

W. S. Johnson

EASTERN AFRICA TO-DAY

An *Annual Description of*
KENYA COLONY, TANGANYIKA TERRITORY, UGANDA,
NORTHERN RHODESIA, NYASALAND, ZANZIBAR,
AND BRITISH SOMALILAND WITH NOTES ON THE
SUDAN AND PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA.

7 MAPS AND 95 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
F. S. JOELSON,
Founder and Editor of "East Africa."

Published in December, 1928, by



91, GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

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NORTHERN RHODESIA.

ABERCORN.

ABERCORN, so-called after Sir Duke of Abercorn, one of the first directors of the British South Africa Company, appears in big letters on the map, but is in reality quite a small place, the township containing early this year only eight Europeans, and the whole administrative sub-district only 39, of whom 13 were women and one a child. Like its neighbour, Fife, its comparative importance is less to-day than it was at the beginning of the century, when it was both the centre of trade for that part of Africa, and the headquarters of Tanganyika Concessions Limited. Trade, however, passed largely to other centres, while the activities of Tanganyika Concessions moved chiefly to the Katanga Province of the Belgian Congo.

Distinct historic interest must always attach to Abercorn as the first and most important post occupied by Britain in this part of Central Africa when it was decided internationally that to be effective the occupation of the hinterland must be actual. That was the cause of the arrival about 1896 of Mr. Hugh C. Marshall—known far and wide by his Native name of "Tambalika"—who remained at Abercorn until 1911. The little post dwindled gradually in importance, and although it was known for its hospitality to all who traversed that part of Africa, it did not come into the limelight until the outbreak of the Great War, in the early days of which it became an important place to Northern Rhodesia, for it lies on the border and close to the then German military station of Bismarckburg—to which the old Native name of Kasanga was restored by the British when Tanganyika Territory was taken over. During the War Abercorn was more or less destroyed and has since been rebuilt.

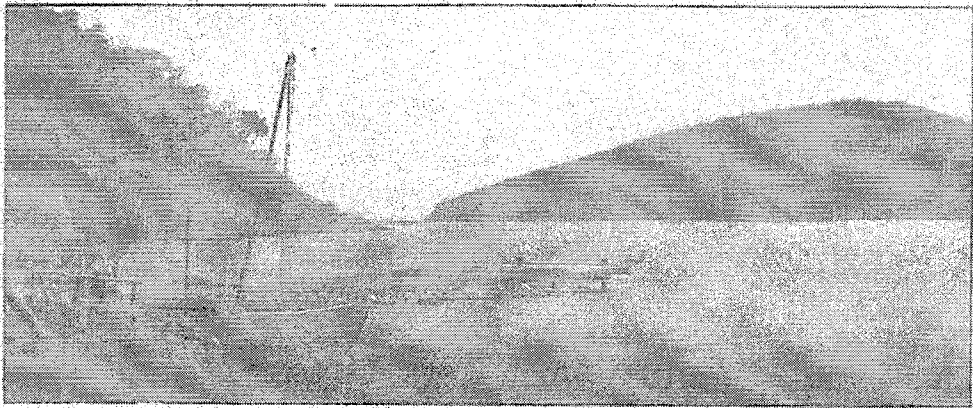


Photo: Colonel G. A. P. Maxwell.

MPULUNGU, THE NORTHERN RHODESIAN POST ON LAKE TANGANYIKA.

EASTERN AFRICA TO-DAY

The township, standing by a most attractive little lake, Chila, is a beautiful station on high and healthy ground, 5,654 feet above sea-level, with mean temperatures ranging from 79° to 53° F., and an average rainfall of 42 inches annually. The rainy season lasts from October to April, the wettest months being January, February, and March.

There are two missionary societies at work in the district, both having been established since the earliest days; the London Missionary Society has three posts, and the White Fathers (Roman Catholic) two. In 1928 there were five settlers—the earliest having been Messrs. C. W. Blyth, Chiappini and Deacon in 1902-3—but this corner of Northern Rhodesia is now attracting more attention than it has for some years past, and an old and prematurely founded Tanganyika Plateau Farmers' Association has just been revived. There is good grazing country, especially in the Saisi Valley, and a good part of the district is free from tsetse fly; there are approximately 2,000 head of Native-owned cattle and 2,500 European-owned Native cattle. Coffee, first grown by the White Fathers at the end of the last century, does well; so does wheat. The Government has started experiments in Native grown cotton, in which work the missions have co-operated. As this is almost entirely a Native district (Native population 42,000; European population 39), this is a good area for such an experiment.

Tennis is played at Abercorn, which possesses a Victoria Memorial Institute—a relic of the optimistic old days—now used chiefly as a lending library. The nearest European hospital is at Kasama, 100 miles to the south, but a medical officer is stationed at Abercorn.

The nearest Rhodesian railway station is at Broken Hill (588 miles), with which there is regular communication by motor road—the best part of the Great North Road—on which traffic for cars is possible all the year, though for heavy traffic it is uncertain for three or four months after January. Goods cost 23s. 6d. per 60 lb. and passenger fares are £30 for the single journey or £45 return. The journey takes about four days.

Plenty of labour is available for all local requirements and there should be good chances for a few hard-working settlers. Land costs from 3s. to 5s. an acre, and in a few cases up to 8s. Semi-skilled labour is paid 12s. 6d. to 40s. a month, and unskilled 7s. 6d. to 10s.; rations, which are cheap, are given in addition. A single man could live well on £15 and a childless couple on £25 monthly. An absolute minimum of £1,000 capital would be required (which is less than elsewhere in the territory) and this only if the settler had in addition an income of about £200 a year for about four years; in other words, it is desirable that the newcomer should have not less than £2,000, half for immediate needs and about another £1,000 in reserve.

Communications with the outside world are comparatively good, for besides the motor road to Kasama, there is communication *via* the port of Mpulungu on Lake Tanganyika (26 miles) by lake steamer to Kigoma and thence by rail to Mwanza or to Dar es Salaam; and also on the west side of the Lake with the Belgian Congo, or by motor road *via* Fife and Mbeya with Iringa, Arusha and Nairobi. It is, however, likely that a direct road may be made from Fife to Kasama, which would then put Abercorn off the main North Road, though it would still have connections with it.

There is also an aerodrome at Abercorn, this being a recognised landing-place between Tabora and Ndola on the Cape-Cairo route.

Game is abundant in the district, elephant being fairly common, while

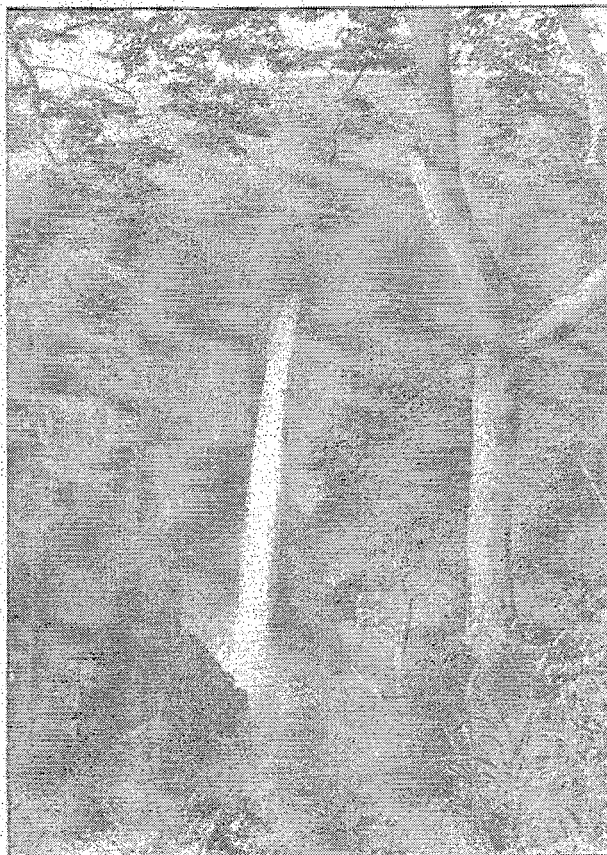


Photo: J. Scott Brown.

THE KALAMBO FALLS.

bird shooting round Abercorn is particularly good. The fish of Lake Tanganyika are of great interest (besides providing good sport), for they are mostly of the marine type although fresh water fish.

The scenery in parts is very fine, though generally, as throughout this part of Africa, only moderately interesting. There is, however, one really notable feature, the Kalambo Falls, some 20 miles away on the Tanganyika border. This is the highest waterfall in Africa and one of the highest in the world. The sheer drop is between 700 and 800 feet, and the width of the stream at the top is probably under 50 feet, but there is sufficient volume of water to enable it to reach as water and not as spray the unfathomable pool below. As mere figures convey little to most people, it may be added that these falls are twice the height of the Victoria Falls.

Intending travellers should remember that there is only one European store and no garage in Abercorn, but it is not unlikely that development may be somewhat more rapid in the near future, in which case such deficiencies may soon be remedied. At present travellers must beware against being misled by the size of Abercorn on the maps.