To the Glory of God and the Mnjama Family
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This study is a critical examination of records management at the Kenya Railways Corporation and its predecessor organisations - the Kenya and Uganda Railways, the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours, the East African Railways and Harbours Corporation and the East African Railways Corporation. It examines the techniques, procedures, facilities and staff available for the management of records and considers the requirements for their creation, retention, storage, retrieval, preservation and final disposition. It demonstrates that during the colonial period, attempts to develop a records management programme were hampered by the lack of a strong national archives service to oversee records management practices.

The study goes on to discuss the role of records management within the context of administrative reform programmes taking place at the Kenya Railways Corporation. It demonstrates that the success of the administrative reform programme to a large extent depends on a records management policy and programme to enhance standardisation in the handling, storage and retrieval of information.

It stresses the need to develop records management policies and procedures to underpin administrative reform programmes. The need to comply with legal requirements and considerations is emphasised, particular in relation to
records retention and disposal. Other recommendations are the need to employ records administrators and records managers to handle the Corporation’s records and the establishment of a centralised storage facility to provide security, accessibility and economical storage for inactive records. Finally the role of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation in the management of public records is analyzed and recommendations made for future improvements.
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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1.1 Purpose and origin of study

The value of records to administration cannot be overstated. They are indispensable tools of administrators, and their effective management constitutes a crucial element in efficient management. Records contain evidence of organisational functions, policies, procedures, operations and other activities. They are the corporate memory of the organisation and are, therefore, an organisation’s resource as well as its asset. In a recent study Archives and records management for decision making, Peter Mazikana has observed that:

the formulation, presentation, and control of budgets, the recruitment, maintenance, advancement and discharge of personnel, the purchasing, receipt, storage and issuance of stores, the formulation and implementation of projects, all these depend on information and require that decisions be made at various points.¹

However, for records to be of value they must be managed from the time of their creation through their distribution, utilisation, retention, storage, retrieval to their final disposition. According to Maedke², information

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is not only our most important tool today, but it also constitutes our greatest requirement for effective decision-making. K B Asante, then the Secretary for Education in Ghana noted in a speech during the official closing ceremony of the Second West African Regional Workshop on the Management of Semi-current Records, that "the major factor in the gross inefficiencies and lack of continuity in the policies and procedures of many African governments is not as commonly supposed frequent changes in government, but bad management of records." He went on further to say, "often there is no records management at all."³

It is, therefore, surprising that the Kenya Railways Corporation has no co-ordinated policy governing the creation, maintenance and disposal of its records. A survey of its records indicates that railway records are currently held in unsatisfactory storage conditions. No records centre is in existence and no complete retrieval tools are available. Records are retained in its registries for unnecessarily long periods, and there is no systematic way of transferring older files to low cost storage areas. Security classified records are never declassified and retention schedules are non-existent, or where they do exist, they have become obsolete.

This should not imply that the Kenya Railways has no appreciation of the value of information. In 1971, it embarked on a computerised system which monitors the movement of wagons and provides a detailed analysis of the location, destination and goods carried by each wagon. Yet records, which could provide so much information about the railways operations, have been ignored as a resource.

Various surveys on railway records have been undertaken by the Kenya National Archives, but these have had very little impact on the manner in which the records are handled. Why should this be the case? Is it because the approach used by the Kenya National Archives has been drastically wrong? What are the underlying reasons for the failure to evolve an efficient records management programme within the railway network?

This study takes a critical look at the procedures for records creation, maintenance, retrieval and disposition. It sets out a suitable records management programme. The study also seeks to demonstrate that an effective records management programme must address itself to the entire life cycle of records. Dealing with discrete aspects of the records management cycle will not solve the problem.

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It is hoped that the lessons which have been learnt from this study will be utilised for implementing a records management programmes in the Railways and in other public bodies in Kenya where similar problems are experienced. The need for effective records management programmes in Kenya cannot be under-estimated, especially at this stage of development when the country is going through a structural adjustment programme sponsored by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this dissertation is to determine how records are managed by the Kenya Railways Corporation from the time of their creation to their final disposition and to formulate principles for managing them efficiently. This dissertation seeks to answer the following questions.

- What are the present record keeping practices and trends in the management and utilisation of railway records in Kenya?
- What are the main problems involved in establishing an efficient records management programme for railway records and how can these problems be overcome?
- What professional systems and organisational structures are desirable for the management of railway records?
- How do railway records differ from other public records in Kenya?
- What legislation or regulation, if any, have a bearing on the way railway records are created, maintained, used, retained or destroyed?

1.3 Limitations

Due to the lack of financial resources and time constraints, it was not possible to examine and compare how record-keeping practices have evolved within the Uganda and Tanzania Railways, which up to 1977 formed part of the larger East African Railways Corporation. The study also excludes any investigation of the records of the Kenya Ports Authority, an organisation with a close working relationship with Kenya Railways and which formed part of the East African Railways and Harbours Administration between 1948 and 1967. For similar reasons, it was not possible to investigate and compare how records are managed in other large public corporations in Kenya such as the Kenya Posts and Telecommunications or the Kenya Airways.

It was only possible to conduct interviews with a limited number of action officers engaged in one way or other in the management of records. Similarly, not all of the railways registries and records stores in the country were inspected.
1.4 General usefulness, thrust and importance

Archives and records management is a relatively new area of study in Africa. This is reflected in the lack of any substantial published literature on managing records in either government or non-government bodies in Africa. Most of the work on archives and records management has been undertaken in developed countries and even then the trend has been to concentrate on specific aspects of processing records. So far, little attempt has been made to produce models of the inter-relationships between the different elements of a records management programme and to indicate where priority should be placed within the records management cycle. For example, should priority be placed at the records creation stage, at the maintenance stage or at the disposal stage? In the past, emphasis has been placed in the development of retention/disposal schedules as the starting point for managing records. In a report compiled for UNESCO F B Evans argues that:

A realistic approach to the development of an effective records management programme requires that the programme concentrates initially upon the area of records disposal. Only after a disposal programme has been implemented should emphasis be directed towards the area of records maintenance and use, and records creation.  

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This study seeks to contribute to records management theory by demonstrating that a totally new approach to managing records is the only way to solving records management problems at the Kenya Railways Corporation and in other developing countries where record-keeping systems have collapsed. William Benedon has argued that "the real key to the success of a records management programme stems from the support received from top management as well as from all employees." But Benedon fails to identify what kind of top management support is required and why it has not been forthcoming? This study seeks to illustrate that in the past records management programmes have had very little impact on organisations or have failed totally because of the piecemeal and bottom-up approach taken by traditional archivists and records managers.

Recent records management workshops held in Ghana and The Gambia between 1989 and 1992 have indicated that for a records management programme to succeed, all phases of the life cycle must be addressed in an integrated programme. The workshops were organised by the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers and were supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat. In both countries, these workshops were followed up by British Overseas Development Administration technical assistance

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programmes. The key elements of these aid programmes include proper legislation, attractive schemes of service, efficient registry systems, proper classification systems, trained personnel, modern records centres, and new organisational structures for managing records. Any deviation from this integrated approach or any simple patchwork leads to an inefficient records management system and will only provide temporary solutions.

As a foundation for designing an integrated programme suitable for introduction at the Kenya Railways Corporation, this study identifies the many problems which have plagued records management programmes which have already been attempted there.

1.5 Hypothesis and analytical framework

This study is based on the premise that records created in an organisation have a life cycle: records are created, used for some purpose, stored or filed for future reference, and eventually disposed of or deposited in an archival institution. In institutions where records are managed effectively, there is an efficient, cost effective

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8 Pearce, N E. Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in the Age of Abundance, Toronto: Lexington Books, 1984, pp.23-24
flow of records through the stages of the records life cycle. Where records are mismanaged, the flow of records through the life cycle is retarded, chaotic or virtually non-existent. When this happens access to information contained in the records becomes difficult, decisions are delayed and the operations of the organisation become inefficient. Archival functions, especially appraisal, also become difficult as each file has to be checked individually to determine whether it should be retained or destroyed.

1.6 Research Methods

Flecker\(^9\) recommends four different methods for collecting data in the area of archives and records management. These are:

- self administered questionnaires,
- interviews,
- personal observation of procedures, and
- examination of records.

All these four methods were used for this study. Wherever possible, a combination of methods was used for gathering data in any one particular situation. Lists of registry supervisors and chief clerks were obtained from Railway Headquarters. All the major departments were

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surveyed. In each department, division or section interviews were conducted with senior officers about the organisation and its policies and with a registry supervisor or clerk who could describe registry practices in his/her office. A different set of questions was used during interviews with heads of departments and various senior officers.

Registries were visited in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru to observe how records are handled, assess staff attitudes to records management work and inspect record-keeping practices. Record stores were also visited.

As the Kenyan Railway records are yet to be arranged and listed, it was impossible to consult them in detail. It is for this reason that this study has relied heavily on secondary sources.

1.7 Organisation of the study

This dissertation is divided into ten chapters. This chapter examines the problem of managing records at the Kenya Railways Corporation, defines the purpose of the study, states its limitations and scope, develops the hypothesis and describes the method of study. It also reviews available literature on records management generally. It concludes by examining the general usefulness, thrust and relevance of the study.
Chapter Two provides an account of the history of Railways in Kenya. It discusses the reasons for its construction and considers the problems encountered and administrative arrangements up to 1948 when the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours was amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services. It concludes by examining events leading to the break-up of the East African Community in 1977.

Chapter Three provides a discussion on railway records as sources of information for the study of Kenya history. The Chapter argues that the completion of the railway in 1901 led to rapid socio-economic development of Kenya. It highlights some of the developmental areas for which railway records provide valuable information.

Chapter Four examines efforts made by the Corporation to manage its records up to 1977. The chapter takes an historical approach and points out that initially the Corporation made some attempts to manage its records. However, the lack of a strong national archival service which would have assisted in the development of archival facilities hampered the creation of an archival service for the railways.

Chapter Five provides an account of present administrative arrangements and examines the present state of records management at the Kenya Railways. It concludes
by exploring possible reasons for the poor state of records management at the Corporation. The chapter argues that records management problems are not only a direct result of inefficient administrative practices within the Corporation but are also due to the ongoing failure of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service to play an effective supervisory role.

Chapter Six analyses legal issues affecting the management of railway records. By examining national laws and international conventions, the chapter shows how these have a bearing on managing railway records. The chapter argues that an effective records disposal programme must be based on a sound understanding of legal requirements and legal considerations.

Chapter Seven discusses the role of records management within the administrative reform programme presently taking place at the Kenya Railways Corporation. The chapter is based on the conviction that administrative reform programmes will be incomplete unless they include a records management component.

In Chapter Eight the discussion is focused on policy issues relating to records management. The chapter identifies several elements required for a successful records management programmes and concludes by pointing out that the most important elements are top management support,
appointment of an information resource manager and the creation of an information resource centre.

Chapter Nine provides a discussion on how record keeping practices can be improved at the Kenya Railway Corporation. The chapter argues that an effective records management programme must begin by instituting controls at the records creation stage.

Finally Chapter Ten explores various alternatives for managing semi-current and non-current records. The Chapter argues that the starting point for a records management programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation must begin with the processing of backlog accumulations. This must then be followed by the creation of a records centre and the development of a records disposal programme.

1.8 REVIEW OF RELATED WORK

1.8.1 Records management

Several attempts have been made to define the term records management but so far there does not seem to be any universally accepted definition. Records management as defined by Peter Emmerson "is an administrative system by which an organisation seeks to control the creation, distribution, filing, retrieval, storage and disposal of those records which are created or received by that
organisation in the course of its business."¹⁰ A similar definition is given by William Benedon, who defined records management as "the direction of a program designed to provide efficiency in the creation, organisation, maintenance, use, retrieval and disposition of records ensuring that needless records will not be created or kept and valuable records will be preserved and made available."¹¹

According to Place and Popham¹², records management involves "the application of scientific control to the creating, processing, filing, maintaining, protecting and dispositioning of an organisation's records." The historian O. Lawrence Burnette Jr. sees records management as the process of "selectively reducing to manageable proportions the bulk of records indigenous to modern civilisation in such a way as permanently to preserve those of the future cultural value without impairing the substantive integrity of the mass for purposes of research."¹³

But what are records? The celebrated American Archivist T R Schellenberg defined records as:


All books, papers, maps, photographs and other documentary material regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution as evidence of its functions, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities or because of the information value of the data contained therein.  

Philip Hutches argues that information is an organisational resource which if properly managed can lead to improved decision-making and increase productivity but if poorly managed has the opposite effect. On the other hand Carl Weisse makes it quite clear that a failure to control information is not "just a minor lapse or an insignificant concern but a case of bad management."  

Cook argues that in the past much emphasis has been paid to the idea of "efficiency" and "economy" in records management practice. He, however, points out that although records management saves money and increases efficiency, this fact alone cannot justify the introduction of a

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17 Cook, M. "This is Records Management," Records Management II, Proceedings of a one-day Conference held at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, on 7th April 1978, by the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists, p.7
records management programme in an organisation. To him, the principal aim of records management is the creation of a record bank which contains all the information necessary to the working of its users and from which that information can efficiently be retrieved and put to use.

Agreeing with Cook, the authors Maedke, Robek and Brown\textsuperscript{18} emphasise the fact that records management programmes strive to achieve an orderly, efficient flow of information throughout the organisation. They further point out that records management programmes have a direct bearing on whether an organisation has effective management or not.

The need for an effective records management programmes is an area that Lovron\textsuperscript{19} discusses at length. His main argument is that the need to introduce records management programmes in business is greater today than it has been in the past. This is a direct result of modern technology, which has led to paperwork explosion. Leahy and Cameron\textsuperscript{20} identified the need to control this paperwork explosion as one way in which records management can


\textsuperscript{19} Lovron, L W. Keynote speaker at the American Records Management Association conference held at Seattle, Records Management Quarterly, Vol.9, No.1, 1975, p.7

contribute to the success of business through "the creation of fewer and better records."

But despite the significant role played by records in management in increasing administrative efficiency and effectiveness, Gill\(^\text{21}\) points out that record making and record keeping is perhaps the costliest part of any office practice. Johnson and Kallaus\(^\text{22}\) estimate that up to 90% of all office activity is spent on record making.

According to Penn\(^\text{23}\) records pass through four stages which he refers to as the life cycle of records. The first phase of the records cycle deals with the creation of the record. He points out that a record may be created in a variety of media including paper, electronic, video, microform etc. The second stage begins from the time the record is received in the organisation. At this second stage the document must be classified and filed to ensure easy retrieval and accessibility. The document is now in its active stage. The third stage in the life cycle of a document is the semi-active stage when the record is no longer required for day to day operations of the organisation. At this stage the main concern of the records

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management is cheap storage and easy retrieval. The final stage in the life cycle of the record is disposition when a decision has to be made as to whether to retain the record for historical and research purposes or to be disposed of.

Carl Newton\textsuperscript{24}, agreeing with Penn, goes further to point out that it is vitally important to understand that records management is concerned with the entire life cycle of the record as it progresses through the basic system stages. In accepting the view that records pass through four stages, Michael Roper\textsuperscript{25} is quick to point out that it is of paramount importance that records management systems be integrated. He emphasises the fact that for a records management system to operate effectively and efficiently, it requires the co-operation of administrators, records managers and archivists.

The discussion that follows examines in greater detail the various phases of the records life cycle beginning from records creation to their final disposition.


\textsuperscript{25} Roper, M. "This is Records Management," \textit{Records Management 1: Proceedings of a one-day Conference held at University of Liverpool, 21 October 1977 by the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists}. London, 1977, p.10
1.8.2 Records creation

Mail management

According to Deslongchamps, mail management involves the receiving, sorting, opening, routing controlling, distributing of in-coming mail and the collection, preparation and despatch of out-going mail. Bergsten identified three elements as being essential in a mail management programme. These are speed, safety and cost. To him, mail must reach its destination by the fastest, safest and cheapest means. Rhodes supports this view but thinks these objectives can be achieved by discontinuing non-essential mail room functions, making maximum use of available resources and through standardising office procedures and practices. Both Bergsten and Rhodes specifically recommend the use of mail slitters, sorters, sorting bins, conveyors, vertical lifts etc for in-going mail and the use of scales, sealers, inserters, tying machines and electronic sorters for out-going mail. In addition they recommend provision of adequate and convenient work space.

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Directives Management

Ricks\(^2\) has defined a directive as "an instruction from management - a form of downward directive - usually addressing policy or procedure". Directives management includes office notices, management statements, orders, circulars, bulletins, manuals, etc. Directives as seen by Ira Penn\(^3\) are necessary in eliminating chaos in organisations. According to him, directives are the main channels of communicating executive information. He states that directives are mainly used to instruct, command, guide and inform personnel. The United States General Services Administration manual on Directives Management indicates that when properly designed and implemented, a directives management system gives managers an organised uniform way of issuing instructions and disseminating information. The booklet, however, emphasises the need for organisations to have one single source of reference for all directives.\(^4\) Maedke\(^5\) stresses the need for periodical reviews in order to avoid duplication, reflect accuracy and to ensure that there is need for instruction.

\(^3\) Penn, I. A. op. cit., p.7
\(^4\) U S. General Services Administration. Directives Management, Washington DC, 1986, p. 3
\(^5\) Maedke et al., op cit., p.8
Forms management

Ulfsparrè\textsuperscript{33} defines a form as (i) a document, printed or otherwise, with pre-designated spaces for the recording of specified information or (ii) a document intended to serve as a model. He further points out that forms, according to their function can either be administrative or operational. Administrative forms are used as a management tool and affect routines and activities. Forms hold information which is in itself operational.

According to Susan Diamond\textsuperscript{34} a forms management programme involves analyzing the users’ needs to determine what forms (if any) are needed, then designing the best possible forms to meet those needs and finally monitoring all forms used in the organisation to ensure maximum efficiency in ordering, stocking and distribution. Maedke,\textsuperscript{35} sees the usefulness of forms in the fact that they serve as a chief means of communicating information in a methodical and standardised way. Agreeing with Maedke, Penn points out that when properly designed, forms not only enhance the flow of work in the organisation but also increase operational efficiency and effectiveness and reduce administrative costs.


\textsuperscript{35} Maedke et al., op cit., p. 425
Available literature on forms management does not provide sufficient information on how to design forms, the length of forms, nor how different forms can be used for gathering similar information. There is, therefore, need for further investigation into forms design, usage and management.

Reports management

The U.S. General Services Administration defines reports management as "the planning, directing, organising, training, promoting and other managerial activities involved in the creation, processing and use of reports." The same document also identifies the functions of reports management as being:

- identification of the information needs of managers at every organisational level,
- collection, transmission, processing and storage of information through the most economical use of personnel, funds and equipment,
- prevention of imposition of invalid, inefficient or unnecessary reports,
- co-ordination of reports management with related information resource activities, and
- subjection of reports and reporting systems to a continuous objective review for quality and

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economy reporting.

Maedke’s points out that in addition to the functions specified above, report management programs assist agencies in many other ways. For example:

- they provide a systematic means for improving the flow and content of information,
- they help to reduce voluminous data accumulation by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative reports,
- they assist in measuring the value of information against the cost of collecting it, and
- they improve reporting methods and techniques by applying information processing technology thus reducing administrative costs.

Kenneth Hayes in his article "Organising a Reports Programme in a Large Company" identified several problems inherent in managing reports. These include:

- some reports appear to be unnecessary but yet continue to be received in the organisation,
- reports are received too often or not often enough,
- reports are received too late to allow effective action by the recipient,

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37 Maedke et al, op cit., p.8

there are errors in the distribution of the reports - they are sent too high or too low in the organisation structure,
- reports are presented in a format that is too difficult to interpret,
- essential information is missing or alternatively there is too much information, and
- contents are inaccurate as a result of faulty input, processing errors or problems in programme design.

Reussow\textsuperscript{39} argues that for a reports management programme to be effective it must not only be placed in the proper echelon of administration but must also have qualified personnel and utilise the latest technology in planning for the future of the organisation.

1.8.3 Records maintenance and use

Correspondence management

Maedke\textsuperscript{40} considers correspondence management as the regulation of all correspondence processed by an organisation through a uniform system for creation, generation, filing, maintenance and disposition of such correspondence.


\textsuperscript{40} Maedke et al., op cit., p.463
records. According to Curtis\textsuperscript{41} the objectives of mail management are:

- to eliminate and simplify wherever possible the creation of correspondence,
- to improve the quality of correspondence so that it serves its purpose,
- to develop correspondence standards and guides,
- to eliminate or reduce the number of carbon and other copies that clutter files, and
- to reduce time and work and, therefore, costs in the creation as well as in the processing and retention of correspondence.

Filing management

According to Maedke, a file arrangement is a logical order of documents or files. Continolo\textsuperscript{42} states that a filing system is created to fulfil the following objectives:

- to gather together in an orderly fashion all the documents which circulate in the business,
- to assure the preservation of documents collected,
- to retrieve documents quickly when requested by the various departments in the organisation,

\textsuperscript{41} Curtis G. "Correspondence Creation Control," \textit{Records Management Quarterly}, Vol.8, No.2, July, 1974, p.9

to carry out the functions outlined above in the best and most economical way possible.

Maedke defines an index as an arrangement of names or topics in either an alphabetical or numerical order that provides the searcher with the unknown element needed to locate an item filed within the system.\(^4\)

**Vital records**

Kenny\(^4\), defined vital records as those records without which a company could not continue to operate after an emergency. Ciura\(^5\) observed that although a vital records protection programme can mean the continuation or discontinuation of an organisation following an emergency, most organisations lack such programmes. To her, a vital records programme is a form of insurance against disaster which pays high dividends as it could enable continuation of an organisation's operations following an emergency.

Settanni\(^6\), agreeing with Ciura, considers a vital records protection programme as a natural sub-set of a

\(^{43}\) Maedke and et al, op.cit, p.157


records management programme. To him, only three to five percent of the records created in an organisation can be categorised as vital records. Both Ciura\textsuperscript{47} and Kenny\textsuperscript{48} point out that a vital records protection programme is not only expensive but also labour intensive. Donaldson\textsuperscript{49} recommends that legal guidance should be sought in order to ensure that all records that would be required following an emergency are included in a vital records protection programme.

1.8.4 Records disposition

Records disposal schedules

According to Continolo\textsuperscript{50} inactive records do not always receive sufficient attention from administrators. He thinks most administrators view inactive records as being valuable for historical research only. He argues that, although this might be partly true, it should always be remembered that the many decisions which an organisation has to make are based on information contained in inactive

\textsuperscript{47} Ciura, J. "Vital Records Protection." p.10

\textsuperscript{48} Kenny, A. "Establishing a Vital Records Programme." p.54.


files. The usefulness of inactive records to current information can only be enhanced by careful selection of records whereby obsolete files are disposed of. He further points out that the work of selecting files for preservation can greatly be enhanced by records retention schedules.

The Records Management Office of New South Wales defines records disposal schedules as a "listing of all departmental housekeeping records specifying how long departments should keep records (retention periods) and whether upon the expiry of the specified period those records are to be destroyed or become state archives."\(^\text{51}\)

Patennall\(^\text{52}\) considers a records disposal schedule as the most important tool for a records management office not only because it assists in the disposal of records but because it also assists in the review of the system. Mary Oliva\(^\text{53}\) is of the opinion that a records retention programme should be designed in close consultation with record creators. In order to develop a retention schedule she recommends that one should:


\(^\text{52}\) Patennall, D. "Records Management: Three Years Experience at the Records Management Office of New South Wales," \textit{Archives and Manuscripts}, Vol.7, No.5, 1979, p.252

- obtain an organisational chart of the division or department,
- determine who is responsible for the records,
- determine where the records are by asking the people responsible, using a floor plan and conducting a physical inspection of the premises in both active and non-active areas,
- determine what the records are by taking a physical inventory,
- appraise and evaluate the records,
- assign suggested retention periods and develop a preliminary schedule,
- obtain departmental tax and legal approval,
- prepare finalised schedules,
- publish and distribute the finalised schedules,
- develop systems for the required security of vital records,
- dispose records of ephemeral value,
- develop procedures and assign responsibilities for maintaining the records retention programme in each division/subsidiary.

Appraisal of records

Appraisal as defined in The American Archivist issue for 1974 is "the process of determining the value and thus the disposition of records based upon their current administrative, legal, and fiscal use, their evidential and
information and research value, their arrangement and relationship to other records." The importance of appraisal of records was best summed up by Haas when he wrote, "all other archival activities hinge on appraisal."

Kromnow in a report to the International Council on Archives in 1976 observed that appraisal of modern records was the most important and sensitive problem in archival science. Why should this be the case? In a study prepared for UNESCO, Felix Hull noted that appraisal of records is essentially a phenomenon of this century forced upon archivists and records managers by the sheer bulk of records created by present day governments and other organisations. Thus Morris Reiger observing that the retirement of records as they become non-current is inevitable, points out organisations must decide whether to

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have an unplanned, chaotic retirement of records or a systematic procedure for retirement of records as they become inactive.

A World Bank report on the appraisal of the Bank's own records published in 1989 takes the same position and argues that appraisal of records must be undertaken alongside other records activities and should not be delayed until the records become inactive. It notes that the appraisal process should be part of the normal routine office work. On the actual process of appraising records, Haas argues that there are no absolute or easy answers to appraisal. Appraisal, he argues, must be carried out in specific institutional settings, where space, staff, resources and particular subject interests temper all decisions.

Records centres

The use of records centres is seen by most authors as an essential element in the management of records. Kish defined a records centre as "an establishment primarily for


60 Haas, op cit., p.9

storage, servicing, security and processing of semi-active records that must be preserved for varying periods of time and need not be retained in office equipment." According to Mabbs\(^2\) the aims of records centres are to:

- prevent the unnecessary use of space used as offices for public departments and other bodies for the storage of records which are no longer in active use,

- prevent the use of repositories for the storage of papers which retain sufficient administrative use and yet have not reached the age at which they can be made available for public inspection,

- ensure that records which are no longer in active use are subjected to effective procedures for the identification of those which can be destroyed after agreed retention periods, and

- provide a service for making documents available to various organisations to which they belong.

Jill Hampson\(^3\) argues that the key factor in the success of a records centre is cost saving. Agreeing with Hampson, Maedke\(^4\) points out that the value of a records


\(^3\) Hampson, J. "Running a Records Centre," *Records Management II*, Proceeding of a one-day Conference held at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow by the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists, 7th April 1978, London, 1977, p.43

\(^4\) Maedke et al, op.cit., p.351
centre to an organisation is beyond question. To him, a records centre not only provides viable and economical alternative to micrographics storage, expensive office retention or premature destruction of records but also saves money on staff and office equipment. However, Wratten argues that although in theory records centres are established in order to provide low cost efficient services and to allow the removal of semi-current records from expensive office space, these factors alone are not convincing enough to justify the establishment of records centres. To him some of the factors which may hinder the establishment of a records centre by an organisation include:

- the desire by action officers to have all records immediately at hand,
- sheer inertia (or it is easier to do nothing syndrome),
- the politics of the office (whether it is the in-thing to do), and
- the timing (whether to organisation is ready to invest resources).

1.9 Records Management in Kenya

Not much literature is available in the field of

65 Wratten, N. "The Challenges of Setting up a Records Centre: From Idea to Reality," Records Management 10, proceeding of a one-day seminar held at the Westgate Hotel, by the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists, Newport, Gwent, 22 November, 1985, p.38
archives and records management in Kenya. The history of record keeping in Kenya was outlined by Musembi who traces it to 1956 when the Chief Secretary issued Archives Regulation No.1 which established the post of the chief archivist and a repository in the basement of Jogoo House "A". Although the post was abolished in 1961, T.R. Cashmore, who was researching the history of district officers in Kenya, agreed to assist in the collection of government records and arranging for their transfer and deposit in Nairobi. At the same time arrangements were made, mainly through the efforts of Mergery Perham of the Oxford Colonial Records Project, to appoint an archivist from the United Kingdom as chief archivist. Derek Charman was subsequently appointed as chief archivist and served for two years, after which he was replaced by Nathan Fedha in 1965. Up to 1974 the Kenya National Archives was a relatively small organisation which concentrated on the processing of records in Jogoo House.

The most extensive study on records management in Kenya was undertaken by Ian Maclean, an Australian records manager who served as a UNESCO consultant for Kenya.

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66 Musembi, M. Archives Management: the Kenyan Experience, Nairobi: Africa Book Service, 1985

Government in 1978. In his report to UNESCO, he expressed his apprehension at the large number of non-archival and records management activities being performed by the Kenya National Archives. Similar views were expressed by John Walford who carried out a short term UNESCO consultancy mission in 1982 and observed that from 1974 the Kenya National Archives had gone through a period of uncontrolled growth in areas which were not directly related to records management. This had made the Archives ineffective in carrying out its core professional functions in the areas of archives and records management. Wamukoya discusses the progress Kenya National Archives has made since 1982 and he is of the opinion that the Government is now on the right course towards the establishment of an effective records management programme.

1.10 The relevance of records management to Kenya

The above analysis has revealed the existence of abundant literature on the subject of archives and records management. But despite the existence of this literature, records management practices in Kenya are still emerging.

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The Kenya National Archives has had many of its professionals trained in the West and yet efficient record keeping practices have not taken root in the country. Throughout the civil service and in parastatal organisations, there is widespread need to address the ways in which records are kept.

This study takes a new approach, by presenting a practical strategy for conceiving, designing and implementing records management programmes in developing countries where record-keeping practices have collapsed using the Kenya Railways Corporation as a case study. This approach is based on the conviction that a records management programme developed in Europe, North America or Australia cannot simply be tacked onto organisations in Kenya and expected to work. This study raises the range of issues which must be tackled in the Kenyan environment. However, it is the responsibility of each institution to evaluate the existing literature and develop its own records management system that meets its requirements. The Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service which is responsible for managing public records will need to play a major role in supporting these efforts.

This study seeks to contribute to other aspects of records management in Kenya. So far, no attempt has been made to link records management to administrative reforms. By examining the case of the Kenya Railways Corporation,
this study demonstrates that there is a direct relationship between records management and administrative efficiency. In this way, it contributes to literature on administrative reforms in Kenya.

In terms of research into record keeping practices in Kenya, this study is the first to be undertaken at a doctoral level and it will contribute significantly to the study of archives and records management at higher levels of learning in Kenya.
CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the events leading to the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railways, problems encountered during its construction and administrative arrangements for the management of the line between 1895 and 1977. It analyses the events that led to the amalgamation of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services in 1948. Finally, it reviews the problems that led to the collapse of the East African Community, of which the East African Railways Corporation was a major service organization.

2.2 The building of the Uganda Railway

Of all the organizations in Kenya, public or private the Railways is oldest. In fact Sir Edward Grigg, who served in Kenya as Governor, once remarked that the history of Kenya is linked very closely to the railways. He went on to say that, "it was the railways that created Kenya as a crown colony." Without the railway the history of Kenya could have taken a totally different course.

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The history of railways in Kenya can be traced back to 1896 when the British Parliament approved the construction of a railway line from Mombasa to Lake Victoria, which was then part of Uganda. The decision to construct the railway was based on several factors, some of which were very difficult to explain at the time. The Daily News described the construction of this railway as "a costly experiment... with no possibility of it being made a financial success in the near future."\(^2\) Sir Winston Churchill, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, called it "the adventurous enterprise of a Liberal Government".\(^3\) Why should this railway generate such controversy and debate? Perhaps the mystery that surrounded the construction of this railway was best summarised by the Poet Loubeche're when in 1896 he wrote saying:

What it will cost no words can express  
What its object no brain can suppose  
Where it will start from, no one can guess  
Where it is going nobody knows  
What is the use of it, no one can conjure  
What it will carry there is no one who can define  
And inspite of George Curzon's superior lecture  
It clearly is not, but a lunatic line.\(^4\)

Several reasons have been advanced as to why the railway line was built. These range from humanitarian to

\(^2\) The Daily News, London, 19th March 1901

\(^3\) Churchill, W. My African Journey, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909, p.4

strategic considerations. In the first instance, it was argued that under the terms of the Brussels Agreement of 1890 the British Government was under an obligation to construct the railway line from Mombasa to Lake Victoria as one way of ending the slave trade. In order to comply with the provisions of this treaty the Foreign Office wrote to the Treasury on 20th December 1890 indicating that:

The coast is the outlet of the sea borne slave traffic. The interior is the source from which it springs...Experience has shown no ships, nor coast police can effectively stop the traffic and that the remedy is that pointed out in 1st article: the establishment of interior stations and the construction of roads and more specifically railways which will provide cheap and safe transport.®

The view that the construction of the railway line was the only effective way to end the slave trade was supported by the Prime Minister (later the Marquis of Salisbury) in a speech to the House of Commons when he said, "it would be the most fatal blow to the slave trade which could possibly be delivered". He went on to point out that as all the slaves were conducted to the coast in caravans, the construction of the railway line would dry up the supply of caravans and the trade required to support it within 100 miles of the terminus of the railway or 100 miles on either side of it.®

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® House of Commons, 10th August 1901. See also C.6560 Papers Respecting the Proposed Railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria, London: HMSO, February 1892, p.3

® C. 6560 Papers Respecting the Proposed Railway, p.3
Although the Government wished to convince the British public that humanitarian aspects were central in its decision to build the railway, other considerations may have had an upper hand in that decision. Political and strategic factors were perhaps the real reasons why the line was ever constructed at all. Britain, having occupied Egypt, was anxious to ensure that she had the control of the upper waters of the River Nile. Already the French had shown great interest in the Sudan and Uganda, and their advance could only be checked by British presence in Uganda. The relationship between the decision to build the railway line and events taking place in Uganda was clearly demonstrated by the then Prime Minister when he said:

There is another consideration which I think recent events have brought before us. What has happened in Matabeleland shows that it is a position not exempt from danger. When the assertion of your authority is very far in advance of your power of moving up either supplies or force or any other instrument of dominion so that the authority may not be able to take with rapidity the full measures necessary to assert it...There is no doubt that our authority in Uganda is recognised... but still the circumstance exists that it is separated from the Coast by 600 miles.7

Apart from these considerations, other reasons were advanced. When Sir Guildford Molesworth, an engineer visited Kenya to inspect the railway line, he was quick to point out that the completion of the railway line would have a "civilising influence". He went on to point out that "the tribes in contact with it (the railway) have already

7 House of Commons, 10th August 1896
commenced to trade and a demand for European goods is springing up among them".®

Yet to others, like the settler-politicians E.Grogan and A.H.Sharp, the construction of railways was based purely on speculative purposes. "Building of railways," they argued "is speculation but one that up to date has proved very satisfactory in Africa." They were quick to point out that although it was common belief that "trade follows the flag", the Ugandan case had shown that it was more correct to say "the flag reluctantly follows trade."* In the case of Kenya, Grogan and Sharp observed that "until the railway comes no one can judge the capability of the country". ¹⁰

It must, however, be pointed out that commercial prospects of the line or the possibility of developing what is Kenya today played virtually no role at all in those decisions. The focus was Uganda, and up to 1902 Uganda included considerable parts of Kenya from Naivasha westwards.¹¹

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® Molesworth, G. Report of the Uganda Railway, Public Record Office, FO 881/7120, p.2

* Grogan, E S. and Sharp, A H. From Cape to Cairo, London; Hurst and Blackett, 1902, p.332

¹⁰ ibid., p.332

¹¹ The Eastern part of Uganda lay approximately between the present eastern frontier of Uganda and a line running northwards from a point where the boundary of Kenya and Tanzania cross longitude 36 east, turning northeast to include Lakes Naivasha, Elementaita, Nakuru and Baringo. It can
Lord Lugard, who served as an administrator in Uganda under the Imperial British East Africa Company, saw the construction of the railway as a matter of administrative benefit. To him a railway reduced administrative expenses in the transport of stores and in the time it took officials to reach their work. It saved lives and health of officers, it reduced the number of police officers required to police the country by increasing their mobility and increased taxation by providing a means of transport for agricultural produce.¹²

The arguments advanced against the construction of the railway were that:
- the railway would not stop the slave trade,
- it could not be made to pay,
- if such a railway should be built, it was the business of the Imperial British East Africa Company under Sir William Mackinnon,

it was a waste of taxpayers money.\textsuperscript{13}

The issue of whether the construction of the railway line was based on humanitarian, strategic or political considerations will continue to generate considerable debate, but one fact that is certain is that the completion of the railway line to Kisumu was followed by rapid socio-economic development of Kenya.\textsuperscript{14}

\section*{2.3 Difficulties encountered during the construction of the railway}

Various difficulties were encountered during the construction of the railway line. The first was that the island of Mombasa where the railway began had to be connected with the mainland by a steel permanent bridge 40 feet high and 1,320 feet long. The logistics of building such a bridge and the lack of landing facilities at Kilindini for off-loading railway equipment had to be dealt with before progress could be made into the interior.

One of the problems in procuring materials from Britain at the time was the lack of any direct shipping service between London and Mombasa. All cargo had to be

\textsuperscript{13} Robin, R E. "Development of the Transport System and its Part and Position in the History and Development of East Africa," \textit{The Uganda Journal}, Vol.41, No.1, September 1950, p. 130

\textsuperscript{14} Hill, M. \textit{The Permanent Way}, op.cit, p.iv
transhipped at Aden as no British Steam Navigation vessel had served Mombasa since the Imperial British East Africa Company withdrew from Uganda in 1894.¹⁵

Then as the railway line progressed further inland, water became a major problem. The water at Maji ya Chumvi was so salty that it could not be used. To overcome the water shortage between Mazeras and Voi, every train had to be provided with a tank wagon carrying 10 tons of water. The same arrangement was necessary between Simba and Kiu.

On the route through the tse-tse fly area there was heavy mortality among the mules and the bullocks, which made transportation of the railway material very expensive. Donkeys were tried as pack animals, but they seldom made more than one journey. In one caravan of 120 donkeys sent from mile 17 to mile 328 in December 1896 only one returned the following April. Altogether about 800 donkeys died. Camels were imported but succumbed almost before they started. Mules were obtained from the Cape and afterwards from Cyprus, and though the mortality was 50% when working in the fly belt, they proved the most successful transport animals tried.¹⁶

But perhaps the greatest threat was posed by the


presence of lions in the Tsavo area. The lions became a real obstacle not only from "the actual deprivations they committed (28 coolies having been eaten by them at Tsavo) but also from the terror their presence inspired". The presence of the man eating lions also made it very difficult to obtain labour cheaply.

Labour was difficult to secure as most of the tribes in East Africa were considered as either being too lazy or weak to work for the railways. They also lacked any experience in working with railways. It was for this reason that labour had to be obtained from India. A total of 35,729 coolies and artisans had to be brought from India together with 1,082 subordinates. Recruiting expenses, including the maintenance of the agent, the upkeep of the camps in India, fares to the ports of embarkation and (on return) from port to place of enlistment and steamship fares amounted to £254,588. Even the payment of the coolies presented a problem because each had to be paid separately and an account had to be made of all his earnings. As a result of these extra expenses the actual cost of constructing the railway line more than doubled from its original estimates.

Further inland the descent into the Rift Valley

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18 Whitehouse. op.cit, p.8
presented another obstacle that had to be overcome before the line could finally reach its destination. As the line was approaching Kisumu, theft of telegraphic wire and other railway materials by the Nandi became a major problem leading to military intervention by the British authorities. However as Charles Miller wrote in *The Lunatic Express*, "It must be said that the Nandi interference with the line was not animated solely by greed and xenophobia. Hostility to the whiteman's railway was excarabed by the behaviour of brown men who laid not only the tracks but also every Nandi girl they could lure into their camps." The Nandi chiefs were outraged by the liberties taken with their women and girls.

Another difficulty was the lack of reliable information as to the watercourses. Dry valleys were often found to turn into roaring torrents and in places where floods might be expected not a drop of water was found, while dry level plains often turned into marshes.²⁰

2.4 Construction of extension lines

Branch lines were built subsequently to serve European farming areas in the Kenya Highlands. The Nairobi-Thika

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²⁰ Cooper, A S. "The Uganda Railway: What it is and What it is Doing," *Africa Railway Magazine*, Vol.1, 1907, p. 344
line was completed in 1913. The construction of the line was commenced with prison labour and the line was called a tramway in order to come within the powers of the Governor who considered that the immediate construction of the line was of more importance than seeking formal approval from the Colonial Office. The line was later extended to Fort Hall [Murang'a], Nyeri and Nanyuki. This 145 mile line was built to serve the rich farming area around Mount Kenya.

The 27 mile line from Rongai to Solai was extended in 1926 to tap the agricultural resources around Lake Solai and Subukia. In 1921 work was started on the main development project on the extension of the railway line from Nakuru to Uasin Gishu. This was completed in 1925 and extended to Kitale in 1927. A branch line to serve the rich wheat-growing Thomson Falls area was completed in 1929.

The Eldoret - Tororo link was completed in 1927. At last a direct link between Mombasa and Uganda had finally been made and the line had reached its original destination. Then in 1930 the long projected Kisumu - Butere branch passing through Yala was opened to serve the densely populated African area.

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In addition there were two branch lines off the section between Mombasa and Nairobi. The first was opened to Lake Magadi in 1915 for the exploitation of the lake's mineral deposits. It was built by the Magadi Soda Company and was owned by the company but operated by the Uganda Railway on a profit sharing basis.\textsuperscript{23}

A second line of 90 miles between Voi and Kahe was constructed to assist the British campaign against German East Africa during the First World War. It was later extended to Tanganyika. It was closed down in April 1923, but was purchased by the Kenya and Uganda Railways and re-opened to traffic in 1924. Up to the time of amalgamation with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services in 1948, the Voi - Kahe line was a major source of friction between the Kenya and Uganda Railway and Tanganyika Railways as it attracted most of the traffic from Mount Kilimanjaro area. This deprived the Tanganyika Railways of rail freight on the Arusha - Tanga line.

By 1930 railway construction in Kenya had virtually come to an end. However, two months after the outbreak of the Second World War arrangements were quickly put under way for the construction of a railway line from Thika on the Nairobi - Nanyuki Branch to a place called Garba Tulla.

The main objective of the projected line was to assist in the military effort against Italian Somaliland. However, two years later the war had moved away from East Africa and the project had to be abandoned immediately.\textsuperscript{24}

In summary by 1930, the Kenya and Uganda Railways operated the following lines.

\textbf{Mileage chart - The Kenya and Uganda Railways 1930}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Mombasa - Kampala & 886 miles \\
Voi - Kahe & 91 miles \\
Tororo - Soroti & 100 miles \\
Solai Branch & 26 miles \\
Yala Branch & 32 miles \\
Kitale Branch & 40 miles \\
Kampala - Port Bell & 6 miles \\
Thomson Fall’s Branch & 49 miles \\
Magadi Branch & 91 miles \\
Nanyuki Branch & 145 miles \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textbf{Table 2.1}


2.5 Administrative arrangements 1901 - 1977

In order to appreciate and understand the nature, arrangement and contents of railway records, it is necessary to delve into the administrative history and functions of the departments that created them.

\textsuperscript{24} For a detailed description of the proposed railway and the work undertaken see "The Thika Branch: The Railway that Never Was," \textit{Spear}, Vol. 6, No.4, 1963, pp.91-92
In 1903 the railway was handed over to the East Africa Protectorate, and Mr Currie was appointed as the General Manager. The railway was administered and operated as an ordinary government department. The revenues earned were paid into general government revenue. Expenditure was not based on the earning capacity but mainly on the ability of the General Manager to extract his minimum requirements from the East African Protectorate (Kenya) Treasury. A Railway Ordinance was placed before the Legislative Council in 1910 and passed the same year repealing the Indian Railways Act which had been in force since 1897.

By 1921 when Lieutenant Colonel F D Hammond undertook a review of the workings and operations of the Uganda Railways, the line had been divided into sections which were commonly referred to as districts. The three covered the following areas:

- Coast District
  - Mombasa to mile 182

- Nairobi District
  - Mile 182 to mile 370
  - Thika Branch 32 miles
  - Magadi Branch 91 miles

- Lake District
  - Mile 370 to Kisumu and work at Lake Victoria

In each of the districts, a number of depots were

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26 Coop  A S. op.cit. p. 334
established. These included rail and road stations, ports, piers, jetties etc., of which one was designated as the district headquarters. For administrative purposes, the Uganda Railways administration was divided into functional departments. Each department with personnel working in the district had a departmental head based in Nairobi. By 1920 the Uganda Railway was well established and several departments had been created. The departments are described below:

2.5.1 The Traffic Department

The Traffic Department of the Uganda Railways was under the control of a Traffic Manager based in Nairobi. Under him was the Deputy Traffic Manager, whose duties included the supervision of loading of trains, excursions, race meetings for the staff working in the railways, movement of special trains and general correspondence with the public. He also saw all correspondence addressed to the Traffic Manager.

In addition there were District Traffic Managers and six Assistant Traffic Managers. Their duties and responsibilities varied greatly from district to district. Of the two Assistant Traffic Managers based at Mombasa, one was responsible for all the stations between Kilindini Harbour and Voi and the other for all the traffic working at Kilindini Harbour.
Between Nairobi and Voi the stations were inspected by an Assistant Traffic Manager who was based in Nairobi. From Nairobi to Nakuru, and on the Thika Branch, the stations were inspected by an Assistant Traffic Manager who reported directly to the Traffic Manager in Nairobi. Another Assistant Traffic Manager was based at Nakuru and was responsible for all the stations up to Kisumu. An Assistant Traffic Manager was employed as a general assistant to the Traffic Manager.

District Station Masters were posted to Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru. Apart from train ordering, their duties were limited to their own stations only.

2.5.2 The Locomotive Department

The Locomotive Department was under the charge of the Mechanical Engineer. The running branch was divided into two districts each under a District Locomotive Superintendent, while the Workshops Branch was under the Workshops Manager at Nairobi. The department was responsible for the maintenance locomotives, carriages, wagons, machinery, tools and plant, cranes and other mechanical and electrical equipment.

2.5.3 The Engineering Department
The Engineering Department was headed by the Chief Engineer. It was divided into three divisions:
- the Coast Engineering Division - Mombasa to mile 182,
- the Nairobi Engineering Division - mile 182 to mile 370 including the Magadi and the Thika Railways,
- the Lake Engineering Division - mile 370 to Kisumu.\(^{27}\)

Each district had a District and an Assistant District Engineer stationed at the main office of the district. However in the Lake Engineering Division, the Assistant Engineer was based at Kisumu where he was responsible for all the ports on Lake Victoria. The department was responsible for the maintenance of the permanent way, signalling, bridges, tunnels and all buildings including housing.

2.5.4 Marine Department

The Marine Department of the Uganda Railway administered both the Uganda Railway Marine on Lake Victoria and the Busoga Railway Marine on Lake Kioga. Both were under the charge of a Marine Superintendent at Kisumu.

The Marine Superintendent dealt directly with the commanders of the various steamers and with Pier Masters at the various ports. The work of loading and unloading of railway wagons at the pier was the duty of the Marine Department rather than the Traffic Department.

2.5.5 Accounts Department

The Accounts Department performed many functions some of which are not normally associated with accounts work. These included the auditing the Uganda Railway finances, preparing statistics and managing the Uganda Railway Press and Stationary.

2.5.6 Stores Department

The department was responsible for purchasing, stocking and distributing of supplies. The main stores were situated at Nairobi. Sub-stores were situated at Kilindini Harbour, for the reception of stores from overseas and in the use of that district, and at Kisumu for the use of the Marine Department. In Uganda sub-stores were located at Kampala for the Port Bell - Kampala Railway, at Jinja for the Busoga Railway and at Namasagali for the Busoga Railway Marine.

2.6 Reorganisation of the Kenya and Uganda Railways
By 1921 the workings of the railways had began to show weaknesses. These were well summarised by General Rhodes when he said:

From bitter experience I came to the Railway on secondment from India Railways as Chief Engineer. I found what Colonel Grogan described in the Legislative Council as "two ribbons of rust running from Mombasa to the lake." The railway was administered as a department of the government and the temptation to take revenue in and to use it for some other, no doubt worthy, purpose was irresistible. But a railway cannot function unless properly maintained and "renewed" when needed not less than 5 - 10 years later.\(^{28}\)

In 1921, Lieutenant-Colonel F D Hammond was appointed Special Commissioner for Railways in Eastern Africa. This was a short lived appointment but one that was very important for the future management of the railway. Hammond arrived in Kenya on 20th January and left on 24 August 1921. During this time he carried out a thorough review of the activities and operations of the Uganda Railway. In his report submitted in October 1921, he observed that the Uganda Railway administration was highly decentralised and needed complete reorganisation. He also noted that between 1st April 1903 and 30th March 1921 the government had taken £1,682,552 from the Railways and utilised it for other purposes other than the Railways.\(^{29}\)

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During Hammond's visit, on the instruction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, an Inter-Colonial Railway Council was instituted in Kenya consisting of official and non official members from Kenya and Uganda with the Special Commissioner as president. After Hammond's departure, the chair was taken over by a General Manager.30

As a result of the Hammond report, the Uganda Railway administration embarked on a reorganisation programme. The offices of the General Manager and the Traffic Manager were amalgamated. The offices of the Personal Assistant and Office of Superintendent on the General Manager's staff were abolished and the Deputy Traffic Manager was placed in charge of the joint office with the title of superintendent.

The reorganisation programme was extended to other departments. The locomotive running work previously controlled by the Chief Mechanical Engineer was transferred to the control of the Traffic Manager, whose title was later changed to that of the Superintendent of the Line, and the remainder combined with the staff of the Mechanical Engineer in charge of the workshop.

The joint headquarters office of the General Manager and the Superintendent of the Line was divided into four

sections:
- Commercial - under an Assistant Superintendent, dealing with commercial work generally including rates, claims, general traffic matters, commodity statistics etc
- Trains - dealing with train and rolling stock control, time table mileage, statistics and other operating work,
- Expenditure - dealing with earnings and expenditure and with all questions of finance, lands and works,
- Staff - dealing with all matters relating to employees of the Uganda Railways.

A separate Civil Engineering Department was retained, but the Chief Engineer was put in charge of construction and maintenance of the line.31

On 3rd February 1926 the Kenya and Uganda Transport Order in Council was promulgated and the name of the railway was changed from Uganda Railways to Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours. From that date the control, management and working of all railways, ports, harbour, warves and steamship services were vested in the High Commissioner for Transport and administered by the Governor

of Kenya on behalf of both Kenya and Uganda.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time, an Advisory Council composed of officials and non-officials was established to advise on the management of the railways. Extended powers were delegated to the General Manager of the Kenya Uganda Railways. Other important features of the Order-in-Council included:

- complete separation between the revenue and expenditure of the Government of Kenya and the revenue and expenditure of the Railways, Port and Lake Services,
- the establishment of separate Railways and Harbours funds,
- the working of the Railways, Port and other services were to take into consideration the agricultural and industrial development in Kenya and Uganda by providing cheap means of transport,
- the use of profits after renewals, betterment, interest and sinking charges to reduce railway rates instead of being divested in other government purposes,
- the requirement of governments for the provision of non-paying facilities were to make good the loss in the working results therefrom.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Report of the General Manager on the Administration of the Railways and Port Services for the year ended 1924}, Nairobi: The Uganda Railway Press, p.23. See also \textit{Kenya and Uganda Railways: Report of the Acting General Manager on the...
A system was introduced whereby the management was clearly under the General Manager of the Railways and Harbours. It was arranged that the Port Manager would control both the shore and the Marine work and would report to the General Manager directly, independent of any railway head of the Department at Mombasa. To avoid duplication the General Manager would use the Railway Engineering, Stores and Accounting Departments for port services. It was also arranged that:

- the High Commissioner would be advised by a Harbour Advisory Board,
- the Inter-Colonial Railway Council would have no jurisdiction over the Harbours,
- Railways and Harbours estimates would be submitted separately through their respective advisory boards and thereafter combined by the High Commissioner before submission to the Legislative Councils of Kenya and Uganda.

Financial arrangements between Kenya and Uganda, which had often been a source of controversy, were also streamlined. The Uganda Government had complained frequently that as the Railway was a department of the Kenya Government, Uganda’s interests were subordinated to those of Kenya. In fact, until the 1920’s the profits derived from the railways were absorbed into Kenya’s

Administration of the Railways and Marine Services for the year ended 31 December 1925, Nairobi: The Uganda Railway Press, 1926, p.19

72
finances. This was unfair to Uganda and led to a neglect of the maintenance of the Uganda line. The Advisory Council recommended that this practice be stopped. Its views were supported by Sir Roger Gibb, who had been appointed to enquire and report on railway rates and finances in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika.

2.7 Amalgamation of Kenya Uganda Railways and Harbours with Tanganyika Railways and Port Services

Early in 1947, the legislatures of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika accepted in principle the proposal contained in a Colonial Office paper Colonial 210. In paragraph 27 of that paper, it was proposed that there should be complete amalgamation of the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours Administration and the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services.

In 1948 the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours were amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services and became the East African Railways and Harbours

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Administration. The new services came under the East African High Commission which had been formed in order to co-ordinate common services in the region.

The integration of the two networks took place during a period of rapid development and expanding traffic in the whole of East Africa and especially in Tanganyika. It was given legal backing in 1950 with the passing of the East African Railways and Harbours Act. The Act set out the obligations and duties of the administration and the rights of users of the service. It also repealed all existing legislation in the East African territories relating to railways and harbours and vested the assets of the former services, together with their higher controls, in the Commissioner for Transport. A Railway Training School was established in Nairobi in 1956 to train railway personnel.

The benefits of amalgamating the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services were not always apparent. The Kenya and Uganda Governments felt that most of the advantages arising out of the amalgamation of the railways and harbours went to Tanganyika where the railways and port services were poorly equipped and under-maintained. As a result of the


amalgamation, resources from Kenya and Uganda Railways were diverted to the rehabilitation of the Railways and Port Services in Tanganyika.\textsuperscript{39}

A Common tariff was gradually introduced, and the East African Railways and Harbours Administration was established as a self-contained service or self financing service. These arrangements were to remain in force until 1961 when it became apparent that Tanganyika was heading towards independence. In that year representatives from the three East African states met in London and formally signed an agreement which established the East African Common Services Organisation.

The establishment of this new body coincided with the beginning of the collapse of federalism in East Africa. In his article "Who Killed Cock Robin? Perceptions Concerning the Break up of the East African Community" Potholm argues that whereas during the colonial period there was an integrating force - the common colonial administration - the post colonial era shows no driving force of a similar magnitude.\textsuperscript{40} The East African Railways and Harbours continued to operate as a self-contained commercial entity


\textsuperscript{40} Potholm, C P. "Who Killed Cock Robin? Perceptions Regarding the Break up of the East African Community," World Affairs, Vol. 142, No.1, 1979, p.46
and was headed by a General Manager.

Following the signing of the Treaty for East African Co-operation in 1967 the East African Railways and Harbours was separated into two corporations. Arrangements were made to establish an East African Railways Corporation with headquarters in Nairobi and an East African Harbours with headquarters in Dar es Salaam. However, the split did not take place immediately as the decision was not gazetted until a year later. During this period, the two corporations functioned under a General Manager of the East African Railways and Harbours as before, but a joint board of Directors also operated until June 1969 when the corporations were formally separated.41

The East African Railways Corporation operated under the new East African Railways Corporation Act of 1969. It was wholly owned by the three East African states, and was responsible for providing co-ordinated rail, road, and inland waterway services within the three states. It was required to conduct its affairs according to business principles, to earn a revenue sufficient to meet its costs and to earn such annual rate of return on its fixed assets as might be determined by the East African Authority, which was the governing body created by the East African Community Treaty of 1967. The Corporation operated under a

Board of Directors whose function was to decide on policy and to operate the Railways and Harbours through three Directors General (one for each state) instead of the General Manager.

The collapse of the East African Community in 1977 led to the formation of Kenya Railways Corporation. The new arrangements for the Kenya Railways were formalised by the enactment of legislation in January 1978. The Corporation is now wholly owned by the Kenya Government but is run as an autonomous commercial enterprise. Administrative arrangements under the Kenya Railways Corporation are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER THREE

RAILWAY RECORDS AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION

3.1 Overview

Several questions can be asked about the nature and quality of railway records. How do they differ from the records of other organisations in Kenya? What are the legal requirements concerning their preservation? Of what value are they to the railway administration and to other interested groups? The discussion below focuses on some of the areas for which railway records provide answers.

But first, how do we define railway records, or in simple terms, what constitutes railway records? According to T R Schellenberg records are:

All books, papers, maps, photographs and other documentary material regardless of physical form or characteristic made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligation or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution as evidence of its functions, decisions, procedures or because of the information value of the date contained therein.¹

Railway records began to be created in 1896 when a decision was taken to construct the line running from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. Ever since, the railway has been

¹ Schellenberg, T R. Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques, Melbourne: F W Cheshire, 1950, p.16
engaged in various activities and functions which have resulted in the creation of large quantities of records. Some of these functions have remained unchanged, some have been abolished, while others have been merged to form new functions. All these activities have resulted in the creation of large quantities of records which provide valuable sources of information on Kenya. Certain records, such as those created by the Engineering Department, relate to specific aspects of railway operations. Those created by the Workshop Department relate specifically to the maintenance of rolling stock. Other types of records such as personnel and accounting records are common to all railway departments. The discussion below highlights some of the major areas for which railway records provide key information.

3.2 Location of railway records

The only records known to survive covering the early survey work and the actual construction of the line are those created in Britain held at the Public Record Office in England. Later materials relating to the railways in Kenya and East Africa as a whole are to be found in Class CO 614 Uganda Railway Construction, CO 822, East Africa Original Correspondence, and CO 533, Kenya Original Correspondence held at the Public Record Office. There are also several references to railway records in other classes at the Public Record Office in London, such as CO 537
Colonies General Supplementary Correspondence. Some copies of these materials have been copied and deposited with the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi.

Photographs relating to the building of the railway are held at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library. The Rhodes House Library at Oxford houses material which has been deposited there by individuals who in one way or other were connected with the construction and working of the railway. Parliamentary papers relating to the construction of the railway line and later on to issues relating to the management and operations of the line are to be found in the House of Lords Record Office.

In Kenya, railway records are held at various locations. Large quantities of records are held in the basements of the railways headquarters building in Nairobi. However, as the Kenya Railways does not operate a centralised records service, its records are also to be found in all its offices scattered throughout the railway network. Three categories of records deserve special mention here. These are correspondence files, photographs and technical materials. Correspondence files include reports, financial records, memoranda and press-cuttings. The technical material includes maps and plans, survey and

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architectural drawings.

Other railway records, particularly those relating to the period 1961 - 1967 when the Kenya Railways Corporation and Kenya Ports Authority were operated jointly with the Tanzania and Uganda railways and ports, are to be found at the Kenya Ports Authority offices in Mombasa. These records are currently being processed by an archivist from the Kenya National Archives and it is not possible at this stage to determine their quantity or nature.

As no survey has been conducted on railway records in Tanzania or Uganda it is not possible to give any indication as to their nature and quantity. As the railways were operated on a regional basis until 1977, it is obvious that railway records held in these countries would include references to railway activities in Kenya. The records of the defunct East African Community at Arusha and particularly those relating to the office of the Commissioner for Transport also include extensive references to railways.

3.3 Railway records as sources of information for research

The history of Kenya is closely linked to the history of the railways, and as was noted in Chapter Two, "it was the railways, that created Kenya as a crown colony." The
railway's role in the socio-economic development of Kenya was well summed up by Sir Edward Grigg, the Governor of Kenya in a speech to mark the official opening of the Uganda extension when he remarked that:

The result of this railway project of thirty years ago have exceeded the wildest dreams of its originators. By accident the railway revealed the lovely highlands of Kenya and enabled us to plant there an outpost of the British race, which has in my belief a great part to play in the history of the European contact with Africa. It has been responsible also for the fact that we have been able to improve and establish economic crops over a rich and fertile country which until its advent had absolutely no external trade. Cotton, coffee, sisal, wheat, - all these things have been brought here by European pioneers and these things have been established simply because the railway has been built. Without the railway none of these valuable crops could have been established here for a day.\(^3\)

The link between the railway and socio-economic development of Kenya can only be understood through a study of railway records. Unfortunately the fact that railway records have never been processed as archives means that no one has been able to carry out a study to assess the contribution the railway has made to Kenya's history. Nevertheless, it is possible to highlight some of the more important areas for which railway records will provide important sources. The discussion which follows is based on a survey of railway records held in Nairobi and on a review of available literature on the subject of railways in Kenya. Examples are given of research carried out to

\(^3\) Cited in A Short Account of the Early History, Development and Plans for the Future of the Kenya and Uganda Railways, Nairobi: The Government Printer, 1948, p.9
date using railway records and of potential research areas.

3.3.1 Development of the Transport system in Kenya

Railway records provide the most complete set of information on the development of the transport system in Kenya. Indeed the railway records provide a corporate memory of all railway activities and operations in Kenya and to a large extent on East Africa generally. Although the records relating to the actual survey and construction work of the line are held in England, railway records contain numerous references to problems which the Railway Administration faced, including competition from road transport, staff, accidents, land, housing and the development of port and marine services in the lake region. Railway records even include references to the development of air services in East Africa and especially to the flying boats on Lake Victoria.⁴

Railway records also provide references to matters relating to African reserves. For example, railway records contain information on confrontations between the railway and the local community in Taita District when a dam was constructed at Kigombo to provide water for the railway at

3.3.2 Agriculture.

The role played by the railways in the development of agriculture in Kenya can only be studied through the use of railway records.

"If produce can not be carried," said an observer in 1866, "it can only find local markets. If it only finds local markets, prices must abate, stimulus to cultivate is lost ... the value of the produce, the value of the land and the extent of the land cultivated all depend therefore upon increased facilities for the conveyance of produce."

Although it can not be stated categorically that without the railway European settlement would have not taken place in Kenya, there is no doubt that without it this settlement would have taken a very different pattern. Without the railway there would have been very little attraction for settlers in Kenya, as its agricultural potential remained unknown to the British until the completion of the railway line to Kisumu.

The spread of European settlement itself was closely linked with the railway. The railway line had been


nicknamed "the lunatic line", and as Legum noted to redeem itself it had to carry profitable goods as well as transporting administration officials. In addition, the railway was required to repay a vast sum of £7,909,294 which had been incurred during its construction. This led to land alienation and the opening up of the Kenya highlands to European settlement. In a recent study by O’Connor, it was pointed out that the establishment of European farms and estates involved a conscious choice of location, and the advantages to be gained from a site near the railway often influenced that choice.

Irene Van Dongen argues that although by 1946 the number of white settlers in Kenya did not exceed 8,000 out of a total white population of 24,000, their demand for transport services had led to the construction of branch lines to Kitale, Thomson’s Falls, and Rongai. As a result of settler pressure, railway extensions ensured that settlers were located not more than 25 miles away from the railway line. A study by Roger Van Zwanenberg came to the conclusion that "the railway system in practice provided a service to the estates and only to a limited extent for the

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8 O’Connor, A M. "Construction and Pattern of Economic Development in East Africa," Institute of British Geographers Transactions, No.36, June 1965, p.23

African farming could effectively expand only with guaranteed transport facilities. For example, in the Trans-Nzoia area which was settled largely by South Africa settlers, when a branch line was constructed to Kitale in 1926 land under cultivation increased from 36,100 acres in 1926 to 107,200 acres in 1930. Similarly, the extension of the Nairobi-Thika line to Nanyuki saw an increase in the acreage under cultivation from 77,000 in 1927 to 141,000 acres in 1930. Railway records contain valuable data on agricultural commodities transported to the coast using the railway. The table below provides some information on agricultural produce carried between 1913 and 1922.


Agricultural produce carried to the Coast using the railway between 1913 and 1922

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>1913/1914</th>
<th>1922</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chillies</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>12,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>5,808</td>
<td>9,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre sisal</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>4,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre flax</td>
<td>....</td>
<td>1,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>16,297</td>
<td>35,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize flour</td>
<td>2,655</td>
<td>6,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hides</td>
<td>3,544</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>2,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds cotton</td>
<td>9,160</td>
<td>3,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds groundnuts</td>
<td>6,981</td>
<td>8,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda ash</td>
<td>....</td>
<td>46,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber</td>
<td>7,748</td>
<td>11,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skins</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wattle bark</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1


In a recent study, Robert Maxon\textsuperscript{12} pointed out that although traditional studies of British rule in Kenya have emphasised that the need to make the Uganda Railway profitable, and the generation of revenue to meet the costs of administration were the major reasons for the policy of encouraging European settlement, this might be an oversimplification of a very complex matter. He argues that before the outbreak of the First World War, African

production, especially in Western Kenya, was already on the increase. It was needed "to provide the traffic that would finance the building of a branch line off the Uganda Railway and so make available a cheap means of transport from hitherto unprofitable settler farms."\textsuperscript{13} Whether or not the construction of some of the branch lines was based on the need to provide cheap transport for settler agriculture, one fact remains - the distribution of commercial agriculture in Kenya still shows a close relationship to the main railway and the branches leading from it.\textsuperscript{14}

The nature of this relationship can only be established through an examination of railway records. Notably the Accounts Department of the Uganda Railway was responsible for the compilation of statistics on goods carried from each station and an examination of its records could be used to show the expansion of both settler and African agriculture.

3.3.3 Urbanisation and Industrialisation

Railway records also provide an invaluable source of information for the study of the growth of towns in Kenya.

\textsuperscript{13} ibid. , p. 53

\textsuperscript{14} O'Connor, A M. 'New Railway Construction and the Pattern of Economic Development in East Africa,' East Africa Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, January 1965, p.2
According to Sonja, it was the railways which established the general urban pattern of Kenya, fostering the growth of important centres at key points along their route. He observed that:

The even spacing of these centres reflects the weak influence of local economic factors in initial urban growth for nearly all were within 100 to 150 mile jumps from one another. Starting from Mombasa, there was Voi, Kibwezi – Makindu, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu (somewhat further because of the importance of such towns as Njoro, Molo, and Lumbwa in the early settlement core), Eldoret and Nyeri. In the highlands all the other major towns were approximately half this distance (50 miles or so) between those previously mentioned. Fort Hall, Nanyuki, Naivasha, Thomson’s Falls Eldama Ravine (just off the railway between Nakuru and Eldoret), Kitale, Bungoma and Lumbwa.\(^{15}\)

Nairobi is the most dramatic example of how the construction of the railway has fostered growth of towns. It began as a depot where railway materials could be assembled and repairs made to the equipment before the ascent up the escarpment and descent into the Rift Valley. From a small settlement of corrugated iron shanties and tents, Nairobi grew to be the capital city of Kenya.

With the railways came, engineers, banks, hotels, traders, etc. to Nairobi.\(^{16}\) As soon as the railway headquarters moved from Mombasa to Nairobi, the Provincial


administration under Colonel Ainsworth was also moved from Machakos to Nairobi. For administrative purposes the railway headquarters at Nairobi, with its ready transport facilities and a pattern of law and order established by the railway police, was ideal. The table below shows population growth in Nairobi between 1906 and 1979.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>%increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>11,512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>29,064</td>
<td>159.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>49,600</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>108,900</td>
<td>119.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>118,976</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>226,794</td>
<td>124.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>342,764</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>509,286</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>827,775</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2

Source. Republic of Kenya, various population censuses 1948, 1962, as well as other sources from the Kenya National Archives Nairobi.

The first municipal committee for Nairobi was set up in 1901 and included two railway officials. Until 1919, when Nairobi Municipal Council was established, two railway officials continued to participate in the deliberations of the committee. As a result railway records contain considerable material on the affairs of Nairobi. Subjects such as public health, law and order, town planning,
housing and land feature prominently in railway records.

Another example of how the railway has assisted in the growth of towns in Kenya is the case of Mombasa. The development of Mombasa as a modern city began when a decision was taken to make it the terminus for the Uganda Railway. As freight traffic increased with the railways, it soon became clear that existing port facilities at the Old Harbour were inadequate. A decision was taken to shift the port to Kilindini, an area where large going vessels could berth.\(^\text{19}\)

The role played by railways in the growth of Mombasa has been illustrated by a study by Van Dongen. In her study, she demonstrates that the growth of Mombasa was greatly influenced by an increase of cargo handled at Kilindini Harbour. The table below provides an overview of how the population of Mombasa was affected by the increase of cargo handled at the port.

\(^{19}\) Stren, R E. Housing the Urban Poor in Africa: Policy, Politics and Bureaucracy in Mombasa. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978, p.14
Growth of Mombasa town in the functioning of Port Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tonnage of cargo passing through Kilindini and Mombasa</th>
<th>Urban population Kilindini and Mombasa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>81,000</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>449,000</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>970,000</td>
<td>43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2,325,000</td>
<td>84,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2,696,299</td>
<td>102,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3


Kisumu as a town was non-existent until the line reached Lake Victoria. Since then it has developed as the main port of call for all vessels operating on the lake as a major town to the west of the Rift Valley.

3.3.4 Trade

The usefulness of railway records as sources of information for the study of trade in Kenya was well summed by Van Dongen when she wrote:

In the absence of more precise data as to the exact points of origin and destination of East Africa trade passing through Mombasa, the records of freight tonnage handled at various rail or lake stations on East African Railways and Harbours system represent the most valid and accurate source of information as to the specific areas in the hinterland of the part which
contribute most to its trade.\textsuperscript{20}

The completion of the Uganda Railway led to the spread of Indian traders who had been moving inland as the Railway progressed. As early as 1899, Lord Molesworth who inspected the completed section of the railway, pointed out that "traders are beginning to settle round the different stations and at Voi there is quite a flourishing bazaar."\textsuperscript{21} By the time of the Second World War they dominated much of the trade and commerce of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika.\textsuperscript{22} The extent to which these traders assisted in the growth of regional or local trade can only be established through an examination of railway statistics which provide details on where goods were collected, their quantity and their place of destination.

The impact that the railway was beginning to create in the country was noted by Lieutenant Colonel Sadler in 1904 when he wrote to the Colonial Office saying:

The Uganda Railway is rapidly revolutionising the conditions of life on this side of the lake, prices of necessaries have fallen and other articles are being introduced which it was impossible to obtain before. The chiefs are commencing to build houses on European methods to fit them with suitable furniture and appreciate many of the articles in common use in England. Trade has increased considerably and an impetus given to cultivation and agriculture throughout

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{20} Dongen. op cit., p 28
\textsuperscript{21} Molesworth. op cit., p.2
\textsuperscript{22} Hatch, J. A History of Post War Africa, London: Andre Deutsch, 1965, p. 123
\end{flushleft}
Urbanisation and trade developed side by side. As the towns grew, the need to develop trade increased. A study of railway records indicates that the railway line fostered both local and international trade.

3.3.5 Population movements

Railway records provide a rich source of information for the study of population movements in Kenya. The construction of the railway line provided a new form of mobility which was less hazardous in comparison to trekking. In his study on population movements in Kenya, Ominde points out that, "the rail pattern is a fundamental structure on which has rested the movement of manpower in the country." In the case of Mombasa, Wilson observed that "Africans began to migrate to the coast as the railway reached their tribal areas. First the Taita and Kamba, and by 1910 there were large number of Kikuyu working in the port." A recent study on Mombasa by Stren indicates that the development of the railway and the expansion of port facilities combined to trigger a flow of Africans towards

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23 cited by Ramsden, R S. "The Uganda Railway," Railway Magazine, June 1904, p.500


25 Wilson, op. cit., p.102
Mombasa. By 1921, Africans were the largest single racial group in Mombasa. The table below illustrates the growth of Mombasa between 1921 and 1969.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>17,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>42,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>111,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>187,147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4**


The Indian community in East Africa can, to a large extent, trace its origins to the construction of the railway line. Over 32,000 Indians were involved in the construction of the railway. The Indian government had stipulated that each coolie was free to remain in East Africa at the expiry of his contract if he so desired. About 6,000 decided to accept this offer. Of this 6,000 who decided to remain in Kenya, 2,000 remained in the employment of the railways.26

The construction of the railway led to the movement of people across the country. The chart below indicates the number of passengers using the railway between 1929 and 1950.

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Passengers transported by the railway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>161,770</td>
<td>499,603</td>
<td>5,935,891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5

Source: Annual reports of Railway Managers 1929, 1938, 1950.

More detailed studies using railway records are needed to compare and illustrate the railway's contribution to population movements in other parts of the country.

3.3.6 The Railway Police

Railway records provide a rich source of information on the origins and growth of the Railway Police. First formed in 1897 by a railway engineer, Mr Napier, the Railway Police was initially concerned with maintaining law and order among railway workers, which by 1904 numbered 22,000 people.\(^{27}\) As the railway progressed into the interior so did the Railway Police. In addition to maintaining law and order among railway employees, the police force was responsible for providing protection to railway workers.

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from hostile African tribes. In the late 1890's, the Police Superintendent was made a magistrate for the trial of railway cases, but as the labour force increased this was impractical and a magistrate with first-class powers was appointed to try cases under the Indian Penal Code.

By 1901 the Railway Police force numbered 39 commissioned officers and 225 men under the control of the police Superintendent and two assistants. The police were armed with rifles and employed on ordinary police duties. In 1902 the force was taken over by the protectorate administration. By 1930 the strength of the Railways and Harbours Police had increased to 296, consisting of 111 Europeans, 11 Asians and 174 Africans.

Until 1951 a separate railways and harbours police section was maintained in Kenya. Its staff were employed by the Railways and Harbours to look after recruitment, training and discipline. There is need for further investigation into the relationship between the Railway police and the regular police force in Kenya. A study of

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29 Whitehouse. op cit., p. 10


31 For a full discussion on the role of the Port Police see "East African Railways and Harbours port police," Spear, Vol.7, No.4, 1965, pp.89-91
railway records would shed light on the whole question of law and order, especially as the railways provided most of its workers with housing.

3.3.7 Publishing

Initially, the Uganda Railways established the Kenya-Uganda Railway Press in Nairobi. Not much seems to have been published except for Railway Annual Reports. Presumably the railways published its own time tables and stationery.\(^{32}\)

The Uganda Railway Press was under the Accounts Department. During the First World War, the Railway Press experienced considerable problems in obtaining paper. In addition to the ordinary work undertaken for the Railways, the Press was also involved in printing work for the military units.\(^{33}\) In 1927 it was amalgamated with the Government Press and placed under the control of the Government Printer. The combined press was to serve both the colony and the railway administration.

Railway records would reveal more about the quantity and type of materials printed by the Uganda Railway Press


and whether it produced any literature geared to the needs of its African workers.

3.3.8 Medical

The railway administration showed immense interest in the health of its employees. When railway construction work began the medical staff under the railways consisted of:

- 1 medical officer lent by the Government of India,
- 2 medical assistant surgeons from India and
- 6 hospital assistants from India.\(^{34}\)

As the number of labourers increased and the workers were widely scattered over the line, the medical establishment was gradually increased until it consisted of six European medical officers, twelve assistant surgeons and eight hospital assistants from India.

A base hospital was established at Kilindini with field hospitals at Voi, Makindu, Nairobi and Kisumu. The main diseases from which the labourers suffered included malaria, fever, pneumonia, dysentery, ulcers, venereal diseases and smallpox.\(^{35}\) Malaria, fever and ulcers were prevalent in the coastal region. By 1904 when the Uganda


\(^{35}\) ibid. p.27
Railway Committee handed over the running of the railway line to the Kenya Government, out of 31,983 labourers imported from India, 6,454 had been invalided as unfit for further work before their term of engagement had ended and 2,493 had actually died. Of the white officers sent from England and India, one died of natural death, two were killed by lions, one was killed in a trolley accident and one was murdered by local people in Kenya.\textsuperscript{36}

Over the years, the railways has maintained a Medical Section and has operated clinics for its employees and their families. The extent to which the railways has assisted in the development of medical facilities in Kenya could be investigated using railway records. The way in which the Railways has been involved in improving health conditions is illustrated by the case of Voi. Voi had always had a high incidence of malaria. In 1930 efforts were made to provide drainage facilities. As a result, the incidence of malaria among railway employees was greatly reduced as shown by the progressively declining number of days lost by staff due to illness for the period January to December 1930.

\textsuperscript{36} ibid. \textsuperscript{?}
Malaria Incidence at Voi 1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of days lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6

Source: Report of the General Manager 1930, p.56

3.3.9 The First and Second World Wars

The railway’s role during the First World War and the effects of the War on its operations is well documented by railway records. At the declaration of the First World War, it was considered necessary to concentrate all the locomotives for the Coast - Nairobi section at Nairobi and for the Nairobi - Kisumu section at Nakuru. The dangerous proximity of the railway to the Tanganyika border and the small number of troops in the country made it necessary for the power and rolling stock to be always available at main centres to move troops, horses and stores between points on the railway or on the lake. This movement was also extended to the Magadi Railway which was then under construction. The lake steamers were taken over by the military and used
for patrol work around Lake Victoria and for transporting troops and porters. Of the five steamers and four tugs owned by the Uganda Railways, only one remained for public use.

The Germans made repeated attempts on the railway line. The table below illustrates the number and severity of the incidents which occurred between 1915 and 1916.

**German Attacks on the Kenya and Uganda Railways 1915/1916**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of incident</th>
<th>Number of attempts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridge damage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotive and rolling stock</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derailed or damaged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent way damaged</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic fired on</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks on stations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines removed</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining parties driven off</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.7*


The workshops at Nairobi and at Kilindini were utilised to meet the requirements of the military, while the dockyard at Kisumu was placed at their disposal. The work carried out varied from the construction of armoured and hospital trains to gun fittings and pedestals, shells, hospital appliances and general engineering works. On the lake the steamers had to be armoured and fitted to carry
guns.\textsuperscript{37}

With the arrival of additional troops in the country, the demands on the railways increased. There was a need to transport cattle, mules, horses, sheep and other animals. Railway housing and other accommodation was given to military personnel at Kilindini Harbour, Voi, Kajiado, Nairobi and at Kisumu. \textsuperscript{38}

During the course of the operations in the Lake, S Sybil a steamship owned by the Railways was wrecked in the enemy’s waters, but the military authorities decided that no effort could be made to salvage the ship. It was subsequently salvaged but remained in the hands of the Germans until the end of the World War.

The contribution of the railways during the Second World War in East Africa was summarised by General Rhodes, a former Engineer with the Railways, who noted:

We can do no more than mention the great achievement of the railway during the Second World War. A supply of new rolling stock just before the outbreak of the war enabled the railway to meet the demands of G O C General Allan Cunningham for his Abyssinian campaign, including making many items of artillery, armoured cars, etc and generally acting as an Ordnance Base Workshop. The almost superhuman


\textsuperscript{38} ibid .,
efforts made by the staff during the remainder of the War and afterwards, with, by then, very inadequate resources form a very bright chapter in the history of East African Railways and Harbours.\textsuperscript{39}

\subsection*{3.3.10 Trade Unions}

The development of trade unions in Kenya is well documented in railway records. Historically, trade unions within the Railways developed along racial lines.\textsuperscript{40} In 1914 railway artisans went on a strike against the enforcement of non-native poll tax. Although this was not a matter that directly concerned the Railways, the General Manager was forced to consider other working conditions for artisans. It was estimated that approximately 1,200 railway workers were involved in the strike which lasted for one week.\textsuperscript{41} The earliest organised trade union in the railways can be traced to 1922 when the Railway Artisan Union was formed.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1934 workers employed at Mombasa by the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours and by the Kenya Landing and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Hill} Hill, M F. "Mombasa to Nairobi: An Historical Article on the Building of 330 miles of track between 1895 and 1899," \textit{Spear}, Vol. 5, No.1, 1961, p.11
\end{thebibliography}
Shipping Company went on a strike. In 1938 African railway employees participated in a general strike in Mombasa which virtually paralysed the town.

The later history of trade unions in Kenya shows close relationships between railways and other trade unions in Kenya. Railway records provide a vast quantity of information for those interested in investigating the part played by trade unions, not only in the struggle for better working conditions but in the whole struggle for independence.  

3.3.11 The Emergency

Railway records provide a new source of information for the study of Mau Mau activities. Past studies on the history of Mau Mau have failed to indicate the role played by the railways in efforts to stamp out terrorist activities, and studies are yet to be undertaken to show how the emergency affected railway operations. For example, in 1954 alone, there were 32 violent incidents including many attacks by armed gangs on railways property. This figure excludes many cases of theft in the Nairobi yard and

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As a result of Mau Mau attacks on the railway, regular local and long-range anti-sabotage patrols were introduced along the line. Specially designed rail cars were locally constructed in the mechanical workshops. These were manned by troops and European railway volunteers who at one time numbered 200. Of the volunteers, 70 were capable of being assigned driver's duties and over 120 had passed out in rifle and automatic weapon tests. By the end of 1954, 1650 armed railcar line and pilot patrols had been run covering 93,000 miles. These patrols assisted in boosting the morale of station staff. However, following many attacks and other incidents against employees at wayside stations, it was decided that improvements in lighting at railway stations and the provision of electric bells in the affected areas were necessary.

The railway was involved in the transporting of Mau Mau detainees from Nairobi to detention camps at Manyani and Mackinon Road. However, before long it was realised that some railway employees from the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru tribes were also involved in Mau Mau activities. A special train then was provided with a screening team which travelled to all the 148 stations in Kenya. Many railway

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ibid."
employees of long experience had their services terminated, and as a result some of the railway operations were greatly affected.

3.3.12 Regional Cooperation

Railway records provide an abundant source of information on regional co-operation in East Africa. The history of this co-operation revolved around the provision of common services and the railways were at the centre of such services. Any study into the history of regional co-operation will be incomplete without reference to the railway’s role.

Postal communication was the first inter-territorial public service established, beginning with the Postal Association of Zanzibar and East Africa, which was set up after the Imperial British East Africa Company began to administer under a charter conferred in 1888. The second inter-territorial public service was the Uganda Railway. The way in which the services have been closely linked during their evolution makes a fascinating story which can only be written through a study of railway records. The discussion which follows is an attempt to show how regional co-operation revolved around the railways.

"ibid., see also "The emergency and the railways," East African Railways and Harbours Magazine, Vol.1, No.8, March 1954, pp. 5-6"
The defeat of the Germans in the First World War led to Tanganyika Territory being placed under the United Nations and administered by Britain as a mandated territory. This opened up the possibility of bringing Tanganyika into closer economic co-operation with the rest of East Africa. As noted in Chapter Two, the line between Voi and Kahe was re-opened and steamer services in Lake Victoria began to use Tanganyika ports on the lake.

Between 1926 and 1948 regular annual meeting were held between the Governors of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. The meetings focused on areas of regional co-operation in such areas as transport, agriculture, education, research etc.

When the Second World War came to East Africa, the need for closer union became more apparent. The East Africa Production and Supply Council, the Supplies Board and the Industrial Management Board were among the several bodies established to deal with the co-ordination of the economy and manpower needs in East Africa. There was also progress in regional co-operation in the areas of research and higher education. The organisations under the Governors' Conferences were also expanded and a number of offices began to function on an East African basis.

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Despite the growth of regional co-operation during the Second World War, the Governors' conferences lacked any legal or constitutional basis, and they became the target of criticism both in East Africa and in Britain. As a result, it was decided that consideration should be given to future methods of dealing with economic co-ordination and provision of common services. At the end of 1945 a Colonial Office publication Colonial Paper No. 191 was released as a basis for discussion on regional co-operation. This paper was subsequently revised and re-issued as Colonial Paper No. 210. In the introductory statement to the revised version it was pointed out that:

...as a result of twenty years collaboration in the Governors' conference, and the developments which have been brought about by the war, it is necessary to establish a constitutional and juridical framework for the inter-territorial services, including a joint legislature in order to provide for an effective means of doing what needs to be done.48

Between 1946 and 1947 negotiations on regional co-operation were undertaken on the basis of Colonial Paper No. 210 which culminated in the issuing of an Order in Council which established the East African High Commission on 1st January 1948. The Order in Council abolished the Governors' Conference and provided for the establishment of the East African High Commission with a Legislative Assembly as the highest governing body. The Commission

consisted of the Governors of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, with Governor of Kenya serving as its chairman. It took over the usual powers of the colonial governments in respect of the common services entrusted to it.

Later in 1948, the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours were amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services to form the East African Railways and Harbours. This organisation was also placed under the East African High Commission.

As Tanganyika headed towards self government in 1961, the future of the East African High Commission Services became a subject of discussion at a meeting in London. During this meeting, it was agreed that it would be in the interest of all the East African states to ensure that whatever constitutional changes might take place in the future, common services hitherto provided by the East African High Commission should continue to be provided on a regional basis. It was also agreed that the organization’s services could be made available to Zanzibar if the government of Zanzibar paid an appropriate share of the cost of services it used.

Out of the London meeting a new body, the East African Common Services Organization, was born. This new organization took over all the services hitherto provided by the East African High Commission. These common services
were grouped into four categories: Communications, Finance, Commercial and Industrial Co-ordination, Social and Research Services.

In 1964, it became necessary to examine the functions of the East African Common Services Organization, and a Commission under the Chairmanship of Professor Kjeld Philip of Denmark was appointed to lead an inquiry. The Commission submitted its report in 1966, and a year later the three Heads of State signed the Treaty for East African Co-operation at Kampala. The Kampala treaty of 1967 thus established the East African Community.  

The East African Community as an organization had a fairly short period of existence. Ten years later it collapsed and all the common services were decentralised. The events leading to the final collapse of the Community were clearly summarised by The Weekly Review issue of 15 November 1977. It has been argued by historians that, the collapse of regional co-operation in East Africa began soon after Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika gained independence. Those in support of this line of reasoning argue that "whereas during the colonial period there was an integrating force, the common colonial administration, the post-colonial era shows no driving force of a similar

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49 The Community: East Africa Monthly Magazine, December 1968, p.3
Perhaps the final blow to the Community was delivered in 1971 when General Idi Amin overthrew President Milton Obote of Uganda. As a result of events in Uganda, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania refused to meet Idi Amin, and the East African Authority, the governing body of the Community was unable to meet. Although a mini-summit was held between President Idi Amin and President Nyerere in October 1973, this did little to reduce tension between the two heads of state. Accusations and counter accusations became a common feature amongst the three East African states leading to the collapse of East African Airways in February 1977. Kenya impounded all the aeroplanes which belonged to the community. In retaliation, Tanzania impounded Kenya tourist vehicles and banned the entry of tourists by road from Kenya. Tanzania also closed its border with Kenya. Then in March 1977 the East African Directorate of Civil Aviation and the East African Railways collapsed too.51

Following the collapse of the East African Community, Dr. Victor Umbritch an economist from the World Bank was appointed to mediate in the division of the assets and liabilities of the defunct Community. It was not until 1983


51 The Weekly Review, 18th November 1983, p.3
that the East African Heads of State met in Arusha and agreed on the distribution of the East African Community assets and its liabilities and on the re-opening of the Tanzania-Kenya border.

In keeping with the spirit of East African co-operation the three heads of state agreed that certain services should continue to operate as joint institutions or common services. These included:-

- Soroti Flying School,
- East African Development Bank,
- East Africa Inter-University Committee,
- Eastern and Southern Africa Training Institute at Arusha and,
- The East Africa Literature Bureau.\textsuperscript{52}

Apparently the report of the mediator Dr Umbritch made no mention at all of the archives of the community. The issue of Community records was either deliberately ignored or perhaps the records were considered to be of no immediate financial value to any of the three partner states. Yet one of the Community's greatest assets is its archives. This will provide future generations of East Africa with means of assessing the successes and failures of the Community.

\textsuperscript{52} ibid, p.13
Recently Kenya and Tanzania entered into a cultural agreement which makes provision for archivists from the two countries to have regular consultative meetings and to develop common strategies for resolving issues which were not adequately covered by the 1982 Treaty of Mediation. These issues include the management of Community records. Preliminary meetings have been held between Kenya National Archives and Tanzania National Archives. It is too early now to predict the impact that this cultural agreement will have on the management of Community records. Other efforts to revive the East African Community, albeit on different lines, have recently led to the signing a Treaty between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.\(^{53}\)

3.13 Other activities

There were many other railway activities which are worth exploring. For example the railways organised a postal service for officers in the interior and ran a regular mail service between Mombasa and Nakuru. It was also involved in the laying of a temporary telegraph line for the Uganda Protectorate from Tsavo to Nairobi and from Nairobi to Eldama Ravine.

In addition the railway was involved in the establishment of schools. In 1904, A J Turner who served

\(^{53}\) For a discussion on legal issues concerning the management of railway records refer to Chapter Six
with the Indian Education Department, was appointed headmaster of the two Railway schools, one for the Europeans and one for the Indians. By 1907 there were 47 pupils in the European school and 46 in the Indian school. When the Board of Education was finally established in 1910, it took over the railway schools and these became the first Government schools in the country.
CHAPTER FOUR

MANAGING RAILWAY RECORDS IN KENYA: 1901 - 1977

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to demonstrate the efforts the East African Railways Corporation and its predecessor organisation the Kenya and Uganda Railway, have taken to establish an effective way of managing their non-current records. It suggests that the lack of a strong archival service in the region, which could have provided guidance and direction in managing records, has been a contributing factor in the failure of the railways to implement such a service. The lack of well defined policies from the East African High Commission and later the East African Common Services Organisation were also factors which contributed to the failure to develop an efficient record management system.

4.2 Early attempts to manage railway records and archives

When, in 1948, the East African High Commission was established as a regional body to co-ordinate certain common services in East Africa, the Kenya and Uganda Railways were amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services to form the East African Railways and
Even before this time railway authorities had shown interest in the management of railway records. For example in 1903 Major Pringle wrote to the Foreign Office stating that:

the much needed record room for storing original drawings record plans etc of the railway is in course of construction, but building operations had ceased on account of shortness of cement. I think the completion of this concrete building is of first importance for the risk from destruction by fire of these valuable records is considerable.

Later, in 1904 the Commissioner of the East Africa protectorate reported that "the records room in Nairobi was in use." It is also interesting to note that in 1909, the Chief Accountant warned that office space in Nairobi was becoming an issue of concern. He reported that the offices, which were made of iron sheets, were not only hot and unhealthy but that they were a security risk to the many records there. He went further to stress that if a calamity should occur, such as an outbreak of fire, "the loss sustained by the Railways would be incalculable in the destruction of its books and records."

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2 Letter Major R E Pringle to the Foreign Office, 31 October 1903, East Africa: No.1, 4 November 1903

3 Quarterly Report by H A F Currie to Her Majesty’s Commissioner, 28th April 1904, PRO, CO537/86

Fortunately, no disaster of that nature struck the Railways. However, calamity did strike the government secretariat, which was gutted by fire in 1939. As a result of this fire, many valuable books and official records were lost. Except for records held at Provincial and District offices, the bulk of the records documenting Kenya's early history including those which contained official communication between London and Nairobi were lost. This meant that the only complete set of documents held locally in the colony covering the early period of colonisation and development of Kenya were those created and retained by the Railways.

The management of personnel records is another area that generated considerable interest to the Kenya and Uganda Railway authorities. As early as 1921, His Majesty's Special Commissioner for Railways in East Africa Lt. Col. F D Hammond noted that:

The establishment Branch keeps a file for every man on the Railway, except locally engaged artisans, who are few in number, and native unskilled labour. At the same time each Department keeps a file for every man in that Department with the same exceptions and the General Manager keeps a third file. Thus for every man above a certain grade, three distinct files are kept, and none of them is usually complete. The Department's file may contain information which the chief Accountant's does not, and the General Manager's usually contains less than the two. And in the case of the Engineering Locomotive and Traffic Departments all three files are kept in the same block of buildings. In addition to his file, the Chief Accountant enters up in an establishment register
full details of every man’s case.^5

Hammond came to the conclusion that there was need to discontinue the practice of retaining three files arguing that "the chief Accountant has all the information he can require in his establishment register and the General Manager can always obtain any information he requires from the Department or the Chief Accountant."® As will be seen later in Chapter Five the problem of managing personnel records still remains unsolved.

Within the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours, efforts to manage records were being made. In 1936, the organisation introduced regulations governing the disposal of records. A records disposal schedule was prepared and approved. The regulations were revised in 1948, 1952 and in 1962. Thereafter they were not revised.^7

By 1932, the storage and retrieval of maps and plans held by the organisation was becoming a major area of concern. This led to the introduction of a new filing system. The advantages of the new filing system were

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6 ibid. p.79

7 It was impossible to locate a complete set of these schedules during field work, but reference to the existence of these schedules is contained in the Kenya Railways Corporation Chief Accountant’s file CA/E0/2
summarised by the General Manager when he wrote:

As will be realised, the new system is infinitely more efficient than the old fashioned one of pigeon-holes. Plans are kept flat and clean and are not torn or crushed by being forced into holes. Each plan can readily be referred to without removing it from the cabinet and if it is necessary to take it away, the plan can easily be traced, while the operation of removing or replacing takes the very minimum of time, and any other plan in the cabinet need not be disturbed. Another important item is economy in space which the new system has managed to effect, this is no light matter when it is realised that over 17,000 plans have been filed away in one small room."

4.3 An East African Community archives service or a railways archives service?

As noted above, the question of managing railway records began to receive attention in 1903. However, until 1948, the question as to whether railway records and archives should be managed on their own or as part of the community archives did not arise. As will be seen in the discussion below, the railways maintained a clear intention to develop its own separate archival service, but for various reasons it had not been able to do so by the time the East African Community collapsed in 1977.

Although the idea of closer union in East Africa can
be traced as far back as 1924,\(^9\) it would appear that the concept of a regional archives was first raised by the Governor of Uganda Sir John Hall when he wrote to the Governor of Kenya Sir Philip Mitchell proposing the establishment of an East African Archival Service. This was either to be an off-shoot of the Central African Archives or a common service under the newly established East African High Commission.\(^10\) Kenya was not in favour of this proposal and even refused to contribute £334.000 towards the proposed visit by a Public Record official who was to advise the East African territories on the preservation of records.\(^11\)

However, in 1951 Tanganyika and Uganda went ahead and invited W Hiller, Chief Archivist of the Central African Archives, to advise them on record keeping practices. Hiller, submitted a report to the Governor of Tanganyika in which he proposed the establishment of a central archives service for East Africa based on the Central African model.\(^12\) Hiller argued that to create an establishment for

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\(^10\) Letter Sir John Hall to Sir Philip Mitchell, Governor Kenya, March 1948, Kenya National Archives, ARC/1

\(^11\) Standing Finance Committee, Minute No. 159. 12th May 1949, Preservation of Official Records, Kenya National Archives, ARC/52

\(^12\) *Central African Archives: Archives in a New Era* 1949-1950 p.49. See also Karugila, J. M "A National Archives in a Developing Country," *Tanzania Notes and Records*, No. 84 & 85, p.117
Tanganyika alone would be costly and not wholly effective. He went on to argue against creating separate archival institutions in the region saying:

- Professional archivists were scarce and good men would be difficult to attract to an indifferent small set up which could offer no promotion and had little standing.

- Every archive establishment had attached to it technical services which dealt with such matters as the repair, restoration and binding of the manuscripts, documentary reproductions, photography and publication. These would involve the employment of specialists who in a small set up could not be fully employed even if the money could be found to engage them.

- The early records of all the East Africa territories particularly those of Zanzibar were vital to the study of the region. In other words, the history of East Africa knew no geographical boundaries and to impose them would be detrimental to an effective archival service.  

In the light of these limitations Hiller proposed that there were many advantages to be gained by pooling

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materials and finances towards a centralised archive. His arguments for such a service were that:

- Fewer officers would be required in each territory because control, technical services and relief duties would all devolve on headquarters.

- The services would be large enough to provide a career in itself, and full training facilities would be available to all young entrants with ambition. Promotion to senior posts could be made contingent on the passing of a departmental examination such as was in force in the Central African Archives.

- One technical set up with single units of equipment such as photostat, microfilm and copying cameras, processing apparatus, strip printers, binding equipment could serve the whole organisation. Better and more economical services would result.

- Materials contained in any depot would be available for purposes of study at any other depot within the service.

- There would be uniformity in archival practice resulting in the publication of lists, guides, calendars etc.

- The headquarters library would contain all the known works on East Africa in detail and those of the African continent in general. The resources
of the library through its catalogues would become available to all centres. The building up of such a library would be a lengthy and meticulous task, which could not be repeated in all the three territories without great cost and there would be little hope of the same success.\textsuperscript{14}

There is every possibility that Hiller was in contact with D A Low, an Assistant Lecturer in history at Makerere University, for during this same period Low wrote to the Government of Zanzibar and raised the possibility of a regional archives based at Makerere University. In his letter to P.T Miller, an Assistant Secretary in the Zanzibar Secretariat, Low proposed that "if an East African archives scheme is not possible from Zanzibar's point of view I would urge that technical advice should be sought once again if only for a considerably modified scheme."\textsuperscript{15} It must be remembered that at that time Makerere University College was the only institution of higher learning in the region operating under the East African High Commission, and the proposal of transferring Zanzibar’s archives to Makerere would have brought Zanzibar archives closer to potential users. It was also argued that climatically Makerere provided a better climate for the storage of manuscript materials than the humid coast.

\textsuperscript{14} ibid., p.7

\textsuperscript{15} Letter D A Low to P Miller, 11th April 1953, PRO, CO822/733
The proposal to establish a regional archives also became a subject of consideration in the Colonial Office in London. In 1953, Rodgers of the Colonial Office wrote to Brown, a lecturer from the Department of Sociology at Boston University who was also a Member of the Ford Foundation and who was preparing to visit East Africa. Rodgers asked him to discuss the issue of an East African archives with officials in Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar and academics at Makerere. Rodger supported the idea of establishing an East African archives under the umbrella of the East African High Commission "but with some degree of decentralisation of archives to the appropriate regions." It is difficult to imagine how Rodgers' proposal would have worked in practice. However, it might have been possible to bring all the records from the regional services together, including those of the railways, to form a regional archives, while leaving the records of the territorial governments within the respective territories.

The proposed East African archives failed to materialise partly due to Zanzibar's refusal to have any of its archives transferred to Entebbe and partly due to a

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16 Letter Rodgers to Brown 11th April 1953, PRO, CO 822\733

17 Comments by Rodgers of Colonial Office, PRO, CO822/733
lack of commitment from the East African High Commission to develop such a service. In a letter to Margery Perham, Sir Milner Gray lamented that his efforts "to transfer the Zanzibar archives to a central East Africa Archives to be started at Makerere" had not been successful. "The local attitude was that of a dog in a manger," he wrote, "and none of the people I approached in Uganda showed much enthusiasm about the matter." He concluded his letter by saying, "I fully realise that ceteris paribus the best place for preserving archives is the place where they are, but their rapid deterioration was worrying me considerably."  

The idea of an East African archive service was not totally lost. In 1962, a letter to the Vice-Chancellor Designate of the University of East Africa, Cherry Gertzel, made the following recommendations:

- The University of East Africa should concern itself directly with the problems arising out of the preservation of archives in East Africa.
- It should offer to assume responsibility for this problem by assisting each government, but most immediately Kenya, where the situation was most acute, to finance an archives survey in that territory.
- The university should employ a suitable person

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with experience of the country and knowledge of its history, to locate and collect together all existing government records.

- Such an officer might come under the History Department of the Royal College or the Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- He should have the status of a research fellow.
- The time period envisaged should in the first place be two years.
- If the Royal College was agreeable the secretariat records in Kenya should be stored immediately in the Library.\(^{19}\)

Meanwhile in Kenya, T R Cashmore a former District Commissioner, was involved in research on the evolution of District administration in Kenya as well as in transferring records from district offices to Nairobi. In a report to the Kenya Government, he expressed his concern as to whether Kenya was in a position to establish an effective archival service. He went on to say:

I respectfully recommend that the Kenya Government seriously consider the following for the preservation of records. If it is considered that the country cannot afford a proper archival organization, the alternative is one based on the three East African territories - archives as part of the common services.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) Letter Cherry Gertzel to the Vice-Chancellor Designate, The University of East Africa, 5 June 1962, Perham Papers, Rhodes House Library, Mss. 257/3

\(^{20}\) Cashmore, T R. Interim Report, 9 October 1962 - 9 April 1963, Perham Papers, Rhodes House Library, Mss. 257/3
Despite these various initiatives, a central archives service for East Africa never materialised and the individual territorial governments embarked on separate programmes to develop their own archival institutions. In Zanzibar, a professional archivist was appointed in 1955 and plans for an archives building were developed. These culminated in the opening of a purpose-built archives building in 1964.\(^{21}\)

Elsewhere in the region, attempts were also being made to establish national archival institutions. In Uganda an archivist was appointed and attempts were made to introduce some form of archival legislation, although these plans were not very fruitful and a strong archival service did not develop. In Kenya an archival service was established in 1956 in the basement of the new central government offices. An archivist was appointed and archival regulations passed in 1956.\(^{22}\)

In Tanzania, despite a preliminary report to UNESCO in 1962 by Marcia Wright, an American historian cum archivist who researched and reported on the state of records in Tanganyika nothing much really happened with regard to


\(^{22}\) ibid, p.121
records until after independence in 1961.\textsuperscript{23} The establishment of archival institutions in Kenya and Tanganyika was followed by the appointment of professional archivists - Michael Cook as Government Archivist for Tanganyika and Derek Charman as Chief Archivist in Kenya.

While archival services were being established in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, officials of the East African Common Services Organisation [EACSO] which had replaced the East African High Commission in 1961, explored the possibility of establishing a centralised archival service for its records. They had the support and encouragement of Charman in Kenya and Cook in Tanzania.\textsuperscript{24}

These two archivists took it upon themselves to pursue the question of an archive service for records generated by the common services organisations. During a meeting between them and officials of EACSO, the question of an archives service was discussed fully. It was generally felt that Tanganyika and Kenya should "act as agents for EACSO records." The plan was that records created by regional bodies should be deposited within the territory where the organisation was based. However, the East African Railways and Harbours and the East African Posts and


Telecommunications Departments were opposed to the idea of a centralised archive service, preferring to establish their own separate archival services.  

The question of whether to establish a centralised archive service for all East African common services organisations continued to be a subject of considerable interest and was raised again by Charman in a letter dated 15 February 1965 to Mr W I Kasera, the Secretary General of EACSO. In his letter Charman pointed out that:

EACSO Departments themselves have varying opinions of what is needed but with the possible exception of Posts and Telegraphs in Nairobi all would appear to welcome some assistance from the centre. On the other hand, it is not clear what degree of decentralisation of the older material would either be advisable or acceptable.

Despite varying opinions as to whether to have a centralised or decentralised archive service, one thing was certain. All the EACSO departments experienced problems although of varying magnitude, for instance the lack of competent staff and of adequate storage space. There was considerable scope, therefore, for an archives organisation within EACSO. "The only problem," wrote Charman, "and it is a big one - is to decide what form such an organisation should take." Charman went further to make recommendations on the nature of such an archives service and on the

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25 Musembi, M. "Development of Archival Services in East Africa," op. cit, p.130

26 Letter, Derek Charman to W.I.G. Kasera, 8 February 1965, Derek Charman personal papers
appointment of an expert archivist. However, he felt it should be left to the departments "to consider whether such accommodation for archives should be provided centrally by EACSO, locally by departments or regionally in co-operation with the territorial governments."^28

At another meeting, held on 16 March 1965, at which most of the EACSO departments were represented, it was unanimously agreed that "it was desirable to establish an EACSO archive." It was further agreed that financial aid was required from outside organisations such as the British Ministry of Overseas Development, so that EACSO would not be placed in a difficult financial position. The meeting also resolved that the question of scope and nature of the service to be provided was to be left to the consideration of an expert archivist whenever he would be appointed. As will be discussed later in this chapter, an archivist was appointed eventually but never took up the post.

While discussions continued within EACSO, Charman and Cook carried out surveys of all EACSO departments. In a 1965 report to EACSO, they observed that "a great deal of co-ordination is essential and without prejudice to the outcome of any future investigations we feel that every

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27 Letter Chaman to Kasssa, 8th February, 1965.
28 Letter Chaman to Kasssa, 8th February, 1965.
29 Musembi, M. "Development of Archival Services in East Africa," op. cit., p.130
careful consideration to the economies likely to be effected by central provision of both staff and accommodation for the archives should be given consideration."\textsuperscript{30}

The momentum for establishing a records service for EACSO, which Charman and Cook had generated, was lost soon after their departure from East Africa. In the years that followed, there was an era of stagnation on the whole issue of community archives. As Musembi notes, perhaps Derek Charman's shoes were too big for Nathan Fedha, who had succeeded him as the Chief Archivist in Kenya.\textsuperscript{31} Although Fedha did make serious attempts to continue the good work that Charman had started, he experienced considerable professional problems. He lacked training and experience in archives and records management and professional staff to assist him. As a result there was little that he could do to create an impact within EACSO.

The idea of establishing a centralised archives service to cater for East African Community records was not totally abandoned, for the thrust to establish a Community archives was now coming from the East African Community itself. During the inaugural meeting of the East African Branch of the International Council on Archives (ECARBICA)

\textsuperscript{30} ibid. ; 130

\textsuperscript{31} Musembi, M. "Development of Archival Services in East Africa." op.cit., p.130

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in Nairobi in 1969, it was reported that the Community was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the appointed archivist. The report went on to outline the duties and responsibilities of the appointed archivist. It was reported that:

First of all he is going to start with what we have, the General Fund Services. That is the Headquarters in Arusha, co-ordinating these activities that are directly under the East Africa Community proper. After that he will get involved and co-ordinate with the East African Community Corporations, like the Railways, Harbours, Airways and to see what we can share. Of course there will be resistance as to whether they will agree to let their records come to us.32

Nevertheless, when the East African Community collapsed in 1977 neither the Community itself nor the Railways Corporation had established an archives and records management programme.

A well-organised and well-equipped archival service in East Africa could have served as a model for, and provided guidance to the railway in maintaining its records. The fact that no such service developed was the main cause of under-development of an archival services within the East African Community and in the Railways administration. This situation is regrettable as the Corporation had shown keen interest in ensuring that its records were preserved properly.

4.4 The Railway Archives and the Kenya National Archives

The problems caused by the lack of a definite policy and guidance on record-keeping from any of the three East African archival services in the period up to 1977 continued after the establishment of the Kenya Railways Corporation in 1978.\(^{33}\) As the Kenya Railways Corporation was created as a public corporation the role expected of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service has become more significant.

The relationship between the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (hereafter referred to as the Kenya National Archives)\(^{34}\) and the Kenya Railways Corporation has always been characterised by hostility, misunderstanding and mistrust.\(^{35}\) In the period up to 1977, railway records were outside the domain of the Public Archives Act Cap.19 of the Laws of Kenya, and as such the Kenya National Archives had no legal basis for investigating or even advising on how they were managed. With the creation of the Kenya Railways Corporation as a Kenya Government parastatal in 1978, its records became public records.

\(^{33}\) For a detailed account of the organisational set up of the Kenya Railways Corporation refer to Chapter Five  

\(^{34}\) The name of the department changed to that of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service in 1990 following amendments to the Public Archives Act.  

\(^{35}\) Report of Work Done at the Railway Archives as from June 1980 to March 1982, The Kenya National Archives, KNA/16/1
The act defines public records as "the records of any Government Department, and of any Commission, Office, Board or any other body established by or under an Act of Parliament." Thus, after 1978 the management of railway records cannot be treated in isolation from the national policy on archives, and any shortcomings apparent in their management must be attributed partly to the failure by the Kenya National Archives to provide the necessary assistance and guidance.

The Kenya Public Archives and Documentation Service Act of 1990 states that the Director of the National Archives shall "be responsible for and have charge of the service and of all the public archives and shall take all practical steps for the proper housing, control and preservation of all public archives and public records." It further empowers the "Director or his nominee to examine and advise on the care, preservation, custody and control of any public records". Although the act assigns the responsibility for managing public records to the Director of the National Archives, it does not specify at what stage in the records management cycle the Director should assume this responsibility. Most Government ministries, departments and parastatals including the Kenya Railways Corporation, assumed that it was the responsibility of the archives staff to deal with all aspects of records except

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current records.

The Act further stipulates that the Director of the National Archives may "approve any institution, whether private or otherwise as a place wherein may be deposited, housed or preserved either permanently or temporarily any public archives, or records which have been declared public records." The Director of the National Archives thus has the authority to establish a repository within the Railways so long as he can satisfy himself that the records will be preserved under appropriate storage conditions. As will be seen in Chapter Ten, this is one of the options recommended in this study for the management of railway records.

As noted elsewhere in section 4.3, Nathan Fedha, who succeeded Derek Charman as Chief Archivist in Kenya, was unable to pursue the issue of establishing either a separate Railway archives or a centralised archives service within the East African Community. Fedha was replaced by Dr Maina Kagombe in 1974. During Kagombe's period, the Kenya National Archives underwent a period of uncontrolled growth, and its responsibilities came to include a wide range of non-archival functions. Ian Maclean, an Australian records management expert who spent six months in Kenya as a UNESCO consultant in 1978, was "astonished at

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the number and range of objectives and programmes postulated by the Chief Archivist for the Kenya National Archives." He further noted that, apart from conventionally accepted public archives and records management functions, the Chief Archivist had envisaged programmes for the retrieval of migrated archives, collection of oral traditions, the preservation of the freedom tree, establishment of a documentation centre, a programme for the preservation of sites and monuments and the establishment of an audio-visual archives. Moreover, he observed that, "the only caveat to be made is that the original and essential but less publicity catching activities in the records and archives management field must not be starved of their necessary share of resources of space, finance and management support." Ian Maclean came to the conclusion that no records management programme would succeed in Kenya without proper emphasis being placed on the responsibilities of the various arms and offices of Government." 

Maclean's fears proved correct. As a result of the proliferation of these non-archival and records management functions, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service was unable to assist in the development of records

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40 Maclean, I. Records Management, Paris: Unesco, 1978, (FMR\PG1\78\128), p.4
41 ibid., p.4
42 ibid, p.2
management programmes, not only within the Government but also in other Government agencies including the Railways. This period of uncontrolled growth came to an end in 1981 following the dismissal of Kagombe from the service. The Government then invited John Walford, a UNESCO consultant from U.K to visit Kenya. Walford recommended that the functions of the Kenya National Archives be limited to those dealing directly with the management of archives and records management.

He argued that the ambitious programmes initiated by Kagombe were already having adverse effects on the performance of the Kenya National Archives. He also noted that a large number of graduate staff and para-professionals were engaged in non-archival functions. At that time, the senior and mid-level staff at the Kenya National Archives were distributed as follows:
### Distribution of Staff working at the Kenya National Archives in 1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Non-Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Records Management</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives Administration</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private &amp; Foreign Archives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfilming &amp; Conservation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Govt. Library</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murumbi African</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Visual Archives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Tradition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites and Monuments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>141</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1

Source. J Walford. Review of the Kenya National Archives, p.6

Walford came to the conclusion that:

Partly as a result of the proliferation of functions and resources which have diverted attention and resources away from essential functions and partly because methods for dealing with archives as opposed to the storage of non-current records have never been adequately developed, the Kenya National Archives is failing to carry out its essential and non-essential functions effectively.

Following the acceptance by the Government of Walford’s report, Kagombe who had been seen by many as Kenya National Archives empire builder was relieved of his duties. David Lyle a documentalist from Britain was appointed to act as Chief Archivist, but was soon replaced.

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by Musila Musembi. With Kagombe's departure, it was hoped that relations between the Kenya Railways and the Kenya National Archives would improve. However, as will be seen later in this chapter this was not to be the case.

By 1981, the differences between the Railways and Kenya National Archives had been sorted out, although Railway authorities continued to neglect their records. As a result of this Railway authorities granted the Kenya National Archives the right to inspect and process railway records. In its 1981 report to the Acting Chief Archivist, the Records Management Section of the Archives proudly reported that:

We managed to appraise and list records dealing with works, traffic, organization and operations. A copy of the list was forwarded to the Railway authorities so that they could approve our recommendations for destruction and preservation or make alterations where necessary. 

However, by 1983, the relationship between the Kenya National Archives and the Kenya Railways Corporation had once more gone sour. In a 1983 report to the Acting Chief Archivist, a Kenya National Archives Records Management Survey Team reporting on the former East Africa Community records expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which a railway official had denied the team access to the records. The Team called upon the Chief Archivist to invoke section 4 (2) of the Public Archives Act which states:

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It shall be the duty of every person responsible for or having custody of any public records to afford to the Director or any officer of the service authorised by him reasonable access to such public records and appropriate facilities for the examination and selection thereof and comply without any undue delay with any lawful directions concerning assemblage, safe keeping and preservation of public records, or the transfer of such public records to the National Archives to form part of the National Archives.  

It was left to the Acting Chief Archivist to review and decide whether an infringement of the Act had taken place.

The reasons for this reluctance to allow the Kenya National Archives Team to inspect the railway records may be explained partly by historical factors. The Railways is a much older organisation than the Kenya National Archives and its staff might have felt that their records had nothing to do with the Archives. Moreover, the Railways had established a Railway Museum in Nairobi and there may have been a misunderstanding about what constituted museum objects. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that once the Railway Museum had been established in the early 1970’s, one of its tasks was to undertake the processing of historical records held by the Corporation. In a 1973 annual report by the East African Railways and Harbours Corporation it was noted that:

Work continued on the preparation of exhibits including a large display case containing old cutlery from restaurant cars and "dak" bungalows and many historical photographs were mounted.

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Progress was made in the archives section, classifying and tabulating various records and documents.  

The reluctance may have been partly due to the fact that the railways cherishes its records and did not even want the records temporarily transferred to the national Archives Records Centre in Nairobi for processing.

However, new evidence indicates that the real reason for the Corporation's reluctance to co-operate with the Kenya National Archives was aroused by events that had been initiated by David Lyle, the Acting Chief Archivist. At the request of the Kenya National Archives Records Management Team, Lyle decided to inspect the environmental working conditions at the Corporation's basements in Nairobi. He was disappointed with the working conditions for the archives staff and decided to seek the views of the Ministry of Health on this matter. A Ministry of Health official inspected the basements of Block A and Block B of the headquarters' building and made several recommendations to the Kenya Railways Corporation. Work on the records


47 Report of work done at the Kenya Railways Archives as from June 1980 to March 1982, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, KNA/16/1

48 Letter, Acting Director Kenya National Archives to the Chief Personnel Officer, The Kenya Railways, 2 April 1981, The Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG7/1/8

49 Letter, Ministry of Health to the Chief Archivist, 26 April 1981, The Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/E6/2
was immediately abandoned with the hope that it would be completed when the working conditions had either been improved or the records transferred to a new storage area.

The senior officers of the Corporation held meetings with a view to identifying new storage areas for the records. While the Corporation was still attempting to implement the recommendations of the Health Officer, the Records Management Team was pressing for the resumption of work. Fearing that the resumption of the work without having improved on the environmental working conditions might lead to more reprisals from the Ministry of Health, the Corporation chose not to cooperate with Records Management Team. The Team viewed this act as a breach of the Public Archives Act and called upon the Chief Archivist to invoke the Public Archives Act against the Corporation.

Although this analysis partly explains the experience by the Kenya National Archives in trying to manage railway records, the National Archives' approach to managing records had its own inherent problems. Notably the Public Archives Act was inadequate. This had first been noticed in 1978 by Maclean, who recommended that Section 6 which deals with the responsibilities of public offices should be amended arguing that:

The main act though quite admirable is an act for a conservative Public Archives organization

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50 Minutes of meeting, The Kenya Railways Corporation, 28 April 1981, The Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG7/1/8
obviously needs broadening to cover the wider objectives of the National Archives. In particular no records management programme will succeed without proper emphasis being placed on the responsibilities of the various arms and offices of Government.\textsuperscript{51}

Five years later, the Kenya National Archives own Records Management Team in a report to the Chief Archivist, highlighted the same issues pointing out that:

Most of the creators of these records are extremely ignorant of the role played by the Kenya National Archives in respect of the non-current records. They are totally uninformed about the Public Archives Act and the need to properly organise and maintain the closed records. They either regard Archives as a mere dumping ground or else they are quite suspicious about the survey team’s intentions and, therefore, very cautious at the time of contact... As a matter of urgency it is now suggested that an educative archival workshops or seminars should be organised by the Kenya National Archives to embrace all the creators of the public records with particular reference to its to corporations under review... It is therefore imperative that the Kenya National Archives devises effective methods of eradicating the general ignorance, laxity and carelessness by the creators of the records and instill into them the necessity of proper management of non-current records for posterity.\textsuperscript{52}

It would, however, be wrong to lay too much blame on the Kenya National Archives. Many of the problems which the Kenya National Archives was being called upon to solve were not unique to Kenya only. Most developing countries face similar problems. It might even be argued that most of the

\textsuperscript{51} Maclean. ibid, p.2

\textsuperscript{52} Preliminary Report of Records Pertaining to the Kenya Corporations of the Defunct East African Community, 1983, Kenya National Archives, KNA 16/14, pp.3-4
professionals in Kenya were ill-trained for the tasks they were expected to perform.

Firstly, traditionally, there has been an assumption that national archives will receive regular transfers of records, or at worst they will have to deal with a backlog accumulation, and their training has reflected this perspective. They have not been expected to undertake any systems analysis of organisations which created the records. Nor have they been expected to deal with such issues as the re-structuring of registries to ensure that records pass through their life cycle smoothly. Yet, these are problems which faced the Kenyan archivists. Until recently, the common practice for the Kenya National Archives has been to conduct a records survey and identify valuable records for transfer to the Kenya National Archives and ephemeral material for disposal. In most cases, the National Archives team prepares a records transmittal list and transfer the records to the Archives.

The Kenya Government has attempted to rectify some of these weaknesses. In 1985 when implementing some of the recommendations of the 1978 Maclean Report, the Office of the President issued a circular defining the role of the National Archives in the management of records prior to their transfer to the National Archives. The circular which was addressed to the Attorney General, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments and Chief Executives of
Parastatal Bodies and Local Authorities lamented that in the past some important documents had been destroyed or lost through unsatisfactory record keeping practices and warned that the situation would not be allowed to continue. It went further to clarify the role that each record creating office was expected to play, saying:

Government Ministries and Departments must provide appropriate accommodation for their non-current records in order to avoid loss, misplacement or possible destruction of such documents. A proper record shall be kept for such records for control and appraisal purposes.\(^{53}\)

Secondly, the government amended the scheme of service for Executive Officers to include responsibility for the management of registry services. Specifically, an Executive Officer II is responsible for:

- organising and supervising of registry services to ensure efficient despatch of government business by action officers,
- sorting out and classifying documents for filing,
- reviewing and up-dating filing systems and the files index for efficient repository and retrieval of information. This may include responsibility for organising and setting up departmental registries,
- managing records which include the care and maintenance of records and control of the quality of records, that is case files, reports, documents, and so on,
- disposing of obsolete records, including the development of time schedules for retirement

\(^{53}\) Letter, Permanent Secretary, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to the Attorney General, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Chief Executives of Parastatals and Local Authorities, Ref. OP.1/48A/66, 28th November 1985
or disposal of dead records to the Archives or for destruction,
- ensuring the security of information and records in the registry,
- supervising of registry staff including their training on the job.  

Despite the great emphasis laid down by the scheme on the role of Executive Officers, no mention is made of their training in the area of archives and records management. For direct appointment into the post of Executive Officer II "the candidate must be in possession of a degree in any of the social sciences from a Kenyan University... or possess such other qualification as may be adjudged equivalent to a degree."  

Executive Officer I's are charged with responsibilities for managing registry services. Appointments to these posts are made on a promotion basis from Executive Officer II or the candidate "must have passed Part II of the Public Certified Secretaries (Kenya) Examination."  

Thirdly, the syllabus for the Proficiency Examination for Clerical Officers was amended in 1990, making it a mandatory requirement for clerical officers to have basic  

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54 Republic of Kenya. Scheme of Service for Executive Officers, Personnel Circular No. 14, (Ref. PM/7/4/34 Vol.II/(15)), 1987, p.4  
55 ibid. , p.5
knowledge in the following areas:

- registry services,
- filing and classification systems,
- indexing,
- records disposal procedures:
  - the Public Archives Act,
  - the Records Disposal Act, and
  - Financial Orders.\(^5^6\)

Although, clerical officers are expected to take proficiency examinations of which 25% of the total mark is derived directly from knowledge in records operations, no formal training is required in these areas. The implications of this situation are readily noticeable in the record-keeping practices at the Kenya Railways Corporation. Although both the scheme of service for Executive Officers and the syllabus or proficiency Examination for Clerical Officers were designed for those working in the public sector, it is common practice for parastatals in Kenya to recruit from the public service.

Fourthly, in 1989 the Government issued a new circular aimed at re-enforcing the provisions stipulated in the Public Archives Act of 1965 to ensure that reports, correspondence files etc are properly managed from the time of their creation to the time of their disposal. The

implementation of the circular was to be monitored by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, under which the National Archives falls. There is no evidence to suggest that the Kenya National Archives is vigorously monitoring this aspect.

The circular was important in that it required ministries, departments and parastatal bodies to establish libraries or documentation centres without further delay. These documentation centres were to be linked to the District Information and Documentation Centres and were to operate in close liaison with the Kenya National Archives. It was hoped that they would provide a comprehensive means of acquiring, controlling and maintaining reports and other documents received or created in the government and in other government agencies. This was considered to be an essential condition to underpin research and policy development.\(^57\)

Moreover, the circular sought to establish, in the civil service and in other government agencies, the fact that information is a resource that is required for effective planning and decision making. The Kenya National Archives was selected to be the co-ordinator of this vital programme and this is reflected in the amendments to the

\(^{57}\) Letter Permanent Secretary, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to the Attorney General, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Chief Executives of Parastatals and Local Authorities, Ref.Op.1\48A\11\10, 7th July 1989
Public Archives Act in 1990.

Furthermore, the circular was aimed at streamlining procedures for the disposal of semi-current and non-current records. It pointed out that where records were no longer required for administrative or other reasons, arrangements were to be made with the Kenya National Archives for their disposal or transfer to the Kenya National Archives.58

Finally, the Government sought to strengthen its records management programme by amending the Public Archives Act. The Public Archives (Amendment) Act 1990 requires that the Kenya National Archives not only be involved with the preservation of records but also assist in the establishment of documentation centres in government ministries, departments, parastatals and local authorities. It requires the Kenya National Archives to "initiate appropriate measures for the establishment and development of such centres."59

The 1989 circular, as well as the 1990 Amendment Act made Railway authorities realise that they could no longer ignore Government instructions on the preservation of records. As a result, the Corporation is now willing to cooperate with information professionals in order to create

58 ibid.

an information system. This is evidenced by the fact that the Corporation has in the last two years invited undergraduate students taking courses in archives and records management at Moi University to assist in arranging the records during their practical attachment period. In addition, the Kenya National Archives Records Management Team too has been granted regular access to the records.

Yet, despite all these efforts, a new approach is still required if the department is to be effective. Ken Hall in a recent study on the operations and functions of the Kenya National Archives observed that "the present approach of scheduling only files for permanent preservation to the Kenya National Archives custody, seeking permission to destroy ephemeral material after listing, is a process which needs to be repeated time and again."® Hall went further to suggest that "in order to improve efficiency a new concept of records management needs to be adopted which assumes that records should be scheduled for retention or destruction in the main when they are current."®

Scheduling records is one of the key elements of a modern records management programme. But schedules can only

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® ibid., p. 10
be useful if the records were created in a manner which enables the schedules to be applied easily. Unless records are organised into clearly identifiable series, records retention schedules cannot be developed.

4.5 Conclusion

The above discussion has pointed out that initially the Kenya Railways did make attempts to manage its records. For example, it provided secure accommodation for its records, introduced some retention schedules and to a large extent made sure that its records survived. The Corporation deserves credit for these efforts which have ensured that its records remain intact, albeit under poor storage conditions and in spite of the records being inaccessible to its administrators and researchers.

The chapter has further revealed that past efforts by the Kenya National Archives to influence the manner in which railway records are managed have had very little impact. Some of these reasons have been explained in this chapter while others are discussed in Chapter Five. There is no doubt that there is a need for greater cooperation between the Kenya Railways and the Kenya National Archives if an effective records management programme is to succeed. Should this not happen, the present procedures adopted by the Kenya National Archives which involves conducting records surveys, sorting out records, compiling
lists and leaving the records in the same stores will have to be repeated again and again. This piecemeal bottom up approach needs to be changed. The "diplomatic procedure" which the Kenya National Archives has been using to solve records management problems at the Kenya Railways does not work. The programme has failed simply because the Kenya National Archives has attempted to manage records without ensuring that all the necessary elements for an effective programme were in place. It is for this reason that this study proposes that the Kenya National Archives should be responsible for the management of records as they pass through their entire life cycle.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING RECORDED INFORMATION AT THE KENYA RAILWAYS CORPORATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the functions of the Kenya Railways Corporation and its record creating departments and establishes the link between records and record-creating departments. It examines the present state of record-keeping practices at the Corporation.

5.2 Administrative arrangements

The Kenya Railways Corporation operates a total of 2,650 route kilometres of permanent way throughout the republic. The Kenya Railways Corporation Act Cap.397 of the Laws of Kenya requires that the Corporation operate on commercial principles so as to earn a reasonable return on capital invested.¹ The Corporation is also required as a matter of policy to assist in the haulage of strategic commodities such as imports of food and agricultural inputs.² In addition it operates a marine service on Lake Victoria. It employs 21,391 employees in various

² ibid. 180
professional, technical and administrative positions.³

Apart from the Kenya Railways Corporation Act Cap.397 of the Laws of Kenya, the Corporation is subject to the State Corporations Act Cap.446 of the Laws of Kenya 1986.⁴ This as will be seen in Chapter Six has legal implication in the management of the Corporation’s records.

The Corporation is managed by a Board of Directors composed of:

- Executive Chairman of the Board appointed by the Minister for Transport and Communication,
- General Manager,
- Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Communications,
- Permanent Secretary in the Treasury,
- Managing Director of the Kenya Ports Authority,
- Not more than three persons not being public officers or employees of the corporation appointed by the Minister by virtue of their knowledge and of their experience in railways or transport matters or in commerce, industry finance or administration generally.


⁴ For discussion on the events leading to the enactment of the State Corporations Act, see Chapter Seven.
The Board is responsible for the formulation of general policy and has powers to:

- approve minor alterations in tariffs, rates, fares and other charges,
- approve any minor alterations in salaries, wages and other terms and conditions of service of employees of the Corporation,
- approve any individual capital work for the purpose of the Corporation not included within the programme of works approved by the Minister of which the estimated cost does not exceed five million shillings or such amounts as the Minister may from time to time approve,
- establish from any of its members committees for the purpose of the Corporation and delegate functions thereof,
- consider legislation proposals and recommend their enactment to the Minister,
- give direction to the Managing Director.\(^5\)

The Corporation is divided into a number of departments and sections, each with its headquarters in Nairobi. Until 1990, the main departments were as described below.

The Executive Chairman's Office

The Executive Chairman's Office is responsible for the co-ordination of all railways operations. All heads of departments report to the Executive Chairman through the General Manager. However, for administrative purposes, five officers report directly to the Executive Chairman as opposed to the rest of the departments which are coordinated by the General Manager. These are:

- the Corporation Secretary, who is primarily concerned with the legal problems of the organization and the secretarial services of the Board. The office of the Corporation Secretary includes the administration of land and estates belonging to the Corporation. The Corporation Secretary is also responsible for the work study organization and methods unit and the public relations section,

- the Chief Internal Auditor, who is responsible for all audit matters of the Corporation,

- the Chief Security Officer, who is responsible for all security matters of the Corporation including security of workshops, supplies, safety and fire,

- the Public Relation Manager, who is responsible for all matters dealing with the general public,

- the District Managers, who are responsible for
the co-ordination of all matters in Railway Districts.

The Traffic Department

The Traffic Department is responsible for customer accounts, wagon allocation, train control, tariff establishment, marine services, road services, operating statistics, accident investigation, liaison with the Kenya Ports Authority, customer relations and claims assessment, catering etc.

The Chief Mechanical Engineer Department

The department of the Chief Mechanical Engineer is responsible for functions including locomotive operations, locomotive maintenance, component manufacture, locomotive and rolling stock availability, driver management, preparation of design specifications and tenders for locomotives and rolling stock, contract administration as concerns trains and mechanical handling equipment.

The Civil Engineering Department

The primary function of the Civil Engineering Department is the construction and maintenance of all civil engineering facilities required for the operations of the
railways. These functions include responsibility for: design services; survey work, land management, building construction and maintenance, architectural services, preparations of design, specifications and tenders for external contracts, plant and vehicle maintenance.

**Accounts Department**

The Accounts Department is responsible for financial accounting, budgeting (revenue and capital), budgeting control, revenue collection, financial reporting, cash forecasts, debt management, financial advice and financial management of overseas procurement.

**Supplies Department**

The Supplies Department is responsible for the procurement of both local and overseas supplies, stock control, management of stores and depots, stores data, management of tender committees.

**Chief Personnel and Administration Managers Department**

This department is responsible for co-ordinating all

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personnel and central services. Specifically it is responsible for matters relating to the Railway Training Institute, manpower planning, management of annual confidential reports, personnel statistics, industrial relations, terms and conditions of service, wage and salary administration, liaison with the Ministry of Labour, planning and administration of external training, personnel policies, recruitment, promotions and discipline, appointments and transfers and staff welfare.

The Central Workshops

Until 1990 the Central Workshops formed part of the chief Mechanical Engineers Department. The workshops are responsible for the maintenance and repair of rolling stock and the Corporation's vehicles.

The Electrical Engineers Department

The Electrical Engineering Department was carved out of the Mechanical Engineering Department. It is primarily responsible for the construction and maintenance of telecommunication systems, fixed electrical installations and their maintenance, construction and maintenance of signalling systems and electrical inspection.
5.3 Records management at the Kenya Railways Corporation

As discussed earlier in this chapter, each of the departments has its head office in the main railways headquarters premises in Nairobi. The departments are divided into sections, each with its own separate office. Each department has a general registry which handles incoming and outgoing mail and a personnel registry which deals with personnel files. The Mechanical Engineering Department and the Civil Engineering Department also operate 'technical' registries which handle technical files and other related documentation such as architectural plans and maps.

In the head offices, the registries fall under the personnel section. Each registry is headed by a Registry Superintendent who reports directly to the Senior Personnel Officer (SPO). Under the Registry Supervisor are clerical officers and messengers. In the Districts, registries fall under Assistant Personnel Officers, who also play the role of registry supervisors. In Nairobi, each Department has been allocated a storage area in the basement of either Block A or Block B of the administration building for its non-current records. Similarly, in the District offices each department operates its own storage area for its non-current records.
Prior to this study, several efforts had been made to examine records created in these departments. In the early 1970s while the Railways participated in discussions about the possible establishment of a centralised archival service, it also sought assistance from Thomas Pugliese a United Nations expert in forms and records management. In 1971, Pugliese conducted a records management survey on behalf of the East African Railways Corporation. He visited registries and record stores both at the headquarters and District offices. In his report, he commented on the unsatisfactory manner in which railway records were being handled. He attributed problems relating to records management to several factors including:

- lack of corporation-wide policies, standards and procedures to establish goals for a coordinated Railways records management programme,

- lack of relatively uniform classification schemes and the absence of manuals and operating instructions to sustain the system and serve as a training tool,

- insufficient training of the records staff, an occupational group experiencing a high personnel turnover,

- incomplete record schedules and inability to apply them in an effective manner.\(^7\)

In 1982, a Records Management Survey Team from the Kenya National Archives undertaking an inspection of

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records of the former East African Community visited the Kenya Railways Corporation. The Team attempted to appraise and list records in the basement of the headquarters building but the exercise had to be abandoned before completion as discussed in Chapter Four.

Since then no further official survey has been undertaken at the headquarters. However, in 1990, Pauline Ngimwa, a student from the Department of Archives and Records Management at Moi University, undertook a six week practical attachment at the Kenya Railways. In her project report she observed that nothing much had happened since the submission of the Pugliese report. Another student from the same department had a six weeks practical attachment at the railways in 1992 and made similar observations.

The author's survey, carried out between September 1992 and February 1993, was the most comprehensive. The survey included questionnaires, interviews and physical examination of records and record rooms. Questionnaires were sent to registry clerks in Nairobi, Mombasa and

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8 Ngimwa, P. A report on practical training at the Kenya Railways Corporation, Faculty of Information Sciences, Moi University, 1991, p.5

9 Mucheke, N M. A List of Documents Relating to the Establishment and Development of East African Railways Network 1914 - 1944, BSc. Project Paper, Faculty of Information Sciences, Moi University, 1992, p.3
Nakuru, and separate questionnaires were used to collect data from heads of departments and from action officers. Interviews were conducted with registry personnel and action officers. Registries and record stores were inspected in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru and a records survey form completed for each office inspected.

The author’s surveys revealed that the Kenya Railways Corporation still lacks a well co-ordinated programme to manage its records and all its efforts to date seem to have achieved very little. The Kenya Railways Corporation’s records remain largely unmanaged and unaccessible both to its own administrators and to bona fide researchers. Records are frequently lost through careless storage practice or through direct sale to waste paper dealers.

5.3.1 Records Creation

Virtually all the registries and offices surveyed suffered from common records management problems. The degree of the problems varied from office to office and from one record store to another. Great variations were also noted between record keeping practices in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru. For example, in Nakuru thanks to the aggressive attitude of the staff of the National Archives at the Nakuru Record Centre, Railway records staff working
in all the record stores and registries inspected were aware of the requirements of the Public Archives Act. Efforts had also been made by the record centre staff to arrange the records in the offices and identify records for preservation and destruction. Although no disposal action had been taken, at least the initial sorting of records had been done and registries had been cleared of the backlog accumulation of closed files. The same can not be said of Mombasa where unauthorised destruction of records continues to take place despite the presence of a Provincial Records Centre in Mombasa.

The problems in handling records at the creation stage which were identified during this study are summarised below.

**Poor mail management**

It was generally observed that the procedures for handling mail are unnecessarily complex. Except for mail addressed to the Executive Chairman’s office, all mail is delivered directly and opened in the respective departmental registries. Incoming mail is recorded by a receiving clerk and placed in an incoming mail folder. The receiving clerk passes the mail folder to the Office Superintendent who in turn passes it to the head of department and other senior officers. The head of the
department or another authorised officer decides who should see a particular folio. Incoming mail is not normally attached to incoming files at this stage. Once the head of the department and other senior officers have seen the incoming mail folder, it is returned to the registry for registry clerks to process the mail and pass it with relevant files to action officers. In the headquarters the mail folder must be seen by the Executive Chairman, the General Manager and the Chief Personnel Officer. This outdated and wasteful practice causes major problems in paper flow as incoming mail may be delayed for several days before being acted upon. Where an urgent reply is required, it is common practice for an action officer to act on the incoming letter without any reference to the file. In such a case, filing of the incoming letter and a copy of the reply will all be done at the same time.

The procedure described above was inherited from the Colonial administration. The mail folder procedure ensures that the head of the department knows all what is going on and controls and co-ordinates it. Changing this procedure by authorising the registry superintendent to attach incoming mail to files for action would mean a real departure in working practices which the railways might or might not accept. It is for this reason, that it is suggested that for the immediate future this situation can be improved by a very short circulation ladder whereby only
one or two officers only see the mail folder within a prescribed time frame. A strict procedure such as this ensures that the mail folder is returned to the registry within the shortest period of time. Registry superintendents must also be trained to enable them identify routine mail that can be dealt with by action officers directly without being passed to the heads of departments.

**Poor file classification**

Files are added to the system on a purely next number basis with no attempt being made at a logical grouping of like functions and subjects. In the older departments, attempts have been made to retain the old broad subject classification classes that have been in used since the colonial period. Some of the broad classes identified during the surveys are:

- **ORG** - Organization
- **LND** - Land
- **POR** - Operations
- **WKS** - Works
- **HOU** - Housing
- **TRF** - Traffic
- **HBR** - Harbours
- **FIN** - Finance
- **PUB** - Publications
Despite the fact that Kenya Railways Corporation has been in existence since 1978, no serious attempt has been made to restructure the classification system to reflect the changed administrative and political arrangements. Where attempts have been made to reclassify the files, they have often created even more confusion rather than solving the problem.

Cases of misfiling were noticed in some offices. This is not a common problem throughout the Corporation, but it was observed that in some offices policy and routine papers are kept on the same file. File series are not clearly defined and do not provide a means of ensuring that policy matters are kept separate from routine issues. This situation often leads to two basic problems:

- an unnecessary long search is required to identify relevant items, and
- the disposal of records becomes more difficult as each file needs to be appraised separately.

Some registry clerks are aware of this problem and have attempted to solve it. For example, in 1983 the Chief Office Superintendent wrote to the Chief Personnel Manager complaining of the difficulties his office was experiencing as a result of files which had been reclassified by his colleagues. He cited the case of file No. EST 6/14 - ‘Conditions of service - Wages staff’ and file No. EST
16/14 'Establishment (Organization Wages Staff) Employment of'. The two files were similar and confusing leading to letters being filed in either of the two files. He promised that he "would come up with more reorganization of the files to streamline filing and eliminate difficulties... At the moment, correspondence is being shared between various files due to close meaning of their titles."¹⁰

Perhaps the only commendable activity in the creation of records at the Kenya Railways Corporation is that of file labelling. This is done with great care and all file titles are clear and legible with file numbers clearly indicated at the top right hand corner.

Poor indexing systems.

The indexing system is unco-ordinated and the indexes are not reliable as tools of retrieval. In some offices a book or file register is kept supposedly in numerical order or under some form of broad subject classification. Often there is very little order in the list. Moreover, the subject indexes have not been up-dated since the inception of the Kenya Railways in 1978. Cross-referencing is, therefore, non-existent. Where registry clerks have

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¹⁰ Letter, Acting Office Superintendent to Chief Personnel Manager, 21 February 1983, Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG 7/1/8
attempted to up-date file indexes, they have often included files which have been inactive for several years, or have simply reproduced earlier indexes. As no procedures are in place for the retirement of records, file indexes are basically a listing of all the files held in cabinets or shelves under broad subject categories. A random check in some of the registries revealed that no attempt has been made to ensure that the indexes relate to files which are actually held in the cabinets or on the shelves.

Poor lay out and work flow

There is no orderly progression of tasks from one officer to another in the registries. Instead, there is much cross trafficking with large amounts of paperwork moving forward and backward. Except for headquarters registries, most of the registries visited outside Nairobi shared accommodation with non-registry staff. The effect on staff morale and service is quite damaging. Even in departments where registry personnel are accommodated separately, the registries are usually too small to house all the files and the staff required to manage them. This has led to overcrowding, lack of confidentiality and poor work-flow. It is yet another cause of low staff morale.

5.3.2 Records maintenance and use
Several observations were made in the area of records maintenance and use. These have been summarised below:

Loss of files

Files are lost regularly from the registry at the Kenya Railways. Usually it is personnel files that disappear, particularly if an adverse report has been made against an officer. Occasionally policy files also disappear. In order to deal with this problem the Chief Supplies Officer has introduced measures aimed at curbing file loses. These include:

- The registry remains closed over lunch hours and the chief clerk is permitted not to allow any other employees to keep the keys during lunch break.
- The chief clerk ensures that all the files in the registry (including those in the pending tray) are locked in cabinets before leaving the office in the evening.
- The chief clerk compiles list of all important files, and any officer wishing to be granted access to these files signs for them,
- Action officers must ensure that all files are
properly locked in their cabinets every evening.\textsuperscript{11}

Although these measures might appear as minor, they would provide some means of control over records.

\textbf{File tracking}

In order that a registry may perform the functions of an effective service to its users, certain controls are necessary to ensure the whereabouts of issued files.\textsuperscript{12} Throughout the Corporation, there is no mechanism in place for tracking files. When files move from the registry to an office or between offices the clerks must rely on their memories to retrieve them. The only rudimentary tracking system in use is that of a file census conducted daily. Each office is required to submit to the Registry Superintendent a listing of the files it holds. No use is made of these census lists. For example, there is no cross-check between files issued to a particular office and the census return. Thus when officers pass files directly to their colleagues without informing the Office Superintendent, there is no effort to record this movement.

\textsuperscript{11} Letter, Chief Supplies Officer to all Officers Supplies Department, 17 May 1980, The Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG/7/1/8

\textsuperscript{12} Recommended systems for dealing with these problems are discussed in Chapter Nine
Whatever system the Kenya Railways adopts to control file movement, it will be necessary to record the same basic information concerning the recipient of the document. This is:
- date of issue,
- identification of the record issued,
- the name of the borrower or department.

The simplest and most economical method recommended for adoption by the Kenya Railways is the use of a multi-use tracer card. This consists of a card on which the details of the borrower are recorded. The card is substituted for the file issued and placed in the appropriate position and remains there until the file is returned.

Alternatively, these details could be recorded in a card and filed in an out card box. In this way it would be quite easy to establish the number of files out of the registry at any given moment.

Re-submit system

The Kenya Railways has no uniform re-submit or bring forward system. Some registries do maintain desk diaries but the entries are not complete. In many cases the details are so sketchy that if one clerk does not turn up for duty
his colleagues will not be able to bring up the files that are required for that particular day.

5.3.3 Semi-current and non-current records: maintenance and use

The maintenance and use of semi-current and non-current railway records has generated considerable debate and discussion within the Kenya Railways Corporation and has generated immense interest from the Kenya National Archives. Why should this be the case? Is this because the Kenya Railways Corporation is one the largest public corporations in Kenya, or is it simply because the Kenya National Archives has identified a public corporation which it can use as a testing ground for further records management programmes? Neither of these reasons really explains why the Kenya National Archives has had such insatiable interest in railway records.

Rather, there are important historical reasons. For a long time the Kenya Railways Corporation and its predecessor organizations have played a leading role in the socio-economic development of Kenya and their records provide an abundant source of information on various aspects of Kenya’s history. Yet appalling conditions

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13 See Chapter Three.
under which railway records have been held have made it virtually impossible for any interested scholar to use them. The desire of the Kenya National Archives is that the records should be arranged, listed and opened up for scholarly research. But first, there is a need to know more about the way these records are managed at present.

The present practice whereby each department in the Railway headquarters and each district office maintains its own separate store for non-current records is an inefficient use of space. Moreover, it provides little security for semi-current records. Although watchmen have been employed to safeguard the Corporation's property, none of them has specific responsibilities for looking after the record stores. In the main, the record stores are unmanned. Many are left unlocked and some of them are not even lockable.

Transfers to the record stores are made in an unsystematic manner, with the result that many departments have lost control of their records. No lists exist of records transferred to the stores, nor are there any records of any files temporarily removed by messengers for reference purposes. For this reason, some valuable records have been lost and efforts to trace them have not been successful. For example, one very important volume was supposedly loaned to a foreign officer who claimed that he
returned the loaned item to the store before his departure. As there was no officer manning the store, he simply left the volume on the table where he thought it could be seen. Later he was asked to return the volume. This is probably only one of the many cases which have gone unnoticed at the Kenya Railways. No one really knows how many valuable records have been lost this way.

The stores themselves vary in size. At the headquarters, each department has its storage area in either Block A or Block B basement. In the Districts the stores range from old warehouses, unused locomotive sheds to converted car garages. Ordinary store rooms are also utilised for the storage of records. Most of the record stores are poorly designed and ill-equipped to enable maximum use of the area. Moreover, very little attention is paid to environmental conditions. Virtually all the record stores visited in Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru were poorly ventilated and poorly lit, while some had leaking roofs and others had broken windows. In Mombasa, rats and bats had taken refuge in one of the record stores. Day-to-day housekeeping practices such as dusting, removing cobwebs, opening windows to allow free circulation of air are nonexistent. It would appear that the only time when the stores are visited is when a file is required and it cannot be located in the registry.
Moreover, the record stores are distant from the major file users. Messengers are often used to fetch or return files, although whenever a detailed search is required (and this happens quite often) it is usually performed by the registry superintendent or a senior clerical officer.

In the past, the basements at the headquarters have been sprayed with insecticides or pesticides, either as a preventive measure or to eliminate infestation. Apparently, this was done without due consideration that DDT might have on officers working on these records. Realising the dangers to which staff might be exposed, the Kenya National Archives requested that the Ministry of Health send its health officers to assess the dangers these insecticides and pesticides were posing. An inspection of the basements by the Ministry of Health officials revealed that:

- existing natural ventilation was inadequate,
- the working space was inadequate due to overcrowding of shelves and documents,
- the presence of heavy dust in the room due to lack of poor ventilation,
- there was a lack of adequate protective clothing and air masks, and

\footnote{For a detailed explanation of the events leading to the inspection of the Corporations basements by a Ministry of Health Official see Chapter Four}
there was indiscriminate use of DDT powder which is not only dangerous when inhaled but also on contact with the skin.

As a matter of urgency the official from the Ministry of Health recommended that:

- separate working areas be created for those officers working in the stores,
- the stores be re-arranged so as to provide ample space between shelves,
- as an interim measure, adequate mechanical ventilation be provided in all the existing record stores,
- suitable protective clothing and air masks be provided to all the employees working in the record rooms, and
- consideration be given to providing suitable storage for the records with adequate lighting and ventilation.\(^{15}\)

Although the use of DDT was discontinued, mosquitoes and other flying insects are a common feature in Block B basement whenever it rains.

**Flooding of the basement record stores at the headquarters is a common phenomenon during periods of heavy rain.**

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\(^{15}\) Letter, from the Ministry of Health to the Kenya Railways Corporation, 20th March 1981, The Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/E6/2
rain. The cause of flooding was highlighted by the Chief Personnel Manager in 1980 when he wrote to the Chief Mechanical Engineer seeking assistance in dealing with the problem. He explained that the management had always maintained a water pump which used to pump water automatically from the subterranean drains of basement B. The pump had broken down and had been sent to the District Electrical Engineer for inspection and repairs. Unfortunately, the District Electrical Engineer had been unable to repair it due to the lack of spare parts and flooding resulted. Although the Fire Brigade had been helpful in pumping the water out, this only happened after the flooding had already taken place. The Chief Personnel Manager went further to warn of the dangers which might result from the annual floods. He noted that the railways was in danger of losing valuable records and of exposing its staff working in the basements to all sorts of health hazards. He also feared that the railways might be prosecuted under the Public Archives Act for negligently allowing the records to be damaged or destroyed.16

As no records of the holdings are available it is impossible to ascertain the number or the quantity of records that have been lost through flooding. To date,

16 Letter, from Chief Personnel Officer to the Chief Mechanical Engineer, 17 October 1980, The Kenya Railways, ORG 7/1/8
however, no permanent solution has been found, and still more railway records are in danger of being lost through the annual subterranean floods.

The records themselves are dumped in the storerooms on the shelves and on the floor without order. In 1983, the Kenya National Archives Records Management Team estimated that in the headquarters building alone there were approximately 250,000 closed files dumped in the basements. These figures could be doubled if all closed files currently stored on top of filing cabinets, shelves or those which have not been active for the last five years (but are currently considered current files) were to be transferred to the record stores. Moreover, these figures exclude all unfiled papers, extra carbon copies, newspapers etc. which could easily be removed from the offices and destroyed of as part of good housekeeping practice.  

In Nakuru, the Provincial Record Centre staff conducted a records survey at Nakuru Railway Station and identified 28,500 closed files held in various record stores. Their report revealed some interesting statistics:

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17 Preliminary report on the survey of the records pertaining to the Kenya corporations of the defunct East African Community, 1983, pp.3-4, Kenya National Archives, KNA 16/14
Number of Non-current Records at Nakuru

**District Traffic Department**
- Subject Files: 4765
- Accounting documents: 1186
- Personnel files: 1433
- Preservable: 43

**District Mechanical Engineer:**
- Estimated Number of files
  - Subject files: 8500
  - Accountable documents: 900
  - Preservable: 19

**District Civil Engineer**
- Subject files: 6700
- Accountable documents: 3985
- Personal files: No figures
- Preservable: 285

*Table 1*


In addition, the author discovered more closed files while conducting a physical inspection of record stores in Nakuru.

Besides records, some of the record stores are used for the storage of office equipment, cleaning materials, old tyres, tubes, old typewriters, broken furniture etc. Although the Kenya Railways has a library, large quantities of published works still find their way into the record stores.
To deal with these problems, the Railway’s management has on several occasions constituted task forces to arrange the closed files in the headquarters’s basement area. This work was carried out in the evenings and on Saturdays. But as Pugliese observed in 1971:

these crash records disposal action either from the office or the archives/record store to gain a few cubic feet of space often fails in its primary mission because under such emergency situations the full import to retain important documentation may be inadvertently overlooked.\(^\text{18}\)

Except for the Chief Mechanical Engineer’s store in Nairobi, none of the stores inspected had working areas or space to facilitate searching or reference. At least in the Chief Mechanical Engineer’s record store there was some evidence that some serious attempts had been made to organise the store.

5.3.4 Records disposition

Initially the author was of the impression that the Kenya Railways Corporation lacks guidelines or tools governing the disposal of its records. However, an examination of the record keeping practices revealed that there are already a number of management and legal tools available for handling this problem. The difficulty is in their application as they have not been incorporated into

a coherent records management programme. Some of these tools include:

- Circulars from the Office of the President,
- Financial Orders Section F026 and F027,
- The Public Archives and Documentation Service Act Cap.19 of the Laws of Kenya, 1991,
- Several Kenya Railways Corporation Standing Orders and instructions including some old retention schedules.

There are no incentives for departments to comply with these tools. Rather, many of the clerks interviewed saw them as involving extra work for no tangible reward. Perhaps the management has also made blunders by making overtime payments to clerical staff assigned to sort and list records held at the headquarters basements.

As early as 1936, the Railways issued disposal schedules for certain categories of records. The most comprehensive schedule was compiled in 1948 and revised four years later. The schedules were last revised in 1962. As the organization has undergone several changes, these schedules have become inadequate. They are incomplete, with many categories of records not identified either for retention or disposal.
Some departments, including finance, have in the past issued retention and disposal schedules applicable to records in their physical custody and/or to records held in District offices for which they have programme interests or responsibility. In most cases these schedules pre-date 1964, and no attempt has been made to up-date them.

The Finance Department is an exception. However, though its schedules were up dated in 1989, there is little evidence to show that they are being applied to all categories of records. Destruction of records is not automatic once a schedule exists. Permission must still be sought from the Supplies Department before the scheduled records can be destroyed.

With one exception in the Mechanical Engineering Department in Nairobi, most of the clerks interviewed were unaware of the existence of schedules and other guidelines, or found it difficult to locate them. This apparent lack of knowledge of these schedules is a clear indication that they are rarely used.

The only requirement known to the officers in the districts is that prior approval must be obtained from the Supplies Department whenever authority was needed to dispose of any railways property including records. However, as the schedules do not specify which particular
officer in the Supplies Department is responsible for the destruction of records, records in Mombasa were disposed of without proper authorization.

At the headquarters, it was observed that security classified records once classified are never declassified. They are retained permanently, and no attempt has been made to evaluate them for retention or disposal. Nor are they ever transferred to record stores.

Perhaps the most problematical issue governing the retirement of records is when to close files. The general practice is to close them when folio 100 is reached for bulky documents or those with enclosures, folio 150 for bills and folio 200 for files with single items. The instructions issued by the Accounts Department require that the cover must be clearly marked with the words "CLOSED" and marked with the following information:

- the date of the first letter in the file,
- the date of the last letter on the file,
- the number of the file on which subsequent papers may be found i.e. the next volume or another file if the series is discontinued completely.  

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19 Circular letter from J O Sam Assistant Accountant to all section heads in Accounts Department, 8th June 1979, The Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/EO/2
An examination of the files transferred to the record store indicates that this procedure for closing files is not being followed.

Another problem is that files that do not become bulky are not closed. Older inactive files which ought to be transferred to the record stores continue to occupy expensive filing equipment because they have not reached the specified thickness. Lack of file covers was cited in several offices as one of the reasons for keeping these files which do not seem to grow remaining open for long periods.

5.4 Managing Personnel records

As discussed in Chapter Four, the question of managing personnel records has been a subject of considerable discussion within the Kenya Railways. Each time record clerks have been asked to sort the records in the stores, the question of how to deal with personnel records has featured prominently. There are various reasons for this.

Today the Kenya Railways Corporation employs over 20,000 employees. In the past it employed Europeans and Asians as well as nationals from Tanzania and Uganda. For instance in 1952 the staff of the East African Railways and Harbours numbered 51,311 including 1,273 Europeans, 4,769
Asians and 45,262 Africans. When the three East African States became independent a systematic process of Africanisation was introduced.

When Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika became independent, the responsibility for pensions of employees European and Asian origin was taken over by the British Government. However interviews conducted with senior officers of Kenya Railways indicate that these pensioners are still entitled to certain privileges such as reduced train fares. For this reason, the management has been reluctant to dispose any of the records of its former employees. This causes congestion of files in the record stores. One way out is for the management to specify the period for which a retired employee can enjoy these privileges. This period should be limited to not more than fifteen years after the officer has left employment with the Kenya Railways. Alternatively the details could be transferred onto a card and the files destroyed.

Except for Tanzania, which has collected some personnel files for railway officers who were absorbed by the Tanzanian Railways, the Kenya Railways continues to hold virtually all personnel files for its past employees.

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20 Letter from Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer to the Managing Director 25 July 1985, The Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/E6/2
The Uganda Railways has been asked to collect personnel files for employees who worked with the East African Railways and Harbours but has not responded.

The sheer number of personnel records held in filing equipment, offices and store rooms is a real concern for any officer charged with the responsibility of managing them. The table below provides a breakdown of personnel distribution at the Kenya Railways:

**Summary of staff employed at the Kenya Railways**

*as of 30th June 1989*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>No of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Directors</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Dev. Manager</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Personnel &amp; Administration Manager</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation Secretary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Civil Engineer</td>
<td>9,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Mechanical &amp; Electrical Engineer</td>
<td>4,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Traffic Manager</td>
<td>6,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Supplies Officer</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Processing Manager</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,391</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2

Within the organization, it is common practice to maintain at least three different files for each officer at the same time. An open file is held by the head of the employing department and another at the head office. Documents relating to normal day-to-day matters, such as leave forms, sick sheets, salary sheets etc are placed in these open files. In addition, a separate confidential file is held for each employee by the Chief Personnel Officer at the Railways headquarters in Nairobi and records details such as appointments, promotions and discipline. None of these files contains complete information of an employee. Hence, on retirement all three files have to be assembled in order to collate the information on any one employee. This is no mean task to the officers charged with the processing of pensions. Even after the pensions have been settled, personnel files are never destroyed. It is estimated that currently the Kenya Railways has no less than 42,000 current personnel files scattered around the organisation. This figure excludes all temporary files created when a specific personal file cannot be located, and files opened for casual labourers.

In the past, efforts to manage personnel records have not proved successful. In 1975, the management accepted the adoption of retention schedules which had been compiled by the Chief Mechanical Engineer. These schedules required that:

\[ \text{189} \]
All non-essential documents such as sick sheets, leave forms etc should be removed from the files and the remaining correspondence to be retained for three years after termination of employment. The retention period for this class of records was extended to eight years in 1985.

- Personal files for all living pensioners should be retained as long as the individuals were alive.

- Personal files for deceased employees and pensioners should be retained for a period of five years or until the estate of the deceased was fully administered. In 1985 this retention period was changed to eight years.

- Personnel files of employees who left the service without retirement benefits should be retained for five years,

- Employees leaving the service without retiring benefits should to be retained for five years.\(^{21}\)

An examination of these schedules indicates that they were compiled without due consideration to legal requirements relating to records retention and particularly on pensions and other retiring benefits.

\(^{21}\) Letter, E Honer Chief Mechanical Engineer to the Chief of Management Services, 27 February 1975, The Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG&/1/8
Despite the formulation of these retention periods, the Kenya Railways still retains the bulk of its employees files. One officer from the Kenya Railways who attempted to sort out these records noted how difficult it was to arrange them as many employee numbers had changed over the years.

Perhaps the best alternative would be to accept the record retention schedules for personnel records which was formulated by the Directorate of Personnel Management and the Kenya National Archives as a basis for further discussion. The retention periods they approved are:

**Recommended retention periods for personnel files in Government Offices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of file</th>
<th>Recommended retention period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>serving employees</td>
<td>retain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living pensioners</td>
<td>retain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deceased employees</td>
<td>3 years after death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees who leave the service without a pension or other retiring benefits eg resignations, dismissals etc</td>
<td>15 years after the file is closed except for files of officers who reached the level of a head of division or above or held a statutory appointment which may be kept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study argues that these periods are too short bearing in mind that the Corporation's pension regulations require that pensions be paid to children of deceased employees until they attain the age of 21. For employees leaving the service with benefits the minimum retention periods suggested in this study should be no less than 25 years after the termination of service or until the officer attains the age of eighty years.\textsuperscript{23}

5.5. The management of registries

Responsibility for the efficient management and utilization of the Railway's records is vested in the Personnel Section of each department. However, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, authority to dispose records of ephemeral nature is vested with the Chief Supplies Officer whose permission must be obtained prior to the disposal of any records. In the districts, this responsibility is vested with the Assistant Personnel Officer. Virtually none of the personnel officers nor the registry staff have had

\textsuperscript{22} Personnel General Letter No.7 from the Directorate of Personnel Management to all Departments, Local Councils and Corporations, 29th August 1991, Directorate of Personnel Management, DPM/PA/1/20/122

\textsuperscript{23} These are the retention periods currently observed in UK government departments.
formal training in the area of records management. It was not until 1992, that a two week induction course for registry clerks was conducted for Nairobi area Railway’s staff by a team of records managers from the Kenya National Archives at the Kenya Railways Institute. The course which was organised on the archives’ initiative was focused on the selection and disposal of records and did not address itself to other areas of the records life cycle nor did it specifically address the problems of managing personnel records. It was hoped that the induction course would become a regular event.

The impact of the induction course on records management is yet to be felt, but the research revealed no difference between the clerks who attended it and those who did not attend and no effects were observed in the record stores. Certainly, the magnitude of the problem calls for a much bigger effort than the two week induction course of this nature.

The performance of registry clerks is further hampered by the lack of any operating manuals. Training is on-the-job. However, little if any training is given in the records management field. It is common practice to transfer registry clerks from one department to another. No scheme of service for registry clerks is in place and the only way registry clerks climb up the administrative ladder is by
joining the executive line.

5.6 Computer Generated Records

Although this study does not cover the management of electronic records, mention must be made of the increasing use of computers at the Kenya Railways Corporation. Electronic records form part and parcel of information handling process and although there is no direct link between the Corporation’s registries and the Data Processing Department, computers are increasingly being used in some of the major operations. The implications of computer generated records on records management practices at the Kenya Railways Corporation is an area needing further investigation.

In the 1950s the East African Railways and Harbours introduced punch card equipment for handling routine matters such as payroll, accounting and other statistical work. A major decision was taken in 1967 to introduce an integrated computer-based management information system in the Corporation to deal with all the major financial activities.

The major reason was the urgent need to increase greater control over the movement of wagons, coaches and locomotives and to improve their utilisation. By 1965, the
Traffic Department had realised that in order to cope with increased traffic and to compete effectively with the road network it had to provide a more efficient transport system. Failure to provide proper controls on the use of wagons was leading to the acquisition of unnecessary new wagons, a situation which the Corporation could not afford. Moreover, it was becoming more and more difficult to keep track of the wagons by a manual system. Allocating wagons, answering customer enquiries and coping with unscheduled operating events all presented increasing problems.24

The introduction of the computer system was seen as the surest way of providing management with quick and accurate information about the railway activities which would lead to better and efficient management of the Corporation. In 1971 it was observed that:

Due to the widely dispersed nature of the Corporation's activities, the collection of provision of information by manual methods is a tedious and cumbersome process, and cannot provide satisfactory up to date service for management decision-making. In this area of speedy provision of reports a computer can be of great assistance.25


25 "Computer Development in the Corporation", Spear, Vol.9, No. 1, 1971, p.4

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The objectives of the Kenya Railways Wagon Control Project as provided by Mukhulo the Data Processing Manager were:

- to locate the location of each individual item of goods and coaching stock,
- to record whether a wagon is loaded or empty, and whether it is available for traffic or undergoing maintenance,
- to control wagons within a specified location and to report any movement outside the limits,
- to provide the District Control Offices with information relating to wagon availability, wagon delays and moving into the District,
- to provide headquarters's and other control offices with information relating to excessive wagon delays, wagon utilisation and movement of special priority wagons (e.g shipment of perishable goods).\(^2\)

Presently, the use of computers to wagon movements operates as follows. As movements and changes in the wagon take place the information is sent immediately by a teleprinter to the Corporation. Unscheduled events such as a wagon developing a mechanical problem or a wagon being despatched to a wrong destination are immediately reported to the management at the relevant location and corrective action taken without delay. Queries relating to certain types of wagon for expected traffic or the location of individual wagons are similarly answered from the information provided from the computer.

\(^2\) ibid., p.213-214
Another area where computers are increasingly being used is in the Finance Department. Activities relating to payroll, expenditure analysis, customer freight and billing are increasingly being carried out through computers.

Although the introduction of data processing equipment at the Kenya Railways Corporation might have been hailed as a major step towards improved information processing provision, it has had negative effects on the development of an efficient records management programme. Firstly, the introduction of automation in the Corporation has led to an increase in the generation of paper records, especially accounting records. Secondly the introduction of computers and the incorrect assumption that automation is the only way of providing quick and accurate information for decision making has led to a neglect of the management of paper based records, which still constitute the vast majority of recorded information in the Corporation. Finally, no effort was made to link the use of computers with an efficient records management programme. As a result, while the Data Processing Department is staffed with professionals, registries have been left to struggle with unqualified registry clerks.

It was planned that computer services would be extended gradually to other branches of the Corporation to
include such areas as personnel, freight scheduling, purchasing and order processing. This has not happened. Many of the programmes which have been developed are geared to the generation of reports, systems security, and general house-keeping systems. Unfortunately, no mention has been made of automating records management practices.

5.7 Other Information Related Activities

5.7.1 The Library

The Kenya Railways Corporation operates a library at its headquarters building. The library contains general works on transport and communication, annual reports, railway magazines, bills and various acts of parliament etc. In the past some attempts were made to classify and catalogue these materials, but these were abandoned some years back. Currently the post of a librarian is vacant and the library is under a clerical officer with no knowledge of library work at all.

Slowly the library is being turned into a store for unserviceable office equipment and unwanted office furniture. The clerical officer is frequently absent, and the library is often left unattended. Dust has accumulated and the books have been dumped without order. No catalogues are available and no accession register kept of materials
deposited in the library. As noted elsewhere in this study, many of the published materials still find their way into the record stores. It is sad to note that the library does not hold a complete set of publications produced by the Kenya Railways or its predecessor organizations.

A separate library is maintained at the Railway Training Institute but it also requires a major overhaul to enable it to serve its clients more effectively. The need for Railways staff to be able to make use of library materials cannot be overemphasised. Ideally the two libraries should be merged together to form one library for the entire organization and a professional librarian employed to reorganise and improve it.

5.7.2 The Photographic Library

The photographic library provides a comprehensive collection of photographs on various aspects of the Kenya Railways and its predecessor organizations. It is currently under the Public Relations Office. It is well managed and various retrieval tools such as subject indexes are kept. However two areas for improvement were noted. Firstly, the negatives are stored with the prints. In case of fire, the Corporation could lose all its entire photographic collection. Ideally, the negatives should be held in a separate storage area. Secondly, there is need to improve
on the captions, some of which are insufficiently detailed. For instance although it is common practice to state in the caption "Managing Director", or "Chairman," the full name and date should be given.

5.7.3 The Museum

The Kenya Railways Corporation Museum was established in 1973. It houses railway relics, old engines, including the one from which Capt Ryall was snatched by a the lion - Kima killer. The Museum also displays photographs as well as some old press cuttings and archival materials. The curator has also been able to collect several files, photographs, minutes and other files relating to the operations of railways in Kenya. In attempting to salvage as many files as possible from destruction, the curator has done a commendable job.

It should be noted, however, that preserving individual documents out of context is contrary to the accepted archival principle of respect des fonds. This simply means that records must be arranged in the order in which they were created. In order to avoid such situations, an overall information policy to coordinate the Library, the Photographic Library, the Museum and other forms of recorded information at the Kenya Railways Corporation is necessary. The development of such an information policy
will ensure that records are not scattered in various locations without proper controls.\textsuperscript{27}

5.7 Causes of poor records management at the Kenya Railways

The above analysis has not only revealed the poor state of records management at the Kenya Railways, but it has also shown that the Corporation has in the past undertaken some remedial measures to try and maintain its records. However, these efforts have not achieved the desired results. Notably in 1971, while the railways were under the East African Common Services Organization, assistance was sought from the United Nations to set up an elaborate record keeping system. A report was compiled, but an inspection of railway records today indicates that the United Nations report was not fully implemented. In addition, the Kenya National Archives has on several occasions visited Kenya Railways and made recommendations for the better management of railway records.

Despite all efforts, railway records remain unmanaged and inaccessible to railway authorities and the research community. Certainly, this situation raises several questions which require thorough investigation. For \textsuperscript{27} For a discussion on the kind of information policy recommended in this study, see Chapter Eight
example, why have past efforts by Kenya Railways Corporation and its previous organizations failed? Is it because the Corporation does not value and appreciate the value of its records? Why has the organization not been able to implement various studies and reports on the management of its records? Is it because these reports did not provide viable and workable solutions?

Moreover, under the Public Archives Act, railway records are deemed public records. Surely these records constitute one of the richest sources of information on the development of Kenya. Why has Kenya National Archives or the Kenya Railways not been able provide adequate storage facilities for same? Since 1985, the Office of the President has issued two circulars explaining the role that each parastatal body and government office is to play in the management of its records. There is no evidence to suggest that the Kenya Railways Corporation is complying with these directives. Why should this be the case?

The reasons which have hindered the development of an effective and efficient records management program at the Kenya Railways must therefore be sought from two perspectives - Problems within the Kenya Railways and the Kenya National Archives' failure to effectively play its role as the main adviser to the government on the management of public records. Some of these problems have
already been discussed in Chapter Four.

Within the Kenya Railways Corporation, records management problems can be traced to the following factors:

- failure by the management to establish acceptable records management goals and practices,
- failure to hire competent and qualified staff in the area of archives and records management,
- failure to provide adequate storage facilities thus causing registry staff to lose morale and motivation,
- failure to encourage training in the area of archives and records management,
- failure to provide financial and administrative support to those involved in registry work,
- failure to provide close supervision of those engaged in registry work,
- failure to implement various recommendations on the management of records,
- emphasis on the introduction of data processing equipment as a means of solving information management problems at the expense of developing paper based records management systems.

Virtually all these factors hinge around finances. Since its reconstitution as the Kenya Railways Corporation in 1977, the Corporation’s financial performance has been
disappointing leading to the introduction of major administrative reforms in 1990. The lack of finances more than anything else explains why the post of an archivist that was created in the mid 1980s remained unfilled until it was abolished in 1991.

Despite these problems, the Kenya Railways Corporation must be congratulated for the efforts it has made to ensure that most of its records are not lost. Although the records remain inaccessible to administrators and the research community, the records do remain intact. Urgent measures are however required if these records are to survive. In the course of conducting research for this study, it became increasingly apparent that records clerks were becoming aware that selling of waste paper can be a source of extra income. In Mombasa some records have already been sold to paper manufacturers, while in Nairobi there was evidence of numerous requests to sell waste paper. If this trend is not controlled valuable records may be lost.

However, more than anything else the Kenya Railways failure to co-operate with the Kenya National Archives explains the poor state in which most of its semi-current and non-current records are in. As discussed in Chapter

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28 For a discussion on the financial performance of the Kenya Railways and subsequent introduction of administrative reforms refer to Chapter Eight
Four, the administration has refused to allow any of its records to be transferred to the Kenya National Archives, arguing that it was in a position to provide suitable accommodation for them. The railway authorities would not even accept a request from the Kenya National Archives to have the records temporarily transferred to Nairobi Records Centre where working conditions were better.

In Nakuru, railway authorities had agreed to temporarily transfer their records to the Nakuru Provincial Records Centre for processing. However, when authority to effect the temporary transfer was sought from the headquarters, the request was not granted. Instead the authorities insisted that the records must be processed within their premises. To get around this problem the Kenya National Archives conducted a records surveys of non-current records and made recommendations for their storage. It processed most of the records in the records store and tied them up into bundles. Archival and ephemeral material were left in the same record stores. Before long the records were mixed up again and needed resorting and listing. As no attempt was made to deal with the problems affecting the registries, the problem continued to escalate.

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29 The Kenya Railways - Nakuru District: Work Progress Report 9/10/90 - 26/3/91, Provincial Record Centre Nakuru, RM/1/17

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Failure by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service to supervise the management of railway records is a major contributing factor for the poor state in which the records are. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service needs to evolve a new strategy for managing all aspects of the record life cycle rather than concentrating on non-current records only.

5.9 Conclusion

The above analysis has pointed out to the poor state of records management at the Kenya Railways Corporation. The main reasons for this poor state of affairs has been attributed to the lack of policies, procedures and lack of competent staff to deal with all the aspects of the records life cycle. The discussion has further revealed that the introduction of data processing equipment in the Corporation has to a large extent contributed to neglecting paper records as a vital source of information.

The greatest challenge facing the Corporation is how to deal with all aspects of records management. Attempts to solve problems associated with backlog accumulations

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30 For a discussion on the relationship of the Kenya Railways and the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service see Chapter Four
have failed to realise the desired effects as they were not linked up with the management of the entire life cycle of records. A new strategy for managing records is required if records are to contribute to the efficient management of the Corporation.
CHAPTER SIX

LEGAL ISSUES CONCERNING RAILWAY RECORDS

6.1 Introduction

Information exists in many formats. It may exist in books, periodicals, correspondence files, reports, accounting records, microforms, maps, photographs or in machine readable formats. Recorded information at the Kenya Railways exists in all these formats. However, the discussion that follows deals with legislation and regulations concerning correspondence, reports and accounting records e.g original paper based records.

This study argues that the lack of comprehensive legislation in Kenya embracing all phases of the records life cycle affects the maintenance and use of railway records. It argues further that because of Kenya’s historical links with Tanzania and Uganda, railway records are also affected by international laws, notably the Vienna Convention on the Law of Succession in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts. Similarly, railway records are subject to a host of bilateral and multi-lateral agreements which Kenya has entered with donor agencies on behalf of the Kenya Railways Corporation.

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6.2 Records and "Information Law"

The legal provisions governing the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of railway records are not found in any one particular place. Various pieces of legislation and various regulations affect railway records, and in some cases records are affected by different pieces of legislation at the same time. Some laws clearly specify the minimum period for which records must be retained, while others merely state the requirement to keep records but do not specify the retention period. Personnel records for instance are subject to the Factories Act, the Pension Act, and in the case of accidents, the Workmen's Compensation Act. As Railways is one of the main providers of public transport in the country, railway records are also affected by the Insurance Act as well as the Public Health Act.

Donald Skupsky, an American records manager, argues that a clearly stated requirement to keep records may be considered a "legal requirement" whereas the more imprecise areas of law may be viewed as "legal considerations."¹ Jake Knoppers, a Canadian information scientist asserts that legal requirements and legal considerations taken together, constitute "information law." He defines information law as:

any law, regulation, code (or part thereof) that requires the creation, production, retrieval, submission, transmission of recorded information or that places conditions on the access and use, confidentiality, reproduction, sale, sharing or handling of recorded information.

Knoppers goes on to assert that records managers and other information professionals cannot ignore information law as it:

- establishes the overall legal and regulatory requirements for the handling of recorded information,

- establishes specific criteria and conditions for the creation or collection, storage, processing, access and use, flow, destruction etc of recorded information,

- introduces the concept of accountability for information management e.g accuracy, integrity, relevance, timeliness etc,

- introduces the concept of rights with respect to information, e.g data protection, financial disclosure requirements etc, and

- may introduce third party arbitration and the need to justify action with respect to information handling.

Compliance with the requirements arising from information law as applied to records management can be divided into three broad categories, namely mandatory, reactive and discretionary requirements.

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3 ibid., p. 19
Mandatory information legal requirements are those which require the organisation to retain certain records for specific periods of time. The requirements often state a specific retention period or a specific procedure to be followed in order to admit the records into evidence or submit it to a regulatory body. Examples of such legislation include financial laws and orders, audit legislation, laws of contract, etc.

Reactive information legal requirements are those which require an organisation to react or respond to a request of a particular nature. Examples here include the Criminal Code, the Evidence Act, the Employment Act, etc. These laws should be able to establish unauthorised actions using records created in the normal manner of business.

Discretionary information legal requirements are those where the organisation has the option of weighing the cost of compliance versus the risk of non-compliance. Skupsky argues that discretionary information law requirements raise such questions as:

- how long should we keep records if the law does not even require that the records be kept in the first place?
- how long should we keep records if the law requires that we keep them but does not specify a retention period?
- how long do we keep records which may affect
legal actions during a statute of limitations period?

The discussion that follows seeks to show how railway records in Kenya are affected by information law requirements as well as international agreements of which Kenya is a signatory.

### 6.3 National legislation

The first question which must be asked is who owns railway records? This question is of crucial importance as all legal issues affecting the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of railway records revolve around it.

Railway records are the property of the Kenya Government. Schedule 2 of the Public Archives Act defines public records as "the records of any Ministry or Government Department and of any Commission, Office or Board establishment under the government or established by or under an Act of Parliament."  

From this it is clear that since the Kenya Railways Corporation was established under an Act of Parliament, all its records are public records and therefore form part of government property.

Even though all public records are the property of the

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Government, the responsibility for their creation, maintenance and use is vested in the hands of individual departments and corporations. The Government only plays a supervisory role, notably through circulars issued by the Office of the President or by the Kenya National Archives. In 1985, the Head of the Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet issued a circular to all Heads of Department and parastatal bodies in which he emphasised that it was the responsibility of ministries, departments and public corporations to provide appropriate accommodation for their non-current records in order to avoid loss, misplacement or possible destruction of such documents.

Moreover, Section 4 (1) of the Public Archives Act, Cap. 19 of the Laws of Kenya, makes provision for the Director of the Kenya National Archives to "examine any public records and advise on the care, preservation, custody and control thereof" of public records. Although this section empowers him to advise public bodies on the general management and care of records it does not authorise him to be involved in the management of current records.

No where is there legal provision for the management
of current records. Ideally the Public Archives Act should make provisions for the Director of the Kenya National Archives to be responsible for the management of all the stages of records as they pass through their life cycle. This would ensure that the responsibility for managing records was vested in one single office in the country. This deficiency in the Public Archives Act calls for amendment. To date the Kenya National Archives has resisted any suggestions from the author that it should get involved with the creation stage of records arguing that it does not have adequate personnel and financial resources to police registries.

6.3.1 Records creation

As departments in the public service in Kenya have responsibility for the creation, maintenance and use of their own records, the Kenya Railways Corporation Act contains legal provisions regarding the creation and retention of certain records.

Regulation No.10, under Section 6 of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act Cap. 397 of the Laws of Kenya makes it mandatory for the Railways Board to keep records of its meetings. The regulation requires that minutes and proceedings of the Board be made available to any Board

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6 Letter, Director Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service to the author, 4th February 1994
Member. Moreover, the act requires the Corporation to report to the Board all accidents other than those involving road transport. The following categories of accidents are to be reported to the Board as soon as practicable:

- accidents involving loss of human life or with serious injury to a person or property,
- accidents involving collision between trains or between vessels which may be carrying passengers,
- accidents involving derailments of trains or any part of a train carrying passengers.

The report to the Board should include details of the location of where the accident took place and if it involved injury to any person, of the nearest police station and district administration official.

Section 27 of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act requires the Corporation to publish and submit annual financial reports to the minister responsible for Transport and Communications.

The State Corporations Act Cap. 446 of the Laws of Kenya (1986) requires:

Every state corporation shall cause to be prepared and shall not later than the end of February in every year submit to the Minister and to the Treasury for approval estimates of the state corporation's revenue and expenditure for the following financial year, accompanied with proposals for funding all projects to be
undertaken by the state corporation.\textsuperscript{7}

Moreover, Section 14.1 of the State Corporation's Act further requires that every state corporation keeps or causes to be kept proper books recording all property, undertakings, funds, activities, contracts, and other business of the state corporation.\textsuperscript{8}

In addition to these provisions, the Employment Act Cap. 226 of the Laws of Kenya makes specific reference to the creation of personnel records. The Act requires each employer to keep a written record of all employees. Regulation G1300/1950 under Section 4(b) of this act stipulates that each employer must keep the following details for every employee:

- employees identity certificate number,
- employees name and his father's address,
- date of employment,
- type of contract,
- rate of wages.

These details are to be kept for as long as the employment lasts and will be needed for pension purposes and for payments of other terminal benefits.

\textsuperscript{7} Kenya. Laws. \textit{State Corporation Act. Cap 446}, Section 3

\textsuperscript{8} For a discussion on the compliance of this section, see Chapter Seven
6.3.2 Retention of railway records

The Kenya Railways Corporation Act Cap. 397 of the Laws of Kenya makes reference to the preservation of financial records. Section 26(1) stipulates that:

The board shall ensure that proper accounts and other records are kept in relation to the revenue and expenditure of the Corporation and shall ensure that within six months of the end of each financial year of the Corporation or such period as the Minister may allow in any particular case a statement of accounts of the Corporation is prepared in accordance with the best commercial standards and any direction which may be issued by the Minister and submitted to the Auditor General (Corporations.)

While the act is silent on the manner or conditions in which records should be retained, section 118(1) of the Public Health Act Cap. 242 of the Laws of Kenya requires that any factory or trade premises must be kept clean and free from any offensive smell arising from any drain, water closet etc. It also requires the premises to be well ventilated so as to destroy or render harmless any offensive gases, vapours, dust or other impurities generated within the working environment. The Act further requires the premises to be properly lighted and ventilated so as not to be injurious or dangerous to employees working therein. Trade premises include the Kenya Railways Corporation registries and record stores.

As discussed in Chapter Five, in 1981 a Ministry of Health official inspected the record stores at the Kenya Railways headquarters and found that none of these
requirements were being adhered to. The Health Officer made specific recommendations as to how these record stores should be maintained.⁹ The Kenya Railway Corporation has failed to implement any of the recommendations contained in the report. This is contrary to section 121 of the Public Health Act which states that failure to comply with the requirements of the medical officer of health constitutes an offence liable to a fine of Kenya Shillings 80.00 per day during the period of contravention. If today the Kenya Railways Corporation was to be taken to court for failing to comply with the recommendations of the medical officer issued in 1981, it would be liable to a fine of not less than Ksh 400,000. This amount excludes other expenses which might arise from such a legal suit.

6.3.3 Access to railway records

Access to public records in Kenya is governed by the Public Archives Act Cap. 19 of the Laws of Kenya and connected regulations and provisions. Section 6(1) of the Public Archives Act stipulates that public records that have been in existence for a period of thirty years should be made available for public inspection. The Act also requires the Director of the National Archives to provide appropriate facilities for the inspection of public documents. As railway records are yet to be transferred to

⁹ Letter, from the Ministry of Health to the Chief Archivist, 26th March 1981, The Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/E6/2
the Kenya National Archives, the Director cannot provide facilities for their inspection. Neither can he exercise his responsibility to provide access to these records. However, as the main adviser to the Government on all matters relating to public records, the Director is duty bound to ensure that the public's right of access to all records which are thirty years old is not hindered. Failure to do so reflects poorly on his role as the legal agent through which the public's right of access to public records can be channelled.

It is interesting to note that the Evidence Act, Cap. 80 of the Laws of Kenya, lays a basis upon which members of the public can obtain copies of public documents while they are still in the custody of the Kenya Railways Corporation. Section 80(1) of the Act demands that:

Every public officer having the custody of a public document which any person has a right to inspect shall give that person on demand a copy of it on payment of the legal fees therefor, together with a certificate written at the foot of such a copy of such document or part thereof, as the case may be, and such certificate shall be dated and subscribed by such officer with his name and his official title and shall be sealed wherever such officer is authorised by the law to make use of a seal and such copies so certified shall be called certified copies.10

Section 51(1) of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act Cap. 397 requires the Corporation to publish certain information for the general public. The Act makes it

10 Kenya. Laws. The Evidence Act Cap 80, Section 80.1
mandatory for the Corporation to prepare and publish:

- a tariff book containing all matters which under this act are required to be contained therein together with such other matters as under this act may be determined by the Corporation and such other matters as the Corporation may think fit.

- such other books, timetables and documents as under this Act are required to be kept.\(^\text{11}\)

Section 51(2) of the same Act makes provision for the display of certain information at all railway stations. The section states:

that there shall be available for public inspection at every booking office:

(a) a copy of the tariff book containing all amendments for the time being in force,

(b) a list specifying the fares for the carriage of the passengers by the Corporation from the place at which the list is kept to every other place in which bookings are commonly made, and

(c) a timetable of the passenger transport service operated by the Corporation.\(^\text{12}\)

Section 65 of the Regulations of Wages and Conditions of Employment Act Cap. 229 of the Laws of Kenya empowers a labour officer to inspect public records or to be provided with copies of these. Regulation 23(1) under the same Act empowers a labour inspector to:

Require the production of wages sheets, or other records of wages kept by an employer and records of payments made to workers by persons giving out work, and any other such records as are required

\(^\text{11}\) Kenya. Laws. \textit{The Kenya Railways Corporation Act}, Section 51(1)

\(^\text{12}\) ibid. , section 51(2)
by this part to be kept by employers and to inspect and examine these sheets or records and copy any materials or part thereof. Failure to produce these records to a labour officer constitutes an offence punishable under the Employment Act.  

It can, therefore, be argued that the Employment Act requires the creation and maintenance of records, particularly those relating to personnel issues. Failure to create and maintain certain records is a criminal offence punishable under the Employment Act.

Another area mentioned by the Regulations and Conditions of Employment Act is the display of information which relates to proposals or wage regulations affecting employees. Such proposals or wage agreements are to be displayed in a prescribed language and manner as a means of informing all employees. It is hoped original copies of materials displayed will be available in the files, which should be retained under specified retention periods.

6.3.4 Research requirements

Section 2 Sub-section (n.v) of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act authorises the organisation to conduct "research connected with any existing service or facility provided by either party or in relation to any service or facility under consideration." All research must be

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accompanied by data collection, and for any data to be meaningful, it must be processed and preserved for future reference. It can therefore be argued that the need to conduct research implies the need to create and manage records effectively. The only example of research conducted by the Corporation in collaboration with other institutions is the development of a Kenya car which was officially launched in February 1990.14

6.3.5 Disposal of railway records

The disposal of records in Kenya is subject to the provisions contained in the Public Archives Act Cap. 19 of the Laws of Kenya. Section 7(1) of the Act lays down the criteria to be used in the disposal of public records. The laid down procedure for seeking authority to destroy public records is as follows. A department wishing to dispose its valueless records must compile and submit a list of such records to the Director of the National Archives, who will seek authority to dispose the records from the Minister for Home Affairs and National Heritage. However, before seeking authority from the Minister he must satisfy himself that the records to be destroyed are either duplicates or records which are no longer required for administrative, legal, financial or other purposes. Once formal authorisation has been obtained from the Minister, the actual destruction of the records can commence.

14 The East African Standard, 14 March 1990
In a recent memorandum from the Office of the President, the heads of departments and public corporations were reminded that failure to follow the laid down procedures outlined above constitutes a criminal offence. The memorandum further went on to state:

In the event that a Government Ministry or Department considers that particular records are valueless or for some other reason no longer needed for administrative purposes, the Director of the National Archives shall be notified without delay and requested to arrange for their appraisal and disposal. No public valueless records should be kept longer than necessary as this will result into wastage of public fund through uneconomical usage of office space and equipment.\(^\text{15}\)

This study has demonstrated that in some District Offices such as Mombasa this procedure is not being adhered to. This is a clear violation of the law. When the attention of the Director of the Kenya National Archives was drawn to this problem he opted to deal with it administratively arguing that "it is difficult for one Government Department to prosecute a sister department."\(^\text{16}\)

The disposal of accounting records is governed by financial orders issued by the Government. Sections 26 and 27 authorise accounting officers to destroy certain

\(^{15}\) Republic of Kenya. Circular memorandum from the Head of the Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet Ref. OP1/48A/66, 28th November 1985, Kenya National Archives, KNA/16/1

\(^{16}\) Letter, Director Kenya National Archives to the author 4th February 1994
financial records after agreed retention periods. However, no records that are subject to audit queries may be destroyed under these financial orders.¹⁷ Certain financial records with archival value are supposed to be preserved.

The disposal of railway records is also subject to the Limitations Act Cap. 22 of the Laws of Kenya. In addition to the conditions laid down in the Limitation Act, Section 87 of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act limits the period for which any legal action can be taken against the Corporation to a maximum period of one year.

The disposal of personnel records is subject to laws and regulations. They are particularly affected by the Kenya Railways Corporation Pension Regulations, 1983, the Kenya Railways Corporation (approved Special Retirement Scheme) Pensions Regulations, 1983, the Kenya Railways Provident Fund Regulations 1983, and the Kenya Railways Corporation Pensions (Increase) Regulations 1983. Although these regulations do not specify the retention periods for which these records must be retained, they nonetheless, provide guidelines upon which a retention schedule can be based. They specify the conditions and duration upon which pension and other retiring benefits can be made. For instance, Regulation No 14(b) of the Kenya Railways Corporation (Pensions) Regulation, 1983 stipulates that

when a pensionable officer dies, a pension will be paid to his dependants for a period of five years. On the other hand, Regulation No. 15 (ii) of the same regulations stipulates that when a pensionable officer dies as a result of injuries received in the actual discharge of his duties or in circumstances specifically attributed to the nature of his duties, the Corporation will pay pension to a child or children of the deceased until the child attains the age of twenty one years.

A critical review of a recent memorandum issued by the Office of the President giving guidelines on the retention periods for personnel records indicates that the retention periods proposed did not take into consideration the legal requirements provided by the regulations cited above. There is therefore need to harmonise these retention periods.

6.3.6 The Limitation Act

Since records provide one of the major lines of defence in the case of a legal action against the Corporation, records must be kept as long as there is any possibility of legal action being brought against the Corporation, or until the limitation period has expired. Section 86(2) of the Evidence Act Cap. 80 of the Laws of Kenya lays down the condition upon which records can be accepted as evidence. One requirement is that the records must have been under proper care and custody. According to
the Evidence Act documents are said to be in proper care "if they are in the place and under the care of the person whom they would normally be. But no custody is improper if it is proved to have legitimate origin or if the circumstances of the particular case are such as to make such an origin probable."¹⁸

In his book A Manual of Archive Administration, Sir Hillary Jenkison argues that one of the archives qualities is based on of the proof of an unblemished line of responsible custodian.¹⁹ At the moment the proper care and maintenance of records might appear as an insignificant issue to the Railway authorities. It will be a different story when court action requires the production of records the custody of which is questionable.

6.3.7 Statistical Requirements

Some records may be maintained for statistical purposes only. The Statistics Act Cap. 112 of the Laws of Kenya authorises the Central Bureau of Statistics to collect data for various purposes. It is possible that the maintenance of records may help in the assessing falling standards in public transport, rates, nature and severity of accidents, goods carried etc. There are other legal

¹⁸ Kenyan. Laws. The Evidence Act, Cap 80, Section 86(2)

implications related to the maintenance of statistical records but they are usually in connection with other purposes such as funding and or legislation.

6.3.8 Audit Requirements

One of the most important pieces of legislation which affects the keeping of railway records is the Exchequer and Audit Act Cap. 412 of the Laws of Kenya. Section 30(2) of the Act authorises the Inspector of Statutory Boards to "call for and inspect all books, records, vouchers, reports and other documents which in his opinion relate to the accounts of or to the execution of the functions of any statutory board, commission or body." For these records to be made accessible to the Inspector of Statutory Boards they must be well maintained. Without a proper records management programme it is impossible to audit the performance of the Kenya Railways Corporation. The need for proper record keeping is perhaps greater today than ever before, especially as the Railways is being restructured under the Structural Adjustment Programme sponsored by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.\(^{20}\)

\(^{20}\) For a discussion on administrative reform programmes at the Kenya Railways Corporation and the role of records management in this programme see Chapter Seven
6.3.9 Other National Requirements and Considerations

The Workmen's Compensation Act Cap. 236 of the Laws of Kenya defines the means by which an employee who is injured while on duty may be compensated. Section 94 of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act requires that before any compensation can take place the employee must first be examined by a medical officer to establish the extent of the injury. This implies that there must be records kept to show the health of the employee before and after the injury.

The Trade Unions Act Cap. 233 of the Laws of Kenya recognises the right of employees and employer to form associations to represent their own interests. These societies must keep records and have regular contact with the employer or employees, and this entails the keeping of records.

The Trade Disputes Act Cap. 234 of the Laws of Kenya deals with collective bargaining for wages and other conditions of employment. This involves the creation of records to support cases and ensure implementation of agreed disputes.
6.4. International Legal Issues

Apart from the various pieces of national legislation discussed above there are other international legal agreements which Kenya has entered into which have a bearing on the management of railway records in Kenya. These are the Vienna Convention on the Law of Succession in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts, the cultural agreement signed in 1986 between Kenya and Tanzania, and the recently concluded agreement between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. These legal instruments form the basis for the settlement of problems involving the records of the defunct East African Community of which railway records form one of the largest record groupings.\textsuperscript{21}

6.4.1 The Vienna Convention on the Law of Succession in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Succession in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts which was adopted in Vienna, Austria in April 1983 has important implications for the preservation and exploitation of railway records in Kenya. The convention set out to lay down guidelines on the procedures to be followed in settling issues affecting new states which were emerging either as a result of decolonisation or through other forms

\textsuperscript{21} For a full discussion on the events leading to the collapse of the East African Community, see Chapter Two
of transfer of power.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours were amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railways and Port Services in 1948. As a result of this merger, railway records are to be found in the three East African states. The discussion below illustrates how the Vienna Convention on State Property, Archives and Debts or other international instruments developed by UNESCO affect the preservation and exploitation of the former East African Community of which railway constitute one of the largest groups.

The question of migrated archives involves different types of records. However, this study is concerned with records which were removed from one territory or to the metropolitan country. Many of these records were removed from the country of origin during the colonial period, the bulk of them being removed on the eve of independence. In the case of the railways, to date only personnel records have been exchanged between Kenya and Tanzania. The Vienna Convention provides a basis for negotiated settlement with regard to the custody of railway records. The former East African Railways Corporation created large quantities of records. To try to distribute these records within the three East African states would mean splitting archival groups to suit political interests. Certainly this would be contrary to the fundamental archival principle of respect
The need to preserve the integrity of records was recognised by the Director General of UNESCO when he wrote saying:

It is equally essential that to the fullest possible extent the archival principle of provenance or respect for the integrity of the archives groups should be observed in all proposed transfers of archives. In accordance with this principle all archives accumulated by an administrative authority should be maintained as single, indivisible, and organic unity in the custody of that authority or its legally designated successor. This is necessary to preserve the integrity of archives as titles, as proofs, and as both legal and historical evidence.\(^{22}\)

In order to maintain the integrity of archives, the Director-General introduced the concept of joint heritage, whereby records could be recognised as being owned by several states with one state providing the physical custody of the records. He went on to state that:

Where an archives group or a body of archives results from the activity of an administration where succession is shared between the predecessor state and two or more successor states—i.e. where the archives form part of the national heritage of two or more states but can not be divided without destroying its juridical, administrative and historical value— as a realistic solution recourse should be had to the concept of joint heritage. The practical result of the application of this concept is that the archive group is left physically intact in one of the countries concerned, where it is treated as


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part of the national archival heritage with all the responsibilities with regard to the security and handling implied thereby for the state acting as the owner and the custodian of that heritage. The states sharing this joint heritage should then be given rights equal to those of the custodial state.\textsuperscript{23}

To what extent are East African states willing to accept the concept of joint heritage? It may be too early to assess the practicability of this concept in East Africa until the region is archivally mature. At the moment neither Uganda nor Tanzania can commit themselves to such an arrangement until their own archival services are fully developed. The only way to guarantee that railway records held in Uganda and in Tanzania are preserved is for East African states to accept the concept of joint heritage. This will ensure that the archival principles of provenance and respect for the integrity of archives are observed.

The concept of joint heritage is closely connected to the principle of the peoples "rights to historical continuity" formulated by the Director General of UNESCO. The principle is based on the right of every community to an identity acquired through its history. Access to archives is fundamental to the establishment of this identity. When applied to railway records, this principle requires that the Kenya Government (and for that matter the Kenya Railways Corporation) to guarantee nationals of

Uganda and Tanzania the right of access to archival holdings held in Kenya.

The legal framework for achieving this exists. A recently concluded cultural agreement between Kenya and Tanzania stipulates that, "both sides shall take measures to ensure that the records of the former East African Community are properly organised, preserved and indexed in order to facilitate research for mutual benefit."

Although efforts are being made to revive regional cooperation, there is little chance that the corporations which once formed the East African Community will be merged again. The question of who should take responsibility of processing these records has been left to the individual states to decide. The large quantities of records involved and the lack of professionally trained staff to manage them means that it will take several years before these records can be made accessible.

One option which might be considered is to develop a microfilming programme for railway records. This option was attempted with considerable success in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi for Central African Federation records. However, it might be difficult to adopt it in East Africa at the

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present time. Firstly, the railway records would have to be arranged and described before microfilming could begin. Secondly considerable large sums of money would have to be set aside for purchasing microfilming equipment and for the purchase of microfilm storage cabinets. At the moment, all three East African countries are experiencing considerable financial problems which make it virtually impossible for them to enter into any meaningful microfilming exchange programme without external financial assistance. Thirdly, Tanzania and Uganda lack the professional expertise to undertake such an extensive microfilming exercise. At this stage of development it might be advisable to allow them time to organise their own national archives before embarking on such an elaborate microfilming programme of railway records. However in the meantime the records are deteriorating.

Article 27 of the Vienna Convention stipulates that the successor state (in this case the Kenya Railways Corporation) "shall take all measures to prevent damage or destruction to state archives." The quantities of records created by the Kenya Railways are too large to be accommodated in the Kenya National Archives to accession them. Uganda has been unable to establish a viable national archival institution, while Tanzania lacks the trained staff needed to handle such large quantities of records. The time has come for the Directors of the Kenya and

25 ibid. , p.317
Tanzania National Archives to assist the railway authorities to establish their own records services. The survey of record stores in the Kenya Railways Corporation indicates a records service for railway records could be established in Kenya. There already are legal provisions under Section 4.1(k) of the Public Archives Act to enable this. Thereafter, comprehensive finding aids should be compiled circulated to all the three East African states to enable their citizens to exploit these records as provided for in the Vienna Convention.

6.4.2 Agreements between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

Some pragmatic solutions have already been attempted. The railway authorities in Dar es Salaam have requested that records relating specifically to railways in Tanzania be repatriated to Tanzania. By 1989 a total of 2,335 files relating to railway operations in Tanzania were transferred from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam. Most of these files relate to railway operations in Tanzania, railway personnel and related issues such as owner occupier housing schemes. A request to reproduce copies of photographs relating to Tanzania was more difficult to grant. The Kenya Railways Corporation demanded a total of K.sh 184,000 to produce photographs, a figure which the Tanzanian Railways was

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26 Letter, Financial Controller to the General Manager, 28th August 1989, Kenya Railways Corporation, CA/E6/2
unable to raise. Kenya made similar requests to Railway authorities in Dar es Salaam, and the records involved were transferred to Nairobi.

What is important here is that the Kenya and Tanzania Railways were willing to address themselves to the problem. This experience provides a precedent for future settlements involving the transfer of records in the East African region. Attempts to involve Uganda in the exchange of railway records have proved unsuccessful, and there is no evidence that any records have been received or transferred from Nairobi.

The Kenya and Tanzania cultural agreement referred to earlier in this Chapter makes provision for archivists from the two countries to have regular consultative meetings and also to develop common strategies for managing community records. Preliminary meetings have been held between the Kenya National Archives and the Tanzania National Archives, but it is too early to predict the impact that this cultural agreement will have on the management of railway records.

As a result of the agreement the archivists have began to wake up to the problem at a time when some railway records have already been exchanged. During a meeting of senior librarians and archivists from Kenya and Tanzania it was resolved that only personnel records could immediately
be transferred between the two states. The remaining records were to be dealt with later. This study has demonstrated that it is possible for records to be transferred between the two states without necessarily involving librarians or archivists, but now that a formal agreement has been signed between Kenya and Tanzania, it will be their responsibility to deal with future arrangements on a professional basis.

The latest development relating to the management of railway records is an accord recently concluded by the presidents of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Although railway records were not the subject of the accord, it has implications for their case. The accord bound the three countries to promoting greater economic and political cooperation in the areas of transport and communications, trade, industry, agriculture, energy and the environment. In the area of transport and communications, it urges cooperation in rail transport, joint use of rolling stock, locomotives and workshops, joint training and documentation, research and marketing strategies and cooperation in lake water transport. As a result of this accord, the Kenya Railways Corporation is now operating a passenger service between Nairobi and Kampala.

The signing of this accord raises challenges for archivists in the region. Will they be prepared to seize

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27 The Weekly Review, 10th December 1993

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this opportunity and develop policies that will enable them to solve problems that have plagued the management of records that are of common interest to the three East African states? It might be too early to give any indication of the direction which this new initiative will take as far as the development of records management policies in the region is concerned.

6.5 Conclusion

The legal requirements and legal considerations discussed above have a direct bearing in the creation, maintenance and use of railway records. While conducting a physical survey of railway records it became apparent that in some of the offices one of the reasons why records are retained indefinitely is the fear of being prosecuted under the Public Archives Act. However, in other offices particularly in Mombasa, most of the officers interviewed were ignorant of the legal requirements and destroyed records without proper authorization. The survey also revealed that records with a confidential classification are never declassified at any time and are never destroyed.

It must be pointed out that legal requirements and legal considerations only apply to records for specific periods of time. Even where access to certain records is restricted, there should be a time limit when legal considerations and legal requirements no longer apply. Once
the records have passed through all phases of their life cycle and have been deposited in a records centre or an archival institution, they should be governed only by the Public Archives Act. The retention periods for railway records described in appendix 1 have been drawn up to reflect the legal requirements and legal considerations discussed above.

Finally, an analysis of legal issues governing railway records has revealed the need for Kenya to re-examine and harmonise legislation and regulations affecting the management of records. The Public Archives Act in particular should be amended so as to make the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service the sole government agent responsible for the management of all phases of the records life cycle. Without these amendments it will be impossible for the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service to discharge its responsibilities adequately.28

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28 The need to harmonise information policies as whole is a subject that is beyond this study. But there is need to formulate a comprehensive information policy which will include records management as one of its main areas.
CHAPTER SEVEN

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT
THE KENYA RAILWAYS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the role of records management and its contribution to the current administrative reform programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation. This study argues that the administrative reform programme will not achieve its maximum desired effect unless it includes a comprehensive records management programme. If we accept that records are the tools of administrators, it follows that any restructuring process which fails to take into account the role of records management in its effective decision making process will not achieve its desired goal. The management of records must, therefore, be viewed as one of the areas needing restructuring. But this can only be achieved if records management is viewed as a key factor establishing an efficient railway network. It is for this reason that the administrative reform programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation cannot be understood in isolation without examining it in the wider context of the administrative reform programmes taking place in the whole civil service and other public parastatals.
7.2 Administrative reforms

Before proceeding with the discussion on administrative reform programmes at the Kenya Railways Corporation two questions must be raised. First, what do we understand by the term administrative reform programme? Second how can an effective records management programme contribute to the current administrative reform programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation?

The term administrative reform has been defined by Caiden as "induced systematic improvement of public sector operational performance".¹ During a United Nations Conference in 1971, major administrative reforms were defined as:

specially designed efforts to induce fundamental changes in the public administration systems through system wide reforms or at least through measures for improvement of one or more of its key elements such as administrative structures, personnel and processes.²

By definition major reforms are to be distinguished from normal administrative and management improvement activities in terms of their scope, mode and implications


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for the institutions they affect. For example, a distinction might be made between the creation of the records management task force in 1982 to sort and arrange records in the Railways Headquarters basement in Nairobi and the major records management programme proposed in this study. The activities of the 1982 task force were very limited and did not involve other aspects of the management of the records life cycle.1

A major reform programme involves a fundamental overhaul of the whole system. During a recent conference organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Royal Institute of Public Administrators of Australia, it was observed that many of the administrative reform programmes undertaken by Commonwealth member states were geared to:

- increasing economic growth,
- increasing efficiency,
- providing quality customer service,
- redrawing political and administrative boundaries,
- reducing corruption,
- embracing technological opportunities,
- improving human resource management,
- reshaping the public/private sector boundary
- increased accountability of public funds,

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1 For a discussion on some of the efforts made by the Kenya Railways to manage its records see Chapter 5
7.3 Background to parastatal reforms in Kenya

Virtually all parastatals in Kenya are programmed either for administrative reforms or for privatisation. The history of these organisations can be traced back to the colonial period. Most of the original parastatals that were created were in the agricultural sector. At the time of independence in 1963, the Kenya government inherited several statutory boards and created others. By 1982 the number of statutory boards created under specific Acts of Parliament had risen to 147. There were also 47 companies which were wholly owned by the Government and various other statutory boards. In addition there were 36 companies in which the Government had a controlling interest or shareholding of 51 per cent or more and 93 companies in which the Government and/or the various statutory boards had a minority shareholding or interest.5

All state corporations are operated under the State Corporations Act Cap. 446 of the Laws of Kenya 1986. In


defining a state Corporation, the Act specifically includes:

A body corporate established before or after the commencement of this Act, by or under an Act of Parliament or other written law but not... a company incorporated under the Companies Act which is not wholly owned or controlled by the Government or by a state Corporation.®

Section 3 of the State Corporation Act further states that each corporation so established "has perpetual succession, can sue and be sued in its corporate name and subject to the Act is capable of holding or alienating movable and immovable property." 7

While the parastatal sector has expanded considerably, the performance of many of these statutory boards has been an area of major concern to both the Kenya Government and various donor agencies, especially the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank. The sector has been a consistent drain on public finances. As a result, in 1979 His Excellency the President appointed the committee on the Review of Statutory Boards to make recommendations with regard to the financial, administrative and operational problems which had plagued these boards. In its report, the committee observed that:

While the government has always concerned itself with efficiency in the civil service, very little direct attention has been given to parastatals. Consequently, in the parastatal sector, unlike in

7  ibid. ,
the civil service, there are no uniform and coordinated procedures or systems for ensuring efficient management and public accountability. It went on to state that it had found widespread "evidence of clear inefficiency, financial mismanagement, waste and malpractice in many parastatals." It further noted cases where ministries had provided little guidance or expertise to parastatals and failed to take steps to enforce established operating procedures.

The root cause of these problems ranged from poor selection of directors and senior staff to lack of proper financial control. Other causes identified included conflicting instructions from various sources within the Government, including parent ministries, the Inspectorate of Statutory Boards, the Parastatals Advisory Committee and the Treasury. The Review Committee made no mention of poor record keeping as part of the management problem. But as discussed in Chapter Five, failure by the Kenya National Archives to enforce instructions on records management to the Railways Corporation has been one of the causes of poor record practices at the Kenya Railways Corporation, and this in turn has undoubtedly contributed to management problems.

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9 ibid. p.3
10 ibid., p.44-45
A Working Party appointed in 1982 to examine government expenditure expressed considerable disappointment with the performance of these parastatals. It went on to state:

... Government involvement in commercial ventures has tended to tarnish the image of the government because the parastatals and other ventures which are expected to be viable have not been profitable.\(^{11}\)

A recent study on public enterprises in Kenya by Barbara Grosh confirmed the existence of these problems and came to the conclusion that "the parastatal problem is real and requires attention".\(^{12}\) A similar study conducted by Philip Shirima a principal consultant based at the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute at Arusha, Tanzania, indicates that many of the problems can be attributed to:

- lack of clear corporate performance objectives,
- non-existence of properly designed evaluation systems,
- delays in decision-making,
- lack of proper systems,
- insecurities of top management,
- untimely procurement and allocation of resources,
- poor human relations,
- lack of team spirit and,

\(^{11}\) Working Party on Government Expenditure, p. 3

Yet another study conducted by SRI International and Mwaniki Associates Ltd for the Kenya Association of Manufacturers came to the conclusion that the root causes of poor performance include both internal and external factors. These factors were summarised as follows:

**Internal Factors**
- deficient management,
- lax cost control,
- inadequate capital structure,
- overstaffing/low morale in work force.

**External Factors**
- lack of managerial autonomy,
- price controls,
- lack of competition,
- onerous regulatory requirements.

Faced with these problems and mounting pressure from the donor agencies, the Kenya Government, with the assistance of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, embarked on an administrative reform programme.

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to restructure the Public and parastatal sector.\textsuperscript{15} Pressure to embark on political and economic reforms reached a climax during a meeting held in Paris in November 1991 between Kenya, The World Bank and other international donor agencies. During that meeting donor agencies decided to defer aid to Kenya for six months, pending progress in political and economic reforms.\textsuperscript{16} As a result of this action multi-party politics in Kenya was introduced and steps taken towards administrative reforms in the public and parastatal sector.\textsuperscript{17}

7.4 Institutional structures for parastatal reforms in Kenya

Following the submission of the report on the Review of Parastatal Boards in 1979, the Government established the Parastatals Advisory Committee (PAC) charged with the responsibility of providing advisory and supervisory services aimed at improving efficiency in the operations of parastatals in the country. In addition to the


\textsuperscript{16} The Weekly Review, 6th December 1991

\textsuperscript{17} Aid donors were angered by the Kenya Government's failure to meet expenditure targets agreed with them. Corruption in the Government and parastatal bodies was also cited as one of the reasons for withholding aid to Kenya. The Weekly Review, 10th July 1992
establishment of the Public Advisory Committee arrangements were made to strengthen the Inspectorate of Statutory Boards. The Inspectorate was expected to deal with management, auditing and consulting services to parastatals and to deal with other administrative problems affecting them.

Despite these efforts, the performance of parastatals continued to be disappointing. Thus in 1983, following the recommendation of the Working Party on Government Expenditure a Task Force on Divesture was established. One of the tasks of the Task Force was to classify parastatals into four categories:

- those whose retention by the government as agencies or enterprises was considered essential to accelerated and equitable national development and the regulation of the private sector,
- those whose objectives had been achieved and which could be discontinued,
- those whose functions could be absorbed by parent ministries and,
- those which could be managed more efficiently by the private sector.¹⁸

The formation of the Parastatal Review Committee was another institution established in the 1980's to improve the performance of parastatals. The committee was expected to monitor the performance and problems affecting parastatals in the country.

In 1991 the Government of Kenya declared its decision to implement a comprehensive reform programme in the parastatals. The Government's stated objectives included:

- reducing the financial and administrative burden that parastatals impose on the government,
- increasing efficiency through improvements in the enabling environment for the private sector,
- raising government revenue from privatisation sales and liquidations,
- eliminating preferential treatment to allow a level playing field for private sector.  

Up to 1990, the government tended to focus its attention to improving the efficiency of public corporations through operational and financial discipline. The creation of the Office of the Auditor General (Corporations) in 1985 was aimed at tightening the control of parastatal financial resources by having public corporations or the Auditor General review and audit the enterprises speedily. But, as will be seen later in this chapter, the creation of this office did not alleviate the

19 ibid. p.ix
problems facing parastatals. The passing of the State Corporations Act in 1986 was yet another measure aimed at achieving similar goals. The objective of the Act was to enhance the investigative and supervisory powers of the State Corporations Advisory Committee.

Following the classification of parastatals into "strategic" and "non-strategic", the government's general policy was to privatise the non-strategic ones and to restructure the strategic ones. The Kenya Railways Corporation was identified as one of the strategic parastatals to be retained by the government and considerable work and thought has already been put into restructuring it.

In 1992 the Department of Government Investments and Public Enterprise was established. The department is responsible for:

- designing and supervising the restructuring of the larger strategic parastatals.
- approving investments and expansion plans
- selecting and appointing competent personnel to parastatal bodies,
- reviewing and approving subsidies by the government to parastatals,
- reviewing parastatal budgets,
- reviewing borrowing which involve government
The department also has the power to nominate independent qualified auditors for appointment by the Auditor-General (Corporations) and to ensure that all strategic parastatals publish their audited accounts within three months of their being approved by the board of directors. In addition the department is responsible for parastatals debt management, including recording, preparation and signing of lending agreements, liaising with creditors, the issuing of statements and reconciliations and managing loans and arrears owed by parastatals.  

7.5 The Kenya Railways and administrative reform programmes

As noted elsewhere in this study the Kenya Railways Corporation was one of the Corporations reconstituted following the break up of the East African Community in 1977. Having been classified as a strategic parastatal, it was the first corporation to undergo an administrative reform programme. The discussion below examines the events leading to the introduction of administrative reforms at the Kenya Railways.

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20 The Weekly Review, 10th July 1992
21 ibid.
Since its re-incarnation in 1978, the Kenya Railways Corporation has been experiencing financial difficulties. The reasons advanced for the poor performance range from stiff competition from the road network following the break up of the East African Railways, controlled government tariffs to the inability to provide adequate capacity. In addition to these problems, there is the problem of the lack of trained manpower in management and in many aspects of operations, including equipment maintenance.

Successive reports of the Controller and Auditor General and those of the Public Investments Committee on State Corporations have constantly pointed to the poor performance of the organisation. Although the Corporation has blamed external factors for its poor performance, some of the problems raised by the Auditor General (corporations) and the Public Investments Committee on State Corporations are a direct result of poor management practices including those in the area of records. For example, in its 1984 report, the Public Investments Committee on State Corporations observed that:

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23 Due, J F. "Trends in Rail Transport in four African countries, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania and Sudan", University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration, Faculty Working Paper No. 937, February 1983, p.5

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While the correct opening balance in respect of fuel and oil as at January 1984 is 4,063,807 litres, the records of the Chief Mechanical Engineer on the other hand reflects a brought forward balance of 3,982,749 at the same date. There is therefore a discrepancy of KSh 272,165.40 which has not been explained. Similarly the closing balance of fuel account as at 31st December 1984 should be 3,901,553 litres as shown in the records of the Chief mechanical Engineer. The difference of 78,965 litres or Sh.226,112.05 has not been satisfactorily explained by the Corporation.24

Moreover, the Committee observed with dismay that the records maintained by the Chief Supplies Officer indicated that goods worth Sh 1,853,595.86 paid for in the years 1975 to 1985 had not been delivered. Finally, the Committee registered its disappointment with the Corporation saying "the committee's attention been drawn to the fact that correspondence between the Corporation and overseas suppliers takes a long time to be acted upon."25 In all these cases the Committee's recommendation was for the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation "to provide all the necessary records required by the Auditor General (Corporations) for verification".26 This is no mean task bearing in mind the manner of records keeping throughout the Corporation.

25 ibid. p.65
26 ibid. p.64
Poor recording-keeping became the centre of criticism from The Weekly Review which reported that:

With the discovery of accounting discrepancies involving some Sh. 609 million, the scandal has taken a new turn. It has so far been reported that on the value of rolling stock only, there is a difference of that amount shown in Government records as having been spent on locomotives, carriages and wagons. The Corporation's Chief Engineer's records up to the end of 1978 state that rolling stock received and paid for by the Kenya Government cost Sh.1,047 million, while the Government accounts are understood to show that only Sh.438 million has been spent.27

Financial mismanagement at the Kenya Railways featured prominently in the Controller and Auditors Report for 1992 when he reported that the Corporation had been unable to provide proper accounts for money advanced to it for the Nyayo Car Project.28

Faced with these problems, the Kenya Railways Corporation, with the support of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development embarked on an administrative reform programme which has been going on since 1990. Basically the Bank's role in the administrative reform programme may be summed as that of assisting the Corporation to:

- rationalise the sector's size,
- improve the market related environment,
- streamline the institutional set up governing the

27 The Weekly Review, 7th March 1980, p.29
28 The Weekly Review, 6th August 1993
relationship of the Corporation with the Government as the regulator and the owner of the Corporation,

- assist in the rehabilitation/restructuring programme.29

A major reorganisation of the Kenya Railways Corporation took place in 1990. The new organizational structure was based on the recommendations of a Presidential Team of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Professor J N Musuva of Nairobi University. The reorganisation was aimed at streamlining the management and administration of the Corporation. The salient features of the new structure were:

- the abolition of the post of the Chairman, Managing Director and Deputy Managing Director and the creation of the post of the Executive Chairman and General Manager,

- the creation of a new division namely the Technical Services to be headed by a Divisional Manager (Technical Services),

- the renaming of the General Manager (FSI) as Divisional Manager Finance and of General Manager Finance as Divisional Manager (Business and Operations),

- the renaming of Business Development Manager as

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Business Manager charged with the responsibilities of marketing, commercial activities and corporate planning,

- the splitting of the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department and the creation of the Mechanical Engineering Department and Central Workshops as two separate departments. The Electrical Engineering Department took control of Signalling and Telecommunications Department.

- the creation of a Catering Division as a minor department reporting to the Divisional Manager, Business and Operations,

- the creation of the post of District Accountants,

- the creation of the post of Chief Security Officer reporting to the office of the Executive Chairman,

- the transfer of the Plant Depot from the Chief Civil Engineer to Chief Mechanical Engineer,

- the transfer of Land Estate Section from the Chief Civil Engineer to the Office of the Executive Chairman reporting to the Corporation Secretary,

- the transfer of the Public Relation Manager from the Business Development Manager to the Office of the Executive Chairman,

- the appointment of the Chief Internal Auditor and strengthening of the Audit Department,

- the creation of the post of District Manager to
be in charge of the Districts and reporting directly to the office of the Executive Chairman, the reorganization of the Supplies Department into distinct sections namely Stores and Stock Control and Purchasing.\textsuperscript{10}

Apparently reforms in record keeping practices did not feature in the administrative reform programme. This was a mistake which should not have been allowed to take place. This clearly demonstrates the Corporation's lack of understanding of the vital role which records management must play in administration. The discussion below seeks to demonstrate some of the areas in which a well organised records management programme can contribute.

7.6 Contribution of records management programme in the reform programme

The benefits of an effective records management programme to an administrative reform programme can only be realised when an integrated approach to managing records is adopted. As discussed in Chapter Five, past efforts by the Kenya Railways Corporation to manage its records have failed. One reason for this failure is attributed to the Corporation's failure to realise the advantages to be gained through the introduction of an integrated records management programme.

\textsuperscript{10} Letter General Manager to all Heads of Department, 2nd January 1990, The Kenya Railways Corporation, ORG/19/144/C
management programme.

As pointed out in Chapter One, the Corporation appreciates that information plays a vital role in improving its performance.\(^{31}\) But merely acknowledging that information is a valuable asset is not enough. For information to be valuable, it must be efficiently processed and stored and in such a manner that it can be retrieved when required. This requires an integrated approach to records management. The benefits to the Corporation of such a programme are described below.

In the first instance, the main objective of a records management programme is to achieve efficiency and economy in the creation maintenance and use of records. Carl Weise argues that "a failure to control information under one control is not just a minor lapse or an insignificant concern, but a case of bad management."\(^{32}\) Records are a vital management tool needed by administrators to make the right decisions. This point was emphasised by Ricks when he wrote, "the decision making process entails the identification of the problem, developing alternatives,


selecting and implementing the best solutions and evaluating the decision." ³³ This can be achieved if records can be readily accessed.

This study has demonstrated that the Corporation's performance is disappointing. Performance is, at least to some extent, a result of poor-record keeping practices. It can, therefore be argued that the establishment of a comprehensive records management programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation will lead to improved management practices and an increase in public accountability. Transparency in the workings of the Corporation is one of the broad objectives of the reform programme. This can only be achieved through proper record-keeping practices. Improvements in handling records will enhance decision making processes and hence contribute to efficiency and economy in the operations of the Corporation.

There are a number of specific ways in which efficient record keeping practices can enhance the performance of the Corporation. In the management of current records, a comprehensive records management programme will result in the creation of fewer and better records. Lincoln E Clarke has estimates that "80% of the cost of the record is in creation and it is here that management at all levels must apply a firm uncompromising stance to avoid such costs to


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the bare essentials based on need." Reducing administrative costs for the Corporation is one area in which the government is very much interested and this can be achieved through an effective records management programme.

The introduction of a records management programme will not only improve the speed at which incoming mail is handled, but it will also mean that outgoing mail reaches its destination at the quickest safest and cheapest means. By reducing the circulation ladder of incoming mail, the programme will enhance file tracking systems thus reducing the number of lost or missing files. The introduction of an effective and efficient records management programme will reduce the time spent on searching lost or misplaced files.

Moreover, the establishment of a comprehensive records management programme at the Kenya Railways Corporation will improve efficiency in the handling of records. With fewer files in the cabinets it will be easier to retrieve records. This will also create a better working environment for registry personnel. Experience gained in The Gambia and Ghana where new registry systems have been installed indicate that it is much easier to search for information from a smaller number of files than searching through a

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large mass of records. Effective correspondence management of records is in line with the Corporation's objective that the "undertakings of the Corporation is operated efficiently and economically." No wonder Place and Popham argue that "a well defined, well supported and ably led programme offers great saving to a company ... improves paperwork usefulness, operating efficiency and overall communication."

There are several ways in which better management and utilisation of records can contribute to the workings of the Corporation. When records are maintained in well structured series, the time taken to search for information will be reduced considerably. Related information to any given subject will be readily available and it will be easier for the Corporation officials to act on complete information. Availability of complete information will also lead to the protection of the Corporation's rights in matters relating activities and its properties.

Furthermore, the establishment of a records management programme will provide easy access to valuable records. As discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the main problems

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35 For a discussion on how registries have been re-organised in The Gambia see Chapter 10.

36 The Kenya Railways Corporation Act, section 8(b)

cited in various reports of the Controller and Auditor General (Corporations) is the question of poor record keeping, often leading to financial disagreements between the Corporation and the Ministry of Finance. To be accountable and transparent, the Corporation must strive to maintain proper records of its activities. This can only be attained when an integrated approach to records management is adopted which ensures that records are well maintained throughout their life cycle. A comprehensive records management programme is the surest way that records can be readily accessible for audit purposes.

In the management of semi-current and non-current records, a comprehensive records management programme will ensure the timely disposal of records which are of no long term value. As discussed in Chapter Five, one of the problems facing the Corporation is the large quantity of records held in offices, basements, warehouses and store rooms. Retrieval and utilisation of these records is greatly hampered by the manner in which these records are currently stored. In some cases, records are being disposed of without proper authorization. The introduction of a records management programme will put an end to the indiscriminate destruction of non-current records. As mentioned in Chapter Five some records have been destroyed in Mombasa without proper authorisation. How can the Corporation be certain that valuable records relating to its properties have not been lost? Should it late
discovered that those files included pension files, the pensioners affected will experience delays in receiving their retirement benefits.

In managing semi-current records, the regular transfer of records from high cost office accommodation to low cost storage areas will result in saving space in administrative areas. Office accommodation in Nairobi as well as in Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu is limited and needs to be utilised effectively. Not only can more records be housed in a records centre per square foot than in filing cabinets, but the timely disposal of records of no value through a well managed disposal programme will result in overall saving of space. As discussed in Chapter Ten, one of the components of the proposed records management programme is the creation of a records centre to house records no longer required for administrative, legal, financial, commercial and other reasons.

Moreover, the regular transfer of semi-current records to a records centre will result in the reduction of the number of filing cabinets needed and this is a direct saving. Surveys conducted by the author at the Corporation’s headquarters in Nairobi and in the District Offices at Mombasa and Nakuru indicate that the number of filing cabinets required to store records could be reduced by at least one third if semi-current records were to be transferred to a records centre.
Furthermore, the effective application of records retention schedules will improve the management of semi-current and non-current records. When records schedules are prepared and applied they will indicate where a file should be held at a given point in its life cycle.

In the management of non-current records, the establishment of a comprehensive records management programme will lead to improved documentation. A comprehensive records management programme administered by a single organisational unit is the only method by which the production, preservation and disposal of records can be effectively managed. Presently, records held in the record stores are not listed. A comprehensive records management programme will ensure that records that have been selected for permanent preservation are arranged and described. This will lead to a centralised access system to non-current records. In this way records can serve as a corporate resource. The value of such a resource cannot be overstated. As discussed in Chapter Three, railway records provide one of the richest sources of information to the study of Kenya history.

Finally, the establishment of a comprehensive records management programme will serve two purposes. First, the programme will help to set a model for other parastatals suffering similar problems. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is hoped that the experiences gained by the
Corporation through its administrative reform programme will serve as an example for other institutions in the public sector. Secondly, in establishing a records management programme, the Kenya Railways Corporation will be meeting both legal and administrative requirements of the country. These legal requirements and legal considerations require that records be maintained to meet various purposes as discussed in Chapter Six.\textsuperscript{38}

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the financial performance of the Kenya Railways Corporation has been disappointing. To a large extent this poor state of affairs can be attributed to the way records are handled at the Corporation. There is therefore need to establish a records management programme as a major component of its administrative reform programme.

The chapter has further demonstrated how an effective and efficient records management programme can contribute to administrative reforms currently taking place within the Corporation. The greatest contribution of an effective records management programme was best summed up by James Rhoads who argues that when properly implemented "it will prevent the creation of non-essential records and thus

\textsuperscript{38} For a detailed discussion on legal requirements and legal considerations regarding the preservation of railway records, see Chapter 6.
reduce the volume of records that would otherwise subsequently need to be manipulated, controlled and disposed of". There are, however, certain policy as well as administrative requirements which must be met. These policy issues and administrative requirements are explored in the next two chapters.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

POLICY ISSUES CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF RAILWAY RECORDS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to show how an integrated records management programme can systematically be introduced at the Kenya Railways Corporation. The study argues that an efficient and effective records management programme consists of several elements which work together and reinforce each other. These elements can be developed and implemented separately, but ultimately the contribution they make to the process of achieving control of records will depend upon the degree to which they are coordinated.

8.2 Approaches to managing records

Ricks¹ proposes three different approaches in dealing with non-current records. These are: the unstructured internal approach, the internal structured approach and the external approach. In the unstructured internal approach, an organisation appoints an officer within the organisation to manage the records. The officer undertakes this job on an ad hoc basis and the management of records is not linked

to an overall records management strategy. The internal structured approach involves the appointment of a professional records manager/archivist, as part of a structured records management programme which takes care of all stages of the records as they pass through their life cycle.

The external approach entails the transfer of non-current records to a national archival institution, a university or a commercial storage facility. Kelvin Smith from the Public Record Office in U.K. argues that the transfer of records to commercial storage is ideal for those organisations which:

- have too few records to justify operating their own facility,
- consider it to be important to store records away from the office for vital records, disaster planning or other reasons,
- have no available low cost storage space for their records,
- have exceeded the capacity of their own records centre, or
- are simply not inclined to run their own operation.²

² For a discussion on general considerations regarding the creation of a records centre see Smith, K. "The Storage and Control of Paper During the Semi-active Phase," in Emerson, P. How to Manage your Records: A Practical Guide, Cambridge, ICSA Publishing, p.70
In the past, the Kenya Railways Corporation has made some efforts to utilise the unstructured internal approach without success. A new strategy is required. This study argues that, to be successful, a records management strategy must involve the adoption of the internal structured approach with some limited external assistance at various stages in the implementation of the records management programme. However, for the Corporation to accept that this proposal, it must be convinced that records constitute a major resource comparable to finance or personnel.

8.3 Options for managing semi-current and non-current records

Three alternatives exist for managing semi-current and non-current railway records. The first is for the Corporation to establish its own records service managed by its own personnel. This would be an internal structured approach as discussed above.

As early as 1982, a Records Management Survey Team from the Kenya National Archives recommended the establishment of a records centre at the Kenya Railways Corporation. The team argued that the large quantities of records involved made it unrealistic to accession railway
records to the Kenya National Archives. In 1990 Ken Hall, a UNESCO consultant, supported the idea of creating separate places of deposit in government departments and parastatal bodies, supervised by the Kenya National Archives. In his report he recommended that:

A task force either from the Kenya National Archives or from the Provincial Records Centre should be sent into each institution selected to work three days per week over a full year. Each team should be led by an archivist qualified at post-graduate level. The team should work with the staff of the institution to introduce a comprehensive records management system... Each institution should be encouraged to designate a senior officer as a records officer.

Hall failed to realise that merely designating a senior officer as a records officer and providing back up from the Kenya National Archives would not achieve the desired results. His recommendation was based on the traditional approach of archivists to managing records which limits itself primarily to dealing with the last phase of the records life cycle. Logistically, such an approach is not viable. A programme of this nature, especially when there are inadequate resources available to the Kenya National Archives will not achieve the desired results. Nor would three days a week be adequate to deal effectively with records management problems in an

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3 The East African Community Archives: A Report by the Kenya National Archives Team, July 1983, Kenya National Archives, KNA/16/1

organisation such as the Kenya Railways Corporation where there are such fundamental problems with the record-keeping system. In order to deal with the problem effectively and adequately, an integrated records management programme should be instituted instead of this piecemeal approach which will not suffice.

What is required at the Kenya Railways Corporation are systems for managing records as they pass through their life cycle and strategies for dealing with backlog accumulations. There is a need for new registry control systems, new file classification systems, the development of retention schedules and a range of other systems, such as those for monitoring and evaluation of the programme. One senior administrative officer could not possibly deal with all these aspects.

Two options exist for managing semi-current and non-current railway records. The first option involves the creation of an information resource centre at the Kenya Railways Corporation to be responsible for the management of semi-current and non-current records. Legally the Corporation would have no problem in adopting this approach. Section 4(k) of the Public Archives Act empowers the Director of the National Archives to "approve any institution whether private or otherwise as a place wherein may be deposited, housed or preserved permanently or
temporarily public archives and records."

Under the Kenya Railways Corporation Act it would be feasible for the Kenya Railways Corporation to be declared a place of deposit for the preservation of public records. Section 12(c) authorises the Corporation to conduct "any business necessary or desirable to be carried on for the purposes of the Corporation and to act as an agent for any service of the Government in the provision of any agreed function." The decision to establish a Kenya Railways Records Centre as a place of deposit for railway records thus rests only on agreement between the Corporation and the Kenya National Archives. Both institutions should treat this issue with some urgency.

The Kenya Railways Corporation might also consider the option of establishing a joint archive facility with the Kenya Ports Authority. The Kenya Railways Corporation Act makes provision for establishing joint services between the two sister corporations. Section 13(n) of the Kenya Railways Corporation Act authorises the Board to "enter into any arrangements with the Kenya Ports Authority which in the opinion of the Board will promote or secure the provision or improved provision of any service or facilities which they separately provide." The joint

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5 Kenya. Laws. The Public Archives Act, 1965, Section 4(k)

6 Kenya. Laws. The Kenya Railways Corporation Act, 1978, Section 12(c)

7 Kenya. Laws. The Kenya Railways Corporation Act, 1978, Section 13(n)
facility the following advantages:

- Railway records and the Ports Authority records would all be housed in the same place. For a long time railway services and the harbours were operated jointly and housing their records together would enhance their use,

- Fewer staff would be required to manage the records, thus saving on staff salaries, equipment etc,

- The volume of the records would justify the cost of providing the service,

- The Kenya Ports Authority has already embarked on a programme for managing its records. Suitable accommodation has been identified at Mombasa and plans are under way to appoint a records officer. The Railways would benefit from their experience.

However, this option has several disadvantages.

- Currently the Kenya Railways Corporation headquarters are based in Nairobi and ideally the records of the Kenya Railways Corporation should be close enough to its administrators to allow quick access and reference,

- Similarly the Kenya Ports Authority headquarters are based at Mombasa and the transfer of the KPA records to Nairobi would not allow easy access of these records to its administrators.
This study recommends the adoption of the first option which entails the creation of an information resource centre operated by the Kenya Railways Corporation. The discussion that follows reviews the professional and managerial considerations which would underpin such a system.

8.4 The systems approach to records management

Many of the records management problems which the Corporation is experiencing as discussed in Chapter Five, are inter-connected and inter-related in complex ways. Records management problems occur within a management environment. Just as each phase of the records management continuum forms part of a complex system, so too are the solutions proposed interconnected to other aspects of management. For example, introducing changes in registries has staffing implications.

For a records management programme to be successful, and for its contribution to be realised in the administrative reform process, there must be a well defined strategy for managing records. However, as pointed out in Chapter Five, the Kenya Railways Corporation lacks a records management strategy.

Past efforts to manage railway records have failed because of the piecemeal and bottom-up approach used and
the failure of the Corporation managers to introduce an integrated records management system. The Kenya Railways Corporation has attempted to solve problems piecemeal without realising that records have a life cycle. For example, establishing task forces composed of inexperienced records clerks to deal with problems related to the storage of semi-current and non-current records has only provided temporary solutions. The management has failed to realise that record keeping problems stem from the breakdown of registry systems and the lack of a machinery for managing semi-current and non-current records. Similarly, records disposition is an activity that cannot be treated in isolation. Rather, it is but one of the record components of a management programme. It is clear from the evidence collected for this study relating to all aspects of records management problems at the Kenya Railways Corporation, that all these elements can be understood only within an integrated framework.

The findings of the study indicated that the records management programme required would need to achieve the following objectives:

- development and preparation of manuals of instructions for the management and maintenance of current, semi-current records and non-current records,

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8 For a detailed discussion on the life concept of records, see Chapter One.
- establishment of a framework for proper selection, training and deployment of the records staff and provision of supervision and assistance in all facets of the records programme,

- development of a logical file classification scheme throughout the Corporation designed to support its functions, transactions and activities, to permit orderly arrangement of records and to allow rapid information retrieval,

- establishment of file series which isolate policy files from routine files in order to aid retrieval and ensure that records requiring long term preservation are retained and records of ephemeral or short-term value are destroyed after an appropriate period,

- establishment of retention and disposal schedules for all classes of records and co-ordinate their implementation within the Corporation,

- establishment a records storage facility to house semi-current and non-current records,

- definition of systems for auditing the performance of the records management programme throughout the Corporation.

While there is considerable agreement that poor records systems increase administrative and storage costs, there is considerable disagreement over the strategy most suitable for introducing new systems. For example, F. B.
Evans argues that:

A realistic approach to the development of an effective records management programme requires that the programme concentrate initially upon the area of records disposal. Only after a disposal programme has been implemented should emphasis be directed towards the area of records maintenance and use and records creation.\(^9\)

This approach is only workable where records have been created and maintained in some reasonable order, but it is not ideal as an approach to solving records management problems where, as in the case of the Kenya Railways Corporation, systems have already broken down.

On the other hand, Carl Newton asserts that it is best to take a strategic approach in which a records management programme is viewed within the broader functions of business objectives and plans.\(^10\) Newton's approach while logical, would appear to be very theoretical and maybe only suitable for new organisations without backlog accumulations to deal with.

This study looks at the reality of introducing a records management programme where there is a breakdown of control. It presents a systems approach to conceiving, designing and implementing records management programmes.

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This approach is based on the conviction that while the theoretical principles that lie at the foundation of good records management are universal, records management programme cannot simply be transplanted from one organisation to another and be expected to work. As Kupfer\(^\text{11}\) concluded in a study on mental health information, each system is unique and requires different design specifications.

A systems approach to designing a records management programme, will focus on the design of the whole system as opposed to focusing individual components and sub-systems. This approach lays emphasis on the inter-related nature of the records life cycle. It ensures that the elements required to control records as they pass through their entire life cycle are set in a logical context taking a top-down approach from the management level downwards to the functional units in the system.

This approach will enable the benefits of a records management programme to be systematically achieved and will make an important contribution to the overall management programme for the Corporation. Within the Kenya Railways Corporation, there are many systems which work together to make the Corporation achieve its goals. Just as the Mechanical Engineering Department has its own role to play.

\(^{11}\) Kupfer, D. et al., *Mental health information systems: design and implementation*, New York: Marcel Dekker, 1976, p. 18
in ensuring that the locomotives are well serviced and maintained and the Civil Engineering Department has the responsibility of ensuring that the line is well maintained, so records management will help the Corporation to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the entire system.

8.5 The appointment of an information resource manager

An information resource manager should be appointed as soon as a decision is taken to manage records as a strategic resource. He/she should play an active role in the formulation of a records management policy and drawing up master plan. Once issued, the records management policy should not be the subject of frequent amendments.

The appointment of the Information Resource Manager constitutes the first practical step towards the establishment of an efficient records service. Many of the advantages to be gained from a comprehensive records management programme, as outlined in Chapter Seven, will result directly from this appointment. No wonder, in an article on the "don'ts" of a good records management programme, D. F. Simpson advises "do not embark on a sea of records with an inexperienced navigator and do not overlook the training that is needed to keep up with
advancement in the field."\textsuperscript{12}

The Information Resource Manager who will coordinate the activities of the Centre, should be answerable to the Executive Chairman. He should work in close liaison with the Data Processing Department. Ultimately the Data Processing Department should be merged with the Information Resource Centre to form one department responsible for the management of all aspects of information processing, storage and retrieval work.

The Information Resource Manager should have oversight of all information resources held by the Corporation including the management of records systems, the library and the museum. As this thesis is concerned with the management of records, and as this will be the largest component of the Information Resource Manager's job, the discussion which follows will focus primarily on the records management component of the job. However, reference will be made to the implications for the management of the library and the museum.

Ideally the Information Resource Manager should be professionally trained and experienced in establishing and instituting records management programmes. This view is supported by Maedke who argues that "the belief that anyone

can operate an information system is one of the greatest misconceptions of our times."

Additionally, the Information Resource Manager must have a liking for records work and a sincere appreciation of the value of records. The qualities required of were well stated by Graham Southwood when he wrote saying a good records manager must:

- be intelligent and a determined planner,
- be up to date with various information processing technologies,
- have comprehensive knowledge about the organisation,
- have the ability to manage change,
- have the ability to persuade senior managers,
- have analytical abilities and,
- be dedicated to the on-going success of the organisation.\(^\text{14}\)

Perhaps one of the most important challenges for the Information Resource Manager will be his/her ability to communicate with senior managers. This requires skills in presenting records management issues in a language and format that management can understand. Top managers cannot be expected to understand the detailed operations of a records management programme. However, they must be kept

\(^{13}\) Maedke, W O. _Information and Records Management_, California: Glencoe Publishing Co. 1987, p. 7

\(^{14}\) Southwood, G. _Records Management Guidelines for Departmental Record Officers (DRO’s) and Chief Registrars_, London: Cabinet Office, 1987, p.3
informed of the potentials and limitations of the programme. Their support is essential if they are to support records management functions within the organisational structure. Experience gained in other countries indicates that the issuing of a records management policy does not always imply that funding will be available nor competent personnel hired. This will only happen if senior management is involved.

The Information Resource Manager should have oversight of the following functions:

- issuing guidance to registries and monitoring performance levels,
- administering the Information Resource Centre,
- conducting an education programme for railway staff on good record keeping practices,
- designing, monitoring and refining efficient records storage and retrieval systems whether they affect information held on paper files, microforms or electronic systems,
- maintaining an up-to-date inventory of records,
- identifying vital records and taking precautions to protect them,
- drawing up procedural manuals, standards and technical pamphlets for the internal use of the staff,
- ensuring that current records are structured to meet the business needs of the Corporation and
that they can be easily retrieved at all times,
- establishing and implementing approved records
  retention schedules and disposition schedules
  which govern how long, where and in what form
  records must be kept and when records can be
  destroyed or transferred to the Information
  Resource Centre,
- managing off site records storage areas,
- supplying information from semi-current records
  held by the Kenya Railways Corporation to
  Railway staff through copying, telephone or
  transcription of original documents or through
  research reports,
- providing reprographic services,
- locating and collecting all non-current
  records of importance to the Kenya Railways
  Corporation and appraising them to determine
  their historical value,
- sorting, cataloguing and caring for closed
  railway records with on-going historical value in
  order to facilitate their retrieval,
- liaising with Kenya National Archives in the
  implementation of the Public Archives Act Cap 19
  of the Laws of Kenya,
- co-operating with public relations projects
  including exhibitions and publications where
  historical or archival expertise is required,
  answering external enquiries about the Railways
history thereby relieving other employees with different professional skills from dealing with these enquiries,
- dealing with requests from historians and other researchers wishing to use the Railways records including establishing *bona fides*, assistance in the location of records and supervision of visits to the Information Resource Centre,
- collecting, maintaining and displaying archival materials paintings and photographs.\(^\text{15}\)

No records management programme however well designed can function without an adequate number of suitably qualified support staff. The efficiency and effectiveness of the programme requires skilled personnel at all levels. As Howard Lowell, a records administrator working with Oklahoma State Archives and Records Management Programme argues many records management programme are constantly in "a cycle of poverty" due to insufficient numbers and inappropriate distribution between professional and support functions".\(^\text{16}\) The Information Resource Manager should therefore be supported by a team competent professionals, para-professionals and clerical staff. These should include


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trained library and museum staff.

Training for these staff should be given high priority. It is in this regard that Donald Simpson advises "do not overlook the training that is needed to keep up advancements in the field."\textsuperscript{17}

### 8.6 Information Resource Management Committee

One of the steps to be taken prior to the launching of a records management programme is the establishment of an Information Resource Management Committee. The committee should examine the need for the programme and its implications for the Corporation. The choice of its members is important and should be considered very carefully.

Section 11(d) of The Kenya Railways Corporation Act authorises the Board to "establish among its members committees for the purpose of the Corporation and delegate function thereto." One way of obtaining support is through the creation of an Information Resource Management Committee. This committee is of key importance to the programme and should be established as early as possible. Its role should be to ensure that the Information Resource Centre pursues the objectives and policies set out in the policy statement and has the resources necessary to do so.

\textsuperscript{17} Simpson, D. "The Don'ts of a Good Records Management Programme", \textit{Records Management Quarterly}, Vol.9, No.1, 1975, p.21
Initially, the functions of the Committee should be to facilitate the setting up the Information Resource Centre and its programmes. Once the Centre has been launched, the specific functions of the Committee should include:

- approving manuals and other publications prepared by the Centre,
- approving retention /disposal schedules,
- approving search room rules and regulations,
- hearing appeals from the general public in as far as access to railway records is concerned,
- assisting in communicating key problems or issues to top management,
- approving the vital records programme.

Ideally the committee should be headed by the Corporation Secretary, with the Information Resource Manager serving as the secretary. Other members of the committee should include all heads of departments and/or their deputies. The selection of the members should be based on the candidate's ability to contribute effectively in the committee's deliberations and their willingness to serve.

8.7 Records management policy

The effective and efficient management of records must be supported by an infrastructure of policies, structures,
procedures, tools, training and resources. The Information Resource Manager should derive his/her authority from a policy statement or charter issued by the Board setting out the objectives and mapping out the plan for the information management programme. The policy statement should specify the need for the programme, the objectives, the proposed structure of the programme and the level of administrative and technical support required with a detailed estimate of what the programme would cost.

The importance of such a statement cannot be overstated. As Archie Donald asserts:

Often firms have felt no need for an explicit statement of priorities of their objectives. Consequently the goals of many enterprises are held solely in the minds of senior management and may not be properly known to staff. When the policy changes as a result of the chief executive reassessing priorities, his decisions may be misunderstood and inadequately funded.  

There are other specific reasons why such a policy must be issued by the Kenya Railways Corporation Board. In the first instance it is only the Board which has the power to approve any alteration in the establishment of the Corporation.

Secondly, as records are created at all levels of administration, it is all the more important that the chief officers be bound by a policy of proper records management.

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18 Donald, A. Management, Information and Systems, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979, p. 4
If the policy does not have the support of the Board then there is a risk that it will be ignored. The records policy should apply to all departments of the Corporation and not just to some of them.

Thirdly, the policy will help to ensure a co-ordinated approach to managing records. The present policy of operating the record stores, the photographic library, the library and the museum is not conducive to effective management and these services should be brought under one umbrella.

Other reasons why the policy statement should be issued by the Board include:

- Resources must be allocated to the new Information Resource Centre, bearing in mind that a return on the investment will be very high in terms of cost savings and enhanced efficiency.

- The creation of the post of an Information Resource Manager and other support staff must be approved by the Board and a legal and administrative framework established.

- The introduction of the Information Resource Centre will have far reaching effects throughout the Corporation in the way records are created and maintained.

The policy statement should clearly state that:
- Records created by the Kenya Railways Corporation and its predecessor organisations are a corporate resource, and as such they constitute a valuable asset not only to the Corporation but also the country as a whole.

- Records must not be destroyed without the written authority of the Minister for Home Affairs and National Heritage.

- The Information Resource Centre will be the official depository of all railway records in the country irrespective of the format of the records.

- The Information Resource Manager will be the established official responsible for all aspects of records from their creation to their final disposal.

Experience gained in various countries in the West indicate that there are many benefits to be derived from such a policy statement. As Shkolink asserts:

The establishment of a company archival programme requires more than a desire or recognition of its necessity. It must have the full support of the highest managerial level. The direction, support and prestige only come from the top. From this level will come the financial support as well as directives and memos to middle and lower management on the desirability and degree of cooperation with the archives. Money, facilities, salaries, materials and the like will only be spent with the expectation that ultimately these will contribute to the money making of the
8.8 Records management master plan

One crucial element in a systems approach to records management is the formulation of a master plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework within which the elements of the records management programme can be introduced. The plan provides a focal point by outlining objectives and criteria which must be considered. It provides a foundation for the co-ordinated development of a consistent, comprehensive, corporation-wide record management system and the basis for auditing the programme.

The importance of a records management master plan was summed up by Brown as follows:

Development of information systems without a master plan normally results in development of unrelated and incompatible systems. Autonomous departments and/or sections develop individualist systems resulting in an inability to interface and communicate between systems of like nature. Often there is considerable duplication of effort.  

8.9 The Information Resource Centre

As far back as 1971 in a report on records retention

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and disposal at the then East African Railways Corporation, Pugliese recommended that:

There should be an organizational unit responsible for overseeing records management development, maintenance and change. Personnel should know where to go for interpretation of principles, whom to talk to about difficulties, who has the authority to audit compliance and make changes and from whom training is available.²¹

There are a number of reasons for managing the Corporation's records centrally through the Information Resource Centre. These include:

- The Corporation creates large quantities of records and it would be virtually impossible for the Kenya National Archives to accession all its records including the backlog.
- Railway records need to be preserved within the premises of the Corporation and thus be close to their internal users. This will have a direct impact on retrieval time,
- Railway records will be managed by railway employees answerable to the Board,
- Access to railway records can be monitored by Railway authorities thus guaranteeing confidentiality.
- The creation of an Information Resource Centre at the Kenya Railways Corporation will be in line

with the government's directive of establishing document link centre in all government departments and parastatals.\textsuperscript{22}

- By taking responsibility for its own records, the Corporation will be made to appreciate the value of the records.

- The creation of an Information Resource Centre will lead to better management of various publications and documents scattered in various offices, record stores and the library, and

- The creation of the Centre will bring the Museum under one management structure with other information related activities.

However, there are several constraints which must be borne in mind:

- Currently the Corporation lacks competent staff in the area of archives and records management,

- The available storage facilities do not meet archival standards, and substantial amounts of money will be required to improve storage conditions,

- The Corporation would have to accept instructions issued by the Kenya National Archives on preservation and use of records, and it might view this as an interference in its affairs.

\textsuperscript{22} Kenya. Laws. The Public Archives and Documentation Act, Cap. 19, 1990, Section 5

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The Corporation would have to allow researchers and the general public access to its archives in accordance with the Public Archives Act. Not only might the Corporation find this a sensitive issue but it would mean additional expense as there would be a requirement to provide public facilities, such as reading rooms and photocopying facilities.

It is important that these constraints should be overcome and an Information Resource Centre established. It should constitute a major new department within the Corporation on par with other departments. The new department should comprise of an Archives and Records Management Division and a smaller Library and Museum Division. It should be responsible for the management of records in district offices as well as in the Headquarters.

The duties of the Library and Museum Division should include the management of the Library, the Photographic Library and the Museum. In terms of the library holdings the section should concentrate on processing library materials already held by the Corporation including those which are yet to come under the control of the library. Later, it should be developed into a documentation unit. The Museum should manage and display railway relics.
8.10 Location of the Information Resource Centre

Studies conducted in America indicate that most organisations fail to realise that the success of a records management programme is determined by its positioning within the overall organisation structure. As Horton and Lannon assert:

Management does not always understand nor appreciate records management and has traditionally placed the records management function at a low administrative level (e.g. branch or section) within the organisation and certainly not on a par with management information systems or library operations. It is often seen "as those people who clean our files or teach our secretaries how to file or get boxes of old dirty records from the warehouse."23

A survey conducted in the United Kingdom by the consultancy firm Touche Ross bears testimony to the fact that the positioning of the records management programme has a direct bearing to effectiveness. The report asserts that "until organisations structure people or sections in a way that recognises their information role as well as their material processing responsibilities they are unlikely to realise substantial benefits."24 Not only must the Information Resource Manager have a reasonably high status but he/she must be capable of operating with a relatively high degree of autonomy without having to


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constantly refer his actions and decisions for confirmation and approval to other senior officers within the administrative hierarchy.

The Information Resource Centre should be based within the Kenya Railways Corporation Headquarters. However, while managed as one facility, the information resources may be physically housed in several locations. An intermediate records centre and an archival repository should be established and this should be located in the basements of Block A and B of the Headquarters building. The library should also be located in the first floor of the headquarters building. The library should provide a closed access system whereby messengers retrieve the books as they are required. Several spare rooms at the Railway Museum could also be racked and used as part of the records centre. A common reference room serving the library, the Record Centre and the Archives with two distinct sections must be provided in the Headquarters building for the consultation of records by administrators and researchers. Careful supervision will be required to ensure that researchers do not gain access to records which are closed to public inspection. Documents should only be retrieved by trained staff. Ultimately all these functions could be housed together in one purpose built information complex.

The establishment of the Information Resource Centre, with equal in status to other departments in the
Corporation will help to emphasise the importance of records, speed up the acceptance of the records management programme and introduce an element of cohesion and continuity into the programme. Such a centre will also help foster a sense of identity and a degree of loyalty to the programme by the records management staff.

Once the Centre has been established, the staff will require training to help them appreciate fully what is expected of them. This should begin with an orientation programme which should take the form of in-service attachments to the Kenya National Archives. Special seminars, conferences and refresher courses should be conducted as part of the training programme run by the Kenya Railways Institute with contributions from the Kenya National Archives staff and lecturers from the Department of Liberal Studies, Kenya Polytechnic or the Department of Archives and Records Management at Moi University.

Arrangements should also be made to send staff engaged in archives and records management work to the diploma programme at the Kenya Polytechnic or to the Bachelor of Science Degree programme at Moi University. Alternatively, the recruitment of officers engaged in records management work should be restricted to those who have undertaken training in archives and records management at the Kenya Polytechnic or at Moi University's Faculty of Information Sciences.
8.11 The Information Resource Centre budget

For the programme to succeed sufficient funds must be allocated. The provision of the repository facilities described in Chapter 10 and maintenance of the system all cost money. Therefore, adequate provision for both current and development expenditure must be made. This factor should be considered carefully. The Kenya Railways should be fully committed to financing the programme if the benefits of the integrated archives and records management programme are to be realised.

The budget should be adequate to support on-going programmes and responsibilities of the Information Resource Centre. In addition to operational needs, it should include funding for the repair and restoration of damaged records; staff training; attendance of professional meetings; the purchase of equipment and office supplies; professional books and journals; and for undertaking special projects such as exhibitions.

8.12 Publicising the programme

Although the formulation of a records policy and the establishment of an Information Resource Centre by the Board are critical steps towards the establishment of a comprehensive records management programme, there must be a means of publicising this new function. This involves
selling the idea of an integrated records management programme to the entire Corporation. This may not be an easy task as records have been neglected for a very long period of time. For this reason, publicity should start as early as possible and should be Corporation-wide and continuous. The records management policy should also be incorporated into the Corporation's Standing Orders, as well as in the Kenya Railways Corporation Act.

The launching of the programme itself should also be given extensive publicity throughout the Corporation. Ricks and Gow emphasise this point and argue that:

Any new programme needs advertising and promotion to get it under way. Cooperation and coordination with those who are to be affected by the programme are important in establishing and implementing the programme. The interest of potential users must be aroused and continued through a planned programme of information dissemination. There is less resistance to change when those who are to be affected by the change have an opportunity to contribute to the planning, development and implementation of the programme.²⁵

The records management programme may be publicised in several ways. One method is through a newsletter from the Executive Chairman's Office or through the railway magazine. Another possible method would be for the Executive Chairman to issue an internal memorandum. Whichever method is used, the publication should clarify the role of the Information Resource Centre and its staff

and provide other information which will make the case for records management strong and convincing.

The launching of the programme should be followed immediately by courtesy calls by the Information Resource Manager to the heads of the other departments. During these courtesy calls, he/she should sell the Centre's services to the Corporation officials and ally any fears they might have regarding the loss, damage or violation of confidentiality of their records. It is crucial to win the support of heads of departments at an early stage in order to ensure that the programme is established on a solid base. Besides this should help to reduce the incidence members of staff claiming ignorance of "what the management is doing".

In order to sustain the publicity programme, the Information Resource Manager must embark on an on-going campaign to publicise the services offered by the Centre. For instance, users could be educated in the role of the registry and in the records transfer and retrieval procedures. In addition accession lists could be issued and annual reports with statistics of the number of records deposited; rate of files retrieved and the number of records destroyed.
8.13 Conclusion

The discussion has focused on the main elements required for an effective records management programme for the Kenya Railways Corporation. It has been argued that a successful records management programme must be supported by well defined policies and procedures. The study has also pointed out that the crucial elements of a successful records management programme are top management support, the appointment of well qualified and highly motivated staff, the allocation of adequate financial resources and the appropriate placement of the Information Resource Centre within the overall management structure of the Corporation. The study has further demonstrated that these elements can be developed and implemented separately but that they must form part of a cohesive programme.
CHAPTER NINE

MANAGING CURRENT RECORDS AT THE KENYA RAILWAYS CORPORATION

9.1 Introduction

This Chapter builds on the discussion in Chapter Eight by outlining in greater detail the main elements required to introduce an effective and efficient machinery for managing current records at the Kenya Railways Corporation. The discussion is based on the premise that a successful records management programme must commence at the time records are created. The chapter reviews the procedures required for records maintenance and use at the current stage of the records life cycle. It is these procedures which will begin to demonstrate the benefits of the records management to the Corporation's managers.

The procedures described here cannot be introduced immediately due to the large quantities of inactive files held throughout the Corporation and the weak structures of the existing filing systems. However the workshops programme described in Chapter Ten will address this backlog and lay the foundation for the introduction of efficient registry systems as described below.
9.2 Records Creation

The creation of records entails costs. Records created must be processed, stored and retrieved when required. Studies conducted in America indicate that 80% of the cost of records is in creation and that "it is here that management at all levels must apply a firm uncompromising stance to avoid such costs to the bare essentials based on need". An organisation in America came to the conclusion that:

With increasing governmental regulations and complexity in business it became apparent that in the interest of efficiency and economy controls had to be placed over paperwork in the same manner that controls had been placed over manufacturing functions.

Records management begins at the moment when records are created, i.e. when they are written or when they are received. The importance of exercising control at this stage is emphasised by Johnson and Kallaus who compare records creation control to health preventive measures. They argue that:

Physicians tell their patients that it is better to prevent a disease than to permit it to flourish and then treat it. This same analogy can be applied to the paper record problem. If the

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creation of records can be properly controlled, considerable time and clerical costs can be eliminated and the fundamental objectives of a records management programme can be more quickly achieved.3

Arguing in support of a programme for records creation control, Peter Emmerson, Head of Records Service with Barclays Bank in U.K. came to the conclusion that "birth control is better than abortion".4

A recent RAMP study by James Rhoads emphasised the importance of records creation control. Rhoads argues that if administered properly and effectively, records creation control will:

- prevent the creation of non-essential records and thus decrease the volume of records to be manipulated, controlled and disposed of,
- enhance the useability and value of records that are needed and,
- ensure appropriate utilization of micrographics and automation throughout the life cycle.5


4 Emmerson, P. "This is Records Management: Efficiency and Security through Documentary Control", Records Management 6, Proceedings of a one day Conference held at the Unicorn Hotel, Bristol, 3 April 1981, London: Society of Archivists Records Management Group, 1981, p. 3

The discussion that follows highlights some of the main areas where control measures can be exercised to ensure an effective and efficient records service. Many of these measures can be termed as operative measures and should form the basis for a registry procedures manual.

9.3 Mail Management

Mail handling according to Deslongchamps\(^6\) involves the receiving, sorting, opening, routing, controlling, distributing of in-coming mail and the collection, preparation and despatch of out-going mail. Bergsten\(^7\) identified three elements as being essential in a mail management programme. These are speed, safety and cost. Mail must reach its destination at the fastest, safest and at the cheapest means.

Maedke\(^8\) considers correspondence management as the regulation of all correspondence processed by an organisation and the establishment of a uniform system for creation, generation, filing, maintenance and disposition of records. According to Curtis\(^9\) the objectives of mail handling are:

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8 Maedke et al., op cit. p.463

management are:

- to eliminate and simplify wherever possible the creation of correspondence,
- to improve the quality of correspondence so that it serves its purpose,
- to develop correspondence standards and guides,
- to eliminate or reduce the number of carbon and other copies that clutter files,
- to reduce time and work and, therefore, costs in the creation as well as in the processing and retention of correspondence.

All are dependent on the efficiency of registry operations.

F. B. Evans has defined a registry as a "system controlling the creation and maintenance of current files/and or semi-current records through the use of formal registers, lists, indexes, and/or filing plans/system."\(^{10}\)

The survey of registries at the Kenya Railways Corporation indicates that all registries perform at least some of the following functions:

- receiving incoming mail,
- opening, stamping and sorting in-coming mail,
- classifying and examining in-coming mail,
- raising and registering files,
- indexing,
- procuring and searching for files,

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\(^{10}\) Evans, F B. Dictionary of Archival Terminology, 1984, p.134
- dispatching correspondence,
- distributing files to action officers,
- repairing files and replacing covers,
- delivering mail,
- putting files away,
- examining files for action completion,
- directing messengers,
- receiving valuables such as cheques and legal documents,
- disposing and sentencing of files, etc.,

However, during the survey, it was observed that on the whole, the Corporation's registries did not discharge many of these services effectively, as has been discussed in Chapter Five. The records management programme envisaged in this study would address these weaknesses. Johnson and Kallaus assert that the performance of registries can greatly be improved through:

- introducing good organisation of mailing functions,
- consolidating mail and other related functions such as filing where appropriate,
- controlling the routing of incoming and outgoing mail,
- ensuring adequate space management and workroom efficiency with a view to prompt, economical, and accurate deliveries,
- making efficient use of equipment, sealers,
postage meters, etc.
- developing efficient work schedules for registry personnel.\textsuperscript{11}

All of these could be developed in the Kenya Railways registries.

The location of the mail room itself plays a considerable part in the efficiency of mail management. As noted elsewhere in this study, the location of registries in the Corporation varies from department to department. Whereas in Nairobi, most registries are located close to action officers in the districts for instance, Mombasa and Nakuru, record clerks share offices with non-registry personnel.

There are also a number of small specific improvements which would make a difference to registry operations. The introduction of simple, low cost supplies and equipment would help. For example, registries could use mail slitters (currently used in some of the offices in Nairobi) and could introduce sorting bins, trays or compartments to speed up the processing of incoming mail.\textsuperscript{12}

For out-going mail, the Corporation could also make simpler cost effective improvements. For instance it could

\textsuperscript{11} Johnson and Kallaus . op. cit., p.353

\textsuperscript{12} For a full discussion on some of the ways in which mail management can be improved see Bergesten, J. op. cit., p.3-5
take advantage of weighing scales, tying machines, sealers etc. During the survey of mail management at the Headquarters Office in Nairobi, it was discovered that very few registries had weighing machines so that staff had to go to the post office regularly. Moreover, re-usable envelopes could be re-used for inter-departmental mail.

Most of the registries still record incoming mail. This can provide a useful means of tracking correspondence, but the process is time consuming and creates delays in mail reaching action officers. It is has been abandoned in most Western organisations. For the time being, this practice should be continued as a security measure, but care should be taken to ensure that clerks record the file on which a letter is placed. Once an effective records management programme is fully operational and the registries are staffed with qualified and competent records clerks it can be phased out.

9.4 File Control systems

9.4.1 Filing management

Many of the records management problems discussed in Chapter Five stem from poor filing systems. The control of incoming mail, its classification and placement in individual subject files is critical but this has received
very little attention. It is essential that filing in the Corporation's registries should be carried out in a logical manner if it is to support business operations. According to Maedke, a file arrangement is a logical order of documents or files. He defines an index as an arrangement of names or topics in either an alphabetical or numerical order that provides the searcher with the elements needed to locate an item filed within the system.\(^{13}\) Continolo\(^ {14}\) states that a filing system is normally set up in an organisation to fulfil the following objectives:

- to gather together in an orderly fashion all the documents which circulate in the business,
- to assure the preservation of documents collected,
- to retrieve documents quickly when requested by the various departments in the organisation,
- to carry out the functions outlined above in the best and most economical way possible.

The system of file classification in current use at the Kenya Railways Corporation is alphanumeric, with one or three letters to indicate a departmental or section code, followed by an accession number. In most cases the code is an abbreviation of the department or section's name. This system was inherited from the East African Railways

\(^{13}\) Maedke et al, op.cit., p.157

Corporation and has never been updated. Its main advantage is that it is used throughout the Corporation and most registry clerks have some basic idea of how it should work. File lists are maintained, but no attempt has been made to update them since the creation of the Kenya Railways Corporation.

The need to streamline the file classification system at the Corporation is of crucial importance. Benefits from systematic filing systems will be maximised when the Corporation adopts a logical filing system based on common principles which can be adapted to the particular needs of the individual departments. As the National Archives and Records Service of the U S argues, a unified filing system leads to:

- integrity and continuity of records. High record keeping standards are maintained despite personnel changes.

- efficiency of personnel. File clerks and clerical assistants master record keeping practices in their own offices and easily acquire a working knowledge of other offices of the organisation, thus permitting interchange or transfer of personnel with the minimum of retraining to operate a registry.

- better communication. A common language representative of search criterion enables users and registry staff to co-operate more effectively in retrieving records. File references cited in written communication have the same meaning to both the sending and receiving office, thus speeding the location of referenced material.

- aid to audit and research. Uniformity of document arrangement facilitates the use of records in audit and surveys. For those records of lasting value, this same ease of
reference promises to be invaluable in the task of archival research.

- compliance with retention schedules. Symmetry in subject arrangement combined with manual instructions on records retention and disposition helps ensure preservation of valuable papers and the disposal of useless ones.

- saving in supplies. Standardization of filing supplies such as folders, labels, cabinets; cupboards etc, permits the purchase of essential supplies in quantities at considerable savings.\(^{15}\)

The introduction of a logical classification system is not a simple matter. The construction of a new classification system and its implementation is beyond the scope of this study. What can be said at this stage is that the challenge lies in choosing the approach that best fits the Corporation’s requirements. The size and complexity of the subject matter as well as autonomy of individual departments must all be considered. Again the General Services Administration guidance is useful. It offers four different approaches for consideration:

- a single agency manual with comprehensive coverage of all subject categories. Each file station wherever it is located selects and uses the subject categories representing its own records, setting aside the remainder of the manual for reference work,

- an agency manual on general administrative (facilitative) subjects only. Every office uses the same manual for general administrative subjects like "personnel" and "budget" but each activity develops its own

manuals for records programmes (operational) subjects like "Medicare" and "Highway Beatification",

- an agency manual that includes basic rules for co-ordinating all files as well as subject classification for general administrative records. Like the second approach this one leads to a single classification scheme for administrative records only. But it has the additional advantage of co-ordinating all of the agency’s filing systems by prescribing uniform procedures for coding, labelling, cross-referencing and other filing activities. Sometimes it is possible to prescribe primary categories for subjects representing programme (operational) records,

- a separate manual for each office or each group of offices engaged in the same activities. This may mean one manual for each bureau or division, with constituent offices at headquarters and in the field adapt to their own needs, or it could mean a different manual for large field stations and for each office or group of offices with unique functions.\[16\]

This study recommends the adoption of a single agency manual with comprehensive coverage of all subject categories. This should serve as a training manual for registry clerks and help to ensure that registry systems are effectively applied throughout the Corporation. The success of the system chosen will depend in large measure upon the maintenance of a regularly up-dated subject list. A common thesaurus should be developed and controlled centrally by the Information Resource Centre. Individual departments of the Corporation can then use the terms that relate to their functions. No new terms should be

\[16\] ibid., p.4
introduced without the approval of the Information Resource Centre. The system must be reviewed regularly, a view that is supported by M. D. Smith who asserts that:

For ease of use, a subject classification should be accompanied by a relative file index. The index orders all the file subject headings. For a functional classification system to be effective it must periodically be updated to delete or add new sub-categories.\textsuperscript{17}

\section*{9.4.2 File tracking systems}

At present no uniform system is in place for controlling file movement in the Corporation. Most of the officers interviewed spoke of their frustrations in trying to locate files, a process which sometimes took two to five days. Sometimes files could not be located at all. File tracking systems require an investment of time but ultimately they will result in major time savings for staff at all levels.

\textbf{File movement cards}

File movement cards would enable the registries to monitor and control and thus to trace a file at any given moment. Each time a file is removed from its normal location, the details of where the file has been forwarded are recorded in a card. One method of tracking is to placed the card in the normal location of the file. The card

remains there until the file is returned into the registry.

In discussing the use of file cards Ira Penn point out that:

The location card shows the file title and file reference, the date on which it was taken out or sent out of the registry and the name of the officer who has it. A card can be made for every file and it can rest inside a file cover when the file is in place in the registry. 18

Alternatively, file movement cards could be placed in a card index containing cards for files that are in circulation. This will enable clerks to know which files are in circulation at any given moment.

Folioing

Closely related to filing of papers is the process of foliating as a means of indicating the order in which correspondence is received or created. This also provides a quick way of establishing whether papers have been removed from a file. Should it be essential for an item to be removed from a file, a note should be made to indicate where the item has been transferred, by whom and on what date.

Cross-referencing

Cross-referencing helps users to relate items. It can

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be carried out at a file level whereby users are directed to related files, or it can be done within individual files. In this later case, the user would be referred to related correspondence within the file. This is usually done by the use of the term "see also" or "refer to" followed by the folio number.

Cross-referencing at the file level is time consuming. However, once a comprehensive indexing system is established this will provide an automatic means of cross referencing, especially if two retrieval terms are used.

Re-submit system

A re-submit or bring-up (B U) system ensures that a file requiring further action by a particular officer is brought forward. As was noted in Chapter Five, the Corporation lacks a uniform re-submit system. Diaries should be provided to all registries to enable them to record:

- the file number and file title,
- the name of the action officer or office wishing to see the file,
- the date the file is required for action.

Keep in view

Closely related to a re-submit system is a method
commonly referred to as "keep in view" (K.I.V). This method alerts registry clerks to the need to be on the look out for related correspondence regarding a subject which has been dealt with or for which related correspondence might arise in the future. However, this system encourages registry clerks to keep files out instead of putting them away promptly. It is not needed if there is a good bring-up system.

File census

The Corporation's registries carry out a daily file census as a means of monitoring file movements. This involves taking an inventory of files which are awaiting action in various offices. This enables registry personnel to locate files which have left the registry without being recorded or which have been passed from one action officer to another without informing registry personnel. However, the effective use of this system depends on the cooperation of registry staff and action officers. When officers lock files in their cabinets or carry files home to complete assignments it is not possible to conduct meaningful censuses.
9.5 Confidential records

Handling confidential records

In designing a records security system several factors must be borne in mind. In the first instance, it must be remembered that records created by the Corporation are a vital resource and should only be made available to authorised officers. This should form the basis of the Corporation's records security strategy. The study indicated that records security is currently given very low priority. There is need to educate all staff about the need for security so that they take appropriate precautions instinctively. An in-built awareness of this kind is the essence of good security. It should be reinforced by adherence to good security practices such as 'the need to know rule' whereby confidential records are only passed to those who "require the information" in accordance with procedures set out by the Corporation. There should also be strict adherence to the Official Secrets Act.

Security of confidential records

Due to the unsatisfactory security arrangements at the Kenya Railways Corporation, many senior officers have lost faith in the registries and retain confidential files in their offices. Except for the Executive Chairman's Office, the registries are ill-equipped to handle confidential
James Schweitzer argues that the value of records arise from the following factors:

- damage to business if the information is made public,
- financial loss if information is changed improperly,
- business cost if the information is destroyed,
- competitive effect if the information comes into the hands of a rival,
- legal vulnerability if information protected by law is improperly released.\(^{19}\)

Schweitzer goes further to assert that the value of information is usually represented by such terminology used as "Secret", "Private", "High Value", "Restricted", "Confidential", "Personal". The particular terminology is unimportant, but there must be a structured meaning which reflects levels of value.\(^{20}\) The valuation of classified records and the resulting assignment of value factor identification, or classification, forms the basis for establishing a programme for handling classified records.


\(^{20}\) ibid., p.6

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Confidential records should only be taken out of the office when it is really necessary to do so. Yet, in 1980, the Managing Director noted in a circular that when confidential records had to be removed from the office, they should remain in the personal custody of the authorised officer and that if it were necessary to read them in public places such as buses or trains care should be taken to ensure that they are not read by strangers. This demonstrates the lack of awareness of what constitutes good security arrangements within the Corporation problem which must be addressed in the future.

Disposal of confidential records

All registry staff and other clerical officers handling confidential materials should be aware of the procedures to be followed in the disposal of confidential materials. Confidential records should be disposed of under supervision. This should normally be done by burning or by mechanical shredding or by pulping under guarantee by a pulping contractor. An authorised officer of the Corporation should witness the disposal of all confidential records and a certificate of destruction issued and filed. Shorthand notebooks containing confidential information, carbon paper and typewriter ribbons used in the preparation of confidential materials should be receive similar

9.6 Messenger service

Virtually all of the Corporation offices surveyed had a messenger service based at the registry. The duties of these messengers are not clearly defined but include cleaning offices, mail collection and mail delivery, making tea for senior officers and occasionally undertaking personal errands. These staff are not used effectively.

The performance of the Corporation registries could be greatly enhanced by an efficient messenger service. In designing an effective messenger service consideration needs to be given to the Corporation’s circumstances and requirements. For instance, in areas like Mombasa and Nakuru, where railway offices are located in several places, the use of bicycles and waterproof bags ought to be provided. A strict inter-departmental mail timetable for the collection and delivery of mail should also be worked out. This will enable action officers to know what time to expect internal mail. Messenger timetables could also be included in office instructions.

The Corporation must regard the messenger service as a segment of its overall communication process. Most messengers are lowly paid and have little hope of any promotion. If the system is to be well maintained, the
terms of service should be good enough not only to attract people with a minimum of initiative, drive and ambition but also to retain those who prove themselves to be hard-working and willing to advance to higher grades. Job descriptions should be prepared and their work closely supervised.

9.7 Vital records programme

In the recent past the Kenya Railways Corporation has experienced several catastrophes. Derailments and other railway accidents have become a common feature as noted by the editor of The Daily Nation who wrote saying:

It has happened again. Another train derailment and another life lost. Something is surely wrong with our rail network. Whatever explanation the Chairman of the Kenya Railways Corporation Prof. Musuva gives for these fatal and frequent train accidents they can no longer be convincing. Whether it is "an act of God" as he said in the Ngai Ndeithya accident or speeding in the latest one at Embakasi, Nairobi, Prof Musuva and the whole railway management ought to get one thing right- the railway system is in dire need of serious attention in all aspects of its operations.  

The restoration of its services is largely determined by the speed at which the Corporation is able to gather all information required. In another recent incident a bridge was washed away by flood waters severing railway communication between Nairobi and Mombasa. Over sixty

22 The Daily Nation, 23 March 1993
people died and others were reported missing. The accident (the worst in railway history in Kenya) was blamed on floods following a heavy downpour of rain. The speed at which the Corporation responded indicates that it was unprepared for such an event. It took several months to restore the service between Mombasa and Nairobi. Such accidents are indicative of the vulnerability of the railways and the importance of ensuring that there is a firm basis for business continuity. The protection of vital records is essential.

It was evident from the field work that the Kenya Railways Corporation has not been able to distinguish the difference between vital records and confidential records. Confidential records may contain vital information, but not all confidential records can be considered as vital.

A successful vital records management programme requires the support and cooperation of top management and should be considered part of the overall planning programme for emergencies. The Corporation has taken initiatives to embark on a microfilming programme of its architectural plans and drawings but has not tied up this into an overall vital records management programme. Worse still, the microfilm copies are stored in the same building as the original copies. Should an emergency arise, the Corporation stands to lose both the original copy and the

23 The Standard, 3 February 1993

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microfilm copy. This illustrates the necessity for professional input.

The process of selecting vital records requires great care. The records manager should constantly remind heads of departments and others involved in the programme that only about 20% of the total record are considered as vital. A comprehensive vital records management programme would need to include:

- accounts payable,
- accounts recoverable,
- audited reports,
- bank deposit data,
- customer data,
- engineering data,
- general ledgers,
- insurance policies,
- inventory lists,
- leases,
- manufacturing processing data,
- minutes of Board of Directors,
- capital asset lists,
- contracts,
- sales data,
- shipping documents,
- payrolls and personal records,
statistical operating data etc.\textsuperscript{24}\textsuperscript{24}

At the moment this material is not adequately protected.

In establishing a vital records management programme it is suggested that a vital records committee be instituted to determine the nature and scope of the programme. It should compose of:

- the Managing Director,
- the Corporation Secretary,
- the Information Resource Manager,
- all the Heads of Departments,
- head of security services.

The committee members should be familiar with their areas of operations and be willing to devote time identifying and selecting vital records. The committee should be headed by the General Manager and should meet regularly until all vital records have been identified and selected for safe custody. The committee should also be responsible for issuing a vital records management directive which will define the programme, establish its authority and assign responsibility for its activities.

Donaldson recommends that legal guidance should be sought to ensure that all records which might be required

\textsuperscript{24} For a broader list of records to be included in a vital records management programme see E J Leahy and C A Cameron. \textit{Modern Records Management}, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, pp. 208-209
following an emergency are included in the programme.\textsuperscript{25} In the case of the Kenya Railways Corporation, it is expected that the Corporation Secretary, who is also the legal officer, would work very closely with the Information Resource Manager in developing the programme.

To be successful the Information Resource Manager and his team should have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the Corporation and should work to motivate heads of departments and other senior officers within the corporation. They should organise training on the need for a vital records programme making use of examples of disasters that have occurred elsewhere, such as the 1939 fire that destroyed the Secretariat in Nairobi.

The type of storage for the safe custody of vital records should be considered very carefully. This will be greatly influenced by the dangers that are likely to take place in the Corporation. Flooding of the basements at the headquarters, fires arising from faulty wires, negligence and sabotage cannot be ruled out. Dispersal of copies of records to various locations seems to be the best option the Kenya Railways should adopt.

Vital records should not be held longer than is necessary and this calls for regular reviews of the records

held to ensure that records which are no longer vital are transferred to ordinary storage areas.

In order to ensure that only vital records are transferred to vital storage areas, there should be a vital records deposit/transmittal form which records:

- the name of the department or section
- the name of head of department or chief officer
- description of records (title or file identity)
- medium of deposit,
- frequency of deposit,
- disposal instructions.

Arrangements must be made for the physical transfer of vital records to secure areas. A system is needed to ensure that each department or section has a list of records which are held. Ideally, this list should be produced monthly, quarterly, or half yearly.

Each office should conduct a periodic test of their holdings in the safe storage area. This will provide some form of regular training in the nature and retrieval of vital records and prepare the departments to respond to emergencies. Routine reports of these tests activity should be made to the Executive Chairman. Recommendations arising from the reports submitted should be taken seriously and might result in changes in the nature records being sent to safe storage, or a revision in storage arrangements.
9.8 Conclusion

The discussion has demonstrated the need to control and manage current records. The discussion has highlighted the main areas needing strengthening. The role of a vital records management programme has also been discussed and recommendations made on how it can successfully be implemented. Several changes for managing current records have been suggested some of which, though minor, when implemented will make real improvements in the way records are handled. Moreover, when these improvements have been introduced, the records management programme envisaged in this study will begin to contribute to the administrative reforms which are presently underway.
CHAPTER TEN

MANAGING SEMI-CURRENT AND NON-CURRENT RECORDS AT
THE KENYA RAILWAY CORPORATION

10.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the problems of managing semi-current and non-current at the Kenya Railways Corporation. It proposes a strategy for dealing with backlog accumulations, identifies appropriate systems for managing semi-current and non-current records and reviews procedures for processing archival records.

10.2 Dealing with backlog accumulations

The overwhelming records management problem facing the Kenya Railways Corporation is how to deal with a backlog accumulation of records extending back over a period of almost hundred years. The root cause of this problem lies in the Corporation’s failure to appoint trained staff to oversee records creation, maintenance and use and disposition. The situation at the Kenya Railways might be compared to what J H Simes, an Assistant Records Keeper with the Scottish Records Office, once said:
In the main, there are congestions, frustrations and expense. Congestion when record rooms become cluttered up, frustration when things cannot be found quickly, and expense when staff time is squandered needlessly searching for information which should be readily at hand.¹

Faced with this problem the question which must be asked is whether traditional approaches to managing records developed in Europe will provide a solution in a situation such as the Kenya Railways Corporation where systems have broken down. These methods involve records surveys, compilation of retention schedules, sorting, appraisal, arrangement and listing. How can these processes be undertaken with limited resources and within a reasonable time frame? How long would it take a records manager working alone or with a small staff of inexperienced clerks to gain control over records accumulated over such a long period? This study argues that if meaningful results are to be achieved, that is if the backlog accumulation is to be processed, registries decongested and new systems introduced, then drastic measures are required.

Normally, the starting point for a records management programme is the records survey and records disposal. This is an approach which Frank Evans supports and recommends. He argues that:

A realistic approach to the development of an effective records management programme requires that the programme concentrate initially upon the area of records disposal. Only after a disposal programme has been implemented should emphasis be directed to the area of records maintenance and use and records creation.²

Records surveys aim at collecting data relating to record series, rate of accumulation, preservation needs, and the preparation of retention schedules. According to Derek Charman, a private consultant in records management in the U.K., the objectives of records surveys are to assist in the development of retention schedules.³ The advantages of records surveys were summed up by Peter Emmerson, records manager with Barclays Bank in U.K. when he said:

The survey work brings other immediate benefits. Records which are already time expired are eliminated, duplication is brought under control, in some cases record copies of documents can be designated though this may lead to changes in the structure of records to ensure complete information. and it brings to light those records that are still being created but whose purpose has since been forgotten. Birth control is always better than abortion. Investigation and analysis of this kind will also bring to light poor filing systems which can then be drawn to the attention of the operating department with suggestions as to the ways in which they could be improved, irrespective of where the direct responsibility for systems design lie. The large accumulations of records which are no longer in current use, the great problem of backlog can also be attacked during the survey at least on the plane of identification, even if the physical movement and arrangement of the records has to be

² Evans, F B. p.16.

postponed to a time in the future.¹

This approach presupposes that records must have been created and maintained in some reasonable order. But the prevailing situation at the Kenya Railways Corporation renders this approach unworkable. Firstly, it would be very difficult to carry out a meaningful survey as Charman and Emmerson recommend. Records series at the Corporation are not easily identifiable while the records stores are full to capacity, with very little working space available to spread out the records for identification.

Secondly, as the records are dumped without order, any attempt to bring them out for identification would be time consuming and not cost effective. It is for this reason that initially the survey should be limited to identifying the location of record stores. The nature and content of the records can only be determined when the Corporation is ready to embark on processing the records and moving them to a records centre.

Thirdly, as will be discussed in Section 10.6, processing backlog accumulations cannot wait until retention schedules have been compiled. The disordered state of the records would make it impossible to construct

meaningful schedules. The compilation of retention schedules should only commence after backlog accumulations have been dealt with and new filing systems are developed.

To obtain immediate results, this study recommends the adoption of a series of workshops for processing backlog accumulation. The organisation of the workshops should follow immediately after the appointment of the Information Resource Manager and the creation of the Information Resource Centre. The materials processed should comprise the first accessions to the intermediate Records Centre and the Archives.

The aims of the first workshop should be to sort, arrange, appraise and describe records in the Corporation's records stores. More specifically the workshop would aim to:

- identify records of long term value held in the basements in the Corporation’s headquarters,
- identify records which, although not required for day-to-day administrative purposes, must still be retained to meet legal requirements,
- identify records of an ephemeral nature which can be disposed off immediately,
- compile finding aids and other retrieval tools for records transferred to the Records Centre,
- identify various publications held in the basements and arrange for their future management
in a library,
- process and accession archival records into the repository,
- accession records into the Records Centre.

The second phase of the workshop programme should concentrate on decongesting registries and transfer of semi-current records held there to the Records Centre. Files that have not been acted upon for the last five years should be closed immediately. Only current files should be left in the filing cabinets. Loose papers and valueless papers which do not need to be retained for administrative, legal, financial or other reasons should be disposed of as part of good housekeeping. The third phase should aim at the installation and monitoring new registry systems described in Chapter Eight. The duration of each phase of the workshop depends on the number of records to be processed. It is likely that the appointed Information Resource Manager will require outside assistance to train other members of staff and to set in motion the records management workshop process. Assistance might also be required during the later phases of the workshop programme.

The advantages of the records management workshops are many. Firstly, the programme will bring together a team of professionals who will be able to tackle the problem and achieve results within a relatively short period. Secondly, except for professional assistance from outside, no
additional expense will be involved in terms of staff. To the students from the Kenya Polytechnic or Moi University, the workshop will provide hands on experience in records management and help prepare them for their future career as records managers and archivists.

This workshop approach has been used with considerable success in West Africa. In The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ghana, records management projects conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers have been successful, and it would be desirable to draw upon this model. For example, the 1991 Sierra Leone workshop which lasted for three weeks had the following achievements:

- 35,000 files of ephemeral nature were identified for disposal,
- 5,500 files of an intermediary or long term value were accessioned to a new National Records Centre,
- 1,100 files of permanent value were accessioned to the National Archives,
- space was created in offices and several filing cabinets were cleared as were many wooden cupboards and shelves.\(^5\)

In Malaysia a similar programme has been developed by the National Archives based on the West African model. The National Archives organises special records management

workshops known as URUS within ministries and departments. During the workshops the staff from the National Archives and the ministry concerned work together to process vast quantities of records.

A similar approach has been developed by the National Air and Space Museum in America. In this latter case, the National Air and Space Museum utilised volunteers to deal with records management related problems. During the workshops, the National Air and Space Museum was able to:

- review, check, caption and rejacket nearly 4,200 colour negatives,
- prepare a master inventory for 3,300 video cassettes,
- relabel 750 video cassettes,
- reorganise and rehouse the entire film collection,
- sort and refolder seven drawer lateral file cabinets containing space history files,
- accession, describe, assess physical condition, rehouse, label, shelve and enter description data for 160 scrapbooks.®

The volunteer programme was so successful that "the archives staff truly believe in the potential of such a programme and after each session have supported the

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scheduling of a programme for the following year." The advantages of the volunteer programme were summed by Susan Ewing, a supervisor with Aircraft Publishers in Brisbane California, when she wrote:

The programme provided the archives with additional volunteer staffing for intensive work on selected projects and offered an opportunity for interested persons to contribute to the historic preservation of national treasures while experiencing a behind-the-scenes look at world famous museum. Everyone who has participated in the NASM programme has benefitted and has been enthusiastic about the programme and its results. The staff of the NASM archives recommends that other archival agencies consider such a programme for assistance with the never ending work of managing the nation’s documentary heritage.

The first immediate task for the Information Resource Manager in making arrangements for the workshop programme will be to identify suitable accommodation wherein records can be processed. The area identified must be large enough to allow for the records to be spread out for identification. The location must also be large enough to allow for a team of about 20 people to work at the same time.

The second step will involve selecting a team of registry clerks, archivists from the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service and students from the Department of Liberal studies at the Kenya Polytechnic and or Moi University’s Faculty of Information Sciences. The

7 ibid. p.180
8 ibid., p.183.
participants from the Corporation should include two officers from each department - a registry supervisor and a registry clerk.

The third step will entail working out a detailed work programme for the participants including the dates of the programme and renumerations (if any). Once the programme has been prepared, the training of participants should commence. The training should cover all information necessary to perform the tasks involved in processing of the records. It should emphasise the importance of protecting the materials and preserving their original order.

Top management support is a pre-requisite to the success of the workshop. Unless the management can demonstrate that it values its records, it should not expect its junior staff to co-operate in the programme. Specifically, top management support will be required in the following areas. The official opening of the programme should be conducted by the Executive Chairman himself. The Director of the Kenya National Archives should be in attendance. A representative from the Directorate of Personnel Management should also be invited. If possible a prominent academician could present a paper to the participants based on the history of the railways or on the value of railway records as a source of information for the study of the history of Kenya.
There are several other ways that the management can show its commitment. To ensure that the participants feel that their work is valued they should be provided with light refreshments and lunches during the entire period of the workshop. Arrangements should be made for the certificates to be awarded by the Kenya Railways Institute.

Arrangements for the disposal of ephemeral material need to be worked out in advance with the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service. The Director should be asked to seek clearance from the Minister for Home Affairs and National Heritage for the disposal of valueless material without describing it at item level, which would require an unrealistic period of time. Summary lists should suffice for this purpose.

During the workshops participants should be organised into teams and their work should be carefully co-ordinated by a project management team led by the Information Resource Manager. Great care should be taken to ensure that the legal and security requirements of the Corporation are met and that professional standards are observed.

All records that have been closed for at least twenty years, and which warrant permanent retention should be listed in a special designed format and transferred to the
new archival repository.\textsuperscript{9} Appraisal decisions should be based on the following criteria:

Research value

Only records containing information of high research value should be selected for permanent preservation.

Policy and precedent value:

Policy files and those containing information which has been used to establish precedents should be preserved permanently.

Administrative value:

Records that might be useful for administrative purposes should be selected for permanent preservation.

Acts, Regulations and Court decisions:

Records containing acts amendments or court decisions should be preserved. Similarly all records that must be retained to meet legal requirements and legal considerations must be retained.

Accounting/Audit Requirements:

Records required to meet accounting and audit requirements must not be destroyed.

Scarcity:

All rare records and particularly those created before 1939 when the Colonial Secretariat was burnt down should be selected carefully.

\textsuperscript{9} For details regarding the procedures to be followed in accessioning records into the archives repository see section 10.6
Reliability and Completeness:

Records selected for preservation must be as complete as possible.

Cost

The cost factor as an appraisal criteria must be taken into account. The cost of accessioning, organising and preserving records must be born in mind when appraisal decisions are made.

The cost element in appraisal decisions was summed up by Steve Abrahamffy, an Australian archivist, when he said:

There are costs associated not only with the storage of records but also with their preservation, transfer to archival custody, maintenance, retrieval, and the provision of access to them. The formulation of classes to dispose of records is also a cost, and in some circumstances there may be an opportunity cost in retaining the record and not reusing media of which the record is made.10

Those records which are less than twenty years old but which must be retained for administrative, legal, financial or research value should be listed and transferred to the new Records Centre. Care should be taken to ensure that a date for disposal action is included in the transmittal list for these records. Records which are more than twenty years old from the time of closure should be transferred to the new Archives.

Library materials such as annual reports, railway magazines, laws and other publications received by the Corporation identified during the workshops should be added to the already existing materials described in Chapter Five. These should be in the library area of the Information Resource Centre. The processing of these materials should be left to a professionally qualified librarian.

Once backlog accumulations have been processed and registries decongested, the Information Resource Manager should embark on the process of restructuring registries; the development of retention schedules and the compilation of a registries procedural manual.

10.3 The Records Centre

William Benedon has defined a records centre as a "low cost centralised storage area for housing and servicing inactive and semi-active records whose reference rate does not warrant their retention in office space and equipment". The difference between the present records stores now in use and the Records Centre is that the Records Centre will provide centralised storage facility for records from all offices and departments where records will be managed by a team of trained professionals. Other

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11 Benedon, W. Records Management, California State University, 1969, p. 258.
benefits to be derived from the creation of a centralised record storage facility include:

- Economical establishment and operational costs. The regular transfer of records no longer needed for day-to-day administrative purposes from high cost office space and equipment to low cost high density storage area will lead to savings and economy in terms of office space and equipment. Maintaining separate departmental storage areas is uneconomical and unsatisfactory.

- Secure storage conditions. The present storage conditions in the record stores are inadequate. As discussed below, the Records Centre will be equipped to provide secure and safe storage. Furthermore, the procedures and controls for depositing and retrieving records will ensure that only authorised officers can retrieve the records and that those records which require confidential treatment receive it.

- Efficient management and retrieval of records. The present arrangements for retrieving records from the record stores are inadequate. By employing trained personnel to manage and retrieve records the records centre will provide a more efficient service.

- Storage of records in different formats. The creation of the records centre will provide a centralised storage facility for records created.
in a range of formats such as photographs, maps, plans and electronic records.

However, for the Records Centre to serve the purposes for which it is established, it must conform to certain requirements, the most important of which are discussed below.

Location

This study recommends that the location of the Records Centre should be located at the basement of Block A and Block B of the headquarters building. The Museum should remain in the present premises until such a time that a purpose built information Resource Centre has been built, while new accommodation must be found for the Library. Should the Corporation decide to utilise other buildings the following factors should be taken into account.

- the distance from the railway headquarters,
- the size of the building required to accommodate records created throughout the entire railway network,
- the number of staff required to run the centre effectively,
- the quality of service required in terms of retrieval time, confidentiality, etc.,
- the amount of money available for setting up and equipping the centre,
the type of transport available for transferring records to and from the centre.\textsuperscript{12}

Much expense and time can be saved if the Corporation utilises its own internal resources. For example, the survey work, renovation of the building, electrical installation and inspection, construction of metal shelving, etc. can be undertaken by the various departments within the Corporation.\textsuperscript{13}

The Records Centre must provide adequate physical facilities to enable staff to do their work properly and its users to make effective use of the records and the services provided. This requires the provision of a certain minimum of furniture and equipment, which together with the records housed and the administration officials and researchers who consult them must be physically accommodated in suitable premises.

The Records Centre should have ample space to accommodate the Corporation’s records for the foreseeable future taking account of the records likely to be accessioned each year. Similarly, consideration should be

\textsuperscript{12} For a discussion on how some of the factors can be implemented see Wratten, N. "Setting up a Records Centre: Some Practical Advice", \textit{Business Archives Principles and Practice}, No.53, 1987, p.39.

\textsuperscript{13} For a discussion on the main departments and their activities refer to Chapter Five.
given to record centre activities such as cleaning and processing of records. In this respect, a comparison might be made with records management programme for a university archives in which Dwight Wilson argues that:

Improperly filed material is only one of the reasons why the archivist must demand adequate working space. The whole business of processing the records, examining, cleaning, sorting and re-arranging requires room enough for the records to be spread out in an orderly fashion so that they be reassembled as organic bodies.\footnote{Wilson D H. "No Ivory Tower: The Administration of a College or University Archives," \textit{College and University Archives: Selected Readings}, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1979, p.155}

The processing area should have sufficient tables and other equipment to efficiently arrange and describe the records. This area should be separated from the rest of the records storage area so that records contaminated with mould or insects have not been fumigated will not damage other records already accessioned into the storage areas. There should be a receiving platform for off loading trucks.

Additionally, the Records Centre must provide a secure place for the storage of records awaiting processing. This is desirable bearing in mind that the records manager might be called upon to collect records from offices at very short notice to create office space or to rescue records that might be in immediate danger.
The Record Centre should have an adequate research room that enable users to comfortably research information from the records. There should be a separate area for the consultation of maps and drawings. Adequate electrical outlets for personal computers and electric typewriters should be made available. The research room should be designed to promote careful supervision to prevent theft and destruction of records.

**Equipment**

In order to make maximum utilisation of the repository, the centre must be fitted with suitable equipment. The British Standards on *Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents* BS5454 provides basic guidelines which might be considered in assessing records centre equipment. They require that, the shelving:

- be strong enough to support the potential load,
- be made of durable material that is non-combustible,
- be easily adjustable, without mechanical aids to accommodate units of varying sizes and shape and to permit rational arrangement of records in proper relation to each other,
- not have features or properties such as sharp angles, projections or chemicals damaging to documents or people.\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\) *Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents* BS5454, London: British Standards Institution, 1977. p.4

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A decision has to be made between mobile shelving and open type shelving. Mobile shelving consists of adjustable shelves mounted on roller bearings that run on tracks fastened to the floor. These units can either be moved manually or electronically. Easy side-to-side movement creates an isle between any two units. This study recommends open type of shelving which makes maximum use of storage space.

When equipping the Records Centre, consideration must be given to the storage of records in various formats and sizes such as maps, plans and microforms. Ideally, a separate map storage area should be set aside with suitable storage equipment. Otherwise maps will have to be kept on shelves flat or rolled. Areas assigned to map work should be well lit and several large tables should be provided. It is desirable for the edges to be rounded to prevent creasing when maps drop over the side. This is desirable both for processing work and for the satisfactory study by the public. There should be good lighting as the lettering in maps is often considerably finer than in books and often requires close scrutiny.

Consideration should also be given to the storage of computer generated records which are increasingly being

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used in the Corporation. Storage requirements for these records should be discussed with the Data Processing Manager. The library area of the Information Resource Centre should be shelved using suitable library shelves. Special cabinets for the storage of photographs must also be provided. In order to make maximum use of the storage facilities, it is advisable for the Corporation to seek professional assistance from the Kenya National Archives.

Records transfer

To be effective, the management of semi-current and non-current records requires a coordinated approach. Lack of coordination will lead to departments continuing their old practice of utilising storage areas on a random and uncontrolled basis and retaining semi-current records in their registries and offices. Moreover, records will continue to be transferred to the record stores without adequate listings or appropriate from of listing.

Records must be transferred to the Record Centre in a regular and systematic manner. At the end of each year, departments must examine their storage area with a view to identifying those files which have not been acted upon for the last five years. Such files should be closed immediately. Under no circumstance should files remain current for more than five years. This should be done irrespective of whether the files have reached the
prescribed maximum thickness. Moreover, once a file has been closed, no papers should be added into it. Records of an ephemeral nature which are likely to be destroyed within twelve months should not be transferred to the Records Centre. Instead these should be disposed of by the department as part of good housekeeping.

Records to be transferred to the Records Centre must be listed in a records transmittal list in a format prescribed by the records centre. Transmittal lists should incorporate the box and file numbers, a description of the records, a disposal date and a shelf location number. Three copies of the list must accompany the records. When the records arrive in the centre they will be checked to ensure that the contents tally with the descriptions in the list. Each box will then be allocated a unique location on the shelves which it will retain for as it is kept. One copy of the transmittal list will be signed and returned to the department as receipt of records held in the centre. The second copy should be retained in an action order file for review purposes, the third copy should be kept in departmental order by the Records Centre as a master list.

No records should be accepted into the Records Centre unless they have been given an action date to indicate when

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they should either be destroyed, reviewed or placed in the archives. This will serve as a guarantee that the Record Centre is not used as a dumping place for valueless records. The action dates should conform with the disposal schedule.\(^\text{19}\)

**Requisitioning files from the Records Centre**

Until they become archives, files transferred to the Records Centre should remain the property of the creating department which should be able to requisition them at any time. Individual papers should not be requisitioned. Requests for files should either be made on the telephone or by completing a records requisition form. The Records Centre staff should complete a requisition form for a file requested by telephone. To minimise loss of archival records and inconveniencing other users, it is recommended that these should only be consulted within the Records Centre.

Records Centre files should not be transferred from one officer to another. However if for some reason this must be done, the officer who does so must notify the Records Centre immediately. Otherwise, the officer who made the original requisition remains responsible for the file’s return. The need to return files borrowed from the Records Centre cannot be overstated. Unless arrangements have been

\(^{19}\) The development of retention schedules is beyond the scope of this study.
made to withdraw a file for administrative purposes, all files should be returned within three weeks.

For security reasons, confidential files should only be issued to heads of departments or on their authority. Such files should only be retrieved by the Head of the Records Centre or his deputy. Only the Records Manager should authorise permanent withdrawal of files from the Records Centre.

Records Disposition

The compilation of records disposal schedules is essential to the smooth operation of the Records Centre and to ensuring that records of permanent value reach the archives. As noted in Section 10.2, schedules can only be developed when the backlog accumulation has been cleared and well structured records series have been introduced. Schedules should be drawn up systematically for every series created in the Corporation and issued with the approval of the Information Resource Management Committee. In the case of subject correspondence files, the review date, rather than the retention date should be indicated. Studies conducted by the Public Record Office in Victoria, Australia, indicate that compilation of retention schedules for subject correspondence files is not ideal. They argue that most "information systems are not set up and maintained with the precision and consistency which would
make this approach viable." They go on to argue that registry classification systems and filing procedures are not usually applied so consistently that detailed analysis for disposal can be relied upon. Certainly this will be the case at the Railways Records Centre.

Records transferred to the Records Centre should be reviewed regularly to ensure that those of enduring value are transferred to the Archives and that the others are destroyed after the agreed retention periods have lapsed. The disposal of confidential waste should receive maximum attention. Ian Dunn, Information Officer and Archivist at the Cheshire Record officer advises that:

Confidential waste should clearly be differentiated and appropriate arrangements for disposal made internally or agreed with commercial suppliers of waste services. It may well be advisable for a member of staff to accompany known confidential waste to the incinerator or shredding plant and this should certainly be a stipulation with any high sensitive material. 

Security

In order to provide maximum security to records, certain measures are necessary. The repository(s) should be windowless or fitted with metal grills. Non-record centre

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20 ibid. p.196


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staff should only enter the repository area with the permission of the Records Manager, and even then they should be accompanied by a member of the Records Centre staff. Additionally, access to the repositories could also be controlled through the combination of the use of any of the following methods:

- single door access controlled by a receptionist,
- locked doors opened only by authorised staff,
- authorised personnel issued with name tags.\textsuperscript{22}

The Records Centre, should meet certain minimum environmental control standards for temperature and relative humidity. Ideally, it should have security alarms and an automatic fire detection system connected to the main security office or the police.

10.4 The archives

The administration of archival records must embrace the following aspects:

- acquisition following appraisal
- accessioning,
- processing including sorting, arrangement and description,
- preservation,
- retrieval for reference.

\textsuperscript{22} Records Centre Operations, op. cit, p.8
The discussion that follows examines in detail how each of these activities can best be performed at the Kenya Railways Corporation so as to make railway records more easily accessible to both the corporation's officials and searchers.

Acquisition

As pointed out in Chapter Eight, the records management policy to be issued by the Board must clearly state that railway archives constitute a corporate memory which must be preserved. It must indicate that the Archives, which is located in the Information Resource Centre, is the official repository for the permanent preservation of railway archives and it should include the following:

- a general statement of the purpose of railway archives,
- a statement of authority to acquire railway archives,
- an explanation of how these archives are to be collected,
- a statement on where the archives will be housed,
- a statement on access conditions.

The first records to be accessioned into the archives repository should be those selected during the workshops. Once the integrated records management programme
envisaged in this study is in place, records will be transferred to the archives repository systematically through the Records Centre.

The Kenya Railways Corporation must also evolve strategies for the collection of information that is not locally available in Kenya. As pointed out in Chapter Three, records relating to the construction of the line from Mombasa to Kisumu are to be found at the Public Record Office and the House of Commons Library in London. The Rhodes House Library in Oxford holds private papers relating to railways in East Africa which have been deposited there by former railway employees. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library and the Cambridge University also contain materials relating to railways in East Africa. Copies of some of these records have already been deposited in the Kenya National Archives, but the Corporation should consider whether it wishes to acquire its own copies. Moreover, more work is required to locate and identify other records relating to the Railways held outside the country especially in India, Uganda and Tanzania.

Accessioning

Just as no records should be transferred to the Records Centre without a disposal action date, no unappraised records should be accessioned to the Archives.
Accessioning railway records into the repository involves recording certain details concerning the records into an accession register. The following details must be recorded and maintained by the repository:

- accession number,
- provenance (source of records such as Department or section),
- date range or span of records,
- quantity of records in terms of shelf metres or number of items,
- date of accessioning,
- physical condition of the records,
- access restrictions (if any),
- name of officer accessioning the records.

The accession register can either be in the form of a book or in separate forms filed in a chronological order. This study recommends the use of a book register not forms which can easily be misfiled or pulled out of the register.

Processing of records

The processing of archival records involves sorting, arranging and describing the records. In processing records, two basic archival principles must be followed. The first is the principle of provenance which requires that records created or received in an organisation must be treated as a single collection and should not be
intermingled with materials from another source. The second principle is that of original order which requires that records be retained in the order in which they were created, maintained and used and should not be re-arranged into any other classification system such as numerical, chronological or other order. Respect for these two fundamental principles is an indispensable condition upon which archives can retain their evidential value.

Preparation of finding aids

The provision of a clean, secure and low cost repository for the storage of archival records will not benefit the Corporation unless they can easily be located and produced. The effectiveness and efficiency of records retrieval depends on a programme of intellectual control of the records accessioned. It is of vital importance that the Archives be involved in the compilation of various types of finding aids.

The compilation of retrieval tools must be given priority. This study suggests that no records should be accessioned into the repository unless they are listed to the item level. As soon as possible arrangements should be made to produce a general guide to the contents of the Railways archives. Thereafter, other specialised guides may be developed. These might include a guide to the railway photographic collection, the museum holdings, the
architectural and map collection etc.

With regard to the preparation of various finding aids, Bruce Jackson, Assistant County Archivist with Tyne and Wear County Council advises that the cost factor of producing such retrieval tools should be considered carefully. He goes on to state that "expensive finding aids or retrieval systems may be justified for records which are required at very short notice". For this reason, the preparation of specialised guides should only be undertaken when the initial listing of all records has been completed. These finding aids will require updating regularly.

Reference services

Suitable furniture such as tables and chairs should be provided in the search room for staff and researchers carrying out research. Provision should be made for the consultation of large documents such as maps and plans. The search room should also provide reference services where straightforward enquiries are involved, e.g. providing general information abstracted from the files, or providing copies of records deposited in the Information Resource Centre. It must be emphasised that staff of the Centre

should not be expected to undertake extensive research on behalf of departments or interpret the information contained in the documents. That should be the responsibility of departmental staff. Where copies of original documents have been provided these should be rubber stamped to indicate that they are copies. Such copies should not be added to active files when their use is over. The transmitting office should decide who should be allowed access to its records before they are thirty years old.

As the Information Resource Centre will serve as a place of deposit for public records, as specified in the Public Archives Act, care must be taken to ensure that records are consulted under close supervision. The regulations for public access to the records should be worked out in consultation with the Kenya National Archives, and copies of the regulations should be displayed. The public should not be granted access to records under thirty years.

If a department wishes to extend the closure period for records beyond the normal thirty year period, this must be done in consultation with the Information Resource Manager. If researchers have been denied access to certain records, they should have the right to appeal to the Minister of Home Affairs and National Heritage through the Director of the Kenya National Archives. The decision of
the Minister will be final. No records should be closed for a period of more than seventy years, and any restrictions imposed to records should be subject to a specified time limit.

Security

The security of the repository and its contents is of primary importance. Records stored in the Archives are irreplaceable and their authenticity is dependent on proof of unbroken custody. Records must be protected against theft, unauthorised alterations, vandalism and other acts of damage caused by careless handling. For this reason, the repository must be used only for the storage of records, and in no circumstances should departments be allowed to store equipment and supplies there. The same security conditions established in the Records Centre should apply.

10.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed procedures for dealing with semi-current and non-current records at the Kenya Railways Corporation. It has pointed out that the starting point for managing semi-current and non-current records at the Kenya Railways must begin with clearing backlog accumulations and the workshop programme developed in west Africa is recommended as being suitable. The creation of a Records Centre with two separate storage areas - an intermediate
Records Centre and an archive repository are crucial to the success of the records management programme. Their successful operation will depend on the adherence to and effective use of clearly stated procedures derived from professional procedures.
This thesis has examined record-keeping problems at the Kenya Railways Corporation. Its main conclusion is that well managed record-keeping systems are essential to the effective operations of the Corporation and that such systems require a new approach to record keeping. The systems introduced when the railway was established in East Africa made no provision for managing the entire life cycle of records. Rather, the systems were intended to manage the records generated by the activities of a railway network in colonial East Africa. They are not appropriate for today's needs. After the collapse of the East African Railways Corporation in 1977 and the establishment of the Kenya Railways Corporation, little effort was made to up-date the systems to meet present day challenges. The thesis has explored the approach and the systems which are required.

The historical review presented in this study demonstrates that the railway line from Mombasa to Kisumu was constructed for various reasons ranging from strategic to humanitarian considerations. The completion of the railway line to Kisumu in 1901 was followed by the rapid socio-economic development of Kenya, and this is reflected in the vast quantity archival sources held by the Railways Corporation. As the colonial Secretariat was gutted by
fire in 1939, railway records are the only complete set of early records available in Kenya which go back to the turn of the century. Yet these records have not been arranged and listed, and their value as a primary source material for the study of Kenya's history and that of East Africa as a whole is yet to be realised. Areas for which railway records contain relevant information include the development of agriculture, transport and communications, the First and Second World Wars in East Africa, the police, medical, trade unions, the Kenya Emergency and regional cooperation in East Africa.

The analysis of archival development in East Africa has revealed that the East African Railways Corporation and its predecessor organisations made several attempts to lay a sound basis for a records management programme. For example in 1909 the Kenya and Uganda Railways made arrangements for housing railway records in a permanent building in Nairobi. This was followed by the acquisition of new filing equipment for the storage of maps in 1932. The development of a uniform file classification scheme and records retention schedules in 1936 and their periodic review was yet another step towards the creation of a system for managing railway records. Then in 1971, the East African Railways Corporation sought the assistance of a United Nations expert in forms and records management to assist in dealing with records management related problems. These efforts have ensured the survival of railway records,
albeit in a poor state and inaccessible to its administrators and researchers. The failure to make any headways in introducing professional records management systems in recent years has created a situation in which the records are increasingly at risk.

The survey of record-keeping practices at the Kenya Railways Corporation has shown that record keeping systems have collapsed and that registries are unable to discharge their responsibilities effectively, with consequences for the preservation of archives. This situation is a result of several factors. These include:

- failure by the Corporation to treat records as a corporate resource comparable to other resources such as finance and personnel,
- lack of Corporation-wide policies, standards and procedures for the efficient management of records as they pass through the life cycle,
- failure to appoint qualified and competent staff to manage registries and to train records staff,
- failure to co-operate effectively with the Kenya National Archives,
- lack of uniform classification systems and the absence of registry operating manuals to sustain the system and serve as training tools,
- failure to establish a centralised records storage facility for semi-current and non-current records,
failure to introduce a records disposition programme.

These findings have been considered in relation to various approaches to the management of records. A review of available literature on archives and records management revealed abundant literature in America, Canada, Australia and England. Yet, despite the availability of this literature, records management at the Kenya Railways has remained under-developed. This study suggests that the literature does not address itself to situations such as the one prevailing at the Kenya Railways Corporation where record-keeping systems have collapsed. It is not easy to simply adapt a records management system that has been successful in another environment or organisation and expect successful results in the circumstances prevailing in Kenya. The Corporation therefore requires a tailor-made records management programme which takes account of the reality on the ground.

Nor has the Kenya National Archives been able to help. Its ad hoc approach to solving record-keeping problems in government institutions, including the Kenya Railways Corporation has been ineffective. The Department should not be blamed for pursuing this approach, which is consistent with published literature and the advice of consultants notably, Ian Maclean who recommended in 1978 that the management of current records be vested with the records
creating offices. The result has been that the role of the Kenya National Archives has been limited to the management of non-current records only. A new strategy whereby the archives accepts responsibility for managing the entire life cycle is required if the archives is to provide support to the Railways and other public bodies.

The way forward for the Archives is to take a leading role in establishing standards, guidelines and procedures that will lead to the creation of well kept files in logical record series reflecting the functions of the agencies concerned.

The study indicates that there is no quick and easy way to solve the record-keeping problems that presently plague the Kenya Railways Corporation. Modern records management techniques applied appropriately can solve it, but the task will be a painstaking one. Moreover, as the study has pointed out, records management problems do not exist in isolation. They are inter-connected in complex ways. Introducing changes in one aspect of the records life cycle will inevitably have repercussions for other aspects of records management. Therefore, to achieve improvements in each of the stages of the records life cycle, it is essential to take a total approach to the management of records.
No records total records management programme would be a success if there are no clear cut goals and objectives. These should be precise, definite and realistic. Ample publicity should be accorded to the proposed records management programme at the Corporation to ensure that the goals and objectives are understood by all concerned.

The Corporation cannot solve the problem of inefficient and ineffective records systems without examining the root causes of its records management problems and addressing them. The key elements of the integrated records management programme required at the Kenya Railways Corporation have been identified. These include the issuing of a records management policy, the appointment of an Information Resource Management Committee, the appointment of a qualified Information Resource Manager with qualified staff, the development of a records management master plan, the development of retention schedules and the establishment of an Information Resource Centre comprising a Records Centre and an Archives, the Library and the Museum. Not only will these elements when coordinated centrally address the existing problems, but they will provide a sound basis for automation in the future.

In the past, the Library, the Photographic Library, the Museum and the record stores have all been treated as separate entities. There is a need to bring all these
information handling processes under one umbrella structure and the link to the new Records centre and Archives. The proposed Information Resource Centre should be responsible for the management of all information related activities.

The centre should comprise an Archives and Records Management Division and a Library and the Museum Division. The Archives and Records Management Division, which should be responsible for the coordination of the records management programme, should be headed by a professionally qualified records manager and supported by a team of well trained and highly motivated officers. It should be responsible for restructuring registries; training and supervision of registry staff; developing procedures for records closure and transfer to the Records Centres; preservation and disposal of records; and the provision of low cost high density records storage facility for semi-current records in the Records Centre and non-current records in the Archives.

The most immediate challenging problem now facing the Kenya Railways Corporation is how to deal with an accumulated backlog of records which has built up over a period of ninety years. Although the Corporation has made several attempts to gain control of semi-current and non-current records, the piecemeal approach has not produced the desired results. These attempts have failed simply
because they were not linked up to a total records management programme, i.e. a programme encompassing all the stages of the life cycle. Therefore in order to obtain immediate results and create an immediate impact within the Corporation, a workshop approach to dealing with large quantities of records is suggested. The workshops should aim at clearing record stores of all non-current records and sorting, arranging, appraising, listing, boxing and shelving them in the proposed railway Records Centre.

This programme will only become a reality if the Corporation accepts that records constitute a vital resource as important as finance and personnel. The Corporation's financial position has been disappointing, leading to the introduction of major administrative reforms. While it is common knowledge that the problems facing the Corporation stem from poorly defined policies and poor management, little attention has yet been paid to records management.

The study has sought to establish a link between efficient and effective records management programmes and the administrative reforms currently taking place in the Corporation. It has demonstrated that these will not achieve the desired results unless they are underpinned by a total records management programme. The Corporation cannot be accountable without good record-keeping practices. Moreover, effective decision making depends upon
timely, accurate and relevant information. This can only be obtained through an effective and efficient records management programme.

In addition to the consequences for administration, an effective records management programme has legal implications. An examination of various national laws and regulations have revealed the existence of several laws and regulations which have a direct bearing on the types of records which the Corporation must create and maintain. The Corporation's retention and disposition programme must therefore be based on a thorough review and understanding of these laws and regulations. Ignoring these requirements could have disastrous implications for the Corporation leading to its prosecution.

Additionally, Kenya is a signatory to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Succession in Respect of to State Property, Archives and Debts. The Convention and the cultural agreements with Tanzania and Uganda require that the Kenya Government, and hence the Kenya Railways Corporation must ensure that the records of the former East African Community are preserved for prosperity. Railway records must also be retained in order to settle any cases arising from the defunct community properties and its debts which might not have been included in the 1982 East Africa Treaty of Mediation.
The contribution of this study to the archives and records management profession lies in the fact that it presents a case study of a new approach to designing and implementing archives and records management programmes appropriate to developing countries where records systems have collapsed. It provides a practical solution to a complex intellectual problem within a sound professional framework. It sets this approach within a management context.

It remains to be seen whether the Kenya Railways Corporation will make use of these findings to manage its records in the future and ensure that they are fully exploited by its administrators and researchers. If it does not, posterity might never forgive the present day Corporation administrators and the Kenya National Archives for neglecting such a vital resource.
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