise was leased to Pamol Ltd. In the early 1930s, banana was planted but in 1957 the banana estate was converted to rubber estates. This was as a result of the sigatoba and panama diseases which infested the banana plants. The Lobe Banana Estate was situated at about 14kms from Mbonge in the Kumba Division. It was later handed over to Pamol Ltd by the Custodians of Enemy Property. The development of the estate started in 1949-50. By 1955, the estate had 5.000 acres of land devoted to banana production.

5.3.4 Backwardness of the Economy

In all, the Southern Cameroons economy remained backward-and underdevelopment during the Mandate and Trusteeship periods. This was surprising given that the territory Was producing the greatest variety of export crops in West Africa. The economic potentials of the territory were also enormous by West African standards. The quantity of palm oil and palm kernel exported by the Southern Cameroons were more than double what the Gambia exported in 1928 and almost nine times more in 1930. In the 1950s the output of palm products, rubber, banana and cocoa increased considerably because of the expansion of European-owned plantations and because Africans had

⁸⁰ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

begun to participate in the production of cash crops, unfortunately the expansion in the plantation sector and export trade did not impact on the development of the territory. The Southern Cameroons remained backward, underdeveloped, neglected and exploited by Britain and Nigeria.

The underdevelopment of the Southern Cameroons could largely be blamed on *Nigerianisation*. The territory was completely fused with Nigeria that it had no separate budget of its own. Consequently, there were no development projects earmarked for the Southern Cameroons as a territory. Development projects designed for Eastern Nigeria were considered to be for Eastern Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons. Moreover, up to the 1930s, the revenue of the Southern Cameroons was not also separated from that of Eastern Nigeria and this made it difficult for the territory to benefit from its resources. The British authorities in Nigeria and Nigerians who dominated the colonial institutions in the Southern Cameroons treated the territory as a captured land and as the backyard of the Nigerian economy. In fact, the Southern Cameroons was a colony of a colony.

The British and their Nigerian collaborators doubted the economic potentials of the territory and gave the impression to the international community that the Southern Cameroons “represented a considerable annual charge on the finances of Nigeria”.⁸¹ They went ahead to promote economic leakage in the territory by exporting its raw materials through Nigerian ports and paying taxes to Nigeria. This was facilitated by the fact that foreign trade in Cameroon was in the hands of European companies (branches of multinational companies) with bigger branches in Nigeria. These companies also had Nigerians (igbo precisely) in the interior as buying agents.

The economy of the Southern Cameroons was largely in the hands of foreigners (Europeans and Nigerians). It was based exclusively on European-owned plantations which the Nigerians inherited and promoted after the Second World War. Nigerians like Europeans were motivated principally by the desire to make as much profit as possible by exploiting the indigenous people. In agriculture, nothing was done to encourage the indigenous people to produce cash crops. But as Warmington pointed out in 1959, “Whereas in Nigeria well over 90 percent of the exports of palm oil and rubber came from small African producers, in the Southern Cameroons, the European plantations

⁸¹ Aka, *British Southern Cameroons*, p. 40.

account for virtually all of the exports of these products.”⁸² In trade the Igbo monopolized and dominated the markets in the urban., suburban and even rural areas. They brought with them a more cut-and-throat approach to life and often coerce the indigenous people to buy from through their price-and-buy policy. The profit made by these foreign planters and traders was never invested in Cameroon. The territory was bound to be lacking in socio-economic infrastructure.

Besides, the foreign capital and profit remittance that characterized the Southern Cameroon economy, the Nigerians also neglected the interior grassland which contained the bulk of the population and where coffee, tea, cotton and other export-crops could be produced. Roads were limited to the coastal districts of Mamfe, Kumba and Victoria. Agricultural officers were not found in the interior. It was late in 1952 that the Santa Coffee Estate was set up in the grassland to educate the indigenous people on plantation cash crop farming. This was followed by the establishment of the Ndu Tea Estate in 1954. These plantations came too late and were set up more to check the spread of the reunification movement than the desire to train the indigenes in cash cropping.

The British and Nigerians in particular did not invest in the territory claiming that as a mandate, its future was not certain. The potential investors feared that the League of Nations could at any time transfer the administration of the territory to another power. Apart from Ezoba a trader of Igbo origins who constructed the Harlem City Hotel in Kumba in 1952, no Nigerian or British carried out a durable investment in the Southern Cameroons.⁸³

The uncertainty that loomed over the territory was aggravated in the 1930s by Adolph Hitler's intensification of international campaigns in favour of the return of German colonies seized after the First World War. This appeal for the reconquest of German colonies and Cameroon in particular came at the time the economy of the Southern Cameroons was dominated by German Nationals and when there was the proliferation of pro-German movements in neighbouring French Cameroons. After the Second World War, the British were confronted with post-war economic problems at home and the nationalist agitations in Cameroon were critical of Nigerian dominant

⁸² Warmington, *Plantation and Village*, p. 37.

⁸³ Atem, “Cameroon-Nigeria Relations”, p. 242.

This situation did not favour investment and development as Nigerians embarked on the rapid transfer of their wealth out of Cameroon.

The modern nation of Cameroon has the dubious distinction of having first belonged to the Germans, then being divided by the British and the French, and then at independence having some of the British controlled regions reunited with the French controlled areas. As a result the independent Republic of Cameroon came into existence with some British built railways, some French built railways, and a few surviving German built lines all incompatible. Virtually all of the colonial era railways terminated at a port. Their purpose after all was not to facilitate exchange within the colony or between colonies, but to link the colonies to the world market, preferably through the domestic economy of the colonial power.⁸⁴

Port construction and improvement was as much a priority as railway construction. Where ports or natural harbors already existed, dredges were soon at work deepening the channels and creating deepwater berths for steamships. Colonial states constructed new piers, built warehouses, and brought in cranes, all to speed the passage of cargo through the ports and off to the colonial metropolises. In places where there were no natural harbors, ambitious colonial officials built artificial harbors. The British colony of Cameroon had despite its long history of trade in the coastal region relied on canoes and surfboats to load and unload the steamers that called at its port. This investment by European nations in infrastructures in Africa was meant to improve the economies of the colonies, many Cameroonians work on the railroads or in the ports because they provided economic opportunity. For many others the opportunity to sell their crops in exchange for imported goods was also beneficial. In some colonies farmers who produced certain cash crops, most notably cocoa came to form a prosperous middle class. Cameroon could pay for its own artificial harbor because of the revenues from cocoa and other products. But there was another less benevolent side to all of this investment. First it usually took the economic interests of the metropole as the starting point for any development scheme. Thus when the French began to encourage cotton production in their colonies, it was because they felt the French industry needed a safe supply of cotton. Most colonial regimes at one point or another in their history used neocomercantilist schemes meant to use tax incentives to favor trade between the

⁸⁴ Atem, "Cameroon-Nigeria Relations", p. 242.

metropole and its colonies rather than trade with other nations. The British tried to encourage trade within their Empire, whereas the Portuguese and French did likewise within their own imperial systems.⁸⁵

The other benevolent investments in infrastructure was that it was often meant to supplant pre-existing transportation systems that were outside the control of colonial state. Railroads were sometimes justified as a way of ending head portage whereas investment in modern ports and steamships in Cameroon was seen by the colonial state as a means for undermining the local selling ships. This brings us to the ideological element of the colonial state commitment to transportation technology which was meant to bring modernity to Cameroon. Many of the features of late nineteenth century Cameroonian life that the colonial state disapproved of were related in some way to transportation technology. Slaves were associated with the caravan trade where it was believed that they formed the majority of the porters, so colonial states built railways along the traditional caravan routes. The canoes of the coastal region transported palm oil, but they also transported slaves, river steamers later replaced them. Thus these modern technologies were symbol of modernity as much as they were practical means of transportation, were often built in places where they were inappropriate to the scale of the economy.⁸⁶

Plantations, traders, and construction projects competed for the limited labour force. Voluntary labour was supplemented by forced labour, which was obtained first as a result of German conquest of resisting ethnic groups and later through a labour tax system under which local authorities were required to provide a certain number of man-hours of labour per year. Both forced labour and contractual labour were placed under government supervision, and after 1902 slavery was abolished. Although the government sought to eliminate abuses of the labour system in the early 1900s, particularly after the very high death rate among labourers sent to the plantations came to public notice, few groups either European or Cameroonians were satisfied with German attempts to supervise the labour sector. In an effort to encourage the flow of private capital into infrastructure development in the interior, the government granted

⁸⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery in the East Coast of Africa*, New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 1977, p. 260.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 261.

two charter trade companies monopolies covering almost half of the territory's land surface.

The Gesellschaft Nord-West Kamerun was granted an area of almost 2.5 million acres, and the Gesellschaft Sud Kamerun received a territory of almost 2 million acres. In exchange for the exclusive monopoly of trade within these areas, the companies agreed to explore the region, to build bridges and roads, and to encourage settlement. In actual practice, the companies did little beyond that necessary for their own trade purposes. Neither was a financial success. They did, however, provide a major injection of capital into the colony equal to one-fifth of the total German investment during the entire colonial period.⁸⁷

The development of a transportation network was one of the administration's chief interests. Although plantations and charter companies constructed a limited number of roads, the government was the major builder of surface transport routes. After 1900 pacified groups were required to expand and maintain the road system and bridges in their region. By the end of the German administration, there were about 300 miles of roads suitable for mechanized vehicles, but the country remained heavily dependent upon human porters. Railroad construction was initially totally dependent upon private investment. Until the turn of the century, the only track was of narrow gauge, laid by plantation owners on their holdings. In 1906 the German government approved funding for loans aiding private construction of 100 miles of track, known as the Nordbahn, from Bonaberi near Douala to northeast Nkongsamba. This service was opened in 1911. The government itself undertook construction of a railroad line the Mittel- landbahn of about 225 miles from Douala east to Windenmeng, but in 1914 less than 100 miles had been completed.⁸⁸

The desire to get health care facilities closer to the people also influence the development of transport facilities to the rural areas. But unlike the centres of extraction, these areas were linked by seasonal roads and foot tracks. Health conditions in Kamerun during the colonial period were far from adequate, and improvements were greatly hindered by budgetary limitations. Facilities were limited; even as late as 1912 there were only twenty-nine German doctors in the colony. Of these, fifteen were

⁸⁷ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*.

attached to the military, nine served the civilian administration, and five were working on a special campaign to eradicate sleeping sickness. After 1900 more attention was paid to health conditions, and efforts were made to control such diseases as leprosy, smallpox, and malaria. The greatest progress was made among indigenous plantation workers. Plans for expanded health facilities were drawn up during the last years of the colonial administration but were never implemented.⁸⁹

During the German administration British missions were supplanted by the German Basel Mission. Roman Catholic missions and United States Protestant missions were established later. Although the German colonial administration established a limited number of schools, education during the colonial period was largely the responsibility of mission schools under German supervision. The administration was interested in training personnel for lower level staff positions but favored craft and trade instruction for the general local population. By 1907 standardization of the school curriculum had been effected, and by 1910 all schools were required to follow government regulations in order to obtain financial assistance. Trade schools had been opened, and the German authorities were giving limited support to agricultural schools. At the end of the colonial period there were four government schools with a total of 833 pupils, as compared with 631 mission schools with about 40,000 pupils.⁹⁰

A variety of factors, including an increased budget for colonial territories and internal political developments in Germany, led to increased metropolitan control after 1907. The new Colonial Office began increasing its information on the colonial situation and proposed reforms, which had they been implemented would have greatly increased administrative effectiveness in advancing economic and social development in the protectorate. As it was, when German control came to an end, an exchange economy based on agricultural production had been introduced; investments had been made in infrastructure; urbanization had commenced; and certain institutions, based on Western prototypes, had been introduced to urban areas.⁹¹

The Cameroon colony, was originally divided out into large number of concessions. Consequently, little progress was made in the construction of roads, telegraph or railway. In 1913 the telegraph did not go beyond Yaounde and Jang, whilst

⁸⁹ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

the capital of the colony was without any means of quick communication with Douala the commercial capital. In 1913 a German “Company for navigation in Cameroon” was floated with a capital of two million marks. It aimed at placing river boats on the Congo, the Sanaga and the Ubangi. The Germans were also ambitious of making Douala the largest port in West Africa. But though a considerable number of public works were projected, and should have been completed by 1913, the Germans were only beginning by 1914 to dredge the entrance to the river and construct quays. Meanwhile, goods were landed in the open, the steamers being unable to cross the bar and reach Douala town; there were no go downs and everything was exposed to the inclemency of the weather.⁹²

5.4 Social Development Facilities

5.4.1 Education

The British colonialists played a significant role in the social development of Southern Cameroons. The British colonial administration did not vigorously pursue education in the British Cameroons. Elementary education was in the hands of the Government, Native administration, Missions and the natives. In 1924, Government regulations made education uniform. The regulations had the following provisions:

- Infants were provided with free education
- Primary pupils were charged six pence every month
- The use of vernacular was prohibited in Government schools because the pupils came from different tribes
- Pidgin English was tolerated in the initial stages

The aims of education as advocated by the British Colonial Administration, the Missions and the Native Administration was that,

- The British colonial administration regarded education as being intended to train civil servants for colonial exploitation

⁹² Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*.

- They wanted clerks who could work in the administration, business, plantations and security service
- The Missions regarded education as a means of spreading the word of God by training catechists, teachers, pastors and clerks
- The Native administration saw education as a means of serving ethnic clans and villages

Education in British Southern Cameroons was dictated by the British Education Policy for Nigeria. In 1926, the Nigeria Education Department regulations were officially implemented in Southern Cameroon. The following year, 1927, the Memorandum on the Place of the Vernacular in Native Education allowed the use of vernacular as a medium of instruction in the first stages of elementary education. English Language was to be used in intermediate, secondary and technical education.

Besides, all schools in Southern Cameroon were classified as elementary schools. Although the colonial administration encouraged voluntary efforts in promoting education, the government was responsible for the general direction of all educational policy and supervised all institutions. When elementary education was uniformised in Southern Cameroons, the curriculum included the teaching of Hygiene, Agriculture, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Singing and Religious Instructions. Preparation for the First school Leaving Certificate by pupils began in Standard One. Subjects for examination included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Composition, Grammar, English Dictation, Colloquial English and Physical Education. In 1932, the educational cycle in Southern Cameroons was reduced from nine years to eight. It was divided into two years infant class (Infant I and II), four years elementary class (Standard I, II, III and IV) and two years middle class (Middles I and II). Funds for the running of schools came from the sale of produce from school farms, school fees, school manual Labour, grants-in-aids from the Native Administrators, Government expenditures and Mission Funds.⁹³

However, the most serious problem which the educational authorities in Southern Cameroons faced was shortage of qualified teaching staff in the schools. The following measures were adopted to solve the problems,

⁹³ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

- The number of schools was reduced and teachers were recruited from Nigeria, Britain and West Indies.
- For Native Administration and Mission schools, the shortage of qualified teachers was compensated for by recruiting uncertificated assistant, probationary and Vernacular teachers. The problem continued until the Elementary Training Centre at Kake in Kumba Division was opened.

In 1940, the Kake Elementary Training Centre was the sole institution in Southern Cameroons that trained Elementary teachers. The Centre generally aimed at giving the students a thorough grounding of what was considered necessary for rural elementary schools. It was also intended to give the students much teaching practiced. In the school curriculum were subjects like First Aid, Agriculture, Handicraft, Music and Games.

British Southern Cameroons did not have a college as late as 1939. The qualified British Cameroonians went to Nigeria for further education, admission into Nigeria colleges such as Government College Umuahia in Eastern Nigeria, King's College, Lagos, Queens College, Lagos and any of the Mission colleges was based on an entrance examination. The qualified pupils were, more often than not, from Government schools and almost all of them went to Government College Umuahia. In 1939, the first secondary school in the British Cameroons was opened at Sasse in the Victoria Division by the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Mission. Boys of all creeds were admitted into the school and there was liberty of worship. Almost ten years later, the Cameroon Protestant College was opened in Bali in the Bamenda Division. The school was opened by the Basel Mission. Thus by 1950, British Cameroonians could pursue their secondary education in the territory. This was thanks to the Roman Catholic and Basel Missions.⁹⁴

5.4.2 Health

In the domain of health, the health situation in British Southern Cameroons was marked by outbreak of epidemics. This was especially so between 1916 and 1945. The most prevalent epidemics were small-pox, yaws, influenza, dysentery and chicken-pox with malaria being a common phenomenon. The head of the Medical Administration in

⁹⁴ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

Southern Cameroons was the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services who was resident at Enugu. The services were later separated and two directors were appointed, the Director of Medical Service and the Director of Sanitary Services. The two Directors issued medical and health regulations and instructions to the Resident in Buea who passed them to the divisional directors. The government doctors controlled both the Mission doctors and the medical staff of the Native Authority in their divisions.

The indigenous population was charged with the responsibility of providing health facilities and resources. The colonial administration merely acted as a guide and adviser. In British Southern Cameroons, the provision of health service was borne by plantation owners in their plantations, by the Roman Catholic Mission, the Basel Mission, the German American Baptist Mission and the colonial Administration. In 1916, the British colonial administration established hospitals in each of the four divisions in Southern Cameroons, each division had a Medical Officer. The Medical Officer for Victoria was Dr. F. Ross, Dr. C. G. Grey was in charge of Bamenda, Dr. C. Kelsall was for Buea and Soppo and Drs. Glover, Gibson and Sieger were for Ossindinge had no resident (Mamfe), Kumba Division had no resident doctor and Dr. Ross of Victoria from time to time visited the Kumba medical centre. It took Kumba Division until 1925 for it to have a medical doctor.⁹⁵

British Southern Cameroons lacked enough qualified medical personnel. In 1938, after twenty years of British administration, Southern Cameroons had only six medical doctors with no indigenous medical doctor. There was one nursing sister, one sanitary superintendent, twenty-five male nurses, six female nurses, six dispensers, five sanitary inspectors (three government vaccinators) twenty-three other male Native Authority staff and three other female Native Authority staff. This implied that there were about 85,051 people per doctor in Southern Cameroons in 1938. The medical Department of Southern Cameroons was thus short of trained medical personnel. Several reasons were responsible for this,

- The government never gave scholarships to deserving Southern Cameroonian students to pursue secondary education and later courses in medicine.
- Qualified students were unable to obtain scholarships elsewhere.

⁹⁵ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

- Most parents could not afford the high fees

Aware of this, in 1938, the Director of Medical Services suggested that Native Authorities should train their own medical doctors in Nigeria at a reduced fee. The Native Authority however found the fees too high.

In 1924, the British Resident in the Southern Cameroons, William Arnet introduced the payment of fees in government hospitals. Several reasons accounted for this decision some of which were,

- Arnet and his supporters thought that it was proper because the amount to be paid (one to three pence each day) by the patients was less than one-tenth of the salary that Europeans budgeted for medical treatment.
- They argued that the fees would send away those who went to the hospitals only to drink medicine even if they were quite normal.
- It was thought that the payment of fees would reduced the number of patients and enable the doctors to concentrate on actual patients. The decision was criticised by the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services and it was also condemned by the indigenous people and some doctors in the divisions.⁹⁶

Many patients either refused to go to hospitals or those in Victoria Division went to Douala for treatment. The proposed fees by Arnet were eventually abolished but later on fees were instituted in all government hospitals. During the 1930s, the British colonial administration began withdrawing her financial and material aid from the medical services of the Native Authorities. Even with the introduction of the fees, government hospitals could not still meet up with the increased cost. This led to an increased in hospital fees in 1941 despite objections from the doctors in Southern Cameroons. In addition to the increase in hospital fees, school pupils were no longer given free treatment except when they contacted diseases such as yaws, scabies, ring worms, syphilis and eye-trouble. Also drugs were no longer given home use except in extreme cases. Unlike before, the servant of African civil servants were no longer given for free medical treatment. Free feeding in the hospitals were meant solely for poor people.

⁹⁶ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

5.5 French Colonial Policies and Practices

5.5.1 Economic Development Policies

The French played an important role in the economic development of French Cameroon during the colonial era. The economic development policy in French Cameroon was influenced by the theory of “*la mise en valeur*” propounded by Albert Sarraut. This theory was aimed at deriving the maximum economic benefits for France before serving the economic interests of the colonies and the world. The economy of French Cameroon was also influenced by the ownership of land as well as the availability of labour and the taxation policy.

The ownership of land in French Cameroon was regulated by a series of decrees. The decree on land of 5 July 1921 regulated public land. The decree of 10 July regulated the procedure of expropriating land for public use while a decree was issued in 1938 dealing with government lands. These decrees divided the land into four categories. The first included land that was acquired with a land title by registration in the German *Grundbuch*. Such lands could be freely transferred whether they were owned by natives or Europeans provided they were not held by the Germans before promulgation of the decrees. The second category included land owned by the natives for which no written title existed. Such lands could be transferred. The third category concerned the native reserves which were lands set aside for the natives. The fourth category was private land which comprised government lands, unoccupied lands, lands used for ten years and land which was vacant and without an owner.⁹⁷

5.5.2 Plantation Agriculture

The economy of French Cameroon was dominated largely by agriculture. The German plantations in Cameroon were inherited by the British and the French at their respective zones. These plantations were auctioned by both the French and the British to French, English and Cameroonian businessmen. The principal crop for exportation was cocoa with its cultivation in the hands of the natives. In 1937, French Cameroon produced 27000 tons of cocoa and in 1948, a cocoa station was set up in Nkoemuon. Both Arabic and Rubusta coffee were also cultivated in Ebolowa, Nkongsamba and Dschang with a tonnage of about 13000 tons in 1952. Banana plantations existed in the volcanic areas of

⁹⁷ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

Mbanga, Penja and Njombe with about 28000 tons exported in 1939. The banana from French Cameroon were sold in France by the *Compagnie des Bananes, S.A.*

Palm plantations were found in the Southern portion of French Cameroon. The *institut de Recherches pour les Huiles et Oleagineux I.R.H.O* opened palm plantations in Bafia, Dschang, Edea and Kribi. Palm oil mills were opened in Dibombari and Edea. Cotton production was reserved in the North because of the favourable climate and was cultivated by the *Compagnie Francaise Pour le Developpement de Fibre Textiles C.F.D.T.* Tobacco was also exported with the *Mission Metropolitaine des Tabacs de Coupe and the Societe J. Bastos* responsible for the entire production of cigars and cigarettes. Groundnuts were grown on the Bateke Plateau and about 12000 tons were harvested in 1937.⁹⁸

5.5.3 Recruitment of Labourers

The employment of French Cameroonians on the plantations and for the various railway and road construction companies was governed by many regulations. Infact, all workers were subjected to medical check-ups and were not allowed to be transferred by one employer to another. Workers who had to work outside their sub-divisions had to undergo a medical examination. Workers were recruited voluntarily. In most cases, it was the policy of the French administration to insist that the workers be free to render their services to any enterprise of their choice. Some companies however found it difficult to recruit voluntary labourers especially after 1945 when forced labour by private enterprises was abolished. In such cases, the French colonial authorities helped in the recruitment of workers. While it was generally difficult to get voluntary workers in certain areas like Maroua, it was easier to get them in regions such as the Bamileke, Bamum, Adamawa, Benue and Ntem.

5.5.3 Taxation

The system of taxation in French Cameroon was based on the capitation tax (head-tax) which was imposed on all men and women. In two district in the North, children over twelve years paid the head tax. The prestation was also used. The prestation was a system of forced labour through which all male French Cameroonians worked

⁹⁸ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800.*

compulsorily, without pay, for the government for ten days in a year. It increased the natives dislike for most of what was French for it was strictly a tax on railway and public works. The natives were able to pay the head taxes by selling palm kernels and groundnuts. With all these measures put in place and others, the French colonial administration ran into difficulties with the indigenes of French Cameroon. These difficulties led to strikes and resistance from the natives. The two main tribes which put up stiff resistance against the French colonial authorities were the Baya and the Duala.⁹⁹

5.6 Social Facilities

5.6.1 Education and Health

Education in French Cameroon was left mostly in the hands of missionary societies. In 1937, there were 85000 pupils in mission elementary schools under the Catholic Mission, the French Protestant Mission, the American Protestant Mission and the American Adventist Mission. In addition to the above missions, the Norwegian and Sudanese Missions also had some schools while some cultural associations had public lay schools. In 1939, the Government had several rural and regional primary schools with an advanced Primary school at Yaounde, a Professional School in Doaula and a Professional health school at Ayos. Secondary and technical institutions were also established. The Ecole Normale at Foullassi was opened by the Protestant Mission.

Prior to this, by an arrete of 27 December 1933, the French colonial administration set up schools for the sons of chiefs in Yaounde, Garoua, Dschang and provisionally in Doume. The Yaounde Ecole de fils des chefs was reserved for the former pupils of the regional schools of Yaounde, Edea and Ebolowa. The major goal of these schools was to train the future chiefs to respect all what was French and promote the French mission in French Cameroon while acquiring the techniques of administration. The admission requirements to the school was a pass grade in the various subjects which were demanded for the award of the *Cerificat de fin d' Etudes*. The duration of the programme was one year and all pupils were boarders. The courses were aimed at improving the students knowledge in French language. The overall goal of the Ecole de fils de chefs was to give the students specialised courses which were aimed at enabling the future chiefs to be able to exercise authority, commandement.

⁹⁹ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

Arabic studies were introduced in the schools since Lamidos refused sending their children to the schools for fear of being christianised.¹⁰⁰

With regard to health education, important moves were made with the establishment of an institute of Hygiene in Douala in 1925. A professional Nursing School was also opened at Ayos for the training of Nurses. The main problem in the territory was sleeping sickness. Through the leadership of Dr. Eugene Jamot, the percentage of those who suffered from sleeping sickness fell from 25 percent in 1924 to 18 percent in 1929 and by 1939 the sleeping sickness disease had been checked in the territory.

5.6.2 Resistances to French Colonial Policies

The French colonial policies and practices ran into difficulties with the indigenes of French Cameroon. These difficulties led to strikes and resistance from the natives. The two principal tribes which put up stiff resistance against the French colonial authorities were the Baya and the Duala. French colonial administration in French Cameroon received a rude shock during the years 1928-1930 following what was generally known as the Baya revolt. This revolt began in French Equatorial Africa and it was led by the Baya before it extended to the Baya communities in French Cameroon. Karnou was the main leader. The principal causes of the resistance was that in order for the French to achieve its *mise en valeur* goals, the French colonial administration imposed its authority on the Baya chiefs and ignored the Baya custom and traditions. This antagonised many of the Baya chiefs and their subjects.¹⁰¹

The colonial authorities forced the Baya to abandon subsistence agriculture in favour of the cultivation of cotton for export in addition, thousands of Baya were recruited by the *Compagnie Forestiere Sangha-Oubangui* to work on its rubber plantations. This meant that they had to abandon their villages. Although the company was expected to provide for its workers, the workers ended up fending for themselves. Moreover, the Baya were forcibly recruited to work on the road which was being built to link French Cameroon and Oubangui under very poor working conditions.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, p. 140.

In addition, the number of French colonial administrators in the Baya country was small and in most cases the administrators were incompetent. The reason was because the Baya country was isolated due to the poor road network. In French Cameroon, the Baya country between Deng-Deng and Meiganga was administratively abandoned and in 1928, an incompetent French agriculture agent Crubile was appointed to head the Baboua sub-division. In 1930, following the capture of Lieutenant Laporte, the Baiibokoum sub-division was left without an administrator. This situation enabled the foreign plantation owners to enforce harsh laws on their plantations which further antagonised the Baya.

Another problem to the French administration was caused by Karnou. Karnou was a Baya who was brought up in a Catholic Mission. He was born in Dang-Doro in French Cameroon and was of the Baya- Yayoue clan. After an attempt on his life in 1924, he escaped to Nahim in the French Equatorial African region of Central Africa. At Nahim, he started criticising and preaching against the exploitative policies of the French which he claimed were responsible for all the calamities in Baya. For instance he called for the destruction of the colonial power, the fight against the whiteman whom he claimed had destroyed the Baya custom and tradition, the total destruction of the new and imposed social order, the destruction of all the symbols of the whiteman and the creation of a strong autonomous Baya nation. Infact, he declared his intention of conquering the territory from the Congo to Ngaoundere. Karnou whom the Baya believed had mystic powers, easily won many supporters among the maltreated plantation workers, those working on the roads and the disgruntled Baya chiefs.¹⁰³

The Baya revolt started in the Baya country in French Equatorial Africa in July 1928 and extended to French Cameroon. The French authorities tried to contain the rebellion by reinforcing police patrols and by adopting the carrot and stick approach to appease the Baya but these methods yielded little dividends. In July 1928, agitations were witnessed in Batouri and by October, the agitations had reached Ngaoundere. In November, Karnou was killed but the revolt continued as the Baya went into full action as many government guards were killed in Deng-Deng, Dampatou, Dissara and Betare-Oye. Although the rebels out-numbered the government forces, the superior fire power of the militia coupled with better training led to the defeat of the Baya in 1930.

¹⁰³ Rudins, *Germans in the Cameroons*, p. 140.

Another resistance to the French colonial administration in Cameroon was the Duala protest. Following the defeat of the Germans in Cameroon in the First World War, the French met the Duala very unwilling to accept French rule. The Duala had acquired high literacy rate before the defeat of the Germans and this made the Dualas to eloquently press their demands without any fear. Many Dualas were clerks in firms and government offices, while some were traders and farmers, this led to the emergence of an elite class in the Duala society. It was this class which was at the fore-front of the Duala protests against the French administration in Douala from 1919 to 1934. The problem which led to the differences between the French and Dualas was centered around the Duala land which the Germans had expropriated and the different interpretation attached to the defeat of the Germans. There were several causes between the French and the Dualas.

Indeed, the Dualas regarded the defeat of Germany as a termination of the Germano-Duala treaty and they expected France to renegotiate another treaty with them. Following the annexation of Cameroon by the Germans, the Dualas signed the Germano-Duala treaty in July 1884. The power and influence of the paramount Duala chiefs were reduced by the French when they took over the administration of Duala. Since the French authorities wanted to transform the French Cameroon natives to French citizens, their administration was geared towards this goal. Consequently, the French decided to appoint chiefs who fell in with French administrative policies and at the same time deposing recalcitrant chiefs. Artificial chiefs were created which reduced the powers of the paramount Duala chief and ended the authority of the chiefs in criminal and civil courts. More often, Duala chiefs were molested by the French authorities for instance the paramount chief of Akwa, Betola Akwa was sentenced to imprisonment after having been accused and tried for torture.¹⁰⁴

Many Duala wanted self determination and self government. It should be recalled that as early as 1919, the Dualas had spoken against being governed by the French. In December 1929, they called on the League to end the French Mandate in French Cameroon. They wanted the territory to be granted self government, or it should be proclaimed a neutral country to be controlled by the League of nations. The French colonial authorities took advantage of the fact that the Duala petition was not popular

¹⁰⁴ Ngoh V.J., *History of Cameroon Since 1800*.

outside Duala, since some chiefs such as chief Atangana of Beti resented the Dualas and called for self determination. The French colonial authorities believed that the Germans had developed the Dualas too fast and consequently ended up disorienting them. This attitude to a greater extent, hardened the French approach towards the grievances which the Dualas presented to them. The French administration in French Cameroon refused to return the expropriated Duala land to their original owners. This was one of the most important reasons for the Franco-Duala differences.

In April 1916, the Tirailleurs Senegalais, who were fighting for the French, maltreated the Dualas and treated them like a conquered people. The Dualas wanted to have a say in their post-war future. Following the partition of Cameroon by the British and French, the Dualas sent a delegation to the British Resident in Buea demanding British control over them. The Duala demand was also extended to the Paris Peace Conference on 18 August 1919. They demanded that, Cameroon should be a neutral territory. African indigenes should be compensated for war damages, expropriation should end, the government should not have any say in the selection and or dismissal of their chiefs, that task should be done by the Dualas themselves. They demanded a guarantee of civil rights, free trade and the security of the office of the chiefs. All the demands made by the Dualas were ill-received by the French colonial authorities. The French regarded the Cameroonian soldiers who had fought for Germany and were stationed in Fernando Po as a potential de-stabilising factor. Though the Dualas did not go into physical confrontations with the French authorities, these protest degenerated into the Duala land problem.¹⁰⁵

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the impact assessment of colonialists policies and practices in Cameroon during the colonial era. It has dwell on the German, British and French colonial policies and practices with emphases on the economic and social practices in Cameroon. The colonial system came into being because a number of people in Western Europe, holding certain ideas in matters of religion, social policy, politics and economic, came into contact with African peoples holding different ideas and living

¹⁰⁵ Ngoh V.J. *History of Cameroon, Since 1800*.

under a different system.¹⁰⁶ Never in the History of Africa did so many changes occurred with such speed as they did between 1880 and 1935. Indeed, the most fundamental and dramatics of these changes took place in the shorter period from 1890-1910, a period that saw the conquest and occupation of virtually the whole continent of Africa by the imperial powers and the establishment of the colonial system. The period after 1910 was essentially one of consolidation and exploitation of the system.¹⁰⁷ The pace of this drama was truly astonishing for as late as 1880 only very limited areas of Africa had come under direct rule of the Europeans. In the whole of West Africa, only the island and coastal areas of Senegal, the town of Freetown and its environs (now Sierra Leone) the Southern part of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) the coastal area of Abidjan in ivory coast and Porto Novo in Dahomey (now Benin) and the island of Lagos is now Nigeria, had come under the direct rule of Europeans.

In North Africa, it was only Algeria that by 1880 had been colonized by the French. Not an inch of the whole of East Africa had come under the control of any European power, while only the coastal stretches of Mozambique and Angola of the whole of central Africa were being ruled by the Portuguese. It was only in Southern Africa that foreign rule had not been firmly implemented but had even been extended to a considerable distance in land. In fact, by as late as 1880s as much as eighty percent of the continent of Africa was being ruled by her own kings, Queens, clans and lineage heads in empires, kingdoms, communities and polities of various sizes and shapes.¹⁰⁸ This work “Colonial transport policies and Development in Cameroon: A historical syntheses from 1884-1961” aims at establishing the view that colonial transport policies were not geared at nation building, rather they were meant to facilitate colonial exploit from 1884 to 1961.

¹⁰⁶ Adu Boahen: African and the Colonial Challenge, A General History of Africa VIP, P.I University of California press, 1985.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine German, British and French colonial transport policies in Cameroon. How the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885 through its Principle of Effective Occupation and possession of the hinterland influenced and guided European colonial transport policies in Africa. In July 1884 Germany declared a protectorate over Cameroon. The German colonial rule in Cameroon lasted for approximately thirty-two years from July 1884 to their defeat in the First World War in February 1916. The defeat and expulsion of the Germans from Cameroon was followed by the Anglo- French provisional partition of Cameroon along the Picot line¹. The British and French administration in Cameroon ended in 1960 and 1961 for the French and British respectively. During this period of rule they implemented different colonial policies with a direct impact on the development of railway, seaports and road transport in their respective sectors of Cameroon.

Chapter one of the work is focus on the general principles of colonial transport policies in Africa and impact on colonial transport policy, that outlined the theories of effective occupation of Africa by the European countries. It also portrays the manner through which the conference was carried out and the resolution taken during the conference. The chapter further examine how the German occupation of Cameroon after the Berlin conference as one of its colony in Africa occurred, and the reasons behind the German occupation of Cameroon. The Chapter also dwell on the British and French plan in North Africa during the partition and the German coup in the Cameroons. It asserts that the occupation of Cameroon, by the Germans during the partition of Africa was basically for commercial purpose.

This chapter examined the German annexation of Cameroon. The annexation of the territory was followed by their penetration into the interior. The activities of the British and the French, particularly, diverting interior trade to their favour and the presence of fertile soils in the interior compelled German movement into the interior. The presence of plantations, their physical location and produce determined the type of transport facility that was constructed. The construction of roads railways and ports was done both by the government and the plantation concessions. The labour for the construction was supplied by the local indigenous communities. By the end of the

¹ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol.2: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods* (Limbe: Macmillan Publishers, 1989), p. 56.

German rule in Cameroon, they had constructed a number of roads, ports and northern railway had been opened to traffic in 1911. The next chapter shall examine British colonial transport policies in the Southern Cameroons.

The work further stressed on an appraisal of the British colonial Transport policies from 1922-1961, it suffices today that, the British administrators through the colonial period were extremely limited in numbers, the extensive, roadless, mountainous Bamenda Division for example, in the 1950s was administered by only four (D.Os) Divisional Officers, who toured the area either on foot or on horseback. Worse still, always aloof, they operated from their Government Residential Areas (GRAS), where they barricaded themselves sufficiently distanced from the native quarters and even for purpose of leisure when they would more easily have been disposed to mixing up with the locals, they continued to be cocooned in the Senior Service (SS) clubs, microcosms of Apartheid. Areas of social contact were rare or simply nonexistent.

These British officials were therefore at best a source of curiosity whenever they ventured out on tour than people who were expected to influence the masses with their Anglo-Saxon mores.² In fact, (Indirect Rule) IR and its elaboration in euphemistic terminologies and titles, such as the “paramountcy of African interests” or the “Dual mandate” only further prescribed separate development for Africans and Europeans or more appropriately, the development of African in Europeans interests. It was an expansion of these policies that fertilized the grandiose theories behind the evolution of Apartheid in South Africa and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith in Southern Rhodesia.

Henceforth, to term what emerged at the end of the German-British colonial administration in Southern Cameroons as an “Anglo-Saxon” culture, an idea that in itself would certainly have turned any typical Englishman blue, is total misnomer and a contradiction of terms. Rather, as we have seen, it was an overwhelmingly mission-generated culture zealously defended by the missionaries, catechists and their fervent Christian followers, the bedrock of which was native to the territory. The British contribution to this notion though high-sounding, comprised little more than the

² Mary Elizabeth Oake, *No place for a white woman*, Neil Co. Ltd, Edinburgh, nd: also W.E. Newington, *West Coast memories* 1993, an unpublished auto biography.

intangible coating of administrative and political structure, which for that matter they shared in good measure with the Germans and within which, bonded by a common colonial past, the Southern Cameroons state structures developed.

Furthermore, we identified in chapter four of the work, the French colonial transport policies in Cameroon. It portrays the manner in which France undertook the construction of roads, railways, airports, seaports and communication system during the departure of Germans in Cameroon in 1916 and the joint rule of Cameroon between Britain and France. The chapter further examines how the French occupation of Cameroon after the defeat of the Germans led to the creation and completion of the transport network set by the Germans. The Chapter also dwells on the French communication system that has existed right up to present day and has contributed much in building the transport communication network in Cameroon.

Nevertheless the last chapter of the work has attempted to handle issues on the impact of colonial transport policies in Cameroon. It has created an insight on the positive impacts on roads, ports, rails and airport in the economic development of Cameroon. The chapter has equally brought to light the development of transport network in Cameroon such as in the domain of Air Transport notably the Bamenda Air Transport services that was relaunched to boost up economic development in the transport sector. The chapter has also stressed on the reasons for the development of transport network in Cameroon. It further examined the negative impact of transport infrastructure in Cameroon on areas such as roads, ports, rail Air Transport in the reduction of poverty which has enhanced economic development in Cameroon tremendously. Lastly the chapter has culminated with German exploitation of natural resources in Cameroon that open up many sectors of transport policies in Cameroon.

European colonial transport policies in Africa were determined by the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885. In 1884 the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck and the French Prime Minister, Jules Ferry convened a conference in the German capital of Berlin to put an end to colonial rivalries in Africa and lay down modalities for a peaceful partition of territories in Africa. The participants came from the major European countries, Britain, France, Germany and Belgium that were interested in colonies in Africa. After three months of deliberations some major decisions were taken and signed in what became known as the Berlin Act on 26

February 1885.³ The conference agreed among other things, European powers must not resort to war in resolving any territorial dispute in Africa. This provision was adhered to throughout the period of the scramble and partition of Africa. European nations were also forbidden from entering into a military alliance with African countries resisting the former. The Rivers Congo and Niger were to be international waterways. Of particular significance and was demonstrated in the discourse was the Principle of Effective Occupation.

For a territory to be recognized there must be effective occupation. This was the most important article for the claim to territory in Africa. It meant nationals of European nations must be present in a territory and a form of government must be put over the area. This article went concomitant with a European possession of the interior. The interior was of great importance to the colonialists as it was both a source of raw material to the colonial industries as well as a market for their manufactures. European movement into the interior quintessentially called for the development of roads into the interior if not, to develop the territory, but to facilitate the exploration and exploitation of Africa's riches of the hinterland. The exploitation of Africa's raw materials for the benefit of European industries was the primary determinant transport policies in Africa during the colonial period. The roads were constructed not for the economic good of the colonial subjects but to link centres of extraction to the ports for subsequent shipment to Europe. German colonial transport policies did not depart from this general European consideration.

German colonial transport policies in Cameroon were dictated by their economic interest in the territory. The German declaration of a protectorate of Cameroon in July 1884 was resisted by the British and French who too had an interest in the territory. The British and the French had great trading in Cameroon and wanted to maintain and control their trade links with the people of the interior. A great deal of trade in the interior kept on flowing to the advantage of the English in Nigeria and the French in the Upper Congo region. A German penetration into the interior necessitated the development of sea transport system but was made difficult by the British and French. Despite the international agreement arrived at during the Berlin West African conference for freedom of trade and navigation on the Rivers Congo and Niger-Benue,

³ B. Barkindo, M. Omolewa, G. Babalola. *Africa and the Wider World* (Nigeria: Longman Nigeria Plc., 1994), p. 21.

the French and British still restricted trade and navigation on the rivers. It presented an obstacle to German penetration into the interior. The River Congo was used but difficulties with the French over navigation as well as the high cost of freightage made it necessary to develop an alternative and better route. The overland route from Kribi on the coast to Yaounde was developed. The construction of a half-way station at Lolodorf provided protection to both the white and Hausa traders from the resistance of some indigenes of the interior. A road was constructed from Edea to Lolodorf and then to Yaounde which brought Yaounde and its hinterland closer to the administrative centre of Douala.⁴

Yaounde and its interior particularly, the south-eastern regions were very rich in ivory and rubber. Transporting these items by road was so easy. The most profitable means of getting them to the coast for onward shipment to Germany was by water-way. This made the development of a sea route imperative on the colonial administration. This was one of the goals of those who explored the eastern parts of the colony: Stein in 1902, Engelhardt in 1903, and Scheunemann in 1904. While they explored, they made valuable discoveries of additional rubber and ivory and a potential migrant labour to meet up the colony's constant labour shortage. Stein taught the indigenes the best method of preparing rubber for the trade and planted palm which was profitable to the traders. The incessant quest for a sea route resulted in discovery of a suitable water-way on the River Nyong. It went up through the River Nyong navigable into the interior to a point where only one day's overland march linked up to the River Doume. The river cleared its debris and dead timber to make it safe for navigation⁵.

Beginning from 1885 the Germans started opening plantations in Cameroon and in 1897 the largest plantation concession the West African Plantation Victoria (WAPV) was established. Most of the German plantations were found in the Victoria and Kumba Bezirk (Districts). Within the plantation localities the construction of roads was dominated by the trading companies. The plantations constructed roads linking up the various estates and then ultimately to the coast for shipment to Europe. To encourage trade in the territory appeals were made to Germany for the construction of roads and for garrisons. The difficulty of obtaining public funds adequate for the construction of roads to the satisfaction of the commercialists led to the formation of two trading

⁴ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroon*, pp. 78-93.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 93-94.

concessions the *Gesellschaft Sud Kamerun* and the *Gesellschaft Nordwest Kamerun* which had the obligation of exploring interior trade and constructing roads in return for the trade advantages in the interior. After 1900 roads of a permanent character were constructed from the coast into the hinterland and bridges were built to link up roads. In 1905 the first vehicle was driven in Cameroon and in 1913 the first long journey by automobile occurred between Kribi and Yaounde, a distance of 280km.

To solve the problem of portage and ensure huge and regular supply of raw materials from the interior to the coast, the Germans embarked on the construction of railroad. The construction of railway was divided into three phases the Northern, the Middle and Southern railway. The Northern railway was the stretch from Bonaberi to Nkongsamba covering a distance of 160km, was opened in 1911. The middle railway was to run from Douala to Widimenge and then to the Nyong River. This was to facilitate the steady and regular extraction of timber, ivory and rubber from the south-eastern region to the coast for export to Europe. Unfortunately, this phase of the railway was never completed as it was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The outbreak of the war and its extension to Cameroon saw the defeat and expulsion of the Germans from the territory.

The expulsion of the Germans from Cameroon was followed by the Anglo-French provisional partition of the territory in 1916. The British obtained one-fifth and the French four-fifth of the territory. The temporary partition of the territory was made permanent in July 1919 following the signing of the Milner- Simon Agreement between Britain and France. At the Treaty of Versailles, Cameroon was handed over to Britain and France to be administered as a League of Nations Mandate territory. In July 1922 the League of Nations administration in Cameroon officially started. In the British Southern Cameroons, the British administering authority made some efforts towards the development of transport facilities in the territory. Like the Germans, the main driving force and policy guide for transport development was primarily the economic benefit of the metropolitan economy (British economy).

The main objective of British colonization was economic. The British nationals came to Africa to trade. They came to exploit to the maximum African resources and markets for the absolute benefit of the British economy at a minimum cost. The British tried as much as possible to avoid spending money made through trade on Africa and in

the administration of colonies⁶. This informed and determined British transport policies in the British Southern Cameroons. In the administration of the territory they adopted the policy of indirect rule which was a style of governing their colonial subjects through their recognized traditional rulers. Among other reasons for the adoption of the policy was the paucity of finance and absence of roads into the interior of most African territories. The British were unwilling to levy an extra tax on her tax payers in order to run the administration of colonies and develop roads in the territories. They therefore, preferred the use of traditional rulers to move into the interior of the territory. The use of Chiefs solved the problem of the absence of roads in the territory explaining the almost neglect of the development of roads in the British Southern Cameroons.

In close connection, the British were aimed at minimizing its fiscal obligations and make the colonies balance their budget without external assistance (most certainly from Britain). For this reason the British decided to administer Southern Cameroons as part of Nigeria. The British looked upon the Southern Cameroons as an economic waste certainly for its smallness and therefore, preferred to have it as an appendage of Nigeria. As a matter of fact, a separate budget for the development of Cameroon was never voted at it was taken tacitly that British Southern Cameroons benefits from every development carried out in Nigeria. Road connectivity in the territory, particularly, in the plantations settlements was carried out by the plantation concessions.

Throughout the British administration of the territory there was only one all-season-road in the territory running from Tiko and Victoria through Mutengene, Muyuka, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, 67km of the lone road remained to be completed between Mamfe and Bamenda. There was one dry-season road through Mamfe linking the province and Nigeria, and two dry-season roads from Kumba to Loum and Bamenda to Mbouda linking the territory with French Cameroon. The non-plantation areas of the Bamenda Division were left without roads. Delancey argues convincingly that the British deliberately neglected the development of the Bamenda Division to maintain the region as a permanent supplier of labour to the coastal plantations⁷. A motor ring road was built during the period circled the Bamenda grassfields joining the Bamenda township

⁶ Barkindo, Omolewa and Babalola, *Africa and the Wider World*, p. 43.

⁷ Delancey, Mark W. "The Expansion of Coffee Production in Bamenda and Bananas in the South West". *Conference on the Political Economy of Cameroon-Historical Perspectives, Leiden-June 1988* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 1989), p. 308.

of Abakwa, the Ndop Plain, Nso, Nkambe and Wum⁸. The development of the ring road was partly influenced by the great possibility of kolanut trade in the area.

The British lukewarmness in the construction of roads in the territory inspired community initiative in the development of roads. The Native Authorities were involved in the development of roads in the territory and labour for the construction was recruited by the Fon or Chief. Self-reliance was a common feature and a propeller for the development of the Native Authority areas. These Native Authority roads were usually done in stages where the people joyously participated for the development of their respective areas. As the tradition went, the town crier goes out announcing and inviting all male adults to participate in the construction of a village stretch linking it to the boundary with the neighbouring village. As each village developed its road, it contributed to the disenclavement of the province. The missionaries encouraged the villagers in these village development projects as was evident of Rev. Fr. Ivo Stockmann of the Roman Catholic Mission in Njinikom in the Wum Division of the Bamenda Province. In situations where some people were not willing to join the community work, they were compelled by the village police to participate.

While the British were reluctant in the construction of roads in the British Southern Cameroons, they made some efforts in the development of the seaports in the territory. If not for anything the presence of the plantations in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions made it mandatory on the British to develop the ports to handle the export of the plantation products. Following the Anglo- French partition of Cameroon in 1916, about 90 percent of the former German plantations were in the British section of Cameroon. The British were to revamp the plantations and bring them back to their pre-war production level. The British however, lacked the expertise to run the plantations and thus settled on selling the plantations to the former German owners which was achieved in the 1924 auction sales. The Germans took over their former plantations and controlled its production and sales. The Germans continued with the development of the Bota and Tiko wharfs to handle the export of the plantation products mostly to Germany, since they were like in charge of the Southern Cameroons economy. The ports also handled the import trade in the territory.

⁸ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 87.

In 1939 the Second World War broke out and the Germans were once again sent out of Cameroon and the British took over the running of the plantations. They continued with the development of the Tiko and Bota wharfs which handled Southern Cameroons trade during the colonial and immediate post-colonial period. The shipping in the British period was handled by the Elders and Fyffes Company. It organized the shipping of fruits from the Cameroons through the ports of Victoria and Tiko to Europe and also provided the regular passenger and mail services by sea from the Cameroons to the United Kingdom. Other shipping lines that visited the Southern Cameroons ports were the Farrel Lines and two former German ships under the flag of the Fyffes Line. The ports were placed under the Marine Department which later became the Ports Authority of the colonial government. The CDC workers carried out most of the repair works at the Victoria and Tiko ports. The British completely neglected the development of railway transport system in the Southern Cameroons during the mandate and trusteeship periods. The French on their part contributed a little more to the development of transport in their section of Cameroon as opposed to the British.

French transport policies in the French Cameroon were influenced by the French colonial policy in Africa. In the administration of their colonies in Africa they adopted the policy of assimilation. By this they were aimed at transforming their colonial subjects into Frenchmen in every aspect but the colour. By the policy of assimilation, the French considered their African colonies as an extension of France- French overseas provinces. As a matter of policy, they were considered part of France and as such it was a duty on the French to develop their territories. The development of the colonies was to facilitate French movement into the interior to exploit its resources for the ultimate benefit of the former's economy. Driven by this motivation, the French continued with German development projects in the territory.

As soon as the French mandate administration started in 1922 they immediately continued from where the Germans had stopped in the construction of railway. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 interrupted the construction of the Middle railway at Njock. The French immediately continued from Njock to Makak and then to Yaounde. The extension line passed through very thick forest that was practically unsettled. Between 1922 and 1926 the Njock- Yaounde railway project had been

accomplished⁹. The railway line measured 134.7km. During this same period a thirty-seven kilometer stretch of railway line was completed between Otele and Mbalmayo. This extension was later modernized in 1933. In 1955 after the construction of the bridge over the River Wouri, Bonaberi was linked to Douala by rail.

These projects were realized at a very high human cost. The French in their administration of the colonies discriminated between the assimilated and the non-assimilated. The non-assimilated were considered as French subjects and subjected to the obnoxious colonial policies of indigenat; prestation and other forms of forced labour. This was the class of people used by the French on the construction sites. Under very dehumanizing conditions the French completed these projects that boosted the transport sector in the French Cameroon. Those who could not stand the harsh working conditions escaped to the plantation towns of the British Southern Cameroons. This accounted for massive presence of the Bassa in the plantation towns of the Victoria Division.

To promote the economic development of the colonies the French National Assembly in 1946 passed a law establishing the Economic and Social Development Investment Fund (FIDES). It was a long term programme for the modernization of the French colonies. The funds into the scheme were to come from basically two sources: grants from the national budget and interest from loans to the colonies acquired from the Central Fund for French Overseas Territories¹⁰. The investment funds were used to finance projects in the colonies. In this way, the French Cameroon benefitted from the scheme to promote the construction and modernization of its transport system. Funds coming from this scheme were used in the extension and modernization of the Douala seaport, the building of bridges outstandingly, the bridge over the River Wouri; the completion of the railway linking the Douala- Yaounde and the Douala- Nkongsamba lines; renovation of railway equipment, building of airfields and the improvement of road network especially between Douala and its hinterland¹¹. By the time of the independence of the French Cameroons in January 1960 the territory was relatively more advanced in terms of transport facilities than the British Cameroons. On the 1st of

⁹ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 75.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.121.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

October 1961 the British Southern Cameroons gained independence and then reunified with the independent Republic of Cameroon, the former French Cameroon.

Transport policies in the post-independence era, in a reunified Cameroon were determined by three main considerations: national integration, bringing the administration closer to the people and the promotion of trade. There was a shift from the colonial policy of promoting the interest of the metropolitan economy to promoting national cohesion through the development of transport infrastructure. The post-colonial administration found the construction of roads as one of the quick means of promoting national cohesion and integration. The British and the French pursued different policies and had different priorities in the promotion and construction of roads, railways, waterways and seaports in their respective territories. After reunification there was a need to plan at the national level and what dominated consideration for road development in the country was the promotion of national integration. In 1965 the Tiko-Douala road was completed and inaugurated by President Ahmadu Ahidjo and was christened the reunification road. The Bamenda- Bafoussam road was also completed linking the two territories. At the same time the custom check between Tombel and Loum was taken off.

In close connection, was to bring the administration closer to the people by linking up the various provincial headquarters to the nation's capital. The Yaounde-Douala highway was expanded and the various headquarters were linked either by road or by air. The Garoua airport was upgraded to international standards as well as the Yaounde- Ngaoundere railway was equally completed. The Douala seaport was expanded to handle import and export trade albeit to the neglect of the Tiko and Bota ports. The various Divisional headquarters were also linked by roads to their respective provincial capitals.

Third consideration for the development of transport facilities in Cameroon in the post-independence period was the promotion of trade. There was a need to link the rural farmers to the major markets which necessitated the construction of roads into the rural areas. The post-independence government embarked on the construction of earth roads into the rural areas to make it easy for the farmers to get their farm products to the markets and better their lot. Colonial transport policies in both the colonial and post-colonial periods had enormous impact on the economic development of the territory.

Colonial transport policies contributed to the economic development of the territory through the development of road connectivity. In consonance with the principle of effective occupation and the clause on the possession of the hinterland, the Germans constructed some roads into interior. The roads linked up to the coast into the interior promoting the better and gainful cultivation of crops in the interior. German penetration into the interior of Cameroon improved on the cultivation and production of rubber. The indigenes were equally taught better ways of producing palm oil which reduced waste of traditional method used by the people of the interior. It led to an improved quality of palm oil as well as the quantity produced by the indigenes with the net effect being an increase in their income and standards of living.

The development of Cameroon transport networks connected the country to the international market. The Germans developed the ports to facilitate the shipment of raw materials from Cameroon to the European markets. The British and the French continued in this same line, whereby the ports handled not just export trade but also import trade. In the post-independence period the port facility was developed and refurbished to handle not just Cameroon import and export trade but serve some landlocked countries like Chad and Central African Republic whose imports pass through the Douala seaport. This has generated income to the state treasury from the import and export duties charged.

On the other hand colonial transport policies led to enclave development in the territory. European colonial transport policies were influenced by the economic need of the metropolitan economy. Hence, areas with immense raw materials needed by the colonialists industries attracted road constructions. The result was areas without these resources were left undeveloped or without roads leading to enclave development of the territory. The Bamenda grassfields was not fertile land for the opening of plantations and as such did not attract roads and other transport facilities to the area.

Colonial transport policies created an imbalance relation between Cameroon and the Western economies. The opening of seaports as already indicated above linked up Cameroon to the international capitalist system. Roads were constructed into the interior to facilitate the extraction of raw materials from the hinterland to the coast for onward transmission to Europe. Cameroon and its interior remained the perpetual producer of raw materials, the hewers of wood and the consumer of manufactures. While the raw

materials from Cameroon added value to the European economy by creating more jobs in the manufacturing industries, the European consumer goods added no plus to the Cameroon economy. This trend continued into the post-independence period.

The study came out with the following findings: colonial transport policies were not aimed primarily at the economic development of the protectorate. What was paramount was the economic benefit of the metropolitan economy. The colonial authorities were all interested in linking the interior areas to the Douala port for the easy transportation of the riches of the interior to their industries abroad. The German desire to circumvent interior trade from flowing to the advantage of the British in Nigeria and the French in Congo led to the development of a waterway on the River Nyong, connected it to the River Doume to easily extract and transport the rubber and ivory of the south-eastern region to Douala. Evidently, what was paramount here was not the interest of the protectorate- disenclavement of the interior but, the promotion of German economic concern. For their own benefit the British neglected the development of the Bamenda grassfields in order to keep the region permanently as suppliers of labour to the coastal plantations. The French promoted transport facilities in the French Cameroon to facilitate the economic exploitation of the territory for their own benefits.

Transport policies in the post-colonial period were a useful tool for the promotion of national integration. After reunification there was every need to promote and foster national unity and cohesion between the two sections of Cameroon that had been separated since 1916 following the Anglo-French partition. The partition had restricted the movement of goods and persons difficult across the dividing line. Therefore, to foster national unity the post- colonial government constructed roads and railways linking the two territories. The Tiko- Douala road was constructed and inaugurated in 1965; the Bamenda- Bafoussam road passing through Mbouda was completed and the Mbanga- Kumba railway line was also constructed all in a bit to promote national cohesion.

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Age	Status	Profession	Place of interview	Date
Abdou Kader Mattamat	75	Male	Farmer	Garoua	24/04/2016
Abdoul Moussai Karim	80	Male	Farmer	Garoua	24/04/2016
Aboubakar Mohamadou	75	Male	Business man	Garoua	24/04/2016
Abraham Muluh	63	Male	Retired Teacher	Bamenda	2016
Adamu Abo Hamon	85	Male	Retired civil servant	Garoua	24/04/2016
Agbor Besong Charles	82	Male	Retired Civil Servant	Mamge	12/11/2016
Agbor Michael Ayuk	75	Male	Retired civil servant	Buea	10/06/2016
Albert Ngome Kome	74	Male	Former Minister of Transport	Yaounde	10/08/2016
Angono Lucas	74	Male	Retired Overseer,	Bamenda	2016
Anyangwe Richard	51	Male	Director Bamenda Airport	Bamenda	2017
Atanga W. Clement	53	Male	Former Mayor of Santa	Bamenda	2016
Baba Hamadou	71	Male	Farmer	Ngaoundere	10/05/2016
Cosmas Nchoujie	74	Male	Photographer	Kom	13/08/2017
Dipoko Joseph	76	Male	Canoe boy and repairer	Mamfe	23/07/2017
Eballe Moses Elangwe	74	Male	Retired C.D.C Worker	Limbe	21/06/2016
Hadidja Inam Dimi	68	Female	Business	Ngaoundere	10/05/2016
Halimatous Seidou	73	Male	Retired civil servant	Ngaoundere	10/05/2016
Hamdou Albert Daouda	69	Male	Driver	Ngaoundere	10/05/2016
Henry Mbain	77	Male	Plantation worker	Tiko	06/11/2016
Isaac koge Mesumbe	91	Male	Teacher traditional ruler	Kack (Tombel)	03/04/2016
Isaiah Ngong	71	Male	Retired Carpenter	Njinikom	2015
Isaish Megne	80	Male	Farmer	Bamenda	2015
Isidore Ngam	80	Male	Farmer	Njinikom	2016
Julius Njua	65	Male	Retired Civil Servant	Njinikom	2015
Lyonga Eling John	72	Male	Driver	Douala	02/06/2017
Marx Njuakom	82	Male	Farmer	Kom	2015
Massang Epole Constance	70	Female	Housewife	Douala	02/06/2016

Mbamome Nkendong Divine	42	Male	Director of Road Transport	Yaounde	16/08/2017
Michael Mbeng	79	Male	Farmer	Njinikom	2015
Mofor C. Samson	61	Male	Retired Teacher	Bamenda	2016
Mvondo Paul Thierry	74	Male	Civil Engineer	Douala	02/06/2016
Nayah Bih	80	Female	Farmer	Njinikom	2015
Ndobe Manfred	93	Male	Pastor	Tombel	03/04/2016
Ngatoumou Rose Nancy epse Bella	37	Female	Regional Delegate of transport for the center	Yaounde	16/08/2017
Ngoh Julius	48	Male	Worker Bamenda Urban Council	Bamenda	2016
Njoki Lisinge Albert	76	Male	Bricklayer	Buea	10/06/2016
Ntantang Agbor Godfred	68	Male	Contractor	Tinto	12/11/2016
Ntsimi Marie Benadette	60	Female	Center Regional service head for road Transport	Yaounde	16/08/2017
Nutoto Godfred	52	Male	Regional Delegate of Agriculture, North West Region	Bamenda	2017
Onya Joshua	54	Male	Road Engineer	Bamenda	2017
Onya Moses	79	Male	Retired Civil Servant	Bamenda	2017
Otto Ngesbinain	80	Male	Farmer	Belo	2015
Sekwe Paul	76	Male	Retired C.D.C. worker	Limbe	10/06/2016
Simon Akaind	82	Male	Farmer	Fundong, Kom	2015
Tantang John	73	Male	Retired Headteacher	Tinto	12/04/2016
Tital Sama Doh	75	Male	Farmer	Bali	2016
Toukoum Jean Marc	53	Male	Syndicate official SYNACTURCAM	Yaounde	10/08/2016
Yassa Aboubakar	71	Male	Retired teacher	Garoua	24/04/2016
Zacheus Nchindo	75	Male	Business man	Bamenda	2016

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

MAPPING OF MAIN ARTERY NETWORK AND COLONIAL PORTERAGE IN CAMEROON (1900-1940)

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1 - INTRODUCTION

Cameroon was discovered in 1472 by the Portuguese Ferno do Poo. The arrival of Portuguese on the coast coincides with the seasonal swarming of the shrimps *Callinassa turnerana* white, locally called MbØatoØ. Also, within sight of the abundance of shrimps, the navigators do not hesitate to baptize the river Wouri "River of the shrimps (Rio Dos Camaroes from where derived the name Cameroon. Very early, this named country rightly Africa in miniature (due to its broad extension in latitude (11) and to its geostrategic position in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea) will become the Crossroads of the colonial military influences and scientific ordinates with the interests of the colonial powers of the time (Mveng, 1983). The colonial history of Cameroon is rich of teaching especially when one analyzes the motivations of the creation of the roads and those which direct the construction of our roads today. Always it is that about 1850, a high wind of philanthropy blows from Europe to Africa (Mveng 1985). Slavery though abolished in 1833 in England and 1848 in France, does not bandage the wounds of Africa which is to be rebuilt. It is the colonial time, and despite of the today right and justified Africans resentment against colonization, the history teaches us that the "colonists" were not always "colonialists". Also, one can check this statement, according to E. Mveng (1985), for certain German Governors of the time. Colonization is a historical fact which seeks afterwards to be justified by legal and moral principles. The conference of Berlin (November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885) devotes the splitting of Africa according to this doctrinarian principles' of Jules Ferry: "the colonies are for the rich countries the most advantageous placement of capital ". Within the three colonial principles, which guide colonists actions, only one holds our attention: occupation of the African territory and the promotion of the moral and material well being of the natives. Our work is articulated around the German occupation and of the bearing followed by the development of the roads and other ways of transport. We will complete it by a critical analysis on the influence of this period in the development of the actual Cameroon.

2 - METHODOLOGY

To realise this work, we run after the existing files and history books, then we consulted with the NIC some existing maps and finally we used MAPINFO 7.5 to chart these arteries of bearings and to put them in comparison with the main terrestrial transportation ways today.

3 - THE BERLIN CONFERENCE AND GERMAN OCCUPATION

The Berlin Conference which devoted the myth of the division of Africa stipulates three conditions to the effective possession of a country: the country does not belong to anybody and it is necessary to distinguish in this case: right of property and right of political sovereignty the main occupant must keep under control the whole territory the formal taking possession should be expressed by: the effective presence of the colonist the fight against slavery and the promotion of the indigenous welfare the development of the country. From these principles, the last indeed will determine the major occupation of the Cameroonian territory by German. This possession will be done in three times: the coast, the hinterland and the north of the country. The occupation also proceeds by three modes: negotiations and treaties, penetrations and installations, military expeditions and conquests. Whatever its mode, the occupation of Cameroon will be effective since 1902 thanks to major Hans Dominik who organized the conquest of the country.

4 - THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE PORTERAGE 4.1 Development of Cameroon After this successful conquest, it was necessary to emphasize economically the conquered territory. The German metropolis did not haggle over the means of this development in spite of the unwillingness of the local populations. The policy of development, though philanthropic proceeds with firmness and this declaration of Dr. Soft (on September 2, 1913) gives all the content of it: "the colonies will thrive with natives for them and not in spite of them and against them". The economic development passes obligatorily by the creation of the companies, scientific research and the realization of an assessment of the riches and potentialities of the occupied territory. It makes it possible to organize a rational and methodical exploitation of the country, and in this direction, very early agriculture held the first place in the German strategy and it is remained nowadays the first sectors of the GDP of Cameroon. Also, since 1890, a company of exploitation is born: the "Gesellschaft Nordwest-Kamerun" with a concession of 100000km² and extending from Sanaga to the British border in Nigeria (fig.1). In November 1898, a new company more settles in the south with 50000km²: the "Gesellschaft Sd-Kamerun". These companies took the name of concessions. After the formula of concessions followed by those of the plantations, there were grouped in company such as the Victoria company born in 1895 with a capital of 2500000 Francs (5000US \$) of the time and the Bibundi company (1500000 francs of capital, 3000 US\$). The development is such as one count in 1913 in Cameroon: 58 plantations, 195 European employees, 17827 Kamerunians employees on more than 28225 ha cultivated. The main cultivated crops were: banana, cocoa, coffee and the hevea (rubber). Timber exploitation follows closely agriculture (8000t of mahogany tree for 400000 marks of receipts in 1913). The exploitation of ivory in addition to the production of the cotton and the development of cattle rearing and breeding in Northern Cameroon came latter.

4.2 - The portorage and labour forced

Is there exist an economic development in a country without a minimum of transportation roads? Consequently one can understand the development of portorage throughout the Cameroon territory. When we look upon the number of employees used in the plantations, the report/ratio is high: 1 employee for less than 2 ha (1,58ha)! One

can consequently realise all the eagerness of German on the portage in spite of their philanthropic feelings. Thus the portage appears impossible to circumvent and it constitutes the main way used at the first years of exploitations. It was a true plague for Cameroon, because, in spite of the abolition of slavery, this drudgery together with labour forced were often practised under inhuman conditions and the tracks of caravans of that time (fig.2) were marked out with corpses. The portage begins in 1891, as soon as after the creation of the first German concession and it will remain long-lived during and after the First World War (1914-1918). Nevertheless it allowed the development of the road network and the railway Cameroon. Thus, on the axis Yaounde - Kribi (300km) in 1913, Mveng (1985) announces 80000 carriers which will connect the hinterland to the coast. It adds that one saw passing daily to Lolodorf (coming from Yokadouma, 600km with distance), nearly 1000 carriers charged with rubber. Figure 3 dealing with road network in 1918, shows well three principal axes by which passed the labour forced: a very long Northern axis, close to 1000km, Eastern axis is more than 600km and a southern axis is reduced to some 300km. According to Bopda (2003), these large axes determined the principal and secondary axes of mobilization of the colonial labour forced in Cameroon.

4.3 - Consequences of the portage: the development of the roads and other transportation ways

Under the conditions mentioned above, to create roads became a need impossible to circumvent. So, in 1912, the Yaounde-Kribi road was completed done and Kribi-Ebolowa followed little afterwards. The creation of an automobile company in 1912 puts in place a program of equipment which creates road in all the districts of Cameroon (from the South to the North). Consequently, the principal centres of Cameroon are connected by seasonal roads (fig 3) with concrete bridges. Actually, the contemporary Cameroonian road network depends mostly on this time. Outside the roads, the railroad was an impressive project. For German colonists, it was necessary to carry out the Douala-Chad line, because the German possessions in Africa had already a railway. It is the case of Togo which aligned in 1912, 300km of railway, of Eastern Africa under German rules (1350 km) and of the South Western Africa (2100km). Through this report, we can understand the poor integration of Central African countries that have any transborder railway. Nevertheless, the first stage is the creation of the Buea-Victoria axis (fig. 3) because of the plantations. In 1903, a company of the railroads will be born `` Kamerun Eisenbalm Gesellschaft' ' with two junctions at the beginning of Douala: Douala-Moungo junction to connect the exploitation of the plantations to the coast (axis Mbanga Kumba which still remains Junction Douala-Nkongsamba (1911), which is removed nowadays. The railroad of the Centre will be born during the War of 1914, it is this line which was to join Chad passing by Yaounde (via EdØa and EsØka, fig.3). Transcameroonian railway project that will follow this line later just reached NgaoundØrØ without joining Chad. That constitutes a great loss of earnings for Cameroon which did not always knows how to make profitable its strategic position in the heart of the African continent. The river transport occupied at the time a dominating place and the concession Sd Kamerun will be connected to Stanley Pool (Middle Congo) by Sangha and Congo while Ivindo and OgouØ open the way towards the

interior of Gabon. In the north, one joined Chad by Logone and Chari while Benue river, tributary of Niger offers a perfect connection for the Atlantic coast to the point and give birth in 1914 in Hamburg to the `` Niger-Benue Transport Gesellschaft ''. With the development of the railway, terrestrial and maritime transport, the Trade is flourishing and the general trade of Cameroon in 1907 represents 33 187 000 marks from which 15 891 000 comes from the exportation, whose Rubber constitutes the basic product (more than 7 641 000). Consequently, the financial organizations take interest in Cameroon which hold in 1913 its first bank: the `` Deutsch West Afrikanische Bank ' '. Germany will continue the equipment of Cameroon by the telephone and telegraphic lines: 1166km of telephone lines, 107 of telegraph lines and 712km of telegraph cables in 1912.

5 - DISCUSSION: GERMAN AND THE CURRENT PERIOD WHAT CHANGES AND CHALLENGES?

By comparing the infrastructures of the time and those nowadays (fig.4), one is tempted to ask several questions including one principal: why Germany succeeds to its work in Cameroon one would be tempted to question itself? A glance on the maps of the time and those of today shows that nothing changed if it is not the regression and the abandonment of certain routes transportation in particular river and railway. The withdrawal of the great railway project Douala-Chad, that of the hinterland river navigation and regional project can no longer benefit the Cameroonian Government. It is necessary to understand the German motivations and to enlighten ourselves while compared the period to the Cameroonian motivations today! Our field results allowed us to outline some thoughts, starting from the geographical information existing system carried out at the period (between 1860 and 1960). Since 1903, German, started a significant cartographic work by Moisel for effective control on the territory; and nor the British colonization or French one which will take Cameroon later does not bring any significant change to Cameroon (Table 1). Briefly, Cameroon is a large crossroads of the geographical information organized at the various periods of its history according to interests of the colonial powers and the colonial administration today. Geographical information in Cameroon is multiform and we will be based on two complementary modes: topographic maps and the air photographs which are primary education tools of geographical information system. We started from historical prospects to show the offers and the achievements of each time and especially to show the current appropriation by the national or international private mediums of the production of the maps vis-a-vis of the resignation or a bad organization of the official or para governmental structures of production of geographical information. It is necessary to add to this offer, the geopolitical or strategic motivations as well as the economic motivations of the various actors.

Period Actors or institutions

Techniques and methods of production

Type of maps produced Destinations, motivations and goals

1906-1911 Gesellschaft and colonial administration

Walking, geodesy, astronomical lifting

Topographic charts of Moisel 1/100000 and 1/300000

Geopolitics, control of the borders, creation of the tracks of labour forced and exploitation, optimization of the means of production and evacuation of the products resulting from the German concessions 1911-1948 None Hollow period No production First and Second World War 1948-1964 Cameroon under French mandate, IGN Air overflight, Geodesy and astronomical levelling Aerial photographs 18x18 and 23x23, topographical maps 1/200000 and generalization to the 1/500000, then 1/50000 Forestry development and mining; fight against the resistance movements, geological and oil exploration; localization of the metalliferous lodgings, scientific research, evacuation of the products of plantations etc. 1965-2005 Cameroon Public National Geographical center (CGN) become National Institute of Cartography, (Inc) Reproduction of maps 1/200000, 1/500000, 1/50000 and of the series of air photographs left by France. Air overflight of 1975 on the large cities for census. Production of the Regional Atlases Geological and mining exploration, scientific research, tourism with establishment of the roadmaps, demographic, economic census. 1983-2001 Parapublic Cameroon CETELCAF CETELCAF Air overflight of 1983-1985, and realization of the charts to the 1/50000 To control the degradation of the forests, plan of installation and forest concessions 1990-2005 Cameroon, Parapublic SNH (National Company of Hydrocarbons) Oil maps of exploration and air photographs carried out in the Far North of Cameroon and the coastal Zone) Oil explorations and geological research. 2003-2005 Cameroon Private organization Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) and ORANGE Tourist maps and advertising executives centered on the cosmopolitan metropolis of Douala and Yaounde. Advertising and sale of the subscriptions, control territory and of the extension of the network of mobile telephony. 2004-2005 Cameroon private organization Macmillan (editor of book) Didactic maps in matter school, conclusive, roadmaps and of the large metropolis (Douala, Yaounde, Bafoussam). Didactic maps in school, educational, conclusive matter; tourist maps. 2002-2005 The USA, Canada Deprived Total ESRI Forest Watch, and MINEF or MINFOF Digitalization and georeferencing of the topographic maps to the 1/200000; production of the roadmaps and tourist, use of the GPS. Control forest installation ` forest concessions, control forestry development), promotion of Tourism in Cameroon and organization of production of maps in Cameroon from the German Period to 2005

APENDIX II TRANSPORT IN CAMEROON

With good infrastructure travel is a lot easier here than in many parts of Africa. The main means to get around in Cameroon are rail, road, air and water.

Railways

The railway makes travel from North to South possible and stress free. Train service between North and South is generally a reliable way to travel, but can sometimes be delayed. Purchase a first class ticket to ensure your spot on an air-conditioned car. The trip may take longer than expected, but the safety is worth the delay.

History of rail transport in Cameroon

German colonial period

The topography of Cameroon with mountains and dense forest belt made constructing railways to the port at Douala very difficult. The first operating railway constructed by the private West African Planting Society Victoria (WAPV) was 600 mm (1 ft 11 5/8 in) on the Feldbahn line. Initially, this railway plied Zwingenberger Hof in Soppo, near Buea, the colonial capital of German Kamerun to port Victoria, now known as Limbe, from 1901 to 1919. It also offered a passenger service which was later expanded.

The second railway that was built is the Douala, Nkongsamba railway, also known as the Northern Railway (Nordbahn) was 160 km (99 mi) long. The third is the Douala, Ngaoundere railway, also known as the Central Railway (Mittellandbahn). These two lines were built in 1,000 mm (3 ft 3 3/8 in) meter gauge, setting the standards for future railway construction in Cameroon.

French-and-British-mandate

After the 1918 Resolution the major part of Cameroon was handed over to France as a League of Nations mandate, with parts handed to the United Kingdom. The League of Nations "trusteeship" did not animate the French colonial powers to make greater investment in Cameroon's railways. Initially, they did nothing more than restore the lines constructed under German rule back to a workable state.

The Northern Railway and the Central Railway were merged into the Chemins de fer de Cameroun (CFC), but they continued to operate as two separate networks. Construction of the Douala - Mbalmayo railway project was completed by the French authorities, but the route was diverted to Yaoundé, which was reached in 1927. The seat of the colonial administration was then moved there.

The closure bridging the gap to Mbalmayo was first achieved by a 600 mm (1 ft 11 5/8 in) railway from Otélé, with Feldbahn locomotion and rolling stock. In 1933 this extension was converted to metre gauge. The changeover to diesel operation was accelerated from 1950 because all coal had to be imported from South Africa and this led to repeated irregularities in the course of delivery. In 1955, a structural link was made between the Central Railway and the Northern Railway, via a 12 km (7.5 mi) long section of line and a 1,850 m (6,070 ft) long bridge over the Wouri River.

Republic-of-Cameroon

After Independent in 1960, the Republic of Cameroon has diverted its initial rail transport efforts to the construction of a 29 km (18 mi) km long branch from the Northern Railway to Kumba. This line started operating in 1969. The new Republic's

biggest project was a 622 km (386 mi) extension of the Central Railway from Yaoundé to Ngaoundéré. This extension started operating in 1974.

The maximum length of rail network constructed in Cameroon ever is 1,120 km (700 mi). In the 1970s, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) commissioned a new railway similar to, and immediately to the east of, Cameroon's original WAPV network. Reports as to its gauge vary between 600 mm (1 ft 11 5/8 in) and 610 mm (2 ft). A lower level section of the Central Railway was partially refurbished between 1975 and 1983. However, the line was closed beyond Nkongsamba, and some of the tracks removed.

The global privatisation wave reached Cameroon's railway network in 1996. A 30 year concession for the operation of the network was awarded on 19th January, 1999 to Camrail, an ancillary of Groupe Bolloré. Camrail, also known as Cameroon Railways, carries passengers as well as freight.

Infrastructure

There are plans towards the construction of an iron ore railway, which might however be isolated from existing railways. The distance from the mine to the nearest likely port is about 500 km. A connection to the nearest Camrail line at Mbalmayo on the Nyong River would be 350 km long. Because of the heavy tonnages to be carried, this railway is likely to be 1,435 mm (4 ft 8 1/2 in) (standard gauge).

The railway is being designed with Quantm software. The railway would run from mines near Mbalam to a port near Lolabe. The expected traffic is 35 million tonnes per year for 25 years. Extensions of the rail network to Maroua and Yokadouma to promote the forestry industry were also recommended. Separate from the metre gauge mainlines were narrow gauge plantation railways, especially in the Tiko area. These served the cocoa and sugar plantations in that vicinity.

Adjacent-countries

There are currently no railways links linking the country to neighbouring countries yet. The nearest, Nigeria's railway system (1067mm) has come to Cameroon is Maiduguri which is over 100 km from the northern Cameroon border. The Gabon rail system (1435mm standard gauge) and Congolese rail systems (1067mm Cape gauge) are not near to the Cameroonian border.

The only account of railway line that came very close to Cameroon is the standard gauge railway line in Chad, constructed from funding in 2011; it included a line to Moundou and Koutéré near the Cameroon border, and also links up to Nyala on the border of Sudan. Railways in Cameroon are operated by Camrail, supported by a French investment group, Bolloré. As of 2008, the country had an estimated 987 km of 1,000 mm (3 ft 3 3/8 in) gauge track. In 2007, the traffic on the line was estimated to be 1Mt per year freight, including 1 million passengers per year.

Camrail

Camrail is the nationally accredited company that has been granted a 20 year concession to operate the Cameroon National Railway. This Cameroonian company is an ancillary of French investment group Bolloré. The railway has been operated by Comazar, also an ancillary of Bolloré, since 1999. According to the Comazar website, the government of Cameroon owns the track while the rolling stock is owned by Camrail.

Roadways

Total highways recorded in Cameroon total 50,000 km with 5,000 km paved and 45,000 km unpaved as of the year 2008. Cameroon lies on a pivotal point on the Trans-African Highway network, with three routes crossing its territory:

- Dakar-N'Djamena Highway, connecting just over the Cameroon border with the N'Djamena-Djibouti Highway
- Lagos-Mombasa Highway
- Tripoli-Cape Town Highway

Cameroon's central location in the network means that efforts to close the gaps which exist in the network across Central Africa depend largely on Cameroon's participation in maintaining the network, since it has the potential to profoundly influence Cameroon's regional trade. Except for the relatively good toll roads which connect major cities (all of them one-lane), roads are poorly maintained and subject to foul weather.

Only 10 per cent of the road network is tarred though there is a high likelihood that within a decade, a great deal of trade between West Africa and Southern Africa will be patronizing the network through Yaoundé. Prices of petrol rose steadily in 2007 and 2008, leading to a strike by transport union in Douala on 25 February, 2008. The strike quickly escalated into violent protests and spread to other major cities. The uproar finally subsided on 29 February.

Waterways

Major rivers in the south, such as the Wouri and the Sanaga, are largely non-navigable. In the north, the Benue, which connects through Nigeria to the Niger River, is navigable in the rainy season only to the port of Garoua, 2,090 km of decreasing importance. Navigation mainly on the Benue River is limited during rainy season.

Seaports and harbors

Among all the operating maritime ports in Cameroon, Douala is the busiest and the most important. Lesser ports include Kribi, used chiefly for the export of wood, and Limbé, used only for palm-oil exports. Garoua on the Benoué River is the main river port, but it is active only from July to September. In 2005, Cameroon's merchant fleet consisted of one petroleum tanker, totaling 169,593 Gross Register Tonnage (GRT).

- Douala - main port, railhead, and second largest city
- Bonaberi - railhead to northwest
- Garoua
- Kribi - oil pipeline from Chad
- Kribi South - proposed iron ore export port, about 40 km south of Kribi.
- Tiko

Pipelines

Pipe lines that carry Gas, Liquid petroleum gas, Oil, and water respectively are Gas 53 km; liquid petroleum gas 5 km; oil 1,107 km; water 35 km as of the year 2013.

Airways

The main international airport is the Douala International Airport. Other secondary international airports can be found at Yaoundé and Garoua. In total, there were 34 airports in 2008, only 10 of which had paved runways. Among the international airlines

serving Cameroon are Alitalia, Swiss, Iberia and Air Mali.

List of airports in Cameroon:

Airports - with paved runways

- Total: 11
- over 3,047 m: 2
- 2,438 to 3,047 m: 5
- 1,524 to 2,437 m: 3
- 914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways

- Total: 22
- 1,524 to 2,437 m: 4
- 914 to 1,523 m: 10
- Under 914 m: 8 (2013)

APENDIX III

Assessing Gender Inclusion in Cameroon's Rural Transport

Introduction

Since 2009, Cameroon adopted a strategy towards being an emerging country by 2035. This strategy addresses the issue of growth and poverty reduction through employment, with infrastructure and rural development being two key considerations (see 2009 Growth and Employment Strategy document). Policies and strategies that resolve concerns linked to rural development within this strategy were deduced from the third Cameroon household consumption survey (CHCS) produced by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) in 2007. This survey indicates that in 2007 the incidence of rural poverty stood at 56%. Poor people in rural areas asked for better communication infrastructures, education and healthcare, access to portable water and credit, and good roads as necessary inputs to consolidate development (NIS, 2007).

Over the same period, several studies using the 2007 CHCS have attempted to shade light on issues of gender inequality in Cameroon. In this regard, Baye and Fambon (2010) then Epo, Baye and Manga (2013) found that gender disparities in endowments like education and health exist between men and women-headed households. Rural transport is important for economic development and poverty alleviation in Africa because good transport roads increase agricultural productivity and improve access to basic education as well as health services (Gallup, Sachs & Mellinger, 1999; Banister & Berechman, 2000). Women in rural areas in Cameroon spend on average 89 US dollars per year on transport (CHCS, 2007), and do not benefit from labour- and time-saving activities that are likely to reduce their time burden. Furthermore,

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women in rural areas do not have sufficient income to pay for modern transport services which are often infrequent and expensive and where sometimes, harassment and safety are also a major concern for women travelling long distances alone (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2008). The subsequent outcome is a limitation of mobility of women, especially in rural areas where culture, customs and traditions play a crucial role in dictating how the people live.

In Cameroon, studies on the gendered effects of transport services have not been undertaken. Furthermore, studies on how access to transport services affect gender disparities in urban and rural areas are under researched in Cameroon. Both remarks seem to explain in part the difficulty Cameroon faced in its attempt to meet the Millennium Development Goal objectives because, rural transport is crucial in instigating development. Rural transport supplies urban areas with food, largely produced by women, from rural areas harbouring food production basins. Consequently, not adequately shading light on rural transport issues and how it relates to gender, may contradict the objectives of poverty alleviation and gender equality.

To carry out our study, we adopt an illustrative approach which consists: (1) of illustrating the current situation of gender transport disparities in Cameroon and (2) identifying from the literature and some transport projects, solutions from best practices elsewhere or benchmarks that could act as indicators or reference points. We then suggest feasible approaches or practices as potential way forward for the government to

put in place cost effective responses to tackling gendered transport inequality in Cameroon. However, other quantitative methods could be used to complement or evaluate the effects of these policies unlike a more descriptive approach adopted in this paper. Nonetheless, it's important to question the extent of gender considerations in rural transport services in Cameroon while a national policy on rural mobility is currently being considered by the government of Cameroon.

In addition to an introduction and conclusion, this paper is structured as follows: section one provides a conceptual framework linking gender and rural transport; section two reviews gendered differences in Cameroon's rural transport and section three assesses how sensitive is rural transport policy to women needs in Cameroon.

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Conceptual Framework linking Gender and Rural Transport

The 1994 SSATP case study by Calvo brought to the forefront the relationship between rural transport and the well-being of women by indicating that improving women access to transport could potentially free up more resources for productive and welfare enhancing activities. In what follows, we review (1) the linkage between gender and transport and (2) specific approaches of gender analyses in rural transport literature.

Gender and Transport

Literature on gender and transport can be identified on developed and developing countries. For developed countries, the main concern is most often associated to urban or suburban daily trips. Since the paper by Turner and Grieco (2000) suggesting a range of information technology based solutions (real time transport information, internet reservations or working at home) to reduce gender gap related to time allocation and labour supply for single low income mothers in UK, the interest for the topic is ongoing (Kenyon, Glenn & Rafferty, 2002; Schneiner & Holz-Rau, 2012).

The economic oriented link between gender and transport in developing countries is of interest to international institutions dealing with transport planning (World Bank, African Development Bank). The paper by Bamberger, Lebo, Gwilliam and Gannon (1999) looks for new modes of analysing gender and transport services that can help reduce women's transport-related burden in terms of time poverty. Time poverty is considered as the main constraint for women in reducing their paucity and vulnerability (Fernando & Porter, 2002; Porter, 2008).

Regarding infrastructures, a working paper by the African Development Bank (2009) adopted a checklist approach for gender mainstreaming in different stages of infrastructure projects (identification, preparation, appraisal and implementation). The paper identifies that indicators related to differences in time and cost needed to transport goods to the markets, increased income for men and women, improved maternal and child health, increased number of women entrepreneurs as necessary in rendering infrastructural projects more gender sensitive.

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Specific approaches to Gender in Rural Transport

In this section we review specific approaches of gender in the literature on rural transport. As the first step of gender mainstream, gender analysis assesses the position of men and women through responsibilities, availability of resources and services, and

how benefits are shared. The paper by Bryceson and Howe (1993) is the reference on gender analysis in rural transport. The authors show that men rather than women are the main beneficiaries of appropriate rural transport technology. In the context of developing countries, this is likely to affect access to basic health and educational facilities.

Access to education, health services and market are often used to show evidence on how gender issues relate to transport (see Porter, 2008). Regarding education, in rural area with poor roads and transport services, girls involved in household chores to help their mothers (farming, fetching water and seeking for wood) face difficulties to attend school due to distance and travel time.

Concerning access to health services, differences in transport by gender in rural area are related to demand frequency and scarcity in obtaining emergency in obstetrical and child health care treatment. For the Ashanty region in Ghana, Buor (2004) shows for example that females have a great need for health services than males, but do not adequately utilise these services because of distance and income. Similar analysis by Ensor and Cooper (2004) as well as Begum and Sen (2000) reveal the importance of influencing the demand side to overcome barriers to health services access for vulnerable groups (poor, women, and girls). Unfortunately, the cost associated to distance and locations in rural area negatively impact how they utilise health care services.

Regarding access to market, food security and time allocations are the most relevant reasons linking gender and rural transport (see Gittinger, Chernick, Horenstein & Saito, 1990). Viewing transport infrastructures and services as a vector for market integration, and considering that women are responsible of most of household food production in rural area, there is still debate as to whether better transport infrastructure will increase women agricultural productivity. The common knowledge identifying relations between accessibility, marketing and agricultural development has been criticised vis-à-vis food security. Tembo and Simtowe (2009) using data from Malawi identify

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differences in daily per capita calorie consumption between household that have access to the market and household not having access to the market.

Commenting on gender equality through the absence of discrimination in resources allocation, opportunities or benefits and guarantees of equal rights and access to resources, Fernando (1998) illustrates gender inequality in the distribution of the transport burden among women and men in rural area. For the author, the disparity between men and women is made evident when looking at the demand for transport because women spend more time and energy on the transport tasks. On the supply side, women participate less in labour activities associated to road construction and maintenance.

To reduce such disparities, policy makers should look for new planning methods, practical examples and innovative projects in rural transport that positively impact on women. This includes involving women in rural transport planning, promoting female transporters (owning and managing of transport enterprises) or intermediate means of transport.

Concerning gender inequity in rural transport, identifying the linkage seems complex. By advocating for fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective need, entails being able to carefully identify similarities and differences in rural transport needs for men and women. A realistic approach will be to analyse such inequality in the use of transport services to indicate differences on how both men and women access and use the services differently. Since women have less access to transport services, the World Bank note by Bamberger et al. (1999) developed a structured approach to make transport policy more responsive to the needs of women by avoiding trade-offs in addressing gender relative disadvantages or bias. Likewise, the paper by Porter (2002) adopted the equity approach while identifying “Tarmac bias” and potential interventions to reduced gender inequality on issues of rural transport. The next section attempts to explain gendered rural transport needs in Cameroon.

Gender issues in Cameroon’s Rural Transport

In this section, we review women roles and activities in rural household structure and how rural transport policy can be acted upon to reduce gendered differences in Cameroon. These two aspects will be used to assess gendered

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similarities and differences in mobility behaviours. We then attempt to deduce specific needs by women for better transport access and utilisation.

Rural Household structure, Women roles and Activities

In Cameroon about 48% of the total population live in rural areas (UNWorld Statistics Pocket Book 2013). In 2007, 64.2% of the active population worked in the agricultural sector (CHCS, 2007). A review to the Second Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector in Cameroon (NIS, 2010) indicates that in rural areas, about 76.8% of women carry out activities linked to agriculture. Of this population, less than one percent of women are in the transport sector.

Generally, large shares of women carrying out agricultural activities are found in the informal sector. The Second Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector in Cameroon indicates that about 95% of women carry out activities in the informal sector (NIS, 2010). Such activities include selling food stuff in local, suburban and urban markets. These women face difficulties in transporting their goods from their farms to rural, suburban and urban markets. Questioning households on governmental priorities, both households headed by women in rural areas and nationally identify the necessity for tarred roads as one of the top five government priorities (CHCS, 2007).

From the 2007 CHCS survey, women in rural areas in their majority go to health district services on foot (39%). About 30% of women in rural areas indicate that their choice to choose the type of consultation is influenced by their proximity to health centres. Despite some women indicating that they go to health district services using motorcycles (25%) or cars (32%), it is worth observing that cars in rural areas are generally outdated and do not go for technical visits. This entails some risk for individuals using these cars for movements, particularly women who face social and cultural prejudices.

Few houses in rural areas are situated close to tarred roads, with about seven percent of women headed households indicating that their households are situated close to a tarred road (CHCS, 2007). These observations mask glaring differences because these roads

are generally main road that go across these villages. Most rural roads are not tarred and local communities argue

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that they do not have sufficient funds to maintain these local roads (Baye, Epo & Dama, 2013).

The main observation from the above statistics indicate that linking rural to urban areas affects the former through market access and income generation as well as access to basic services. In rural areas, social and cultural norms influence the roles of both women and men concerning the production and selling activities, non-tradable activities and individual responsibility. These differences in roles in terms of family (cooking, looking for potable water and firewood, education and maternal health care) and non-family activities (farming, hawking, cash and non-cash crop production, and so on) influence time allocation. For instance, whereas most households (both men and women) gain their livelihood by producing both cash and food crops, they also engage in seasonal or intermittent non-farming activities such as owning small shops, cooking food to sell and salary employment. For farming activities, whereas men farm and sell cash crops and large livestock, women deal with foodstuff, horticultural crops and small livestock. This implies women are more engaged in regular farming activities and spends more time on farming. They also spend more time and risks on commercializing foodstuffs, unlike men who sell cash crops once or twice per year. This specific division of labour generates gendered differences in rural mobility. It also influences specific transport needs for women (frequency, dependence, safety, timeless). In the next section, we assess the relationship between rural transport gendered differences in terms of accessibility and mobility.

Rural Transport and Gendered differences in Cameroon

In this section, we examine how gendered differences are made evident in rural transport in Cameroon in terms of rural sector development strategy and projects related to activities undertaken by rural women.

In Cameroon, rural transport involves public and private interventions. Public interventions are through infrastructure development and private interventions through the liberalization of private services. The 2009 National Growth and Employment strategy by the Government of Cameroon did not consider rural transport as a major issue. In addition, rural transport characterised by the absence of policy and strategy is still officially viewed within the context of rural and agricultural development. Some pilot projects without great success have been launched within the scope of SSATP program to reduce gender dif

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ferences in rural transport services (women's use of bicycles in the North-West and community transport pilot project by Horse/Donkey-Drawn Cart managed by women in the North).

Modernising rural and agricultural infrastructures as well as women empowerment are two pillars of the rural sector development strategy. In the action matrix, the Ministry of Transport is in charge of facilitating access to basic services in rural areas. High transport costs between the rural agricultural production basins and urban consumption

zones in agricultural marketing are addressed by ameliorating accessibility to local resources through control and maintenance of rural roads. In the current decentralization processes, communities should be trained and used for regular maintenance of rural roads. To do so, the national rural road strategy should adopt a labour intensive based approach which considers the participation of rural women in road maintenance activities, through employment opportunities. However, differences in skills, labour technical constraints and time horizon of road maintenance make it difficult to actively include rural women.

Since the official launching of the National Program for Rehabilitation of Rural Roads in 2009, the usage of women labour force in road maintenance has been largely insufficient. Generally, by empowering women to participate in lucrative rural road rehabilitation jobs, they may be able to move away from less income generating tasks. Furthermore, despite the observation that women may empower themselves by selling products they farm on highways in Cameroun, pineapple in the Mbankomo area, tomatoes and water melons in the villages of Bangangté, pineapples and sweet potatoes in the villages of Ombessa, there is need to note that they are exposed to road accidents. In this regard, the construction of specialized markets along these high ways should reduce potential road accidents and act as clusters for women to sell their goods or come together in creating local NGOs.

Concerning transport services, it relates to gender issues in two ways. Concerning the first relationship between transport services and gender issues, we indicate that rehabilitating rural roads reduces the cost of transport and transactions, thereby reducing the vulnerability women face against urban actors when they sell their food stuffs. By improving rural roads, women access comfortable buses and vehicles which are cheaper and safer than old trucks or motorcycles. This enables women buying foodstuffs from rural

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market to sell in nearest urban markets, termed “Bayam-sellam”, to reach rural areas to collect foodstuffs. Moreover, rural women are not obliged

to carry back their foodstuffs to different seasonal market of the area. The high frequency of selling activities increases women income and time for unpaid tasks (for the southern Region in Cameroon, see Kemtsop in Starkey, 2007).

The term “Bayam-sellam” is a local term used to describe women that buy perishable food crops in rural areas situated at the peripheries or sometimes in the agricultural production basins in rural areas and sell them in local urban markets. These groups of women have seen their role gain importance since the economic crisis witnessed by Cameroon in the mid-1980s (Epo, Baye & Manga, 2013). Some main characteristics of these groups of women are (1) they are mainly in the informal sector; (2) they face difficulties in accessing credit due to inadequate borrowing collaterals; (3) they sell mainly perishable food crops and spend the whole day in the market; (4) the perishable food items they sell vary with the agricultural seasons and (5) a significant share of their running cost is on transporting these perishable food crops to urban markets.

Concerning the second relationship between transport services and gender, we examine how rural life styles and mobility are influenced by transport infrastructures. More

precisely, it is important to consider that rural way of life and transport are influenced by trade facilitation projects on main transit corridors (Douala-Ngaoundere-Ndjamena and Baugui). In this regards, ameliorating transport infrastructures and traffic on highways and transit corridors increases the exposure of rural inhabitants to accidents and diseases like HIV/AIDS. In the World Bank Transport Paper (2009), vulnerability of rural women to HIV/AIDS and other sexual diseases are positively linked to road transit traffic. In Cameroon, a country report by the African Development Bank linked the high HIV prevalence of women in the Adamaoua and East regions to the existence of main corridor hotspots.

Example highlighted put to the forefront the need for gender considerations in terms Cameroon's current rural transport policy concerning infrastructures and services. In this view, bringing out some specific needs for women on which a gender sensitive rural transport strategy should focus could enable us perceive the extent to which the current rural transport policy is gender inclusive.

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How sensitive is Cameroon's Rural Transport Policy to Women Needs: The way forward

Ragassa (2012) indicates that across regions, gender-specific needs are very rarely considered when developing transport infrastructure or networks especially in rural areas (Carr & Hartl, 2010). Most transport projects stress on building major roads to promote connectivity of rural areas, while women often access the smaller local roads which are often not part of project considerations (World Bank, 2004). This situation is verified in Cameroon.

Table 1 explores gendered specific needs according to the following welfare objectives: time allocation, income generating activities, better access to basic services and being vulnerable to diseases. These specific needs will help explore requirements for gender sensitive rural transport strategy.

Considering women specific needs that the Cameroon rural transport policy should consider, as indicated in Table 1, and some successful rural transport strategy (Ghana, Uganda and Ethiopia) that factor in gender considerations, we discuss some potential recommendations that should render future rural transport programs in Cameroon, within a decentralization framework, gender sensitive. To improve gender considerations government could capitalise on (1) women employment opportunities in rural road maintenance, (2) improve the skill of women on road maintenance activities and reduce labour technical constraints associated to road activities, and (3) reduce risks associated to road safety as well as diseases and HIV/AIDS prevalence. This entails impacting on the capabilities of rural women by targeting the four main strategic axes.

First, government should improve the capabilities of women in rural road maintenance activities. By enhancing women participation in rural road maintenance and training unskilled rural women to acquire skills associated to road construction, government will contribute in reducing gender disparities in activities linked to rural road transportation. Training may focus on building capacities in mastering materials for road construction (blocks, sand and gravel, kerb-stones, among others). Women could be organised to

undertake part time rural road maintenance jobs compatible with their daily task as rural women.

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Second, by using safety market facilities in road projects to increase farmincome, reduce sexual diseases and road accidents on transit corridors or highways in rural areas, government will be ameliorating the welfare rural inhabitants and enabling women gain from road projects. For instance, highway projects can be used to ameliorate the commercialization of food stuffs in pedestrian crossing zones. New road construction projects could build resting zones with specialised regional market infrastructures to help women selling food stuffs along roads. These markets could act as clusters to help bring together rural women to exchange and share ideas. These market areas could be used to sensitise vulnerable the rural population like women and girls on HIV/AIDS.

Third, by developing community transport for maternal and child health care, government could respond to the neglect of the role of transport in national rural health policy. Some women do not access health services in rural areas because of inadequate transport access to these facilities. Thus, rural transport strategy could enhance access to rural health centres by creating community transport systems for emergencies in maternal and child health care with village safe committees using mobile phones, as implemented by the UK-aid funded Mobilising Access to Maternal Health Services in Zambia.

Fourth, by developing a “Bayam-sellam” transport facility system, government would respond to resolving a major constraint voiced by women selling farm products in urban markets. In this regards, the rural transport strategy could develop a micro credit system that target “Bayam-sellam” associations. This micro credit scheme may have as main goal financing the creation of transport companies along important farm-to-market routes to transport foodstuffs from the rural areas to urban markets. These specific services could be defined in the Communal Development Plan of Cameroon, which is the main planning instrument in the ongoing decentralization process supported by development partners.

Conclusion

This paper assessed gendered specific needs and proposed policy responses to reduce gendered rural transport related burdens in Cameroon. Using illustrative approaches, the paper identifies four policy orientations as necessary in attenuating gender differences and responding to women needs in rural

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transport in Cameroon. These involve (a) improving capabilities of women in rural road maintenance activities; (b) developing safety market facilities in road projects to increase farm-income, reduce sexual diseases and road accidents between transit corridors or highways in rural areas; (c) developing community transport for maternal and child health care and (d) creating a “Bayam-sellam” transport facility system.

APENDIX IV

Transport Policies and Development in Cameroon

In developed economies, transport investments and improved technology over the last century have resulted in a continuous decline in transport costs, which in turn stimulated growth and economic development. In low- and middle-income countries alike, the current potential for transport policies to boost sustainable and inclusive growth appears to be large. This is especially the case given significant backlogs of transport infrastructure investment in both rural and urban areas, weak governance and inadequate regulations in the transport sector, and rising social costs in terms of congestion, pollution and accidents, especially in emerging large cities. For example, transport costs in Africa – with its poor infrastructure network – are considerably higher than elsewhere. Transport between Doula and N'Djamena (in Cameroon and Chad, respectively) costs on average 11 US cents per ton-kilometre, versus 5 US cents per ton-km in France and 4 US cents in the US (Teravaninthorn & Raballand, 2008 Teravaninthorn, S., & Raballand, G. (2008). *Transport prices and costs in Africa: A review of the main international corridors*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Transport investments can be very large and transformative in their nature, leading or accompanying structural change (that is, the movement out of agriculture into industries and services). They may be needed to accompany the fast pace of urban growth currently occurring in Africa and Asia. While the provision of transport is potentially crucial for development, its impact depends on a variety of factors. Because these factors are not well understood, there is often a risk that transport investments are not cost-effective and do not produce the range of expected outcomes. Setting priorities in the strategic use of scarce resources should rely on a detailed understanding of how transport policies can produce growth-inducing effects and reduce social costs.

There are three broad types of transport policies: infrastructure investments, price instruments, and regulations. Investments entail building new transport infrastructure (for example roads, railways, or airports), upgrading existing links and technology, or improving transport services. Price incentives include subsidies or taxes to influence mode choice and transport behaviour more generally (for example, student fare reductions, tolls, parking fares, fuel taxes, and clean transport subsidies). Regulations include rules to directly reduce emissions (such as fuel emission standards, or driving restrictions) or to organise the transport sector (for example, freight, taxis or buses) or the construction of infrastructure. Some policy interventions may affect supply, such as fuel emission standards, or driving restrictions) or to organise the transport sector (for example, freight, taxis or buses) or the construction of infrastructure. Some policy interventions may affect supply, such as infrastructure investments, whereas others target demand, as do transport subsidies.

A useful categorisation of the broader objectives of policies can be (i) to stimulate growth (for example, through lower transport costs, which facilitates agglomeration effects, trade and structural change, and leads to higher productivity), (ii) to facilitate social inclusion (for instance, through better access to transport services, which can enhance economic opportunities for the poor), and (iii) to improve sustainability (for example, through reduced health and environmental externalities). The extent to which

these broad objectives can be reached depends on the behavioural responses of firms and households to policy interventions in terms of trade, location and mode choices.

Lessons from the Literature

In line with our conceptual framework and reviewing mainly recent studies that apply a robust identification strategy, this section sequentially summarises the links between transport policies and growth, inclusion, and sustainability.

Growth

In principle, investing in transport should reduce costs, leading to an increase in productivity and shifting the economy to a higher growth equilibrium (see the Big Push Theory of Rosenstein-Rodan, 1943 Rosenstein-Rodan, P. N. (1943). Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. *The Economic Journal*, 53(210/211), 202–211. doi:10.2307/2226317[CrossRef], [Google Scholar]; further developed by Murphy, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1989 Murphy, K. M., Shleifer, A., & Vishny, R. W. (1989). Industrialization and the big push. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 97(5), 1003–1026. doi:10.1086/261641[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]; and Agénor, 2010 Agénor, P. (2010). A theory of infrastructure led development. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*, 34, 932–950. doi:10.1016/j.jedc.2010.01.009[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]). Empirical tests at the macro level confirm that transport investments can have a significant impact on growth. Calderón, Moral-Benito, and Servén (2015 Calderón, C., Moral-Benito, E., & Servén, L. (2015). Is infrastructure capital productive? A dynamic heterogeneous approach. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 30, 177–198. doi:10.1002/jae.2373[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) estimate that the elasticity of output with respect to a synthetic infrastructure index – which includes transport along with electricity and telecommunications – ranges between 0.07 and 0.10. Similar impacts are found in the case of sub-Saharan African countries (Boopen, 2006 Boopen, S. (2006). Transport infrastructure and economic growth: Evidence from Africa using dynamic panel estimates. *The Empirical Economic Letters*, 5(1), 37–52. [Google Scholar]; Calderón & Servén, 2010 Calderón, C., & Servén, L. (2010). Infrastructure and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of African Economies*, 19(Supplement 1), i13–i87. doi:10.1093/jae/ejp022[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]).

Firms' location decisions, clustering and productivity effects

Improved transportation may lead to a re-allocation of manufacturing along the transport network. Ghani, Goswami, and Kerr (2015 Ghani, E., Goswami, A. G., & Kerr, W. R. (2015). Highway to success: The impact of the golden quadrilateral project for the location and performance of Indian manufacturing. *The Economic Journal*, 126(591), 317–357. doi:10.1111/eoj.12207[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) highlight this impact in terms of clustering of manufacturing activities and the resulting enhanced productivity, consistent with insights from Economic Geography. The authors find that a major inter-city road investment in India (the 'Golden Quadrilateral') caused higher entry rates of manufacturing firms near improved highways and that these firms have higher labour productivity and total factor productivity. Focusing on the same road improvement programme, Datta (2012 Datta,

S. (2012). The impact of improved highways on Indian firms. *Journal of Development Economics*, 99(1), 46–57. doi:10.1016/j.jdeveco.2011.08.005[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) finds that firms located near highway improvements are actually run more efficiently (storing inventories for less time).⁷⁷ Improved transport can also lead firms to be more productive as better roads can stimulate more intense vehicle use (Fernald, 1999 Fernald, J. (1999). Roads to prosperity? Assessing the link between public capital and productivity. *American Economic Review*, 89(3), 619–638. doi:10.1257/aer.89.3.619[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) or reduce absenteeism (Van Ommeren & Gutierrez-i-Puigarnau, 2011 van Ommeren, J., & Gutierrez-i-Puigarnau, E. (2011). Are workers with a long commute less productive? An empirical analysis of absenteeism. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 41(1), 1–8. doi:10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2010.07.005[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]). View all notes Interestingly, the effects can differ across industries. In Indonesia, massive upgrades to the highway system during the 1990s actually led to the dispersion of durable manufacturing activities and the clustering of perishable goods (Rothenberg, 2013 Rothenberg, A. (2013). Transport infrastructure and firm location choice in equilibrium: Evidence from Indonesia’s highways. Unpublished manuscript. [Google Scholar]). There may, however, be trade-offs regarding the location of investments: Lall, Schroeder, and Schmidt (2014 Lall, S. V., Schroeder, E., & Schmidt, E. (2014). Identifying spatial efficiency-equity trade-offs in territorial development policies: Evidence from Uganda. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 50(12), 1717–1733. doi:10.1080/00220388.2014.957277[Taylor & Francis Online], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) argue that transport investment in existing agglomerations will generate higher economic returns than in remote but that the investment in rural areas, although generating lower returns, would be more beneficial to the poor.

Economic activity and income

Increased trade and productivity result in greater production and higher incomes. In the context of China, it has been found that infrastructure (roads and highways) have a positive effect on per capita GDP at the county level (Banerjee, Duflo, & Qian, 2012 Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., & Qian, N. (2012). On the road: Access to transportation infrastructure and economic growth in China (No. w17897). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.[CrossRef], [Google Scholar]) and that it increased real income (see the structural estimation of Roberts, Deichmann, Fingleton, & Shi, 2012 Roberts, M., Deichmann, U., Fingleton, B., & Shi, T. (2012). Evaluating China’s road to prosperity: A new economic geography approach. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 42(4), 580–594. doi:10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2012.01.003[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar], based on a New Economic Geography model). In the case of Nigeria, Ali et al. (2015a Ali, R., Barra, A. F., Berg, C. N., Damania, R., Nash, J., & Russ, J. (2015a). Transport infrastructure and welfare: An application to Nigeria (Policy Research Working Paper, WPS 7271). Washington, DC: The World Bank.[CrossRef], [Google Scholar]) find that reducing transport costs significantly increases local GDP but note that the full impact of transport costs on incomes may only emerge slowly over time. In Ghana and Kenya, railway access has had a positive impact

on economic development both in the short and in the long run (Jedwab, Kerby, & Moradi, in press; Jedwab, R., Kerby, E., & Moradi, A. (in press). History, path dependence and development: Evidence from colonial railroads, settlers and cities in Kenya. *Economic Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1111/eoj.12347[CrossRef], [Google Scholar]; Jedwab & Moradi, 2016; Jedwab, R., & Moradi, A. (2016). The permanent effects of transportation revolutions in poor countries: Evidence from Africa. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 98(2), 268–284. doi:10.1162/REST_a_00540[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]). In sub-Saharan Africa, Storeygard (in press; Storeygard, A. (in press). Farther on down the road: Transport costs, trade and urban growth in sub-Saharan Africa. *Review of Economic Studies*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1093/restud/rdw020[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]) estimates that cities close to a main port grow faster.

Structural transformation

Improved transport networks may lead to structural transformation and the shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Lower transportation costs have been shown to cause an increase in the production of high-input crops at the expense of low-input crops (Ali et al., in press; Ali, R., Barra, A. F., Berg, C. N., Damania, R., Nash, J., & Russ, J. (in press). Agricultural technology choice and transport. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1093/ajae/aav073[CrossRef], [Google Scholar], on Nigeria). They also facilitate the adoption of modern farming techniques (see Ali et al., in press; Ali, R., Barra, A. F., Berg, C. N., Damania, R., Nash, J., & Russ, J. (in press). Agricultural technology choice and transport. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1093/ajae/aav073[CrossRef], [Google Scholar]; on Nigeria, and Minten, Koru, & Stifel, 2013; Minten, B., Koru, B., & Stifel, D. (2013). The last mile(s) in modern input distribution: Pricing, profitability, and adoption. *Agricultural Economics*, 44, 629–646. doi:10.1111/agec.2013.44.issue-6[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar], on Ethiopia). Reduced transportation costs may also lead to a shift of production and labour away from the agricultural sector as evidenced by Gachassin, Najman, and Raballand (2015; Gachassin, M., Najman, B., & Raballand, G. (2015). Roads and diversification of activities in rural areas: A Cameroon case study. *Development Policy Review*, 33(3), 355–372. doi:10.1111/dpr.12111[CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]), who find that improved access to markets in Cameroon led to a diversification of the economic activities of households, especially among the most isolated households. For India also, it has been shown that new rural roads enabled workers to access external labour markets, leading them to shift away from agriculture (Asher & Novosad, 2016; Asher, S., & Novosad, P. (2016). *Market access and structural transformation: Evidence from rural roads in India*. Unpublished manuscript. [Google Scholar]). Similarly, the construction of a new road in Vietnam was followed by the emergence of new non-farm activities (Mu & van de Walle, 2011; Mu, R., & van de Walle, D. (2011). Rural roads and local market development in Vietnam. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 47(5), 709–734. doi:10.1080/00220381003599436[Taylor & Francis Online], [Web of Science

®], [Google Scholar]). For Indonesia, Gertler, Gonzalez-Navarro, Gracner, and Rothenberg (2014) Gertler, P. J., Gonzalez-Navarro, M., Gracner, T., & Rothenberg, A. D. (2014). The role of road quality investments on economic activity and welfare: Evidence from Indonesia's Highways. Unpublished manuscript. [Google Scholar]) find that improved road quality increases job creation in the manufacturing sector and triggers an occupational shift from

agriculture to manufacturing. In Nigeria, falling transportation costs both decrease the probability of agricultural employment by households, and increase the likelihood of full employment (Ali et al., 2015a) Ali, R., Barra, A. F., Berg, C. N., Damania, R., Nash, J., & Russ, J. (2015a). Transport infrastructure and welfare: An application to Nigeria (Policy Research Working Paper, WPS 7271). Washington, DC: The World Bank. [CrossRef], [Google Scholar]).

When transport costs remain high, however, as in the rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, people will remain located near the spatially diffused sources of food production, thus preventing structural transformation by hindering the movement of people out of subsistence into the modern sector (see the model of Gollin & Rogerson, 2014) Gollin, D., & Rogerson, R. (2014). Productivity, transport costs, and subsistence agriculture. *Journal of Development Economics*, 107, 38–48. doi:10.1016/j.jdeveco.2013.10.007 [CrossRef], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]).

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