THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN NORTHERN RHODESIA: ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, 1929-1939

BY

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A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

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DECLARATION

I, Mbozi Santebe, declare that this dissertation

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APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the administrative and legislative changes that the colonial government made in response to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. It reveals that the government mainly responded to the decline in government revenues, the widespread poverty and destitution and the distortion of internal trade. The study shows that during the emergency period, 1932-1934, the administration made changes to government structures and functioning so as to curtail expenditure and balance its budget. It reorganised staff in the public service, reduced budgetary allocations to departments and realigned several departments and provinces.

The colonial government also passed various pieces of legislation during the emergency period. Its fiscal legislative changes legalised new taxes that were envisaged to raise extra revenues with which to balance the budget. To reduce poverty and destitution, the government passed legislation that introduced new currency from England and Southern Rhodesia, legalised compulsory repatriation of destitutes to their countries of origin and restricted immigration into Northern Rhodesia.

The study concludes that some of the changes made yielded good results while others did not. The government managed to reduce annual budget deficits but failed to balance the budget during the emergency period. Also, the staff reduction scheme caused work pressure on the remaining staff and reduced government efficiency. Although currency was acquired during the emergency period, the circulation of money remained distorted up to around 1938 as many rural dwellers resented the use of small value coins having become accustomed to barter trade during the times of currency scarcity.
DEDICATION

To my late father Mr. George Santebe Sankanga and my mother Ms. Beatrice Masiliso Ngenda who both sacrificed a lot for my education. To my wife Janepher Musakanya and our children Pumulo, Likando and Musakanya who missed me a lot during my research.
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ABBREVIATIONS

FENZA ................................................................. Faith and Encounter in Zambia.

MIA ................................................................. Mining Industry Archives.

NAZ ................................................................. National Archives of Zambia.

RST ................................................................. Rhodesian Selection Trust.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Great Depression, which occurred between 1929 and 1939, affected every aspect of human endeavour in all parts of the capitalist world\(^1\) and did not spare Africa. It disrupted economic, social and political activities in many parts of Africa and forced colonial governments to change some of the existing policies and adopt new ones in response to the challenges faced.\(^2\) Responses of colonial administrations to the impact of the Depression in some African countries such as Northern Rhodesia have largely eluded historical analysis. Therefore, this study explores the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia by focusing on the administrative and legislative changes that the administration made. The study begins from 1929 when the Depression started in the United States of America (USA) and ends in 1939 when the World War II broke out and began to influence colonial policies in Africa.

The Great Depression or Great Slump refers to the economic crisis that the capitalist world experienced in the 1930s which was more widespread, deeper and longer than any other depression in the twentieth century.\(^3\) It was a period of unprecedented trade contraction, bank failures, investment cutbacks, acute unemployment, wage reductions and a sharp decline in the

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standard of living in the capitalist world.\(^4\) The industrialised countries had experienced economic crises even before 1929 but none of them was as severe and extensive as the Great Depression.\(^5\)

Beginning with the New York Stock Market Crash in October 1929, the waves of the Depression swiftly spread to and hit all European stock markets. European economies were already fragile and vulnerable to economic catastrophe as a result of the impact of the World War I. Thus, like in the USA, the slump caused serious economic breakdowns in Europe. From 1929 to 1931, the Depression was characterised by an almost uninterrupted decline in commodity prices, trade, production and employment in the western world.\(^6\) Economic ties between European nations and their colonies spread the Depression from Europe to Africa and other peripheral countries around the globe.\(^7\) It was through this chain of events that by October 1931, the Great Depression hit the Northern Rhodesian economy, an appendage of the British imperial economy. In Northern Rhodesia, the Depression began in the mining industry, spread to the railways, commerce and agriculture, and ruined the economic boom of the late 1920s.

Northern Rhodesia had become economically tied to the capitalist world by 1929 through the development of the copper mining industry which attracted foreign investment and needed market for copper. The development of copper mines at Bwana Mkubwa, Mufulira, Nchanga, Roan Antelope and Rhokana all relied on foreign capital.\(^8\) Furthermore, the western world provided markets for the upcoming copper mining industry. This easily spread the Depression to Northern Rhodesia when the demand for the metal declined and investors could not risk pumping

huge capital in the copper mining business. Once the slump hit the mining industry, it easily spread to other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, as they were interlinked.

The mine construction boom experienced during the years 1928-1930 in Northern Rhodesia attracted both European and African labourers from all over Southern Africa. To Africans, mine-related employment became an important source of money for the payment of tax and the purchase of desired goods such as clothes, blankets, plates, pots and many others. Hence, the construction of the copper mines and the commencement of mining activities in Northern Rhodesia was a blessing to the territory’s labour market. As the mining industry provided employment for thousands of people, migrant labour became a common phenomenon and the population of the Copperbelt region expanded. According to Wills, the African mine labour force on the Copperbelt grew from 8,000 in 1927 to 23,000 in 1930.

As a result of the mine construction boom, government revenues from tax and duties on imported machinery increased. At the same time, the copper industry began to increase railway traffic and the railways provided further employment opportunities in the territory. Also, white settler agriculturalists within and outside Northern Rhodesia found a fortune in the selling of maize and beef cattle to the emerging copper mining community. Africans, particularly those along the line of rail, also found market for their agricultural produce especially maize and cattle. With the emerging Northern Rhodesian mining industry depending on foreign capital and markets, the territory’s economy was severely depressed by 1932 following the decline in international trade.

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Even the remotest parts of Northern Rhodesia economically linked to mining and other capitalist ventures through the export of labour and food were hit by the Depression.

The impact of the Great Depression on capitalist economies has led to considerable research in both the industrialised world and the developing countries. A number of scholars have examined the impact of the Depression on African countries and Northern Rhodesia is not an exception.\(^\text{12}\)

The impact of the slump in Northern Rhodesia is analysed mainly in connection to the mining industry, settler agriculture, the labour market and colonial taxation. The collapse in the demand for copper on the international market led to the cutting down of copper production by the mining companies and the consequent reduction of workforces and wages. This resulted in high levels of unemployment and a decline in the standard of living in urban areas. The collapse of the mining industry depressed settler agriculture and also reduced railway traffic. Many Africans and Europeans likewise were repatriated to their homes at government cost. In both rural areas and urban centres, Africans found it difficult to raise money for paying poll tax and as many defaulted on tax payment, arrests of defaulters increased.\(^\text{13}\)

Although the Great Depression has been alluded to in many historical studies on Northern Rhodesia, most scholars only highlight the impact of the crisis and do not explore the response of the colonial government to the slump.\(^\text{14}\) Few scholars such as Gann, Berger and Clegg refer to the response of the government but without analysis. They allude to the financial problems that the colonial administration faced in Northern Rhodesia and its attempt to reduce expenditure by


cutting down the civil service, lowering wages and repatriating people from urban areas to their homes. This study attempts to analyse the colonial government’s administrative and legislative responses to the challenges that the territory faced during the Great Depression.

Statement of the Problem

Academic discourses on the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia examine the impact of the economic crisis without analysing how the colonial administration attempted to mitigate the challenges ushered in by the slump. This study attempts to examine the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Depression in the territory with specific reference to the administrative and legislative changes that it made to mitigate the decline in government revenues, the increase in poverty and destitution and the reduction in the demand for produce on the internal market.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. The study seeks to

(i) Examine the factors that influenced the response of the colonial administration to the impact of the Great Depression.
(ii) Analyse the administrative changes that the colonial government made in order to mitigate the impact of the Depression.
(iii) Examine the legislative changes that the government made in response to the slump.

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Assess the role and impact of the government’s administrative and legislative response to the economic crisis.

**Rationale**

This study is significant as it contributes to the historiography of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia by unveiling the administrative and legislative changes that the colonial administration made in response to the impact of the slump in the territory. The study is also envisioned to stimulate research on other aspects of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia.

**Literature Review**

A review of literature on the Great Depression reveals that while government responses to the crisis are well documented in some parts of the world, such as Europe and America, this is not the case in many parts of Africa, especially Northern Rhodesia. For example, Youngson alludes to the enactment of various pieces of legislation in British agriculture and industry in response to the Depression during the years 1931-1936 and discusses the Agricultural Marketing Acts of 1931 and 1933 which encouraged producers to devise marketing schemes that were to be legally enforced. The 1933 Act restricted imports and provided for the setting up of schemes for production of potatoes, pigs and milk. This study benefited from Youngson’s work as it explores legislative changes made in response to the slump in Northern Rhodesia vis-à-vis agriculture and commerce.

Frank Dobbin examines the policies adopted in Britain and the USA during the Great Depression. He discusses the passing of the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 and the Social Security Act of 1935 which, he argues, were all

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designed to soften the impact of the crisis on the American public. Like Youngson, Dobbin also alludes to the passing of the Agricultural Marketing Acts in Britain during the early 1930s and argues that they sought to eliminate inefficient small-scale wholesalers who failed to quickly respond to the changing market demands. His work is relevant to this study, which explores the pieces of legislation passed in Northern Rhodesia to reduce the impact of the Depression.

In his work on the Indian economy during the Great Depression, Parakunnel Thomas refers to some of the administrative and legislative changes made by the Indian government in response to the crisis. He notes that the Depression reduced India’s foreign trade, distorted prices of primary products, reduced the income of local producers and increased unemployment in the country. Thomas also notes the weakening of the financial position of the Indian government and the administration’s response through staff retrenchment, expenditure reduction, emergency salary cuts and fresh taxation. He also argues that in response to the influx of Japanese goods, the Indian government passed the Safeguarding of Indian Industries Act and the Finance Act, in 1933, which imposed high duties on cheap imports to save local industry. The current study unveils similar administrative changes and legislative enactments in Northern Rhodesia.

Scholars have also analysed the impact of the Great Depression on African countries but few examine the responses of colonial governments to the crisis. Among the few is Moses Ochonu who explores the impact of the slump in Nigeria and discusses the recovery measures adopted and their significance. Ochonu analyses the government’s attempt to balance its budget and the

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19 Thomas, “India in the World Depression”, p. 479.
20 Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, pp. 103-145.
effort to boost the production of cocoa, kola nuts, cotton and groundnuts. Like Ochonu’s work, Bonaventure Swai’s analysis of the impact of the Depression in Tanganyika includes the response of the Tanganyika government. He focuses on the fall of external trade and the dislocation of agriculture and argues that the government passed the Traders Ordinance, the Markets Ordinance, the Coffee Ordinance and the Cooperative Societies Ordinance in order to revive agriculture and external trade. This study also unveils the ordinances that the administration passed in Northern Rhodesia in connection with agriculture and import trade.

Jewsiewicki’s study on the role of the Great Depression in the making of the colonial economic system in the Belgian Congo also discusses the response of the colonial government to the slump. He argues that the Belgian Congo’s administration attempted to increase African agricultural production for the capitalist market and that it extended credit to large companies and financed the transportation of export crops through loans from Belgium. Similar to the studies by Ochonu and Swai cited above, Jewsiewicki’s work focuses largely on the attempt by the government to support external trade in agricultural produce. The present study highlights policy changes that were made in support of local agricultural production in Northern Rhodesia.

In an analysis of the impact of the Great Depression on the relations between Africans and the colonial government in Cameroun, Guyer notes that the slump considerably reduced government revenues from customs duties and that the government responded by intensifying its reliance on head tax. Cameroun’s administration raised head tax by seven percent between 1929 and 1932 and increased the use of African chiefs to collect the tax. Guyer notes that “The burden of

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21 Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, pp. 120-122.
enforcing tax payments fell to them [African chiefs] and they were held personally liable for any amounts they failed to collect.”26 Similarly, the current study also explores the colonial government’s attempt to raise revenues for the administration of Northern Rhodesia.

Anthony Minnaar analyses the impact of the Great Depression on Graaf-Reinet, a medium-size rural town in South Africa in the period 1929-1933. The town’s affluent sheep farming economy which produced wool for export was severely weakened by the Depression and this led to high unemployment and poverty in the municipal location.27 Relevant to our study is Minnaar’s discussion of how various official bodies embarked on unemployment relief works like road-building, brick-making and the construction of a new power station in order to reduce unemployment in the municipal location.28 This study also illuminates government responses to the challenges of unemployment and destitution in Northern Rhodesia but focuses more on legislative changes relating to destitution than on public works.

Separate works by Sharon Stichter and Otakar Hulec explore the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia in relation to other territories in the neighbourhood. Stichter notes the challenges of high unemployment and the decline in living standards in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia. Mainly concerned with the impact of the crisis on labour relations, she explains that in Northern Rhodesia’s mining industry, deliberate programmes were put in place to train Africans so as to reduce dependence on expensive European labour.29 Stichter also explains the role of the Depression in the transition from desertions to on-the-job collective worker action as a form of

26 Guyer, “Depression and Administration in South-Central Cameroun”, p. 73.
African labour protest. She sees the Depression as having contributed to the rise of labour militancy as Africans could no longer risk their jobs by deserting. Her study is concerned with labour relations while this study focuses on government responses to the Depression.

Otakar Hulec analyses the impact of the Depression on the two Rhodesias noting that the contraction in the world’s demand for raw materials reduced prices and affected both mining and agriculture in the two territories. Hulec alludes to the reduction in the demand for agricultural produce in Northern Rhodesia and the resultant competition for the internal market which emerged among farmers. This study explores how the Northern Rhodesia Government responded to the declining demand for agricultural produce through its attempt to secure the internal market for local producers.

A number of works on colonial Zambia, such as those of Gann and Berger, also allude to the impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia. The works are not specialised on the Depression as they are general studies. They allude to the impact of the crisis and some of the responses of the government without detail. Gann notes the impact of the Depression on the mines, railways and agriculture and briefly highlights some of the financial difficulties that the government faced which made the administration to curtail staffing and expenditure. Like Gann, Elena Berger also refers to the financial challenges that the colonial government faced and the reduction of its staff and spending. Berger also argues that the financial crisis prevented the administration from crafting a policy with regard to labour issues on the Copperbelt in the

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32 See Gann, History of Northern Rhodesia, pp. 252-253 and Berger, Labour, Race and Colonial Rule, pp. 18-23.
33 Gann, History of Northern Rhodesia, pp. 252-253.
1930s. These works provided the current study with a vital starting point for a detailed analysis of the government’s administrative response to the slump.

Like the studies by Gann and Berger, the works of Rotberg, Wills and Clegg also highlight the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. They each explain the setting up of the Copperbelt mining industry, its decline at the start of the Depression and the resultant retrenchment of workers that created anxiety in the territory. Wills further notes that the economic crisis reduced government revenues and forced the administration to reduce civil service salaries and repatriate destituents to their homes. In addition, Clegg explains that the crisis worsened race relations between Africans and Europeans, reduced African ability to pay tax and increased crime in urban areas. These works yielded background information on the administrative and legislative changes made in response to poverty related challenges.

The study by Kaniki explores the impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia’s labour market and on the agricultural sector. Kaniki contends that thousands of workers who depended on selling their labour to the mining and agricultural sectors were badly affected by the Depression through wage cuts and mass retrenchments. Like Clegg, Kaniki notes that as a result of unemployment and reduced incomes, many Africans were unable to pay poll tax, a situation that lasted beyond the middle of the 1930s in outlying areas of Northern Rhodesia. Despite being informative on the impact of the Depression, Kaniki’s study does not reveal any response of the colonial administration to the crisis as he argues that the government did not know how to handle the crisis. On the contrary, the present study demonstrates that the Northern Rhodesia

37 Kaniki, “Impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia”, pp. 131-150.
38 Kaniki, “Impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia”, pp. 145-146.
Government made a lot of changes to its administrative and legislative structures to mitigate the impact of the crisis and its response was consistent with that of many other British colonies.

Musambachime’s study on the development and growth of the Mweru-Luapula fishing industry reveals the impact of the Depression on the fishing enterprise.\(^{39}\) He explains how the decline of copper mining in Katanga ruined the fishing industry and reduced people’s income in the fishing area. He notes that the reduction in the circulation of money, particularly the farthing, half penny, one penny and three pence, depressed people’s purchasing power and contributed to widespread poverty as people were unable to buy goods such as clothes and to pay tax.\(^{40}\) The current study explores how the colonial government attempted to resolve the shortage of currency in the country during the slump.

The study by Kalusa on aspects of mineworkers’ health at Roan Antelope mine alludes to the impact of the Great Depression on African health in the mining industry.\(^{41}\) Kalusa shows that the Depression impacted negatively on the already neglected health of mineworkers at Roan Antelope and elsewhere on the Copperbelt. He argues that the mining companies, seeking to minimise their costs during the Depression, paid less attention to the health of their African workers and the situation only improved after 1934 when the mine began to recover.\(^{42}\) The work does not focus on the response of the colonial government to the Depression. The present study highlights some of the administrative changes that affected the Health Department.

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Dorothy Mwansa’s work on the history of Mount Makulu Research Station shows how initial efforts to establish agricultural research stations at Mazabuka, Abercorn and Fort Jameson were curtailed from 1931 due to the Depression. She argues that despite the significance of the Fort Jameson Experimental Station since its establishment in 1930, the exodus of settlers and several other problems during the Depression slowed down experimentation works at the station. Similarly, experimentation works at Mazabuka were hampered by the Depression and they were eventually abandoned by 1935. The work illuminates the curtailment of government programmes which this study explores under the administration’s economy campaign.

Methodology

This study was accomplished using both primary and secondary sources of data. At the University of Zambia Library, books, journal articles, theses, dissertations and several government documents such as reports and Legislative Council debates were consulted. They provided data on the impact of the Depression on various economic sectors and highlighted the response of the colonial government. At the National Archives of Zambia, several government files and reports were consulted. They supplied critical information on how the colonial government attempted to deal with the ensuing challenges besides illuminating the impact of the slump on the economy and on various sections of the Northern Rhodesian society.

Data from the Mining Industry Archives in Ndola provided information on the impact of the Depression on the mining industry. At the Livingstone Museum, data collected from newspapers added a non-official voice on different aspects of the study. Finally, secondary sources were consulted at the Faith and Encounter in Zambia (FENZA) Library in Lusaka and they yielded

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data on the historical background and some of the administrative changes made during the slump.

The research was mainly based on archival sources and largely employed qualitative analysis of the data collected. Pieces of information from various sources were analysed in comparison to each other. Where available and applicable, statistical evidence was used in correlation with qualitative information. Specific themes were identified under which the data was analysed and presented.

**Organisation of the Study**

This study consists of six chapters. Chapter One is the introduction and historical background. Chapter Two examines the factors that influenced the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression. Chapter Three analyses the administrative changes that the colonial administration made while Chapter Four examines the legislative changes that the government made in order to mitigate the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. Chapter Five assesses the role and impact of the government’s administrative and legislative response to the Great Depression. The sixth chapter is a conclusion of the whole study.
CHAPTER TWO: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THE RESPONSE OF THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT TO THE IMPACT OF THE DEPRESSION

Introduction

This chapter examines the internal and external factors that influenced the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. This is in an attempt to provide the context in which the Northern Rhodesia Government made administrative and legislative changes in order to mitigate the impact of the economic malaise. With regard to the internal environment, the chapter explores how various challenges faced within the territory attracted the attention of the Northern Rhodesia Government and raised concern among various stakeholders who then pressured the administration to do something about the economic plague. On the external front, the chapter explores the role of the wider British imperial interests and recovery efforts, the territory’s customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and the measures adopted by other British territories, in influencing the response of the Northern Rhodesia Government to the challenges posed by the Great Depression.

The Internal Environment

Northern Rhodesia’s internal environment played a crucial role in influencing the response of the colonial government to the Depression. The slump brought a lot of challenges in the territory among which the main ones were the decline of the mining industry, the reduction of internal and external trade, the fall of government duty and tax revenues, the rise in crime levels and the increase in European unemployment and destitution.¹ These challenges attracted the attention

and response of the colonial government. They also provoked commentaries from concerned stakeholders such as locally-based missionaries, the unemployed (retrenched) community, the farming community and local chiefs. Apart from exposing the challenges faced by various sections of the society, these groups suggested measures to mitigate the impact of the Depression and put the colonial government under pressure to do something about the crisis.

The decline of the mining industry

During the late 1920s, Northern Rhodesia experienced a rapid growth in the mining industry with new mines under construction at Nchanga, Mufulira, Nkana and Roan Antelope just before the Depression.\(^2\) The development of these mines provided employment to both Europeans and Africans from within and outside the country. Shamutete notes that between 1927 and 1930, mineral exploration, construction of mining plants and workers’ houses, and other related works, attracted large numbers of people to the mining areas where, previously, very few people lived.\(^3\) Many Africans from all parts of Northern Rhodesia and others from Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Angola flocked to the mining areas to obtain employment. The number of Africans in mine-related employment more than doubled in the period 1924-1932.\(^4\) European immigrants from Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and England also came into the territory to seek mine employment or participate in economic activities stimulated by the mines, especially agriculture. The European population of Northern Rhodesia increased from 4,424 in 1924 to

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13,846 in 1931. There were more than 3,600 Europeans in the Copperbelt region alone at the end of 1930.

The demand for copper on the world market declined tremendously between 1929 and 1931. The world’s annual consumption of copper fell from about two million tons in 1929 to about one million tons in 1931. This fall created a surplus of the metal on the international market. Consequently, prices of copper slid from £72 to £44 per ton in the last eight months of 1930 and further to £27 per ton in 1931. The crisis threatened mine owners with capital losses and forced them to curtail both investments and production. Following an international copper quota agreement made in August, 1931, the Anglo American Corporation and the Rhodesian Selection Trust each curtailed their production in Northern Rhodesia to 25 percent, which they decided to produce from their most developed mines at Rhokana and Roan Antelope, respectively. Works at Bwana Mkubwa, Nchanga, Broken Hill and Mufulira were completely halted.

The reduction in mining activities on the Copperbelt was immediately followed by a massive chop-down in the workforces of the mines in which the non-racial axe of the Depression spared

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6 Mining Industry Archives (hereafter MIA), Loc. 16.1.9E. Rhodesia Selection Trust Limited, Chairman’s Speech for the Meeting held on 23 September, 1931. In Britain, consumption of unwrought copper dropped from over 150,000 tons in 1931 to about 120,000 tons in 1932. For more details, see MIA, Loc. 15.2.5E. Report by W.R. Barclay and C.H. Schneider on Copper Development and Propaganda, 1932.


8 See MIA, Loc. 12.6.1E. Rhodesian Anglo American Limited, Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March, 1931; MIA, Loc. 12.6.1E. Rhodesian Anglo American Limited, Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March, 1932 and MIA, Loc. 12.6.1E. Rhodesian Anglo American Limited, Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March, 1933. Some shares in the mining companies were forfeited, especially in 1932, due to non-payment by shareholders who were not keen to invest more in the copper mining business.

neither Africans nor Europeans as both were laid off in large numbers at short notice or without notice at all. Due to the layoffs, the population of the Copperbelt sharply reduced. According to Butler, “Between November 1930 and June 1933, the number of European[s] declined from 3,600 to 1,200, while the African population fell ... from 32,000 to 9,300.” Salaries for the remaining mine workers were also reduced in order to curtail the cost of production.

The curtailment of mining on the Copperbelt had a bearing on the response of the Northern Rhodesia Government to the impact of the Depression. The colonial administration considered the mines to be an international property and felt that there was very little it could do to save the industry from crumbling. They left efforts to resuscitate the copper industry in the hands of the mining companies at both local and international level. In December, 1932, the Governor, Sir Ronald Storrs, stated that “The mines are more than an imperial ... asset and they depend for their ultimate and complete prosperity upon the world revival.” As far as the government was concerned, it could only study and mitigate adverse local forces which affected the industry.

Furthermore, the decline of the mining industry entailed large revenue losses to the colonial government which became seriously shaken financially. The administration, however, observed that the mines were the backbone of the territory’s future economic prosperity and decided not to exert much strain on the industry so as to avoid financially suffocating mining magnates. In Butler’s view, colonial officials realised that “no income tax could be expected from the copper industry ... and that ... until the price and production of copper had stabilised, it was unsafe for government to rely on the industry to make considerable contribution towards public

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12 Butler, Copper Empire, p. 29.
revenues." This realisation influenced the administration to begin devising measures to reduce expenditure and generate additional revenue so as to mitigate the financial impact of the crisis.

**The disruption of local trade and the reduction in the circulation of money**

The mine development boom of the 1920s stimulated growth in other sectors of the Northern Rhodesian economy, mainly agriculture, fishing and timber production. The mining community provided a growing market for foodstuffs and encouraged local producers to look forward to a long period of prosperity. For example, the mining companies required a total of 100,000 bags of maize in 1930 and this demand stimulated the expansion of maize production in the territory especially along the line of rail. By then, the expanding market for beef had stimulated the opening of cattle ranches at Kalomo, Mazabuka, Lusaka, Chisamba and other places. The Susman Brothers, for instance, had opened the Leopards Hill Ranch in Lusaka where they had more than 5,000 cattle. Africans, especially along the line of rail and near the mining centres, also participated in food production and this increased local trade in the country.

Timber production also expanded in Northern Rhodesia during the mine construction boom. This was particularly the case with production by the Zambezi Sawmills in the forests to the west of Livingstone. Nzila’s study shows that between June, 1925 and June, 1926, the company’s annual timber output, in cubic metres, was 24,796. The output rose to 33,636 for the period between June, 1928 and June, 1929 and further to 36,970 for the period between June, 1931 and January, 1932. The Zambezi Sawmills employed a workforce of about 3,300 by the end of 1930.

\[13\] Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 28.
\[14\] MIA, Loc. 16.1.9F. Food Supplies, 3 December, 1930.
\[15\] MIA, Loc. 16.1.9F. Susman Brothers to G.R. Nicholas of the Roan Selection Trust, 26 February, 1930.
Undoubtedly, the increase in mine employment and the expansion of agriculture, fishing, timber production and local trade boosted the flow of money in Northern Rhodesia in the late 1920s.

The Great Depression adversely affected agriculture, fishing, timber production and local trade and reduced the circulation of money in the country. The mine layoffs sharply reduced the population of the Copperbelt and the line of rail and led to a sudden fall in the demand for all types of produce. In December, 1932, Ronald Storrs lamented the grinding difficulty that producers of minerals, livestock, tobacco and other commodities faced in disposing off their products.\textsuperscript{17} The slump in the demand for maize, cattle, fish and timber sharply reduced prices of the commodities. Dixon-Fyle notes, for instance, that the price of a 200 lb bag of maize along the line of rail dropped from eight shillings to below five shillings, sometimes hitting three shillings.\textsuperscript{18} As the demand for produce declined, fewer sales were made. For example, the number of cattle sold along the line of rail reduced from 2,558 in 1931 to only 780 in 1932.\textsuperscript{19}

The impact of the Depression on sawmilling was also serious. The slump hit the industry in 1930 before it struck mining, agriculture and the railways, as major markets for timber products in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia contracted much earlier. The decline of the copper industry in Northern Rhodesia only exacerbated the situation. As the demand for timber declined in the south and in Northern Rhodesia, Zambezi Sawmills reduced its workforce. As revealed by Nzila, the company’s workforce, which had risen from 700 in 1922 to 3,300 by the end of 1930, dropped to 2,933 in 1932 and to only 1,700 before the end of 1933.\textsuperscript{20} Those retrenched lost their

\textsuperscript{17} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 14 December, 1932}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{19} Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on Economic and Social Change”, p. 434.
\textsuperscript{20} Nzila, “Zambezi Sawmills”, p. 45.
source of money while food suppliers to sawmill workers also lost their market. This contributed to the reduction in the circulation of money in the south-western parts of Northern Rhodesia.

Furthermore, a serious scarcity of money hit Northern Rhodesia mainly from 1932 following her departure from the gold standard in October, 1931. This made it difficult for people to access small currency with which to buy essential articles. According to Dixon-Fyle, the shortage of money and the decline in the demand for commodities like maize, cattle and fish, reduced most local trade to barter as goods such as sewing machines, bicycles and ploughs were exchanged for cattle or bags of maize. The circulation of money was distorted especially in areas far from the railway line and the main trading centres, where trade was entirely reduced to barter. Even in areas where some coins could be accessed, commodity prices were distorted. These challenges attracted the attention of the colonial government which responded in 1932 and 1933 by passing legislation that legalised the use of coins issued mainly from Southern Rhodesia and England.

Local producers also faced competition from external products during the Depression. Prior to the economic crisis, the demand for commodities such as maize, cattle and tobacco was so high that local producers could not meet the territory’s demand. Imports had to be made of maize from Southern Rhodesia and of cattle and beef from Bechuanaland and South Africa. This, it

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21 The gold standard was a currency system in which representations of gold were used in monetary exchange. Currencies on the gold standard were convertible into gold of a given weight and purity. The currencies were often backed by storing in the reserves a specific quantity of gold for each bank note. See Craig K. Elwell, “Brief History of the Gold Standard in the United States”, Report for Congressional Research Service, June, 2011, p. 1 and S.E. Harris, “The Gold Standard”, The American Scholar 2, 3 (1933), p. 302. The USA, Britain and many other western countries and their colonies were on the gold standard before the First World War and they tried to restore it after the war but failed to operate the system. For details on how the system collapsed, see Harris, “The Gold Standard”, pp. 307-308.


25 MIA, Loc. 16.1.9F. Food Supplies, 3 December, 1930; Roan Selection Trust Limited Memorandum for the Attention of Mr. Chester Beatty, 8 August, 1929 and Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates: First Session of the Fourth Council, 14-21 September, 1932 (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1932), pp. 175-176. Restriction of cattle imports from Ngamiland and Southern Rhodesia was lifted to allow some imports of cattle from there.
can be argued, complicated matters when the demand for these products shrank during the Depression. For, the imported commodities were often cheaper than local ones and Northern Rhodesian producers could barely export their products to the south, where they were perceived to be of inferior quality. It was not surprising, therefore, that in 1932 and 1933, settler farmers along the line of rail and in East Luangwa complained about the presence of imported agricultural products on the Northern Rhodesian market, and they sought government intervention to secure the internal market for local producers.\textsuperscript{26}

As local producers called for government intervention in the competition they faced from external products on the internal market, the government responded first by negotiating for restriction of imports from Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Bechuanaland in 1932. It also negotiated for more favourable tariff agreements with Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa and made changes to the territory’s customs and excise legislation in the period 1932-1934.\textsuperscript{27} The legislative changes imposed duties on imports that were previously admitted duty free into Northern Rhodesia from both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

**The decline of external trade**

The Great Depression affected both the import and export trade of Northern Rhodesia, but its impact was more serious on the import arena. It seriously reduced the value of imports during the period from January, 1932 to July, 1933. The value of Northern Rhodesia’s imports during the first six months of the year 1931 was £2,743,300 while that for the corresponding period in 1932 was only £992,700.\textsuperscript{28} As it may be observed, these figures translated to a fall of 63.8 percent in

\textsuperscript{26} Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates: Third Session of the Fourth Council, 8 March-7 April, 1933* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1933), pp. 11-12 and Vickery, “Saving Settlers”, p. 222.

\textsuperscript{27} Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 14 December, 1932*, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{28} Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 19 September, 1932*, p. 108.
the import value and meant that the value of imports for the first six months of 1932 was only 36.2 percent of the value for the corresponding period in 1931. Similarly, imports for the first half of the year 1933 were much lower than those for the corresponding period in 1932.

The drastic reduction in the territory’s imports from 1931 to mid-1933 was due to the curtailment of the importation of mine construction essentials by the mining companies. Imports of metal manufactures, machinery and vehicles in the first six months of 1931 amounted to £1,403,200 and to only £234,500 during the corresponding period in 1932. It was only from August, 1933 that the imports steadily improved and by the end of the year, a small increase was recorded. Butler argues that the recovery of imports from August, 1933, was due to the commencement of the construction of an electrolytic refinery plant at Nkana, by the Rhokana Corporation, and the reopening of Mufulira mine earlier in July, which revived Northern Rhodesia’s external trade.

The impact of the Depression on export trade was also serious. Although annual aggregate values of Northern Rhodesia’s domestic exports increased throughout the Depression, exports of certain commodities slumped drastically in 1932. The gravest impact of the slump on the territory’s exports was on hides, skins and horns, maize and maize meal, wood and live animals. The export value of hides, skins and horns fell from £19,807 in 1931 to £8,725 in 1932; that of maize slumped from £18,031 in 1931 to only £1,006 in 1932 while maize meal exports dropped from £6,173 in 1931 to £1,034 in 1932. Furthermore, the export value of timber

29 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 September, 1932, p. 108.
31 Butler, Copper Empire, p. 22.
33 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1933, p. 22.
and its associated products slipped from £29,937 in 1931 to £23,414 in 1932 and that of live animals dropped from £18,913 in 1931 to £11,793 in 1932.\textsuperscript{34}

The reduction in external trade, especially the decline in imports of dutiable goods, became a serious concern to the Northern Rhodesia Government as it caused a drastic contraction in the territory’s revenues. It thus contributed to the government’s decision to levy customs duties on goods that were previously allowed free entry into Northern Rhodesia and to increase duties on already liable goods.\textsuperscript{35} This particularly affected goods from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The decline in exports of consumables also contributed to the government’s attempt to secure the internal market for local producers.

**The decline in government duty and tax revenues**

Northern Rhodesia’s economic boom of the late 1920s brightened the revenue prospects of the colonial government in the years prior to the Depression. Government revenue shot up from £672,289 in 1929 to £830,254 in 1930 and rose further to £856,376 in 1931.\textsuperscript{36} Import duties were among the major revenue contributors as the mine construction boom entailed “the importation annually of vast supplies of mining and electrical machinery, plant and stores of every description.”\textsuperscript{37} The growth of the mining community led to increased importation of commodities such as clothes and foodstuffs and expanded the government’s duty revenues. Another source of the revenue was tax on the proceeds of the Rhodesian Railways which

\textsuperscript{34} Northern Rhodesia, *Annual Report, 1933*, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{37} Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission*, p. 4.
transported mine construction essentials, food supplies and government stores. As railway traffic increased during the boom, government tax revenues from the railways also improved.

African taxation was another important source of revenue for the Northern Rhodesia Government. From the establishment of colonial rule in North-western and North-eastern Rhodesia to the depth of the Depression in 1933, African tax had been a vital source of government revenue. During the construction boom, mine employment became an important source of money for Africans. The boom in railway transportation, sawmilling and agriculture also provided Africans with employment opportunities that enabled them to raise tax money, besides earning a living. Some Africans purchased desired commodities and raised their tax money through the sale of foodstuffs such as maize, meat, vegetables and fish to the emerging mining, sawmilling and railway communities.38

When the Depression hit the mines, railways, sawmills and agriculture, government revenues from import duties and proceeds from the railways fell drastically. The curtailment of mine works reduced imports and caused a fall in government revenues from customs duties. Customs receipts for the first four months of the 1931 financial year stood at £113,000 as compared to only £61,200 for the same period in 1932-1933.39 This was a decline of nearly 50 percent and it was due to the loss of numerous dutiable imports that were supplementary to the mining industry. The mines staff layoffs led to a reduction in the consumption of imported foodstuffs, liquors, tobacco and clothing, and diminished imports and duties on them.40

The curtailment of mine, sawmill and railway employment and the reduction in the demand for local produce made it difficult for Africans to raise tax money. Revenues from poll tax slumped

38 See, for example, Dixon-Fyle, “Reflections on Economic and Social Change”, pp. 430-431.
40 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933, pp. 3-4.
tremendously during the Great Depression. While the total amount of poll tax collected during
the year ended 31 December, 1931 was £153,100, the figure tumbled down by 27 percent to
£111,694 at the end of 1932.\footnote{NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, 31 March, 1933.} Collections of the African tax from provinces declined heavily
between 1931 and 1932. Apart from Kafue and Batoka provinces which recorded increases of 20
percent and 11 percent respectively, poll tax revenues dropped by 57 percent for Barotse, 42
percent each for Kasempa and Luangwa, 36 percent for Mweru-Luapula, 27 percent for
Tanganyika, 16 percent for Awemma and 13 percent for East Luangwa.\footnote{See Appendix 1 or NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, 31 March, 1933.}

Due to the decline in revenue from customs duty, income tax and poll tax, the total revenue
collections of the territory fell significantly during the 1932 financial year. The 1931 total
government revenue of £856,376 drastically contracted to a 1932 value of £649,538.\footnote{Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report}, 1932, p. 39.} This was
a decline of £206,838 or 24 percent in just a year. The heavy revenue loss attracted the attention
of the colonial government which responded through a vigorous economy campaign aimed at
balancing the budget. In December, 1932, the chief secretary summarised what the drastic
revenue loss meant for the territory:

\begin{quote}
... children receiving little, if any, education; … the restriction of medical services to small areas; … the policing of the small and more settled towns by … drastically reduced police detachments; … the cutting
down of agricultural and veterinary services; … the reduction of the Public Works Department to a mere
supervisory skeleton; … [and] money will not be available for road maintenance on a great scale ….\footnote{Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932}, p. 170.}
\end{quote}

The administration also noted that the reduction in revenues from the existing sources rendered
new taxation imperative. In seeking extra sources of revenue, the government made fiscal
legislative changes that widened the income tax base, increased customs duties and introduced an
entertainments tax, besides imposing a personal tax and an emergency tax on non-Africans.\textsuperscript{45} These taxes clearly illuminate Gann’s argument that the colonial administration introduced a wide range of taxes in Northern Rhodesia during the Great Depression.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{The increase in European unemployment and destitution}

Another challenge that attracted the attention of the government was the increase in European unemployment and destitution. The massive layoffs from the mines offloaded many Europeans into unemployment and many found themselves lingering in urban centres like Ndola, Livingstone and Lusaka where they became absolute destitutes.\textsuperscript{47} The decline in agriculture also forced many settler farmers to abandon their farms along the line of rail and at Abercorn (now Mbala) and Fort Jameson (now Chipata). As prices of agricultural produce subsided, scores of settler farmers returned to Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Europe.\textsuperscript{48} Others only went to the Copperbelt to look for work in the mines but to no avail. These joined the ranks of the unemployed who, without a source of livelihood, lingered around Ndola depending on their relatives, friends and charitable agencies. They soon became destitutes as the savings of their relatives and friends were depleted and some ended up at the Ndola camp for the unemployed.\textsuperscript{49}

As the number of destitute Europeans increased drastically in Northern Rhodesia after 1930, and reached its peak in 1932, it became a burden for the colonial government to provide them with shelter, food, health, education and other requirements. In March, 1932, for example, a total of 358 destitutes were receiving government aid at relief centres in Ndola, Lusaka, Fort Jameson

\textsuperscript{45} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{46} Gann, \textit{History of Northern Rhodesia}, p. 253.
\textsuperscript{47} NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Northern Rhodesia Governor to Colonial Secretary, 1 June, 1932.
\textsuperscript{48} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 20 September, 1932}, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{49} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 20 September, 1932}, p. 228.
and Livingstone. The number increased to 583 by September of the same year. This was an increase of about 63 percent in just six months. Clegg notes that there were 593 poor whites in receipt of government rations at relief centres in Ndola and Lusaka in November, 1932. By then, rations alone were costing the government an amount of 15 shillings per person per week.

The above statistics attracted the attention of the colonial government which then began to take measures to curb further increases in unemployment, dependency and destitution. The government made legislative changes that tightened immigration laws to prevent the entry, into the territory, of people likely to become unemployed and destitute. The government also repatriated some impoverished Europeans to their countries of origin. In 1931, it repatriated 157 destitutes from the country followed by another 189 between January and April, 1932. This made a total of 346 repatriated in the sixteen months from January, 1931 to April, 1932. The major destinations were Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Britain while others were India, Bechuanaland and Canada. The government also passed the Repatriation Ordinance in 1933 as a policy on destitute repatriation, besides being an attempt to reduce expenses on destitute relief.

With regard to Africans, the government’s position was that there was no destitution among them as they could easily subsist on resources in the countryside. As far as government officials were concerned, unemployment among the Africans was not a grave menace to the community because it did not directly imply destitution. They argued that Africans had ample land and that idleness did not exist among them to any worrying levels as it did among the unemployed.

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50 See NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Northern Rhodesia Governor to Colonial Secretary, 1 June, 1932 and Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 20 September, 1932, p. 209.
51 Clegg, Race and Politics, p. 71.
53 NAZ/RC/1600 Immigration Amendment Ordinance, 1933.
54 NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Northern Rhodesia Governor to Colonial Secretary, 1 June, 1932.
As noted by Stichter, Africans were said to be busy fishing in the streams, hunting in the forests and in various other ways. Thus, the government’s response to the challenges of unemployment became skewed towards European destitutes. A similar attitude was exhibited by the government of Southern Rhodesia which, as Hulec argues, “looked after the European population, whose interests were given preference over those of the majority … Africans.”

The rise in crime levels

The economic crisis caused by the Depression led to a rapid increase in crime in Northern Rhodesia. The major contributing factor to the rise in the crime rate was the loss of employment and other means of livelihood. The massive retrenchments and the reduced opportunities for earning money for subsistence escalated crime rates especially in urban centres. Crime levels were at their worst in 1932 at the two municipal centres, Livingstone and Ndola, following the massive retrenchments from the mines, railways and sawmills. Chiputa notes that many of the retrenched persons who failed to find alternative means of subsistence were reluctant to leave the urban centres and they turned to criminal activities in order to make ends meet. An examination of the number of cases reported to the police during the years 1931-1933 clearly shows large increases in the crime rate. The total number of cases reported to the police increased from 8,645 in 1931 to 10,510 in 1932, the highest since the British Crown took over the territory in 1924. Table 1 shows the annual figures of cases reported to the police in the period 1930-1933.

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58 Hulec, “Aspects of the 1930s Depression”, p. 102.
Table 1: Cases of crime reported in Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of cases reported to the police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>4,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>9,337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Northern Rhodesia, Annual Reports, 1929-1933.

The escalation in crime did not discriminate between the two races as both Africans and Europeans contributed to the increased cases. Clegg notes that the common cases committed by Africans were burglary, house-breaking and theft. He also observes the increase in cases of forgery and alteration of food tickets by Africans.\(^{60}\) Besides the loss of economic livelihood and the need to raise tax money, the drastic rise in crime committed by Africans was also due to the deportation to Northern Rhodesia of large numbers of Africans from Southern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. The number of Africans who were deported to Northern Rhodesia and arrived at Livingstone in 1931 was only 32 but it skyrocketed to 107 in 1932.\(^{61}\) Most of these men were deported for offences such as theft, house-breaking, burglary and robbery. At Livingstone, some of them were imprisoned but others were freed. Many of those who were released remained in the town or spread to other urban centres especially Lusaka, Broken Hill and Ndola. Their contribution to the increase in crime in urban areas is clear from the following sentiments:

In Livingstone also, the District Commissioner quite correctly attributes the good deal of the prevalence of crime to the deportation from Southern Rhodesia of Natives to this Territory with long and bad criminal records. They are dumped at Livingstone and, seldom succeeding or in most cases even

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\(^{60}\) Clegg, Race and Politics, p. 76.

\(^{61}\) NAZ/SEC 3/66 Commissioner for Police to the Chief Secretary, 11 April, 1933.
endeavouring to obtain honest employment, very soon revert to their former criminal mode of life in order to satisfy their requirements. The number of such men was in the neighbourhood of one hundred.\(^{62}\)

Crime committed by Europeans also increased during the period 1931-1933 due to the hardships caused by the Depression. The crime rate among Europeans in 1932 was 82 percent higher than that of 1931.\(^{63}\) The high rates of unemployment and destitution and the drastic increase in careless beer-drinking by destitute whites undoubtedly contributed to their increased involvement in criminal activities. The common cases committed by Europeans were forgery, fraud and uttering false documents but they were also involved in theft at a low rate.\(^{64}\)

**Commentaries and pressure from concerned stakeholders**

The response of the colonial government to the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia was also influenced by commentaries from various groups and individuals who were concerned about the situation in the territory. Their concerns were expressed through letters to government officials, commentaries in newspapers and direct expression at meetings and conferences. They exposed the challenges faced in the country and suggested measures by which the government could deal with them. The most common challenges highlighted were unemployment and destitution, the decline in the demand for local produce and Africans inability to pay tax.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{62}\) NAZ/SEC 3/66 Extract from the 1932 Annual Report for Batoka Province.

\(^{63}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933*, p. 7.

\(^{64}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Annual Reports, 1932-35*, p. 35.

Bishop Embling of the Universities Mission to Central Africa in Ndola was a controversial figure during the Depression. In May, 1932, he wrote a letter to the chief secretary advising the government not to leave the care of destitutes to charitable agencies but cooperate with them to alleviate destitution. Embling noted that “It would be to the advantage of all concerned that there should be the closest cooperation between the government … and charitable organisations.”

The Bishop was also linked to an article in the Bulawayo Chronicle of 26 August, 1932 entitled ‘Deportation or starvation? Choice for the destitute in the North’ which was critical of forced repatriation of destitute Europeans from Northern Rhodesia. This followed the deportation of some destitute whites under the Vagrancy Ordinance of 1930. The article reported that Northern Rhodesia had withdrawn all aid from poor whites and that it forced the unemployed to agree to deportation or to starve. Embling called on the government to rescind its decision.

The article was one of the factors that influenced the policy of destitute relief and repatriation in Northern Rhodesia. It attracted the attention of the colonial secretary in London who, through a telegram, immediately directed the territory’s governor to provide rations to all destitute Europeans who asked for them in Northern Rhodesia. The message was that “Until the whole position can be fully considered here I must ask you to arrange for rations to be issued [to] all genuine European unemployed without limitation and to inform me that you have so arranged.”

Clearly, Bishop Embling added his voice to the plight of the unemployed whites in Northern Rhodesia and the government integrated some of his proposals into the changes that it made.

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67 NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Extracts from Bulawayo Chronicle, Tuesday 26 April, 1932. The Vagrancy Ordinance of 1930 provided for the deportation of any vagrant who was not a British citizen and for whom no suitable employment could be found.
At a conference on unemployment held at Ndola in May, 1932, unemployed Europeans made a lot of proposals to government officials in attendance. Mr. Sharp, an outspoken attendant of the conference, suggested that the government should sponsor bridge and culvert works as relief for unemployed destitutes.\(^{70}\) The unemployed also sought protection against further white immigration into Northern Rhodesia. Sharp stated that “We also ask for protection against immigration, that is, people being brought into the country when there are men here who could do the job. There are mines bringing men from the south.”\(^{71}\) It is evident from this plea that the unemployed whites wanted the government to make legislative changes to tighten immigration regulations so as to reduce competition for the few work opportunities in the country.

R.E. Lloyd, a coffee planter at Serenje, expressed his views at meetings with government officials and in September, 1932, wrote a letter to the Livingstone Mail Newspaper in which he advised the colonial government to find ways of reducing expenditure. In Lloyd’s view, reducing expenditure was possible and “The Agricultural Department so far as it has been increased in the recent years should be cut back but not the more necessary Veterinary Department.”\(^{72}\) He argued that the agricultural department had become redundant in the wake of overproduction and low demand in Northern Rhodesia.\(^{73}\) Lloyd also advised the administration to reduce the size of the military police. His suggestions added to many other factors that made the colonial government to consider cutting down its expenditure on less necessary departments and programmes.

In April, 1933, G.R. Suckling, a Reverend of the Christian Missions in Many Lands, based at Chitokoloki in Balovale (now Zambezi) district, wrote a letter to the district commissioner for Balovale explaining the difficulties faced by Africans in paying tax. He urged the government to

\(^{71}\) NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Ndola Notes; Conference on Unemployed, 23 May, 1932.
\(^{72}\) Livingstone Mail, Wednesday, 4 September, 1932, p. 3.
\(^{73}\) Livingstone Mail, 4 September, 1932, p. 3.
devise a scheme to help Africans pay poll tax. Troubled by Africans who knocked at the mission doors to look for work to earn tax money, Suckling offered to employ one man for every one employed by the government to work on a proposed road project. He remarked that “if ten men work on a road, I would pay five if the government would give either tax tickets or exemption tickets to the other five ….” As his letter was forwarded to higher officials, it exposed the extent to which taxation had become a burden in Balovale and made it clear that unless the government aided them, Africans would continue wallowing in tax arrears.

The crisis in African taxation also attracted the attention of Colonel Gore-Browne, a former British artillery officer who settled at Shiwang’andu. When Ronald Storrs visited Gore-Browne in October, 1932, the latter advised the former to help Africans pay their tax. He later wrote a letter to Storrs noting that Africans were willing to pay tax but they were constrained to do so by the lack of means of raising money. According to Rotberg, Gore-Browne noted that the tax was necessary and should be neither abolished nor reduced but imprisoning defaulters was unjust. Hence, he proposed relief works such as airfields, roads, tree planting and sanitary drains to enable Africans work and raise tax money. He advised that Africans must be paid in cash, and not giving them work in lieu of tax, so that their labour would not appear to be forced labour.

Some of Gore-Browne’s proposals, such as the maintenance of tax rates and the reduction in imprisonment of tax defaulters, were adopted by the colonial administration. Also, the

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74 NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. G.R. Suckling to Mr. Green, District Commissioner, Balovale, 18 April, 1933.
75 NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. G.R. Suckling to Mr. Green, District Commissioner, Balovale, 18 April, 1933.
76 Suckling was an already known figure for his numerous letters to the colonial administration. Chabatama explains that Suckling’s persistent letters partly influenced the secretary for African affairs to cancel all outstanding poll tax arrears in Zambezi, Kabompo and Mwinilunga districts ‘up to and including 1921’. See Chewe Mebbiens Chabatama, “Peasant Farming, the State, and Food Security in the North-Western Province of Zambia, 1902-1964”, PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1999, p. 114.
77 In 1935, Gore-Browne, became the elected member of the Legislative Council for the Northern Electoral Area.
79 Rotberg, Black Heart, p. 155.
government passed an ordinance, in 1934, to empower district commissioners to exempt, from the tax, Africans with proven inability to pay. Rotberg observes that the proposal for public works was shelved by the Storrs administration which argued that most districts in Northern Rhodesia were remote and constructing roads there would serve very little purpose since there was little traffic to make use of roads. Public works were only started by Sir Hubert Young whose tax relief scheme included the construction of roads, bridges and airstrips.

Letters to government officials continued to pour in even in 1934. In January of that year, Reverend Malcolm Moffat, writing from Kalwa mission in Serenje district, complained to the chief secretary of being besieged by men who were looking for work in order to meet their tax obligations. His advice to the governor was that “I think you will have to face the fact that it is almost impossible for the people of this district to find the necessary cash wherewith to pay their hut tax ….” Reverend Moffat suggested that the government should employ Africans to do some maintenance works on the Great North Road. His letter put more pressure on the colonial government to deal with the challenge of African tax arrears in Northern Rhodesia.

African chiefs also commented on the problems that befell their subjects during the slump and proposed some changes for the government to make. For instance, in May 1933, chiefs in Serenje condemned the high poll tax rates in view of the difficulties that Africans faced in finding work or selling their produce. At a meeting with the provincial commissioner for Central Province the chiefs, led by Chief Muchinda, remarked that “… the white men have closed the mines. When our people go to Ndola to look for money they get arrested. When and where are

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81 Rotberg, Black Heart, p. 155.
82 Rotberg, Black Heart, p. 155.
we to find the money for our tax? We do not mean to say there must be no tax, but we ask that … it may be reduced …”. The chiefs noted that before the mines were opened, the tax was at 3s and the government used to help Africans with work. When the tax was raised to 5s, Africans could pay but the amount of 12s 6d that the government demanded was far too high. They requested the government to reduce the tax rates and provide work for men to raise money. Other chiefs who made similar observations and requests included Mpezeni of the Ngoni in East Luangwa Province and Mwata Kazembe XII of the Lunda of Mweru-Luapula Province.

Some retrenched Africans who did not want to return to their villages also pressured the government to deal with the challenge of unemployment. A good example is that of Henry Chibangwa who complained to the secretary for African affairs at Livingstone about the unemployment situation. He lamented his inability to find work eighteen months after he was retrenched as a clerk and added that he could not return to the village having become accustomed to urban tastes. Although Chibangwa was dismissed by the secretary for African affairs and asked to return to his village in Mporokoso, his case represented what was going on in other parts of the country where Africans confronted colonial officials to give them work.

**Findings and recommendations of investigative bodies**

Amidst the challenges faced and the commentaries made by concerned stakeholders, the colonial government formed investigative bodies, mainly the Finance Commission and the Unemployment Committee both in 1932, to explore the nature and extent of the problems that

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84 NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. Excerpts from minutes of interview held with chiefs at Serenje on 4 May, 1933.
85 NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 1. Excerpts from minutes of interview held with chiefs at Serenje on 4 May, 1933.
prevailed in the territory. The findings and recommendations of these bodies became important points of reference for the colonial government in its response to the concerned challenges.\textsuperscript{89} Many of the recommendations of these bodies were adopted by the government and they influenced its administrative and legislative response to the impact of the Depression.

The Finance Commission was appointed by Governor Sir James Maxwell in April, 1932 to investigate the financial situation in Northern Rhodesia. Besides reporting on departmental organisation and staffing, the commission was to report on “salaries, leave conditions, allowances and other conditions of officers, and whether and in what manner departmental expenditure can be reduced without loss of efficiency in administration.”\textsuperscript{90} The commission was also asked to find out ways of raising taxation and to study the territory’s customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in view of the need to augment revenues. Notices were published in the \textit{Livingstone Mail, Government Gazette} and at government buildings around the country appealing to the general public to give submissions to the commission.\textsuperscript{91} Some of the commissioners visited and discussed with departmental heads and other officers the prospect of departmental reorganisation and economies. They also received evidence from companies, associations, representative bodies of settlers and individual residents in the territory.

The Finance Commission issued three interim reports, one each in May, June and July, before it submitted its final report in August, 1932. Its findings exposed the nature and extent of the crisis and the need for urgent action by the colonial government. Territorial revenues had dwindled to

\textsuperscript{89} See, for example, Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933}, p. 4.
levels so low that it was impossible for the government to continue running normally. The commission advised the administration to find ways of reducing government expenditure and raising extra revenues. It recommended departmental economies through amalgamation of some departments and provinces, revision or suspension of allowances and, reluctantly, staff retrenchment. The commission also proposed the introduction of various taxes in the public service, the revision of customs duties and the introduction of various property licences and fees.

The report of the Finance Commission became the cornerstone of government policy during the Depression. Regardless of the opinion of the general public, the government viewed the report as an exceptionally fabulous work. Colonial officials felt that the commission carefully scrutinised every detail submitted to it and so, they sought to implement most of its proposals as fully and as quickly as possible. They clearly noted that the commission’s report would be the major economic policy document throughout the Depression period. Hence, the government’s response to the economic crisis was largely based on the report of the Finance Commission.

Meanwhile, the drastic increase in the number of unemployed Europeans who were on government relief began to cause serious concern to the colonial administration by the end of 1931. During the March 1932 session of the Legislative Council, the problem was debated at length and a select committee was appointed to report on the challenges of unemployment and destitution. Gann remarks that upon realising the intensity of the situation, the colonial office appointed the Northern Rhodesia Unemployment Committee to study the question of unemployment and consider possible ways of reducing the problems of destitution and

94 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932, p. 167 and Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933, p. 4.
95 Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Unemployment Committee, p. 8.
dependency.\textsuperscript{96} The committee conducted an extensive study of the situation and made recommendations on how the government could deal with the challenges.

One major finding of the Unemployment Committee was that employment prospects would remain bleak in 1933 and 1934. It estimated that the number of destitutes and dependants would rise to 700 by April, 1933 and proposed that government expenditure on impoverished Europeans be increased. The committee also reported the deterioration of health and living conditions of poor whites and proposed measures to restrict immigration into the country.\textsuperscript{97} It also noted that there was excessive beer-drinking among destitute Europeans and that about seventeen percent of them were in heavy debts as they consumed liquor on credit. The committee thus proposed legislation to outlaw the sale and consumption of liquor on credit, and this culminated into the passing of the Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Ordinance in 1933.\textsuperscript{98}

\textbf{The External Environment}

External factors also played a crucial role in influencing the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Depression. Among the main factors were Britain’s imperial interests and recovery efforts, Northern Rhodesia’s customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa and the recovery measures adopted by other territories.

\textbf{British imperial interests and recovery efforts}

Being a British protectorate, Northern Rhodesia had her affairs and policies integrated into the wider British sphere of influence. Her economic, social and political policies were to a considerable degree influenced by the interests and policies of the British government. Although

\textsuperscript{96} Gann, \textit{History of Northern Rhodesia}, p. 255.
\textsuperscript{97} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Unemployment Committee}, pp. 9-15.
\textsuperscript{98} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Unemployment Committee}, pp. 22-23. Also see Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, March, 1933}, pp. 22-30.
Butler argues that the Depression hit Northern Rhodesia at a time “when the initiative in policy matters lay with individual colonial governments, rather than the colonial office”,\(^9\) it should be noted that many policy changes that the colonial government made in response to the slump had to be approved by the colonial secretary in London.\(^10\) In fact, some of the policies that Northern Rhodesia adopted were directives from the colonial office. For example, as already noted, in 1932, the colonial secretary directed the governor of Northern Rhodesia to give rations to all poor whites asking for them and to stop compulsory repatriation of destitute Europeans.\(^11\) Thus, the policies of the Northern Rhodesia Government were under the surveillance of the colonial office and the territory had to frame its response in conformity with British interests.

Also, Britain integrated all her imperial possessions into her recovery efforts. For example, in an effort to secure monopoly over her imperial markets, she called for an imperial conference at Ottawa, Canada, in 1932. The conference sought to insulate British trade from competition posed by the USA, Japan and Germany by preventing these countries from accessing her colonial markets.\(^12\) It stressed the notion of imperial preference which implied that all British possessions would increase preference on imperial products for their imports and markets for their exports.\(^13\)

In particular, Britain influenced her colonies to import finished products from her while she agreed to import raw materials from within the empire.\(^14\) For example, she preferred to buy copper from Canada and Northern Rhodesia other than that from the USA, Chile and the Belgian

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\(^10\) See, for example, NAZ/RC/1608 Repatriation Ordinance, 1933. Despite passing the Repatriation Ordinance in April, 1933, Northern Rhodesia could not enforce it until it was signed by the Secretary of State in July, 1933.


\(^12\) Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, pp. 106-107.


Congo. However, as Butler argues, this was “on condition that empire producers could meet British requirements at world prices.”\textsuperscript{105} The condition was placed amidst British skepticism about the ability of Canada and Northern Rhodesia to meet the imperial demand at world prices.

The Ottawa agreements influenced changes in the customs legislation of Northern Rhodesia. The colonial administration began to make reference to the conference even before it was fully aware of the specific agreements made there. In September, 1932, the Acting Governor, D.M. Kennedy, remarked that there was no doubt that the Ottawa conference would necessitate a revision of the territory’s customs legislation.\textsuperscript{106} Many of the agreements made at Ottawa were endorsed by the Legislative Council and several changes were made to the country’s customs legislation in December, 1932 after the government had studied the provisions of the agreements.\textsuperscript{107} The actual changes made to the customs legislation are discussed in Chapter Four.

Some measures taken by Britain were adopted directly by Northern Rhodesia in response to the Depression. For example, the abandonment of the gold standard by Britain in October, 1931, made Northern Rhodesia to follow suit. The measure directly influenced the colonial government to pass legislation that effectively abolished the gold standard in Northern Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{108} Also, as the territory neither issued bank notes nor minted coins, and so relied on currency mainly from Britain and Southern Rhodesia, the colonial government was forced to pass legislation that would legalise the use of new currency from these countries. This resulted in several amendments to the Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance during the years 1932-1934.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{105} Butler, \textit{Copper Empire}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{106} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 17 September, 1932}, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{107} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 16 December, 1932}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{109} See, for example, NAZ/RC/1594 Bank Notes and Coinage (Amendment) Ordinance, 1932.
Customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa

In 1931, Northern Rhodesia belonged to two customs zones namely the Congo and Zambezi Basins. The Congo Basin consisted of “… all the territory north of a line drawn on a map of Northern Rhodesia in a south-westerly direction from Fife in the north-east, to the border where the territory joins the south-east corner of the Belgian Congo.”\[^{110}\] The Zambezi Basin consisted of the rest of the territory that was situated to the west and south of the Congo Basin and it was there that most of the trade, more than 90 percent, took place. The Zambezi Basin was affected by customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. Generally, the customs agreements provided for substantial rebates on the exchanges of locally manufactured products and for the free interchange of raw products with limitations on leaf tobacco.

In 1931, Northern Rhodesia adopted the Union tariff of 1925 following the conclusion of a customs agreement with Southern Rhodesia, which required uniform tariffs to be adhered to. Southern Rhodesia had already adopted the Union tariff in 1925. The customs agreement with Southern Rhodesia provided, as far as possible, for a uniform import duty paid upon removal of imported goods. It also provided for free interchange of raw products and manufactures, except for ales, beers, wines, and spirits, which were taxed at import rates subject to rebates of 60 percent on ales, beers and wines and 25 percent on spirits.\[^{111}\] Also, cigarettes and tobacco manufactured in one of the two territories were transferred duty free into the other territory.


As the Depression struck Southern Rhodesia before it hit Northern Rhodesia, the former increased her duties in April, 1932, without notice to the latter. Major Dutton, the Acting Chief Secretary, noted that “Hon. Members are aware that earlier in the year the Government of Southern Rhodesia revised its tariff. Previous to this revision the tariffs of Northern and Southern Rhodesia were identical.” The escalation of the slump in Northern Rhodesia made it necessary for the territory to adjust its duties to parity with those of the south in order to raise extra revenues. It was noted that “… the increases made by the Government of Southern Rhodesia … had the effect of introducing many differences in tariff rates and this is very inconvenient.”

Thus, an emergency session of the Legislative Council was held in September, 1932 to consider a bill to bring certain tariff items into line with corresponding items in the Southern Rhodesian tariff. Hence, the customs agreements influenced Northern Rhodesia’s fiscal legislative changes.

Northern Rhodesia’s customs agreement with the Union of South Africa, made in 1931, also influenced the former’s legislative response to the Depression. By the agreement, Northern Rhodesia received a duty on imported goods from the Union of South Africa, at Union tariff rates, except on certain commodities where the duties were higher in Northern Rhodesia. Also, the Union paid to Northern Rhodesia a duty of twelve percent of the export value of foodstuffs and six percent of the export value of all other manufactures save for cigarettes, tobacco, ales and beers, wines and spirits. The latter articles were directly taxed at Northern Rhodesia tariff rates subject to rebates of 75 percent on cigarettes and tobacco manufactures, 50 percent on ales, beers and wines and 25 percent on spirits. The agreements also provided for free interchange of raw products except maize and maize meal and limited duty free exports of leaf tobacco from

112 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 17 September, 1932, p. 105.
114 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1931, p. 47. See also Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932, p. 211.
Northern Rhodesia to the Union to 400,000 lb per annum.\textsuperscript{115} Similarly, they limited to 50,000 lb per annum duty free Union leaf tobacco exports to Northern Rhodesia.

In practice, the customs agreements with the Union of South Africa disadvantaged Northern Rhodesia whose export trade did not match that of the Union in terms of quantity and variety. The agreements deprived Northern Rhodesia of duty revenues in the case of rebates and duty free products. Since most of her products were considered to be of inferior quality in South Africa, she could not export them to that country in quantities similar to her imports from there.\textsuperscript{116} Also, in 1932, the colonial administration realised that the customs agreements promoted the dumping of South African products in Northern Rhodesia and impeded the establishment and growth of local industries in the territory.\textsuperscript{117} Being alive to this state of affairs, the colonial government decided to respond by making legislative changes which imposed duties on previously duty free products and removed some of the rebates granted earlier.\textsuperscript{118}

**Measures adopted by other Territories**

The Great Depression hit many British imperial possessions before it struck Northern Rhodesia. Therefore, the Northern Rhodesia Government was aware of how other territories responded to the impact of the crisis. Some of the challenges and responses of other territories were even published in the *Livingstone Mail*. Examples include the challenges faced and measures taken in Dominica, Malaya, Honduras, Fiji, Kenya, Ceylon and Nyasaland.\textsuperscript{119} In Dominica, the administration introduced measures that reduced government expenditure and increased taxation while in Malaya there was a rigid retrenchment of the civil service and a curtailment of

\textsuperscript{115} Northern Rhodesia, *Annual Report, 1931*, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{116} Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission*, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{117} Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission*, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{118} Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 21 December, 1932*, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{119} *Livingstone Mail, 4 September, 1932*, p. 7.
allowances.\textsuperscript{120} Meanwhile, British Honduras passed a bill legalising a reduction of ten percent on official salaries and amalgamated some government departments. The Northern Rhodesia Government studied these measures and adopted them in its response to the crisis.

The influence of measures adopted by other territories is clearly alluded to in the Legislative Council debates. In proposing changes to be made in Northern Rhodesia, official members of the council often referred to countries where such measures were already in force. For example, in proposing to increase duties on imported goods, Major Dutton referred to the increase of such duties in other territories. He cited the different rates of duty levied on petrol by the governments of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, the Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Ceylon, Mauritius, Cyprus, Trinidad, Grenada and St. Lucia and referred to the different tariff rates on whisky levied by Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Mauritius.\textsuperscript{121} Using the rates for other territories, the Northern Rhodesia Government arrived at its own duty rates on petrol and whisky.

The adoption of an entertainments tax from Southern Rhodesia is another case in point. The official members noted that “In 1917 in Southern Rhodesia the [entertainments] duty was 12\frac{1}{2} percent and was increased in June of this year [1932] to 20 percent.”\textsuperscript{122} The official members argued for the introduction of an entertainments tax in Northern Rhodesia at 20 percent duty based on the Southern Rhodesian model, noting that this would contribute to government revenues. Similarly, the legislation to govern the repatriation of destitutes from Northern Rhodesia.

\textsuperscript{120} Livingstone Mail, 4 September, 1932, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{121} Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 September, 1932, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{122} Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 17 September, 1932, p. 146.
Rhodesia was drafted in line with the Expulsion of Undesirables Bill of Nyasaland. The officials resolved to adopt some of the measures that were implemented in other British colonies.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that a complex of internal and external factors influenced the response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. On the internal front, the decline of the late 1920s economic boom, the fall in government revenues and the rise in unemployment, destitution and crime attracted the attention of the colonial government. Pressure from concerned stakeholders forced the government to respond to certain challenges. External factors such as British imperial interests and recovery efforts, Northern Rhodesia’s customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and the measures adopted by other countries also influenced the response of the colonial government. Its response through administrative and legislative changes was a compromise between internal dynamics and the external environment and it largely reflected the concerns and priorities of the administration.

CHAPTER THREE: ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF THE DEPRESSION

Introduction

This chapter analyses the administrative changes that the colonial government made in Northern Rhodesia during the period 1929-1939. This is in an attempt to demonstrate that the colonial government responded to the impact of the Great Depression in the territory. The chapter argues that in response to the drastic reduction in its revenues, the Northern Rhodesia Government made administrative changes with the aim of curtailing government expenditure without compromising the efficiency of the administration. It is argued here that the colonial administration responded to the impact of the Depression by reorganising staff in the public service, reducing expenditure on departmental and provincial administrations, revising conditions of service of government personnel, reorganising various government departments and rearranging the territory’s provinces and districts. Most of the administrative changes alluded to resulted from the recommendations of the Finance Commission of 1932 and they were carried out mainly during the years 1932-1934, a period herein referred to as the emergency period.

Staff reorganisation in the Public Service

When the British Crown took over the administration of Northern Rhodesia from the British South Africa Company in 1924, it inherited a public service comprising a handful of staff.¹ The expansion of the territory’s economy between 1924 and 1931 necessitated greater and more effective administration. This prompted the colonial government to begin raising the number of personnel in the public service. The European staff, for example, was increased from 321 in

¹ Butler, *Copper Empire*, p. 23.
December, 1924 to 406 by July, 1927 and raised further to 550 by July, 1930 and 770 by April, 1932. Some Africans were also incorporated into the service mostly as clerks, teachers, station hands, messengers and policemen. The onset of the slump in the country in 1931 forced the administration to start reorganising the public service staff in 1932 so as to reduce expenditure.

Staff reorganisation in the public service was one of the major administrative responses of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. The reorganisation mainly involved a reduction in staff that was implemented by retrenching some of the public service personnel and by leaving unfilled, vacancies caused by retirements, transfers, death and other causes. The reorganisation also involved abolishing some of the already vacant posts, at least during the emergency period, and transferring some of the personnel from one department to another in order to ensure administrative efficiency. It affected both European and African staff in various government departments and in provincial and district administration.

The roots of staff reorganisation in response to the impact of the Depression lay both within and outside Northern Rhodesia. Outside the territory, reorganisation of public service personnel was enforced in many British dominions and mostly involved reduction of the sizes of the services. Within Northern Rhodesia, many residents, official and unofficial, proposed to curtail the number of staff in departmental and provincial establishments so as to reduce expenditure. It was noted that some posts in government departments and provinces were a luxury and less necessary for the administration to maintain in times of economic trouble. Such posts were scrapped off and officers occupying them were retrenched. For instance, many deputising posts such as those

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4 *Livingstone Mail, 4 September, 1932*, p. 7. Gann alludes to the staff retrenchment in Southern Rhodesia during the Depression. For details, see Gann, *History of Southern Rhodesia*, p. 293.
of deputy provincial commissioners and deputy directors were abolished. The staff reduction programme also targeted officers that were deemed to be redundant or ineffective. As noted by Kanduza, 30 percent of government personnel were redundant between June, 1931 and September, 1932. These were the ‘dead wood’ that the colonial administration preferred to ‘cut out’ before carrying out the general retrenchment.

The colonial administration also considered some of the government departments and units to have been overstaffed and decided to significantly reduce the staff in such departments. For example, it was felt that the staff of the Northern Rhodesia police, which consisted of the civil and military branches, was too large for the government to maintain during the crisis. Generally, departments specialised in service provision were more heavily retrenched than those which dealt with revenue collection. Hence, the police, health, education, agriculture, public works and other service departments were earlier and more affected by staff reduction than were the treasury and income tax departments. These considerations were made in order to avoid compromising the efficiency of the administrative machinery of the territory.

Staff retrenchment from the public service commenced in Northern Rhodesia in 1932. However, major retrenchments were executed in 1933 and continued in 1934. This was because large scale staff layoffs had to be approved by the territory’s Legislative Council which met in September and December, 1932. Also, personnel to be laid off had to be given three months notice of retrenchment and a further three months for leave pending retrenchment. Nevertheless, they

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5 Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Finance Commission, p. 46.
7 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933, p. 67.
8 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 20 December, 1932, p. 237. Also see Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Finance Commission, p. 27.
9 This was as recommended by the Finance Commission of 1932. The Commission noted that the operations of revenue collecting departments should not be interfered with so as to maximise revenue collection. For details, see Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Finance Commission, p. 35.
could choose to leave before the lapse of six months.10 By December, 1932, retrenchment notices had been issued to 59 officers, who were to depart from the service by 31 March, 1933.11 The government also had to allocate funds for expenses anticipated on gratuities of officers to be retrenched and such costs actually swelled government expenditure in the 1933 financial year.12

A survey of retrenchments in government departments shows that the Northern Rhodesia police was the most heavily retrenched in terms of numbers, though not in terms of percentages. A lot of personnel were laid off from both the civil and military police. The civil branch had a total staff of 618 in December, 1932 made up of “6 officers, 65 other European ranks, 509 native rank and file and 38 native detectives.”13 By the end of March, 1933, its staff had been reduced by 16 European officers and 87 rank and file policemen to a total strength of 515.14 During the 1933 financial year, that is, from April to December, 1933, the civil police staff was reduced further as budget estimates of the period provided for a reduction of 87 from the branch.15 Not more than 428 personnel were in the civil police at the end of 1933, a reduction of 190 since December, 1932. The civil police operated below its establishment until 1936 when the government began to strengthen the department in order to curb the escalating levels of crime in the country.16

The military police were also retrenched in large numbers during the economy campaign. In December, 1932, the strength of the branch was 496 which consisted of 15 officers, nine non-commissioned officers and 472 African rank and file.17 By the end of March, 1933, the military

10 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932, p. 213.
11 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932, p. 212.
12 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 4 December, 1933, p. 780.
14 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933, p. 7.
15 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933, p. 79.
16 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 13 November, 1937, p. 11.
branch was curtailed to a total strength of 490 by the retrenchment of three officers and three other ranks. The staff of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment was reduced further between April and December, 1933. Budget estimates for the 1933 financial year provided for a reduction of 25 personnel from the military branch.\(^{18}\) However, more personnel than had been provided for were laid off from the branch during the year. By November, 1933, the strength of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment had been reduced to ten British officers, five British non-commissioned officers and 373 African rank and file. Thus, the staff of the military branch numbered not more than 388 at the end of 1933, a decrease of 108 since December, 1932.\(^{19}\)

The Department of Agriculture and the Posts and Telegraphs Department were also drastically retrenched during the Depression. Seventeen officers were laid off from the Department of Agriculture during the years 1931-1933. This reduced the staff of the department from 21 in 1931 to five in 1933 and there was a complete demobilisation of the water boring personnel.\(^{20}\) The technical staff of the department was reduced to one agricultural officer at Mbala, another at Chipata and an entomologist at Mazabuka. As Allan notes, the country’s only soil chemist was laid off upon bare commencement of his work.\(^{21}\) The Posts and Telegraphs Department was also heavily retrenched in 1933. Its staff had recently been raised from 34 to 65 between July, 1929

\(^{18}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933*, p. 79.

\(^{19}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates: Sixth Session of the Fourth Council, 1 November-4 December, 1933* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934), p. 15. Also see Brelsford, “Between the Wars”, p. 74. He notes that by April, 1933, the Northern Rhodesia Regiment consisted of twelve British officers, seven British non-commissioned officers and 376 African rank and file.


and March, 1932. From April, 1932 to August, 1933, 24 postal assistants found themselves out of the service and by October, 1933, the total staff of the department had been reduced to 32.\textsuperscript{22}

The Departments of Public Works, Education and Health were also affected by staff reductions. The Public Works Department had a total staff of 71 in 1930, which was increased to 92 in 1931 and to more than 100 in 1932.\textsuperscript{23} The department was heavily retrenched losing about sixty percent of its total staff by March, 1933. Sir Ronald Storrs reported to the Legislative Council in March, 1933, that the staff of the Public Works Department had been reduced from over 100 to 40.\textsuperscript{24} Meanwhile, the Education Department lost a number of European teachers by the end of March, 1933. The only inspector of schools the country had reverted to the duties of a headmaster to enable the government evade the necessity of appointing another headmaster. The medical branch of the Health Department was so badly retrenched that it only had sixteen medically qualified personnel in 1934, and it remained seriously understaffed up to 1937.\textsuperscript{25}

Retrenchment was also carried out in provincial establishments, the decision to do so having been hesitantly arrived at under the pressure of financial stringency. According to Marquard, in 1931, the provincial staff was made up of nine provincial commissioners, 91 district officers, 15 European clerks, 95 African clerks and 553 African messengers.\textsuperscript{26} In 1932, the post of deputy provincial commissioner was scrapped off in view of the availability of senior officers with vast

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{22} NAZ/SEC 3/101 Vol. 1. James Maxwell to Lord Passfield, 1 July, 1929; Allocation of Staff-Postmasters and Postal Assistants, March, 1933; Postmaster-General to Chief Secretary, 18 August, 1933 and Chief Secretary to Postmaster-General, 25 October, 1933.
\bibitem{23} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report of the Public Works Department for year ended 31 December, 1931} (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1932), p. 3.
\bibitem{24} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 8 March, 1933, p. 7.
\end{thebibliography}
experience that could be taken advantage of and utilised fully. A major reduction in the staff at provincial and district centres was executed in 1933. The provincial administration was reduced by at least 21 officers by the end of 1933 with messengers and station hands being chopped out of the service in larger numbers. In November, 1933, the chief secretary reported that a considerable reduction in the staff at district centres had been carried out during the year.

Clerical personnel of departmental and provincial administrations, many of them being Africans, were not spared by the retrenchments. In 1933 alone, 134 Africans were retrenched from provincial establishments, 45 being clerks and artisans. In retrenching the clerical staff, the government targeted the less efficient individuals. Some clerks were retrenched and replaced by their more efficient colleagues from other departments in an attempt to maintain administrative efficiency. The result was that there were many inter-departmental transfers among the clerical staff. The Chief Secretary, D.M. Kennedy, justified this course of action as follows:

> It would be most unfair to make a necessary reduction in the establishment of a department by dispensing with the services of a clerical officer who had devoted his … energies to making himself efficient, while there remained in other departments, officers … of less use to the Government.

The reduction of staff in provincial and district establishments proceeded slowly in 1934 and 1935. It was observed that further drastic reductions in the number of officers in provincial and district establishments would be uneconomical as it would lead to loss of revenue larger than the economy achieved. Also significant was the realisation that sustained retrenchment of provincial and district staff would also markedly weaken government footing in vast areas where

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28 See Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, November, 1933*.
30 Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933*, p. 68.
policemen had been withdrawn. However, the retrenchments reduced government staff in the districts from 110 in 1932 to 90 in 1935.32

Besides retrenchment, the colonial government also reduced the public service staff by inducing retirement of officers and leaving unfilled, during the emergency period, vacancies created by retirements and transfers. In December, 1932, D.M. Kennedy noted that a considerable staff decrease would be attained by leaving vacancies unfilled and by inducing some officers to retire earlier.33 These measures had already been proposed by the Finance Commission in August of the same year. The commission had recommended, for example, that the existing vacancies for one stock inspector and one veterinary officer be left unfilled until the economy recovered and that the post of attorney-general be kept vacant when the officer occupying it left the country on transfer.34 These recommendations were all adopted and implemented by the administration during the emergency period. In 1933, the director of animal health elected to retire and the post was left vacant for the rest of the period.35 In the secretariat, the establishment officer also chose to retire and the post was kept unfilled for some time. The positions of attorney-general and treasurer were also left unfilled when they fell vacant.36

Induced retirements were also effected in the Police and Health Departments. In 1932, for example, the reduction of the staff of the police was not attained by retrenching police officers but by leaving unfilled, vacancies created by retirements and other causes.37 In the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, four senior officers and one senior warrant officer who retired on pension in

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32 Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 252.
36 See Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, March, 1933*.
1933 were not replaced. Also left unfilled was a vacancy created by the voluntary retirement of one sergeant. In the Health Department, the governor reported in November, 1933 that the director of medical services had retired while the senior health officer had been transferred to Palestine. Furthermore, a medical officer proceeded on leave during the year and was retired at the end of 1933. All the three positions were left vacant for the rest of the emergency period.

More positions fell vacant in 1934 and the colonial administration left them unfilled. These included the post of registrar and administrator-general and that of solicitor-general which were both left vacant throughout the year. Also left unfilled for the entire year, 1934, was a vacancy created by the retirement of the deputy postmaster-general. In the Department of African Education, the senior assistant master of the Barotse National School was transferred to the Jeanes School in January, 1934 and the post remained vacant. The practice continued in 1935 and 1936. For example, when Fell, the principal of the Jeanes School retired in 1936, the position was deliberately left unoccupied for some time until a superintendent of African education was seconded to become principal. Three of the eight superintendents of African education were on leave during the first part of 1936 and the department worked shorthanded.

As a result of the retrenchments, induced retirements and non-filling of positions that fell vacant, the staffing of the Northern Rhodesia public service was drastically reduced. The number of officers in various government departments and in the provinces, which stood at 770 in April, 1932, was reduced to 750 by August of that year and curtailed to 578 by March, 1933. The

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38 Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 1 November, 1933*, p. 15.
number of officers in the public service reduced to 539 by October, 1933 and dropped to 517 by January, 1934. Meanwhile, several officers retired in the early part of 1934. The staffing levels remained low until the end of 1936 when the government began to increase them considerably.

Reduction of expenditure on government departments and provincial administrations

Government expenditure in Northern Rhodesia increased throughout the period 1924-1931. This was partly due to the expansion of the public service during the late 1920s. Total expenditure in the 1924 financial year was £340,326. This rose to £518,806 in 1927 and to £704,986 in 1930, reaching a pre-slump peak of £820,056 in 1931. Expenditure in most departments and provinces increased throughout the period. However, when the slump hit Northern Rhodesia, the revenues of the territory began to fall below the expanding government expenditure. Confronted by the increasing difficulty to balance its budget, the colonial government began to advocate for a general economy campaign in all its departments and provincial administrations.

The curtailment of expenditure was, therefore, a significant response of the colonial government to the impact of the Depression. The measure was adopted in response to the decline in revenues and was part of the economy campaign that was at the centre of the government’s administrative response to the crisis. The administration wanted to ensure continued availability of funds to execute essential government programmes. Officers in departments, provinces and districts were all instructed to ensure that government funds were expended on necessary programmes and to scrap off or curtail all less necessary expenditure. In April, 1932, the treasurer reminded all

45 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1931, p. 46.
46 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1932, p. 39.
47 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 14 September, 1932, p. 3.
responsible officers that “… in these days of the grave financial stringency, you should endeavour to see that strict economy is observed by all departments under you.”

The reduction of departmental and provincial expenditure was proposed by many witnesses to the Finance Commission of 1932. The proponents included government staff in departments and districts who realised that if the day-to-day operations and certain important government programmes were to continue running, it was essential for government departments and provinces to shed off luxury expenses, that is, expenditure that could easily be dispensed with in hard times. An example was given of expenditure on office writing desks with drawers or revolving armchairs as a luxury. Procurement of such furniture and other items of a similar nature was forbidden and discontinued during the Depression. Government departmental and provincial administrations were also directed to reduce their expenses on stationery, water and electricity, besides curtailing that on meetings, conferences, tours and other programmes.

The Finance Commission also recommended the suspension of various programmes that the colonial government planned to carry out and those which were at their early stages of implementation. The suspension of cattle dipping in African reserves and the deferment of agricultural research works at Mazabuka was also proposed. Government grants to missions under the Department of African Education were also recommended for reduction or suspension. The commission also noted that staff transfers cost the government a lot of funds.

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48 NAZ/RC/1499 Treasury Circular No. 1 of 1932-33. Similar economies were pursued by mining companies on the Copperbelt. See MIA, Loc. 16.1.9C. Rhodesian Selection Trust, Minute Book No. 2 and MIA, Loc. 17.6.2A. L. Pollack, Rhokana Corporation Limited: Memorandum on the Rhodesian Administration, 10 March, 1932.
50 NAZ/RC/1497 Chief Secretary to all Heads of Departments, Provincial Commissioners and District Commissioners.
and advised that they be restricted to cases where they were meant to improve efficiency.\textsuperscript{52} To guide departments and provinces in their budgeting, the commission proposed that the government, when calling for annual budget estimates, should indicate the amount within which each unit should frame its budget. The commission even proposed such figures to the central financial planning staff. The proposal was implemented beginning with the estimates for 1933.

The major curtailment of departmental and provincial expenditure was executed during the years 1932-1934. It mainly affected the agriculture, animal health, lands, surveys, public works, legal affairs, African affairs, education, police and posts and telegraphs departments.\textsuperscript{53} In December, 1932, D.M. Kennedy, remarked that economies were already ordered and that they were expected to reduce government running expenses by 6.8 percent during the 1932 financial year.\textsuperscript{54} He noted that a reduction of 25 percent in services was necessary as savings from retrenchment were not enough to balance the budget. He also remarked that the government was already reducing expenditure on education, health, police, agricultural and veterinary services. An update to the Legislative Council on the procession of expenditure reduction showed that by March, 1933, the postmaster-general had reduced expenditure by 18 percent while provincial administrations had curtailed their services by 19 percent.\textsuperscript{55} By then, the judicial system of using circuits that was operational in the period prior to the slump had been halted.

A number of programmes were suspended or curtailed during the Depression in line with the economy campaign. A good example was the five year scheme on African education that was

\textsuperscript{52} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Finance Commission}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{53} Roan Consolidated Copper Mines Limited, \textit{Zambia’s Mining Industry}, p. 35 and Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{54} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 19 December, 1932}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{55} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933}, p. 78.
drawn in 1931 to be undertaken by missions under government grants. The programme was to involve an expenditure of £32,179 in 1931-1932 to be increased yearly until it reached £71,346 in 1935. The onset of the slump disrupted the implementation of the scheme as less funds than had been planned for were released during the economic crisis. According to Snelson, in 1932-1933, the scheme received a grant amounting to £27,915 out of the planned £40,164 and the funding declined to £22,743 out of the £61,250 anticipated in 1933. In 1935, only £27,176 out of the planned £71,346 was discharged towards the programme. Although the scheme was revised in 1936, it only became fully functional in 1937.

In 1933, economies were also effected on grants-in-aid for pupils who were attending the sub-standards in boarding schools. They were to receive their early education in village day rather than ‘luxury’ boarding schools. Snelson notes that “boarding grants for pupils in the sub-standards … were reduced and tuition fees in government schools were increased.” This was meant to enable the concerned department maintain, as high as possible, important grants for teachers. Also, many building grants were suspended except those where the schemes so funded were nearing completion. The government deferred the building of schools at Lusaka and Broken Hill in 1932 and suspended the planned construction of government district and provincial schools, such schools having been opened only at Kasama, Mpika and Abercorn.

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56 NAZ/RC/1721 Scheme for Native Education in Northern Rhodesia.
59 Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 207.
In the Animal Health Department, the cattle dipping scheme instituted in African reserves in 1930\(^6\) was heavily curtailed in 1932-1933. Whereas 793,353 African cattle were dipped in 1931, the figure dropped to 621,079 in 1933 and further to 483,074 in 1934.\(^6\) The curtailment of the scheme was so drastic that as late as 1937 there were still serious outcries for its reinstitution and expansion.\(^6\) In the Agriculture Department, research works that had been started at Mazabuka were suspended during the emergency period. It was argued that the services of the agricultural research station, despite being significant in normal times, were not necessary during the slump.\(^6\) Hence, the research works were drastically curtailed, the planned training of African agricultural demonstrators was suspended and the station was nearly closed down in 1933.

The colonial government also decided to curtail expenses on stationery in departmental and provincial administrations. In February, 1932, provincial commissioners and sub-accountants were ordered to scrutinise the necessity of all government forms and returns and to arrange for the destruction of those that were redundant.\(^6\) It was noted that there were too many government forms, not less than 998, and that many of them were of a size quite out of proportion to their importance or use. By November, 1933, Storrs had authorised a reduction of about 450 forms and returns of district origin which were deemed to be unnecessary and a waste of time, material and money.\(^6\) The number of forms in use in the public service was reduced from nearly 1,000 to about 550 and the sizes of the remaining forms were also reduced. Besides, the system of using a

\(^6\) Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Veterinary Department Annual Report for the year 1936* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1937), p. 34.
\(^6\) Northern Rhodesia, *Further Memorandum on the Economics of the Cattle Industry in Northern Rhodesia, with Specific Reference to the Native Cattle Industry, 1937* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1937), p. 10.
\(^6\) NAZ/RC/1499 Treasury Circular No. 19 of 1931-32.
\(^6\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 1 November, 1933*, p. 5.
different voucher for every payment was suspended under the direction of the chief secretary who saw no need to use a separate voucher for each person to whom a salary or wage was paid.\textsuperscript{66} Changes were also made with regard to tour reporting at district and provincial levels. In 1933, provincial and district commissioners were advised that district tour reports be the consumption of the provincial staff and that only reports of real and general interest were to be sent to the central administration. The chief secretary noted that much of the information contained in tour reports, despite being insightful, was of purely district and provincial consumption. He advised provincial commissioners to distinguish between matters of interest and those of no interest to the higher authorities.\textsuperscript{67} The chief secretary thus directed that only copies of memoranda with issues of general concern and those in which provincial commissioners wished to consult higher authorities should be transmitted to the secretariat.\textsuperscript{68} The submission of maps to accompany tour reports was limited to cases where reference to the map provided necessary elucidation.

It should be noted that the changes in the mode of tour reporting were made in order to reduce the amount of work that was involved in the preparation, scrutiny and filing of tour reports that had little or no compensatory value. They were necessitated by the massive retrenchment of the staff of the public service that was carried out in 1933. The reduced staff could not manage to handle the bulky work that was previously performed by a larger workforce. Thus, the colonial administration transferred the work of scrutinising tour reports from the secretariat to the provincial administration which then informed the central authority on any matters of special interest in the reports.\textsuperscript{69} The practice was in force from 1933 and continued up to 1937 when the

\textsuperscript{66} NAZ/RC/1499 Treasury Circular No. 19 of 1931-32.
\textsuperscript{67} NAZ/SEC 2/5 Minute from Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, 5 July, 1933.
\textsuperscript{68} NAZ/SEC 2/5 Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, 14 July, 1933.
\textsuperscript{69} NAZ/SEC 2/5 Secretary to the Government to Secretary for Native Affairs, 23 September, 1933.
administration reverted to the old mode of tour reporting which involved sending copies of all the reports to the secretariat.

Prior to the Great Depression, the financial year in Northern Rhodesia began on 1 April and ended on 31 March of the following year. On the other hand, the administrative year followed the calendar year. Annual administrative reports were not made at the same time as financial reports. In 1932, the Finance Commission proposed that the financial year be adjusted to coincide with the calendar year so as to pave way for the simultaneous preparation of annual departmental reports and financial statements and make comparison between the two documents easier.\(^\text{70}\) The change was also meant to reduce work duplication, improve efficiency and achieve some economy. The 1933 financial year was made to run from 1 April to 31 December, 1933 and the planned change was effected from 1934 onwards.\(^\text{71}\)

More departmental economies were pursued in 1934. For example, “The estimated cost of the Department of Agriculture during 1934 was [only] £6,477, a decrease of £24,000 since 1931-32. The Department has receded … to where it was in 1925-26.”\(^\text{72}\) Provision for the Northern Rhodesia Regiment in the estimates for 1934 was £22,411, an amount that was lower than its annual expenditure of any year since 1924. The expenditure of the Medical Department which amounted to £30,918 in the 1931 financial year was reduced to £6,839 in 1934 and it was only raised to £13,205 as late as 1938.\(^\text{73}\) Total government expenditure reduced from £820,056 in 1931 to £712,903 in 1934. It only began to recover steadily in 1935 and rose considerably to £1,417,776 in 1938.\(^\text{74}\)

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\(^\text{71}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 10 March, 1933*, p. 75.
\(^\text{72}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933*, p. 222.
\(^\text{73}\) *Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission Report*, p. 100.
\(^\text{74}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Annual Report, 1938*, p. 38.
Revision of conditions of service and allowances of government workers

The colonial government revised the working conditions of staff in the public service in Northern Rhodesia in response to the Great Depression. A number of privileges were withdrawn and allowances suspended or reduced as part of the government’s economy campaign.\textsuperscript{75} The measure was adopted by many other British colonies. Baker notes that even territories such as Nyasaland, which managed to do without retrenching staff and imposing a levy on salaries, could not avoid reducing allowances in the civil service.\textsuperscript{76} In Northern Rhodesia, most of the changes made stemmed from the proposals of the Finance Commission. For example, the commissioners found it uneconomical for the government to continue subsidising water fees of officers residing in government houses. They noted that there was “… no justification for the continuation of the payment by Government of the first 13s 6d of the water rate at … houses occupied by government officials in Livingstone ….”\textsuperscript{77} The commission estimated that the government spent at least £80 per month on the water subsidy and that withdrawing it would result in a saving of £640 in the 1932 financial year and a full year economy of £960 thereafter.\textsuperscript{78}

The Finance Commission also recommended that leave conditions for staff in the public service be revised in order to save government funds. The commissioners proposed that “… immediate relief to expenditure in the current year [1932] might be effected by declaring a six months moratorium on [vacation] leave.”\textsuperscript{79} They estimated that the moratorium, if imposed, would save about £10,000 in the expenditure for the year 1932. Meanwhile, the commissioners also

\textsuperscript{75} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 14 September, 1932}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{77} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Finance Commission}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{78} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Finance Commission}, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{79} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Finance Commission}, p. 56.
recommended that officers in the public service be encouraged to take more local leave than had been the practice. This was in order to reduce government expenditure on leave benefits.

Having surveyed the various allowances paid to officers in the public service, the commission recommended that allowances be suspended or reduced. For example, they recommended that baggage allowances for officers travelling within the country on duty, on transfer, or arriving from leave or on first appointment, must be reduced.\(^80\) This was because government officers no longer transported bulky and heavy furniture from place to place. Also to be reduced was the scale of free excess baggage when travelling on leave and the allowances of African porters. Furthermore, allowances of officers travelling on leave, 5s to 20s per day, and those for unavoidable detention at Livingstone during travel were recommended for abolition.\(^81\)

More economies were to be realised by restricting travel and field allowances which as the Finance Commission recommended were to be withdrawn from all officers whose usual work involved travelling. Among such officers were those in “… the Provincial Administration, Police Forces, Survey Department [and] Public Works Department ….”\(^82\) The allowances were to be paid only to officers whose normal duties did not require travelling but were in special cases asked to do so. The expected saving from restrictions on travel and field allowances was £1,350 in the 1932 financial year and £2,800 in a full year.\(^83\) Commuter transport allowances were also to be reduced and the radius in which they were payable increased to at least ten miles from the

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\(^80\) Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission*, p. 60.
officer’s residence. The reductions were envisaged to save £350 in 1932 and £525 in a full year.  

The colonial government began to revise the conditions and allowances of its staff in 1932. By September of that year, a number of allowances had been suspended. Uniform allowances were suspended, save for nursing sisters and commissioned police officers to whom they were deemed to be necessary. In September, 1932, the Acting Governor, D.M. Kennedy, stated as follows:

… subsistence, detention and excess baggage allowances have been suspended or abolished, travelling allowances in respect of journeys off the line of rail have been partially suspended, commuted transport allowances reduced and … Government assistance to officers at Livingstone towards payment of water fees withdrawn.

Furthermore, marriage allowances payable to the European police and prison staff were not to be paid to new entrants as from August, 1932. By March, 1933, several other allowances had been abolished or curtailed. For example, acting allowances were suspended in order to save about £700 in a full year. Of this amount £300 was anticipated to come from savings on acting allowances on the posts of attorney-general and provincial commissioners. Also, the payment of allowances to the quartermaster and the paymaster of the Northern Rhodesia police was halted in 1934. The suspension and abolition of allowances was clearly part of government economies.

Reorganisation of Government Departments

Having taken over the governing of Northern Rhodesia in 1924, the British Crown began to expand the territory’s administrative machinery. This was partly done by forming new technical

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85 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 14 September, 1932, p. 2.
86 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 14 September, 1932, p. 2.
87 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 3 April, 1933, p. 303.
88 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 4 December, 1933, p. 785.
and specialised departments. As Gann observes, between 1924 and 1931, new departments such as the Lands Department, the Mines Department and the Department of African Education were formed in order to improve efficiency. The Prisons Department was also delinked from the Northern Rhodesia Police in 1929. The creation of new departments was partly necessitated and facilitated by the late 1920s economic boom. When the Depression hit Northern Rhodesia, the expanded departments became a major strain on the territory’s finances. Therefore, the colonial government began to realign the various departments in order to enhance economies.

The reorganisation of government departments mainly involved the merging of some departments and the abolition of others. The colonial government found it necessary to adopt this measure as a way of curtailing both its staff and expenditure. Proponents of this measure suggested that certain ‘luxury’ departments which the government could not afford to finance in hard times be merged or eliminated. The administration scrutinised all government departments and their units or branches to determine their necessity and the possibility of merging or abolishing those that were deemed to be less necessary. The government also began to reorganise those departments in which senior officers were retiring or were being retrenched. However, some departmental units were separated in order to enhance their efficiency.

One of the departments that were reorganised during the Depression was the Health Department. The Finance Commission proposed that the medical and sanitary branches of the department be administered under one Head to pave way for the redundancy and abolition of the post of deputy director of medical services or deputy director of sanitary services. The department was realigned in 1933. In April of that year, the director of medical and sanitary services stated that

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90 Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Finance Commission, p. 27.
91 Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Finance Commission, p. 36.
the medical and sanitary branches were being merged and the department being composed of a
director of health, a deputy director of health and a number of officers, some for health work and
others for medical duty.92 When the director of medical services retired, the post was abolished
and the deputy director of sanitary services became deputy director of health and began to
perform both medical and sanitary works. In November, 1933, the governor reported that the
merging of the medical and sanitary branches had been completed.93

The Lands, Survey and Mines Departments were also realigned. By August, 1932, the colonial
government was already planning to merge the three departments. The plan was supported by the
Finance Commission which noted that the merger would improve efficiency and reduce
government expenditure.94 By April, 1933, the survey platoon section of the military police and
the game warden and town planning branches of the survey department were disbanded. Apart
from two officers who were absorbed by the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, the survey platoon
staff was incorporated into the Survey Department.95 The proposed merger was then effected on
1 August, 1933 when the three departments ceased to exist as individual entities and the
Department of Lands, Mines and Local Government was formed.96

With the merging of the three departments into one, the secretaries for mines and lands were
replaced by the commissioner for lands, mines and local government. The commissioner was to
administer the new department with the assistance of a secretary, two technical mining men,
inspectors of mines, a registrar of mining titles and two European clerks for accountancy and

92 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 4 April, 1933, p. 361.
93 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 1 November, 1933, p. 16.
96 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 4 April, 1933, p. 18.
clerical duties.\textsuperscript{97} Hence, the post of deputy director of surveys in the Department of Mines was abolished. The amalgamation of the Lands, Survey and Mines Departments was envisaged to shed off government expenditure on the Lands Department from £1,208 to £526 in 1933 and to save about £1,750 in a full year. Furthermore, the changes were expected to reduce the expenditure of the Mines Department from £3,098 to £1,621 in the 1933 financial year.\textsuperscript{98}

Departmental reorganisation did not spare the Northern Rhodesia police. Before April, 1932, the department consisted of five branches namely the military, civil, stores and transport, criminal investigation and immigration branches. On 1 April, 1932, the civil and military branches were separated partly in order to reduce its personnel and expenditure. As a result of the split of the department, the post of chief commissioner of police was abolished to pave way for the saving of £200 per annum allowance that was forfeited by the police commandant.\textsuperscript{99} The civil, criminal investigation and immigration branches were merged to form the Northern Rhodesia civil police while the stores and transport unit became a branch of the Public Works Department.\textsuperscript{100} From April, 1933, the military branch became known as the Northern Rhodesia Regiment.

Departmental reorganisation also involved the transfer of some departmental units or branches from one department to another in order to improve efficiency. The Stores and Transport Department was affected by this type of reorganisation. Between November, 1930 and September, 1931, the department was a unit of the Northern Rhodesia police to which belonged most of its stock. When police procurements reduced during the Depression, the future of the

\textsuperscript{97} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 5 April, 1933, p. 42. Also see \textit{Government Notice No. 134 of 1933} in \textit{Government Notices of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1933 Part 1} (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934), p. 304.
\textsuperscript{98} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 4 April, 1933, p. 375.
\textsuperscript{99} See W. Clifford, “Crime in Northern Rhodesia”, \textit{The British Journal of Criminology} 1,1 (1960), pp. 63-64 and NAZ/SEC 3/503 Chief Secretary to Commandant, Northern Rhodesia Police, 4 September, 1931 and \textit{Northern Rhodesia Police (Military) Annual Report, 1932}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Northern Rhodesia Police (Military) Annual Report, 1932}, p. 2.
department was tabled for debate. Some government officials felt that the department should be demolished to allow for economies. Others, such as the police commandant, felt that it should be transferred to the Public Works Department noting that it would be uneconomical for each government department to make its own procurement, stores and transport arrangements. In October, 1932, the Stores and Transport Department was fused into the Public Works Department where it became “Stores and Transport Branch, Public Works Department.”

The colonial administration also reorganised departments by transferring certain functions from one department or branch to another. In August, 1933, local government functions of the secretariat were transferred to the Department of Lands, Mines and Local Government in order to reduce the workload of the secretariat and improve its efficiency. Similarly, supervision of the construction of aerodromes in the country was transferred from the Public Works Department to the commissioner of police in 1933. Meanwhile, the abolition of the accounting section of the Public Works Department in 1933 was followed by the transfer of its accounting works to the Stores and Transport Department. The move was envisioned to improve efficiency in financial administration as the bringing together of matters pertaining to procurement, stores, transport and accounting would ease the coordination of staff that dealt with them. Furthermore, when the Department of African Affairs was abolished in 1936, and the post of secretary for African affairs vanished with it, the responsibility of advising the government on African affairs was transferred to the Ndola based senior provincial commissioner.

101 NAZ/SEC 3/503 Chief Secretary to Commandant, Northern Rhodesia Police, 4 September, 1931.
102 NAZ/SEC 3/503 Stores and Transport Departmental Organisation, Chief Secretary to Director of Public Works, 31 March, 1932.
103 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 1 November, 1933, p. 5.
105 Mutende, March, 1936, p. 3.
Departmental reorganisation also involved the separation of some branches or units in terms of their financial allocations. This was particularly the case for the treasury and income tax units of the Treasury and Income Tax Department. Budgetary allocations to the two units were previously made under one head until they were separated in 1932. The separation was meant to increase the votes of the branches, bring more specialisation in their respective works and improve their efficiency in revenue collection. This was because revenue generation, besides expenditure curtailment, became a priority of the colonial administration during the Depression.

**Rearrangement of Provinces and Districts**

In April, 1929, Northern Rhodesia was divided into nine provinces namely Awemba, Barotse, Batoka, East Luangwa, Kafue, Kasempa, Luangwa, Mweru-Luapula and Tanganyika. Details of the districts included in each province are shown in appendix 1. Each province was administered by a provincial commissioner who supervised and coordinated the work of district commissioners in his province. Provincial commissioners also ensured that directives from the capital were carried out accordingly by all district commissioners in their respective provinces. Additionally, provincial commissioners were “… responsible for coordinating the work of technical officers with one another and with that of the ordinary administrative personnel …” The arrangement largely remained the same until the Great Depression set in and necessitated the reorganisation of the provinces and districts.

The colonial government embarked on the rearrangement of provinces and districts in response to the Great Depression in 1933. The reorganisation mainly involved the amalgamation of some

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106 Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 15 September, 1932*, p. 34.
provinces and the merging of certain districts. It resulted from the recommendations of the Finance Commission of 1932. In their report, the commissioners stated that “We consider that economy might be effected by the reduction in the number of provinces from nine to seven; in fact, some senior members of the Provincial Administration suggested to us that it might be practicable to reduce the number still further.”109 The aim of taking this measure was to reduce the expenditure of the provincial administrations.

The recommendation of the Finance Commission to reduce the number of provinces was approved by the Legislative Council of the territory in 1933. On 8 March of that year, Sir Ronald Storrs stated in the Legislative Council that “The provinces, and therefore the Provincial Commissioners, are being reduced from nine to six ….”110 The actual rearrangement began with the curtailment of the number of provincial commissioners from nine to five in 1933. One of the provincial commissioners was placed in charge of three provinces while two others were each tasked to administer two provinces. This, according to Stone, saw Tanganyika, Awemba and Mweru-Luapula provinces having one provincial commissioner, Kasempa and Luangwa provinces placed under one commissioner and, likewise, Kafue and Batoka manned by one provincial commissioner.111

The amalgamation of provinces was concluded in 1934 by the renaming of the resultant five provinces. The combination of Awemba, Mweru-Luapula and Tanganyika formed a single province that was renamed Northern Province.112 The Northern Province also included Serenje district which was transferred from Luangwa Province. The remaining districts of Luangwa

110 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 March, 1933, p. 7.
111 Jeffrey C. Stone, “A Guide to the Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, O’Dell Memorial Monograph 7, University of Aberdeen, 1979, pp. ix-x. Also see Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933, p. 228.
112 Stone, “Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, p. 3.
Province, namely Broken Hill, Mkushi and Ndola were merged with Kasempa Province to form the Central Province.\footnote{113 Stone, “Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, p. 6.} In the meantime, the combination of Kafue and Batoka provinces was renamed Southern Province.\footnote{114 Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933}, p. 228 and Stone, “Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, p. 6.} Barotse Province remained unchanged while East Luangwa was simply renamed Eastern Province. In the budget estimates for the year 1934, only the five provinces were planned for and allocated funds. The rearranged provinces of Northern Rhodesia and the districts they included as from 1934 are shown in table 2 as follows:

\textbf{Table 2: Provinces and Districts of Northern Rhodesia in 1934}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Districts included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barotse Province</td>
<td>Balovale, Kalabo, Lealui, Mankoya, Senanga, Seshke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Province</td>
<td>Broken Hill, Kasempa, Mkushi, Mwinilunga, Ndola, Solwezi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Province</td>
<td>Fort Jameson, Lundazi, Petauke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Province</td>
<td>Abercorn, Chinsali, Isoka, Fort Rosebery, Kasama, Kawambwa, Luwingu, Mpika, Mporokoso, Serenje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Province</td>
<td>Kalomo, Livingstone, Lusaka, Mazabuka, Mumbwa, Namwala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: \textit{Government Notices of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 1934}, p. 206.

The number of provinces remained five until 1937 when they were increased to six following the creation of Western Province from the western parts of Central Province.\footnote{115 Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Northern Rhodesia for the year 1937} (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1938), p. 7 and Mutende, \textit{June, 1937}, p. 13.} The provinces were further increased to seven in 1939 by the creation of the Kaonde-Lunda Province. It can be argued, therefore, that from an administrative point of view, the impact of the slump lessened during the year 1936 when the government found it viable to increase the number of provinces.

Besides the diminution of provinces from nine to five, the number of districts in Northern Rhodesia was reduced from 33 to 31 in 1933. The changes involved Feira and Chiengi which
were stripped off their district status. Stone notes that in October, 1933, the Chiengi district administrative centre in Mweru-Luapula Province was closed and the district was fused into Mporokoso. In the same year, Feira district of Kafue Province was abolished and incorporated into Lusaka district. The planned establishment of substations or sub-districts in the Gwembe valley portions of Kalomo and Mazabuka districts was halted in 1933 for fear of increasing both staff and expenditure. It was only implemented in 1936 when Guimbi sub-district was formed and Kalomo was incorporated into and became a substation of Mazabuka district.

Some substations or sub-districts were also closed during the Depression. For example, Ndola district had four substations namely Nchanga, Mufulira, Nkana and Luanshya each of which was under a district officer responsible to the district commissioner at Ndola. However, the shutting down of Nchanga and Mufulira mines led to the closure of the substations at the two centres by the end of 1931. Meanwhile, proposals were made to upgrade Nkana and Luanshya substations into districts in 1934 but this could not be implemented due to the economic problems that were still being experienced. It was noted that “The possibilities of creating separate districts of Nkana and Luanshya has recently been under investigation, and in view of difficulties revealed it has been decided to take no action in that regard at present.” However, Kitwe (Nkana), Luanshya and Mufulira were each accorded district status in 1936 to reduce the extent of Ndola district and improve administrative efficiency. This was possible only because the economic situation had improved in Northern Rhodesia.

116 Stone, “Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, p. 9.
118 NAZ/SEC 2/61 Staff of the Provincial Administration, 5 January, 1933.
119 NAZ/SEC 2/26 Luangwa Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 19 April, 1934.
120 Stone, “Administrative Boundaries of Northern Rhodesia”, p. 73 and NAZ/SEC 2/26 Luangwa Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 19 April, 1934.
121 NAZ/SEC 2/26 Luangwa Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 19 April, 1934.
Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the colonial government responded to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia through a number of administrative changes. It has argued that the colonial administration’s direct response to the Depression involved the reorganisation of staff in the public service, the reduction of expenditure on departmental and provincial administrations, the revision of working conditions and allowances of public service personnel and the realignment of government administrative structures. The changes were a response to the diminishing government revenues and they were envisioned to curtail government expenditure. Furthermore, the colonial government rearranged its administrative structures in order to maintain administrative efficiency. Though the changes were made mainly during the years 1932-1934, they lasted beyond this period due to uncertainty about the end of the Depression. Most of the changes made remained in force up to the end of 1936 when the colonial administration began to undo those changes that were deemed to be no longer necessary.
CHAPTER FOUR: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF
THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Introduction

Policy change was a common phenomenon in the capitalist world during the Great Depression. Many governments made legislative changes in order to usher in fresh policies that were envisioned to reduce the impact of the economic crisis. Northern Rhodesia was not an exception. This chapter examines the legislative changes that the colonial government made in the territory in response to the impact of the Depression. It unveils the ordinances that the administration passed in order to mitigate the challenges that resulted from the crisis. The chapter begins by examining the fiscal legislative changes through which the government introduced new taxes that were envisioned to raise extra revenues with which to balance the budget. It then proceeds to discuss the legislative changes that were enacted in order to mitigate the challenges of poverty, destitution and African incapacity to pay poll tax.

Fiscal Legislative Changes

Fiscal policy changes were the top priority of the colonial government in its legislative response to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia and most of them were commenced at the start of the crisis in 1932. This was due to their significance in the quest to raise extra revenues for the colonial administration to balance its budget.¹ The changes introduced several new taxes in the country, besides raising the scale and widening the base for already existing taxes. Among the pieces of legislation that the government passed were ordinances relating to

¹ Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 14 September, 1932, pp. 9-11.
tax on official salaries, income tax, non-native personal tax, emergency tax, entertainments tax and customs and excise duties.

The Tax on Official Salaries Ordinance, 1932-1936

The Tax on Official Salaries Ordinance was enacted by the Northern Rhodesia Government in direct response to the financial impact of the Depression. It was aimed at empowering the government to impose and collect a levy on the salaries of all government officers in order to generate extra revenues. The ordinance was envisaged to introduce a completely new tax that was to be collected only during the emergency period. The tax was expected to contribute about £12,000 in 1933. It should be noted that the levy on official salaries was not unique to Northern Rhodesia as it was introduced in some other British colonies. As shown by Ochonu, for example, the tax was also introduced in Nigeria with the same objective of raising additional revenues.

In Northern Rhodesia, the Finance Commission had proposed that tax on official salaries be introduced only when efforts to reduce government expenditure or raise extra revenues had failed. However, the introduction of the tax came much earlier than had been proposed by the commission. The Tax on Official Salaries Bill was drawn, debated by the Legislative Council and passed into law in December, 1932. Certainly, the period between the release of the commission’s report in August, 1932 and the enactment of the ordinance in December of that year was not enough to assess the success or failure of the economy campaign and the new revenue generation measures, most of which were only implemented in 1933. The speedy

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3 Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, p. 116.
4 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 16 December, 1932, pp. 68-73, 283. Although most secondary sources do not refer to the ordinance and its provisions, some allude to the tax or levy on official salaries. See, for example, Roan Consolidated Copper Mines Limited, Zambia's Mining Industry, p. 35 and Gann, History of Northern Rhodesia, p. 252.
enactment of the ordinance partly reflected the seriousness of the administration’s need for additional revenues to balance the budget.

The Tax on Official Salaries Ordinance was to be operational from April, 1933 to the end of March, 1934. Among its major provisions, the ordinance authorised the governor of Northern Rhodesia to impose a tax on the salary of every government officer at a specified rate. The ordinance also empowered the governor to vary the rate of the tax from time to time, to suspend it if need arose and to exempt any person or class of persons from the tax.\(^5\) It provided further that the rate of the tax should not exceed ten percent of the officer’s monthly salary and that the tax be imposed only on a salary that exceeded eighteen pounds per month. The ordinance also authorised the treasury department to deduct the tax, on a monthly basis, from the salaries of all officers concerned so that the proceeds went directly to the territory’s coffers.\(^6\) It can be argued that by making direct deductions from officers’ salaries, the colonial administration wanted to ensure timely remission of the funds and to avoid the possibility of evasions from the tax.

The Tax on Official Salaries Ordinance was amended in 1933 mainly in order to extend the collection of the tax for a year and to allow rebates on the tax for children and dependants maintained by the tax payers. This was with a view to mitigating any negative impact that the levy may have had on the welfare of officers and their families. As noted by Gann, the burden of taxation on Europeans was so much that they could no longer accumulate any savings and this affected their living standard.\(^7\) In addition, the amendment was intended to devise a criterion for determining how much of an officer’s salary the tax could be levied on and how much rebates

\(^5\) *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1932* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1933), p. 78 and NAZ/RC/1595 Ordinance No. 30 of 1932.

\(^6\) *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, p. 78 and NAZ/RC/1595 Ordinance No. 30 of 1932.

\(^7\) Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 253.
could be allowed. The ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council in November, 1933 and its provisions were to be operational from April, 1934 to March, 1935. The colonial administration still considered the levy on official salaries to be an important source of revenue.

Apart from extending the tax for a year, the amendment provided for the inclusion of a chargeable amount on the salary of every officer liable to pay the tax. In calculating the taxable part of an officer’s salary, funds remitted by the officer towards pension were to be deducted first and then the tax would be levied only if it amounted to not less than fifteen shillings per month. The ordinance also allowed rebates to officers with unmarried children who were living under their maintenance. The rebates were fixed at the rate of £10 per annum for every such female child aged below 21 years and every such male child under the age of eighteen years.

As government revenues recovered markedly in 1935, the colonial administration decided to reduce the rate of the tax on official salaries in April, 1936. From the maximum of ten percent earlier set, the Governor, Sir Hubert Young, slashed the rate of the tax to as low as 2½ percent for salaries up to £40 per month, but, with additional charges for amounts in excess of £40. The government then decided to do away with the tax on official salaries and the governor revoked it in July, 1936 through a notice in the Government Gazette. The abolition of the tax was a clear sign that it had outlasted its objective as an emergency revenue generation measure. By the time

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8 NAZ/RC/1644 Tax on Official Salaries (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933.
9 Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1933 (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934), p. 271.
10 NAZ/RC/1644 Ordinance No. 40 of 1933.
12 Northern Rhodesia Gazette Supplement, 1936, p. 113.
of its abolition, the tax on official salaries had helped the government to raise a total of £36,166, an average of about £9,042 per annum during the four years 1933-1936.\textsuperscript{13}

The Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1932

The enactment of the Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance in 1932 also illuminates the response of the colonial government to the decline in revenue during the slump. The ordinance was not a completely new legislation but an amendment to already existing law. Prior to the Depression, the bulk of income tax revenue came from companies and the business community; proceeds from salaries were low partly due to various rebates that individuals were allowed on the tax.\textsuperscript{14} The rebates included annual amounts of £300 for the income earner, £600 for a wife, £90 for the first child, £60 for each other child and £50 for each dependant.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, faced with the need for extra sources of funds, the government began to revise the income tax regime by curtailing the rebates, abolishing non-taxable income, increasing the tax rates and expanding its base.\textsuperscript{16}

The Income Tax (Amendment) Bill was drafted based on the recommendations of the Finance Commission and it was enacted by the Legislative Council in December, 1932. The bill passed all its stages with a lot of support from the council. The resultant Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance was signed by the colonial secretary in February, 1933 and its provisions were to take effect at the start of the 1933 financial year.\textsuperscript{17} One of its major provisions was the abolition of the tax-free income that was previously granted in respect of earned revenue. The ordinance reduced

\textsuperscript{13} See Appendices to Pim and Milligan, \textit{Report of the Commission}.
\textsuperscript{14} NAZ/RC/1555 Ordinance No. 14 of 1931. Also, income tax from some mining companies and their senior staff were repatriated to Britain. See, for example, MIA, Loc. 16.2.1C. Return of Income Tax for the years 1932-1934.
\textsuperscript{15} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1931}, pp. 49-50.
\textsuperscript{16} NAZ/RC/1618 Legal Report by the Attorney-General, Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 22 December, 1932.
\textsuperscript{17} NAZ/RC/1618 Ronald Storrs to Philip Cunliffe-Lister, 30 December, 1932 and NAZ/RC/1618 Cunliffe-Lister to Ronald Storrs, 28 January, 1933.
from £600 to £420 the abatement that was allowed on individual income in respect of a wife.\textsuperscript{18} It also increased the rates of income tax levied on individuals and companies. The provisions of the ordinance clearly show the deliberate attempt by the government to improve its revenue that had been curtailed by the economic crisis. The rates of income tax as provided for by the ordinance were as shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Rates of Income Tax in Northern Rhodesia in 1933**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of income</th>
<th>Rate of tax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the first £100</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £100</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £100</td>
<td>1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £100</td>
<td>2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £100</td>
<td>2s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £500</td>
<td>3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound of the next £500</td>
<td>3s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every pound in excess of £1,500</td>
<td>4s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1933*, p. 80.

The colonial government attempted to amend the income tax legislation in 1933 with a view to hiking the tax rates so as to raise more money for the administration. However, most members of the Legislative Council argued stoutly against the proposal noting that taxpayers would resent the suggested tax increases.\textsuperscript{19} Consequently, the proposal was withdrawn and the ordinance was not amended during the year. Though some changes were made to the 1932 ordinance after 1934, most of its provisions remained in force throughout the period under our consideration.

It should be noted that the changes made to the income tax legislation in 1932 did not immediately reverse the fall of proceeds from the tax. For example, income tax revenues, which

\textsuperscript{18} NAZ/RC/1618 Ordinance No. 31 of 1932.

fell from £126,567 in 1931 to £96,070 in 1932, due to the slump, dropped further to £88,903 in 1933. This was despite the implementation of the new tax changes in 1933 and the beginning of economic recovery during the year. The drop was partly exacerbated by the retrenchment and retirement of several tax-paying public service personnel, which was at its peak in 1933. However, income tax revenues recovered to £94,529 in 1934 and to £142,270 in 1935. As it may be noted, it was only in 1935 that proceeds from income tax surpassed their 1931 value.

**The Non-Native Personal Tax Ordinance, 1932-1939**

The Northern Rhodesia Government also responded to the revenue losses through the passing of the Non-Native Personal Tax Ordinance in 1932. The main objective of the ordinance was to generate extra revenues for the 1933 financial year by levying a poll tax on non-Africans who were resident in the territory. The measure was adopted from the recommendations of the Finance Commission and the ordinance was drafted along the lines of similar legislation in the British East African territories; Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. The draft bill was approved by the Executive Council in November while the ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council in December, 1932. The new legislation was intended to be a purely emergency measure and was envisaged to contribute about £2,500 to the revenues of the 1933 financial year.

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24 Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 16 December, 1932,* p. 82.
The Non-Native Personal Tax Ordinance imposed a levy of £1 on non-African residents of the territory who were 21 years and above to be paid between 1 January and 28 February, 1933.\textsuperscript{25} Liable persons who left the territory during the period without paying the tax were required to do so within one month of their return.\textsuperscript{26} The ordinance also required non-Africans who became resident in the territory in 1933 to pay the tax within their first month of residence. All persons liable to pay the tax were required to step up and do so to authorised officers in their respective districts of residence.\textsuperscript{27} To reduce evasions from the tax and ensure good collections, the ordinance provided for the doubling of the amount due in case of default unless the defaulter proved that the non-payment was due to circumstances beyond their control.

Proposal to amend the ordinance to provide for the payment of another £1 of non-native personal tax in 1933 did not go through the Legislative Council. It was rejected by elected members of the council who convinced the government to levy an alternative tax, the emergency tax, in its place.\textsuperscript{28} The Non-Native Personal Tax Ordinance was not renewed at the end of 1933. However, the ordinance was re-enacted in 1934 to legalise the levy and collection of non-native personal tax in 1935. It was authorised by the Governor, Hubert Young, in December, 1934.\textsuperscript{29}

The 1934 legislation repeated most of the provisions of the 1932 ordinance. The tax remained at £1, to be paid between January and March, and the punishment for default remained the doubling of the amount payable.\textsuperscript{30} Persons applying for exemption from the tax were required to provide sufficient evidence that payment of the tax would inflict hardship on them. However, the 1934

\textsuperscript{25} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{26} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{27} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{29} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1934* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1935), p. 28.
\textsuperscript{30} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1934*, p. 28.
ordinance exempted married non-African women from paying the tax. The ordinance was re-enacted beyond the emergency period. As late as 1939, the government continued to collect non-native personal tax and notices were issued to remind defaulting persons to pay the tax or risk being prosecuted.\textsuperscript{31}

The introduction of non-native personal tax in Northern Rhodesia in 1932 and its non-abolition immediately after the slump partly illuminates the lasting impact of the crisis on the country’s fiscal policy and is consistent with what happened in many other countries where some of the fiscal changes made lasted beyond the Depression. For example, Hartley, Sheffrin and Vasche assert that most states in the USA introduced personal income and retail sales taxes in response to the slump and that both taxes remained important components of the fiscal system of the USA as late as the 1990s.\textsuperscript{32} It should be noted, however, that the non-abolition of the non-native personal tax in Northern Rhodesia was mainly due to continued calls by elected members of the Legislative Council for the government to continue levying non-Africans a tax that was similar to the African tax. During the period 1932-1937, non-native personal tax contributed £34,322 to government revenue, an average of £5,720 per annum.\textsuperscript{33}

**The Emergency Tax Ordinance, 1933**

The Emergency Tax Ordinance of 1933 was yet another fiscal legislative enactment which shows the response of Northern Rhodesia to the diminution of revenues. Having realised the significant contribution that non-native personal tax made to the 1932 revenue, the government


\textsuperscript{33} See Appendices to Pim and Milligan, *Report of the Commission*.  

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attempted to levy a second non-native personal tax to raise extra funds for the 1933 budget.\textsuperscript{34} An ordinance was drafted to that effect but it was withdrawn from the Legislative Council in July, 1933 upon unprecedented criticism by elected members of the council. The elected members opposed additional taxation of persons without capacity to pay and proposed extra taxation of those who were able to contribute more funds to the government.\textsuperscript{35} They proposed the levy of an emergency tax based on a graduated scale that reflected different income levels.

In the light of the above circumstances, the colonial administration drafted the Emergency Tax Bill in consultation with the elected members to legalise the levy and collection of an emergency tax on male non-Africans.\textsuperscript{36} The bill was modelled on a similar legislation enacted in Nigeria in 1931. The tax was specifically aimed at raising a sum of between £5,000 and £6,000 which the government critically needed in order to service the remainder of the 1933 financial year.\textsuperscript{37} The administration estimated that besides the economies already carried out and those that were yet to be executed in the remainder of the 1933 financial year, the government needed at least £5,000 to meet some of its most critical financial requirements and to help balance the budget.

The Legislative Council passed the Emergency Tax Ordinance in July, 1933. The major provision of the ordinance was that every male non-African resident of the territory aged at least 21 years on the first day of August, 1933 must pay an emergency tax to a district officer assigned to collect the tax in their district of residence.\textsuperscript{38} It also exempted from the tax, every non-African whose income as at 31 July, 1933 was less than £300. Those who were liable to pay the tax were categorised according to the size of the income they were expected to accrue by the end of July,

\textsuperscript{34} NAZ/SEC 1625 Non-Native Personal Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933 and Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 27 July, 1933, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{35} NAZ/RC/1627 Legal Report by the Attorney-General on the Emergency Tax Ordinance, 1933.
\textsuperscript{36} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 29 July, 1933, pp. 56-57.
\textsuperscript{37} NAZ/RC/1627 Legal Report by the Attorney-General on the Emergency Tax Ordinance, 1933.
\textsuperscript{38} See \textit{Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia}, 1933, p. 41.
1933. Among the incomes considered were proceeds of individuals from salaries, rentals, businesses, pension allowances and dividends. Table 4 shows the graduated scale according to which non-Africans were required to pay the emergency tax as from August, 1933.

**Table 4: Rates of Emergency Tax in Northern Rhodesia in 1933**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Column</th>
<th>Second Column</th>
<th>Third Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where the income is in excess of £300</td>
<td>But not exceeding £400</td>
<td>£1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the income is in excess of £400</td>
<td>But not exceeding £700</td>
<td>£2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the income is in excess of £700</td>
<td>But not exceeding £1,000</td>
<td>£3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the income is in excess of £1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1933*, p. 43.

The Emergency Tax Ordinance further provided that the tax be paid within the three months ending 31 October, 1933. This provision, as it may be noted, was meant to allow some time for the collections to be expended before the close of the financial year. The ordinance also provided that although the tax would lapse on 31 December, 1933 for those who would have met their obligations, it would be carried forward in the case of defaulters. A report to the Legislative Council in November, 1933 showed that proceeds from the emergency tax amounted to about £4,000 at the end of October. It should be observed that the emergency tax was one of the few new taxes that did not last beyond the slump period. As the ordinance had provided for, the tax lapsed at the end of 1933.

**The Entertainments Tax Ordinance, 1932-1935**

The Entertainments Tax Ordinance of 1932 was yet another legislation passed in Northern Rhodesia to mitigate the financial impact of the Depression. It was enacted in order to contribute

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funds to public coffers by levying a tax on gross receipts for admission to theatrical performances, cinemas, circuses, variety or musical shows and other entertainments. Some government officials noted that a duty on these activities would contribute significantly to the revenues of the country. The Entertainments Tax Bill was debated by the Legislative Council during the September, 1932 session and it was passed with a few amendments.

The provisions of the Entertainments Tax Ordinance were to be in operation from January, 1933 up to the end of March, 1934. Among its provisions was the imposition of a levy on the receipts of all entertainments provided in the territory. Entertainments providers were all required to pay the tax to officers entrusted to collect it at the district office in the respective districts in which they operated. Table 5 shows the rates of the entertainments tax as imposed by the ordinance.

**Table 5: Rates of Entertainments Duty in Northern Rhodesia, 1933-34**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount charged for admission</th>
<th>Rate of duty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 6d and does not exceed 2s</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 2s and does not exceed 3s</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 3s and does not exceed 5s</td>
<td>9d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 5s and does not exceed 7s 6d</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 7s 6d and does not exceed 10s 6d</td>
<td>1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 10s 6d and does not exceed 15s</td>
<td>2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceeds 15s</td>
<td>2s for the first 15s and 6d for every 5s or part of 5s over 15s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1932*, p. 40.

The Entertainments Tax Ordinance also empowered district officers in which the proprietors operated to authorise and effect exemptions from the tax. It stated that “A District Officer in charge of a district may upon receipt of a written application … grant a total or partial exemption

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42 Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission*, p. 67; NAZ/RC/1610 Acting Attorney-General to Chief Secretary, 12 September, 1932 and *Livingstone Mail, 4 September, 1932*, p. 4. The entertainments duty was a new tax that was adopted from Southern Rhodesia upon recommendation by the Finance Commission.
from the payment of the entertainment duty.\(^{43}\) The exemptions were to be granted only on those entertainments which were proven to be of fully educational, scientific, religious, philanthropic, charitable and patriotic nature. The ordinance also required every entertainment provider in the territory to keep true records of all their receipts and avail them for inspection by authorised officers. Contravention of any provision of the ordinance was punishable by a fine of not more than £50 and, on default, by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months.\(^{44}\)

An amendment to the Entertainments Tax Ordinance was made in November, 1933 to extend the collection of the duty beyond March, 1934. The territory’s continued unsound financial position necessitated the re-enactment of the legislation to re-impose entertainments tax for another year.\(^{45}\) The amendment ordinance renewed the levy and collection of the duty as planned. Similarly, the ordinance was re-enacted in 1934 with the objective of re-imposing the tax during the 1935 financial year. The 1934 amendment extended the collection of the tax in the country to 31 December, 1935.\(^{46}\) In fact, from an emergency measure, entertainments duty lasted beyond the Depression period in Northern Rhodesia as the colonial government continued to extend the tax. This illuminates Ochonu’s view that the Depression should also be viewed as a watershed of some policies in colonial Africa.\(^{47}\)

For, certain emergency changes that were made during the slump remained an integral part of government policy even after the crisis.

In practice, entertainments tax contributed a total of £15,287 to the revenues of the territory during the period 1932-1937. The amount consisted of £978 in 1932, £2,525 in 1933, £2,775 in

\(^{43}\) *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933*, p. 39.
\(^{44}\) *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933*, p. 40.
\(^{45}\) NAZ/RC/1632 Entertainment Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1933.
\(^{47}\) Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, p. 103.
1934, £3,209 in 1935, £2,962 in 1936 and £2,838 in 1937.\textsuperscript{48} As it may be observed, the annual proceeds from entertainments tax increased during the period 1932-1935 and declined during the years 1936 and 1937. It can also be noted that an average of £2,548 per annum was generated from the tax during the six years 1932-1937. This was lower than the average annual contributions of tax on official salaries and non-native personal tax. In fact, entertainments tax generated less revenue than most other taxes introduced during the Great Depression.\textsuperscript{49} This partly reflected the small number of entertainments provided in the country during the period.

**The Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Ordinances, 1932-1934**

In the period 1932-1934, the colonial government made a series of amendments to the Customs and Excise Duties Ordinance of 1931. The amendments sought to increase rates of duty on selected imported articles.\textsuperscript{50} They were also envisioned to remove the rebates that were granted to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in 1931 and to impose duties on goods that were allowed duty free entry into Northern Rhodesia. The amendments dealt with the territory’s external trade. In making the changes, the government was directly responding to the traumatic fall of its import duty revenue, which was caused by the decline of international trade.\textsuperscript{51}

The Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) (No. 3) Ordinance of 1932 clearly illuminates the government's response to the slump. The ordinance resulted directly from the recommendations of the Finance Commission which had proposed the revision of customs tariffs in order to generate about £14,000 for financing the administration of Northern Rhodesia in the second half

\textsuperscript{48} See Appendices to Pim and Milligan, *Report of the Commission*.
\textsuperscript{49} Refer to Northern Rhodesia, *Annual Reports, 1932-1937*.
\textsuperscript{50} NAZ/RC/1613 Governor to Clerk of the Legislative Council, 19 September, 1932.
of the 1932 financial year and at least £24,000 in each full financial year afterwards. The amendments were also intended to check the dumping of external products on the local market.

The Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) (No. 3) Ordinance of 1932 was passed by the Legislative Council in December of that year. Its provisions were to be in force up to the end of March, 1934. The ordinance imposed a duty on all imported cigarettes and on all cigarettes manufactured within the territory using tobacco imported from Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and other countries. A surtax of one penny was to be levied on each packet of not more than a half ounce in weight and a farthing on other packets or containers. Thus, as Dixon-Fyle contends, the ordinance effectively suspended the customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The ordinance also legalised Northern Rhodesia’s preference on British typewriters, clothes, spirits and cotton piece goods and on Canadian leather boots and rubber shoes at a duty rate of ten percent. Meanwhile, it increased customs duties on most non-imperial goods, imported into Northern Rhodesia, from fifteen to twenty percent.

Two amendments were made to the ordinance in 1933, the more relevant one being the Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) (No. 2) Ordinance of 1933 which came into operation on 31 October of that year. The amendment was aimed at extending the duties imposed in 1932 for

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53 See Kanduza, “Underdevelopment in Northern Rhodesia”, pp. 119-121. Also see Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission, 1932*, p. 22. In general, customs legislation were changed in most British colonies to reduce the entry of non-imperial goods into the British empire. See Ochonu, “Conjoined to Empire”, pp. 106, 117; and Manson et al, “West Africa”, pp. 154-158. They refer to similar changes to customs tariff legislation in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.
55 *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, p. 28.
56 *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1932*, p. 28.
59 Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 20 December, 1932*, p. 286. The duties alluded to applied to the Zambezi Basin tariff region. For further details, see NAZ/RC/1613 Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) (No. 3) Ordinance, 1932.

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another year as the government was not ready to forego revenue of about £25,000 which the

duties could generate.\textsuperscript{60} It was also envisioned to achieve greater tariff uniformity with Southern
Rhodesia, to maintain imperial preference and to foster the wheat industry in both Rhodesias.\textsuperscript{61}
The ordinance extended the duties imposed in 1932 beyond their expiry on 31 March, 1934. It
also increased the duty levied by Northern Rhodesia on imports of confectionery, wheat, fruits,
starch, spirits, bicycles and motor cars. In particular, the ordinance hiked duties on whisky,
brandy, gin and rum by five shillings per gallon, an equivalent of 8½ pence per bottle.\textsuperscript{62}

In addition, the ordinance empowered the governor to prohibit or restrict, by proclamation,
imports of wheat from territories other than British colonies in southern Africa south of the
Zambezi.\textsuperscript{63} Northern Rhodesia restricted her external sources of wheat to Southern Rhodesia and
South Africa because, while she wanted to promote her own wheat industry, she still needed to
import the grain to meet all her requirements. Further amendments were made to the ordinance
after 1934 but they were not as closely knit with the slump as those made in 1932 and 1933.

\textbf{Legislative changes dealing with poverty-related challenges}

The Great Depression resulted in unprecedented poverty in Northern Rhodesia. This was visible
in the sharp increase in the number of European destitutes and the increased inability by Africans
to pay tax or purchase essential commodities such as clothes. While European destitution caused
a drastic increase in government expenditure, African inability to pay tax swelled poll tax arrears

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{60} NAZR/RC/1651 Northern Rhodesia Governor to Secretary of State, 16 November, 1933. The first amendment, on
the other hand, only excluded Palestine from the rebates provided by the 1932 Ordinance. For details, see
NAZR/RC/1626 Ordinance No. 14 of 1933 or refer to \textit{Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933}, p. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 1 November, 1933, p. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{62} NAZR/RC/1651 The Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) (No. 2) Ordinance, 1933.
\item \textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933}, p. 43.
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and contributed to the decline in government revenue. These challenges forced the colonial
government to pass pieces of legislation that were aimed at mitigating them.

The Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance, 1931-1934

The Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance was partially aimed at mitigating the poverty that
resulted from the shortage of coins in Northern Rhodesia during the slump. One of the objectives
of the legislation was to effect the abandonment of the gold standard subsequent to its collapse
on the international scene. Britain went off gold on 19 September, 1931 and Northern Rhodesia
found it expedient to follow suit so as to stay in conformity with British currency changes.\textsuperscript{64}
Northern Rhodesia relied on bank notes and coins from Britain and needed to follow British
monetary policy. The government also wanted to keep the parity in the value of the pound in
Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Southern Rhodesia and Britain.\textsuperscript{65} Also, it wanted to maintain the
supply of bank notes and coins in the country so as to sustain the circulation of money. These
factors prompted the Legislative Council to hold an emergency session in October, 1931 to pass
legislation that would address the territory’s emerging challenges.\textsuperscript{66} Consequently, the council
passed the Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance on 12 October, 1931.

Among its provisions, this ordinance empowered the governor to officially proclaim the
deptature of Northern Rhodesia from the gold standard. By subsequent proclamation in the
\textit{Government Gazette}, the country went off gold on 12 October, 1931.\textsuperscript{67} To ensure the supply of
bank notes in the territory, the ordinance declared all bank notes issued from Salisbury by the
Bank of England, Standard Bank of South Africa and Barclays Bank as legal tender in Northern

\textsuperscript{64} NAZ/RC/1532 Northern Rhodesia Government Gazette, General Notice No. 363 of 1931.
\textsuperscript{65} NAZ/RC/1532 The Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance, 1931.
\textsuperscript{66} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1931}, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{67} NAZ/RC/1532 Northern Rhodesia Government Gazette, General Notice No. 363 of 1931. Also see Hulec,
“Aspects of the 1930s Depression”, p. 100.
Rhodesia. As for the supply of coinage, the ordinance legalised for use in the territory all coins that were current in England. This measure was envisaged to sustain the circulation of money in Northern Rhodesia so as to prevent the deterioration of poverty in the country.

As the Depression worsened in 1932 and 1933, Northern Rhodesia faced an acute shortage of coins, especially those of small denominations. This shortage contributed to the reduction in monetary transactions and worsened the poverty that prevailed in many areas around the territory due to the difficulties involved in accessing money. In rural districts such as Kalabo, for example, the shortage of coins and the decline of internal trade forced many Africans to revert to wearing animal skin. The colonial government responded to the currency shortage by making a series of amendments to the Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance of 1931. The main intention of the administration, however, was to improve African tax collections that sank as a result of the reduced flow of money. As argued by Rotberg, the administration realised that “… taxes would remain unpaid until coin was somehow injected into circulation …” A similar view is held by Berger who notes that the government’s concern about adequate supply and flow of coins in the country was mainly because of its interest in African tax collections.

As the government of Southern Rhodesia continued to make new coins during the slump, Northern Rhodesia watched closely and passed ordinances to adopt them. In December, 1932, the Legislative Council passed the Bank Notes and Coinage (Amendment) Ordinance to extend beyond Britain, the sources of coins for the territory. The ordinance legalised for use in Northern

68 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1931, p. 36. Also see Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia for year ended 31 December, 1931 (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1932), p. 10 and Supplement to the Northern Rhodesia Government Gazette, 12 October, 1931 (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1932), p. 103.
73 See, for example, NAZ/RC/1582 Bank Notes and Coinage (Supplementary) Ordinance, 1932.
Rhodesia the small value silver coins which were introduced in Southern Rhodesia.  

The colonial government took advantage of the passing of Act No. 24 of 1932 of Southern Rhodesia which empowered the governor of that country to issue gold, silver, bronze and nickel coins.

In December, 1933, another amendment was made to the Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance. It was aimed at further increasing the supply of coins in Northern Rhodesia by legalising more coinage of Southern Rhodesian origin which was to be extended beyond silver to include nickel and copper coins.  

The 1933 amendment empowered the governor of Northern Rhodesia to legalise silver, nickel and copper coins issued by the government of Southern Rhodesia and which were in circulation in that country.  

The maximum coin value was to be two pounds for silver coins and one shilling for nickel and copper coins.

The Bank Notes and Coinage Ordinance was revised yet again in 1934 to legalise more coinage from Southern Rhodesia. The ordinance targeted cupro-nickel and bronze coins from that country.  

As a result, the 1934 amendment empowered the Northern Rhodesia governor to proclaim as legal tender in the territory silver, cupro-nickel and bronze coins issued by Southern Rhodesia for any amount up to two pounds for silver and one shilling for cupro-nickel and bronze coins.  

Following the passing of the ordinance, Sir Hubert Young accordingly made the proclamation and legalised, for use in Northern Rhodesia, one penny and half-penny cupro-

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74 NAZ/RC/1594 Bank Notes and Coinage (Amendment) Ordinance, 1932. The maximum value of each piece of silver coin was to be two pounds.
75 NAZ/RC/1635 Bank Notes and Coinage (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933.
76 Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933, p. 211.
77 Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1934, p. 38.
78 Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1934, p. 12.
nickel coins that were issued by Southern Rhodesia and which were current in that territory. No further amendments were made to the ordinance during the period under our consideration.

**The Repatriation Ordinance, 1933**

One of the gravest challenges that Northern Rhodesia faced during the Great Slump was the rapid increase in the number of destitute Europeans. These were Europeans who lost their means of sustenance during the economic crisis and began to depend on the government and charitable organisations for their food, health and housing needs. Faced with the decline in its revenues, the colonial administration found it difficult to provide relief to all poverty-stricken Europeans and their dependants. Government expenditure on destitutes swelled in 1932 and more money than had been anticipated was spent on relief works. Although £2,000 was allocated for relief works during the 1932 financial year, about £3,500 had already been spent by August, 1932. Though without specific statistical evidence, Berger notes that several hundreds of impoverished Europeans received government rations at relief centres during the slump.

Many witnesses to the Unemployment Committee of 1932 submitted that Europeans without means of livelihood be induced to return to their respective countries of origin. However, the committee noted that voluntary repatriation might lead to the best men departing and the least desired ones remaining. Hence, it recommended the passing of an ordinance to legalise compulsory repatriation of all impoverished Europeans to their original homes in Africa or

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81 Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Finance Commission, August, 1932*, p. 39. Also refer to Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 19 September, 1932*, p. 209. The chief secretary noted that the bulk of the £7,000 sanctioned for destitute relief by September, 1932 was for maintenance of the destitutes.
overseas. It also proposed that the Northern Rhodesia Government should pay an allowance to repatriated persons and their dependants upon their arrival back home in order to enable them to reorganise themselves and start their lives afresh. As government expenses on destitutes increased, the administration drafted the Repatriation Bill and presented it to the Legislative Council in March, 1933. It soon became law as the Repatriation Ordinance was passed by the council in April. The ordinance authorised the governor to make an order to repatriate every destitute person in Northern Rhodesia to their country of origin. The order was to be issued to:

… a person who has been resident in the territory for a period of less than five years [who] is unemployed and destitute and has no definite prospects of obtaining regular and adequate employment within a reasonable period and by reason thereof is or is likely to become a public charge.

A repatriation order was to indicate a specific time-frame within which the repatriation must be executed. In addition, the ordinance provided for the payment of an allowance to a repatriated destitute and each of their dependants upon their arrival at their destination. The ordinance remained in force for the rest of the period covered by this study.

The Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933

The colonial government also responded to the challenges of European unemployment and destitution in Northern Rhodesia by passing the Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance of 1933. Immigration matters became of serious concern to the colonial administration during the Depression. This was in view of the realisation that unrestricted immigration was worsening unemployment and destitution in the country and thus contributing to the increase in unforeseen government expenditure at a time when revenues were depressed. Gann contends that many

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83 Northern Rhodesia, Report of the Unemployment Committee, 1932, p. 18.
84 Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933, p. 37 and NAZ/RC/1608 Ordinance No. 13.
whites who were resident in the territory requested the government to tighten immigration laws so as to prevent further entry of Europeans against whom they were likely to compete for the reduced job opportunities.\textsuperscript{85}

Both the Finance Commission and the Unemployment Committee of 1932 stressed the negative consequences of weak immigration laws which allowed easy entry of people into Northern Rhodesia. The Unemployment Committee, in particular, favoured prohibitive immigration laws and proposed amendments to the existing legislation and regulations.\textsuperscript{86} The Immigration (Amendment) Bill was drafted and it was approved by the Executive Council in February, 1933. The bill sought to tighten the territory’s immigration laws so as to prevent the entry of immigrants who were likely to become destitute and a public charge.\textsuperscript{87} It was also envisaged to curtail employment of outsiders so as to help employable persons, who were already in the country, to be absorbed back into employment whenever work opportunities were available.\textsuperscript{88}

The Immigration (Amendment) Bill was considered by the Legislative Council and passed into law in March, 1933 without opposition. The ordinance was signed by the Governor, Ronald Storrs, on 31 March the same year subject to ratification by the secretary of state for colonies in London.\textsuperscript{89} The ordinance required individuals entering Northern Rhodesia to take up residence or in search of work to prove instant possession of £100. It also required them to deposit at least £100 for themselves and not less than £50 for each dependant as insurance against possible

\textsuperscript{85} Gann, \textit{History of Northern Rhodesia}, p. 256. Archival sources clearly authenticate this argument. See, for example, NAZ/SEC 3/65 Vol. 1. Ndola Notes; Conference on Unemployed, 23 May, 1932.\textsuperscript{86} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Unemployment Committee}, pp. 11-12.\textsuperscript{87} NAZ/RC/1600 Minute from Chief Secretary to Clerk of the Councils, 9 February, 1933.\textsuperscript{88} NAZ/RC/1600 Minute from Chief Secretary to Clerk of the Councils, 9 February, 1933.\textsuperscript{89} Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933, p. 24.
government expenses on their maintenance and repatriation in case they became destitute.\textsuperscript{90} It is worth noting that the ordinance emphasised evidence of immigrant means of livelihood so as to prevent the entry of persons with high chances of becoming destitute in the territory.

Another provision of the Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance of 1933 was that “any employer who introduces an employee into the territory is made liable for any expenses which may be incurred by the government in consequence of the employee becoming destitute.”\textsuperscript{91} The provision applied if the employee under question became destitute while in employment and before the last three months of their contract. The ordinance also required employers to notify the nearest immigration officer of the expiration or termination of employment of any of their employees seven days from the date of such action.\textsuperscript{92} This provision was aimed at preventing employers from easily throwing their workers into destitution. From its provisions, it can be clearly observed that the Immigration Ordinance of 1933 was a direct response to the slump. The ordinance sought to deter employers from bringing into the territory persons who were likely to become destitutes and a burden to the government. Furthermore, it was meant to make employers responsible for their immigrant employees who became destitute in the territory.\textsuperscript{93} The provisions of the ordinance remained in force throughout the Depression period.

**The Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933**

The Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Ordinance of 1933 was part of Northern Rhodesia’s response to the challenges of European unemployment and destitution. As these challenges escalated in 1932, due to the Depression, there was a parallel increase in careless beer-drinking

\textsuperscript{91} NAZ/RC/1600 The Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933.
\textsuperscript{92} NAZ/RC/1600 The Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933.
\textsuperscript{93} *The Laws of Northern Rhodesia, 1934, Vol. 3, CAP. 22 Section 15.*
by unemployed Europeans in urban centres.\textsuperscript{94} This was clearly alluded to by the Unemployment Committee whose recommendations included the passing of legislation to curb the vice. It was noted that many unemployed Europeans, unable to face the exigent circumstances ushered in by the slump, resorted to excessive beer-drinking. The committee estimated that at least seventeen percent of destitutes on government relief were involved in excessive beer-drinking and that this contributed to the degenerating European moral standards in the territory’s urban centres.\textsuperscript{95}

Also disturbing to the colonial administration was the realisation that as government expenditure on the welfare of impoverished Europeans increased, the destitutes themselves were busy accumulating debts by consuming liquor on credit. Bars and hotels had devised a credit scheme known unofficially as the ‘chit’ system through which they allowed Europeans to consume liquor upon signing cards by which they committed themselves to liquidating the debts when they had the money with which to do so. Sellers of beer did this because of the reduced demand for cash liquor. Such ‘chits’ were provided at higher prices than the normal price of beer, and so, the victims of the system found themselves in heavy debts which they had to service.\textsuperscript{96} Even when some destitutes could find temporary work, they could still not graduate from their status due to their liquor debts. The government found it economically unwise for the unemployed to be spending even the little hard earned money on liquidating beer debts.\textsuperscript{97}

As credit liquor consumption increased throughout 1932, government officials felt compelled to do something to save the destitutes from the debt trap, the ‘chit’ system, which was set by those licensed to sell the commodity. A bill was drafted and introduced for debate during the March 1933 session of the Legislative Council. It was subsequently passed as the Liquor Licensing

\textsuperscript{94} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Unemployment Committee, 1932}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{95} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Unemployment Committee, 1932}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{96} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 9 March, 1933}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{97} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 17 March, 1933}, pp. 29-30.
(Amendment) Ordinance of 1933. The aim of the ordinance, according to government officials, was to outlaw the sale and consumption of liquor on credit so as to prevent individuals from squandering resources that could enable them carry on with life and provide necessities for themselves and their families.\textsuperscript{98} It is also undeniable that the government’s displeasure with the moral standards of the poor whites which were degenerating in the full view of Africans contributed to the passing of the ordinance. As argued by Clegg, the whites always feared that their standards might degenerate in the full view of Africans.\textsuperscript{99} The concern was highlighted in the report of the Unemployment Committee which recommended the passing of the ordinance.\textsuperscript{100}

One of the major provisions of the Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Ordinance of 1933 was that it prohibited credit sales and consumption of liquor in any premises licensed to sell the commodity. Liquor was to be provided for consumption only when it was fully paid for in cash, coupon or cheque at the time of supply.\textsuperscript{101} The ordinance also stipulated that any beer that was to be consumed with an ordinary meal must be paid for together with the meal at the time of supply. Contravention of these provisions by those licensed to sell liquor meant their forfeiture of the whole amount owed to them by their customers.\textsuperscript{102} This provision enabled the government to avoid the inconvenience of having to pay beer debts for destitutes who were due for repatriation.

**The Native Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1933-1934**

As the Great Depression reduced employment opportunities through which Africans raised money for paying tax, many Africans began to default on payment. There were suggestions to reduce the tax rates but the decision to do so was, arguably, hampered by the government’s dire

\textsuperscript{100} See Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Unemployment Committee, 1932*, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{101} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933*, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{102} *Ordinances of Northern Rhodesia, 1933*, p. 22.
need for funds. It must be observed that despite the effects of the slump, poll tax still remained a major contributor to the revenue of the territory. For example, in 1933, African tax accounted for about 22 percent of the country’s tax revenues and it was only second to customs duties which contributed 44 percent.\textsuperscript{103} Even income tax revenues were below the proceeds from African taxation during the 1933 financial year when income tax contributed fifteen percent to the year’s total tax revenues.\textsuperscript{104} Mtisi provides another explanation as to why the government did not reduce the rates of poll tax during the emergency period. He notes that the decision to maintain the existing tax rates was influenced by the argument that the slump would not take long and that it would be difficult to raise the tax rates after the economic crisis.\textsuperscript{105} Whatever the case, the government maintained the levy and collection of poll tax at the same rates in 1933.

Having decided to maintain the rates of poll tax, the colonial government sought other ways of providing relief to those Africans who were genuinely unable to pay the tax. The first legislative action in this regard was the passing of the Native Tax (Amendment) Ordinance of 1933. The legislation was enacted in December, 1933 in order to lessen the burden caused by the reduced circulation of money in most parts of the territory.\textsuperscript{106} Prior to the enactment of this ordinance, Africans were allowed to pay tax in kind using only grain and livestock. The major provision of the amendment was that it allowed Africans to pay poll tax using grain, livestock, honey, meat, fish, bees wax and all other forms of produce.\textsuperscript{107} The items were to be valued at the prevailing market prices. As argued by Chabatama, the policy change was mainly influenced by the government’s realisation that the shortage of coins in the countryside inhibited local efforts to


\textsuperscript{104} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Report of the Taxation Committee, 1934}, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{105} See Mtisi, “Economic Impact of Colonial Rule”, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{106} NAZ/RC/1656 D.M. Kennedy to Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, 18 December, 1933.

\textsuperscript{107} NAZ/RC/1656 Native Tax Amendment Ordinance, 1933.
raise tax money through the sale of produce.\textsuperscript{108} It should be noted, however, that the government preferred payment in cash to tax in kind due to the difficulties encountered in transporting and marketing the collected items.

The colonial government also responded to Africans inability to pay poll tax by passing a piece of legislation that provided for exemption of those who genuinely failed to pay, and by loosening regulations governing the imprisonment of tax defaulters. This was the Native Tax (Amendment) Ordinance of 1934. The ordinance increased the powers of district officers to exempt Africans from payment of the tax and it reduced the maximum term of imprisonment for poll tax default.\textsuperscript{109} Chabatama observes that the legislation reduced the period of imprisonment in default of distress from two months to one month and that of flagrant and persistent defaulters from two months to six weeks.\textsuperscript{110} Again, the colonial government found it hard to reduce the tax rates due to the contribution that the tax continued to make towards the revenue of the territory.

The debate on the need to reduce the rates of poll tax continued and it was eventually decided to do so beginning with Balovale district in 1934 and then the tax was reduced in most parts of the country in 1935. The new rate of the tax was 7s 6d for most of the districts. Some district commissioners suggested in late 1935 to reduce the rate further to 5s or 6s but senior officials dismissed the suggestion as impractical noting that there was still need to raise revenues for the territory.\textsuperscript{111} They also argued that some Africans were able to pay the poll tax and that for those who could not afford to do so, there was a relief labour scheme introduced in 1935 to liquidate

\textsuperscript{108} Chabatama, “Peasant Farming, the State, and Food Security”, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{109} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1934}, p. 37. This is also alluded to by R.J.B. Moore, \textit{These African Copper Miners: A Study of the Industrial Revolution in Northern Rhodesia, with principal reference to the Copper Mining Industry} (London: C. Tingling and Company Ltd., 1948), p. 23.
\textsuperscript{110} Chabatama, “Peasant Farming, the State, and Food Security”, p. 144. For more details on the provisions of the Ordinance, see NAZ/SEC 2/340 Vol. 4. Minute by His Excellency on Native Taxation, 26 April, 1937.
\textsuperscript{111} Kaniki, “Impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia”, p. 146.
arrears. The scheme was, however, unpopular among most Africans who viewed it as forced labour and it was abandoned in 1937.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the legislative responses of the Northern Rhodesia Government to the impact of the Great Depression. It has clearly demonstrated that the colonial government directly responded to some of the major challenges faced in the territory by passing a number of ordinances to mitigate them. Through fiscal legislative changes, the administration introduced new taxes and increased the rates and scope of existing ones in order to raise additional government revenues to contribute towards the balancing of the budget. Furthermore, the government passed ordinances that were aimed at reducing poverty-related challenges such as European destitution and African inability to pay poll tax. Most of the ordinances alluded to were enacted during the period 1932-1934 and the administration began to do away with some of them in 1935. However, some ordinances remained in force beyond the Depression period. In view of the ordinances passed by the government in response to the economic crisis, it is evident that the Depression left significant imprints on the legislative landscape of Northern Rhodesia.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE GOVERNMENT’S ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE TO THE DEPRESSION

Introduction

The preceding two chapters have demonstrated that the Northern Rhodesia Government responded to the impact of the Great Depression by making changes to its administrative and legislative structures. The changes made altered the makeup and functioning of the administration and ushered in new policies by which the government hoped to mitigate the challenges faced in the territory. This chapter attempts to assess the role and impact of the changes made in an attempt to underscore the significance of the colonial government’s response to the economic crisis. One of the main objectives of the colonial administration was to balance its budget by closing the gap between its revenue and expenditure without compromising the efficiency of the administration. The government also sought to reduce the poverty-related challenges that were widespread in the country following the distortion of the economy. These objectives are used to assess the impact of government responses to the Great Depression.

Reducing expenditure, increasing revenue and balancing the budget

The measures taken to reduce expenditure during the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia contributed significantly to saving government funds. Considerable annual savings were made in various departments and provincial administrations during the period 1932-1934 as a result of the rationing of government funds. For example, during the 1932 financial year, departmental economies yielded a total saving of £87,195. This was accumulated from all departmental heads and it represented a reduction of about 12.7 percent in the year’s initial estimated expenditure of

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1 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933, p. 205.
£689,210. In fact, it was only under the prisons departmental budget that over-expenditure, amounting to only £659, was incurred during the 1932 financial year. All other departments and the provincial administrations were able to save on their budgetary allocations.

Despite its contribution towards savings, the economy campaign did not significantly reduce total government spending during the emergency period. A survey of expenditure during the years 1932-1934 shows that small reductions in government spending were made in 1932 and 1933. While the colonial administration spent a total of £820,056 during the 1931 financial year, the figure was only reduced to £790,506 in 1932 and £778,879 in 1933. These were reductions of only £29,550 in 1932 and £11,627 in 1933 or 3.6 percent and 1.5 percent respectively. However, a significant reduction was made in 1934 when the expenditure was curtailed from the 1933 total of £778,879 to an amount of £712,903. This was a reduction of £65,976 or 8.5 percent of the 1933 amount.

It is asserted here that the low rates of reduction in annual expenditure were partly caused by unforeseen expenses that the government incurred in connection with the staff reduction and destitute relief programmes. Such expenses swelled government spending and reduced the impact of the departmental savings made. For example, the colonial administration incurred an additional sum of about £90,000 on the provisions of the 1932 budget on account of pensions, gratuities, destitute maintenance and repatriation, and other expenses. Furthermore, during the 1933 financial year, expenditure in relation to the staff reduction scheme, destitute relief and other miscellaneous expenses amounted to £94,706. As it may be noted, this amount was more

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2 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933, p. 205.
3 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933, p. 205 and Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1934, p. 38.
4 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 3 November, 1933, p. 99.
than eight times the actual reduction in government expenditure, of £11,627, attained in 1933.\(^5\)

Undoubtedly, the additional costs incurred were large enough to constrain significant reductions in the annual expenditure.

The part played by the staff reduction scheme in constraining the reduction of government expenditure can be explored in more specific detail. Unforeseen expenses on pensions and gratuities caused by the wholesale staff layoffs and induced staff retirements in 1932 and 1933 cost the colonial government considerably.\(^6\) A survey of annual figures of pensions and gratuities during the emergency period illuminates this argument. While the colonial administration’s annual expenditure on pensions and gratuities in 1931, before the massive retrenchment, amounted to £34,625, it rose to £50,773 in 1932, £68,568 in 1933 and £72,694 in 1934.\(^7\) In December, 1933, some members of the Legislative Council bemoaned the high expenses encountered in connection to the staff reduction scheme.\(^8\) Pensions and gratuities actually accounted for 6.4 percent of total government expenditure in 1932, 8.8 percent in 1933 and 10.2 percent in 1934. These percentages were high especially that there were other unforeseen expenses encountered during the three years.

It must also be noted that government expenditure on pensions and gratuities increased fast during the years 1932-1934. In particular, it rose by £16,148 or 47 percent in 1932, £17,795 or 35 percent in 1933 and £4,126 or 6 percent in 1934, an average increase of 29 percent during the three years.\(^9\) Besides, the annual expenditure on pensions and gratuities increased by £38,069 or 110 percent during the emergency period. In other words, it more than doubled during the

\(^7\) See Appendix XA to Pim and Milligan, *Report of the Commission*.
\(^8\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 4 December, 1933*, p. 780.
emergency period. In December, 1933, the treasurer alluded to the high rate at which government spending on pensions and gratuities had risen noting that the staff reduction scheme had caused a marked increase in pensions and gratuities during the years 1932 and 1933.\textsuperscript{10} The increase caused a heavy strain on the country’s financial resources and, undoubtedly, slowed the pace at which the government was reducing its expenditure during the years 1932-1934.

Expenditure on the maintenance and repatriation of impoverished Europeans also constrained the curtailment of government spending during the 1932 and 1933 financial years. In 1932, destitute-related costs amounted to £15,239.\textsuperscript{11} This amount was more than half of the total reduction in government spending of £29,550 attained during the year. In 1933, the colonial administration spent about £10,000 on the relief and repatriation of poverty-stricken Europeans.\textsuperscript{12} This was close to the total reduction in expenditure of £11,627 achieved in 1933. Combined with pensions, gratuities and other miscellaneous expenses, destitute related costs reduced the magnitude of the government savings made in 1932 and 1933. For example, the saving of £87,195 achieved during the 1932 financial year reduced to a net value of £23,099. Government expenditure on destitutes, however, reduced drastically to about £5,000 in 1934.\textsuperscript{13}

Measures taken to raise additional revenues, particularly the new tax regime, played a significant role in generating funds for the colonial administration during the emergency period. Collections from entertainments tax, non-native personal tax, the revised income tax and customs and excise duties contributed about 43 percent of the 1932 government revenues. Together with the levy on official salaries, the taxes accounted for about 44 percent of the 1933 government revenues and

\textsuperscript{10} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 4 December, 1933, p. 780.
\textsuperscript{11} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 3 November, 1933, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{12} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, 4 December, 1933, p. 763.
\textsuperscript{13} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates}, November, 1933, pp. 99, 205, 736.
about 51 percent of the 1934 revenues.\textsuperscript{14} It must be noted, however, that the bulk of these funds came from customs and excise duties which contributed 27.3 percent in 1932, 28.4 percent in 1933 and 39 percent in 1934. Income tax was second with contributions of about 14.8 percent in 1932, 12.3 percent in 1933 and 13.6 percent in 1934.\textsuperscript{15} The widening of the base for customs duties and income tax increased the significance of these two sources of government revenues.

Despite its contribution towards raising money for the colonial administration, the new tax regime did not generate enough funds to reverse the decline in revenues during the period 1932-1934. Government returns continued to remain lower than their pre-Depression peak throughout the emergency period. The revenues declined from the peak value of £856,376 attained in the 1931 financial year to £649,538 in 1932 and then struggled to recover from the latter figure, despite the reopening of the mines in 1933 which began to revive the economy, only reaching £693,337 in 1934.\textsuperscript{16} It was only from 1935 that government proceeds began to recover steadily in Northern Rhodesia, and they surpassed their pre-slump peak value in 1936 when total returns amounted to £863,255. In 1938, the revenues reached an unprecedented value of £1,593,504.\textsuperscript{17}

Although the colonial administration did not stop the fall in government revenues through its revenue generation measures during the emergency period, it managed to reduce the rate at which the revenues were declining. Government proceeds, which sank to £649,538 in 1932, temporarily rose to £718,283 in 1933 due to the combination of the new tax regime instituted

\textsuperscript{14} These percentages have been calculated using tax collection data contained in the appendix to Pim and Milligan, Report of the Commission entitled Estimated and Actual Revenue under Heads, with some of the main Sub-heads, for the years 1924-1938 (hereafter, appendix to Pim and Milligan). Total revenues used are extracted from Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1938, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{15} Appendix to Pim and Milligan.
\textsuperscript{16} Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report, 1934, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{17} Northern Rhodesia, Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Northern Rhodesia for the year 1938 (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1939), p. 38.
after September, 1932 and the reopening of the mines after June, 1933.\textsuperscript{18} This means that the revenues reduced by 24 percent in 1932 but recovered by 10 percent in 1933 before declining by only 4.5 percent in 1934. The average rate of decline in government proceeds for the entire emergency period was about 19 percent, with an average rate of decline of only 2.8 percent in the last two years of the emergency period, when the new taxes were in force.\textsuperscript{19} See appendix 2 for details on the revenue and expenditure of Northern Rhodesia in the period 1930-1938.

The Northern Rhodesia Government failed to balance its budget during the emergency period. Each of the budgets for the financial years 1932-1934 ended with a deficit.\textsuperscript{20} The 1932 budget deficit stood at £140,968 while the deficits for 1933 and 1934 were £60,596 and £19,566 respectively.\textsuperscript{21} The colonial government only managed to balance its budget from 1935 onwards. The 1935 budget ended with a humble surplus of £27,055 which was gradually built up over the years until it surpassed its pre-Depression peak of £125,268 in the 1938 financial year when a surplus of £175,728 was attained.\textsuperscript{22} Without doubt, the budget surplus attained in 1935 was largely as a result of the recovery of government revenue following the revival of the economy.

Although the economies and the new fiscal measures pursued by the colonial government in Northern Rhodesia did not help to balance the budget during the emergency period, they reduced the magnitude of the deficits recorded. Contrary to Gann’s assertion that Northern Rhodesia accumulated serious deficits over the years 1933 and 1934,\textsuperscript{23} it is argued here that budget deficits

\textsuperscript{18} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1938}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{19} These percentages were calculated using data obtained from Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1938}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{20} Gann, \textit{History of Northern Rhodesia}, p. 253.
\textsuperscript{21} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1938}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{22} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Annual Report, 1938}, p. 38. It should be noted, however, that a deficit £24,162 was recorded in 1936 before surpluses were consistently attained thereafter.
\textsuperscript{23} Gann, \textit{History of Northern Rhodesia}, p. 253.
actually reduced considerably over the years 1932-1934 until a surplus was attained in 1935.\textsuperscript{24} The deficit of £140,968 recorded in 1932 was reduced to £60,596 in the 1933 financial year and to only £19,566 in 1934.\textsuperscript{25} These figures translated to deficit reductions of 57 percent in 1933 and 68 percent in 1934. Certainly, the reductions largely reflected the impact of the fiscal changes made and the beginning of the recovery of the copper business after mid-1933.

The failure by the colonial administration to balance its budget during the Great Depression was partly due to the fact that the execution of some of the administrative and legislative changes made in response to the economic crisis entailed a further drain on the country’s finances. As already noted, the unforeseen expenses that were often encountered during the wholesale retrenchment and induced retirement of officers from the public service expanded the financial requirements of the territory.\textsuperscript{26} Added to this were expenses on the welfare and repatriation of destitute Europeans. Provisions for expenditure of this nature were often underestimated and supplementary expenses were incurred that made it difficult to balance the budget.

**Maintaining the efficiency of the administration**

The attempt by the colonial government to maintain the efficiency of the administration during the Great Depression was a large failure. Even though total administrative failure was avoided,\textsuperscript{27} the mass reduction in the staff of the public service largely compromised the functioning of the administration. In many administrative units, the remaining staff found it very difficult to perform work that was formerly done by a larger workforce. Those who remained in the service

\textsuperscript{25} Pim and Milligan, *Report of the Commission*, p. 88. A deficit of £85,000 was anticipated in 1933 but due to the economy campaign and the new tax regime, the actual deficit was only £60,596. For details, see Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 1 November, 1933*, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{27} Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 253.
found themselves having to double their efforts in order to meet the new work exigencies in their departments. This was characteristic of departments like printing and stationery, stores and transport, posts and telegraphs and the Northern Rhodesia police. It was not unusual during the period 1932-1935 for government officers to work beyond their official business hours, carry work to do at home after their normal office hours or to work during weekends.\(^{28}\) This was largely the result of the massive staff layoffs carried out by the administration during the period.

In the Printing and Stationery Department, the work of printing documents such as Blue Books, Law Reports, Annual Reports, Gazettes, and later, the *Mutende Newspaper*, became a burden on the staff that remained to man the department during the Depression.\(^{29}\) In fact, the pressure of work on the staff of the department continued even in the aftermath of the slump. For example, in 1936, the government printer seldom left his office at the usual knocking off time and was reported to have worked seven Sundays in succession as a result of pressure of work. Similarly, personnel in the stationery office worked on Saturday afternoons and part Sundays in addition to working two extra hours for most of the week-days.\(^{30}\)

The staff of the Stores and Transport Department also suffered a burden of work as a result of the wholesale retrenchment. Although there was a general reduction of departmental procurements, the continued construction of the capital at Lusaka, which was financed by external loans,\(^{31}\) kept the remaining staff of the department fully functional during the entire emergency period. It was actually noted in 1933 that the staff retrenchment and the absence of officers on leave resulted in

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\(^{28}\) NAZ/SEC 3/81 Government Printer to Chief Secretary, 9 March, 1936 and Chief Secretary to Government Printer, 29 May, 1938.

\(^{29}\) NAZ/SEC 3/81 Government Printer to Chief Secretary, 9 March, 1936.

\(^{30}\) NAZ/SEC 3/81 Government Printer to Chief Secretary, 29 May, 1938.

\(^{31}\) For details on the financing of the construction of the capital at Lusaka, see Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 17 March, 1933*, pp. 3-9.
the remaining staff of the department being kept extremely busy.\textsuperscript{32} In fact, every officer in the Stores and Transport Department was called upon to perform extra work during the year 1933. On grounds of its reduced efficiency, the department was actually separated from Public Works in September, 1933, nearly a year after its incorporation into that department.\textsuperscript{33}

Another department which experienced a decline in efficiency was the Posts and Telegraphs Department where the remaining staff could not cope with the overwhelming amount of work. During the years 1933 and 1934, the department even requested for the beefing-up of its staff when retrenchment, other than re-engagement, was the order of the day.\textsuperscript{34} Some of the requests were actually granted due to the role that the department played in revenue collection. There were complaints from the general public about the inefficiency of the department in the period 1933-1935. For example, in 1935, unprecedented service delays at the Ndola Post Office led to a serious outcry from the general public and the matter attracted the concern of the Ndola Chamber of Commerce.\textsuperscript{35} The latter launched an official complaint to the provincial commissioner for Central Province about the inefficiency at the Ndola Post Office and the commissioner admitted that the problem was a source of genuine irritation.\textsuperscript{36} Undoubtedly, the problem was partly caused by the reduction in the number of postal assistants during the massive staff layoffs.

The Northern Rhodesia Police was among the most heavily retrenched departments during the Great Depression. The heavy staff layoffs consequently made it very difficult for the department to curtail the increase in crime faced by the country during the economic crisis. Cases of crime which reached their Depression peak of 10,510 in 1932 only reduced to 9,337 in 1933 and rose

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Stores and Transport Annual Report, 1933}, p. 1.
\item Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Stores and Transport Annual Report, 1933}, p. 1.
\item NAZ/SEC 3/102 Vol. 2. Postmaster General to the Chief Secretary, 10 February, 1934, Provincial Commissioner, Kasama to the Chief Secretary, 23 April, 1934 and Postmaster-General to the Chief Secretary, 14 June, 1934.
\item NAZ/SEC 3/102 Vol. 2. Provincial Commissioner, Central Province to the Chief Secretary, 23 August, 1935.
\item NAZ/SEC 3/102 Vol. 2. Provincial Commissioner, Central Province to the Chief Secretary, 23 August, 1935.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to 9,513 in 1934, remaining as high as 9,350 in 1935. The most common among the cases reported were burglaries, house-breaking and thefts, which reached their highest levels in 1934 and contributed to the increase in the total number of criminal offences from 9,337 in 1933 to 9,513 in 1934 despite the recovery of the economy being on course. Reported cases of burglary rose from 160 in 1933 to 312 in 1934, cases of house-breaking increased from 197 in 1933 to 375 in 1934 while those of theft climbed up from 1,035 in 1933 to 2,247 in 1934.

It should be noted that many of the cases reported to the police during the years 1932-1934 remained unsolved largely due to the shortage of police officers to investigate them. In 1933, K.E. Harris, the honourable member for the Ndola Electoral Area, bemoaned the high number of unsolved cases of robbery in the district during the year and emphatically attributed the failure to trace the culprits to the insufficient number of policemen. In 1934, it was noted that the government’s mass retrenchment of the police and the closure of several police stations around the country at a time when cases of theft and burglary were on the rise made it hard for the police to contain the crime situation in Northern Rhodesia. In December, 1934, Captain J. Browne, the honourable member for the Midland Electoral Area, observed that the closure of several small centres where police posts had been established left many people vulnerable to the activities of scoundrels who survived by their wits. He requested the government to reopen

37 See Northern Rhodesia, Annual Reports, 1932-1935.
38 Gann, History of Northern Rhodesia, p. 254.
40 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 4 December, 1933, p. 761.
41 Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council Debates, 18 December, 1934, pp. 298-299. On the Copperbelt, in particular, the crime situation was also exacerbated by the retrenchment of mine policemen and watchmen, besides the retrenchments from the Northern Rhodesia Police. See MIA, Loc. 17.6.2A. L. Pollack, Rhokana Corporation Limited: Memorandum on the Rhodesian Administration, January-February, 1932 and MIA, Loc. 17.6.2C. Rhokana Corporation Limited, Report by L. Pollack and S.S. Taylor, March, 1934.
police posts that were closed and to reinforce the staff at larger stations in order to enable the police embark on patrols.\textsuperscript{42}

The decline in government efficiency was also noted in district and provincial administrations. The economy campaign and the staff reductions made it increasingly difficult for provincial and district officers to discharge all their functions efficiently. Hence, the provincial and district staff often chose to do what they deemed to be most essential or urgent at any particular time. In some provinces, the administrative staff preferred to do their office work and they neglected their role in the collection of poll tax.\textsuperscript{43} Others were more involved in poll tax tours and they neglected non-tax-related administrative works in their offices. Whatever the case, government efficiency seriously declined as the staff that survived the retrenchment could not effectively strike a balance between office duties and field work in the generally vast provinces and districts.

Furthermore, some departments and provinces faced frequent changes in their senior staff and this also reduced their efficiency. Berger asserted that the staff reduction scheme led to a grave shortage of senior staff and reduced the continuity of officers in administrative centres.\textsuperscript{44} Indeed, this made it hard for the administrative staff to be familiar with the concerns and challenges of the local people. Gore-Browne’s comments on Northern Province exemplify this argument:

\q{In the Province in which I live we have had five Provincial Commissioners in the last two years. I should need a ready reckoner to count the number of District Officers in the districts in which I am concerned, and the result has been bewilderment, either a perpetually changing policy or no policy at all …. One}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{42} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Legislative Council Debates, 18 December, 1934}, pp. 300-305.
\bibitem{43} NAZ/SEC 2/180 District Commissioners’ Conference held at Kasama, 2-7 May, 1935: Notes and Comments by Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, on Recommendations.
\bibitem{44} Berger, \textit{Labour, Race and Colonial Rule}, p. 24.
\end{thebibliography}
point alone: I do not know how long it is since we had a District Commissioner in my part of the world who could talk the native language.\(^{45}\)

The staff reduction scheme and the general economy campaign weakened government standing in the countryside. This was because, besides the removal of policemen and other government officers from many far-flung areas, there was a drastic decline in long distance tours. The reduction of the number of officers in provincial establishments and the rationing of government funds made it hard for the remaining staff to tour distant areas in the generally large districts.\(^{46}\) This state of affairs, which prevailed throughout the years 1932-1935, drastically reduced contact between government officers and the local African population. In 1935 and 1936, most district commissioners appealed to higher authorities to increase the staff in districts so as to enable them improve government efficiency.\(^{47}\) Thus, in 1937, the government employed African clerks to assist with some poll tax works in order to release some of the district and provincial officers from tax-related duties and enable them to concentrate on other administrative works.\(^{48}\)

The retrenchment of senior officers also led to a shortage of such staff during the course of the Depression and it became hard to replace them in the aftermath of the crisis. Reporting in 1938, Orde Browne noted an acute shortage of senior and experienced staff in Northern Rhodesia which he attributed to the retrenchments made during the slump. He reported that the territory was still “characterised by an acute shortage of senior and experienced officers ….”\(^{49}\) The shortage of senior officers with a record of long service meant that less experienced persons had

\(^{45}\) Quoted in Berger, \textit{Labour, Race and Colonial Rule}, p. 25.
\(^{46}\) NAZ/SEC 2/180 District Commissioners’ Conference held at Kasama, 2-7 May, 1935. Also see NAZ/SEC 2/177 Minutes of the District Commissioners’ Conference held at Ndola, 15-18 April, 1936.
\(^{47}\) NAZ/SEC 2/180 Minutes of the District Commissioners’ Conference, Northern Province, held at Kasama, 11-14 May, 1936.
to be employed in their place or the more experienced ones sought from outside at a higher cost.\textsuperscript{50} The continued shortage of senior officers to as late as 1938 was also due to the reluctance by the government to embark on a quick staff build-up in the immediate aftermath of the slump.

In general, up to around 1938, most government departments still operated below their approved establishments. This was mainly due to the reluctance by the colonial administration to re-engage staff after the Depression. For example, the Northern Rhodesia Police was reported to have worked below its approved establishment in 1936 despite many calls to increase its staff.\textsuperscript{51} Although Bradley’s remark that there was no single policeman in Northern Province at the time he toured the province in 1938\textsuperscript{52} seems to be an exaggeration, it shows the extent of the impact of the retrenchment. The staffing level of the Department of Agriculture was also still very low at the end of 1936. During that year, for instance, there was a serious outcry to increase the number of district stock inspectors and the travelling vote of the Veterinary Department so as to enable the veterinary staff effectively serve the stock-owning Africans.\textsuperscript{53} It was only in 1937 that the government began to seriously re-engage staff in the departments and provinces as a large budgetary allocation was made for a re-staffing scheme.\textsuperscript{54} More funds were provided to most of the departments and to the provincial administrations to recruit staff in 1938.

The new system of tour reporting introduced in Northern Rhodesia in 1933 meant that most district tour reports were sent only as far as the provincial administration with no copies to the secretariat. This reduced administrative efficiency as it created a communication gap between

\textsuperscript{50} Orde Browne, \textit{Labour Conditions}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{51} Mutende, March, 1936, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{52} See Kenneth Bradley, \textit{The Diary of a District Officer} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966), p. 12.
\textsuperscript{53} Northern Rhodesia, \textit{Memorandum on the Economics of the Cattle Industry}, p. 10.
district officers and the central administration. In 1937, the Chief Secretary, E.A. Dutton, noted that though the system had resulted in the saving of a large amount of work, it had led to the loss of contact between the secretariat staff and district officers especially with regard to African affairs.\(^{55}\) Indeed, the system contributed to the reduction in district tour reporting as some district officers saw no need of going on tours and writing reports that did not go beyond the shelves of the provincial administration. It was not surprising, therefore, that the system was discontinued in 1937 when provincial commissioners were directed to start sending to the secretariat two copies of each tour report, annexures thereto and their comments on the reports.\(^{56}\)

**Reducing poverty-related challenges**

The colonial government’s attempts to reduce the poverty-related challenges that resulted from the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia also recorded both successes and failures. A good example was the attempt to improve the circulation of money which was drastically curtailed by the shortage of coins in Northern Rhodesia. Even though money was acquired and brought into the country, its circulation, especially in rural areas, remained low throughout the period 1932-1937. For instance, although Southern Rhodesia issued £120,000 of silver coinage to Northern Rhodesia in 1933, only about £6,000 of it was in circulation in the territory by October, 1933 and it was estimated that just about £6,000 more would be in circulation by April, 1934.\(^{57}\) These amounts illuminate the slow rate at which the territory recovered from the currency shortage.

The scarcity of coins which hit Northern Rhodesia in 1932 and became acute in 1933 made Africans and some settler traders become accustomed to bartering their commodities. This constrained government efforts to revive the circulation of money even when currency was

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\(^{55}\) NAZ/SEC 2/62 Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, 19 November, 1937.  
\(^{56}\) NAZ/SEC 2/62 Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, 19 November, 1937.  
\(^{57}\) Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates, 8 November, 1933*, p. 212.
obtained. Furthermore, the absence of any coin of denomination lower than three pence in the country, up to 1934, became an obstacle to reviving the flow of money. When half penny and one penny cupro-nickel coins were introduced in Northern Rhodesia in 1934, Africans were reluctant to take them because they had become accustomed to selling their commodities at not less than three pence or on barter terms.\textsuperscript{58} As a result, settler traders had to return some of the coins to the banks and this made small articles continue to fetch slightly higher prices. The African rejection of coins in rural areas and the persistence of barter partly reflected their loss of confidence in the European currency system and their trust in the traditional system of exchange.

As the acceptance of the small denominational coins was very slow in Northern Rhodesia, the colonial government embarked on a campaign to encourage their use so as to reduce the cost of living in the country. The administration noted that the three pence was an unsuitable minimum coin and so intensified its efforts to encourage the use of the smaller denominational coins.\textsuperscript{59} Throughout 1935, colonial officials battled to encourage the use of cupro-nickel coins, namely, the half penny and one penny pieces, which were issued by Southern Rhodesia. The result was that banks were able to get cupro-nickel coins worth £200 in 1936 and £700 in 1937 most of which went into circulation.\textsuperscript{60} Thus, barter still remained the common mode of trade in most rural areas of Northern Rhodesia up to around 1938. A great improvement in the circulation of money was only reported in 1938, for example, in Barotse and Western provinces. The improvement was largely attributed to the increase in remissions of money, to their home districts, by Africans who were away at work and also to the improved cattle sales.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} NAZ/SEC 2/180 Regulations to abolish barter. Also see Pim and Milligan, \textit{Report of the Commission}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{60} Pim and Milligan, \textit{Report of the Commission}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{61} Livingstone Mail, Wednesday, 6 July, 1938, p. 6.
The colonial government’s attempt to provide relief to Africans who were genuinely unable to pay poll tax resulted in a lot of exemptions being granted during the years 1933-1935. There is evidence to suggest that a large number of Africans around the country were exempted from paying poll tax during the years upon proof of their inability to pay on account of old age, ill-health or economic incapacity. According to Pim and Milligan, statistics of exemptions for individual districts varied but the average was in the range of 20 to 25 percent, the highest being in Barotseland where it oscillated between 30 and 40 percent.62 A total of about 78,000 men or 21 percent of the African adult male population of Northern Rhodesia were exempted from the tax in 1933. This, in Moore’s view, translated to nearly every village having a number of men exempted from paying poll tax.63 It should be noted, however, that colonial officials remained firm in pursing those whom they believed had the capacity to pay, especially in urban areas.

The relaxation of poll tax imprisonment laws in 1934 also helped to reduce the number of Africans who were imprisoned for tax default. On average, one in every twenty African taxpayers who were in Northern Rhodesia during the Depression went to prison for not paying tax.64 The number of men imprisoned for tax default, however, reduced from 7,589 in 1933 to 1,951 in 1936.65 This was a total reduction of 5,638 over the three years or a decline of 74 percent of the 1933 figure. The drastic reduction partly resulted from the loosening of poll tax imprisonment regulations in 1934 and the exemption of many Africans from paying the tax. Chabatama notes, for example, that in the north-western districts of the country, there was a decline in the number

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64 Moore, *These African Copper Miners*, p. 23.
of Africans imprisoned for not paying tax in 1934 and that some tax defaulters were actually released from prison during the same year.66

African tax exemptions and the relaxed imprisonment of defaulters negatively affected the collection of poll tax in Northern Rhodesia. It contributed to delays in payment of the tax as some Africans preferred to attempt getting exempted and only paid when they were denied exemption. Besides, many of those who were denied exclusion became more resentful of the tax and began to deliberately evade payment.67 This contributed to the rise in the number of Africans who did not pay the tax in 1934. Clegg observes that at least 158,000 Africans defaulted on tax payment in 1934.68 In fact, out of about 368,000 Africans who were liable to pay the tax in 1934, about 181,200 or 49 percent did not meet their obligation due to exemption or evasion.69 This was a high figure and it caused anxiety among government officials who bemoaned its occurrence at a time when employment prospects had begun to improve in Northern Rhodesia. Exemptions and evasions actually made it difficult for poll tax revenues to recover. Throughout the period 1932-1938, annual collections of the African tax remained lower than the £153,100 attained in 1931.70 Cases of tax evasion remained high as late as 1938 and some Africans became so good at evading the tax that they were referred to as expert defaulters.71

With regard to European unemployment, it should be noted that the legislative changes made, particularly the tightening of immigration laws in 1933, came at a time when the mines were

66 Chabatama, “Peasant Farming, the State and Food Security”, p. 144.
67 Pin and Milligan, Report of the Commission, p. 121 and NAZ/SEC 2/558 Sesheke Tour Reports; organisation and Reports. Many men hid in the bush upon hearing that tax collectors were passing through their villages and they only returned to their homes after the collectors had passed.
68 Clegg, Race and Politics, p. 72.
70 See Northern Rhodesia, Report on Native Taxation, 1937 (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1938) and NAZ/ SEC 2/340 Vol. 4. Treasurer to Chief Secretary, 28 May, 1937. Poll tax revenues for the period 1932-1938 fluctuated between £112,000 and £103,000 and remained far below the 1931 figure of £153,100. Evasions, exemptions and the shortage of staff continued to hamper the recovery of poll tax collections up to 1938.
about to re-open and the mining industry about to be rejuvenated. In fact, some of the repatriated persons began to return to Northern Rhodesia in 1934 and the inflow of whites into the country began to rise again. For example, the number of immigrants, per annum, increased from 801 in 1933 to 1,726 in 1934 and remained high over the years, reaching a 1930s record figure of 2,785 in 1938. Therefore, it is argued here that the immigration restrictions that were adopted in Northern Rhodesia came slightly late and they did not do much to provide relief to the unemployment situation during the years of emergency.

Conclusion

The administrative and legislative response of the colonial government to the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia had its own share of successes and failures. This chapter has argued that the colonial government managed to attain some of the objectives which it attempted to achieve but failed to meet the others. Although the administration managed to reduce its expenditure and to generate additional revenues during the years 1932-1934, it failed to balance its budget during the period partly due to unanticipated expenses that were encountered on account of the staff reduction and destitute relief schemes. The changes made also compromised the efficiency of the administration as many programmes could not be effectively carried out due to the shortage of staff and the rationing of government funds. Furthermore, the colonial administration failed to maintain the widespread circulation of money in Northern Rhodesia, especially in the countryside, from the emergency years up to around 1938.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The study focused on the administrative and legislative changes that the colonial government made in its endeavour to mitigate the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia. Several conclusions have emerged from the research. The first is that the colonial government responded to the major challenges faced during the crisis, namely, the decline in government revenues, the widespread poverty and destitution, the difficulties faced by Africans in the payment of poll tax and the competition that Northern Rhodesian producers faced from external products on the local market. The response of Northern Rhodesia to these challenges largely reflected the concerns and priorities of the territorial administration but it was consistent with some of the responses of other British colonies.

Another conclusion of the study is that the colonial government’s major priority in its response to the impact of the Great Depression was to balance its budget which recorded a serious deficit in 1932 following the abrupt decline in revenues. The government made a number of administrative changes during the period 1932-1934 involving strict economies in departments and provincial administrations. The principal changes were the reorganisation of staff in the public service, the curtailment of departmental and provincial budgetary allocations, the realignment of departments and the rearrangement of provinces and districts. In its attempt to balance the budget during the period 1932-1934, the colonial administration also made legislative changes that legalised the levy and collection of new taxes and slapped duties on imports which were previously admitted duty free from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. These measures all helped to raise extra revenues but the import duties also served to reduce the competition that local producers faced from external commodities on the internal market.
Furthermore, the research concluded that the colonial government also sought to preserve its efficiency during the slump by spreading its administrative changes over the period 1932-1934. For example, staff layoffs were not all effected at once but spread over the three years. Also, the retrenchment first targeted personnel that were deemed to be less efficient so as to avoid compromising the quality of performance. Caution was also exercised in the economy campaign by targeting the curtailment of what the administration deemed to be luxury expenditure before general economies were carried out. In some cases, personnel and administrative units were transferred from one department to another in order to preserve government efficiency.

Another conclusion drawn from this research is that the colonial government found it hard to deal with the challenges faced in the collection of African tax during the Depression. While the administration appreciated the difficulties faced by Africans in raising money for the payment of poll tax from 1932 onwards, it was reluctant to reduce tax rates until 1935 due to the significance of the tax in raising the revenues that were needed to balance the budget. In 1932, the administration only attempted to maintain the circulation of money in the country by acquiring and legalising currency from Southern Rhodesia and Britain. It was only in 1934 that the government passed legislation that authorised the exemption of Africans from the tax on grounds of proven inability to pay and it relaxed the imprisonment of tax defaulters.

Other legislative changes that the colonial government made sought to mitigate the challenges of European unemployment, poverty and destitution which were so high in Northern Rhodesia, in 1932 and 1933, that colonial officials began fearing that a poor white class was beginning to emerge in the country. Though the government’s effort to provide relief work to impoverished Europeans from 1932 onwards was of help to the destitutes, it led to their dependence on aid and cost the administration considerably. To address the challenge of destitution, the government, in
1933, passed ordinances that restricted immigration into the country and legalised compulsory repatriation of destitute Europeans for whom there was no hope of finding employment.

The study also concluded that the impact of the Great Depression in Northern Rhodesia had reduced quite markedly by the end of 1935 after which the government began to undo some of the administrative and legislative changes made during the economic crisis. For example, the tax on official salaries was reduced in April, 1936 and abolished in July the same year. Also, the number of provinces was increased from five to six in 1937. However, the colonial government remained skeptical about the end of the Depression up to around 1937 when it began to seriously re-expand its administrative machinery. Some of the changes made during the slump such as the collection of entertainments tax and non-native personal tax remained in force beyond 1939.

In assessing the role of the changes made, the study has concluded that the response of the colonial government to the impact of the slump had its own share of successes and failures. For example, although the government managed to reduce its expenditure and raise additional revenues, it did not manage to balance the budget during the emergency period. The economies pursued and the taxes introduced significantly reduced the deficits recorded during the years 1932-1934 but did not balance the budget until 1935 partly due to unforeseen expenses incurred during the period. Another conclusion is that the effort to maintain the countrywide circulation of money did not materialise during the emergency period. Many rural dwellers reverted to barter by 1933 and they resented the use of small value coins that were introduced. Until 1936, traders continued to return many of the issued coins to banks as Africans rejected them. The circulation of money in rural Northern Rhodesia only recovered significantly in 1938.
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Monographs and Seminar Papers


Internet Sources


## Appendix 1

### Provinces and Districts of Northern Rhodesia in 1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Districts included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barotse</td>
<td>Balovale, Kalabo, Lealui, Mankoya, Nalolo, Sesheke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batoka</td>
<td>Kalomo, Livingstone, Mazabuka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kafue</td>
<td>Chilanga, Feira, Mumbwa, Namwala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luangwa</td>
<td>Broken Hill, Mkushi, Ndola, Serenje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasemba</td>
<td>Kasempa, Mwinilunga, Solwezi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awemba</td>
<td>Chinsali, Kasama, Luwingu, Mpika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Luangwa</td>
<td>Fort Jameson, Lundazi, Petauke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mweru-Luapula</td>
<td>Chiengi, Fort Rosebery, Kawambwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanganyika</td>
<td>Abercorn, Isoka, Mporokoso</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAZ/SEC 2/26 Northern Rhodesia Notice No. 21 of 1929.
Appendix 2

Northern Rhodesia’s Revenue and Expenditure, 1930-38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total Revenue (£)</th>
<th>Total Expenditure (£)</th>
<th>Surplus/Deficit (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>830,254</td>
<td>704,986</td>
<td>+125,268</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>856,376</td>
<td>820,056</td>
<td>+36,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>649,538</td>
<td>790,506</td>
<td>-140,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>718,283</td>
<td>778,879</td>
<td>-60,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>693,337</td>
<td>712,903</td>
<td>-19,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>833,484</td>
<td>806,429</td>
<td>+27,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>863,255</td>
<td>887,417</td>
<td>-24,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>981,894</td>
<td>909,252</td>
<td>+72,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1,593,504</td>
<td>1,417,776</td>
<td>+175,728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>