

Lloyds provided another valuable agency. Now offers came from all quarters.

During 1887 Sir William Mackinnon was offered by the Sultan of Zanzibar a concession on the mainland. The Imperial British East Africa Company was formed. Sir William was the chairman of the B.I.S.N. Co. and the close connection between Smith Mackenzies and the I.B.E.A. proved a godsend. It was obvious that an office had to be opened in Mombasa.

At the time there were no Europeans resident on Mombasa island although there were European missionaries at Freretown. Mr. W.J.W. Nichol was sent to Mombasa to open the first mainland office. During 1877, Mr. E.N. Mackenzie died of malaria.

One of the first coffee plantations in Kenya was established by Smith Mackenzie at Dagoretti; the price of the land being a bale of Amerikani cloth, five oxen and a quantity of beads. Unfortunately the venture was a failure.

During the life of the I.B.E.A., Smith Mackenzie acted as financial and general agents for the organisation. In the mid-90's the I.B.E.A. surrendered their rights over Uganda and East Africa and the British Government decided to build the Uganda Railway. A great burden of traffic fell upon the shoulders of Smith Mackenzie. B.I. ships were employed in bringing railway material to Kilindini while from Indian ports came coolies and foodstuffs. At the same time the company was dispatching trading caravans to Uganda and fitting out caravans for other enterprises. In 1896 a branch was established at Kampala. An agency was procured for petroleum products and £50,000 spent on tanks and equipment; later the company was given the concession for cutting mangrove bark at Lamu and an agency was set up on the island.

The first war strained the company's resources to the limit, and it was during this period that branches were set up in Nairobi, Kisumu and Kampala; later branches were opened in Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Lindi.

It would be impossible to catalogue in this small compass the interests of Smith Mackenzie and Co. Ltd., but the company has had a finger in every

phase of life in East Africa for the past century. During the days of sea travel B.I. was the first choice and indeed I remember when seven B.I. ships were at the same time alongside the berths at Kilindini, busy with imports exports and passenger traffic. At one time associated companies were the main stevedoring and go-

down operators on the coast.

There is much I haven't been able to tell, but I hope I have given a glimpse of a company which has existed almost for a century, and during this time has seen the birth of modern East Africa from the days of caravans and slaves to those of travel and independence.

I believe that the story is in the writing. It will be a fascinating saga, starting with the meeting of Archibald Smith and E. N. Mackenzie and the formation of a small company which grew into an industrial, commercial and maritime empire .... the largest East African complex we have ever known or are likely to know in the days to come.



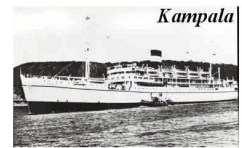
*SS Sirdhana*



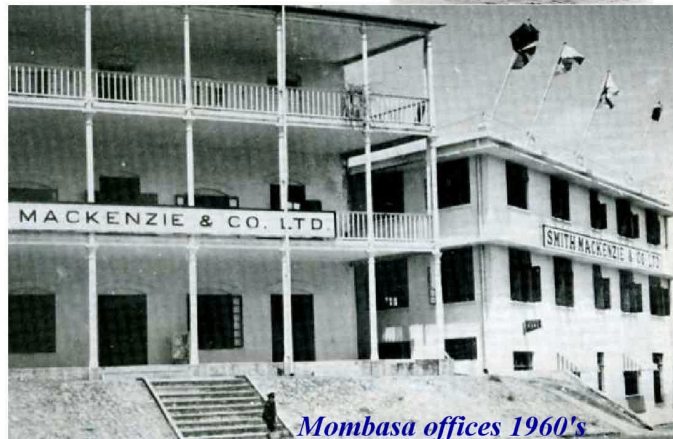
*Chakdina*



*SS Kenya*



*Kampala*



*Mombasa offices 1960's*



*Smith Mackenzie Mombasa office in what was Vasco da Gama street at the beginning of the century.*