



EAST AFRICA HIGH COMMISSION

***Decisions of the High Commission on the
Recommendations Contained in the
Report of the Committee of
Inquiry into the Working of
the Port of Mombasa***

348

1953

Printed by the Government Printer, Nairobi

Decisions of the High Commission on the Recommendations Contained in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Working of the Port of Mombasa

The High Commission has received the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into various aspects of working and other matters concerning Mombasa Port and, having considered the Report along with advice from the Transport Advisory Council, has accepted the views of the Transport Advisory Council as summarized hereunder:—

The Inquiry Committee's Recommendations fall into five main groups, namely—

- I.—Sixteen Recommendations which, in the main, are confirmation or advocacy of action already taken or of schemes already under consideration by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration.
- II.—Six Recommendations which were stated by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration as not being acceptable, except with reservations.
- III.—Six Recommendations of a general nature.
- IV.—Two Recommendations regarding principles of organization.
- V.—Three Recommendations which concern Customs procedure upon which Transport Advisory Council is not competent to advise.

GROUP I

Recommendations Which Are Confirmation or Advocacy of Action Already Taken, or of Schemes Under Consideration by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration

Group I comprises one-half of the Committee's Recommendations and, with the exception of a fourth deep-water berth, this Group covers all the major practical proposals which arise as Recommendations from the Inquiry. The High Commission is advised that, for the most part, all these proposals were already in hand, or under consideration, by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration and, from time to time, they had already been considered or recommended by the Transport Advisory Council and its Committees. The High Commission, while realizing that this group of Recommendations introduces no new proposals, nevertheless appreciates the Committee's underlining of the vital importance of the various works, and the High Commission agrees that the utmost possible should be done within the limits of the financial and physical resources to expedite completion or realization of the various proposals, subject to the practical considerations mentioned in the comments of the Transport Advisory Council.

The Transport Advisory Council's comments on this Group of Recommendations are as follows:—

No. 3—The Administration to Examine the Siting of New Berths on the Mainland as Soon as Possible

Preliminary site investigations for the construction of berths on the mainland were undertaken almost ten years ago and, at the time the Inquiry Committee was pursuing its inquiries, plans were being prepared for the construction of a new Berth No. 11 on the mainland.

No. 4—Mechanization of the Port

Intensive experimentation in mechanical appliances for handling cargo will be pursued, but the Transport Advisory Council advises that a degree of caution is necessary and that mechanization is but one of the measures to be taken to improve port capacity.

No. 5—Lighterage: (a) Full Complement of Lighters to be Supplied to the Port at the Earliest Opportunity

The lighterage position at all ports is under continual review by the Harbours Committee and the Members of that Committee are entirely satisfied that the Management's proposals, including recent proposals for further accretions to the lighter fleet, are now adequate to meet foreseeable requirements.

(b) Extension of Lighterage Wharf to be Given a High Priority

The Transport Advisory Council is satisfied that this work is proceeding as rapidly as is practicable in conjunction with other port works.

(c) Expert Study to be Given to the Use of Mbaraki Wharf

This proposal has been given active consideration from time to time by the Management which realizes the value of using Mbaraki Wharf to advantage; but to make it practicable to bring Mbaraki into use as an all-purpose wharf would be very costly and would require the provision of many ancillary facilities. It is separated from the main port by a considerable distance and both rail and road access are awkward. It cannot conveniently be used by other than specialized traffics such as coals and tiles, as is now being done. Coal imports are likely to increase considerably when the various cement factory projects materialize and could conveniently be handled at this wharf. It is a problem of utilizing financial and physical resources to the best advantage.

(d) Consideration to be Given to an Auxiliary Lighterage Wharf at the Kipevu End of the Port

The Council considers that it would be unwise to site a lighterage wharf at the place recommended—both for financial and operating reasons. Furthermore, it is of the opinion that the lighterage wharf which will become available by the current extension of the existing wharf should be adequate for likely requirements.

No. 6—Wagon Turnround: (a) the Number of Port Railway Trucks and Road Vehicles to be Increased

Orders for great numbers of vehicles have been placed for the system generally, and until these begin to arrive it is no more possible to increase the number of vehicles at the disposal of the port than it is to increase wagon supply over the system as a whole. The use of motor transport is well recognized by the Management and the Landing and Shipping Contractors, and the fleet is being increased in relation to practical utilization.

No. 7—Works on the Cutting Back of the Cliff Face to be Pressed on as Speedily as Possible

The importance of this work is well recognized and has been given priority for some time, but it has to be intelligently phased in with the construction of the lighterage quays, the deep-water berths, etc., so as to provide *inter alia*, for the most economical movement of the soil.

No. 8—Plans to Build Staff Housing on Mombasa Island to be Reviewed

This question had been the subject of review by the East African Railways and Harbours Management and the possibility of providing housing on the mainland has not been overlooked. Bearing in mind (a) the nature of the terrain, in

relation to practical and economic port development; (b) that the area zoned for housing is confined to a comparatively narrow strip adjacent to the new highway; (c) that further cut back of the cliff, if necessary, remains possible and (d) that future port development will be on the mainland, the Council does not consider that the limited housing to be in this area is likely to be an impediment to future port development.

No. 9—The Movement of Marshalling Yard to the Mainland to be Considered

Proposals for such a scheme have been in existence for some years, and have now reached a stage at which definite planning is being carried out. It is not a project which can be implemented as an immediate measure. The acquisition of land at Changamwe will not be easy and will involve lengthy negotiations.

No. 10—Construction of an Oil Pipe Line from Mombasa Island to Changamwe

This proposal was already under consideration and definite plans are now ready for examination in conjunction with the oil companies.

No. 11—Warehousing of Export Produce: Quantities to be Kept to a Minimum

The Council accepts that the storage of exports in transit sheds should be kept to a minimum, but realizes that this involves the necessity for adequate warehousing capacity, sited convenient to the port, to accommodate export cargo which has been accumulated for shipment and waiting to be called forward. The question of ways and means of providing such warehousing, in all its aspects, has been under active consideration by the Transport Advisory Council for some time past, on recommendations submitted by the Harbours Committee, and the High Commission accepts the advice of the Transport Advisory Council that consideration of this matter should await the outcome of the Council's and the Harbours Committee's deliberations.

No. 13—Transit Sheds to be Used Only for Temporary Storage of Import Cargoes and for Export Cargoes Only When Called Forward for Shipment

The Transport Advisory Council endorses this as a policy. The eventual use of the four new back-of-the-port sheds, which were approved some time ago with the object of easing transit shed utilization, will go a long way towards the possibility of implementing this policy.

No. 14—Uncleared Import Cargoes to be Removed to Uncleared Cargo Sheds at Consignee's Expense

This is accepted policy and will be implemented when adequate shed space becomes available.

No. 15—Building of New Sheds to be Expedited

The Transport Advisory Council agrees, and is satisfied that the Management is taking all possible steps to expedite this work. In the meantime, there has been some amelioration by improvements in cargo handling operations and documentary procedures.

No. 16—Free Storage Period to be Reduced to Five Days

The Transport Advisory Council is aware that the East African Railways and Harbours Administration has for some time past been examining ways and means of speeding up documentary procedure with a view to introducing a shorter franchise period. The proposal of the Committee accords with the Administration's aim, and the High Commission accepts the advice of the Transport Advisory Council that the franchise period should be reduced from six to five days as recommended by the Inquiry Committee.

No. 19—Additional Scammels and Trailers to be Provided for Use by the Contractors in the Port Area

This policy is already being pursued, and there already exists a fair-sized fleet of vehicles, which has been built up on the initiation of the Management with the advice of the Harbours Committee. In the near future the fleet at Mombasa will comprise 12 tractors and 40 trailers; and more will be acquired to serve the new berths now under construction.

No. 20—Number of Delivery Points in the Port Area and Exit Gates to be Increased

Additional local delivery points are already in course of erection at Sheds 3 and 4. They had been planned before the Committee began its investigations. In the new port layout there will be an additional gate at Shimanzi which will become the main entrance and exit point, so that there will be three gates to nine berths compared with two gates to seven berths as at present.

No. 25—Completion of Lighter Quay and Associated Equipment to be Expedited

This work is being pressed forward as quickly as is practicable in phase with the several constructional works within the port area.

GROUP II

Recommendations Which Were Stated to be Unacceptable to the East African Railways and Harbours Administration Except With Reservations

No. 2—Construction of a Fourth Deep-water Quay to be Put in Hand Immediately

The High Commission is advised that this proposal is under consideration by the Harbours Committee of Transport Advisory Council as part of the general port development in relation to assessed traffic trends. While, therefore, not wishing to indicate acceptance or otherwise of the premises upon which the Inquiry Committee recommends the *immediate* construction of a fourth deep-water berth, the High Commission has referred this proposal back to the Transport Advisory Council for the Harbours Committee to continue its considerations and to report thereon to the Transport Advisory Council.

No. 6—(b) Wagon Turnround: Up-country Storage Facilities to be Enlarged

The High Commission is advised that this proposal is not a vital factor in wagon utilization and the Transport Advisory Council is of the opinion that, apart from any question of principles, the financial outlay might well be incommensurate with any advantages to be gained. Furthermore, the Council considers that present difficulties are contingent upon wagon deficiencies which will be ameliorated with the arrival of new rolling stock. The High Commission accepts the advice of the Transport Advisory Council that this Recommendation should not be implemented.

No. 12—Export Manifests to be Closed in Advance of Sailing Dates and Penalties for Late Cargoes to be Considered

The Transport Advisory Council recognizes the importance of avoiding delays in the loading of ships on account of cargo not being available as and when required but it does not consider that irrevocable closing times for the acceptance of cargo, fixed in advance, are practicable in present conditions at Mombasa. The High Commission accepts this view.

No. 17—Central Sorting Point to be Constructed Behind Berths Nos. 5 and 6

The problem of the most expeditious and economic measures of dealing with small parcels has been the subject of continuing examination by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration for many years past, and, in fact, an arrangement is in existence for concentrating small parcels for making up into wagon loads. The Transport Advisory Council does not consider that the problem warrants the diversion of resources at the present time to construct a central sorting point. The High Commission accepts this view.

No. 18—Sorting of Small Cargo Parcels for Stations Beyond Nairobi to be Done at Nairobi

The Transport Advisory Council would deprecate the introduction of a measure which, while of doubtful value in transit shed management would (a) involve the need for increased shed space at Nairobi; (b) necessitate double or triple handling; (c) increase the risk of pilferage; (d) lengthen transit times, and (e) give less efficient wagon utilization. The High Commission accepts this view.

No. 27—Provision of Meals for Labour

The High Commission is advised by the Transport Advisory Council that, while realizing that the provision of meals to labour would be desirable, it has to recognize that this Recommendation runs counter to the experience of all in East Africa who have instituted measures for feeding labour in connexion with working shifts. The feeding of labour as suggested has already been tried by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration without success. The High Commission accepts the advice of the Transport Council that this Recommendation cannot be adopted, but it notes with interest that the East African Railways and Harbours Administration intends to provide facilities, inside the port area, for food to be cooked by the labourers' own women.

The High Commission is advised that, contrary to the opening statement by the Inquiry Committee in paragraph 106 of its Report, the Transport Advisory Council is authoritatively informed that port labour has not deteriorated since pre-war days, and that, given comparable conditions of operation, it can achieve high performance figures.

GROUP III

Recommendations Which Are of a General Nature

No. 1—Estimation of Traffic Trends—More Scientific Methods to be Introduced

No. 30—Greater Use to be Made of the E.A. Statistical Department

These two Recommendations are essentially related. The Transport Advisory Council does not consider that the assessment of traffic trends, for the purpose of determining transport development, is susceptible of exact scientific evaluation. It is of the opinion that the East African Railways and Harbours Administration has hitherto adopted the best available practical means by way of evaluating traffic trends and by consultation with appropriate bodies, for the purpose of making assessments likely to be of value in determining future rail transport requirements. The Council considers that recognition must be given to events such as wars, political upheavals, sharp changes in commodity prices, etc., which are incapable of scientific forecasting, but which powerfully affect primary production and trade in a country such as East Africa. As regards Recommendation No. 30, Council understands that information is not available in the Statistical Department in analysed form suitable for use by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration in its assessment of future traffic trends and developmental requirements. The High Commission agrees with the Transport Advisory Council

that Recommendations Nos. 1 and 30, with the implication that the past forecasting methods of the East African Railways and Harbours Administration have been inadequate, cannot be accepted as they stand. The High Commission notes that the E.A. Statistical Department has been directed to examine the practicability of producing information in analysed statistical form for use by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration in estimating future traffic trends.

No. 21—Immediate Steps to be Taken to Introduce Symbol Marking

The Transport Advisory Council advises the High Commission that the advantages of symbol marking, or any similar systems which permit of deliveries from bulk, are well appreciated by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration, and it advocates that the Administration should continue its efforts to persuade shippers and others concerned to adopt such methods. Neither the East African Railways and Harbours Administration, nor the Customs or the shipping companies, has control over the marking of cargo by the shipper for purposes of this Recommendation.

No. 26—Lighting in the Railway Yards and Export Sheds to be Improved

The High Commission is advised that this Recommendation is not truly indicative of the position and that it may give a misleading impression. Yard lighting has been considerably improved during the post-war period and no fewer than 53 "Duoflex" flood lamps, each of 1,000 watt. capacity, illuminate the stacking ground and railway yards at 1.25 candle power per square foot. Those members of the Transport Advisory Council with first-hand knowledge of Mombasa are of the opinion that the lighting is very good. The export sheds referred to by the Committee are old military sheds which are due for demolition within the next year or so. The stacking grounds behind Berths 7 and 8 are not yet completed and, therefore, are not yet provided with the lighting which is in the plans, and the temporary lighting which exists at the lighterage wharf will be replaced as part of the rehabilitation of the area. The High Commission understands that lighting will be improved progressively within financial and practical limitations but, as advised by the Transport Advisory Council, it would not accept an implication that lighting has hitherto been given insufficient attention by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration.

No. 29—Improved Liaison Between the Transport Organization and Commerce, Producer Organizations and Banks

The High Commission is advised by the Transport Advisory Council that the East African Railways and Harbours Administration has a well-established procedure for collecting information, both through the medium of its District Officers and by direct contact with central organizations, Government Departments, etc., and Council considers the implication in this Recommendation of lack of liaison to be entirely unjustified. Officers of the East African Railways and Harbours Administration are honorary members of the several Chambers of Commerce throughout the territories, the Superintendent of Ports and Lights, or his representative, has regular meetings with the Liaison Committee of the Mombasa Chamber of Commerce and there has existed for many years the closest possible liaison between the Administration and the Uganda Loading Committee. The East African Railways and Harbours Administration also has a representative on the Board of Commerce and Industry in Kenya. Tributes to the Administration's representative have been recorded by the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce. The information which is obtained through the medium of liaison with the several commercial, industrial and agricultural bodies is used by the Administration, as far as is practically possible, in assessing future traffic trends, but, ultimately, the Administration's assessments have had to be largely empirical.

The High Commission fully endorses the advocacy for the closest possible liaison between the Administration and Commerce and Industry.

No. 31—Necessity for Advance Planning in Harbour Development

It may be accepted as axiomatic that it is necessary to look ahead in planning development, but to look ahead, in the sense used by the Inquiry Committee, presupposes that future events are susceptible of close evaluation. This has not been possible over the past few years, during which the volume of traffic passing through Mombasa port has exceeded all expectations. In other paragraphs of the Report the Committee implies that action to construct new berths at Mombasa was taken too late and that plans for development were not in existence. The High Commission is advised by the Transport Advisory Council that the broad plan of development of the port of Mombasa has been in existence for many years, though more detailed later plans, which were started in 1948, were not finalized as a scheme until 1950. As to whether earlier action could and should have been taken by the East African Railways and Harbours Administration, the Transport Advisory Council was somewhat divided in opinion. Some members could not subscribe to the view in paragraph 142 of the Committee's Report that the present state of affairs could have been avoided by adequate foresight and vision but, on the contrary, they took the view that in the atmosphere of 1948, with (a) the background of two new berths having become available only two years previously; (b) post-war boom traffic as the explanation of the then pressure on the port; (c) the prospect of a possible recession; and (d) the governing financial stringency, neither the East African Railways and Harbours Administration nor the Harbours Committee could have been expected to have seriously entertained, at that time, the idea of additional deep-water berths at Mombasa; moreover, the 1951 congestion could not have been foreseen at that time as the Committee seems to suggest in paragraph 140 of its Report. The other view was that the traffic trends of 1948 were a clear indication of a future upward trend in traffic; that at that time a plan should have been in existence for immediate implementation and that the Administration ought then to have taken action.

The Council as a whole realizes, however, that it is now of doubtful benefit to assess what should or could have been done in 1948 and it considers it enough to conclude that in the light of the very steep rise in traffic which followed immediately on the post-war boom, it is unfortunate that earlier steps were not taken to provide additional berths at Mombasa. The Council has, however, made clear its view that, for the reasons given above, this should not be regarded as a criticism of the Railways and Harbours Administration, which does not in any case bear the final responsibility, particularly where important matters of financial policy are involved. The High Commission accepts this view.

As to the Committee's remarks concerning the planning of the lighterage wharf, the High Commission is advised that an entire re-survey of the area became necessary because the line of extension which had previously been accepted on the basis of Consulting Engineers Development, earlier plans proved to be impracticable. Similarly with the planning of the third berth, the Consulting Engineers plans proved to be unsuitable in relation to present-day conditions and the replanning of an entirely new development scheme was, therefore, initiated in 1948.

Finally, in respect of planning, there is the important question of finance and the High Commission accepts the expression of opinion by the Transport Advisory Council that, while recognizing that planning must be a continuing process, it is also well aware of the fact that finance has been and must be the governing factor in limiting development.

GROUP IV—ORGANIZATION

No. 32—Appointment of a General Manager, East African Ports and Harbours

The Transport Advisory Council has advised the High Commission that neither the proposals for a separate Port Management as embodied in paragraphs 172 and 173 of the Committee's Report, nor complete separation of the ports from the railways, should be adopted. The Council reached its conclusion after having considered the arguments advanced by the Port Inquiry Committee and after having given full weight to some contrary views expressed in Council. The High Commission too has brought under consideration and duly weighed the views expressed by an important section of opinion in East Africa and has also taken notice of the several kinds of port organizations throughout the world, in so far as they might be advantageously applied in East Africa. In the result, the High Commission remains of the opinion that, in a newly-developing country such as East Africa, the existing organization of the railway and port services is the most efficacious. The ports of East Africa serve a vast hinterland and, for all practical purposes, the export of the produce of that hinterland and the import of the materials for its development, must be dependent on rail transport. If East Africa is to be developed economically during the next decade, it is necessary to recognize that those factors make the ports and railways of East Africa essentially interdependent. This, and the very important consideration that financial and physical resources must be used to the best advantage, makes the closest possible integration of ports and railway services an inescapable need.

Turning to the administrative aspect, the High Commission is of opinion that separation of the ports and railways, in any form, would necessitate parallel staff establishments, workshops and finance organizations. The difficulties which would result from such a course are many and would necessitate, among other things, the employment of additional staff, the deployment of extra constructional resources and the provision of additional machinery and equipment, with heavy additional expenditure and without corresponding advantages. Separation would thus result in the less advantageous use of developmental resources and might well lead to cleavage of policy. The High Commission believe that there can be no doubt but that the achievements of the transport Administration during the past few years of phenomenal traffic increases, with no corresponding increase in capacity, have been possible only with an organization in which the ports and railways are under a single executive management. The High Commission cannot, therefore, accept the Inquiry Committee's proposal for the appointment of a General Manager, East African Ports and Harbours.

The High Commission has, however, accepted the view of the Transport Advisory Council that the Managerial organization of the East African Railways and Harbours Administration should be examined in the light of present-day conditions and likely future developments, and it has accordingly directed the Acting Commissioner for Transport to obtain specific recommendations from the Council and would wish the Council to give close consideration to the establishment of a post of Deputy General Manager and, amongst other possible measures, to the appointment of an Assistant General Manager (Harbours and Inland Waterways).

No. 33—The East Africa High Commission to Appoint in Future a Layman as Commissioner for Transport

The High Commission recognize that, whereas in the case of the General Manager experience and proved capacity of a high order in the operation of

railways, ports and surface transport generally are essential qualifications, the requirements in respect of the office of Commissioner for Transport do not necessarily include expert knowledge of those or other branches of transport. They would be prepared, in recommending the appointment of a Commissioner for Transport, to take advantage of special capability and special experience where-soever derived, if it appeared that this would be in the best interests of East Africa. They do not consider, however, that the relative weights to be attached to qualifications in the field of transport and to qualifications derived from other fields can be subject to an inflexible rule, but must be determined in the light of all relevant circumstances on each occasion.

GROUP V—CUSTOMS PROCEDURE

No. 22—Documents Not to be Rejected by Junior Customs Officials on Account of Minor Errors

No. 23—Selection of Cases for Customs Examination to be Made in Transit Sheds

No. 24—The Facilities of "Rest Release" and Extended Customs Working Hours to be Given Publicity

These Recommendations have been referred to the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, who may be relied upon to take any action which may be necessary. With respect to Recommendation No. 22, he recalls that complaints concerning Customs procedure were examined by a Sub-committee of the Board of Commerce and Industry (Kenya) in December, 1951, which expressed satisfaction that the Customs authorities made every effort to prevent trivial rejection of documents and to obviate unnecessary obstruction by Customs officials. As regards Recommendation No. 23, the Commissioner states that wherever practicable it is, and has been, the practice not to insist on specifically numbered cases being produced for examination purposes if the Customs Officer is satisfied that alternative packages offered for examination are representative. The facilities referred to in Recommendation No. 24 should be known to clearing and forwarding agents; nevertheless, the Commissioner of Customs is once again circularizing the Chambers of Commerce inviting their attention to these facilities.

The following members attended the Joint Meeting of the Transport Advisory Council and Railway and Harbours Committees to frame advice to the High Commission:—

Transport Advisory Council—

- A. F. Kirby, Esq., C.M.G. (*Acting Chairman*).
- Brigadier W. E. H. Scupham, C.M.G., M.C., M.L.A.
- H. K. Jaffer, Esq., C.B.E.
- L. R. Maconochie-Welwood, Esq., M.L.C.
- A. A. Adamjee, Esq., O.B.E.
- A. Hope-Jones, Esq., M.L.C.
- J. T. Simpson, Esq.
- J. F. R. Hill, Esq., M.L.C.
- A. N. Maini, Esq., O.B.E., M.L.A.
- G. A. Tyson, Esq., C.M.G.

Railway Committee—

I. C. Chopra, Esq., M.L.C.

C. P. S. Allen, Esq.

Harbours Committee—

H. H. Robinson, Esq.

D. R. McDonald, Esq.

A. S. Folkes, Esq., O.B.E.

H. Pearce, Esq.

In Attendance—

A. Dalton, Esq., C.B.E., General Manager, East African Railways and Harbours.

Captain C. W. Hamley, O.B.E., Superintendent of Ports and Lights, East African Railways and Harbours.

Captain A. M. Smith, M.B.E., Assistant Superintendent of Ports and Lights, East African Railways and Harbours.

The High Commission wishes to express its thanks to the Members of the Mombasa Port Inquiry Committee and to the Members of the Transport Advisory Council and its Committees for the services they have rendered in connexion with this investigation.
