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**THE AGRICULTURAL CHANGES IN THE KIPSIGISLAND,
c. 1894-1963: AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY**

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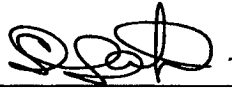
SAMSON MOENGA OMWOYO

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

JULY, 2000

DECLARATION

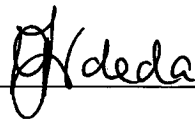
This thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge it has never been submitted for a degree in any University.



SAMSON MOENGA OMWOYO

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors



PROF. GABRIEL JAL

DR. MILDRED JALANGO-NDEDA

DEDICATION

To my wife Pauline Moraa Omwoyo, and our children Dennis Moenga,
Steve Masaki and Alice Bosibori, with love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ADC | African District Council |
| AHP | African Highland Produce |
| ALDEV | African Land Development Programme |
| ATC | African Trading company |
| BEADOC | British East Africa Disabled Officers Corps |
| CBD | Coffee Berry Disease |
| DC | District Commissioner |
| EALB | East African Literature Bureau |
| EAPH | East African Publishing House |
| ECF | East Coast Fever |
| Ed(s) | Editor(s) |
| KAR | King's African Rifles |
| KAU | Kenya African Union |
| KCA | Kipsigis Central Association |
| KER | Kericho |
| KFA | Kenya Farmers Association |
| KMB | Livestock Marketing Board |
| KLB | Kenya Literature Bureau |
| KNA | Kenya National Archives |
| KTA | Kipsigis Tribal Association |
| KTC | Kenya Tea Company |
| KTGA | Kenya Tea Growers Association |
| LNC | Local Native Council |
| MCB | Maize Control Board |
| NZA | Nyanza |
| OI | Oral Interview |
| OUP | Oxford University Press |
| PC | Provincial Commissioner |
| TPWU | Tea Plantation Workers Union |
| Vol. | Volume |

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the organisation, and transformation of agriculture among the Kipsigis of Western Kenya in the period preceding and during colonialism. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources and subjected to corroborative analysis using the historical method. An eclectic approach borrowing certain paradigms from the underdevelopment and dependency and articulation of modes of production theories were employed as the major tools of analysis. From the beginning it is demonstrated that the pre-colonial agriculture in the Kipsigisland was dynamic, innovative, diverse, efficient, self-reliant and suited to the needs of the Kipsigis people. It is argued that the Kipsigis agricultural organisation was sound and rational and based on the people's knowledge of their environment.

The colonial penetration set a chain of events in motion which systematically modified, marginalised and subordinated the Kipsigis indigenous agriculture. Animal husbandry fell prey to the colonial manouvres of depleting the Kipsigis stock. The Kipsigis farmers were peasantised and their role as commodity producers was articulated and firmly enforced. Part of the Kipsigis labour was proletarianised as migrant and resident workers in settler farms, and later as a semi-proletariat in the Kipsigisland. The Kipsigis local industry was marginalised by the incoming merchant capital and as more and more Kipsigisland was alienated for European settler farming activities, the Kipsigis indigenous land tenure systems was gradually changed and tended to forms of privatisation. However, it is argued, indigenous agricultural organisation did not disappear; it kept readjusting, was articulated and co-existed with the colonial capitalist sector in a contradictory manner of "destruction/preservation" or

"conservation/dissolution". It emerges more clearly from the study that although agricultural land, animal husbandry, labour, and trade policies were aimed at achieving maximum benefits for the white settlers and the colonial state, the Kipsigis seem to have reacted in their own ways to exploit such policies for their own economic advantages. The Kipsigis were definitely not passive to the new colonial agricultural policies - they perceived them correctly accepting those that were of benefit to them while rejecting the undesirable ones, even if for a while as was the case of maize.

The dependency theoretical formulations are replete in the study as the Kipsigis households suffered from insufficient labour and traditional chores were gradually changed, resulting in food shortages and the intensification of female labour. Extensive cultivation of maize for export led to soil degradation and erosion besides exploiting African labour through unequal exchange and differential pricing of their agricultural products. The introduction of cash crops severely affected food production and led to new systems of land tenure. Colonial capitalism also provided for unequal and uneven development throughout the Kipsigisland as Bureti and Belgut emerged as magnets of development and Sotik and Chepalungu relegated to the back waters of economic development.

It is also argued that while colonial capitalism provided new opportunities for some Kipsigis to accumulate wealth and expand agricultural output, it also pauperised part of the population. The notion of accumulation is intricately related to and engendered the processes of class formation. That by independence the Kipsigis were not a mass of undifferentiated and unstratified class is easily defended in the study. The emergence of stratified social categories invariably led to the ubiquitous aspect of class struggles. Thus,

the new mode of production hindered and ruined some indigenous patterns of social formations by effecting changes in the agricultural sector of the Kipsigisland.

During World War II, agricultural production was intensified to produce enough food for war purposes. But in the post-war period, emphasis shifted to the production of cash crops, and little attention was paid to the subsistence food needs of the Kipsigis. But more than ever before as the colonialists started giving recognition to African agricultural activities, aspects of class differentiation, unequal exchange, uneven development, wealth accumulation were even more amplified, as was the proletarianisation of the Kipsigis population and its dependency on the capitalist structures and institutions. By independence, therefore, the Kipsigis agriculture had been fundamentally transformed and integrated into the Kenyan colonial economy as part of the world capitalist system.

GLOSSARY

Great effort has been made to explain Kipsigis words and indeed all other foreign words, as far as possible whenever they occur for the first time. The following are those commonly used in the thesis:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Ainet</i> | river |
| <i>Aiywet</i> | axes |
| <i>Arruet ap kemut</i> | a pestle |
| <i>Askaris</i> | refers to soldiers and/or policemen |
| <i>Baraza</i> | a large public gathering |
| <i>Belso</i> | the burning of turf into ashes in the field |
| <i>Buloo</i> | the circumcision grade for men in 1916 named after the blue ink for thumb marking for those enlisted for colonial labour |
| <i>Buni</i> | dry coffee berries |
| <i>Burasta</i> | anthrax |
| <i>Chebusurenik</i> | smut; a fungus disease of grains that turns plant parts into black dust. |
| <i>Chemusit</i> | a reward given for the unpleasant duty <i>sutet</i> of carrying a corpse |
| <i>Chepandek</i> | the women circumcision age grade of 1913 named after maize (<i>pandek</i>) |
| <i>Cheptigonit</i> | East Coast Fever (ECF) |
| <i>Chepkiskawa</i> | The circumcision age-grade for women in 1919 named after <i>kahawa</i> i.e. coffee to commemorate the participation of women in coffee picking in large numbers |
| <i>Chorset</i> | an abominable act of stealing or raiding animals from a fellow <i>Kipsigindet</i> |
| <i>Dinitap Mbojet</i> | a Kipsigis indigenous religion sect set to oust the whites from the Kipsigisland |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Duka(s)</i> | shop(s) |
| <i>Emotinwek</i> | provinces comprising of several <i>kokwetinwek</i> |
| <i>Imbareta a' mossop</i> | field of the house |
| <i>Imbareta ab soi</i> | fields owned and controlled by men |
| <i>Ipinda</i> (pl. <i>ipinwek</i>) | age set |
| <i>Isakek</i> or <i>ysaygek</i> | spider flower, a nutritious type of vegetable |
| <i>Itet</i> | stick |
| <i>Kabista</i> | a stage in the growth of <i>wimbi</i> when the shoot is coming out of the soil.(other stages are given in page 71) |
| <i>Kabwateret</i> | a form of betrothal between an infant girl and a grow up man |
| <i>Kapingkui</i> [<i>kabungut</i>] | a small vegetable garden surrounding and close to the homestead |
| <i>Kapkoros</i> | a sacrificial sacred place |
| <i>Karaita</i> | a formerly cultivated piece of land near the homestead. |
| <i>Keleta kussuek</i> | the sowing of the grain |
| <i>Kemut</i> | mortar made from the hollowed truck of a tree |
| <i>Kesengit</i> | wild pig |
| <i>Kigueza Oreka</i> | the scattering of ashes in the field |
| <i>Kimanagan</i> | the practice of distributing ones herd among friends and neighbours |
| <i>Kimatagur</i> | a poor state of not having property especially food |
| <i>Kimiet</i> | a local meal |
| <i>Kipkeita</i> | red water |
| <i>Kipkoloit</i> | a beer drinking party after some task has been co-operatively performed |
| <i>Kipkutungit</i> | foot and mouth disease |

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Kipsigindet</i> | a Kipsigis man |
| <i>Kipsirget</i> | age grade for men in 1911, so named after the counting of huts for hut tax purposes |
| <i>Kiptayat neo nebo murenek</i> | the war leader of the shire |
| <i>Kipuser</i> | an artificial sore on a calf's nose indicating that the calf can not be loaned out |
| <i>Kiruogik</i> (pl; <i>kiruogindet</i>) | judges or councillors. |
| <i>Kiruogindet neo</i> | the great judge of the shire |
| <i>Kitany</i> | refers to iron smelting |
| <i>Kiptayat ab murek</i> | a war leader in a <i>kokwet</i> |
| <i>Kiwotet</i> | boundary |
| <i>Kok</i> | the space outside the hut |
| <i>Kokwet</i> (pl; <i>kokwetinwek</i>) | the basic unit of administration and political organisation, equated to a village |
| <i>Konyek</i> | eye-sore |
| <i>koolt</i> | second digging |
| <i>Koromerik</i> | stars |
| <i>Kosobek</i> or <i>kosopindet</i> | the Kipsigis name used to refer to the Gusii |
| <i>Kotap-chi</i> | paternal relations |
| <i>Kusto</i> | black quarter |
| <i>Laibon</i> | prophets, in origin exiled Maasai |
| <i>Lemek</i> | the Kipsigis name used to refer to the Luo |
| <i>Loynet</i> | a small bleeding arrow |
| <i>Mama</i> | maternal uncle |
| <i>Maotik</i> | <i>laibons</i> messengers |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Mareret</i> | the marking of the boundary |
| <i>Matheawa</i> | a Kipsigis age grade |
| <i>Mayuek</i> or <i>maiyekek</i> | beer |
| <i>Mechegeren</i> | paternal relations |
| <i>Mugombet</i> | hoe |
| <i>Mogoriot</i> | a wealthy man |
| <i>Moncha</i> | a coffee variety |
| <i>Morik</i> | those helping in an agricultural task other than relations |
| <i>Morut</i> | panga |
| <i>Mossorek</i> | grain |
| <i>Mumek</i> | oath |
| <i>Musarek</i> | <i>uji</i> (porridge) |
| <i>Ngeny</i> | a salt lick |
| <i>Njoget</i> | a form of mob justice administered on a cattle/goat thief who is killed by sharpened sticks |
| <i>Orgoi</i> (sing. <i>Orgoiyot</i>) | prophets of Kipsigis origin |
| <i>Otwaget</i> | a very poor man |
| <i>Pitorindet</i> | a man guilty of drinking milk and eating meat the same day |
| <i>Piut ap tuga</i> | place of cattle, very roughly fenced kraal |
| <i>Poyot ab kokwet</i> | the headman of the village |
| <i>Poyot ab tumda</i> | a ceremonial leader of the shire |
| <i>Pogot</i> | rubbish |
| <i>Purpur</i> | pulverisation |
| <i>Roret</i> | a piece of cultivated land belonging to an individual |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Ruagan</i> | a dug hole used to store <i>wimbi</i> head temporally in the field |
| <i>Rupet</i> or <i>rubet</i> | famine |
| <i>Shamba</i> | refers to a piece of land or plot |
| <i>Sinet</i> | scarcity of other foods to eat with <i>kimeit</i> |
| <i>Sumarariet</i> | the hard crust-like layer forming on top of milk when cold |
| <i>Tabot</i> | granary |
| <i>Tebengonik</i> | a tree whose leaves were used to smear the granary owing to their deferent effect on insects and pests |
| <i>Telanik</i> | grains of <i>wimbi</i> too hard to be easily pounded; used for making beer |
| <i>Temet</i> (pl <i>temeni</i>) | a few homestead clustered together |
| <i>Temisyo</i> | first digging |
| <i>Tirita</i> | a tree less communal grazing land |
| <i>Totos</i> | refer to juvenile labourers |
| <i>Tuga che kibarū</i> | animal acquired by father's own prowess or industry |
| <i>Tuita</i> | fence |
| <i>Tutlonok</i> | hills for communal grazing |
| <i>Wimbi</i> | eleusine millet [finger millet] |

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Agriculture: refers to both crop and animal husbandry in general. But in certain instances pastoral farming is distinguished from agriculture which in its narrow sense now refers to crop cultivation. Both meanings are used in this thesis and where necessary distinctions are made.

Change: refers to the transitional process of alteration, modification, transformation and variation from one form, composition or state to another.

Capitalism: an economic system of production in which human labour is exploited by the owners of the means of production to create profits at the expense of the workers.

Dependence: a concept implying the inability to exist or operate independently without external support or reliance.

Dependency: a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected.

Dependent development: a process of development which is not autonomous as it depends on foreign capital and technology, the result of which is distorted economic development.

Development: the realisation of substantial economic growth with a corresponding increase in the realisation of human needs and potentialities.

Means of Production: the asset which enables man to be able to subsist such as land, machinery etc. through persistent utilisation of his labour and appropriation of labour products.

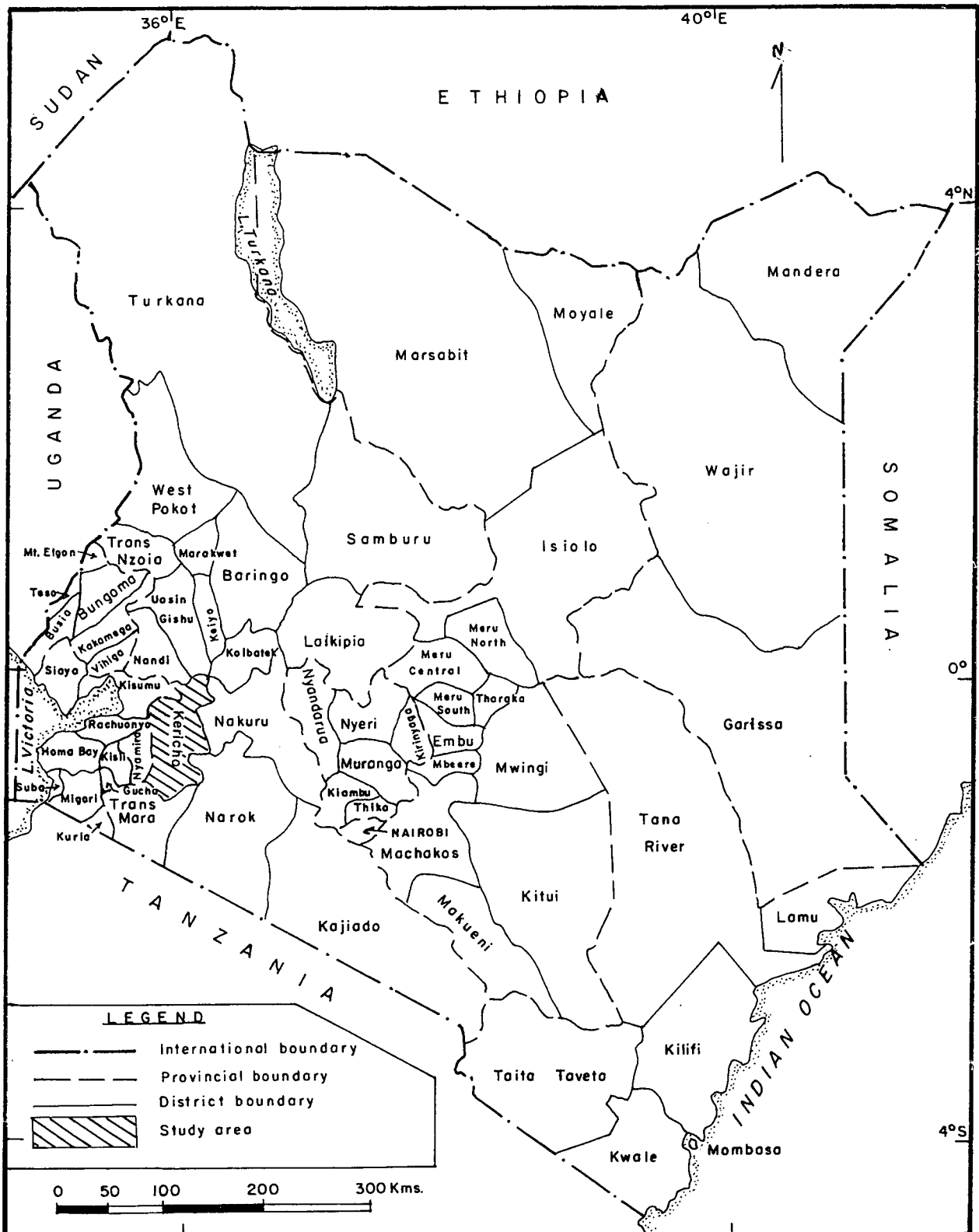
Mode of Production: a given system of production or social form of economic organisation.

Poverty: an impoverished state of a community or country whose resources or income have been exploited through mechanisms of unequal exchange and whose socio-economic needs are meagrely realised if not at all.

Underdevelopment: this is an impoverishing process of a country/community through external expropriation of its labour, raw materials and surplus value through the mechanisms of unequal exchange: the under-developed country dialectically becomes dependent on the external income leading to further exploitation.

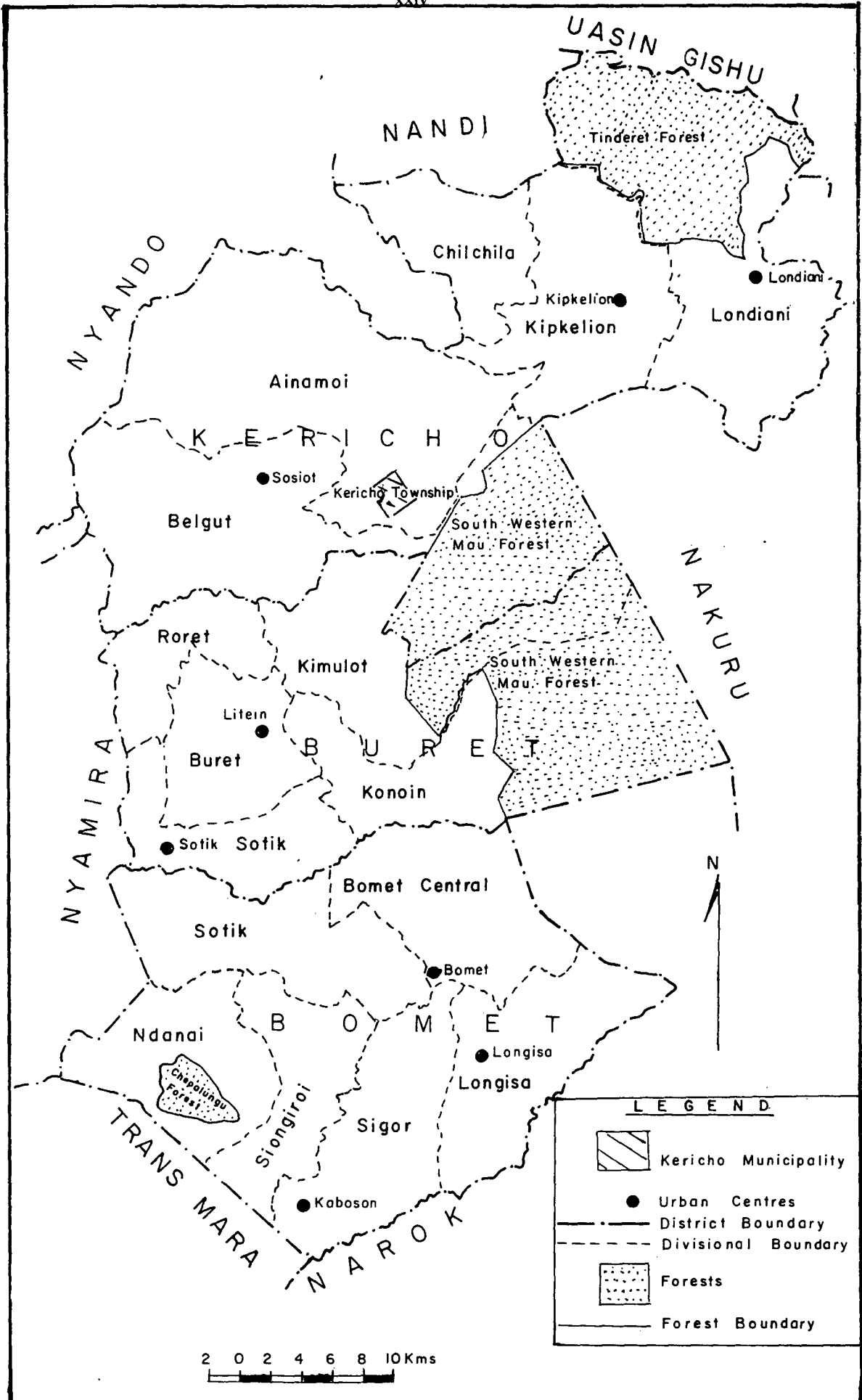
Unequal exchange: the unremedying payment for commodities (trade, goods, labour, etc.) in terms that do not reflect their actual value.

Uneven development: the growth of inequalities between nations, regions, classes and groups because of the appropriation of the labour product by the dominant classes; quite often, uneven development is a by-product of uneven exchange.



Source : Modified from D.D.P. 1999 – 2001.

Fig. 1 : THE LOCATION OF THE KIPSIGISLAND IN KENYA



Source : Electoral Commission of Kenya, 1997 & 1999

Fig. 2 : THE STUDY AREA

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Scholarly works, analysing Africa's poor agricultural performance in general and Kenya's agricultural changes in particular, tend to ignore changes in specific and smaller units of study. Although Africa's poor agricultural performance and especially its declining food production per capita has continuously attracted scholarly concern (World Bank, 1995: 179, Zeleza 1986, Adedeji, 1985) a big gap exists in the study of specific local units to overcome general observations tenable at broader continental and regional levels of study. This study recognises the fact that agricultural systems are regionally specific and their analysis requires systematic local examination. It, therefore, focuses on agricultural changes and their socio-economic effects among the Kipsigis of Western Kenya from the period of between 1894 and 1963. The geographical area of the study is the present day Kericho, Bureti and Bomet Districts in the Rift Valley.

Although agricultural changes in Kenya and indeed in Africa as a whole may be explained in terms of physical, ecological conditions and population trends, the problem can also be explained historically (Zeleza, 1986). This poor performance has been a culmination of processes and changes imposed on Africa's agriculture by the imposition of colonial capitalism. The consequent internationalisation of division of labour relegated Africa to the role of supplier of cheap agricultural raw materials to the western capitalist world. The integration of Africa's economy in general and Kenya in particular into the world capitalist system elicited a process of transformation that gradually modified, marginalised, destroyed and subordinated the regional agriculture. The changes brought

by colonial capitalism cannot, however, be conceptualised as having been uniform for the whole of Africa, leave alone Kenya. Some areas were more important in agricultural production or mineral extraction, while others were labour reservoirs to varying degrees.

The generalisations tenable at continental and national levels include the forms of African agricultural systems - shifting cultivation, communal ownership and other land tenure systems and many more and issues pertaining to pastoralism - nomadism, ecological control and vegetation types among many other observations. To overcome the failure of such generalisations this study narrows down the scope of focus to the Kipsigis community inhabiting the three districts of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet in the Rift Valley area. It approaches the subject historically to verify the validity of some of the generalisations tenable at much broader levels.

The three districts manifest various unique features to necessitate such a study. In the first instance, no exhaustive economic study has been undertaken in the area. The few works which had been undertaken, though useful contributions, have lacked a dimension of economic history (Toweett, 1979, Orchardson, 1961, Peristiany 1939). In addition to that, the ecological conditions in the three districts under investigation are conducive to the growth of a number of food and cash crops together with pastoral production. Yet in the pre-colonial period, the Kipsigis were portrayed mainly as pastoralists (Wrigley 1968). In the colonial period, they were systematically depastoralised through the application of state policy and turned into 'progressive' agricultural farmers, producing cash crops for export and maize as the staple food for the plantation workforce. Such a major change was accompanied by diverse socio-economic effects which have not been exhaustively analysed and documented to provide a usable body of knowledge.

Other factors in the background included the colonial land policy of acquisition and the accompanying tea plantation economy which did not immediately constitute the Kipsigis into a labour reservoir as was the case elsewhere in the country. In fact the tea plantation economy relied on migrant labour for some time as the Kipsigis initially shied away from manual labour (*Ibid*). As such there is an immense historical lacuna that needs to be addressed on the subject of Kipsigis labour in relation to the prevailing agricultural changes.

That the Kipsigis witnessed profound changes during the colonial era is academically defensible. The study explores further such changes and shows their socio-economic effects among the Kipsigis, using some aspects of the underdevelopment and articulation of modes of production theories. This will not only re-examine the existing knowledge of the Kipsigis but also give new interpretations of hard facts on the Kipsigis.

1.1 Area of Study

Kericho, Bureti and Bomet districts were formerly one district - Kericho before it was divided in 1993 and 1998 in order to ease administration and reduce it into manageable units. Figure 1 shows the location map of the Kipsigisland in Kenya. The area lies along the South-western edge of the Kenya Highlands forming a hilly shelf, between the Mau Escarpment and the lowlands of Nyanza (Kericho District Development Plan, 1989-1993). These areas are inhabited mainly by the Kipsigis who belong to the Highland Nilotic group of people.

The Kericho district, prior to its division, occupied an area of about 4,984 square kilometres, of which 4,485 square kilometres (89.99%) is suitable for agricultural production (Kericho District Development Plan, 1989-1993:1). Now Kericho, Bureti and

Bomet districts enjoy a number of natural resources - rainfall, which generally follows altitude, ranges from 1,000 mm in the South to 2,000 mm in the north per year, and there is no real break between short and long rains in the entire area (*Ibid*). With an undulating topography that gradually develops to flatter terrain in the South, the area is well drained and the Mau Escarpment acts as a major catchment area.

The area has varied types of soils ranging from the high potential clay (47%), loam (25%) to the low potential black soil (28%). Hence the soils are variedly suitable for agricultural production, such as tea, pyrethrum, maize, coffee, sugarcane and maize in addition to pastoral farming mainly dairy and beef cattle. The three districts could probably have potential for mineral resources though currently limited to natural quarry. Forest resources are conducive to timber and energy production.

The three districts as shown in Figure 2, had a population of about 633, 348 people in the 1979 Census. Kericho District alone had nearly 423,811 people in 1979, growing to about 591,000 people in 1993, and with a growth rate of roughly 3.7% it was projected to increase to approximately 645,000 people by 1996 (Kericho District Development Plan, 1994-1996 p. 9). Its dependent ratio is about 54%. Bomet district, on the other hand, covered an area of nearly 1,834.5 square kilometres and is smaller than Kericho, and with six divisions, both have equal number of divisions. Bomet's population totalled roughly 212,802 in 1969; 291,340 in 1979 and 411,402 in 1993 - with a growth rate of about 2.7% its population was projected to increase to nearly 449,521 in 1996 with a dependent ratio of about 54.6% (Bomet District Development Plan, 1994-1996 p.8). Bureti is a recent creation carved out from the two districts –Kericho and Bomet.

The Kipsigis who have been recorded in history recently as people with large devotion to pastoralism had descended from early communities of mainly gatherers and

hunters who supplemented their livelihood with crop production. According to J. Sutton the only cultivated plant of which there is archaeological evidence around the Kipsigis country is the gourd (Sutton, 1973: 81). The gourd was used as a milk container, implying that the inhabitants of the land were pastoralists. Equally Mwanzi (1976: 33) contends that cattle husbandry for the Kipsigis became a practice within about the last 200 years or so when they acquired cattle through institutionalised raiding of the neighbouring Gusii and Maasai.

The implantation of colonial capitalism at the turn of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century effected further changes among the pastoral Kipsigis. Wrigley (1968: 232) argues that the pastoral communities remained for most purposes outside the new colonial economic system altogether before 1914. He asserted that the influence of the market began to penetrate societies such as that of the Kipsigis during World War II. Notwithstanding timing inaccuracies as given by Wrigley, the Kipsigis, who had hitherto been almost unaffected, responded to the colonial efforts to depastoralise them, and up to the end of World War II, they, together with their kinfolk-the Nandi, came to depend as much on farming as in herding for sustenance and indeed "after the war the Kipsigis were to become, perhaps, the most 'progressive' of all African farmers in Kenya. (Wrigley, 1968:346). A critical and in-depth analysis of these changes and their effects on the people is the focus of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study attempts to address the gap of knowledge on the evolution of the Kipsigis agriculture in the period between c.1894 and 1963. The traditional methods of agricultural production and the resultant changes effected by colonial capitalism have been

adequately attempted. An assessment of the causes and impact of these changes on the Kipsigis community have been investigated. The study therefore, attempts to provide answers to a number of questions on the Kipsigis agricultural economy during the period under investigation.

For example, how was the Kipsigis agricultural economy organised on the eve of colonial rule? What were their forms of land ownership and usage? How effective were the Kipsigis methods of food production and what measures were taken to curb food shortages?

What were the traditional methods of livestock management among the Kipsigis? Did the Kipsigis society have an internal social organisation which established types of relations of production that governed the pastoral economy and the distribution of pastoral resources?

What were the changes brought about by colonial capitalism and what effects did these changes have on the Kipsigis pastoral economy? How did these changes affect the Kipsigis labour organisation?

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the underlying factors that necessitated such changes and assess their socio-economic impact on the Kipsigis as the people populating the area of investigation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study endeavours to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the traditional methods of agricultural production in the Kipsigisland on the eve of colonial rule.

2. To give an analysis of agricultural changes that took place in the Kipsigisland during the colonial period.
3. To investigate the causes of these changes and their impact on the Kipsigis people.
4. To evaluate the Kipsigis responses and reactions to these agricultural changes.

1.4 Research Premises

This enquiry is predicated upon the following points,

1. That the Kipsigis pre-colonial pastoral economy was dynamic, diverse, efficient, productive and aimed at self-sustenance.
2. That through a historical process of articulation the colonial agricultural economy modified, marginalised and subordinated the Kipsigis pre-capitalist pastoral economy.
3. That modern methods of agricultural production were stressed during the colonial period to the advantage of the colonialists and disadvantage of the Kipsigis.
4. That the political and economic reforms announced by the colonial state were measures meant to preserve the European dominated political and economic interests.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Many works on agriculture done on the continental, regional and even national levels tend to be too general, given their broad scope. This study, however, assumes that

agricultural systems are regionally specific and their analysis requires systematic local studies. It therefore narrows down the unit of focus to the Kipsigis community inhabiting the three districts of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet. It approaches the subject historically to verify the validity of some of the generalisations tenable at broader levels. Did pre-colonial African agricultural systems essentially comprise shifting cultivation? Was communal land ownership universal in Africa? Did nomads roam throughout Africa haphazardly or were they ignorant of ecological and physical conditions?

It has also been noted earlier that besides a few works on the Kipsigis, such as those of Toweett, 1979; arap Korir, 1976; Orchardson, 1961; Peristany, 1939, no exhaustive economic study has been undertaken on the Kipsigis agriculture. Yet Kipsigisland has ideal conditions for agricultural and pastoral production and witnessed major changes, such as colonial land acquisition and tea plantation economy. The present study attempts to fill in this gap of knowledge. Moreover it is anticipated that this study will help the relevant specialists, such as economists, agriculturalists and many others to seek answers to questions about subsequent Kipsigis agriculture as the work provides a base for the study of the post-colonial period. Such questions may include the fate and prospects of pastoral farming, the possibility of food shortages and effects on dietary change, implications on land use and land fragmentation in the three districts.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study begins at about 1894 when Uganda, formerly a British Sphere of Influence, was declared a British Protectorate - then extending to the Rift Valley area which is presently in Kenya, and within which the Kipsigisland is located. But the Kipsigisland came under effective colonial rule in the first decade of the last century. This

provides an ideal setting within which an analysis of the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy may be undertaken. The study ends in 1963 when Kenya attained independence from the British colonial rule. Moreover, the study is limited to the three Kipsigis districts in order to make the unit of study more manageable.

1.7 Literature Review

Although much scholarly attention has been focused on Africa's and Kenya's agricultural history, no study has been undertaken on the Kipsigis of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet. At these levels specific details pertaining to the Kipsigisland are obscured, given the wide scope of the study in terms of peoples and systems. Some of the general observations may need to be modified in the context of local and specific conditions at the micro-level of study. This study attempts to delineate the specific conditions unique to the Kipsigisland.

Tempany (1958) asserts that pre-colonial African agriculture consisted of 'obsolete' forms of shifting cultivation. Jones (1984) adds that African agricultural systems were traditional and static and manifested very slow change qualities. A host of such developmentalist writers believed that, despite the rapid evolution since then, the traditional agricultural systems of 1900 were remarkably similar to those produced today (Jones, 1984:4).

In the recent past, such and many more misconceived notions of the developmentalist writers have been refuted by Africanist scholars who have shown that change in African agricultural systems was not necessarily externally motivated. Hopkins (1975:35), for example, has shown that there existed various types of agricultural systems, and no less than seven headings are needed in West Africa alone. He argues that the

indigenous economy experienced major historical changes and that the agricultural history of the pre-colonial period is a process of innovation rather than stagnation. In the same vein, Zeleza (1986:155) asserts that it is certainly a crude distortion to subsume the wide range of agricultural systems in the pre-colonial Africa under the rubric of shifting cultivation. Such dynamism and changes have already been noted on the part of the Kipsigis pre-colonial agriculture. According to Mwanzi (1976:31) the early communities from whom the modern Kipsigis descended were gatherers and hunters who supplemented their livelihood with crop production. Gradually, the Kipsigis later turned to pastoralism after acquiring animals as a result of organised raids on the neighbouring Gusii and Maasai. And during the colonial period the Kipsigis were gradually deliberately depastoralised and turned into crop farmers. The Kipsigis case, therefore, represents a dynamic and changing pattern of agricultural systems that innovatively adapted to suit external and internal conditions. The works of Hopkins, Zeleza and many more in the Africanist school of thought have provided valuable backgrounds and insights in the present study.

Few historical studies have been made on the nomadic pastoral peoples of East Africa and consequently we know little about their past as a result. Such studies have concentrated on the broad sweep of the history of migrations of pastoralists or on their recent political past and little attention has been paid to their economic or social histories. Besides, anthropological accounts of pastoral communities have tended to give a timeless picture and that the methods of production in the pre-colonial period have hardly changed and that modern times changes have passed these societies (see van Zwanenberg and King 1975:79). Yet it would be most unusual to find any society in which no adjustments or modifications have occurred and indeed recent evidence suggests that nomadic pastoral

societies, like other societies, did experience alterations in their modes of production in the pre-colonial period and even after.

Consequently, such imperialist writers have always wanted Africans to accept that the continental pastoralists moved haphazardly or irrationally from one place to another only in search of pastures and water. Specifically Rigby (1964) gives an anthropological account of the Maasai as a wandering community and Dyson (1966) further gives justification for the pastoralists' love and devotion to large herds. Such works, therefore, tend to show little change among pastoral communities and do not appreciate the pastoral peoples' understanding or their adaptation to their local environmental conditions.

African writers have questioned the age-old beliefs and fallacies held by such imperialist writers. Allans (1965) holds that pastoralists know grasslands well. They know the feed value of different grazing and browse species. He asserts that the pastoralists understand their ecological environment quite well and their pastoral activities are rationally determined by ecological conditions. This is a fact that Kjekshus (1977) well demonstrated in Tanzania's case. Kjekshus well demonstrated how the pastoralists in Tanzania are very well versed in the ecological balance of their regions and how their movements are positive responses to the physical and social environmental challenges. Their veterinary knowledge is the basis of a viable and productive pastoral system. The works of Allans and Kjeskus have usefully informed this study of the Kipsigis pastoral economy in Kericho, Bureti and Bomet Districts in Kenya.

According to Wright (1979: 179) the life styles of various peoples ranged along a spectrum, primary categories being nomadic pastoralists, cultivating pastoralists, cattle-keeping cultivators and sedentary cultivators. Most studies on pastoralism in Africa have tended to emphasise nomadic pastoralism - the Maasai, Turkana and the Samburu (See for

example Jacobs, 1965 on Maasai; Odegi Awuondo (1990) and Nyanchoga (1999) on the Turkana, Waweru (1992) and Lemoosa (1999) on the Samburu, to mention a few. The cultivating pastoralists are either ignored or marginally treated together with agricultural communities. The Kipsigis who were sedentary cattle-keeping cultivators have been overshadowed in pastoral studies by such nomadic pastoralists as the Maasai, Turkana and the Samburu. This study attempts to precisely fill in this gap with new knowledge.

Notably, writers like van Zwanenberg and King (1975) analysed the pastoral communities of Kenya within a theoretical framework that assumes pastoral activities to take place mostly in semi-dry areas. They have asserted that the situation of pastoralists who were the predominant force in East Africa in the early part of the nineteenth century has been turned upside down so that today pastoralist societies are impoverished, dominated and underprivileged largely due to their perceived traditionalism. The Kipsigis being neither nomadic nor residing in a semi-dry area have somewhat been modified in a different form from that seen by Van Zwanenberg and King and this study tries to delineate the Kipsigis case.

A lot of work has been produced on colonial capitalism in Kenya of which a few examples are Berman (1990), Leys (1975, 1985), Kitching (1980), Swainson (1980a, 1980b), Langdon (1975), Brett (1973) and Fearn (1961). All these works are useful to this study as the authors have tackled the subject from the viewpoint of the dependency and articulation of modes of production theories. Their observations provide a useful guide in the present study, and their conclusions, though acceptable at national level, have been tested against the background of a lower and smaller unit of study, such as in this case the Kipsigis agriculture.

van Zwanenberg and King (1975) carried out a comparative economic study of Kenya and Uganda in the period between 1900 and 1970. In this work they have contended that Kenya's faster development was due to a flow of capital that she encouraged and that Kenya developed predominantly through settler production and plantation export crops and with this they concluded that only Europeans accumulated wealth during the colonial period. In all, van Zwanenberg and King denied accumulation of wealth by indigenous Africans. Besides they have seen that the pastoralist economy was transformed into an impoverished one and dominated by the colonial state.

On the other hand, Cowen (1982) Kitching (1980) and Swainson (1980b) have shown that Africans did accumulate some form of wealth during the colonial period. Swainson (1980b) traces the emergence and rise in Kenya of a national African bourgeoisie and this is the class that Kitching (1980) calls the "petite-bourgeoisie". Cowen (1982) established that before the colonisation of East Africa relations of production existing in what is now Central Province determined the formation of a class of accumulators of land and livestock - the principal means of production - through migration into new land, raiding and long distance trade. This social stratum of the agrarian rich was transformed into a class of accumulators and later joined by wage income people whose base was education. According to Leys (1985) this indigenous class of capitalists was heavily concentrated in the largest ethnic group - the Kikuyu, constituting, with closely related neighbouring people, about 25 per cent of the total population of the country. What happened with the other 75 per cent of the Kenyan population is, nevertheless, the major flaw of this work. But it is evident that an embryonic African bourgeoisie began to emerge from the 1920's based on new forms of commodity production and the employment of wage labour. These factors were borne in mind in the analysis of the Kipsigis agriculture

and the attendant social formations. The Kipsigis case has been well documented in this study in regard to such social formations.

Aseka (1989) has analysed the Buluyia economic and political systems in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, using the historical and dialectical materialist approach. He identified various contradictions between the imperialist British metropolitan government and imperialist colonial state in Kenya on one hand and the unprecedented upsurge of the nationalist struggle in the colony on the other. He examined the issues of land alienation, labour expropriation, taxation, commodity production, trade and exchange in Buluyialand and showed how the Buluyia indigenous farmers entrenched themselves into commodity production and some were even turned into a waged labour force for colonial capitalism. Through agriculture, wage labour, squatterdom and education, Aseka provided a detailed study of various social formations, forces of production and the process of accumulation of wealth by an embryonic African middle class, resulting in social differentiation and the formation of a wealthy and waged labour force elements in the populace. His work has provided valuable reflections in the direction of the present study.

Brett (1973) explores the nature of the connection between colonialism and underdevelopment. He shows the economic basis of colonial politics and advances the view that the settler economy underdeveloped indigenous African economies in Kenya. But, Brett's analysis, like other dependency theorists, is conservative and he centres his explanation of underdevelopment on the world system theory. His work gives a generalised view of economic development in colonial Kenya with no attention to particular communities.

Wolff (1974) analyses the viability of development in colonial Kenya but his analysis stopped in 1930 before most pastoral communities had fully felt the impact of

colonialism. The decade between 1920 and 1930 witnessed land alienation, but it was not until after 1930 that land pressure, over-stocking and soil erosion became evident in the pastoral reserves.

Fearn (1961) examined the economic development of Nyanza in the period between 1903 and 1953. He found out that economic development rested almost entirely on European and Asian efforts and argued that indigenous enterprise was non-existent due to the customary system of land tenure. His study, therefore, portrayed the African passivity in the process of economic change.

In his article, Atieno-Odhiambo (1974) traces the African indigenous farmers from a rich and prosperous independent farmer with a surplus of food to exchange, to one impoverished and relegated to the economic backwaters of the colonial system. He contends that both the enhancement of the African farmer and the expropriation of his labour were basically a colonial creation for the benefits of settler economy. In his eyes, the logic of capitalist exploitation upset the rural economic equilibrium and therefore created both the rural and urban waged labour. Yet his work is not only based on agricultural communities, but too general and only spells out a framework along which more study can be undertaken. Besides, he does not see any group of African accumulators in the process of commodity production enhancement nor does he give an account of African response to this process. Worse still, he has ignored the history of the indigenous African farmers in the 1920s and does not show what happened thereafter.

Samir Amin (1974) has outlined the elements of a theory of underdevelopment which could be applied to petty commodity agricultural production. According to him, pre-capitalist agriculture, based upon the production of the food needs of a society, became involved in a crisis caused by the 'aggression' of a capitalist mode of production

elsewhere. An imposed political authority - the colonial state, mediated this aggression and sought to 'extrovert' the indigenous economy - to direct it to production of commodity for export. The methods used, according to him, included monetarising that economy, with the result that some indigenous farmers found it more profitable to produce export crops than food, and the majority were more easily induced into producing the minimum required for taxation. Amin's analysis of the colonial transformation of agriculture in Africa proved a useful guide in the examination of agricultural changes among the Kipsigis during the colonial period.

Njonjo (1981) argues that Kenyan farmers were turned into waged workers rather than reproduced as agricultural farmers and that most of them were no longer living in self-sufficient households, but have become workers with patches of land. He also finds that transformation into a waged labour force of a majority of farmers has been paralleled by the rise of a landed group of people, more especially in the Rift Valley region. His work certainly provided useful reflections on the present study.

Bowles (1972) applies the underdevelopment theory to indigenous agriculture in Kenya. He argues that agricultural development in colonial Kenya did not consist of the introduction of export crop farming, either by the arrival of planters or settlers, or by the creation of indigenous cash-crop agriculture. To the contrary, the effects of the alienation of land upon indigenous agriculture and nutrition deteriorated enormously. Fertile land was alienated for the purpose of setting up large-scale farms or plantations which were to provide crops for export. This meant not only that indigenous people were physically removed, but food cultivation was suppressed in the alienated areas, the men were induced to work on export crop production on the plantations instead of food production at home, and their own wives' cultivation took place in more marginal areas. And so food

production declined and soil erosion increased in marginal areas largely due to overcultivation and soil exhaustion, resulting in food shortages, famines, malnutrition and poor standards of living among the people. Bowles analysis, together with his other work (1979), that delved into underdevelopment in Agriculture in colonial Kenya, which highlighted some ecological and dietary aspects, gave important insights in the present study.

Omwoyo, (1992a) analysed the organisation and transformation of agriculture among the Gusii of Western Kenya in the colonial period. He demonstrated that the dynamism and innovativeness of Gusii indigenous agriculture showed its efficiency and productiveness. Furthermore he showed how the colonial penetration modified and marginalised the Gusiiland's indigenous agriculture. Consequently the Gusii indigenous farmers were reduced to petty commodity producers. Part of the Gusii population was turned into waged labour, initially as migrant workers and later as a rural waged labour force in the district. As a result Omwoyo (1992b) has shown how Gusii households suffered from insufficient labour, resulting in food shortages to an extent that maize, hitherto a major food crop produced by the Gusii, had to be imported in 1961 to avert a potentially dangerous food shortage situation. All these aspects pertaining to agricultural changes in the Gusiiland were borne in mind when examining agricultural changes among the neighbouring Kipsigis.

Stichter (1982) analyses the phenomenon of migrant labour in the settler large-scale farming and the subsistence farming sector. She gives a detailed account on the methods of labour recruitment and retention as manipulated by the settler economy. Her work proved valuable in this study as the Kipsigisland was a home for tea plantations.

Yet a number of works exist on the Kipsigis history. Henry Mwanzi has written extensively on the Kipsigis. In his book, A History of the Kipsigis, he largely dwells on the emergence of the Kipsigis society and the evolution of social and religious institutions of the Kipsigis. One chapter is devoted to the pre-colonial economic development of the Kipsigis (Mwanzi, 1977a). This work gives a detailed account of the socio-economic institutions in the pre-colonial Kipsigisland and provided a useful base on which the present study has proceeded. But the work does not examine the changes brought about by colonial capitalism on the Kipsigis economic foundation.

Mwanzi's second work does not only give an account of the rise and use of the title *arap* in the Kipsigis naming system and as it relates to the social and other institutions, but equally analyses the evolution of the Kipsigis from being agriculturalists to being pastoralists (Mwanzi, 1976). He argues that it was the introduction of cattle that led to far reaching social, cultural and economic changes among the Kipsigis. The introduction of cattle to the Kipsigis changed the matrilineal base of that society to a partrialineal one, and the rise of the word 'arap' represented that change (Mwanzi, 1976:42). This work was important in analysing the Kipsigis pre-colonial relations in terms of production though its major flaw was that it does not show what happened in the colonial period.

Mwanzi's third work deals with the role of local chiefs during the colonial period and how they acted as vehicles or agents of the colonial economic and social change. Using the example of Senior Chief, Cheborge arap Tengecha, Mwanzi argues that the colonial chiefs formed part of the nascent and embryonic *petit-bourgeoisie* accumulators during the colonial period (Mwanzi, 1977b). In all, Mwanzi's works provided valuable insight on the Kipsigis community.

Another useful work on the Kipsigis was undertaken by Peristiany (1939) who gives a descriptive account of the customs and social institutions which he had personally witnessed in the community. Other than being anthropological in orientation, this work is useful in showing what existed in the early colonial period in the economic and social spheres of the Kipsigis. He demonstrates clearly that commercial production of maize introduced some changes in the organisation of the Kipsigis agricultural production, especially as pertains to labour organisation and acquisition of ploughs.

Manners, (1972) analyses the cultural changes among the Kipsigis whom he refers to as a 'model East African tribe'. Apart from the anthropological works, Manners has analysed various types of land-use, labour and the effects of the market economy among the Kipsigis (Manners, 1962). His two works were resourceful as they pointed out some economic aspects among the Kipsigis.

Arap Korir (1978) has analysed the issue of land alienation among the Kipsigis. He has shown that the Kipsigis suffered massive land alienation and displacement, especially in the tea plantation areas. He gives a detailed account of the forceful eviction of the Kipsigis in the alienation of land around Kimulot. In another work, arap Korir (1976) looks at the tea plantation economy in Kericho district and examines related issues – such as land alienation and labour recruitment and retention. But, he only deals with the tea plantation economy leaving out other aspects of agricultural production. Nevertheless, the two works were invaluable in examining the economic history of the Kipsigisland.

Taaita Toweett (1979) attempts to give an oral history of the Kipsigis though limited to the pre-colonial period only. He also does not give a comprehensive and detailed account of the origins, migrations and settlement of the Kipsigis people and leaves

a number of issues absolutely unanswered. Importantly, one chapter is devoted to the economic life of the Kipsigis and this proved valuable to the present study.

Orchardson (1961) perhaps more than anybody else gives a detailed general history of the pre-colonial Kipsigis touching on all facets of the community. Having settled and lived among the Kipsigis for several years, Orchardson understood intimately the Kipsigis customs and traditions and this work benefited from his resourcefulness. Unfortunately, this work does not cover the colonial period. And, inevitably in such general works, Orchardson does not give agriculture sufficient attention and space (only 4 pages out of 141) that this work attempts to achieve.

The economic patterns of the Kipsigis has also been portrayed in other wider works. Wrigley (1965) maps out the economic effects of colonialism in Kenya, between 1902-1945. He contends that the pastoral peoples, such as the Maasai, Nandi, Kipsigis and the Kamba remained, for most purposes, outside the new colonial system altogether before 1914. He asserts that the influence of the market began to penetrate the Kenyan societies, such as that of the Kipsigis during World War II and therefore portrays them as traditional and slow in terms of response to the new changes.

Middleton, (1965) classifies all the Highland Nilotic peoples as having been mainly transhumant, needing a large area of grazing which is a misconception of the sedentary Kipsigis. He also asserts that the Nandi and the Kipsigis responded to calls for labour migrancy and for the growing of cash crops much later than the Kikuyu, Luyhia, Luo, Taita and the Giriama for that matter. He consequently, does not show why the Nandi and the Kipsigis case was delayed though generally he attributes such changes to land shortage, taxation, good communication and the influence of the christian missionaries. In spite of the delay, Middleton shows that throughout the 1912-1945

period, the Nandi and the Kipsigis came to depend as much on farming as on herding for sustenance, and indeed, after the Second World War the Kipsigis were to become, perhaps, the most 'progressive' of all farmers in Kenya. It is this enormous change among the Kipsigis that has not been clearly documented which is the focus of the present study.

In conclusion this study essentially aims at examining the agricultural changes, their causes and socio-economic effects in the Kipsigisland in the period between 1894 and 1963. The many works reviewed here are seen as being complementary for the attainment of the objective of filling a gap of knowledge in the study of the Kipsigis history.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

In analysing Africa's economic history many theories have been advanced. The ones applicable to this study will be the dependency and underdevelopment and articulation of modes of production theories.

The dependency and underdevelopment theory has tried to overcome the ethnocentric and unilinear conception of development as proposed by proponents of the disgraced modernisation theory. The dependists assert that underdevelopment is not an original condition and that neither the past nor the present of the underdeveloped countries resembles in any important respect the past of the now developed countries. The now developed countries were never underdeveloped though they may have been undeveloped (Frank, 1969: 40).

The dependists who include Frank (1969), Rodney (1972), Bowles (1976) among many others, attribute the underdevelopment of the Third World countries to their incorporation into the international capitalist system by colonialism as dependent satellite states. Africa, the proponents of the dependency theory assert, had its history characterised

by constant expropriation of its surplus value to the West through numerous mechanisms, especially that of unequal exchange. The underdevelopment of the periphery and the development of the centre was therefore constantly being reproduced through an intermittent satellite-metropolis chain in which the surplus generated at each stage was successively drawn to the centre (Zezeza 1982: 13). Underdevelopment in the Third World is, therefore, the result of their subordinate role in that system and the contribution they have made and continue to make to the development of the advanced capitalist societies. The contribution consists of cheap labour, raw materials or investible surplus. Thus, the capitalist system has totally and uniformly changed Africa's economy into its structurally underdeveloped state of today, and this state is consolidated by development and the structure of the world capitalist system. The net result has been the diffusion of the much-needed surplus for development from the underdeveloped to the developed countries. Thus the development of underdeveloped countries will not occur as a result of the diffusion of institutions and values, rather, their development can now occur only independently of most of these relations of diffusion (Frank, 1969: 61).

Underdevelopment is thus viewed as an impoverishing process of a country/community through external expropriation of its labour, raw materials and surplus value through the mechanisms of unequal exchange. The underdeveloped country then becomes dialectically dependent on the external income leading to further exploitation. Therefore underdevelopment and dependency are sides of the same coin. However this theory has limitations - first, the theory is idealistic in the sense that the entire poverty in the peripheral countries is solely blamed on metropolitan countries; it overlooks the possibility of local conditions abetting dependency. It also has a tendency to become involved in a geometrical pattern of circles within circles, that is, the trajectories of

satellites and satellites of satellites (Bowles; 1976: 13). The theory glorifies the role of external forces, especially colonialism in changing, subordinating and weakening social, economic and political institutions in Africa. Lastly, the theory ignores the role of internal factors in their explanation of poverty in the Third World.

This theory of underdevelopment finds apt application in the analysis of the Kipsigis agriculture. Colonial capitalism massively alienated the Kipsigis land for tea plantations turning the Kipsigisland into a producer of raw materials for Metropolitan Britain. The Kipsigis were turned into petty commodity producers, especially in the cultivation of maize to feed the plantation work force and therefore relegating *wimbi* production, the indigenous food crop with so many advantages over maize into second place. With the burden of taxes to pay and the need for other merchandise, the Kipsigis were conditioned to overwork their farms, leading to soil exhaustion and erosion. The impressive large quantities of maize produced cannot be taken as an index of development but of underdevelopment, given the side effects shown above and the dearth of efforts done in the 1940s and 1950s to rectify the situation. The Kipsigis were equally conditioned to sell their labour and animals in order to meet their needs occasioned by colonial capitalism, such as education, clothing, bicycles, *posho* mills, and many more. All these elements of underdevelopment impoverished the Kipsigis to varying degrees and eventually made them dependent on colonial capitalism.

It has been noted in this connection that, in spite of the predominance of the capitalist mode of production, there had existed some elements of the non-capitalist modes of production in peripheral societies which have continued to be reproduced. As Leys (1985) remarks, the debate about dependency and underdevelopment can not occur at the periphery or that it is eventually bound to occur. What it demonstrates rather, is the need

to study and theorise the conditions under which some peripheral countries have and others have not experienced significant measures of economic growth. This awareness has given rise to the theory of articulation of modes of production in the developing countries.

A mode of production is seen here as a system of production or social form of economic organisation. It mainly involves itself with the means of production and the attendant social relations of production. The main argument in this theory is that when the capitalist mode of production is introduced it does not automatically and immediately replace the pre-capitalist modes of production; but rather, reinforces them. With time, the capitalist mode of production gradually starts to establish and asserts itself over the pre-capitalist mode of production. The two modes of production were then locked in a complex and sometimes contradictory struggle, hence articulation. Gradually, the capitalist mode of production then began to modify, marginalise, destroy or eventually subordinate the pre-capitalist mode of production by utilising it rather than casting it aside. The pre-capitalist mode of production did not get completely eliminated but kept on reproducing itself diversely in relation to the capitalist mode of production. Goodman (1987:60) puts it in other words that pre-capitalist modes of production may have continued to exist although subordinated to the capitalist system through a process of "preservation and destruction" or "dissolution and conservation", by which they were articulated in their diverse relations with capitalist system, more particularly through unequal exchange relations.

Articulation is therefore a double-edged concept where certain sectors of the pre-capitalist economy were integrated into the capitalist economy and other sectors were not integrated for some time with a view to achieve certain economic goals. Most pastoral communities for that matter, were not readily integrated into the colonial economic

mainstream but were constantly depastoralised to pauperise them and turn them into cheap labour force or petty commodity producers, such as was the case for the Kipsigis, which was more beneficial to the colonial system than pastoralism. The processes of articulation and disarticulation therefore went on hand in hand while certain sectors were being preserved through articulation others were being destroyed through disarticulation, and vice versa, since the entire pre-capitalist economy could not be integrated in totality though subordinated to capitalist system.

According to Leys (1985), what produces underdevelopment is not the transfer of surplus appropriated by metropolitan capital from the periphery however significant this aspect may be. Rather, such a transfer should be seen in the light of structures at the periphery which militate against the productive investment of surplus labour there to be appropriated. The existing structures in the periphery prevent the realisation of relative surplus value. In other words, the development of underdevelopment is rooted in the structure of production based on the extension of absolute surplus labour which determines a sharp disjuncture between the requirements for the development of productive forces (productivity of labour) and the structure of the profitability of the economy as a whole. In essence, the argument states that under certain conditions, articulation is structured to maintain pre-capitalist sectors of the economy (Goodman, 1981:62) with seasonal or migrant labour, part of the long term cost of production is borne by the pre-capitalist sector or the domestic community and the wages paid can be correspondingly lower. According to Zeleza (1985: 143), the concept of articulation of modes of production, therefore, goes further than the dependency theory to explain specific forms that accumulation, the labour process and class struggle have taken in different regions of the Third World.

Since articulation is a process by which the capitalist mode of production penetrates and establishes dominance over pre-capitalist modes, the theory of articulation has been applied extensively in analysing African economic history during the colonial period. It is in line with this theory, and in conjunction with the dependency theory that the Kipsigis agricultural changes have been analysed. This is notwithstanding the fact that in the last decade and half or so there has been a hot intellectual debate of re-examining Marxist theory and this has given rise to the theory of postmodernism. According to the proponents of this theory, the present stage of capitalist maturity is a stage in which use-value tends to lose content in the sphere of consumption, and concrete and individual labour tends to disappear in the sphere of production. It is therefore, a stage that can thus, at last remove the fundamental ideological obstacle to the formation of a collective subjectivity as seen by Marx, a stage in which there is no room for individual or social subjectivity. Post-modernity is seen as a mere incoherent passing of present moments, images and signs, deprived of any sense and, therefore, of the cohesion necessary for the formation of subjectivity. Nevertheless the theory is highly disjointed or fragmented (Aseka, 1995) and for these reasons and given its application in contemporary studies, I found the 'theory' of postmodernism of little use in the study of the Kipsigis agriculture in the period before 1963. Besides the theory of post modernism rejects the role of history in social reconstruction. Thus, because the theory is ahistorical it was rendered inappropriate for the study.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research for this study spanned from January 1997 through July 1998 in the gathering of various pieces of required information. The study is based on both primary

and secondary sources. Primary sources include carrying out oral interviews - the perspective source of African historiography in the three districts of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet. Other primary sources certainly include archival documentary records, official reports of the colonial period while the secondary sources include published accounts provided by contemporaries, such as early foreign travellers, missionaries and colonial administrators.

Information gathered from oral interviews covered both the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Of interest in the oral sources is information relating to agricultural organisation, such as traditional agricultural tools and implements, traditional and modern crops, pest and disease control and many more. Folk songs, legends and myths explaining agricultural and pastoral phenomena were explored. Relics of agricultural connections in the relevant periods were sought and critically examined.

Informants were chosen selectively and purposively throughout the two districts of Kericho and Bomet; a third district was created out of the two in 1998 only after the oral research had been completed. Evidently, in any community, there are those individuals who are well informed on certain issues and are even consulted over the same. These individuals renowned in their villages for being informative on agricultural and pastoral issues were sought and interviewed orally using a question guideline (see Appendix III).

The initial format of selecting the informants was as follows. Since both Kericho and Bomet Districts had six divisions each, this formed an ideal starting point. Three divisions from each district were chosen randomly. In every chosen division four locations were randomly chosen. Each locational chief or anybody in his place or anybody chosen by him was then approached to give at least three residents he considered knowledgeable on agricultural practice. One of these three was then sought and

interviewed and in addition suggested three other residents renowned for their agricultural knowledge. Subsequently, only those respondents who scored highly on the selection list were sought and interviewed. It was envisaged that at least four respondents be interviewed in a chosen location. In cases where an individual outside the chosen areas was repeatedly nominated for interview by other informants, allowance was given to accommodate such deserving cases. And in cases where the four respondents in a location did not avail sufficient information, allowance was given to interview more respondents or substitute the entire location. Consequently neither sex nor occupation was used as basic criteria for selecting informants. Although age was not considered an important attribute in selecting informants, it nevertheless emerged that those above the age of fifty-five proved to be more informative.

But this system proved more expensive in terms of time and manpower. One person could not effectively compile the snowballing list of informants and at the same time interview all deserving cases. After the workload increased, two research assistants were thoroughly trained to co-ordinate the interview of informants. A number of researchers were then engaged and dispatched to identified locations. This time round allowance was given for the researchers to work in their locations or neighbouring ones. They identified knowledgeable people out in the field and interviewed them. The earlier plan of interviewing about ninety-six respondents from 24 locations thus did not materialise. About eighty-four informants were interviewed in all from the entire Kipsigisland. The list of forty-five informants provided in the bibliography is for those who have been repeatedly cited in this work.

A tape-recorder was to be used to record some interviews, but this proved unworkable, given the number of researchers involved while others were to be transcribed

on paper. The researcher employed the services of research assistants from the Kipsigis community to help in the translation and explanations of Kipsigis concepts. In all, all information obtained from oral interviews was assessed and corroborated with other data for validity, reliability and accuracy.

Archival records in the form of annual reports, agricultural gazettes, publications and newspapers, were sought in the Kenya National Archives and the Information and Documentation Centres at Kericho and Bomet. Apparently such information was not entirely reliable, as most of it is prejudiced, biased, 'developmentalist' in nature and largely reflect the colonialists' view. It has therefore been corroborated with other data, especially findings from oral sources.

Secondary sources abound in the form of books, journals, theses and dissertations papers presented in seminars and conferences, magazines and newspapers. Relevant information was gathered from the above sources and this was analysed and integrated together with archival and oral information to provide reliable, relevant and accurate information for the writing of the research results.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE KIPSIGIS ON THE EVE OF COLONIAL RULE

2.1 The Settlement of the Kipsigis in their Present Land

The Kipsigis occupy three districts of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet, measuring a total of about 4,984 square kilometres. Of course, this was a colonial creation of limiting the Kipsigis to that area which they designated as Kericho prior to its subdivision into three more districts. The Kipsigis were long settled in the area well before the coming of the European colonial forces.

Early Kipsigis settlement in the Kericho, Bomet and Bureti districts is shrouded in a number of controversies. Those who would like to conform to Trevor Royer's assertion that pre-colonial African societies were ceaselessly migrating to and fro, trace the origins of the Kipsigis elsewhere and try to show how, in the course of their migration, they came to settle in their present land. Then there are those who argue that the Kipsigis did not exist as Kipsigis, but rather as an interaction and amalgamation of a number of communities which came together in the area under investigation and gave rise to a community that eventually became known as the Kipsigis. This latter school of thought, therefore, argues that the Kipsigis have evolved in their present homeland from various ethnic interactions and amalgamation. The Kipsigis themselves believe that they came from a region to the north of their present homeland. A brief outline of these divergent views will suffice here to illustrate the settlement of the Kipsigis in their present land.

The Kipsigis belong to the Highland Nilotic group. Their origin is closely related to that of their neighbouring kinsmen, the Nandi (Matson, 1974; Hollis, 1909;

Hobley, 1903). They, together with the Nandi, Tugen, Keiyo, Marakwet, Sapiny and Terik comprise one originally united group, called the Kalenjin (Toweett, 1979:2).

According to Orchardson, (1971), in the latter half of the 18th century, the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, Keyo and the Marakwet were one people. They lived in a land called *To*, situated probably to the north of the present Tugen and Keyo country and not far away from Lake *Camos* (Baringo). From *To* the Nandi and Kipsigis migrated, due to drought and resulting famine, southwards. They moved to Hill *Tiluapsigis* where they parted from one another. The Kipsigis then pushed southwards where they ousted, first the Sirikwa and later the Gusii (*Kosopek*) who were at that time occupying parts of Bureti. To the south there was a small community, the *Nata*, probably a branch of the present Kuria. They lived in a bushy and forested tract called Sotik to the east of the present Sotik to which it gave its name. The Kapasiso clan of the Kipsigis appeared to have integrated with the *Nata* to form the Sotik as a section of the Kipsigis community. The Kipsigis then slowly drove off the Gusii and the Maasai, pushing the latter completely back to the Trans-Mara area by 1870 with terrible defeats.

Toweett (1979:2) asserts that almost every Kipsigis has been made to believe that the Kipsigis as a community came from the northern countries of Africa. Toweett shows how the Kipsigis moved southwards, possibly from what is now the South Sudan, together with their kinsmen, the Kalenjin group; how they split and eventually settled in the Kericho area after encountering and displacing the Gusii and the Maasai to the southwest of Kericho.

Peristiany (1939:1) like Toweett and Orchardson, conforms to the migrational notion. According to the Kipsigis, he posits that their present land was only reached after a long series of successive migrations. Their original home was in the "country of

Tto in the vicinity of the Lake *Chamus*, near the Lake Baringo, over 60 miles to the north of the present Kipsigisland". The migration must have taken place very long time ago, as during the *chuma* age-set the Kipsigis were in possession of their present district. He continues to argue that the Kipsigis left the land of their ancestors because they were suffering from severe drought and in search of better pasturelands for their herds. When they arrived in the *peelkut* (Belgut), they met with the Sirikwa who were the original antochtones, occupying the land. The Kipsigis stopped at the *Tuluap Kipsigis* (mountain of the Kipsigis), a short distance to the north of their present homeland from where they gathered their forces and attacked the Sirikwa. Having been victorious in their first battle, the Kipsigis infiltrated slowly into the country, gradually ousting the Sirikwa, until they dominated them through integration and assimilation. They then came into contact with the Maasai, but after a long and severe fighting, defeated them as well and occupied their most southern position, between the Nyangoris and the Amala rivers. The Gusii suffered the same fate from the hands of the Kipsigis who forced them to move southwards from their original homeland.

Mwanzi departs from such migratory approaches and asserts that the Kipsigis as such have not come from anywhere (Mwanzi, 1977a). In his book, which grew out of doctoral research, Mwanzi tries to show how the Kipsigis evolved where they are today from various ethnic interactions. He concludes that the origins of the society are diverse.

First, Mwanzi recognises the existence of early inhabitants in this region, whom he identified as being hunters and gatherers, and labels them the Sirikwa. Around the Mau escapements were the Okiek. To the southern part the Gusii and the Maasai factors had great bearing on the formation of the Kipsigis. Specifically, Mwanzi

divided the Kipsigis into three sub-nationalities of the Belgut in the north, Bureti in the middle and the Sot or Sotik in the south. While some clans of the Belgut seem to have come from a northerly direction, possibly through Nakuru, Rongai and Njoro, before scattering through Mau and Molo forests where the Okiek seem to have settled already and some clans, such as the *Kipasisek* were already settled here. He, therefore, asserts that the Kipsigis of Belgut were a result of interaction and amalgamation of the incoming Kalenjin clans and the already settled Okiek in the region.

Bureti, on the other hand, was initially inhabited by a people who Mwanzi identifies as the Nata and the Sirikwa. This area of Bureti, around Litein and Koiywa regions is regarded by the Kipsigis as the melting pot of cultures and the secondary dispersal area for many Kalenjin clans. Some Kipsigis clans claim descent from Sirikwa, such as the *Kapchebokolwolek*, *Kipkendek* and the *Kapkugeok*. The Gusii, in their migration from Kano plains and Kabianga, did settle at Bureti. As such some clans at Bureti claim descent from the Gusii, such as the *Baswetek*, *Matoborik*, *Buguserek*, *Mochorwek* and many others ((Mwanzi, 1977a; 49).

Lastly, the population of Sot (Sotik) derived mainly from movements in Bureti and Belgut. Some clans trace their descent to Sirikwa, others are of Okiek extraction, but the vast majority of the population there seems to have originated from Gusii ancestors. Mwanzi posits that quite often in the Kipsigis traditions, one comes across such statements as "...the people of Sot are just Gusii who learned the Kipsigis language". (Mwanzi 1977a: 49).

The diversity of the Kipsigis origin is therefore indisputable. Toweett, (1977). asserts that

".... The Kipsigis as a 'tribe' now is an admixture of Bantu and non-Bantu blood. The designation Kipsigis includes persons of foreign extraction such as

the Tiriki, Nandi, Keyo, Maasai Okiek, Tugen and the Gusii. If the Kipsigis divided themselves into those 'tribal' units, there would be no one else to be called a Kipsigis" (Cited in Mwanzi, 1977a: 51).

These three otherwise distinct and separate sub-nationalities gradually and eventually became unified through integration and amalgamation of their cultures and the spread and use of one identifying word; the Kipsigis. This process of acculturation and social integration has been given sufficient coverage by Mwanzi and suffice to say that by 1900, though differences existed, the peoples of Belgut, Bureti and Sot could answer to one name, the Kipsigis. It is this community that is the focus of this study. And as it will be shown later, the diversity in origin was well reflected in their agricultural systems.

2.2. Socio-Political Organisation

The basic unit of production and consumption of the Kipsigis was a homestead. With a population of about 80,000 people in 1937 (Peristiany, 1939:xx) the Kipsigis were considered to be the more numerous of the Kalenjin groups, with a density of about 80 to 100 people per square mile. No evidence has been adduced to show that the situation was contrary before colonial rule, except of course, for the variation in population figures. Their homesteads were, therefore, spread all over their country and several hundred metres from one another. A homestead here comprised a husband, his wife or wives and unmarried children. A few adjacent homesteads formed a *temet* (pl. *temenik*) which, Evans-Pritchards calls a hamlet (1937:xx). Then several such *temenik* or hamlets comprised a *Kokwet*, (village) which formed the basic unit of administration and political organisation. It could stretch over a couple of kilometres. Anything from fifteen to sixty huts were found in a *kokwet* and no unoccupied stretch of country

separated one village or *kokwet* from another and gave them spatial distinction. A tree, stream, field or pile of stones marked the boundaries between villages (Korir, W., O.I. 1997), Torongei, W., O.I. 1997). Membership of each *kokwet* was well known to everyone. Orchardson (1971:2) refers to a *Kokwet* as a group of people who lived in several adjoining localities or *korosiek*.

Three or more *kokwetinwek* or villages were grouped together as a unit, stretching from four to ten kilometres or more. The Kipsigis had no specific term and Peristiany called it a "group or shire". These groups or shires were then grouped together to form *emotinwek* or provinces of which there were four in the entire Kipsigis land: Belgut, Waldai, Bureti and Sot (Evans-Pritchard, 1939:xxi). However, other scholars on the Kipsigis history hardly elevate Waldai to the level of a 'province'. Only three provinces are commonly identified among the Kipsigis as Waldai is subsumed under Belgut (Orchardson, 1971; Mwanzi, 1977a, and Toweett, 1977).

Politically, the Kipsigis lacked any central authority. A man was the head of his homestead as much as the wife was in charge of her household. But there existed an intricate relationship to give each autonomy without infringing on the other, for example, a woman decided what to cook, and what to grow in her *shamba*, though this was naturally limited to *wimbi*. But a man was in charge of the entire homestead and harmonised activities within it. Equally as the head of the homestead, a man was subject to societal norms and rules (Arap Chumo, C., O.I. 1997; Togom, P., O.I. 1997).

In each hamlet there were elders who were well-versed in law and who settled disputes between members of different homesteads. These were referred to as *kiruogik*: (judges or counsellors). They were elderly men who had shown intelligence above average in the *kokwet*, capacity to command respect and a comprehensive knowledge of

the law through intimate experience. If the arbitration was not recognised or they could not settle them, or if the dispute was between members of different hamlets, then they came before the *poyot ab kokwet*, the headman of the village to whom the *kiruogik* of the hamlets acted as advisers. The *kokwet* acted as the basic unit of administration. Usually *poyot ab kokwet* was not elected, but earned the position for being the assistant of the last leader who had died or retired. But first he had to distinguish himself as a capable leader in order to gain favour as an assistant to the present leader. He did this by trying small cases, with the help of elders, acting as a mediator rather than a judge, between members of his village. He had no other functions than those of a *kiruogindet* judge (DC/KER//1,1912, p.6).

The *kokwet* was also a defensive unit. The warriors of a village were under a *kiptayat ab murenek*- a war leader - and their duties were to protect the village against attack and to drive its cattle to the grazing grounds and salt licks. But in its juridical and military functions, *kokwet* organisation forms part of a wider system of the shire. If a case was not settled by the *kokwet* authority, or if there was a case between men of different *kokwetinwek*, and in all cases of divorce, homicide and witchcraft, decisions were given by the *kiruogindet neo*-the great judge of the shire who was assisted by a council of elders to which he was only its mouthpiece. The council's decision prevailed and the *kiruogindet* could give no contrary order to their ruling in any case (Peristiany, 1939, Orchardson, 1971).

The shire also had its war leader, the *kiptayat neo nebo murenek*, who was responsible to the judge of the shire-*kiruogindet neo*. The village leaders were under his control and orders. Equally there was a ceremonial leader for the shire, *poyot ab tumda*, who was independent of the judge and his functions were of a purely ritual

character. He officiated marriages, initiations, harvest festivals and other ceremonies and performed rituals for cleansing persons who had incestuous relations with relatives and such offences. His major role in all ceremonies was offering of prayers to god and he could be regarded as the priest of the shire. The shire, therefore, was an economic unit (*Ibid*). Above the shire was the province which was the largest organised unit in Kipsigisland. It was also the largest organised military unit for each province went to war by itself. It was also the largest ceremonial unit. Each province held its handing over ceremonies and its harvest ceremonies separately. The commonly known provinces were Belgut, Bureti and Sot, though Evans-Pritchard (1939) and Peristiany (1939) include Waldai as a province.

However, a *Kipsigident*, a Kipsigis man would be a member of more than two provinces by virtue of his residence if he had several wives whose home were in various provinces. Hence he would also belong to two or more *kokwetinwek*. Also a man with a considerable number of cattle could distribute them amongst his friends and relatives across provinces, hence creating innumerable links between members of the different *kokwetinwek*, shires and provinces of the Kipsigis community.

An analysis of the socio-political organisation of the Kipsigis will be incomplete without a mention of the institution of the *laibon*. These were prophets, who were in origin exiled Maasai. Their chief role was to foretell the fortune of raids in return for which they received part of the booty. They used to occupy a position between that of man and God. They used to forewarn the people about any impending phenomenal catastrophes, such as the coming of drought, the visitation of an epidemic against cattle or humans, the losing of battles and raids, the productiveness of the country and livestock, and so on (Toweett, 1979:2). Because some or more of what they had

predicted came to be true, the people gave them an enviable honour and fear. They took the position in Kipsigis society once occupied by the Kipsigis prophets, the *Orgoi*.

The Kipsigis warriors in the battles of Mau and Mogori had been refused to organise such battles by the then senior Kipsigis *laibon*. The Kipsigis believed that the two battles were lost because the advice of the *laibon* was disobeyed. Added to this, the Kipsigis report many other spells cast upon the community because of not listening to the *laibon's* counsel. The Kipsigis came to believe that it was a very grave thing to disobey any of the *laibon*. Punishments which were supposed to be invoked by the offended *laibon* included all kinds of misfortunes, such as drought, floods, locust depredations and failure in warfare. During harvests all households had to contribute some *wimbi* for the *laibon*. The *wimbi* was kept in every *kokwet* by his representative, and could either be forwarded to the *laibon* on demand, or the *laibon* could visit the *kokwet* in which case the *wimbi* was used in brewing beer for him and his party. The *laibon* used to drink extensively. Even when they got drunk and misbehaved to a point of beating individuals, no *kipsigindet* dared even to complain (Toweett, 1979:43).

The *laibons* used their messengers, *maotik* to pass information to the people. They were greatly feared by the people and usually referred to as *bik ab emet*- that is the owners of the country -or *katin rektoot* -the Lower Home. They were hardly called by their names and their powers were unquestionable. They had large families due to polygamy and mostly constituted amongst the richest peoples among the Kipsigis (*Ibid*).

Cutting across both the territories and regimental systems was the age-set system. Every *kipsigindet* was initiated into an age-set (*ipinda*). Boys were initiated from 14 to 18 years of age by 1900. Before this, some informants asserted that the

initiation age used to be between 20 to 30 years (Maina, W., O.I., Talam, I.O., 1977), and the initiation ceremonies were held every seven years. During the period of seclusion for about nine months, the initiates lived in a hut in the bush. There were three age-grades; boyhood, warriorhood and elderhood, and the initiated boys entered at the same time into the age-grade of warriorhood. There were seven *ipinwek*-age sets, and as the names are repeated they form an age-cycle of *Maina*, *Chuma*, *Sawe*, *Kipkoymet*, *Kablelach*, *Kimnyige*, *Nyonge*, and then back to *Maina*. Each age-set lasted from fifteen to twenty years, though the period was certain and probably varied- the rule being that the age-set in the warriors grade retained that status until the first batch of the sons of the previous age-set but one had been initiated. Thus when the first sons of the *Chuma* age-set had been initiated into the *kipkoymet* the *Sawe* became elders (Evans-Pritchard, 1939:xix-xxxiv).

2.3 The Kipsigis and their Neighbours

It is not prudent here to explore exhaustively the relations between the Kipsigis and their neighbours as this subject has been covered elsewhere (see Mwanzi, 1977a: Chapter 6). Our attempt here is to show the diffusion of ideas, goods, and other aspects of co-operation or conflict as they related to the Kipsigis agricultural economy. The Kipsigis did borrow a lot of ideas and goods from their neighbours as much as they also gave out. However, this analysis examines the Kipsigis as recipients rather than as donors since they are the focus of the study.

2.3.1 The Kipsigis and the Nandi

The Kipsigis and Nandi have a shared common history and are more often considered to have been one people with a common ancestry. With such a shared origin, there is much similarity in customs, genealogy, traditions, economy and language. But, of course, some few differences are inherent since, just the Kipsigis, the Nandi did not have a unity of origin, some claim descent from the Kipsigis, Maasai, Tugen, Elgon and Keiyo (Hollis, 1909, Matson, 1974). Most clans that claim to have come from the Kipsigis country have their kinsmen there who bear the same names, such as the Kapasiso, Chemuri, Kipaa and the Fungo clans. In fact the Nandi derive from the communities as the Kipsigis, Gusii, Sirikwa, Okiek, Maasai and other Kalenjin communities. The Maasai descendants provided the *Orgoiyot* as was the case among the Kipsigis.

The Nandi, like the Kipsigis, are Highland Nilotes who combined tilling of land with cattle husbandry. Relationships between these two neighbouring communities was mainly peaceful and reciprocal. They considered themselves brother communities and treated each other as though they were one community. In fact one could move from one country to settle in the other without difficulty. Such a peaceful and harmonious co-existence was partly due to the historical bonds by which some members in both communities derived from the same source or had earlier historical contact. Mwanzi (1977a: 78) also suggests that the harmony was partly a result of a peace treaty signed between them. This incident is believed to have taken place around Lumbwa, present day Kipkelion in the 19th century. Such an alliance seems to have been sparked by the near presence of the Gusii or Maasai. Be it as it may, all informants referred to the Nandi as their half-brothers (Cheramgoi, Z, O.I., 1997, Tubulu Koske, O.I., 1997 and

Chumo Ngono, O.I. 1997). No fighting ever took place between the two communities. And if a person from either community killed another from the other, he was forced to pay indemnity as per custom of murdering a fellow tribesman. It is therefore not surprising that the two communities allied to fight the Gusii during the battle of Mogori. The two communities, therefore, had a standing agreement for defence. Trade and exchange between these two communities took place smoothly without hindrance (Kiprop Kirui, O.I., 1977 and Philip Chebose, O.I, 1997).

2.3.2 The Kipsigis and the Maasai

The Maasai were divided into two categories - the cattle keepers (*Il-Maasai*), and the agricultural (*Iloikop* or *Wakawavi*). Also the word *Il-Lumbwa* was used by the Il-Maasai to refer to their neighbours who tilled the land as farmers. This word, *Lumbwa*, however, gained much application on the Kipsigis, especially in the colonial period. It thus attests to the origin of the word *Lumbwa* as applied to the Kipsigis.

The supposed coming of the Maasai to East Africa is portrayed as a momentous event. Both Ehret (1971) and Sutton (1973) among others, give the impression that many societies are said to have been formed in reaction to Maasai ferocity. Such developments in the interior as military organisation among the Kipsigis, according to their view, was a result of the Maasai intrusion into the area under investigation. Pastoralism is also one of those things associates with Maasai ferocity (Jacobs, 1965). The Maasai have developed a pastoral economy which has deep historical and cultural roots. Some of the Purko (pastoral) Maasai however bordered the land occupied by the Kipsigis and the latter got some of their cattle from them, mostly through raids and trade.

Of more importance to the making of the Kipsigis society were probably the wars between various sections of the Maasai. One such notable war was one between the Purko Maasai and the *Wakwavi* (agriculturalists) called Segalai which occurred in about 1862 between Nakuru and the Mau escarpment. The Segalai were seriously defeated and the survivors fled to the Nandi and Kipsigis countries. According to Mwanzi, (1977a:8) this explains why most of those among the Nandi and Kipsigis claim Maasai descent, including the clan of the *Orgoiyot*, who trace their ancestry to Sigilai. The *Orgoiyot* was intimately attached to crop production in the Nandi and Kipsigis countries (*Ibid*). The Maasai presence reinforced the unity and alliance between Nandi and Kipsigis against their hostile neighbours, including the Maasai.

One of the contributions of the Sigilai community to the Kipsigis and Nandi societies lay in the office of the *laibon*. Though these were later developments, the *laibon* served as a unifying factor in these societies and brought in a number of changes. Of course not every one from the Sigilai group became a *laibon*. Most of them came in as destitutes after the ravages of war or natural disasters. Some quickly took to the art of iron-working in order to earn their livelihood. This art was learnt from people of Gusii descent, such men as Kibiridi, Moito, Nyagide, Ngole, Meguni and Motito (Mwanzi, 1977a:84).

Overall, relations between the pastoral Maasai and the Kipsigis seem to have involved not so much ethnic incorporation as cultural exchanges. Linguistic similarities are noted between the two communities which had come about not because of a shared common origin, but through acculturation (Toweett, 1979:19). Besides, both communities are nomadic and have a number of common pastoral features, though the Kipsigis were not as mobile as the Maasai. When circumstances and geographical

conditions favoured them, the Kipsigis could stay at a place for a good number of years. To distinguish the life of the Kipsigis from that of the Maasai one could say the former were semi- nomadic pastoralists, whereas the latter were nomadic pastoralists. The Kipsigis were fewer in numbers and they had fewer herds of cattle than the Maasai. This meant that they could not overstock an area within a few years, but with the Maasai it was the exact opposite (Toweett, 1979:8).

There were frequent intermarriages between the Kipsigis and the Purko Maasai of Narok. The practice of mixing their milk with something else is said to have come to the Kipsigis from these Maasai. The Maasai mixed their milk with animal blood while the Kipsigis mixed theirs with potash ash and charcoal of specific trees. And when raiding became institutionalised among the Kipsigis, the two groups clashed quite often over cattle. Such raids occurred along their common border. Thus, the Purko Maasai provided together with the Gusii, most of the sources of cattle for those Kipsigis who did not have them or wanted more (Stanley Rutoh, Jason Serem, John Too, O.I., 1997). One such remembered class between the Kipsigis and Maasai over cattle was the battle of Mau.

The Maasai of Mau, after realising that they were no match for the well-prepared Kipsigis, withdrew back into their country. After pursuing them for days, the Kipsigis grain was exhausted and they resorted to eating their shields made of hide and hence the battle is also called the "battle of shields" (Toweett, 1979:23).

During periods of calm and peace owing to the absence of raids, trade and exchange, mostly in livestock, took place between the two communities (arap Barta, S., Ngena, P., Belikon, E., and Miruka, W., O.I., 1977). Most informants singled out the donkey as one animal obtained from the Maasai through trade (arap Maina, W., Lebos,

K., and Ngeno, M., I.O., 1997). Medicines could also be available from the Maasai (Bet F. and Ngeno M., O.I. 1970). The presence of cowrie shells as a medium of exchange among the Kipsigis in fact came through the trade with the Maasai in livestock and ivory (Mabwai, J., O.I., 1997). Beads, arrows, spears, and bows formed some items of trade between the two communities (Langat, P., O.I., 1997). In exchange for these items the Kipsigis gave *wimbi*, spears and arrows to the Maasai (S.T. Chepkwony, and Kirui, K. O.I., 1997). There were a few people specialising in trade because they could speak the language of neighbouring people and were friendly. Even the blacksmiths specialised in making agricultural tools, spears, bracelets and earrings, which they exchanged, for livestock (Alfred Sillate and Stephen Kirui, O.I., 1977). Mostly, these blacksmiths and traders constituted amongst the wealthiest individuals of the Kipsigis community.

2.3.3 The Kipsigis and the Gusii

The Gusii factor in the making of the Kipsigis society is well-documented (Peristiany, 1939; Mwanzi, 1977a; and Toweett, 1979). After the battle of Chemoiben the Gusii split into two groups - one group was assimilated into the Kipsigis community around Sotik and another group proceeded into the Trans-mara Triangle before entering the Gusii highlands. The Sotik group was made up of several Kisii clans, namely Maḃasik, Mataborik, Bukuserek, Baswetek, Narachek, Kimeitek and Kamagoi (Toweett, 1979:19). And for a long time there was continuing cultural exchange between the two communities. This involved intermarriage, trade and social changes resulting from contact. Though the Kipsigis are Highland Nilotes and the Gusii are Bantu, the two communities share a number of common words in their languages,

which are nearly similar. For example, March, May and September are referred to as *Kiptamo*, *Mamut*, and *Bureti* by the Kipsigis, while the Gusii call them *Egetamo*, *Amaumutia*, and *Tureti ya Kebaki* respectively (Peristiany, 1939; Omwoyo, 1992). A common vegetable, spider flower (*Gynandropisis gynandra*) is called *sayget* or *isaket* and *chinsaga* by the Kipsigis and the Gusii respectively. These linguistic similarities do not point to a common origin but rather reinforce the fact that the Kipsigis have had a long tradition of interaction with their neighbouring Gusii (Toweett, 1979:19-20).

The Kipsigis country appears to have experience periods of epidemics, drought and famine in the second half of the 19th century. In such situations the Kipsigis people went to the Gusii for food. Such food was either purchased in exchange with livestock or other trade items, such as bows and arrows. Also the Kipsigis sold their children to the Gusii in exchange for *wimbi*. Occasionally the Gusii did the same but it seems most probable that the practice was carried out more by the former than the latter (Mwanzi 1977a:85). In *rupet ap Kosobek* - the famine of Kisii, many Kipsigis sold their children to the Gusii people. It was called the famine of Kisii not because the Gusii themselves had famine, but because the Kipsigis sold many of their children to the Gusii people in exchange for *wimbi* and probably sheep and goats. One hundred pounds of husked *wimbi* was exchanged for a child, aged between eight and ten years old. Such sold children did not however become an important factor in the harmonisation of relations between the two communities as contacts after the exchange were completely severed. It has also been argued that during peaceful days the Gusii people, probably out of their own accord, migrated and lived among the Kipsigis after which they were naturalised and assimilated (Toweett, 1979:20).

Items such as pots, arrows, spears, pangas and swords were also acquired from the Gusii in exchange for beads and other ornaments. Much of this barter trade took place in peace time for these two communities appear to have been perennial enemies mostly locked in combat over cattle. This was more pronounced in the second half of the 19th century. Numerous battles, raids and counter raids took place between sections of the Gusii and those of the Kipsigis and such hostile relations were common and widespread among the two communities in the pre-colonial period.

Large-scale battles between the Kipsigis and the Gusii were also evident and those clearly remembered include the battles of Chemoiben, Ngoina, Tiriit ap Moita, Kibongwa, Chelemei, Kapsabanut, Mabasi and more severe was the battle of Mogori fought about 1890 (Mwanzi, 1977a: 85; and Toweett, 1979:2). The latter battle was important because it was large-scale in its operation and it was fought between two massive forces - the Kipsigis and the Nandi on one side and the Gusii, Kuria and the Luo on the other. After a successful raid among the Gusii and the Luo, the Kipsigis refused to retreat at night arguing that "it was cowardly to run away home with cattle at night. We are not going to flee away with other people's cattle at night when they are not present to witness the strength on how we are taking their cattle away as men and not like thieves" (Toweett, 1979:24). So they stayed at Mogori. and at night an alliance of the Gusii, Luo and the Kuria arrived and the battle was fought all night. By morning the Kipsigis were overwhelmed, falling like hewed trees. Consequently from that the Kipsigis attest that there had never occurred another massacre like that of the Mogori - so disastrous that the waters of the River Charachani was turned red with the Kipsigis blood (Ochieng' 1974, and Toweett, 1979:24). Their male population was drastically decreased and as a result the elders were compelled to allow young boys to be initiated

and marry much early. Mwanzi (1977a: 85-8) indicates that rules governing marriage were relaxed and communal mating customs were reorganised. His assertion that boys were allowed to have sexual intercourse with their sisters and mothers for the purposes of procreation demands a more plausible explanation as this flouted the more serious African custom of incest. Nevertheless the war had the effect of loosening moral sanctions to ensure the survival of the community. As most leaders were killed in this war, there resulted a leadership crisis. The vacuum left was easily filled by the *orgoiyot* from Nandi (*Ibid*).

2.3.4 The Kipsigis and the Luo

In spite of their common Nilotic origin the Kipsigis traditions are silent on any form of interaction with the Luo, except the numerous raids and counter-raids over animals in the 19th century. Mwanzi (1977a:86) asserts that there is hardly any evidence of cultural interaction and offers the following as the probable reason. The Kipsigis tended to look down upon the uncircumcised Luo whom they called *lemek*, a derogatory word with a bad connotation among the Kipsigis. On the other hand the Luo also looked down upon the Kipsigis and attributed evil spirits to the Kalenjin in general. As a result of this unfavourable human environment and the attendant negative social attitudes, there seemed to have existed negligible favourable relations with the Luo except for a few encounters in raids over cattle.

But Toweett (1979:20) offers an alternative explanation by asserting that the Luo were friendly to the Kipsigis and vice-versa. But he hastens to add that it is not that the Kipsigis chose to be in good terms with them. The Luo were not as bellicose as the Maasai. In addition they were far removed, in a country which proved shelterless

for the Kipsigis who had been accustomed to living in forests on the highland regions. It is said that whenever the Kipsigis and the Luo met in battlefields, the Luo proved better fighters during day time and absolutely hopeless at night. Like Mwanzi, Toweett, also, agrees that the Kipsigis did not have much in common with the Luo for their common good. The Kipsigis raided the Luo for cattle, and though no major battles are remembered, one battle confirms these raids. During the battle of Mogori, the Luo had lost a lot of their animals to the Kipsigis. The Luo had to ally with the Gusii and Kuria because of this common inconveniences; the raiding menace of the Kipsigis.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter we have attempted to show the origin of the Kipsigis, where they came from, where they are settled and who their neighbours are and how they have interacted with them. From this background it has emerged that though the Kipsigis did actually migrate into their present homeland of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet districts - they had encountered other communities with whom they actually interacted to change their composition. Consequently through the process of interaction, acculturation and assimilation the Kipsigis population came to comprise peoples of Sirikwa, Gusii, Luo, Maasai and even of Kuria descent. This has led some authors to conclude that the Kipsigis, as we know them by the end of the 19th century, did not come from anywhere - they evolved in their present homeland from various ethnic interactions and assimilation. Nevertheless, some authors argue that the dominant group which assimilated sections of these other ethnic groups did indeed come from elsewhere and those who regard themselves as 'pure' or 'original' Kipsigis claim to have come from the

north in a land they refer to as *Tto*. Be it as it may, both schools of thought help in elucidating the origin and composition of the Kipsigis people.

In their present homeland, the Kipsigis have lived in symbiotic relations with their neighbouring communities though there were frequent frictions. In times of peace, the Kipsigis engaged in thriving trade with the Gusii, Luo, Maasai and their kinsmen, the Nandi. However, due to their love for and devotion to cattle, they frequently raided all their neighbouring communities for cattle, except the Nandi. This led to frequent conflicts and wars with their neighbours. Raids and counter-raids became a common feature of relations between the Kipsigis and their neighbours on the eve of colonial rule.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE KIPSIGIS ECONOMY ON THE EVE OF COLONIAL RULE

3.1 Land Tenure:

All members of pastoral communities in Africa or Kenya never owned land as private property. The Kipsigis are no exception as there was no property in land and any natural products upon it. Traditionally the Kipsigis were pastoralists though they also relied on crop production to a great extent. Nevertheless they did not have much attachment to land as a resource to be possessed privately. The Kipsigis idea of property was that upon which one had done some work, which he had acquired by his own effort, such as the tree he felled for firewood or honey boxes, the house he built, the grain he planted, the cattle he raided or bought with his property (Orchardson, 1971:108, Peristiany, 1939:127). Not only was land common property but also all that grew naturally upon it or was found beneath it, such as stone and salt lick. Personal property was acquired in a thing as soon as work was done on it, but that which occurs naturally was given by God to all equally, the earth, the grass, the trees, the salt lick, the wild animals and so on. These only become a man's property when he had done work upon them (Orchardson, nd: 3)

Therefore land never became the property of an individual: it was the property of the community. But so long as a man kept a piece of land in cultivation he had the right to use it. But as soon as he left it to go back to bush or grass, it became a public property again. When reverting to a previously cultivated land each family had to take up their former portion of land. Any vacated land was open to anyone to cultivate, for example, a newly married couple or new arrival. The custom was that

the person or family who had first cleared an area had, on re-cultivation of that area, to re-cultivate their former plot, unless he decided to do otherwise (Toweett, 1979:54).

As the Kipsigis did not own land individually there were no elaborate rules, laws or customs of inheritance regarding land, except for crops. The old Kipsigis system laid the responsibility for the distribution of property of a deceased on the eldest son of the first wife. He acted in the capacity of an executor or administrator of his father's estate and was guided and equally advised by two elderly relatives of the deceased. It is erroneous to think of the eldest son inheriting everything. He did, in fact, only inherit the right to distribute his father's property equitably amongst the younger brothers from different wives of the deceased (Mwanzi, 1977a:156).

When a man died, his wives equitably inherited the usufructory rights of his property and then the property was shared by sons of each wife equally (Arap Cherutich, O.I., 1997). But even the inherited property does not really become the personal property of the sons, but the entailed property of all his descendants. The sons had the right only to use the inherited property, but they could not dispose of it out of the family, except as marriage gifts. It is therefore evident that inheritance rules pertained to the chief form of property- cattle, sheep and goats, for there was no property in land.

One of the important results of this type of communal land tenure system was that everyone had the means of subsistence. There were no landless people nor were there any landlords. Disparity between the rich and the poor was little. Everyone had land to cultivate, land to graze, land to build a house upon, and the materials for building,

fencing and making most of the essentials of their life (Richard Koskei, Ambrose Koech, Paul Rono, Simon Cherogin, O.I., 1997).

Some of the exceptions in which land was privately owned included the space outside one's hut - the *kok* - which was deemed private. This included the place where cows are milked. Then, the small vegetable garden surrounding a hut - *kabungut* was individually owned and cultivated by the mother and her daughters. Far away from the *kabungut* was the *imbaret a'mossop* - field of the house - owned and cultivated by each of a man's wives to grow her crops, mainly *wimbi*, to sustain her household food requirements. And lastly was the *imbaret ab soi* or *kapande* which was owned and controlled by the man in contradistinction to the *imbaret a'mossop* controlled by the wives. *Imbaret ab soi* was sown with *wimbi* initially but after the adoption of maize, the name changed to *kapande* (Peristiany, 1939:130; Arap Tobon, Kiptul Tanui, O.I., 1997)

Besides these privately owned parcels of land were the *roret* - an area of temporary cultivation which, after stoppage of cultivation, reverted back to communal use. Otherwise the rest of the land was considered communally owned. These included, *tirita* - a treeless communal grazing land, *tulonok* - hills considered as communal grazing land, and later reserved for thatching grass; *ainet* - river, a place to which all stock must be given access for watering, *ngeny* - a salt lick, reserved for communal use, *kapkoros* - a sacrificial place, sacred to the community and could not be used by any individual, and *orop too* - public ways of access, wide enough to be used for cattle (DC/KER/4/1, Samuel Koske, arap Cheptuech, arap Malei, O.I., 1997).

All those people with huts and fields in one area were members of one economic unit called *kokwet*. Boundaries between *kokwetinwek* (plural for *kokwet*) were marked by a tree, a river, or a field mark. Individual members of a *kokwet* had to fence their cultivated land to ward off cattle and goats. The most common fence - *tuita* - was erected around areas of temporary cultivation. Planting a hedge was often done around a *karaita* and *roret*. An important point in any demarcation of land or disputes of any sort were settled by the *kokwet* elders. A *kokwet* was a geographical area so that the elders were not necessarily of the same blood and clan and their decision, based on a majority will, was therefore less likely to be biased in the settlement of family feuds (DC/KER/4/1, Paul Ngena, Elijah Belion, O.I., 1970).

There was no such thing as sale of land. Crops on the land could be sold or exchanged for cows, goats or articles of trade according to the agreed value, but as soon as the buyer had harvested the crops the land either reverted to the original owner as *roret* or to bush when it again became common property to the community (Richard Koskei, Kiprop Kirui, O.I., 1997). A dwelling house in a *karaita* could be sold and the buyer automatically took over the *roret* of the settler if the hut was left on the land, but if the buyer removed the hut then the *roret* remained for cultivation by the seller (DC/KER/4/1, William Torongei, Stephen Kirui and others, O.I., 1997). Any transaction involving land had to take place in the presence of a *kokwet* elder to provide witness and blessing of the transfer of property.

What possibly amounted to tenancy and/or loaning of land among the Kipsigis existed. Custom provided for the giving of a *roret* on loan to a person living nearby if the owner lived some distance from that *roret*. The owner of the *roret* could request its return at any time after harvesting the crops. The person who was given a *roret* on

loan could not refuse to return it to the owner. The cultivation of the *roret* on loan was always subject to the consent of the owner (DC/KER/4/1, Philip Chebose, Wycliff Miruka, O.I., 1997). But it should be noted that since no landless people existed, the tenant was not therefore in a desperate situation, but the system was to the convenience of both the owner and the tenant. Rather than clear a new piece of land the tenant accepted the transaction because the plot was near his homestead. For the owner, this was a cheap way of preventing land reverting to bush. Mostly those accepted for tenancy were men who had taken up new wives or more people to feed. After building them huts far away in a neighbouring *kokwet*, the couple or family could take up tenancy before settling down to clear their own piece of plot (Ambrose Koech, Paul Rono, Wesley Korir, O.I., 1997).

3.2 Hunting And Gathering

The hunting and gathering system of appropriation of subsistence from nature is, according to Abdul Sherriff (1985:4), universal and was practised as late as the nineteenth century in Kenya. The practice is still in place even today though on a much-reduced scale. Under this system, little energy and time is invested in production of food. The Kipsigis supplemented their animal husbandry and cultivation by hunting and gathering. Among the foods gathered usually by women, was an assorted number of fruits and roots, notably- *mogoiwet* (eaten by children), wild berries, *tigainmanik*, *legetetiet* (*leketetik*), *simbwet nukuuk* and *sirondet* (Joice Chepkwony, Simon Cherogin, Philip Togom, O.I., 1997). Toweett, (1979:59), observes that the Kipsigis never planted any fruit trees because of their shifting from place to place. It is therefore evident that all fruits eaten by the Kipsigis were wild

ones. Honey was also harvested from the forests, though at times the Kipsigis had personal honey barrels perched on trees far in the forest. This was more pronounced in the Sotik area where honey harvesting was a major economic activity than in the other two provinces of Belgut and Bureti (Orchardson, 1971:96, arap Barta, Zakayo Cheramgoi, Josiah Talam, O.I.,1997;).

Big game hunting was a major part of Kipsigis life, especially for the warriors; in fact it was regarded as a sport. The Kipsigis had elaborate knowledge and skill of hunting and trapping animals. Small duikers could be shot with bows and arrows, and small rodents destroying the grain trapped with a snare, but big game hunting was a national Kipsigis sport (Peristiany , 1939:172). The purpose of these hunts was not only to kill dangerous animals, but the blooding of the spears by the young warriors and as a sign of bravery and for social distinction as a good hunter (Ibid; Benjamin Soi, Joseph Rotich, Joseph Chepkwony, O.I., 1997).

The big game hunted by the Kipsigis included buffalo, elephant, leopard and lion, some for meat, others for their skin and others for sport. The buffalo's trail was followed all day until the animal was exhausted. It was then driven towards some trees full of Kipsigis bowmen, who shot at the animal as it passed beneath them. The elephant was either trapped in large cavities made in the ground, sometimes with a spike at the end or shot at with arrows and spears. Leopards were surrounded and speared and shot with the arrows (Peristiany, 1939:172; Toweett, 1979; Samson Malei, Jason Serem, O.I., 1997). Some of the big game was hunted for meat, some for sport, but others like the leopard for its skin and elephants for meat, skin and its tusks, which could be sold to traders. But much of the hunting was for sport (arap Cheptuech, arap Cherutich, S.T, Chepkwony, O.I., 1997).

3.3 Crop Production

In the period preceding colonial rule, crop production among the Kipsigis had not acquired much prominence and importance in relation to pastoralism, but nevertheless, was an important aspect of the Kipsigis economy, especially in food production. The major crop produced by the Kipsigis was eleusine grain – *wimbi*. The origin of this crop is of mere speculation. In one of their traditions it is said that when there was famine in the land and their cattle were fast dying out, some women discovered eleusine grain growing in elephant dung. They tasted it, found it was sweet, and sowed the remaining grain. Henceforth the cultivation of eleusine grain commenced (Peristiany, 1939: 127). Animals are, of course, naturally agents of seed dispersal and this might have been the case though we are unable to tell when it exactly occurred. Besides, in their settlement in Kericho area, the Kipsigis had to displace the Gusii from Kabianga and the rest of Bureti (Ochieng 1974). The Gusii are known for their extensive cultivation of the crop. It is therefore highly probable that unless the Kipsigis acquired the crop before their migration to Kericho area, they may have acquired it from their interactions with the earlier settlers of the area -the Gusii. In any case much of the Sotik and part of the Bureti and Belgut population comprised people of Gusii origin whose cultivation of the crop can not be put to doubt (Peristiany, 1939:127; Orchardson, nd, 4).

Mwanzi, (1977a:155), has shown that even such agricultural activities were not uniform throughout the Kipsigisland. He contends that originally, the agricultural section of the Kipsigis used wooden tools and ribs of elephants for cultivation of the soil. Later on a certain clan, which Mwanzi identifies as the Kamoku clan, moved from Gusiiland with their iron technology, hence introducing iron work and

implements to the Kipsigis. The Gusii were renowned for their expertise in iron work, an art which they had acquired from the Kano plains and beyond during the course of their migration to their present homeland (Ochieng', 1974a).

Probably learning the art from the Gusii the Kipsigis smelted iron from the rich volcanic red soils which they call *maraba* or *marabaek* (Francis Bett, O.I, 1997). They used a hammer in shaping tools and implements. The entire process of iron smelting among the Kipsigis is known as *kitany*. Such products as *mogombet* (hoe), *morut* (panga), cattle bells, armlets, axes *aiywet* (axes) and spears were made. The ironworkers among the Kipsigis were a specialised group who traded their products with animals and agricultural produce. One hoe fetched a heifer and one goat was exchanged for a spear. Though initially this group of iron smiths was poor, more trade earned them wealth and by the eve of colonialism, they comprised most of the wealthiest individuals among the Kipsigis (Mwanzi, 1977a:156).

Mwanzi posits that not all those who call themselves Kipsigis today took to tilling of the land at the same time. He shows that those who settled in parts of Belgut, Lumbwa and parts of Bureti were already agriculturalists. Others especially those who lived along Mau and Molo forests, existed mainly through gathering and hunting of animals in the adjacent areas. Even those who cultivated crops for livelihood supplemented such with gathering wild fruits and roots and hunting wild animals in the adjacent forests.

There is a tradition in Kipsigis which says that when people were living in the forest near Koiywa they did not own cattle and did not grow crops. It was after they had got out of the forest, states the tradition, that they began to acquire both cattle and cultivate crops. This does not, however, apply to all the Kipsigis, but it

symbolises the stabilisation of the Kipsigis agriculture which seems to have taken place at about the beginning of the 19th century when more and more people took to the use of land, partly due to the restrictions imposed by human environment (*Ibid*).

The main crop grown was eleusine or millet - *wimbi*. Mwanzi shows that at A later period, sorghum was brought from the Kuria country to supplement the *wimbi* (Mwanzi 1977a:161). Millet flour or sorghum flour or a mixture of both was boiled to produce *kimiet*, a local meal. The cultivation of *wimbi* ensured the provision in the household with sufficient quantity of solid food, for beer brewing during ceremonial occasions and some stored for trading purposes. *Wimbi* could also be exchanged with livestock, a major item of wealth. Together with *wimbi*, the Kipsigis grew an assorted kind of vegetable for household consumption and sale to acquire some cash.

Three types of cultivation took place- first was the *kapingkui* (*kabungut*) -which was a small vegetable garden surrounding and close to the homestead and cultivated exclusively by the mothers and their daughters. Men did not have anything to do with the *Kapingkui* - as this was the sole prerogative for women who decided on what to grow and how to use it. Often on such gardens vegetable was grown, such as *isakek* or *ysayge k*-(Spider flower) *kelichek*, *interemek*, and *borotchek*, also the calabash from which vessels to hold liquids are made. The vegetable of the *kapingkui* was boiled with blood or meat, for to eat it alone was a sign of extreme poverty during a famine (J. Chepkurui Chekwony, O.I., 1997). Peristiany, (1939:129) notes that the homesteads which had the largest *kapingkui* were those of old widows as the vegetable required very little digging and attention so that one person could look after them herself, without having to give beer to the rest of the community to come to dig and harvest as in the case of *wimbi*. In addition to those vegetables produced,

however, there was other wild vegetable which would be gathered from the nearby bushes or forests; such included *isik*, *inyonyoek*, *syek*, *kelicheck*, the bitter silk, *mendeiwet* (a wild rhubarb), *kapsereraiwek* (a dock) and *raparapchet*. The *pobat* (mushroom) and a small-like fungi- *pungunerek*-which came up in large patches during and after heavy rains were a great delicacy (Orchardson, 1971:96, Toweett, 1979:56, Kiptul Tanui, O.I., 1997).

The second type of cultivation was that which was referred to as *imbaret a'mossop* (lit field of the house). As the words suggest every separate household had a field cultivated and attached to it. This would equally suggest that each of a man's wives had to have her own *imbaret a'mossop* attached to her house. On this entirely hand-dug field *wimbi* and sorghum were cultivated. The work in this field was the sole preoccupation of a wife, her children and any resident relatives. The husband could also assist in such tasks as sowing or erecting a fence. In case of need for colossal labour input, beer could be provided for the people of the *kokwet* to come and assist in the digging, weeding and harvesting. It was common for members of a *kokwet* to be assisted by the entire *kokwet*, and though beer was provided, this was not considered as a form of payment, but a reward for work done in the field. Provisions were given for both the rich and poor to be assisted. The main work of the *kiptayat ab kokwet*, the economic leader of the village, was to co-ordinate such co-operative ventures. When a man wished to sow, weed his field or harvest his crops and needed assistance from the *kokwet*, he approached the *kiptayat ab kokwet* who not only appointed a day but also went around the *kokwet* informing everybody of the pending task to be done. Any member of the village who drank beer had to

send his wife to assist in the communal labour on the appointed day (Peristiany, 1939:130).

Every man cultivated a separate field for each of his wives. The fields were referred to as belonging to the man, but when the grain was in store it was said to belong to the wife. A widow was helped by her sons; if there were no children of working age the *kokwet* made a field for her. In cases of poverty the work was done without any thought of remuneration, but if the widow or widower had sufficient grain left over from the previous harvest, the usual communal beer party was held and all those who had helped attended and drank beer as a reward for their work (Orchardson, 1971:92, Mathias Ngeno, William Maina O.I., 1997).

The produce of *imbaret a'mossop* was stored in the *tabot* (granary) on the second storey of the hut over the sleeping quarters. The smoke emanating from the fireplace thus blighted the grain and rendered it useless for trading. In addition such *wimbi* is resistant to weevils and this way it was kept in good conditions for as long as five years so that the risk of famine was reduced (Kipkoech Labos, O.I., 1997).

From this background, it should be noted here that the husband had no authority over the grain stored in the hut of his wives. This belonged to the wife exclusively. He could not take some of it to give beer to his friends or relatives; such grain had one purpose-to feed the household and for this purpose no member of the family could divert it. Every hut inhabited by a man's wife and children was as a result of this rule, independent of the other households of the polygamous husband (Peristiany, 1939:130). Only on social occasions regulated and enforced by custom could such food be considered; not even a party for private merry-making (*Ibid.*).

The third type of cultivation was *imbaret ab soi*. This *imbaret ab soi* is a contradistinction to the previous one. That it was the field over which the husband had complete authority. These fields were predominantly sown with *wimbi*. Although the crop from these fields could be used by the man to entertain his friends, it was mainly for trading and exchange. It was kept in separate storehouses built near the hut so that it was not mixed it with the grain of *imbaret a'mossop* and also for keeping it away from the smoke of the hut which would have blighted it and rendered it worthless for trading and exchange purposes.

All the work in the *imbaret ab soi* was the responsibility of the owner and could be done by him or his workers helpers. His wife or wives and daughters were not asked to help him as their energies were devoted to the family plot. Even when a man wanted to give a beer party to his *kokwet* so that they may come and assist him in his work, the grain he used belonged to him and had been grown on an *imbaret ab soi* (Peristiany 1939:130).

The *kokwet* village as an economic unit did assist its members in several ways. For those who were starting fields for the first time, various households could provide them with *telanik* from *imbaret a'mossop* so that they may give a beer party. The *telanik* are grains of *wimbi*, which are so hard that they could not be easily pounded and thus were useless for food production.

Certain tasks required heavy labour input and mechanisms existed within the *kokwet* to provide labour for such tasks as digging, weeding, planting or harvesting. In such cases a beer party was given to the residents of the *kokwet* who provided the necessary labour. There were two types of such beer parties and for which the permission of the *kiptayat ab kokwet* was sought. The first was *mayuek ab kokwet*

(beer of *kokwet*) which was given as advance reward for some work to be done, such as *temisyo* (first digging operations), *koolt* (second digging) and so on. Everybody who was willing to join in such a beer party did so on condition that he or she had to offer the necessary labour on the appointed day. Sometimes, however, men drank the beer and sent their wives to work (Patrick Langat, Jimmy Mabwai, O.I., 1997).

The second type of beer party was *kipkoloit* in which beer was drunk only after the work had been done. But admission to it was by personal invitation only. Membership was mostly, but not exclusively, from the *kokwet*. This beer party could also be given for such tasks as weeding, harvesting or for tying *chagaik* (sticks) during hut building. Such party could be offered even three or four years afterwards. This shows that beer, at least in this case, was provided as a reward for the services rendered, but was rather a ritual form of reward (Peristiany, 1939:145).

The *kokwet* on the other hand gave help to its members in case of distress. For example, in cases when a man's harvest was insufficient to feed his family, his paternal relations, *mechegeren* and *kotap-chi* had to support him. But none of them alone could be able to provide sufficient grain to feed the entire family for a whole year. The man then turned to his *kokwet* for help (Choget arap Chumo, O.I., 1997).

In the case of a newly married couple taking up residence in a foreign *kokwet* all the neighbours invited them to share their food and provided them with *wimbi* and sorghum without expecting this to be returned when the husband tilled an *imbaret* of his own. For the first year after marriage those relatives who lived within a reasonable distance contributed a certain amount of grain and the balance-even the whole when there were no nearby relatives-was supplied by the *kokwet*. Every house in the neighbourhood in which the newly married couple had decided to live usually

supplied one large basket of grain. This assistance was necessary because land could only be prepared in the dry season (Orchardson, 1971:91, Chumo Ngono, O.I., 1997). If they, in turn, had during this period to do some work in the fields, the couple would help them even without being asked to do so.

When a man's harvest failed, he gave a *mayuek ab mossorek* (lit. beer of grain) outside his home and put near the beer pot a large basket. This was an indication that whoever came to drink from this beer would have to fill the basket with *wimbi* after he had harvested his own field. The value of the beer drunk was not of course, an equivalent to the grain given, but served more as an appeal to attract the attention of the *kokwet* to the distress call of one of its members (Peristiany, 1939:148).

When a child was born to a poor man, he would ask a rich neighbour to give him a piece of his *imbaret a'mossop* if it was large enough. The wealthy man could then consult the *kiptayat ab kokwet* to see if he could ask another *mogoriot* (wealthy man) to help him shoulder the burden; but he could not refuse to help if he could possibly manage, not only out of sheer sympathy, but because it was a sign of honour to be asked to help other members in distress situation (*Ibid.*).

Lastly, if the harvest had not been gathered on time and rain was threatening to destroy the crop, a man could take *itet* stick (used for burning the interior of the calabash before milking) and went to all his neighbours, asking them to come out and help him. This approach was *saiset* and was the symbolic manner of imploring help which could not be refused. Those who, for one reason or another, found themselves in economic odds of providing for themselves and their families resorted to such appeals. However, the most extreme case was that of *otwaget*. *Otwaget* was a name given to a very poor Kipsigis who, either through his own bad behaviour, had

estranged all his relatives or for some accidental reason, such as loss of his cattle or of his *kot-ap-chi*, was in such a state of destitution that nothing remained for him but to work for another man in exchange for grain, goats or money. Therefore assistance provided by the *kokwet* could only last from one harvest to the next, and thereafter a man had to solve his own economic problems. Otherwise he became *otwaget-a* Kipsigis working for another Kipsigis for payment (see Peristiany, 1939; Chumo Ngono O.I., 1997).

Inter-cropping which Zeleza (1986:176) calls “the heart of African agriculture” seems to have taken place among the Kipsigis. *Wimbi* was mainly inter-cropped with sorghum. Vegetable could be grown with all these crops, though women had a small plot for vegetable, *kapingkui* near the homestead. Even here a variety of crops were grown together. Occasionally *wimbi* could be grown in pure stands, especially in *imbaret ab soi*.

Inter-cropping or multiple cropping as a manner of crop production suited the needs of the Kipsigis in their fragile environment. The deep red volcanic soils, if left bare, would be eroded or washed away by heavy torrents in the region. Constant cover of the ground by some crops preserved the soil by preventing soil erosion. Soil fertility was maintained through multiple cropping. Adequate food security and self-reliance were ensured by the cultivation of a variety of crops and vegetable. Besides, inter-cropping maximized on labour, which was scarcer than land (Levine, 1979:5).

Preparation of land for cultivation was a joint undertaking between men and women. Once a piece of land was identified for cultivation, often by the use of certain plants and grasses as indicators of soil fertility (Daniel Serem O.I., 1997), it was

mainly cleared by men and then burnt. If the land in question was designated as *imbaret a'mossop* then the wife commenced the digging, but if designated as *imbaret ab soi*, then the man continued with the preparation. However, since much of this work involved working in large groups covering the entire *kokwet*, most people gave the required beer party for such work- clearing and *temisyo* to be done. Most men gave beer to have their *imbaret ab soi* cultivated usually by women. It is therefore safe to assert that women did much of the cultivation (arap Tobon, O.I., 1997). Fieldwork could easily be summarised in this way - clearing the land was done by men, burning the clearing was done by men or women, digging was done by men and women, burning the turfs and sowing was done by nearly always by men, raking in the seed was done by men and women, final gathering up of rubbish was done by women, cutting fencing sticks was done by men, carrying the fencing sticks was done by women, and men, erecting the fence was done by men, hand weeding was done by women, children and old men, harvesting was done by all hands, stacking and carrying the harvest was done by women, threshing and winnowing was done by women and girls, grinding was done by women (Peristiany 1939:138; Orchardson, 1971:92; O.I-various)

Peristiany(1939:132) draws the Kipsigis lunar calendar as composed of twelve months as shown in Appendix I. In the month of *Kipsunde Netai* (November) the marking of the boundaries of the field each man was going to cultivate started. There was no ceremonial beginning of the work. In some *kokwetinwek*, members fenced one large common piece of land and then divided it into plots amongst themselves. This was largely the custom where large numbers of goats and cattle posed a problem to the crops. Fencing, common or individual, was therefore predetermined by the danger

caused by livestock; but in case one did not fence, then he had no cause to complain if his or her crops were destroyed by livestock. It was held among the Kipsigis that a person had to protect his /her crops from animals, and not the owner of the animals restraining his animals from destroying the crops (Choget arap Chumo, O.I ,1997)

The choice of a suitable piece of land did not present many problems. As already noted above certain plants and trees were used as indicators of soil fertility. But much of the Kipsigisland was suitable for the cultivation of *wimbi*, which was traditionally the major field crop (Toweett, 1979:52). Since land was plentiful, there existed very few restrictions prohibiting the use of certain plots. Some of these restrictions were naturally derived. For instance once a field of *wimbi* had been cultivated, it was allowed to lie fallow for at least two to five years before re-cultivation. Stretches of ground near the river were found to be always damp, so that *wimbi* would not flourish well under very wet conditions. Equally one was not allowed to tamper with the best grassland or pasturelands of the *kokwet*. There was only a tacit understanding about this rule since there were numerous pasture lands around the area. But whoever flaunted such a rule risked unpopularity as nobody would help him to cultivate his field. Cattle paths were well protected and respected.

Within a *kokwet*, therefore, one was free to cultivate anywhere. But if a man wanted to cultivate land in another *kokwet*, he had to consult with the *kiptayat ab kokwet* or with the owner of the neighbouring plot to the one he intended to cultivate. But such restrictions were minor. As Peristiany asserts, "the general rule is that a man can cultivate any land in his own or in a foreign *kokwet*, if there is no prior claim to it". In his own interest a man usually chose a piece of ground near his own homestead or that of a relative; but they often cultivated strips of land very far from their own

domicile, so that their crops would mature at different periods of the year and provided them permanently with food. No wonder, therefore, that a man belonged to more than one *kokwet*, more especially polygamous husbands who had wives settled in various *kokwetinwek* (Peristiany, 1939:133).

After selecting a piece of land for cultivation, one had to mark the boundary. *Mareret* -or marking of the boundary was done by digging at intervals a line round the piece of land. This was also done to separate the pieces worked by men and women. A few trees were planted as boundary markings. The *kiwotet* (boundary) was marked so that none would encroach upon what was considered as the property of another (Philip Togom, O.I., 1997).

The marking was then followed by *temisyo* (the first digging). This was mainly the work of women and was done with hoes. In such tasks colossal input of labour was required and it was at that stage that beer parties were conducted in exchange for communal labour. Often all paternal and maternal female relatives of the man and his wife who were living in the same *kokwet*, or at a short distance, were asked first to help. Should the *imbaret* to be dug be slightly bigger in proportion, then the *kokwet* would also be asked to help. Helpers other than relations were termed as *morik* (Orchardson, 1971:92). This was achieved by giving notice to the *kiptayat ab kokwet* who confirmed the date if it had not been reserved by anybody else. Beer was then put outside the hut (*mayuek ab kokwet*) to which members of the *kokwet* came to drink and send, on the appointed day, their wives to help in the digging. Large lumps of earth were cut during the digging; they were folded with turf inside and left round the *imbaret*. These operations continued well into *Ngotiolo* (Peristiany, 1939:139, Orchardson, 1971:93 Toweett, 1979:52, O.I., Various, 1997).

Gradually as the digging went on, the turf was opened and dried in the sun. Small pits of it were then made, set on fire, and left to burn slowly until they were reduced to ashes. This was called *belso* and was done by the wife with the help of relations or friends as it was considered to be very light work for womenfolk. The ashes were then scattered (*kiguessa orek*) over the fields and left there to serve as manure and to fuginat the land. *Wimbi* was rarely sown on old land as the crop was liable to fungi diseases and liked plenty of potash. An old field had to be left at least for three years, and usually for four to five years to develop a good turf which would burn when dry or a good covering of bush sufficient when cut or dug up to burn over the whole ground. In this way potash was produced and fungi diseases were destroyed (Orchardson, 1971:93). The Kipsigis, through their experience, had realised that ashless soil was no good for *wimbi*.

In *Kiptamo* (March) planting commenced. This month was often associated with guinea fowls cry of *okol! okol!*- plant!, plant! (Peristiany, 1939: 134). Equally in some *kokwetinwek* there were elders known for their knowledge of the movement of stars; after identifying the eight *koremerik* (stars:- or the constellation of the Pleiades) he pronounced the commencement of sowing. *Wimbi* planted after March, say in *Tuatkut* (April) is handicapped by an unfavourable rainfall (*Ibid.*).

The sowing of the grain (*keleta kessuek*) was done by a specialist; mostly a man, residing in the *kokwet* where the field lay. Orchardson (1971:93) asserts that some men in the *kokwet* were usually expert broadcasters and sow for all their neighbours. A number of my respondents attested to this fact (William Torongoi, Stephen Kirui, Philip Chebose, O.I., 1997) Such specialist was rewarded after harvest with *Kipkoloit*, beer specially prepared for the purpose.

The grain is sown without any re-cultivation however many weeds may have grown up after the scattering of potash. After sowing, the weeds are to be removed in addition to mixing the grain with the earth. Both goals are achieved in *koolet*, the second digging. After digging the women then pulverise (*purpur*,) that is they shake the weeds which have been dug up so as to detach all the earth from them and to throw back the grains. The weeds are then laid on the ground to dry up, and thrown away as *pogot* (rubbish).

In *Page* or *Ngeyiet* (June and July) the weeds have sprouted again and are to be removed. This is considered a most difficult task usually done by women, girls and old men. Often a wife and her daughters and friends found the task insummoutably laborious, and the women of the *kokwet* were again asked to come and help. They were rewarded with *kipkoloit*, (beer) which is drunk even by their husbands after harvest. The first weeding was *kibuch* while the second one *putet* followed four or five weeks later. The second weeding was most thorough requiring much attention. It lasted until *Bureti* or *Epeso* (September or October). The women devoted over six hours a day to this work (Peristiany, 1939:134).

Kessisyo (harvesting) began in *Epeso* or *Kipasunde Netai*, when the *wimbi* was at *mongorek* stage and was of a rich brown colour. Harvesting was finished in *Kipsunde Netai* (November). When even the stem was brown, and the *wimbi* was called *katchorot*. Virtually everybody in the household helped in harvesting; both husband, wife and children, and if necessary, another *kipkoloit* beer was prepared for the *kokwet*, so that its members could come and help. Since *wimbi* was a very short plant, cutting was performed either in a sitting or bending or squatting position. A small

knife was used to cut below the heads which were collected in large baskets (Mathias K, Ngeno, Tubulu, Kokei, O.I., 1997):

The harvested grain was immediately stored in a granary in *tabot* (the roof of the hut) if the field was near the homestead. The *tabot* must have been strewn with *tebengonik* leaves. These leaves had a deterrent effect on insects and pests as well. But if the field was far, then the grain was temporarily stored in *ruagan*, a dug hole with a depth of about a half-foot deep and three to four feet wide. This hole was strewn with husks of the previous year's *wimbi* so that the fresh crop did not come into direct contact with the ground. The grain was then stacked into it in a pile and thatched with the stems of the *wimbi*. Women then gradually carried the grain into the homestead for storage. The stem, deprived from grain was usually left standing, and goats and cattle of the master of the *imbaret* were brought to feed on it (Peristiany, 1939:)

If the grain was needed for immediate consumption, it was dried in either of the following two ways. First, a rough tray of sticks was erected above the fireplace, or secondly, it was dried outside in the sun using *saina*, a skin supported by four sticks, so that the goats could not eat it (Bett, O.I. 1997).

Women carried out the threshing and pounding. The *wimbi* was first scraped on *poreito*, a goat's skin with a rough surfaced stone. The grain was then winnowed and put in a *kenut*, (mortar) made from the hollowed truck of a tree and pounded with *aru'ap ken* or *arruet ap kenut*, a pestle cut from the same tree. The *wimbi* was then ground between two stones to produce flour which was used in the making of food, porridge and beer (Toweett, 1979:52, Peristiany, 1939:137; Orchardson, 1971:94-95; O.I. Various, 1997).

One notable and commendable feature with Kipsigis *wimbi* cultivation was the rich vocabulary used to indicate the different periods of its growth. Toweett (1979:52) asserts that the Kipsigis knew more than ten types of *wimbi*, each with its own name, and they knew which species were early rippers. This is a clear sign that the practice of agriculture was long acquired before their settlement in Kericho. It also attests to the diversity and innovativeness of Kipsigis agriculture in identifying even the smallest details of *wimbi* production. For example, eleven words were used to denote the various stages of growth of the *wimbi*; and these were:-

1. *Kabista*- when the *wimbi* was coming out
2. *Kabagoek*- when the first knot appeared
3. *Karobe*- when the second knot appeared
4. *Kassengen*- when the bud appeared
5. *Kaimet*- when it flowered
6. *Katoet*- when the flower changed into grain
7. *Kengargarit*- *wimbi* was ripening but still soft enough to exude juice when squashed
8. *Messissrek*- when *wimbi* changed from green to yellow
9. *Kabelle*- when the head became brown
10. *Mongoret*-when rich brown
11. *Katchoret*-when even the stem was brown

Wimbi appears to have been resistant to most diseases. *Chelatit* or *Kiboet* (frost) was not very prevalent but occasionally caused some damage to the crop. The affected crop could be uprooted (Kiprop Kirui, O.I. 1997). Spreading ash over the

affected crops treated plight on *wimbi* and sorghum. Except for drought therefore, *wimbi* cultivation appears to have been almost without major problems when planted with ash to prevent fungi diseases. The use of ash to treat plight and prevent fungi diseases is a clear manifestation of the Kipsigis mastery of agricultural knowledge. Smut (*Cheburesnik*) equally affected crops and according to Stephen Kirui (O.I., 1979) the affected crop was uprooted to avoid further spread.

After harvests a number of ceremonies were held not only to celebrate but also to offer prayers to *Asis* (god) to make the harvested *wimbi* to last them until the next harvest. The first type of ceremony was held at *kokwet* level. A beer party called *mayuek ap ingarek* was held in the hut of either the oldest or most respected member of the community. Even friends were invited to this ceremony which was held by every *temet* or branch of the *kokwet*. The second type was a private one held by every household in which only the husband and wife participated (Peristiany, 1939, 137). It is therefore apparent that the Kipsigis used *maiyeuk* (beer) for many purposes- ceremonial as well as for help or a labour reward. The marriage ceremonies were not less than eight in number and each one of them could not be effected without *mayuek* for people to drink. All these led to *wimbi* production among the Kipsigis to occupy a valuable position next only to animal husbandry (Toweett, 1979:54).

A piece of land could be cultivated for one year before being abandoned and a new one prepared. The plot could revert to bush or grassland and could take up to four or five years before it could be re-cultivated (Toweett, 1979:54; arap Cheptuech, O.I. 1997). As a rule the Kipsigis usually never re-cultivated a piece of land owing to abundance of fertile land. But owing to population pressure at the end

of the nineteenth century, evidence of re-cultivation becomes abundant. In the event of declining soil fertility or advance ecological and environmental conditions, people either cultivated nearby grassland or moved to another ridge or *kokwet* altogether. Settlements appear to have been fairly permanent except when there was large-scale migration due to insecurity or severe ecological changes. Otherwise the spread of the Kipsigis in their present country early in the twentieth century was a result of gradual extension of farmlands. However, exceptions were notable in the low-lying southern areas due to drought. Here occasionally large-scale movements of people were evident.

The often-generalised contention that pre-capitalist African societies carried out shifting cultivation did not apply to the Kipsigis at the close of the nineteenth century. Proponents of this view see the African as a useless farmer, too lazy or ignorant to conserve the soil through fertilisation and prevention of erosion. Wrigley (1965:254) best exemplifies this notion when he states that;

Indigenous [agricultural] practices, varying in detail, conformed to the general pattern known as shifting cultivation. Land was tilled until its yields began to diminish. It was then abandoned to the slow regenerative agencies of nature and new fields were taken out of the surrounding waste[lands]. No attempt was made by systematic rotation of crops or the application of manure, to maintain the soil [fertility].

Other scholars have refuted this concept of African shifting cultivation. Hopkins (1973) identified several types of cultivation grouped under the rubric of shifting cultivation. Zeleza (1986: 157) writes that for centuries most of the settlements were fixed and the chief methods of cultivation were rotational bush fallow, rotational-planted fallow, mixed farming and 'permanent' farming. Boserup (1965) shows how methods of cultivation changed with increasing population, ranging from long fallow periods to short fallow periods and eventually progressing into seasonal fallow and

lastly two or more successive crops each year. This corresponds to a continuum ranging from forest fallow- then bush fallow- then short fallow -then annual cropping and lastly multiple cropping. The Kipsigis case tends to lie between bush and short fallow cultivation, which may compositely be termed as rotational fallow. It appears that because there was abundant land among the pre-colonial Kipsigis they tended to leave fields fallow for relatively longer periods.

In any case this system of rotational bush fallow had evolved and was suited to the needs of the people in their fragile tropical environment and helped them to cope with food shortages and crop failures. This form of cultivation helped in maintaining soil fertility, checking soil erosion and, above all, ensured high yields. Besides there was little change in the eco-system as the cultivated lands reverted to vegetation.

The flexibility of the system allowed movement of an individual farmer to another plot if adverse environmental or ecological circumstances occurred in form of pest damage, weeds or unanticipated poor soil performance. By having plots in different micro-environmental and micro-ecological areas, farmers had the chance of spreading risks.

The Kipsigis demonstrated great mastery of agricultural information and practices. For planting purposes, they selected the best *wimbi* heads that could give high yields. They dried and threshed them, and stored the grain in the ceiling of a house. This grain, designated as special seed, was therefore kept in a warm area free of any insects or pests.

Protection of crops from bowling insects and animals, both in the field and in store in the granary, appears to have been negligible. No form of medicinal plants or ash was used against them. Rats on the other hand were not much of a menace and, as

one informant put it, there was abundant food, both inside and outside the granary so that damage to stored food was negligible (arap Cherutich, O.I 1997). The basis for continued food surplus lay in the manner of storage and continued cultivation of surplus food.

3.4 Famines and Food Shortages.

The main dish was always *Kimiet*; *wimbi* flour boiled to the consistency of plum pudding. Wild and cultivated vegetable was the commonest and cheapest additive to *kimiet*. Meat was roasted or stewed. Sometimes a sheep or goat was specially slaughtered for food, but it was generally a useless one, unless it was for a special guest, sacrifice or sick person. Only the very rich could kill cattle for food. Meat was usually eaten only when there was death in the flock or herd or when there was a ceremony (Josiah Talam, Zakayo Cheramgoi, Samuel Koske, O.I. 199). The blood of cattle, goats and sheep was used not in place of meat, but as a relish with *kimiet* sometimes instead of vegetable or milk, but more commonly cooked with vegetable. Perhaps milk was another important ingredient of Kipsigis diet, but milk and meat could not be eaten on the same day as it was believed that the milk of that cow would dry (Orchardson, 1971:96). *Musarek-uji* could be eaten anytime of the day. Honey was a luxury chiefly obtained during the first three months of the year. It was either chewed in the comb or mixed with water and taken as a drink (*Ibid.*)

The scarcity of other foods to eat with *kimiet* was termed as *sinet*; while lack of the staple food was *rubet* or famine. Famines, although not uncommon, were infrequent in Kipsigisland. It appears that food shortages ravaged individual households more than all the Kipsigis. More so, food shortages were more frequent

in the Sotik and Chepalungu areas and the low-lying southern areas bordering the Luo districts. This was on accounts of the less rainfall received in such areas accompanied with frequent rain shortage or failures altogether.

Food security however can not solely be pegged to the amount of rainfall received in an area. The methods of food production and storage do account greatly in warding off food shortages (Zezeza, 1986:156). Food production among the Kipsigis was not such as would ensure continuous supply. Most harvests were only geared to last for a year, until another harvest. As already shown the Kipsigis had no elaborate system of keeping enormous amount of *wimbi* for several years unlike their Gusii neighbours (see Omwoyo, 1992). The result was that famines frequently ravaged the country. The second half of the nineteenth century, especially the last quarter was particularly bad in this respect. Some of the best-remembered famines occurred during this period. One of them was referred to as *kimout sigiryet*. During this famine and due to its severity, people are said to have eaten donkeys. According to Mwanzi (1977a:161) the donkey was a later development which according to tradition was introduced to the Kipsigis from Maasai country where it was in turn introduced by the Swahili traders.

The second famine was known as *kimaita*. Mwanzi (Ibid.) asserts that “the word *kimaita* is a shortened form of the word *kimatagur* which means not having property”. The improper behaviour attributed to the restlessness resulting from famine, which according to some tradition led some people to eat human flesh.

Not long after *kimaita* the Kipsigis were yet to experience another most severe famine. The severity of this famine known by the name of *kimauito* was reflected in the fact that people are said to have eaten dried cattle skins. But the severest of them

all seems to have been the famine of the Gusii- *rubiit ab kusobindet* or the famine of *wimbi*. Traditional accounts show that it occurred at about the close of the nineteenth century. The Kipsigis are said to have sold many of their children to Gusii in exchange for *wimbi*. It also appears that many Kipsigis migrated into Gusii country in search of food (Mwanzi, 1977a; 162). During the time of another famine of *Kiprengendet* people are said to have eaten grass-hoppers (Ngono, C, O.I, 199). Except for *rubiit ab kusobindet* whose occurrence Mwanzi dates to around 1890, it was difficult for us to precisely date the rest of the mentioned famines except to reiterate that they all took place in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The last half of the 19th century appears to have been a difficult period of famines and pestilence, more particularly the last quarter. Ochieng (1974:66) identified, between 1885 and 1891, a series of bitter famines among the Gusii culminating in *Nyamakongiro*, one of the severest famines in 1891. Similar disasters have been reported among the pastoral Maasai (Jacobs, 1965:96-99), the Agikuyu (Muchoki, 1988, Muriuki, 1970) and Kjekhsus, (1977:126-142) reports about the great rinderpest of 1890's in many parts of Tanganyika. Mwanzi's (1977a) assertion that the Kipsigis were beset with numerous famines in the last quarter of the last century, therefore fits well with the general pattern of pestilence and famines in this region. It appears that the causes of these famines were diverse: rainfall failure or drought, hailstones, cattle diseases, intra and inter-ethnic wars, and so on (Mathias Ngeno, Patrick Langat, S.T. Chepkwony, O.I. 1997).

The consequences of the famines were manifold. Underfeeding and starvation led to poor health and a number of deaths, and the Kipsigis word for famine, *rubiit*, literally implies many deaths. Also people moved from affected areas to the highlands

in the hope of getting food. Livestock was depleted as most households relied solely on cattle as food or exchanged them with those who had some grain (Arap Tobon, O.I., 1997).

Among the Kipsigis, there were ways of predicting famines, and there were *laibons* and seers who could foretell impending disasters such as famine and war. People could take the *laibon's* predictions seriously and store more grain. Jimmy Mabwai (O.I. 1997) asserted that by observing the celestial bodies such as stars and by observing the direction of wind, the *laibons* and seers were able to make accurate predictions of rain failure, resulting in famine. Another index of foretelling impending calamity, especially rain failure, was by observing the movement of birds. Langat, P. (O.I. 1997) posited that “there were certain clouds, if not seen, this foretold of the failure of rain; and also if wind came from a certain direction it also foretold of a danger”. Chepkwony J.C. (Mrs), O.I., 1997) was even more specific, “.when the strong wind blows following the direction of the sun then calamity was in the making”. Some insects were also used as indicators. Miruka W. (O.I., 1997) said this of birds, “Some birds which move in a group could be studied and when moving in a certain direction or manner then famine was imminent”. Arap Chumo Choget (O.I., 1997) asserted that by observing where the birds known as *tartet* and associated with luck and losses, faced, one could easily foretell an impending calamity.

The Kipsigis took a number of measures to curb food shortages. One such measure was to produce so much grain that some was stored for lean days in the rains. It should be noted here that every wife had her own store of grain in her house. This was used in feeding her household, and she disposed of her surplus without much interference from the husband. On the other hand, as already mentioned, there

used to be a field for the husband, the harvest of which was stored separately in a granary built near a house. This acted as a bank or security against food shortage. In the event of famine, the husband's produce was used to supplement the wife's grain. The produce in the man's granary was never used in feeding his wife's household except in periods of food shortage. In the event of the man's death, his wives inherited his produce. And when there was no food shortage the man exchanged his produce for livestock or gave more beer parties for community work on his large fields (arap Barta S., O.I., 1997).

It is well-documented (Paristiany, 1939; Orchardson, 1971; Ochieng' 1974; Mwanzi, 1977a) and all my informants agreed that the Kipsigis did rely on their neighbours for grain in the event of food shortages. Such grain was mainly obtained from the Gusii who were great *wimbi* cultivators. This was done in the form of barter trade. The Kipsigis exchanged a few of their animals for grain from the Gusii. Sometimes they pawned their children in exchange for grain (Malei, S.; arap Chumo, C.; Maina, W.; Chepkwony, S.I.; Sillattee, A., O.I., 1997). Mwanzi, while admitting that the Kipsigis country was frequently visited by famine, shows that the latter went to Gusii for food. "The Kipsigis sold their children to Gusii in exchange for millet. Occasionally the Gusii did the same but it seems the practice was carried out more by the former than the latter" (1977a:86). These exchanges took place during peace time when there was free movement of people between the two communities.

Occasionally, due to the famines, the Kipsigis could raid neighbouring communities for cattle or grains. When raiding became institutionalised among the Kipsigis, the neighbouring communities, especially the Luo, Maasai and Abagusii witnessed frequent attacks whether there was famine or not. A number of battles

took place between the Kipsigis and Gusii. Some of these included what the Kipsigis knew as Chemoiben battle, and the battle of Ngoina. The best remembered and most important of these battles was the battle of Mogori. Its importance lay in the scale of its operation and in the magnitude of the defeat suffered by the Kipsigis at the hands of Gusii and their allies. This battle seems to have taken place at about 1890. This battle has been covered elsewhere, but what is of importance here is the fact that the battle was partly fought and motivated by famine ravaging Kipsigisland at this time (Mwanzi, 1977a:85).

Apart from widespread famine which affected a large locality if not all Kipsigisland, there were occasional food shortages in individual households with unenterprising members. In this case, also a number of measures were taken to acquire food. First, such affected households exchanged their animals with *wimbi* from those who had surplus. Secondly, the affected family could beg for food. Sometimes the community could willingly assist needy and open cases. For example, a newly married couple taking up residence in a foreign *kokwet* could be invited by their neighbours to share their food and provide them with *wimbi* (Peristiany 1939 : 146). This only took place in their first year of residence until they reaped the harvest of their first field. Though not common the affected households could also be given a long-term loan in food from their neighbours and relatives to be repaid later. Equally, all members of a household could move from hunger-stricken area to join relatives who could give them food until they harvested their own. Even in the absence of relatives it was a custom for members of *kokwet* to assist new comers providing them with food until they made and harvested food from their *imbaret* (Torongei, W., Chebose, P., Rono, P., O.I., 1997).

We have already noted that when a man's harvest failed or was disappointingly inadequate for his food requirements he could give *mayuek ab mossorek*, a beer party. Everybody who participated in this occasion undertook to provide a basketful of *wimbi*. This was one way of offsetting a catastrophic food deficient situation before it actually occurred (Korir, W; O.I 1998). Perhaps one of the social mechanisms put in place to alleviate the ravages of famine or food shortage is illustrated by the custom known as *kabwateret*. This is a form of betrothal between an infant girl and a grown up man, resorted to in very special circumstances. When a whole area suffered from famine, and the help of relation and neighbours could not be invoked, a man with a very small daughter could take her to a rich locality and request for anybody who would like to marry her. When a man was found, appropriate initial ceremonies were done, an advance payment of the bride-wealth was effected, either a cow with a calf to supply the affected family with milk or a bull which they could exchange for *wimbi* (Peristiany 1939:64, Cherogin, S., Serem, D., O.I, 1997). This custom was of course different from that mentioned earlier whereby when a child was born to a poor man, the latter could ask a rich man for a piece of his *imbaret a'mossop* so as not to seriously suffer from food shortage.

In the event of scarcity of food to be consumed with *kimiet*, wild fruits and vegetable were gathered instead. Even those fruits and vegetable normally not eaten were this time round eaten. Hunting for wild animals was a major preoccupation in periods of *sinet* or *rubet*. The eating of *kesengit*- wild pig which was normally eaten by some people, this time acquired universal acceptance. Zebras were not normally eaten, except perhaps in secret when away from home on a hunting expedition (Orchardson, 1971:96); women could not eat birds like guinea-fowl, partridge and

quail, and prohibitions existed in the eating of moles, cane -rats, rats, mice or hare. But in times of famine such foods were freely and openly consumed owing to the difficulty of obtaining staple food. One informant argued that “if donkeys could be eaten during a famine, why not such prohibited animals as zebra, rats and mice, and other wild foods” (arap Barta, S., O.I, 1997). Even milk was treated in a special way to enable it to last for two weeks (Orchardson, 1971: 95). When a man was pressed by famine, he might steal or take a sheep or a goat from someone else. This kind of theft was considered to be forgivable, provided that the thief made a formal apology on behalf of the said culprit (*Nyoetap gat*). It was understood that if the thief became prosperous later he could return the goods taken to appease his (the thief's) hunger (Orchardson, 1971:112).

While it is therefore evident that the pre-colonial Kipsigis experienced food shortages due to severe climatic conditions as well as warfare and other forms of social disruptions, it is also evident, as Zeleza (1986:159) puts it in a relatively much wider context, that there existed a variety of social mechanisms and ecological reserves to reduce the impact of food shortages in any one family. The organization of the extended homestead, both as a production and consumption unit, reduced the vulnerability of individuals and component nuclear family units. Patterns of redistributive and reciprocal gifts between households in turn reinforced the society's ability to withstand crisis in food shortage at hard times.

Social insurance against food shortage also extended to the level of food storage and consumption. Elaborate techniques of shortage permitted grain to be stored for relatively longer periods, especially those stored on ceilings of houses. Allan (1965:36) recognized the presence of a normal ‘surplus’ in pre-colonial economies

and saw the traditional beer party as an indication of the existence of such surplus in stores. As already noted, several of such beer parties existed among the Kipsigis even in hard times.

3.5 Animal Husbandry

The Kipsigis are known in history for their love and devotion to animals. “In [the] Kipsigis life, tradition and mythology, the cow has a place of its own and occupies in the minds of the people, a position next in importance to that of their children” (Peristiany, 1939:151). The entire Kalenjin groups were nomadic pastoralists, who used to move from place to place to graze and water their herds. However when compared with the nomadic Maasai, the Kipsigis were not as mobile as the former. When circumstances and geographical conditions favoured them, the Kipsigis people would stay in a place for a good number of years. Since inhabiting the Kericho area, which is relatively wet, the Kipsigis could easily be referred to as being semi-nomadic pastoralists (Toweett, 1979:8).

Animal husbandry was the most lucrative enterprise in pre-colonial Kipsigisland. Since land was abundant, and therefore communally owned, cattle remained the single most cherished item of ownership and inheritance. “A man who had neither a cow nor a goat was considered to be a pitiable poverty-stricken creature of God whom nobody would dream of paying even a day’s visit (Toweett, 1979:56). Economically, cattle were the “ only form of investment possible” (Peristiany, 1939:149). All the cattle, sheep, donkeys and goats belonged to the man as head of the homestead. However some animals, especially heifers were associated with individual households of wives and in some instances women owned a few goats and

sheep. While the head of the homestead retained the overall claim of ownership to the cattle, wives who during this period resided in different localities had animals associated with their individual households. This association did not necessarily mean that in the event of death of the husband wives automatically inherited animals associated with them. As will be seen later in the study, clear and elaborate rules of inheritance existed among the Kipsigis.

Cattle were the main source of prestige and power and numbers were cherished since they indicated a man's wealth. "Cattle, sheep and goats constituted a complete form of wealth to any Kipsigis man" (Toweett, 1979: 56). Their possession does not only increase the material wealth of a man, but also enhances his social position. Through the complicated system of *kimanagan* such a man gained for himself reliable friends and spread the fame of his name among the people living even very far from his home (Peristiany, 1939:150, Kirui, J., Tanui, K., O.I., 1997).

The Kipsigis acquired their livestock through numerous ways. Some received it as dowry for their daughters or sisters, while others acquired it as indemnity paid for murder of a man or as a settlement for a dispute. But the most common ways of acquiring animals was through exchange, inheritance, raiding neighbouring communities and the system of *kimanagan*. Those families without livestock could start by cultivating a lot of wimbi which they then exchanged for goats and sheep. The exact terms of exchange are hard to determine here but most of the respondents quoted two to three baskets of wimbi for a goat or sheep. Sheep and goats were also kept in large numbers by the Kipsigis as in most important ceremonies a goat was sacrificed and its entrails were used for haruspication. But due to their destructive nature the sheep and more especially the goats were very unwelcome factor in

Kipsigis economies. The only redeeming feature in favour of the goats was that “it was regarded as the poor man’s cow”. In order to acquire cattle such poor men could exchange about 14 goats or sheep for a heifer in the ratio of 1 to 2 male. A cow in calf could go for 20-22 goats or sheep. A cow with calf fetched about 30 goats or sheep. But a bull fetched 8-9 goats or sheep since they had limited use. It is therefore evident that cattle were the best medium of exchange and a standard of value. Two people could combine resources to buy, say, a heifer. The one who gives less takes the calf, the one who gives more remains with the mother. Either of them could claim a heifer from each other if theirs died (DC/KER/4/1; Togom, P., Miruka, W., Koske T., O.I., 1997).

Mwanzi (1977a:164) traces the establishment of pastoralism among the Kipsigis and posits that it was a gradual process. Some clans had goats and sheep before they traded them with cattle. Such clans were those who inhabited the southern fringe of the country which is close to southern Mau escarpment. The spread of cattle was also helped by the Swahili traders who brought cattle from Maasai and other places to Kipsigis country and exchanged them with ivory.

When a man died his property was inherited by his wives (if more than one) equally irrespective of the number of children each wife had, and the property assigned to any one house. These principles ensured that there was no discrimination in favour of seniority, either in the case of the widows or the children. But whatever was allocated to the sons was not really their personal property but the entailed property of all his descendants. The sons had the right only to the use of this inherited property. They could not dispose of it without the consent of the family, except as marriage gifts (Orchardson, nd; 3).

The chief form of inheritable property was, of course, cattle, sheep and goats for there was no property in land. Land belonged to everybody and everyone had land to cultivate, graze, or build a house and so livestock remained the single most cherished and inheritable assets. The property of a man was composed of three distinct elements according to the source from which the livestock was acquired. The first was that belonging to the whole family because it was inherited by the father, *tugab geny chebo boyot*. The second was that which was acquired by the father's own prowess and industry or *tuga che kibar*. Then lastly was that which belonged to individual households- that is the children of one mother. That included cattle received on the marriage of the daughter of the household or obtained for compensation for wrongs committed against a member of the family. Such wrongs could be infliction of serious injury like breaking one's bone or adultery committed against a married woman of the household (Orchardson, 1971:109).

The only property over which a man had complete control was that which he had acquired by his own efforts. This he would sell, barter, slaughter or give away during his lifetime if he wished to do so, but on his death they became a part of the inheritable property as much as the property which he had received from his own father. And so when a man died such property was shared equally between his wives except for that which belonged to individual households. Usually the stock being shared was left with the elder brother if married until other sharers married when they took their portion and its progeny (DC/KER/4/1). Neither inherited nor presented cattle could be sold except by agreement among all members of a family. Sometimes such an agreement was made when excess male stock were slaughtered or sold. The proceeds were used in such a way so that none of the heirs suffered any loss from the

transaction. The most common option was the purchase of a female stock whose calves were shared out equitably (Orchardson, 1971:110).

A woman would also acquire property in her own right, which she could dispose of herself outside the family if she thought it fit to take such unusual course of action. Such property was acquired when the women did any work which was outside their family duties-the care of initiates earned them a goat or sheep, the practice of *sageyuwek* for which they would receive grain; the manufacture of ornaments and baskets; the baking of pots, an industry carried out only by women (*Ibid*). On the death of a woman her sons and daughters divided her ornaments, but if the husband was living he took his choice from these. Nevertheless he would not give them to another wife or any other women. The deceased household utensils went to her sons and failing them to her daughters as also *tabut* (the food in her store). Similarly the standing crops in the field that she had cultivated were divided between her husband and sons. The last born son of a woman, who invariably buried her took his choice of these presents of goats and the like that she had received from her husband when a bride and so were her hoes, her milk gourds , and her grinding stone (*Ibid*). It was therefore possible for a boy to inherit the family stock as well as stock associated with his mother's household; although these could not be disposed of or slaughtered -they only had the right of use such as for marriage or acceptable activity.

There were various presents of stock made to a son by his father after the conclusion of ceremonial seclusion after circumcision. His maternal uncle-*mama*, also gave the initiate presents when the former extracts the latter's lower incisors teeth and pierced his ears. These were the absolute property of the recipient. The eldest son was awarded the *chemusit* for the unpleasant duty, *sutet*, of carrying out his

father's corpse. Failing the son the reward was given to whoever did it. His half brother (that is, the eldest son of the second wife) received a male animal. A rich man in such instances could give a heifer and bull respectively. But poor families gave a goat and sheep -female for the elder and male for the young brother (Orchardson, 1971:111).

Raiding neighbouring communities was also one avenue of acquiring livestock. All respondents confirmed the importance of raids. As a rule no Kipsigis man raided or stole animals from a fellow Kipsigis. This, *chorset*, was an abomination punishable with death and rarely took place. But a cattle raid on their neighbours was a past time sport and was in fact institutionalized. Cattle theft from outside the community was a very different matter as it was not *chorset* to the Kipsigis but was the object of their active lives and a test of their military prowess. There was no death penalty for a successful raid, but death was often the penalty of failure (Orchardson, 1971:116).

Mwanzi (1977a:163) has attempted to show that not all those who became Kipsigis took to cattle keeping at the same time, and gave as example, the people who lived in the vicinity of Molo forest who did not have cattle. He countered Peristiany (1939) and Orchardson (1971), who contend that the Kipsigis initially acquired animals when they were living near Lake Baringo, by asserting that they actually acquired animals from the Gusii when the latter were settled on the Kano plains, near Lake Victoria. The story suggests that every day a man who lived near a lake saw cattle coming out from its direction. Eventually he made traps and caught some of them and this marked the beginning of cattle keeping among the Kipsigis. Be it as it may, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the Kipsigis really evolved a cattle culture supported by institutionalized raiding and military

organization. The main task of the young warriors was to raid the neighbouring Gusii for cattle. Clashes with the Maasai over cattle seem to have been a more recent phenomenon, just as clashes with the Luo.

Other than during peacetime when trade and exchange flourished, in most times the Kipsigis and Gusii were locked in combat over cattle. This was mainly a phenomenon of the second half of the nineteenth century. A number of battles between the two communities are remembered in Kipsigis traditions; Chemoiben battle and the battle of Ngoina. But the obviously remembered is the battle of Mogori. On one side were the Kipsigis and Nandi warriors against the Gusii, Kuria and Luo warriors in alliance. The battle seems to have taken place about 1890, and the Kipsigis suffered the worst defeat ever remembered in their history of cattle raids (Mwanzi, 1977a: 85-86)

Perhaps the most important system of owning and sharing cattle within the community was that of *kimanagan*, this was the system by which a Kipsigis distributed his cattle among different friends living very far from each other. *Kimanagan* (lending of a cow) was the farming out of cattle and was based on two reasons. The first, in case of cattle raids, the losses would be less severe if the cattle were not concentrated in one location. And secondly, in the event of a cattle plague like rinderpest, the losses would again be less severe. Cattle were given to relatives and friends after a household had attained a sufficient number of them. When a man married for the second time, he usually sent his first wife to live in a distant place with her eldest son, so that they would both keep for him part of his cattle. With every subsequent marriage he built a new hut at a different *kokwet*, and he thus succeeded in having his cattle scattered over a wide area, covering several

kokwetinwek so that no misfortune would wipe out his cattle-wealth in a stroke (Sillattee, A.; Belion, E.; Koech, A; O.I., 1997, Peristiany, 1939:150).

When all the households of a man had a sufficient number of cattle to provide them with milk and blood, they then gave out half of the new-born calves as *kimanagan*. Usually their friends and relatives requested them a long time beforehand for a calf and as soon as it had grown big enough, they came and took it if it was their turn, for several friends requested a calf from one household. If the calf happened to be a bull, they waited until it was two to three years old and then exchanged it for a heifer. Cattle given as *kimanagan* were cared for and fed by the recipients as their own and as recompense they were allowed to use the milk. The calves they had from *kimanagan* cows were kept by the recipients until the second or third generation and then they began distributing them in their turn to their own friends as *kimanagan* without consultation with the previous owners and this process went on and on *ad infinitum*. When the owner reclaimed his cattle he could, if he so wished, leave a calf with the person to whom he had lent the beasts as reward for keeping the animal (Peristiany, 1939:150; Toweett, 1979:58; Orchardson, 1971).

The system of *kimanagan* did not just entail that rich households lent out their cattle to poor households, but rather it was also a reciprocal exchange amongst the rich and poor households. In Such a case the man who had put his calf out would now ask another of his friends for a *kimanagan*. However, it was not a custom to ask the same man to whom one had given the *kimanagan*. It was, therefore, common that a man received as many cattle as he had given out as *kimanagan*- thus the number of cows in his kraal would be approximately the same as if he had not been continually

putting some out to others. The wealthier a man was, the easier it was for him to give and receive a *kimanagan*.

A wealthy man, with many cows and who did not easily refuse a *kimanagan*, was greatly respected; he was referred to as *neo* - big; but if he kept his cattle without giving out to others, he was *kipmouket*, that is, a mean and unpleasant being in the eyes of the Kipsigis. If a man wanted to keep a calf for himself he produced *Kipuser*, an artificial sore on its nose. This was to deter friends and relatives from bothering him for the calf. The sore was made to prevent the calf from drinking the mother's milk, but was also a sign that there was no *kimanagan* to be given in the form of that animal (*Ibid*).

Cattle once given out as *kimanagan* could not be redeemed without an exceptional reason. Even when the giver wanted his son to marry a girl, or if his other cattle died, he could not take all the *kimanagan* back, but had to leave behind at least one calf. The only valid reason for asking for the complete return of the *kimanagan* cows was that the calves born to a cow in its new kraal had died. At the death of the original owner, his sons would ask for *kimanagan* cattle to be returned, but one of the last commands of a good father was always said to be "Do not take all the [*kimanagan*] cows from my friends. Leave [for] him at least one to remember me for it" (Peristiany , 1939:151).

The man who took the *kimanagan* was under no obligation to the man who had given it to him. The milk of the cow belonged to him, but if the cow or one of its calves died, he had to send back the skin to the owner to confirm that he was under no obligation as the cow or calf was dead. The *kimangan* transactions were kept as close secrets and usually wives were not even freely informed. This was because it

was feared that wives might force their husbands to disown their transactions in case of economic hardships. The men considered it a disgrace to ask for the return of their *kimanagan*, even if this meant great hardship to themselves and their families in the rains when there was scarcity of food (Peristiany, 1939:152; Talan, J.; Bet, F., Ngeno, M., O.I., 1997).

As already noted, cattle provided the Kipsigis with the nourishing elements of their diet-milk, blood and meat. So were goats and sheep. Donkeys were used to transport goods. Cattle, sheep and goats also provided skin for clothing and as bedding. But there were elaborate roles and customs observed in relation to pastoral farming. The cattle were kept in the *piut ap tuga*, - place of cattle, and a very roughly fenced kraal. A hut of a man who looked after the animals at night was built on the eastern side of the kraal. The daily routine in the keeping of the livestock was simple. The cattle were taken out by the younger boys to graze at about six o'clock in the morning and then returned to the kraal at about eleven o'clock for milking, which was usually done by women and young boys. They were then returned to graze until sunset.

Drinking of milk and eating of meat on the same day was prohibited in the believe that this would make the milk of the cow dry up by hardening its udder. A man who was guilty of this offence was *pitorindet* and could be publicly thrashed if found out. The milk was stored in a calabash. Mostly it was mixed with ashes and charcoal of a special burned wood to give it flavour. Equally the ashes and charcoal of the tree in question had medicinal value. The Kipsigis had a way of fermenting and preserving the milk so that it could last for a long time. Three or four days after milking the Kipsigis took the *sumarariet* (skin) from the milk and thoroughly shook the calabash

until all the water came out. This process was repeated at about a week later and the milk thus obtained became as hard as yoghurt. Such milk could be left in such a state for a month or two and after that time had elapsed, it assumed a green colour and had a very strong and sharp smell (Mabwai, J., O.I., 1997).

Butter was also made by constantly shaking a calabash half full of milk until butter was formed. Such butter, *mwaita ab chego*, was cooked together with vegetable or herbs for consumption and women could use it to smear their bodies to provide soft skin (arap Barta, S., O.I., 1997). Women and children only drank the skimmed milk that was left over.

Blood, an important ingredient of Kipsigis diet, was drawn from the cattle's neck veins using *loynet*, a small bleeding arrow. Such blood could be drunk raw or mixed and boiled with vegetable. Bleeding of animals was frequently done but on different animals. Animals are bled not merely for the sake of blood but also to improve their health condition, especially at the beginning of the dry weather (Orchardson, 1971:96).

Meat was obtained by slaughtering bullocks, goats and sheep. Cows could not be slaughtered for meat unless they were suffering from a disease, which could not affect human beings, barren cows, or cows which had attained old age. Such animals could be sacrificed for the spirits of the dead or simply killed and its meat shared out.

Disputes did occur over livestock and these were resolved by the *kokwet* elders, led by the *kiptayat ab kokwet*. The disputes mainly revolved around trespass over cultivated land, trespass over individual grazing grounds (a few of these existed especially around the household such as *kamusta*). Cattle theft within the community was rare and uncommon as it would be considered the worst insult that could be

committed by a man to a fellow Kipsigis. A habitual thief of goats and sheep or beehives would bring upon himself a form of mob justice, known as *njoget*. Every man in the community would make a sharpened stick and surround the thief. After a signal was given all could then throw their sticks maiming and even killing the man. Sticks were used because they were anonymous, whereas spears could always be identified with particular persons (Peristiany, 1939:151).

Disputes over inheritance of cattle were not uncommon. Although the principles controlling the division were clear and not very intricate, difficulties and disputes sometimes arose in practice owing to such factors as indivisibility of animals, differences between male and female, young and old stock and their potential fertility (Orchardson, 1971:109). So brothers could differ over the number and type of animals each could take in determining the progeny of a certain cow. The responsibility of acting as executor and administrator lay with the eldest son of the first wife. This son therefore inherited the right to distribute his father's property, including cattle, goats and sheep, equitably amongst his brothers and to make provision for his sisters. Quite often such a system was not abuse-free as some brothers complained of partiality and unfairness. But the elders stepped in to advise on livestock inheritance disputes.

The system of *kimanagan* was also beset with a few problems that led to disputes. Some people could refuse to return the cattle given to them, others secretly sold such animals without the owner's consent, while others, knowing how such transactions were secret, outrightly refused receipt of such animals. In such extreme cases, *mumek* oathing was carried out and whosoever took a *mumek* unscrupulously brought a curse upon himself. If sheep, goats or cows were stolen, the owner would curse the

unknown thief, the curse being carried out in his home. The idea was that the family of the thief would then be suffering, dying from a disease and his wife would tell him that “you must have done something wrong to another man who has cursed you”. The man would go and confess if indeed he had committed such an offence. There was another custom whereby a thief could confess immediately after stealing and the theft was thus transformed into a loan (DC/KEA/4/1).

Further disputes involved allegations of witchcraft and sorcery on animals, division of cattle obtained in a raid, payment of bride price and disputes between co-wives (Saltman, 1971:53). On the other hand it was not uncommon for individuals to put special marks on their animals to ensure against theft and loss of such animals. If found, such animals were easily identified. Such marks included the piercing of ears, branding or cutting the ears or tails (Tanui, K., Labos, K., O.I., 1997).

The love of Kipsigis men and women for their cattle can be demonstrated by the knowledge pertaining to the animals. Toweett (1979:58-59) tells us that the Kipsigis knew their cattle well and they could tell which ones of them were good for milk, meat and other uses. Their knowledge about cattle characteristics was almost unsurpassed. They gave names to their cattle according to behaviour, colour and occasionally their place of living. When a Kipsigis skins a killed animal he could divide and subdivide all the meat and name the parts accordingly. The Kipsigis people knew all the anatomical parts of any domesticated animal. All the bones had names given to them. All the intestines had different names one from the other (Toweett, 1979:58-59). To demonstrate their resourcefulness and dynamism in evolving different vocabularies to distinguish various aspects of their animals based on sex,

colour, formation and other unique features, is the list of more than forty Kipsigis names provided in Appendix II.

The Kipsigis kept the indigenous zebu cattle that were adapted to the local conditions and were resistant to many diseases. They knew the diseases that infected their cattle, and some of these were treated by herbalists, using certain medicinal plants. Some of the diseases known were *burasta* (anthrax), *cheptigonit* (East Coast Fever), *kusto* (black quarter), *kipkutungit* (foot and mouth), *konyek* (eye-sore), *kipkeita* (red water), bloat (accumulation of NH_2 gas), bracken fern poisoning, rinderpest, anaplasmosis, dysentery and many more. For most of these diseases, expert herbalist used herbs either in raw form or processed powder or ash for treatment. But some animals had to be isolated, for example anthrax victims; or given a dose of the local brew (*maiyeuk*) for foot and mouth disease or the carcass burnt to prevent further spread of the disease like for anthrax. Some diseases however needed mechanical treatment as was the case of bloat in which an animal had to be chased around so as to release excessive gas in the stomach (Sillattee, A., arap Kirui K., arap Chumo, C., O.I., 1997). The treatment of rinderpest showed that the Kipsigis used a form of immunisation similar to that used in modern medicine; - the sick animal was bled and blood allowed to settle; it was then decanted and the serum was fed to healthy animals.

Tiriiyta, a grassland or grazing area was common land and the stock belonging to the public had the right to graze there. If any person cultivated such land without the consent of the public, the crops could be destroyed by the stock of the public and there could be no claim for compensation (DC/KER/4/1). *Tulonok* (hills) were also considered to be public land for grazing purposes only. Places along rivers where

animals could get drinking water, *ainet*, were also considered public lands. No one was allowed by Kipsigis custom to prevent access to it. Any one refusing public access to the *ainet* was cursed. Equally used as public land were *ngeny* (salt licks) *Orap too*, (public roads), to both *ainet* and *ngeny* were well secured and it was against Kipsigis customary law to block any public roads. If they were blocked the passers-by would curse the person who did so. But it was customary to open a new road when the old one was blocked (*Ibid*).

As the Kipsigis country is well provide with water supplies, there were a few hard and fast rules regarding the usage of water, especially rivers. A general rule was that one could not be forbidden access to water and this was ensured by the *kokwet* elders. There was *togomnda*, a custom whereby a person could construct in a river a small dam to build up the head of water for his cattle. He then had prior but not exclusive right to water his cattle at that spot (DC/KER/4/1,1911).

3.6 Summary

In this chapter the Kipsigis economy on the eve of colonial rule has been thoroughly examined with a view to demonstrate the diversity, resourcefulness, dynamism, innovativeness, productiveness and efficiency of various aspects of this economy. Land ownership and usage methods showed effective harmony in utilizing the resources provided by nature. Elaborate rules regulating the land tenure system existed to preserve the right of use though all land belonged to the community. Private land ownership was only limited to the area under cultivation and adjoining the homestead. The *kokwet* elders were vested with powers of resolving land disputes and regulated land use in the interests of the members.

The Kipsigis broad-based economy involved the hunting of wild animals and the gathering of wild fruits. The Kipsigis knowledge of hunting, including the hunted animals, depicts their resourcefulness and thorough understanding of their environment. Their understanding of wild fruits, vegetable and herbs was helpful in supplementing their diet. But perhaps crop production, especially the cultivation of *wimbi* shows their resourcefulness and dynamism in all aspects of production. The selection of seeds, land preparation, the sowing, weeding, harvesting and more importantly storage - all demonstrated the Kipsigis mastery of knowledge related to crop production. Methods of predicting and curbing food shortages and famines show that the Kipsigis were not caught by such calamities by surprise. There existed elaborate methods and ways of alleviating food shortages and famines, including the pawning of their children to neighbouring communities and even eating animals which normally were not eaten.

The backbone of the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy was, however, animal husbandry, which had various functions in the Kipsigis life. Animals were the source of milk, meat, blood, bedding and clothing. Besides, they were used to solve disputes, pay fines, bridewealth and for sacrificial purposes. Animals occupied in the minds of the people a position next to that of their children. As such' the Kipsigis knowledge and understanding of animal husbandry was abundantly resourceful. This covered the broad spectrum ranging from grass types, animal types, based on colour, sex and formation, diseases and forms of treatment, milk and meat preservation and many more. An elaborate system of loaning animals known as *kimanagan* existed and afforded all people an opportunity of getting milk even when they did not own any animals. The ultimate objective of every *Kipsigindet* was to own a cow; thus

crop cultivation and herding of goats and sheep were geared towards accumulation of wealth to enable one to buy a cow. Besides this, raiding for animals became an institutionalized enterprise in the community with the *laibons* playing a pivotal role in giving their blessings and predicting the outcome of raids. Animal husbandry thus remained the most lucrative enterprise in pre-colonial Kipsigisland.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD IN THE KIPSIGISLAND TO 1919

4.1 The Establishment of Colonial Rule

The partition of the East African region is well documented by Harlow and Chilver (1965), Oliver and Atmore (1967), Burke (1970) and Brett, (1973) among others. Suffice it to say that European interest in Africa predated the partition of the continent. The Uganda region was of crucial importance to the British, first as the source of the River Nile which was the lifeline for their other important region, Egypt, and secondly for its strategic and economic reasons (Oliver and Atmore, 1967; Okoth-Ogendo, 1991). Uganda was already a British sphere of influence for a long time, but in the wake of rivalry and impending competition from the Germans in Tanganyika, the British sought to secure their interests in Uganda permanently. In 1890 they negotiated an agreement with the Germans in what came to be termed as the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890. This agreement drew the southern boundary with the Germans and a line from the Indian Ocean through Mount Kilimanjaro to Lake Victoria was drawn. The line thence proceeded to western Uganda in a straight line through Lake Victoria (Gordon, 1946; Oliver and Atmore, 1967). Later Uganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894. The eastern boundary of this protectorate was amorphous but extended to the Rift Valley area which is presently in Kenya and in which the Kipsigisland is located.

It is noteworthy here that the Kenyan side was not initially of great importance to the British as was Uganda. Kenya was annexed in order to secure a safe passage from the Indian Ocean port of Mombasa to Uganda and in due course became important because of its abundant natural resources, especially the fertile agricultural lands and moderate

climate (Harlow and Chilver, 1965; Wolff 1974). When Kenya was declared a protectorate in 1900, it was imperative that the Kenya-Uganda boundary had to be revised to correspond to that which is existing now. Once again all that area to the west of the Rift Valley became Kenyan territory. With such arrangement the Kipsigisland was therefore reverted to become part of the western Kenya region.

Wolff, (1974) gives two major reasons for the British interest in East Africa in general and Kenya in particular. First was its strategic importance, but most importantly were the region's relatively rich agricultural possibilities which raised hopes of a healthy trade with Europe. These were seen both in terms of the exploitation of indigenous crops and also providing an opportunity for the production of those commodities that were in great demand in Britain. As early as 1893 Fredrick Lugard (later Lord Lugard) who had travelled extensively in the region, reported enthusiastically of commercial possibilities in agriculture. He noted of the region's fertile soils and adequate rainfall and their suitability of producing such products as sisal, cotton, rubber, coconut and so on. Of particular interest were the highlands which offered "unlimited room" for the location of agricultural settlements or stock-rearing farms, "...the new industries in coffee, tea, indigo, fibre, tobacco, wheat, cotton ...could be inaugurated here" (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:8). Charles Eliot and John Ainsworth became the principle architects of early European settlements by making persistent calls for white immigration into Kenya. In order to safeguard these economic interests, all 'unoccupied and waste' lands in the protectorate were declared crown lands in 1902 and were either sold or leased to the incoming white settlers. The price for freehold was stated as about 2s.8d. per acre and leasehold rents as from £1 per annum per 1,000 acres (*Ibid.*).

Early European penetration in the Kipsigisland seems to have started in about 1885 for in this year the first colonial District Commissioner (DC) walked into Kericho district from Narok (DC/KER/6/1 Agricultural Gazetteer, p. 87). Following him came Indian traders and European settlers. These were provided with money and other facilities to induce the local African people to appreciate the benefits of trade goods and services so that they did not stage resistance to British colonial rule. The DC spent his first tour in a camp by the river at Sotik Post, and the Indians created Sotik Post for the same reason. On his second visit, the DC moved to Kericho and the first European house was built there in 1897 (*Ibid*). An earlier account of European encounter is however provided. Lang'at states that the first European to pass through the Kipsigisland was the German naturalist, Dr. Fischer in 1886. Then followed Fredrick Jackson, a servant of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC). It is reported that Menya arap Kisiara, an undoubtedly successful warrior and a person of considerable influence, was recognised by the Kipsigis in a leadership role concluded treaties with the Maasai and also with Fredrick Jackson in 1889 (DC/KER/3/1 Political Record Book, p. 2; Lang'at, 1969:88). According to Kipsigis custom, two dogs were cut in half to symbolise the establishment of blood-brotherhood relationship between Jackson and Arap Kisiara. But Jackson was charged with the duty of persuading African leaders to sign treaties of friendship with the IBEAC Company. This was done on the same day. Arap Kisiara placed himself and his people under the protection, rule and government of the Company, ceding to it all rights over land and people, and accepting in return the doubtful benefit of association with the Company together with a Company flag (Lang'at, 1969:88).

Be it as it may, these early contacts of the Kipsigis people with Europeans were through the attempt to open a road through Narok to Uganda. This was established but the hostility of the Kipsigis prevented it becoming popular. It is said that the "natives" were generally treacherous and the attack on Elton Newman (a Company employee sent to survey the route to Uganda through Maasailand) at Sotik closed for a time the road (*Ibid.* p. 2). The next occurrence of importance was during the Nandi expedition of 1900 when Colonel Evatt accompanied by Lieut. Henderson and Dr. Sherlock entered the Kipsigisland in pursuit of Nandi cattle and refugees but instead seized a number of Kipsigis cattle, not knowing which were Nandi or Kipsigis. The Kipsigis attacked the party at night. Dr. Sherlock and a number of soldiers and Maasai were killed in action, Lieut. Henderson was dangerously wounded and large numbers of cattle were recovered by the Kipsigis (DC/KER/3/1 p 2; Lang'at, 1969:89-90).

Subsequently the British were however determined to subdue the Kipsigis. In May 1902 Major Evans Gorges who was the first British Political Officer opened Kericho station. Two months later a medical assistant was posted to Kericho. Sergeant Ellison succeeded Major Gorges in January 1903, and in March that year, Her Majesty the Commissioner visited Kericho. Gradually the colonial administration started to increase the numbers of their staff at Kericho station. These colonial administrators toured the whole area of the Kipsigisland and filed favourable reports on the suitability of the area for European settlement for agricultural purposes.

The Kipsigis came to realise that they were not after all an independent people in 1905. In March that year the Kipsigis of Sotik raided the Maasai as was their custom and carried off a large number of cattle. They were ordered by the colonial administrators to hand back the stolen cattle and pay a fine. At first they refused to do

so and assumed a defiant attitude buttressed by their sense of independence (Toweett, 1979). As a consequence a punitive military expedition was sent against them in July 1905 under the command of Major Pope-Hennessy and with James Partington as political officer. The Kipsigis were caught unaware and after realising the futility of an armed struggle, offered little resistance. About 2,000 heads of cattle were taken from them (Lang'at, 1969:90). They were also made to work on the Kericho-Sotik road as a punishment and by December 1905 the telegraph line was completed from Lumbwa (Kipkelion) to Kericho. Besides, the King African Rifles (KAR) was stationed in Kericho to provide the Kipsigis with visible show of strength on the ground (DC/KER/3/1 Political Record Book p.2; Lang'at, 1969:90).

Practically the Kipsigis ceased to be an independent people. When in late 1905 the Nandi rebelled, it was anticipated that the Kipsigis would join them. To the contrary, they did not participate and in fact assisted the colonialists by bringing in all the Nandi cattle that had crossed into their country. At a meeting to which the Kipsigis chiefs were called at Muhoroni, HM Commissioner expressed to the Kipsigis his thanks for the services they had rendered and from this time onwards it was felt that the presence of a company of the KAR was no longer necessary (DC/KER/3/1, Political Record Book, p. 4). Overt Kipsigis resistance seemed to have come to an end though covert acts of resistance and sabotage did persist for a long time from the date of the British colonial establishment in the Kipsigisland.

Colonialism generated a dynamic process driven by distinctive internal and external contradictions rather than fixed, unchanging conditions of underdevelopment. Berman (1990:8) notes that these contradictions were emanating from the way a particular capitalist metropole interacted with various and often idiosyncratic indigenous social

formations. This momentous process of linkage is understood here through a particular construction of the concept of 'articulation'. It is this process that determined the patterns of social formation and class struggle and the recurrent crises of accumulation and legitimisation which occurred in a colony. With the implementation of colonial rule in the Kipsigisland, therefore, came a number of external regulations and influences that were set to gradually modify and change the Kipsigis indigenous economy. Such aspects as the monetization of the Kipsigis economy, the levying of poll and hut taxes, the recruitment of the Kipsigis labour for colonial purposes, the exploitation of the Kipsigis agricultural surplus and the introduction of new crops, were all set to change the economic and agricultural landscape of the Kipsigis (Saltman, 1971). However, the policy of monetization was a gradual process and by 1919 the capitalist mode of production had not sufficiently taken roots and was progressively busy in adjusting, restructuring and exploiting the Kipsigis traditional economy.

Meillassoux, (1971:97) notes that initially the contact is between two modes of production and one of them dominates and begins to change the other. The author continues to point out that as long as the domestic relations of production and reproduction persist, rural communities although in a process of change remain qualitatively different from the capitalist mode of production. However, in the long run the general conditions for reproducing the social whole resulting from this interpretation no longer depend on determination inherent in the domestic mode of production but on the decisions taken in the capitalist sector. By this process, contradictory in essence, the domestic mode is simultaneously maintained and destroyed - maintained as a means of social organisation which produces value from which imperialism benefits, and

destroyed because it is deprived in the end of its means of reproduction, under the impact of exploitation.

The Kipsigis were thus gradually drawn to a money economy through the levying of taxes, collective fines, the growing of cash crops; such as maize and by offering their labour for wages. Berman, (1990:35) argues that the indigenous societies in which money, commodity production, wage labour and bureaucratic forms of organisation were virtually unknown were progressively subdued gradually subdued in favour of European forms of capital by a state that already had more than two centuries of development. The African societies were subjected to contradictory forms and patterns of transformation, destruction and preservation of their internal structures, resulting in a wide variety of intermediate and hybrid social formations. This process, he continues to assert, did not occur instantaneously or uniformly in a single broad wave, but in a variety of forms and phases encountering different local conditions and responses. The resulting variations were determined by particular forms of external capitalist penetration and political subjugation of the structures of the indigenous societies and the diversity of the local ecology and resource endowment. 'Articulation' involved widespread coercion by the colonial states and frequent, if not uneven, forms of active and passive African resistance. The differing patterns of impact and reaction within African societies also determined the emergence of distinctive processes of class formation and struggle. He concludes that articulation, then is a concept for understanding the distinctive forms of uneven capitalist development in colonial Africa. The patterns of unequal exchange and the centre-periphery relations seen as causes of underdevelopment by dependency theorists are here understood as the consequences of the diverse forms of uneven capitalist development occurring within the historical processes of articulation. In this

chapter, we set to explore the initial stages of capitalist penetration that Marx calls primitive accumulation (Rodney, 1972) and examine the distinctive local response prevailing in the Kipsigisland.

4.2 Land

The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 had declared all African "unoccupied" land as crown land (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:8; Berman, 1990:). It was noted that the 1902 Ordinance laid down that no 'native' had any title to land, as his claim to land was only recognised as long as he occupied it (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:8). Together with the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915, which defined the boundaries of the "native reserves", the Kipsigis found themselves confined in an area without an option of spreading out as was the case previously. The original reason for the establishment of reserves, according to Huxley (1935:45) was simply to make way for European settlement. The whole region of Chepalungu and the "buffer zone" with the Gusii were precluded from Kipsigis use. A potential situation leading to pressure on land had already been created. By 1919 cases were noted of people living far outside the reserve boundaries and some had left their homes to squat in European farms (DC/KER/1/3, Political Record Book, p.64). Evading European exaction may have driven the former while economic reasons, such as need for taxes may have motivated the latter. But it is also true that both categories sought to enjoy more pastureland resources, which were now diminishing in their homes. Their action was, of course, a deliberate challenge to the occupation of their land by alien settlers and thus constituted a form of resistance (Jal, G., 1999; Oral communication). Several informants noted that the Kipsigis frequently flouted boundary

regulations in order to get more pastures for their cattle (P. Chebose, W. Torongi and P. Ngena O.I., 1997)

Land alienation among the Kipsigis started with the advent of European penetration in the area. The early European settlers followed the route from Narok through Sotik. They were therefore apt to take up the first land they came to and it was in this respect that the bushlands of East Sotik were taken up first leaving the red soil and forest areas to latter settlers. A man called Joanne's Duirs had one of the first farms and his old house site was still evident at Itembe Settlement Scheme by the close of colonial rule. Most of these early farms, mostly around the present Bomet area, failed and some of them lay empty for about 20-30 years. The major reason behind their failure was due to impeded drainage. The area was liable to clogging and flooding. Secondly, the area has extreme climatic conditions and of all areas in the Kipsigisland have severe and prolonged drought periods. These areas, generally termed as Chepalungu, proved unsuitable for European settlement and though already had been declared crown land, were later to be exchanged for more suitable agricultural land (arap Korir, 1978:12). Meanwhile the area lay empty for many years and the farms were to become vulnerable to occupation by the local people who refused to acknowledge that their land now belonged to the settlers (DC/KER/3/1, Political Record Book, p. 87)

Later the areas which proved favourable for Europeans settlement were in the Sotik area, the Songor- Muhoroni area, the Kipkelion- Londiani and the Mau-Molo areas, all surrounding the Kipsigis reserve. In his journey to Kericho and Sotik in 1906, Ainsworth reported that

".... this ridge country which lies in a triangle between Kimugu and Chepkoisi streams would be a very suitable agricultural country for settlers were it not for its remoteness from the railway and the consequent inability of any of the products to stand the transport" (DC/KER/3/1, Political Record Book, p. 1)

Saltman (1971:27) has observed that when the British first began alienating the Kipsigis land for white settlement, it was ostensibly to create a buffer zone between the mutually antagonistic Kipsigis and Gusii. But from the outset it was clear that an underlying tenet of the British policy towards the Kipsigis was the ultimate coercion of the latter from a predominantly pastoral economy to one of 'peasant' cultivation. When a second offer of the Kipsigis land to white settlers was proposed in 1912, objections were raised both by the Kipsigis and by certain sympathetic local DCs and DOs on grounds that these lands constituted traditional Kipsigis grazing areas. Belfield, the governor at the time, responded that he was "... not in favour of giving the African native land outside his reserve for any purpose and ... deprecate in the strongest possible way the suggestion that his pernicious pastoral proclivities should be encouraged by the grant of any land for grazing purposes" (Land Office Document, 270)

Advocating for European settlement, Ainsworth noted that the whole of the Kipsigis district was formed of a series of plateaux with streams far in between, with more than ninety percent of it not under cultivation. He concluded, since only cultivation mattered in the colonial period anyway, that the area that was being allowed for a "Native Reserve" was therefore ample and extremely generous. He even coveted the Bureti and Sotik areas as being the best grazing land in East Africa. The Sotik "buffer zone" was therefore alienated for European settlement. In 1906 a survey was undertaken for the parcelling out of about 5,000-acre farms to European settlers in the Kipsigis country. Besides, the Sotik area enjoyed two more advantages - first was the proximity of the Kisii farms whose fertility seemed remarkable and secondly the area would act as a buffer zone between the Kipsigis and the Gusii against whom they were supposedly in

"tribal" warfare (arap Korir, 1978:9). Evidently European settlement was promoted in virtually all areas surrounding the Kipsigisland. Okoth-Ogendo (1991) who has traced the origins of Kenya's agrarian law and institutions through the colonial and post-colonial periods argues that settler farming was promoted at the expense of local agriculture and eventually the agrarian law and institutions were re-organised to facilitate the process of economic transformation.

By 1911 a large number of Europeans went to Sotik to settle and others were to inspect farms. The Londiani allotment farms, a number of them in the Kericho district, were gazetted for occupation. A surveyor, Thomas Taylor, was engaged in November 1911 in surveying the farms on the Lumbwa-Kericho road for white settlers and as a result the latter part of the same year was characterised by a very large increase in European population in Sotik, Kericho, Fort Ternan, Muhoroni and Londiani Allotment (DC/KER/3/1/1911). Some of the farms near Muhoroni in the Londiani extension were transferred to Kisumu district for administration purposes due to their proximity to the region. By the beginning of the First World War, therefore, substantial land in the Kipsigisland had been alienated and occupied by white settlers. Even at such an early period, the Kipsigis labourers started to invade the settlers' farms as squatters implying a decrease in pastureland for their livestock (*Ibid*).

Okoth-Ogendo (1991) posits that "the legal organisation of the colonial agricultural economy was designed with one principle objective in mind, namely, to enable the European sector to develop by underdeveloping the African sector". Yet white settlement in the Kipsigisland seems to have been checked by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Indeed some of the white settlers were enlisted in the army and actively participated in combat military operations in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Although some of these settlers managed to return after the war, others abandoned their farms altogether and moved elsewhere in Kenya, especially the Nakuru-Molo area. Those who returned during the war together with those who remained were actively involved in the production of flax that enjoyed favourable price increases during the war. Talbott, (1974:59) has shown that the First World War had the effect of skyrocketing the prices of many agricultural commodities among which was the tender for flax. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities flax cost about £65 a ton, by 1915 it was valued at roughly £120. One year later, shipments from Kenya were fetching nearly £220 on the English market. Russia, the biggest producer of flax was rocked by the Great October 1917 Revolution and by mid 1919 the price of flax had risen to over £300 per a ton.

At the height of these price increases and immediately after the First World War the British government attempted to fulfil commitment to demobilised soldiers by finding them agricultural employment overseas. An aspect of this commitment was the Soldiers Settlement Scheme instituted in Kenya in 1919 which allowed a great deal of new lands to be surveyed and opened up and thereby added to the white domain (Odingo, 1973). Some of the land alienated was in Kericho District. And so after the conclusion of the war, ex-soldiers started streaming into the district to receive large tracks of land as rewards for their service. Large numbers of new members, belonging to the British East Africa Disabled Officers Corps (BEADOC), arrived in Kenya and when they reached Kericho District they started a flax-growing scheme opening up new demand for further land alienation and occupation as will be seen later in the study (arap Korir, 1978:9).

But before 1919 the major European farming activities were limited to animal husbandry and crop production, especially in flax. The former predominated over the latter though this situation seems to have changed towards 1919 due to prevailing high

flax prices. The European farmers obtained their animals from the Kipsigis and the neighbouring Gusii through purchase (Stanley Ruto, O.I., 1997). But it is also true that a number of them received their animals from the administration in Kericho (Berman 1990:37). These were animals recovered after cattle rustling, those acquired from the Kipsigis as collective fines for various offences, those commandeered by tax collectors or those acquired from the Gusii during their 1908 and 1914 resistances.

Crop production in this period was limited to flax. However a few experiments with wheat, potatoes and passion fruits were in progress. Though tea had first been cultivated in Kericho station in May 1916, this was only limited to about 1/4 of acre experimental plot. By 1919 tea and coffee, also introduced in May 1916 for roughly 1/2 acre experimental plot, had not become major cash crops attracting any attention (DC/KER/3/1/1916, p.17)

Land alienation and settler farming activities had great impact on the indigenous Kipsigis agricultural economy. As already noted Bureti and Sotik were some of the best pasturelands in the district. Shortage of pastureland started being felt as early as 1912 and resulted in large numbers of the Kipsigis who were ready to offer their labour as squatters on European farms in order to secure pastureland for their animals. In 1913 the plan of allowing "natives" to squat on white farms under agreements was disapproved by the governor of the colony of Kenya who ruled out that no one was to leave the Reserve except for work and that cattle may be allowed to go and graze if a farmer wanted his farm grazed. This was hotly disputed by the settlers who in a meeting held on June 10, 1913 by their representatives at Lumbwa (Kipkelion) all agreed that squatting was the only way to obtain regular labour supply. They even allowed each house owner to bring along about five heads of cattle for use of family, though these

animals had to be branded (DC/KER/3/1 1913, p.11). That there were a few Kipsigis who were ready to accept these terms indicates a lot about the extremely rising need to acquire more pastureland. Thus the colonial state started forcing the peasants to enter the labour market as squatters by ensuring that the material conditions of reproduction in the "Reserve" were insufficient to meet the needs of reproduction, commodity purchase and tax payment (Bernstein, 1977:4).

The impact of land alienation on the Kenyan African population has long been recognised by scholars (Odingo, 1973; Brett, 1973; arap Korir, 1978). First by decreasing the size of land available for African use, population pressure was increased and people were forced to seek wage employment, not only as a subsidiary source for the means of livelihood but as a way of obtaining cash for the payment of taxes and other essential household requirements (Wolf, 1974). Expropriation of land thus became a means of enhancing and exploiting African labour by drawing them into the capitalist sector (Meillassoux, 1981:127). This is not only true for the Kipsigis case but issues associated with land were to dominate the colonial history of the area. Besides, the Kipsigis also lost important resources, such as salt licks to the Europeans in the alienated areas and were forced to pay for their use. Stichter has observed that the reserve policy confined the African population to legally delimited areas as most African societies were merely circumscribed in *situ*. Among the Kipsigis and the Nandi, land limitation also resulted in the outflow of thousands of squatters for whom this was the only possibility of maintaining a purely pastoral way of life (Stichter, 1982:5). Having set the "Reserve" boundaries, the Kipsigis stood to loose as they regularly flouted these boundary regulations as a sign of passive resistance to the expropriation of their lands. For example, in August 1911 a number of cattle were found in Chepalungu forest, far

outside the "Reserve" limits. They were arrested and half of that number was confiscated (DC/KER/3/1/1911, p.5). Further expansion beyond the "Reserve" was restricted and the Kipsigis found this a curtailment of their free movement. For example, the residents of arap Koruoga and arap Martim were moved from across the old Sotik track to the "Reserve" (*Ibid*, 1914). Raids into Mau forest, like in January 1916, hunting the Kipsigis who were living outside their "Reserve" were regularly conducted. One settlement was found and one man caught in the January 1916 raid. The huts were also destroyed and these incidents clearly show a potential situation for pressure on the land.

Secondly, as it will be argued later in the study, the colonial administration preferred cultivation to animal husbandry. Consequently they sought to depastoralize the Kipsigis and land alienation and limitation were the initial steps in this direction (Saltman, 1971:27). By the advent of colonial rule the Kipsigis had not started experiencing any pressure due to shortage of land. But by 1919 one could safely argue that the Kipsigis could not comfortably meet their pastoral and other economic requirements without undue pressure from land shortage. This aspect becomes even more clearly evident later in the study.

4.3 Crop Production

Meillassoux (1981) has noted that neither capitalism nor feudalism is exclusive of the domestic economy for they rely on the domestic relations to reproduce themselves. A historical confrontation between them can not be considered by entailing the substitution of one for the other, but rather their mutual transformation or dependence of one on the other. When considering the penetration of capitalism in the domestic economy, a

dialectical process of destruction or preservation and impoverishment or accumulation takes place. As already noted, Okoth-Ogendo (1991) argues that even the legal organisation of the colonial agricultural economy was designed with one principal objective in mind, namely, to enable the European sector to develop by under-developing the African sector. This is being demonstrated in the study that dialectical materialism grants that it is possible for value to be transferred from one mode of production to another through the mechanism of primitive accumulation, that is, when the transfer is achieved through the destruction of one mode of production by another. Wolff (1974) notes that it is by preserving the domestic sector which is producing subsistence goods, that imperialism realises and, further perpetuates primitive accumulation. The enhancement and entrenchment of the Kipsigis in commodity production was one avenue of transforming the Kipsigis economy and exploiting the community through the extraction of its labour and resources (see Berman, 1990:37).

It has already been noted that the Kipsigis were mixed farmers, and *wimbi* production played a vital role in their agricultural economy. But to the Europeans this crop was useless and unsalable (Omwoyo, 1990). It was the avowed policy of the British colonial administrators to replace *wimbi* cultivation with a marketable and profitably grown crop, such as maize. As early as October 1903, the Kericho DC, McClellan started experimenting with wheat, maize and sweet potatoes - all did well except the last (DC/KER/3/1/1903). The success of the experimentation, coupled with frequent food shortages in 1903, 1904, 1906 and 1907 gave more impetus for the change. In 1906 the *wimbi* crop failed and as a consequence relief work was started. This continued through April 1907 when famine relief work was started on the Lumbwa-Kericho road and Kericho-Sotik road. About four to five thousand people were employed daily

(DC/KER/3/1/1907, p.4). The rains during 1911 were very minimal and the crops very poor and in some places failing altogether.

As noted elsewhere, improved seeds for marketable crops were issued, paid for generally out of chiefs' tax commissions and sometimes out of officials' pockets (Berman, 1990:53). It was not until 1913 that a large amount of maize seeds was distributed among the Kipsigis (DC/KER/3/I/1913, p.11). In recognition to this major change the women circumcision age - grade for 1913 was referred to as *chepandek* after maize (*pandek*) (W. Korir O.I. 1997). In March and April in the following year about ten tons of yellow maize were given out to all residents in the district. It was estimated that every hut owner got at least two pounds of yellow maize (*Ibid*). In May 1916, besides planting a quarter of acre with tea and half of an acre with coffee for experimentation, large quantities of Hickory King maize and trees were distributed and planted throughout the "Reserve". Despite these efforts there was great scarcity of food in the "Reserve", especially in the Sotik and lower Belgut areas which persisted for several months in that year.

However, by 1919 the cultivation of maize seems to have started, taking root generally in the entire Kipsigisland. Already in existence were two flourmills - one in location 4 and another in location 5, all started in 1911. Before then several water mills used in the grinding of the grain were in existence and dotted throughout the district. The adoption of maize did not initially augur well with the Kipsigis. Saltman, (1971:28) asserts that in fact maize was first introduced in the Kipsigisland in 1906 and the Kipsigis displayed a certain amount of resistance towards growing this crop but the resistance tapered off during the First World War. The British were undoubtedly interested in the cultivation of this crop which had both an export value and could as

well serve to feed the growing labour force in the protectorate. Berman (1990:53) gives another reason for colonial support of maize cultivation as “the need for regular sources of patronage and income to stabilise and legitimate powerfully increasing colonial domination”. This furnished the bedrock for rapid expansion of peasant commodity production in the years before World War I in Kenya. But to the Kipsigis maize was a useless crop not comparable to their all-important *wimbi*. For one, it required extensive cultivation which was alien to the Kipsigis. Secondly, it could not replace *wimbi* in the making of the traditional *murek* (beer). Thirdly it required to be ferried for long distances to be ground unlike *wimbi* which could be ground right in the household (Sillattee, O.I. 1979). Continuous exhortations from government officials, the establishment of water mills and later flour mills in the "Reserve", availability of free seeds, availability of market and the need for money to pay taxes, all gradually led to the adoption of maize cultivation, especially after 1913. The process of transforming the Kipsigis economy from a predominantly pastoral to one increasingly reliant on cultivation of cash crops started with the introduction of maize. Whereas in terms of the traditional pastoral economy land was considered a common grazing resource, maize cultivation and later the cultivation of other crops sparked off a process that could culminate in land enclosures and private ownership of land for production of such crops.

In comparison to other districts, especially the neighbouring Kisii district, (Omwoyo 1992) it is evidenced that the colonial government made little effort to improve the Kipsigis agriculture besides the introduction of maize. By 1919 no other saleable crops had been introduced though experimentations had been done with tea, coffee, potatoes and oranges. Except for maize, none of the crops had created any impact in the agricultural economy of the Kipsigis. Many informants were unaware of any innovations

introduced before the end of the First World War. Statistics on the Kipsigis agricultural production before 1918 are scanty and mostly absent unlike in other districts in Kenya. Inability of keeping such agricultural statistics is less plausible than the fact that the colonial administration largely neglected the Kipsigis agriculture. The apparent neglect of the Kipsigis agriculture is not hard to speculate here. The prime motive of the colonial government was to depastoralise the Kipsigis and turn them into labourers in settlers' farms (Langat, 1968). Besides, only maize cultivation made economic sense for the feeding of African labour in settlers' farms. Maize was easier and cheaper to produce since, despite its low nutritive value in comparison to indigenous crops, like *wimbi*, it provides a great quantity of food and the necessary energy that was ideal for the vast numbers of workers. Through its provision the workers could feel more satisfied and well fed so that they did their work with cheerfulness and vivacity (Bowles, 1979:198-202). Maize was a tool for the penetration of capitalism in rural areas because it was a more saleable crop. "Maize was introduced in order to assist a change in the mode of production in Kenya as a whole to a capitalist mode" (Bowles, 1979:202).

4.4 Animal Husbandry.

Contact with the British radically affected the Kipsigis economic system as expressed in a movement from a predominantly pastoral economy to one based on mixed farming. Within thirty years the Kipsigis economic interests shifted from a focus on cattle to intense interests in land and cash (Saltman, 1971). This shift did not happen by accident, but it was a result of a strategic colonial policy to depastoralise the Kipsigis. Right from the beginning the colonial government considered the Kipsigis as being treacherous and

consequently targeted their animals so as to humble them. All manner of tactics were used to achieve this colonial economic objective.

During the Nandi punitive military expedition of 1900, Colonel Evatt accompanied by Lieut. Henderson and Dr. Sherlock entered the Kipsigis country and seized a number of Kipsigis cattle. Such unwarranted raid on the Kipsigis evoked their anger at a time when they were not at war with anybody. The Kipsigis attacked the party at night. Dr. Sherlock, a number of soldiers and Maasai porters were killed and Lieut. Henderson was dangerously wounded and the majority of cattle recovered by the Kipsigis (DC/KER/3/9/1900, p.2). It is evidenced that even before formal occupation of the Kipsigisland by the British, the Kipsigis cattle was already a target of the colonial administration.

The Kipsigisland was formally occupied in May 1902 when Kericho station was opened by Major Gorges who was the first Political Officer. Until 1905 when the Kipsigis faced a punitive military expedition, it seems that the Kipsigis livestock had not started experiencing heavy depletion devices from the British. But traditionally cattle and goats were used as food supplements in case of food shortages and this was the case in 1903 and 1904 when the Kipsigis experienced a shortage of food due to rain failure. The Kipsigis resorted to slaughtering large numbers of goats for food and as a consequence there was a large export of goat skins, especially in the first half of 1904 (DC/KER/3/1/1904).

The punitive military expedition of July 1905 was precipitated by a Kipsigis raid on the Maasai livestock near Sotik. The Kipsigis who had carried a very large number of cattle from the Maasai refused to accept orders to hand back the stolen cattle and pay a fine. It is noteworthy here that the fine was in form of cattle which the Kipsigis flatly

refused to comply with. As a consequence Major Pope-Hennessy was dispatched with soldiers to the Kipsigis country. The Kipsigis put up a stiff resistance but were soon overwhelmed and about 2,000 heads of cattle was taken by force from them. Additionally the Kipsigis were made to work on the Kericho-Sotik road as a punishment. It has been argued elsewhere that the involvement of the indigenous peoples in the colonial labour market was with a hope of receiving their animals back in form of payment and the Kipsigis case was not exceptional (Zezeza, 1987). The objectives of such expeditions are easy to understand. Besides politically asserting the "rule of law" and showing their military prowess, the colonialists aimed at disrupting the Kipsigis economy by depleting their livestock in order to force them to enter the money economy by either cultivating marketable crops, such as maize or enter the colonial labour market. The Kipsigis had to offer their labour for the return of their captured cattle and in order to be able to buy more cattle. The colonial administration recognised the extent of the Kipsigis reliance on their livestock as a means of livelihood and they sought to sever this dependence by depleting the Kipsigis livestock (Saltman, 1971:20). The punitive expedition of 1905 seems to have achieved its aim of frustrating the Kipsigis. Later in that year when the Nandi faced another punitive expedition, the Kipsigis far from joining their kinsmen, even assisted the colonial authorities in returning all the Nandi cattle that had crossed over to their country (DC/KER/3/1/1905, p.4).

The colonial government used all manners of tactics to get rid of the Kipsigis livestock. A number of livestock was captured whenever there was a police patrol, especially along the Kipsigis borders. In August and September 1909, for example, there was a police patrol in Tinderet in which a number of livestock was captured. Whenever cattle were found outside the designated Kipsigis "Reserve", these were confiscated. A

notable example was in August 1911 when a number of cattle were found in the Chepalungu forest far well outside the "Reserve limits". They arrested the animals and half were confiscated under the Diseases of Animals Ordinance (DC/KER/3/1/1911, p. 6). In the same month, another police patrol captured a large number of cattle, sheep and goats in Tinderet. Several cattle allegedly stolen previously from Europeans were also found. A number of men, women and children were also brought in. All the livestock taken was then confiscated and sold in October and the people punished (*Ibid*). In September of the same year, the Sotik chiefs brought in a number of people with livestock which had been living in Chepalungu, Korgech and Mismis. The livestock was confiscated and the people punished (*Ibid*). These and many incidences in which case the Kipsigis livestock was arbitrarily confiscated and sold out abound in the early colonial period. This points to the conclusion that the British colonial authorities wanted to depastoralize the Kipsigis.

Livestock was also used in the payment of fines and to settlement of disputes. Besides the Kipsigis were forced by economic circumstances to sell their animals in order to pay the colonial imposed taxes (Stichter, 1982:50, Zeleza, 1987). In 1911 huts were counted for tax for the first time and the Kipsigis age- grade for men in 1911- *Kipsirget*- bears this testimony. *Kipsirget* simply means the counting of huts (arap Kirui, O.I., 1997). Default in paying hut and poll taxes could lead to confiscation of animals. Even petty crimes were resolved by levying fines in form of cattle. Similarly, cattle were confiscated for 'crimes' committed individually and collectively. Collective fines amongst the Kipsigis became common even for petty reasons. For example, in December 1912, a fine of about 130 heads of female livestock was imposed on locations of arap Chemosit and arap Persecutor for engaging in cattle raids (DC/KER/3/1/1912, p. 9). A collective

fine of roughly 10 heads of cattle was imposed on the location of arap Taminee in connection with a theft from Wills Cameron in January 1912. Again in April a collective punishment of about Rs 1,000/= on arap Tamimee's location was collected largely in form of cattle. In 1913 a collective punishment amounting to nearly sixteen thousand Rupees (Rs16, 000) was imposed on the Kipsigis of Belgut and Bureti. Most of it was paid before the end of July. Bureti paid in cash. Cattle numbering over 80 were brought in from Kipterre by Captain Leland. It is noteworthy that the people of Bureti managed to pay their fine in cash after selling their livestock to the Gusii in an already thriving cattle trade along the borders, especially at Sondu. The inhabitants of Kipterre suffered as their animals had to be confiscated.

The commencement of the First World War negatively impacted on the Kipsigis livestock. During the war Africans' contribution in manpower and material support were crucial, and the supply of cattle to feed the soldiers was resorted to (Brett, 1973). In February 1915 a large *baraza* of all chiefs was held and the subject was getting bullocks for the government's war purposes (DC/KER/3/1/1915, p. 15). To begin with, cattle concentration camp for the Gusii captured livestock during their 1914 resistance had been started at Muhoroni in December 1914 under Captain McCall. These Gusii cattle were to be exchanged for Kipsigis bullocks and in the first transaction in March 1915, Dr. Hannigan obtained over 2,000 bullocks for the government (DC/KER/3/1/1915, p. 15). Henceforth Hannigan went round exchanging cows for bullocks, starting with Sotik in April. When such exchanges did not yield enough bullocks, the colonial authorities resorted to purchases. In July 1916 Lieut. Peffers arrived to buy bullocks for military meat ration. During July, August and September he bought well over 1,725 bullocks at prices ranging from about 35 to 65 rupees. Over 1,300 bullocks were obtained from the

Kipsigis and the rest from Indian and Somali traders. Over Rs 80,000/= were paid out for these purchases (DC/KER/3/1/1916,p. 14). In addition to such purchases, the Kipsigis continued to suffer from numerous unnecessary collective fines in which their bullocks were systematically confiscated. However, at this time the Kipsigis were also willingly selling their livestock in order to obtain money for payment of taxes (Cherogin, S., O.I., 1997).

By 1917 both cattle and donkeys were required for military purposes. In April 1917 Lieut. Gethin came to the "Reserve" to buy donkeys for the military and Captain McCall and Lieut. Aggett were busy buying about 425 cattle from the Kipsigis and traders in May. The great scarcity of food in the "Reserve" during this period occasioned by drought worsened the situation and more Kipsigis were willing to sell their livestock for money (DC/KER/3/1/1917, p.8). In August Lieut. Aggett obtained roughly 385 cattle for the military and a number of oxen for government transport were purchased. In January and February 1918, about 500 cattle were obtained for military meat ration. By the end of the war the Kipsigis viewed their livestock with an extra purpose - as a source of money. Cattle could now be sold not only to acquire tax money, but also to meet basic needs, such as for buying food and other items being sold around by Indian and Somali traders (Berman, 1990, Zeleza, 1987). The depletion of the Kipsigis livestock was set to continue as the Kipsigis started acquiring more tastes for imported exotic goods and services.

Meanwhile issues relating to cattle rustling across the border continued unabated in the early colonial period. In spite of the government's effort to bring to a halt inter-ethnic raiding of cattle, this aspect proved subtler than the colonial authorities would have anticipated. Practically no year or season passed without an incident of

cattle raids between the Kipsigis on one hand and the Gusii, Maasai or Luo on the other and colonial annual reports are rich in these accounts.

Cattle raids on the Maasai were behind the punitive expedition of 1905 on the Kipsigis. In 1910 there was a border friction with the Luo, especially at Marraboi salt lick. This salt lick, the Kipsigis asserted, had been theirs and had been alienated. But both the Luo and Kipsigis drove their animals there and Europeans presence could not deter conflicts. During the earlier part of 1911, a considerable number of raids took place from the Maasai, Luo, Gusii and Europeans. The European's Lumbwa Farmers Association wrote to the government protesting the raids and asking for measures to be undertaken with a view to putting a stop to such activities (DC/KER/3/1/1911, p. 5). In 1912 livestock raids broke out from the Maasai, Luo and Europeans. Incidents of isolated livestock thefts from European farms were also frequent. For instance, on March 10, two oxen were stolen from Orchardson's farm and three heifers were stolen from a Somali kraal in Kericho (DC/KER/3/1/1912). In 1913 livestock rustling by the Kipsigis which began again in November 1912 increased enormously in the first few months of that year. In April 1914, the Maasai reported numerous raids by the Kipsigis of Sotik. The cases of cattle rustling, raids and occasional killings within and outside the district persisted throughout the early colonial period and such cases are just but a few examples. It seems that by 1919 the Kipsigis were not ready to forgo their traditional pastime habit - cattle rustling. This was in spite of the colonial efforts of reducing, if not, completely stopping such incidents.

The colonial authorities on their part utilised the incidents of livestock rustling to further depastoralize the Kipsigis. While every effort was made to stop livestock raids, the colonial officials burdened the Kipsigis with fines or taxes to effect the exercise.

One method used to reduce incidents of livestock raids was the holding of border meetings. The affected ethnic groups were brought together in meetings in which they voiced their complaints and offered solutions to the problem. Often either or both communities could be reprimanded by levying a fine, either in cash or in form of cattle (DC/KER/3/1/1913). Besides border meetings, the administration held numerous *barazas* in the countryside with a view of exhorting the Kipsigis to stop their habit of raiding their neighbours for livestock. These *barazas* doubled as public education meetings. For example, in March 1912, the Provincial Commissioner Ainsworth addressed a large *baraza* of chiefs in Kericho "principally on the subject of livestock [raiding] and women leaving the "Reserve" for purposes of prostitution" (DC/KER/3/1/1913, p. 80). Another large *baraza* was held in Kericho in April 1913 and the chiefs were told to very strongly take measures to put to an end livestock raiding. In July 1917, another large *baraza* was held on the Amala River between the Maasai and the Kipsigis to discuss livestock raids. In April 1916 issues of livestock rustling with the Gusii and the Luo had persisted and the Assistant District commissioner (ADC) held numerous meetings to resolve the issue. In some of such *barazas*, culprits were publicly reprimanded. For example, in January 1917, there was an outbreak of livestock raiding by the Kipsigis from the Luo but no one was caught. This incident culminated in the Kipsigis catching and torturing a Luo who had followed his stolen livestock. The culprits were publicly beaten before a large *baraza* (*Ibid*, p. 3).

The chiefs were also extensively used to bring to an end livestock raids, and only a few examples will suffice here. Besides holding their own locational *baraza* and urging their residents to stop raiding, they used their positions to arrest the culprits. In September 1911, for example, the Sotik chiefs brought in a number of people with

stolen livestock who had been living in Chepalungu, Korgech and Mismis (DC/KER/3/1/1911, p. 6). The pay of all chiefs was temporarily withheld in 1911 for a considerable period in consequence of the number of livestock raids. Worse still chiefs could suffer loss of pay when they seemed unable to control the vice. This happened in 1913 when most of the pay of the Belgut and Bureti chiefs and headmen was used in rewarding *manyatta morans* in connection with arresting suspects. Chiefs and headmen were also used in counting and identifying stolen cattle in their locations. In February 1917, for example, chief arap Borgochut and headman Toptigen counted all livestock in their locations and after a thorough investigation discovered large numbers of livestock raided from the Gusii and the government camp at Muhoroni. About 50 culprits were sentenced and large numbers of stolen livestock recovered (DC/KER/3/1/1917). In a nutshell, chiefs proved very instrumental in the control and curbing of livestock raids, and in depastoralising the Kipsigis.

Perhaps of some importance was the institution of police patrols, especially along the borders. Along the Kipsigis-Gusii, Kipsigis-Luo and Kipsigis-Maasai borders police posts were established at Kipkebe, Marraboi and Amala respectively. Together with these police posts the colonial authorities had established Guard huts in the trouble spots. Such guard huts were manned by "Tribal" or Lumbwa retainers instituted in 1910 whose duty was to curb and check livestock raids. Such a Guard hut was established at Marraboi salt lick in March 1912. The role of such police patrols and Guard huts was not only to scare the Kipsigis from engaging in cattle raids, but also to track down raided cattle and apprehend the culprits. These police patrols only helped to check livestock raids and failed totally in eliminating them because, as will be evident later, cattle rustling was a deeply rooted tradition beyond the effectiveness of the police to

bring to an end. In August and September 1909 there was a police patrol in Tinderet and a number of livestock were captured (DC/KER/3/1/1909). A police patrol captured a large number of cattle, sheep and goats in Tinderet in 1911. Several cattle stolen from Europeans were also found. What was interesting was that all the livestock taken was confiscated and sold and the people involved in such transaction were punished (*Ibid*, 1911). From this point it seems that the police patrols were more preoccupied with confiscating 'stolen' cattle rather than stopping the raids from reoccurrence (D. Serem, O.I., 1997). Thus police patrols were just but one of the many ways of depastoralising the Kipsigis, turning them to accept wage labour and consumers of exotic products.

The Maasai also proved useful in curbing the 'menace' of the Kipsigis livestock raids. For example, a number of Sotik livestock found by the Maasai outside their "Reserve" in December 1911 was brought by them to the DC. Again these animals were confiscated and sold later to the public. But besides this the Maasai *morans* were occasionally hired to truck down cattle raiders among the Kipsigis. One such incident was in March 1913 when most of the pay of the Belgut and Bureti chiefs and headmen was used in rewarding *manyatta morans* in connection with arresting some Kipsigis culprits. Indeed in April a large number of cattle raiders was arrested and sentenced to some terms of imprisonment (DC/KER/ 3/1/1913, p. 10).

Fines were equally used as a method of curbing cattle raids. A few incidents of collective fines imposed on certain sections among the Kipsigis have already been cited. The practice of using fines where border meetings, police patrols, chiefs and *barazas* could not work is the height of economic punishment and exploitation. It is being argued here that fines in the form of livestock or cash were aimed at depleting livestock in order to depastoralise the Kipsigis. It was common for the Kipsigis to sell their animals in

order to pay such fines. In April 1917 it is noted that the Kipsigis "... sold many cattle in connection with Stock and Produce Theft fines" and these were many and frequent (DC/KER/3/1/1917, p. 6). It is ironical that a people who treasure animals to a point of having an institutionalised system of raiding from their neighbours should be made to suffer further losses of even what they have already. Such collective fines probably provided a great impetus for more raids if the Kipsigis had to compensate themselves for the losses and adequately replenish their herds. Even those who entered the colonial labour market did so with the aim of replenishing their stock (Illiffe, 1983, D. Serem, O.I., 1997). And so in the early colonial period, Illiffe, 1983 stock raids remained the cheapest way of replenishing ones herd after losses incurred collectively or individually even when these were willingly sold in order to pay taxes (*Ibid*).

It is apparent that the colonial authorities recognised the intricate relationship between cattle raids and the institution of *laibonism*. It has already been noted that the *laibons* played a central role in stock raids as they had to be consulted to give their blessings for cattle raids. Realising this connection, the colonial authorities set out to dismantle the institution of the *laibons* (Sialai, 1998). First they were not recognised as having any political authority over the Kipsigis. When it came to the appointment of chiefs and headmen, the *laibons* were grossly overlooked. The chiefs were merely government appointed headmen without natural authority or prestige but only that given by European support. Without any political authority, the *laibons* nevertheless continued having great social influence on the Kipsigis, especially on cattle raids. In dealing with them, the colonial authorities were set out to uproot them from amongst the Kipsigis and deported them outside the district. arap Koileki, whose influence had extended beyond the confines of his own district and to whom the Gusii and the Nandi used to

pay tribute, was deported together with two lesser *laibons*, arap Boisio and Kiboygot, to fort Hall (Muranga) in January 1914. The results were eminently satisfactory in the eyes of the colonial administrators, as stock rustling momentarily ceased to be such a profitable activity. Dobbs, the area DC, indicated that there was ".... a large decrease in cattle thefts" (DC/KER/3/1/1914, p. 7). However, it was noted that unfortunately the deported *laibons* had left a large number of children behind them who required constant watching to prevent them from following in their fathers' footsteps. arap Koileki, the principal *laibon*, had four sons: Kenduiwa, Kiboin, Keturet and the harmless Chebochok. The first three were removed and settled close to Kericho station with their stock so as to be under the close supervision of the government. Chebochok was humble and disinterested with *laibonship*, and so was considered harmless. It was the avowed policy of the colonial officials that none of the old *laibons* be ever allowed back into the district for good.

But the menace associated with the *laibons* was far from being solved. In July 1915 numerous raids from Mohoroni camp came to light and about 20 Kipsigis were imprisoned in connection with these actions. Two of these were of the *laibon* family (DC/KER/3/1/1915, p. 16). arap Koileki died in July 1916 and numerous attempts were made to find a successor. During the dry weather of 1917 and 1918 several attempts were made to give presents to some of the *laibon* families to induce them to bring rain. In Bureti there was some trouble owing to an apparent attempt on the part of the local population to create a new *laibon* in the person of Kenduiwa, the son of the deceased *laibon* (DC/KER/3/1/1917, p. 8). The government was set to suppress the revival of such an institution. Even in 1918 the Kipsigis sought a government permission to get back one of the *laibons* to bring rain or to select one of their sons but the permission

was refused. But owing to the drought and epidemics, there still remained a strong movement in 1918 to resuscitate the power of the *laibons* in the persons of their sons. And by 1920, Kenduiwa, son of arap Koileki was getting a good deal of powers and was receiving presents from the local residents. Kenduiwa was already on his way into being recognised as a *laibon*.

Meanwhile not much change had taken place in regard to animal diseases. The most common animal diseases, such likes as anthrax, rinderpest and pleuro-pneumonia continued to attack the Kipsigis and settler livestock. For example, between 1914 and 1918 a variety of diseases infected livestock in the Kipsigisland. The settlers took advantage of inoculations to prevent their livestock from the outbreak of disease, while this service was unavailable to the Kipsigis. Dipping, first introduced among the settler farmers in 1914, was also of limited use to the Kipsigis. As a result livestock diseases still continued unabated. In March 1915 several cases of anthrax were reported in Belgut and Bureti. In January 1917 livestock of the Kipkelion farmers had to be inoculated twice though large mortalities had already been reported. At the same time a severe outbreak of rinderpest, with large mortality, was reported among Johnson's and Robinson's livestock at Sotik. In February 1917 an outbreak of rinderpest swept through the Kipsigis "Reserve". In 1919 rinderpest broke out on Cooper Guys farm at Sotik but the disease was controlled by timely inoculation (DC/KER/3/1/1919, p. 4), though there was a general outbreak of rinderpest and foot and mouth diseases on numerous European farms.

4.5 Labour Reorganisation

The Kipsigis involvement in the colonial labour market started from the outset of colonialism in the area. The contribution of the Kipsigis to the colonial labour market must therefore be viewed in the context of the wider settler economy. The Kenyan settlers were inadequately supplied with finance capital and wage labour. The colonial government, which was dominated by the imperial policy of self-sufficiency, was unable to provide more than a rudimentary infrastructure. Colonial capital accumulation was therefore based on the appropriation of surplus capital created by the cheap and lowly paid African labour (van Zwanenberg, 1975: xvi-xix; Bernstein, 1977; Stichter, 1982:32; Berman, 1990:37). Such appropriation of labour surplus led to impoverishment and exploitation of the African "Reserves". Berman (1990) has noted that the autarky of pre-capitalist production in Africa was accomplished, either peacefully through the activities of merchant capital or more typically through the administrative coercion of the colonial state in the form of taxes, forced labour, or the compulsory production of cash crops. The use of the Kipsigis labour in the colonial economy was a foregone conclusion, given the heavy presence of settlers in the region. Because of its unstable character, the only way in which the settler economy could survive the difficult problems of take off, notes Stichter, (1982:26) and Okoth-Ogendo (1991:89) was through the utilisation of labour-intensive methods on a grand scale. What was needed, therefore, was a system that would ensure a steady supply of cheap and dependable labour - forced labour, squatting and migrant labour systems subsequently started emerging as distinct forms of labour organisation within the general capitalist mode of production (Stichter 1982:25).

The earliest involvement of the Kipsigis in supplying labour was after their defeat in the 1905 punitive military expedition. Stichter (1982:5) has noted that the eventual price of submission for both collaborators and resisters, all alike, was not the surrender of territorial sovereignty, but the provision of what the author calls "tribute labour". All the early supply of African labour to the British settlers took the character of tribute to the conquering overlords. The Kipsigis were forced to work on the Kericho-Sotik road as a punishment. Forced labour as the severest form of exploitation was manifested right from the outset of the Kipsigis involvement in the colonial labour market. In the early colonial period, the Kipsigis were involved in the construction of roads, telegraphs and later as farm labourers and herdsmen on European farms. The Sotik-Kericho road was built by the settlers under contract, but much of the labour was locally obtained largely through coercion as payment was negligibly low and the Kipsigis had no motivation to over their labour. Subsequent grading and widening of these roads witnessed a heavy outlay of African labour. Other public works heavily utilised African labour. For example, in March 1914 work on a large scale began on the Lumbwa-Sotik road, "... 1,000 natives being employed and paid out of collective fines" (DC/KER/3/1/1914, p. 13). In September 1916, it is reported that "... some Lumbwa working on the roads were not paid"(DC/KER/1/1/1916, p. 6). While in January 1917 it is reported that "work commenced with free labour on the roads to Amala and Sotik and to Kipsonoi and Sotik "(DC/KER/3/1/1917, p. 3). With such practice in place one is left to wonder how free such labour was when all other forms of labour were paid. As late as March 1918 it is stated that "...work with free labour started on Sotik road close to Litein location 10 and 11" (DC/KER/3/1/1918 p. 4). The use of prisoners on such roads shows how the colonial authorities wanted to utilise all the available "free" labour! (DC/KER/3/1/1917).

This "free labour" can only be understood from the context of forced or *corvee* labour. Forced labour in the Kipsigisland, as in the rest of Kenya, was widespread before and during the First World War (van Zwanenberg, 1975: 126-166, Stichter, 1982:37). The chiefs played a central role in the acquisition of such labour. What was referred to as administrative 'encouragement' of labour led directly to the use of coercion by the chiefs and their retainers. As Norman Leys told the Labour Commission of 1912-13 "... 'encouragement' by the District Officers means compulsion in practice. The whole basis of Government in a reserve is that every wish of the District Officer is law" (Leys, :1924:60). Thus at times the chiefs resorted to undesirable methods in maintaining the labour supply. They took sheep and goats from the people who refused to be commandeered for work; they could also accept to be bribed with an animal by those who sought exemption from work and so on. It is apparent from these few cases of 'free labour' that the Kipsigisland was not exempted from forced labour as none could have offered his labour freely without any coercion in a period when the acquisition of tax money forced the Kipsigis to sell their most cherished asset - the cattle (Clayton and Savage, 1974). The Kipsigis could not easily and readily enlist their labour in the colonial market, given the sustenance and self-sufficiency of their economy. As Stichter (1982:19) notes, the fact of conquest and the nature of African modes of production combined to introduce an element of coercion into labour recruitment from the outset.

Besides forced labour, the Kipsigis were forced by circumstances to offer their labour on settlers' farms as squatters. By 1913 the Kipsigis were already squatting on settlers' farms - a form of imposing themselves on European farms. Though the Governor disapproved such a plan of allowing "natives" to squat on farms, all the farmers agreed in a meeting held on June 10, that this was the only way of obtaining

regular labour supply (DC/KER/3/1/1913). Squatting, which Berman (1990:62) notes was the second of the most dominant forms of African labour to emerge, involved access to land on settler estates for cultivation and grazing in return for a stipulated period of labour service on the settler's fields at a minimum wage. Squatting or the imposition of the available manpower was attractive to most of the Kipsigis men for two reasons - first, they were allowed to move with part of their livestock to the farms, about five heads of cattle, thus getting access to extra pastureland and secondly it was a way of avoiding menial and forced labour in the "Reserve" (see Stichter, 1982:36; Zeleza, 1989). Due to such pull factors large numbers of the Kipsigis moved to settle on European farms in Sotik even before World War I. In October 1914 ".... natives from Sotik and Bureti for the first time go out of their locations for regular work" (DC/KER/3/1/1914, p. 14). And by December ".... large numbers of natives left Sotik for farms without permission" (*Ibid*). Besides, large numbers of "natives" were registered as resident labourers in Lumbwa (Kipkelion) and Fort Ternan farms. By March 1915, a complete census of all the Kipsigis on Sotik farms was conducted. One notable feature of the Kipsigis labour was that it was harnessed within the district before World War I. The close proximity of European farms in Sotik, Fort Ternan, Muhoroni, Londiani and Kipkelion offered them an opportunity to work in close proximity to their reserve homeland. As a result turnovers and desertions were relatively high whenever one felt that there was no need for working any longer, though imposition was generally attractive to them all.

Stichter (1982:32) argues that in the period before World War I the introduction of European goods did not create incentives for more waged labour demands. The consumption of such goods increased ,but hardly enough to account for the increase in

wage earnings when at the same time there was a great expansion of the market for African produce. The author therefore argues that three major forces transformed Africans into wage labourers: namely land alienation, taxation and administrative coercion. Furthermore Meillassoux (1981:91) notes that the managerial methods set up by the capitalist state - including the apparatus of coercion, repression and corruption - are part of the economic armoury of capitalism. Additionally, coercive methods of recruitment had the advantage of placing the cost of labour almost entirely upon the administration. The myth of "target-labour" or in its more intellectualised form, "the backward-bending labour curve" was used to rationalise the use of coercion to extract cheap labour and keep wages low (Weeks, 1971:364) This myth asserted that the African labour supply would not grow if wages increased rather since Africans had limited cash needs attached to particular 'targets', primarily the payment of taxes and purchases of particular imported consumer goods, supply would drop if wages were raised (Leys 1924).

The outbreak of the First World War heralded a new form of labour for the Kipsigis. In February 1915 over 200 Kipsigis from Sotik and Bureti alone were sent to Nairobi for wagon driving. In April 1915, Captain Rose of the 3rd KAR came to recruit the Kipsigis and got one hundred men in April and May. Lieut. Kenyon-Slaney and Dr. Cherrett were back in Sotik in June 1916 to recruit additional men for military service with KAR, and a total of about 300 Kipsigis were obtained - 200 for the 3rd and 100 for the 4th KAR battalions. In November in the same year Lieut. Eames of the 4th KAR battalion visited the district and got about 200 men. A proper KAR register in office was started with names, addresses and regimental numbers of all the Kipsigis serving in the KAR. The year 1916 is considered as the time when the Kipsigis entered the labour field

in large numbers. The circumcision grade for men in 1916 is called *Buloo*-so named because the Kipsigis entered the labour market at this time on some large numbers and made their thumb marks in purple (*buloo* -blue) ink. In April 1917 Martin and Allison of Nakuru recruited about 200 Kipsigis in the district. In March 1918 the Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) went on a recruiting safari in Sotik and got about 25 recruits. Essentially recruitment for the war efforts was widespread in the Kipsigisland and generally elsewhere in Kenya.

The effects of the war on the Kipsigis were manifold. Other than being sent for 'outside work', more workers were needed in the war against the Germans as carrier corps. The exact number of the Kipsigis involved in the war is hard to tell, though their number probably ran into several thousands of men. Of course, it was not possible to mobilise all that labour without coercion more so when such labour was paid below its actual value (Amin, 1974; Berman, 1990:59). Consequently the district seems to have witnessed some levels of forced conscription that was never known before that time. Compulsory labour levies and indirect pressure through the chiefs and headmen were the most widespread and usual means of procuring wage labour for the Government and settlers alike, and the very necessity of their use testifies to the inefficacy of other pressures (Clayton and Savage, 1974; Stichter, 1982:36). Youths were rounded up in the fields and from their homes. The chiefs and headmen once again proved to have been actually instrumental in supplying such manpower (A. Koech, O.I., 1997). Though the cost was high in terms of disaffection, poor work and high rates of desertion, force was the only alternative (Stichter, 1982:36). The use of force before 1920 was necessary as labour was an opportunity cost and taxes could be paid by other means (Fearn 1961:46). The percentage out at work increased enormously during the war - the change was

partly due to coercion for military work and the desire to avoid military draft. Going out to work 'voluntarily' was merely a means to escape from what was considered to be a far more distasteful condition - namely the terrible privation and high death rates of the carrier corps (Wolff, 1974:113). The registration of Native Ordinance, first passed in 1915, but only brought into force in 1919 and 1920, finally introduced the *Kipande* system which by law forced Africans to offer their labour for a specified time and to a specified employer so as to limit cases of desertion (van Zwanenberg, 1989).

The uprooting of such able-bodied young males from the district must have impacted negatively on agricultural production. Even the traditional forms of labour organisation which were analysed earlier in this study were greatly disrupted. The great scarcity of food in the reserve in 1917 and 1918 attests to this large-scale recruitment of the youth for war efforts. The situation was coupled with rain failure at the same time and by 1918 some European farmers sold off their farms and either left the district or the country entirely. By 1919 the situation had even become worse, forcing even women to take to coffee picking on the European farms to earn some form of livelihood. The circumcision age-grade for women in 1919 was named *chepkiskawa* (*Kawa* - being a loan word from the Kiswahili *Kahawa* meaning coffee) to commemorate such an important event. Therefore in 1919 the Kipsigis forms of traditional labour organisation had experienced profound changes and trends towards labour migration, hired labour, tenancy and imposition on European farms were increasingly taking some forms and gaining importance over traditional forms of labour output.

4.6 Trade and Exchange

The European penetration into the Kipsigisland gradually effected some changes in the realm of trade and exchange of goods and services. But it is true to argue that some aspects of the earlier traditional exchanges persisted in the early colonial period. The Kipsigis traditional trade with the Gusii, Maasai and the Nandi was slightly affected by 1910, and the items of trade only slightly varied. And so the Kipsigis exchanged animals for *wimbi* from the Gusii as much as they also traded with the Maasai, the Luo and the Nandi. A few aspects of this trade were, however, changed by 1919. While much of the trade was formerly barter, some colonial attempts were undertaken to make the transactions strictly on cash basis (DC/KER/3/1/1916). The monetization of trade and exchange was one major impact brought about by colonialism (Kay, 1975:105).

Secondly, in the pre-colonial period there were no specific centres of trade. Colonialism did draw boundaries between the Kipsigis and their neighbours. Much of inter-ethnic trade seems to have been confined to the border areas or centres which emerged near the boundaries as a result. The deep penetration of traders from one ethnic group to another seems to have come to an end (arap J. Serem, O.I., 1997). By 1916 the colonial authorities started setting up trading centres along the boundaries deliberately replacing the traditional centres with new and well-organised ones. Consequently market shelters were established along the Kipsigis-Luo border at Kablelach, Kapsanok, Marraboi and along the Sondu River. Along the Kisii border was Kipsonoi at Ngoina Hills. In these centres all transactions were to be, as far as possible, on cash basis and completed on the spot (DC/KER/3/1/1916, p. 2). Together with these border trading centres emerged a number of inland small trading centres where the local inhabitants exchanged their agricultural and pastoral products. Such centres at Kericho, Sotik and

Kipkelion were direct colonial creation, but Litein, Kipterre, Kampetu, Kaptisa, Kablutuet, Mogogosiet, Kapcheriro and Longisa had relatively developed further with at least a few shops in each centre.

As already noted, European penetration as early as 1885 was followed by Indian traders and Europeans settlers. These, especially the former, brought in new items of trade, such clothing, European merchandise - iron ware, beads, hoes, knives, American cloth and blankets, axes, pangas and Arabian items. Above all, they provided a ready market for pastoral and agricultural products. Indian traders set up shops in practically every major centre, such as Kericho, Sotik, Londiani and Kipkelion. Later they were joined by the Somali traders whose sole preoccupation was trade in animals. As early as 1904, following a period of food shortage in the reserve, there was a large export of goatskin as a consequence. This was only possible due to the available market provided by the Indian and Somali traders. Hides and skins continued to be major items of export from the district and brought in a handsome income. The presence of Indian and Somali traders, especially after April 1912 when the district was opened for trade without restrictions, greatly provided the Kipsigis with the opportunity to sell and buy their animals. Besides, these Indian traders were responsible for the establishment of the first posho mills in the Kipsigisland. The first mill built in Kericho town by Jamnadas, an Indian, was operational by May 1915. Sherkhan, a local storekeeper, began building a water mill on the Kimugu River and was completed by April 1915. Another watermill was begun in location 10 near Litein in August 1917. In 1919 two flourmills were constructed in location 4 and 5 respectively. The increasing number of mills in the Kipsigisland was an indication of the entrenchment of the Kipsigis in maize production during the war years. Though figures for maize production before 1919 are unavailable,

the growing number of mills attests to the increased levels of maize production in the district.

Administrative encouragement of the spread of Indian and Somali traders into African areas, Berman (1990:66) has noted, began to breach the cycle of simple reproduction in local domestic economies and articulate them into the circuits of capital and commodities centred on the metropole. This process was intimately linked to the creation of a class of collaborating chiefs who were the key agents of local control and the principle early beneficiaries of the new opportunities for the accumulation of wealth and power. Nevertheless most of the Kipsigis utilised the new trading opportunities to sell their animals in order to acquire cash, not only to pay for taxes but also to buy imported European and Indian exotic goods and services. Others used their labour savings to invest in livestock production. During the war cows were exchanged for bullocks and later direct purchases of bullocks conducted. The enterprising Kipsigis were able to amass wealth in form of cattle. Some were able to increase their maize cultivation. Even those who served in the war invested their war savings on animals and maize cultivation. All these activities led to some aspects of rural differentiation in the district. Of the three major divisions - Belgut, Bureti and Sotik, Bureti started to emerge as the most prosperous of the three. This was on account of its locality in relation to the Sotik farmers in addition to its fertile soils and good pastureland. In fact the payment of hut and poll taxes in Bureti presented little or no difficulty in the whole district. It was always completed earlier than in the other two divisions, implying that the area was wealthier than the other two. The total hut tax collected in 1918 and 1919 was about Rs 107,530 increasing to approximately Rs 118,482 in 1919 and 1920. The huts increased from 2,581 to 23,525 respectively (DC/KER/3/1/1919, p. 4).

Berman (1990:60) has also indicated that taxes introduced an immediate basis of differentiation among Africans - the fortunate ones had land on which to expand production, a wife or wives to perform most of the actual agricultural labour, or had skins and hides from his dead cattle which could now be marketed and on the other side of the line were those who had none of these things. On the evidence of the Native Labour Commission of 1912-13 it was the unmarried and propertyless young men who went out to work as wage labourers in this period, very many of them 'voluntarily' in order to acquire the livestock needed to start the domestic cycle of family formation. It may be summarised that such young men generally came from poor families whose fathers may not have been able to provide bride wealth. More certainly others were coerced to work by their chiefs' retainers and were selected from among the "weaker and poor class", such who would not make trouble for the chiefs.

It is noteworthy to suggest that some of the Kipsigis also started to invest in education. One John Kabrau Lumbwa who was educated at the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Nairobi started a small school in location 10 at the wish of the chief, arap Kiptai (DC/KER/3/1/1917, p. 3). Location 10 was in Bureti by then.

4.7 Summary.

The penetration of colonial capitalism threw the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy into disequilibrium. First was the monetization of the rural area and the Kipsigis found themselves subjected to an economy over which they had little control. They were forced to pay taxes and the need for tax money drove them to offer their labour in European farms and public works (Hopkins, 1973; Clayton and Savage, 1974). However, this was a period of primitive accumulation and the Kipsigis came to witness

brutal exploitation of their labour. They were not only paid far less than their labour's worth, but also were overworked, underpaid and at times coerced to work for free (Berman, 1990:60).

The Kipsigis pastoral economy was headed for worse times. The Kipsigis suffered massively through the 1905 punitive expedition when they lost their herds. They were made to lose many more through collective fines, individual fines, for settling disputes, through sales to obtain tax money and many more for the war purposes. What abated this brutal exploitation and restructuring of the Kipsigis economy was the unequal exchange rate. The Kipsigis labour, goods and animals were bought cheaply while the Kipsigis paid dearly for European goods. Besides, the colonial authorities set the levels of taxes, the rates for labour and prices of goods, and through various economic and political mechanisms they forced the Kipsigis to enter into this economy which was set at their disadvantage. And so from the beginning the systematic peasantisation of the Kipsigis started with the introduction of maize while at the same time they were gradually being depastoralised through gradual loss of their livestock. Their various responses to the new economic stimuli started effecting social differentiation and stratification of the population. However, all these social and economic processes were at their nascent and embryonic stage and remained to be manifested more distinctly in the latter years of colonialism. Therefore, the establishment of colonial rule in the Kipsigisland set in motion accumulation of debilitating effects which led to the transformation of the Kipsigis pre-colonial pastoral economy. Most notable of these effects was the depletion of the Kipsigis livestock, emphasis of maize production to replace *wimbi*, demand for labour and associated hut and poll taxes which were articulated to meet the requirements of the colonial economic policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 AGRICULTURAL CHANGES IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD, 1920 - 1939.

5.1 General Overview

The period between 1920 and 1939 was beset with intensification of the colonial policies that continued to restructure and modify the Kipsigis economy. The imposition of colonial rule, as previously examined, facilitated a systematic penetration of the Kipsigis traditional economy by capitalism. Colonialism, then, provided the articulation of indigenous modes of production with the capitalist mode of production and the integration of the African economies into Western capitalist system (Amin, 1974; Zeleza, 1989:35). On a wider territorial scale, the colonial state which Lamb terms as the 'primary mechanism of articulation between two modes of production (Lamb, 1975:131), was to act as an instrument of primitive accumulation on the settlers' behalf by appropriating African land, confiscating livestock, introducing taxation, building transport networks, and creating marketing and financial structures which were favourable to the settlers (Aseka, 1989:165). The period before and even after 1920 in the Kipsigisland could, therefore, correspond to the Marxist period of primitive accumulation, which is a historical process of divorcing the producers from the traditional means of production. Moreover it was primitive because it formed the prehistory of capital and because capital could not be derived from previous accumulation but had to be derived from pre-capitalist economies through brutal exploitation of the indigenous population (Zeleza, 1982:65).

The colonial state was firmly in control in the Kipsigisland by 1920. Equally, the white settlers were streaming into the area at an alarming rate to exploit the economic potential of the Kipsigisland. The colonial state as an agent of the capitalist settlers set in motion various mechanisms in favour of the settlers and the settler economy came into direct conflict with the peasant sector (Brett, 1973:70). It is due to this fact that the period after 1920 witnessed massive land alienation, coercive labour recruitment, increased taxation and unequal exchange rate of agricultural produce. But unlike in the period before 1920 when the colonial state went largely unchallenged, the period after 1920 saw a marked increased opposition from the Kipsigis manifested in various forms (arap Korir, 1976). Land was to become a major issue of disagreement and predominated the politics of the period. By 1939 the colonial effort of depastoralising the Kipsigis was attracting stiff resistance, though maize production had acquired relative prominence over the traditional food crops and was tending towards monoculture in the absence of cash crops. By 1939, therefore, profound changes had taken place in the agricultural landscape of the Kipsigis as the pre-capitalist Kipsigis economy had greatly been transformed and marginalised in favour of the European settler economy in general and the emerging tea plantation economy in particular. The Kipsigis found themselves extremely restricted in movement in search for pasturelands as they continued losing more of their land to the tea plantations, albeit putting up a spirited resistance (Leys, 1977).

5.2 Issues Related to Land.

The major concern of post-war settlement was to fill up the empty spaces in the highlands with settlers. Huxley (1935:54) argues that the Whitman's prestige was severely shaken in

the East African campaign and their vulnerability revealed. The only insurance for safety was, according to Huxley, to double the white population concentration in the country. The fear may not have been forcefully articulated as is done here, but the idea of providing a place in East Africa in which ex-soldiers, particularly officers, could settle was one that appealed readily to the Imperial mind (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:46). Nevertheless at the close of World War I increased emigration of settlers into the Kipsigisland was witnessed. Members of the British East Africa Disabled Officers Corps (BEADOC) streamed into the district to claim their war promises of land and to engage in the lucrative flax production, which in 1919 fetched up to about US \$ 300 per ton increasing to roughly US \$ 590 in 1920 (Talbott, 1974:62). By 1920 the European population had skyrocketed to about 307 in the district, excluding 15 officials and 9 missionaries (DC/KER/1/1/1920, p.4). Though these numbers were later to decrease due to falling prices of flax in the world market, the need for more land for the incoming settlers had already been established and more land was set to be alienated. This elicited a strong opposition and protest as arap Korir (1978) recounts in the following episodes.

The first manifestation of popular protest of the Kipsigis against colonial appropriation of their land took place in 1920 over the Chematum salt lick. This case prominently featured in the Kenya Land Commission of 1932. It was recognised even by the D.C., Clarke Tomkinson that the salt-lick was of great importance to the Kipsigis as it maintained their livestock in good condition. The alienation of three farms at Muhoroni - one of which contained the Chematum salt-lick was admitted by the colonial government to have been a mistake before the Commission (arap Korir, 1978:11). Since the Kipsigis had been using the salt lick from 'olden times', they considered its alienation as being

encroachment on their land. Unfortunately the area already lay outside the Kipsigis reserve boundary and a long protracted struggle ensued for its return. The settler occupant of this land, Thomas Allen, initially a maize farmer agreed to an equal exchange of land in the Kipsigis reserve in 1920. By 1923, the exchange had not taken place and having switched over to sugar cane farming, Thomas Allen now became reluctant to such an equivalent exchange. Instead he offered to take one thousand acres in the Kipsigis reserve for only the salt-lick and a corridor leading to it of about one hundred yards- all of which amounted to a mere 450 acres. Moreover, while he had originally been willing to pay all the survey fees now he would only agree to pay half of the cost of the survey and no more. This was an indication that the settlers wished to obtain more land and pay less money for survey in the Kipsigisland (*Ibid.*).

It was assumed by the administration that since the Kipsigis desperately needed the salt-lick, they could readily agree to such an unequal exchange of land: about 450 acres for roughly 1,000 acres, but this turned out to be the contrary. In a signed statement on August 27, 1928, the chief and elders of Location 2 (which bordered the disputed area) unanimously rejected the proposals and definitely and finally refused to give away any area of the Kipsigis Reserve in exchange for the much reduced Chematum salt-lick. They argued that the area offered to them was too small to be of proper advantage to them and that they were unwilling to give up a bigger area than they were to receive. This rationality was in fact recognised by the Kericho DC who asserted that the Kipsigis acted with acumen. It was admitted that the land was alienated by mistake. The government had to let the Kipsigis use the salt lick and undertook to erect and maintain a fence out of the general revenue (Report of Kenya Land Commission, p. 303).

Meanwhile, in the period under study the Kipsigis demonstrated acute land consciousness. This was brought out clearly in their testimonies before the Carter Land Commission of 1933. Even the DC of Kericho reported that "the tribe is definitely developing a 'Land Complex': the smallest request for clay or such like applications are met with distrust" (DC/KER/1/6/1933, p. 4). This was further exemplified when the appointment by the Local Native Council (LNC) of a Development officer was mooted, the Kipsigis stated that they would undertake the work themselves, but their real unspoken reason was that they feared a European having anything to do directly with their land and cultivation. A map was drawn in 1933 showing the vast areas of the crown land of which some parts were unalienated and some others were alienated but unoccupied within and on the border of the district. The DC noted that "not only is this position one of the prime factors leading to outlawry, but will also in time be a political question, the natives who have seen their one time grazing grounds alienated will perforce in time enquire why they should not utilise again these empty spaces" (DC/KER/1/17/1934, p. 5).

It is no wonder then that in their evidence in the Land Commission, the Kipsigis were very vocal in demanding their lands back. The Kipsigis of Belgut concentrated their demands on the area of Kibulgeny in their division. One of their spokesmen, Kiptesot arap Kandie, stated vividly that:

"We ask for more grazing land which is empty. We want Kibulgen ... for grazing our cattle. It was our country in old times and when the Europeans arrived. The [tea] companies' land likewise was ours.... We were sent out of the farms, no part was not inhabited by us (Kenya Land Commission Evidence and Memoranda vol. III p. 2440, in arap Korir, 1978:16):

Tirop arap Maiga, also from Belgut underscored the importance of Kibulgeny thus:

"... Now farms have been given out we are crowded in our reserve, and want unoccupied land for our cattle.... Now we have no good grazing lands as we had before. Diseases amongst our cattle increase as the livestock is crowded and we cannot quarantine them. I ... appeal for Kibulgen" (*Ibid*).

Elsewhere the witnesses from Bureti and Sot focused their struggle primarily on regaining the vast area of Chepalungu. One witness, Kibirir arap Chemwa of Bureti said:

"We have no land to graze our cattle, this land has been taken from us [The] Government burnt our huts and sent us away from around Ngoina, Manga, Miss-Miss and we were sent to where we are now. It seems right to ask for Chepalungu, our country which is empty. Our strength is gone as the Europeans have our land" (Kenya Land Commission, vol. III p 2441).

Ezekiel arap Roronya, the headman of location 7 stated that:

"We all have one feeling ... Bureti has been squeezed. We have no room for cattle, as Europeans have farms with grazing [lands]. Our men have gone as squatters for cattle grazing and wander about; those left behind suffer. We wish to go to Chepalungu. This is the opinion of all" (Kenya Land Commission, Vol III p 2441).

Another witness from Bureti, Maina arap Bwogo had the audacity to question why the Luo and Gusii lands were left intact when theirs were parcelled up by the same European settlers (*Ibid*). One witness, Cheborge arap Tengecha represented the interests of a new social group - that of ex-servicemen when he noted that:

"We worked for [the] Government as Police and Kings' African Rifles. With wages, we bought cattle, but there was no room to graze them. Even ex-sergeants have to go on farms as squatters, like children at six shillings per month to get grazing. Now Chepalungu is a resort for canivora, we want to occupy it beneficially" (*Ibid* p. 2441).

The evidence of the witnesses before the Carter Land Commission demonstrates the heightened awareness and consciousness of land as an important economic resource among the Kipsigis. The demand for their land alienated for settlers' agricultural activity was an indication and as a consequence of land shortage among the Kipsigis. European

encroachment on the Kipsigis lands badly squeezed up the local population to a point of not having enough land for pastures and agricultural production (M.K. Ngeno, O.I. 1997). Finally the Carter Land Commission ruled that Chepalungu should belong to the Kipsigis (DC/KER/1/8/1935 p. 4). Outside the Carter Land Commission, arap Tamuren, the chief of location 12, was demanding for a piece of land behind Howland's farm alienated from the reserve to be restored to him (DC/KER/1/1/1923, p. 3).

The colonial government established the Local Native Council (LNC) in order to "...ascertain and control native opinion" through the DC who presided over it. But the Kipsigis used the LNC to express their definite sense of disenchantment with colonialist land policies and used it as a vehicle of taking practical measures to protect their land wherever that was possible (arap Korir, 1978:18). Consequently, the LNC became a forum for the Kipsigis to protect their land from arbitrary alienation by the colonial government, especially within their reserve. In 1929 the LNC had approved an application by African Highland Produce (AHP) company, the locally registered subsidiary of James Finlay for a lease for a power scheme on the Chemosit River. In 1931 the jurisdiction for granting such a lease passed from the hands of the LNC. The LNC members later vigorously questioned as to why the power engine could not be worked on the property of AHP company, and the councillors voiced their opposition to the renewal of the lease on grounds that the Government had marked out European farm areas and native reserves and each community should keep their areas. Their main fear was that the government might alienate the land which was adjacent to the power station (DC/KER/4/1931, p.16).

In 1935 the government had erected numerous beacons throughout the Kipsigisland to assist in mapping the country. But the Kipsigis who feared that their land was being

alienated destroyed many of these beacons. The DC had to make this point clear in the LNC where the issue had gained prominence (DC/KER/1/8/1935, p. 6). During 1935 also, the DC proposed to the LNC councillors that the Europeans wanted to give up one square mile of land at Sotik Post, now Bomet, in exchange for an additional one square mile at Chemagel for establishment of a township. The councillors objected to these apparently attractive terms and "the council unanimously agreed in refusing their assent to a township at Chemagel" (arap Korir, 1978:21). It was the Secretary of State who came to rule in 1937 for the demarcation of a township of one square mile at Chemagel, thus ignoring the views of the Kipsigis. Later on in 1946 when the government wanted land in the Sotik Post to erect a police building, they found the Kipsigis opposition unrelenting, given the land exchange that took place in 1937. Eventually the government found it hard to take back the land that had been given out. The only logical solution was to purchase land from a settler, Major Webb and a voucher for about Kshs 1,500 for the purchase was forwarded to him in December 23, 1946 (DC/KER/1/1946, p.10).

The LNC was similarly a vehicle for protest against missionary appropriation of the Kipsigis land. In 1939, for example, the African Inland Mission applied for the extension of their site at Cheptenye. The councillors unanimously opposed this on ground that the existing mission school was sufficient (DC/KER/1/12/1939, p.2). But even more dramatic was the confrontation with the National Holiness Mission at Tenwek. The main contention with the Tenwek case was reduction of the erroneously demarcated parcel - the mission had a water frontage contrary to the LNC agreement and later efforts of the missionaries wanting an extension of their land in order to establish a hospital and school. This case elicited protracted struggle until 1946 when the case was resolved in favour of the Kipsigis

(arap Korir, 1978:28). But eventually the LNC came out as a championing organ protecting the interests of the Kipsigis. The LNC, although an administrative structure set up by colonialists for their own purposes, did sometimes serve as a mechanism of protest against land alienation in the Kipsigis country even though in the final analysis it could be overruled by the colonial authority from above (*Ibid*).

Meanwhile the Kipsigis also used other forms of resistance to show their disenchantment with colonial land policies. "In their endeavour to confine the Kipsigis to the area set apart for the use of the tribe, raids were made on the Tinderet forest in May 1934, on the Tinet forest in April 1934, the Sotik farms in July 1934 and, in conjunction with DC of Narok, on the Siria Maasai area in October 1934. In the latter case about 60 families with 1176 heads of livestock were evicted and prosecuted and at the same time the Chepalungu area was cleared of all natives unlawfully residing there" (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 6). This citation gives ample evidence that the Kipsigis willingly flouted the colonial boundaries and went to stay and graze their animals far beyond their reserve boundaries. The main argument of such encroachers was that the white man had no moral obligation of taking their land, restricting them into a tiny area and refusing them the right of grazing their animals in areas which they had used for long (S.A. Malei, O.I, 1997). The government's reaction to such defiance on the part of the Kipsigis was to round them up in punitive raids, prosecute them in courts and confiscate their animals, as what had happened previously in 1934.

After realising that they could not totally prevent the Kipsigis from using Chepalungu as their pastureland, the colonial authorities then started to issue some of the Kipsigis with permits to reside and graze their cattle in the affected area. Those given such

privileges were either police spies, border guards or those deemed to be gentle and obedient in the eyes of the colonialists. However, it is noteworthy that although such permissions may have been subsequently withdrawn, a number of those issued with such permits failed to return. Some failed to retain the original chit of authorisation, hence it was hard to determine those legally residing in Chepalungu from those who had illegally flocked into the area. When in 1934 it was declared that any person found in Chepalungu without a written note would be imprisoned without an option of a fine, the DC noted that, "... the only result of this has been to fill the detention camp to overflowing" (DC/KER/1/1934, p. 6). This was bound to occur since there were so much unalienated and alienated but unoccupied land in the vicinity of the Kipsigis reserve. Consequently open defiance of colonial rules even went further to a point whereby being imprisoned emerged as one way of the Kipsigis protesting loss of their land.

The land complex of the Kipsigis before 1939 had one important characteristic—that it was "tribal" rather than being individual. As no individual, family or clan holding in perpetuity was recognised among the Kipsigis, land consciousness was therefore directed to complaints regarding the settlers' inroads on the original lands rather than to personal acquisition (DC/KER/1/8/1935, p.5). While this had the advantage of eliminating or precluding inter-clan jealousies and strife in regard to land, it however had one major unique feature of resistance, especially at the LNC level. The LNC more often refused to admit that it had advisory powers granted to it by law in regard to the disposal of land. In other communities the respective LNCs could easily agree to disposal of land unless there was a conflict or compensation denied. But among the Kipsigis no person had the right to agree to any land disposal, all land being "tribal" and the Kipsigis having no indigenous

central authority with powers to act on its behalf. This at least partially explains the attitude adopted by the LNC in regard to any form of land alienation in general and the proposed alienation of land for the establishment of a township at Chemagel. Individual members could see no harm in the proposal but they did not feel justified in agreeing to the alienation of the "tribal" land. In effect they said that:

"... if government wants a township at Chemagel let [the] government establish one, but please do not put us in the impossible position of agreeing to the alienation of tribal land of which, in the eyes of the tribe we have no right of disposal" (DC/KER/1/1/1935, p. 5).

The reluctance of the LNC delayed the implementation of the recommendations of the Land Commission Report even in the face of the concessions given by European settlers. This equally delayed the establishment of a township at Chemagel until 1937 (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 6). The demarcation of a township at Chemagel was carried through without incident with the Kipsigis remaining quiet but resentful (*Ibid*, p. 7). And it was until March 1939 that Chepalungu, though already colonised by the Kipsigis, became part of the Native reserve by law (DC/KER/1/13/1939, p. 5).

5:3 Crop Production

The Kipsigisland had the advantage of experiencing a dual economy as expounded by the colonialists in the Devonshire Declaration of 1923 which, though it gave official sanction for the encouragement of African agriculture, did not stimulate adequate African commodity production for fear of competition (Leys, 1924; Dilley, 1966:200). After large tracks of land were alienated for settlers' occupation, and for tea plantations the Kipsigis, now pushed into "tribal" reserves, found themselves faced with the hazards of a dual

economy right in their district. As a result the Kipsigis indigenous agriculture was subjected to numerous pressures and changes from the adjacent settlers' agriculture. The two modes of economy kept on adjusting and modifying each other with the settler economy dominating over the indigenous Kipsigis economy. As Brett (1973) has argued, the stagnation and non-development of the African sector was directly due to the progress and development of the European ones. But Stichter (1982:70) is of the view that the stagnation in African agriculture during the 1920s is not fully explicable by reference to such factors as commodity competition, low prices for African products, poor weather conditions or even solely to the undoubted inequities and inadequacies of government policy. The most important factor in the 1920s, according to Stichter (1982), was the withdrawal of large amounts of African labour which was increasingly tempted out by the very success of European agriculture and decreasingly by force. This chapter attempts to analyse the interplay between all the above factors to show that the total effect over the decade was the peripheralization of African agriculture, which could continue up to the 1930s but would then be achieved by other means:

It has been shown elsewhere that until the Swynnerton plan of 1954 the colonial government's attitude towards African agriculture was largely discriminative and negative (Talbot, 1992:81). The primary exports originating from African farms were those that were historically incorporated into traditional patterns of production or could be grafted onto those patterns, such as maize, hides and skins, wattle bark and cotton to mention a few. Such African originated products required little attention and financing from the colonial government. As such African agriculture was financially neglected while the government handsomely supported the settlers. Consequently the settlers' agriculture

expanded rapidly in the inter-war period. Berman (1990:128) has noted that as the state moved in to defend and sustain the settler economy during this period, it undermined its effective legitimacy and control in African areas. Zeleza (1989) has however shown that the settlers' agriculture exhibited various degrees of primitive accumulation before World War II. As a consequence this period witnessed a widespread peasant impoverishment and exploitation, though a small class of African petty bourgeoisie equally managed to accumulate wealth (Langdon, 1975; Swaison, 1980a; Mook 1986). But settlers' and African accumulation came into conflict with each side wanting to consolidate its position and enhance its chances for faster accumulation (Zeleza, 1989:145; Berman, 1990:131).

Such pre-World War II conditions were clearly manifested in the Kipsigisland. Expansion of settlers' economy was witnessed and buttressed by government support while abject neglect on the part of the African farmer was the norm. The 'Dual economy' of simultaneously sustaining development in the reserve and maintaining their articulation to settler and metropolitan capital required that the "native" did the impossible: "...feed himself and his dependants, produce crops for export and at the same time keep all the European estates going to the satisfaction of their owners" (McGregor-Ross, 1968:450). Though settlers' agriculture was largely inefficient and unproductive in the pre-World War II period, the government mechanisms were well laid in providing them with infrastructure, inputs, labour and finance. Marketing became stabilised as a result of the system of bulk-buying and bulk-selling of colonial produce introduced before the war. Differential payments for European and African produce not only aided European advancement but also further impoverished the Africans.

This section therefore examines crop production in the Kipsigisland, taking the dual economy approach to demonstrate the inherent contradictions of the colonial government in supporting the settlers while discriminating against the Africans. Against such background, however, a few Africans were able to accumulate wealth and were entrenched into commodity production as the inefficiency and unproductiveness of settler farmers came to the fore.

5.3.1 Settlers' Agriculture

At the close of the World War I increased emigration of settlers into the Kipsigisland has already been noted with a population of about 307 migrants in 1920. Thereafter the increasing trend of European settlers was checked due to the falling prices of flax, their main agricultural product. The year 1920 marked the highest price fetched by flax – at about S \$ 590 a ton (Talbot, 1974; 62). This had been the motivating factor for the streaming of BEADOC settlers with a view to participating in the booming business of flax production.

However, such an opportunity and the accruing prosperity was only a short-lived development. Soon after settling, the ex-soldiers were beset with decline in world prices at the end of 1920. By 1922 the price had sharply declined to about US \$90 per ton further dropping to about US \$80 in the following year (Talbot, 1974:63). The Kericho DC noted that "flax on which most of them [settlers] banked in is unsaleable" (DC/KER/1/1/1922, p. 4). The drought of 1921 and 1922 had prevented the selling of flax and the flax mills were closing down as a result. "Every mail brings a fresh crop of civil summons and attachments against the European and Indian Residents" (DC/KER/1/1/1922, p. 7). The

British government had to step in to salvage the unfortunate farmers with an assistance of about US\$80,000 to US\$100,000. The terms of land occupation were also progressively revised in an attempt to give further support. Land prices were lowered in 1920 by about one-third. Then many farmers were revalued and mortgages were allowed on land on which the first payments were still due. At the end of 1922 when payments were due, again they were waived altogether (Brett, 1973:77). Despite all these attempts at propping it up and owing to their inexperience and inefficiency the soldiers' settlement scheme in the Kericho district collapsed. By 1924 the flax-growing scheme had faded in importance and relegated into being a "minor activity". Their dreams of quick acquisition of easy wealth were quickly shattered and many of the ex-soldiers returned bankrupt to England (Manners, 1965:277). This all was a disaster forcing the ex-soldiers to run away from Kericho making their numbers to drop downwards progressively from about 307 settlers in 1920 to roughly 165 in 1921 and further down to 97 in 1922 and to only 64 in 1923 (DC/KER/1/1/1920-23). Countrywide, by 1925 it was estimated that out of about 1,246 farms given out in the entire scheme not more than 545 were then occupied by the original settlers (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:48) Furthermore, the drought and grim world depression of the early 1920's were devastating to these soldiers. Huxley (1935:322) noted that the Kericho "...[soldiers] sold their land for a song" to two British tea companies which came into the district around this time, Brooke Bond and James Finlay. Exit from flax growing was replaced with tea plantations which subsequently became a feature that predominated the agricultural landscape in the Kipsigisland. Moreover the presence of such multinational companies was important in the shaping of the agricultural economy of the district during and after colonial rule in Kenya.

The Settlers' agriculture countrywide was weakened by the fluctuations of the international economy (van Zwanenberg and King, 1975). But other problems, such as land speculation, shortage of capital, high debts, inefficiency and lack of technical skills, all compounded by the 'irrational' social aspirations of the white community, further disadvantaged the settlers' agriculture. The competition of African peasant producers and a chronic dependence on the colonial state rendered the settlers' agriculture largely a failure until the Second World War brought a sustained period of high prices and rapid growth (Berman, 1990:131). The important factor, according to van Zwanenberg (1975:280-283), was "... undoubtedly the low level of knowledge, skill and industry on the part of the majority of the farmers and the high standards of living expected". Settler farmers not only lacked capital and worked an insufficient area under crop, but were also 'notoriously unbusiness like', lacked 'ordinary business prudence' and were seldom able to estimate their actual production costs or profits (Berman, 1990:133). As a result of a combination of such factors and, inspite of government support, the settlers' agriculture in Kenya remained generally structurally weak before 1939 and the failure of the settlers' farming in the Kipsigisland in the early 1920s was not peculiarly exceptional.

Meanwhile some of the settlers who remained on the ground hoped to venture into coffee, tea, maize and wheat cultivation in addition to the management of livestock. After the fall of flax, coffee remained the only crop that maintained its price and only the old established farmers who had coffee in bearing did well in those difficult and precarious economic situations. By 1922 the best Sotik coffee was fetching about US\$105 per ton in London (DC/KER/1/1/1922, p. 2). By 1927 the district had a number of coffee plantations and although Coffee Berry Disease (CBD) was prevalent, it managed to obtain a prize at

the Nairobi Agricultural Show (DC/KER/1/1/1927, p. 22). The coffee estates were also making progress in terms of output and acreage under crop production. The CBD, detected in the previous year, was yielding to spraying in 1928 (DC/KER/1/2/ 1928, p. 4), and at this time the coffee industry carried away two prizes at the Nairobi Agricultural Show (*Ibid*).

By 1928, 38 firms were producing coffee in the Kipsigisland. The approximate tonnage of coffee sold in the country in the same year was about 16.03 tons while the approximate tonnage of coffee exported was roughly 403.19 tons. This was projected to increase to about 693.09 in 1929 and 963 in 1930 (DC/KER/1/2/1928, p. 31). The acreage under coffee at December 1928 was roughly 2473 acres; and was projected to increase to about 3175 and 4763 in 1929 and 1930 respectively. On the other hand the acreage of bearing coffee in 1928 was roughly 2,699, and this was projected to rise to about 3177 in 1929 and 4270 acres in 1930 (*Ibid*). No wonder then that coffee from Kericho continued winning awards at the Agricultural shows in Nairobi and Nakuru respectively.

The onset of the world depression of the 1930s hit hard at the coffee industry as early as 1930. The fall in the price of coffee was a grave matter to the whole of the Sotik settled area where landowners depended almost entirely on coffee cultivation as their mainstay industry. Though fair crops were picked and several diseases were fought, the coffee growing industry nevertheless suffered a great setback on account of the slump in the overseas markets (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 41). By 1931 it was noted that disease was causing depression even more than the market price and consequently a Plant Inspector and an Agricultural Mycologist were stationed in Sotik in line with the colonial policy of supporting settlers' farming (Swainson, 1980a). Such extension services were a monopoly

of the European farmers when Africans went unaided for a long time before World War II. The Plant Inspector and the Agricultural Mycologist remained in the district until about 1934 though the incidence of CBD had been lessened by the drier conditions of 1932. Owing to the prevailing difficult economic conditions, however, three coffee farms in the Kaptien area were abandoned and it seemed that the area's only salvation was tea:

The work of the Agricultural Mycologist and Plant Inspector bore fruits by 1934 when they recommended Blue Mountain coffee, instead of *moncha* variety on account that the former was almost entirely CBD resistant. As a result of these findings a few farmers started to plant Blue Mountain coffee (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 21). By 1935 the results of these experiments were uncertain, as the general coffee growing conditions were found unsuitable. With few exceptions, notably in Ngoina area where a good crop was reaped, the coffee farms did very badly in 1935. Conditions to the east of Sotik seemed to have been quite unsuited for coffee culture, unless perhaps the Blue Mountain variety. Otherwise the laborious selection and bulking by vegetative propagation of types resistant to CBD seemed to be the only alternative to complete abandonment of the area or the crop (DC/KR/1/8/1935, p. 27). The realisation that coffee growing in the district was unsuitable was echoed in 1936 "Except on a few estates in the north of the Sotik farms where coffee-growing has been attended with little success it seems quite certain that Sotik is entirely unsuitable for coffee growing" (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 41). This was in spite of the continuing experiments going on in the district in the following years. The DC noted that:

"In good years [years comparatively free of CBD and hail storms] coffee can be a paying crop on a few favoured estates but in general it must be admitted that Kericho District is unsuited to its cultivation" (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 35).

And by 1940 coffee production had ceased to be an important item worth entering in the annual reports. Its failure testified to the underlying problems facing the settlers' farming production. As much as fluctuation of prices during the depression years was a contributory factor, the settlers' inefficiency, unrealistic expectations and low level of knowledge and skill, even in the face of government support, were prominent factors for such a failure (Brett, 1973). Even before it was realised that coffee was unsuitable in the district, some European settlers had long diversified their farming activities to include mixed farming and later maize cultivation. But by far the most outstanding European activity in the district was tea production.

Tea had been first grown in Ceylon as a herb. It was introduced in Kenya and first grown in Kericho in 1916, starting with half an acre experimental plot. Then in 1923 tea seeds were distributed to two settlers (DC/KER/1/1/1922, p. 12). By 1925 two large tea companies, Brooke Bond and Finlay Mure had occupied most of the BEADOC land and tea had been taken up by several other cultivators in North Kericho and around the Jamji river (DC/KER/1/2/1925, p. 3). 1926, the wettest recorded year hitherto (about 89.27 inches of rainfall) provided the tea companies with the required dampness and a suitable season for their first considerable cultivation, in spite of damaging hailstorms in some areas (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 2). Although devoid of statistics, the DC noted in 1927 that "... the acreage under tea and coffee cultivation have increased considerably with the African Highland Produce (AHP) Company and Kenya Tea Company beginning to be anxious about power for their factories" (DC/KNA/1/2/1927, p. 2). Already AHP Company had started to construct a hydroelectric plant on the Jamji (Chemosit) river for the purpose. The Kenya Tea Company factory was completed and in working order while

the Jamji Estate factory was nearing completion. And three settlers, Butterfield, Mathews and Orchardson all had tea in bearing and were picking and selling the product (DC/KER/1/2/1927, p. 22).

The year 1928 was considered a prosperous one for a number of reasons - part of which was the progress made by the tea companies. They had managed to open up large areas for tea cultivation. Besides, three factories were now manufacturing tea- Kenya Tea Company, Bureti Tea Company and Jamji Estate while 8 firms were producing tea in the settled areas. These were Kenya Tea Company (KTC), Bureti Tea Company (BTC), AHP Company, Jamji Estate, G.J. Grant, E.C. Brayne, I.Q Orchardson and Mathews. The approximate area cultivated in tea as at December 31, 1928 was about 4,125 acres of land and 3,167 acres were programmed for 1929. The amount of tea manufactured in 1928 was about 119,394 Ibs out of which roughly 92,575 Ibs were sold locally and 8,502 Ibs were exported mainly to Europe and other British colonies in Africa (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p 30). Table 1 shows these details per individual firm.

After having established themselves in Kericho the tea companies expanded land under tea cultivation, increasing the number of factories and their labour force. The DC having been impressed by the progress of these tea companies remarked that "... I think it is an example of what can be done with capital in the hands of those competent to use it" (DC/KER/1/2/1929, p. 40).

AHP Company opened four new estates while Kenya Tea Company added to their land acreage by the purchase of land at Kaptien and Tagabi (*Ibid*). Egerton estate, a new farm came into being while other small estates seemed to be doing well. By 1930 the total area under tea cultivation had doubled from about 4,125 acres in 1928 to 8,000 acres. The

Table 5.1: Tea Production In Kericho District - 1928

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
|--|--------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-----|-----|-----------|---------------|
| Approx. area planted in tea as at 31st Dec. 1928 | 1205 | 800 | 1445 | 448 | 50 | 30 | 75 | 72 |
| Programme for 1929 | 1200 | 200 | 1000 | 600 | 70 | 80 | 7 | 10 |
| Programme for 1930 | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | 100 | - |
| Average Labour force employed in 1928 | 1832 | 500 | 2468 | 1262 | 72 | 125 | 85 | 150 |
| Average Labour force employed in 1930 | 2564 | 600 | - | - | 100 | 125 | - | - |
| No. of factories working during 1928 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Their maximum output capacity | 150 lbs p/hr | 5000lb leaves/day | 1M lbs/p.a | 0.96 M lbs | - | - | - | 40800 lbs/p.a |
| No of factories under construction | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| No. of factories to be constructed in 1928 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| No. of factories to be constructed in 1929 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| Amount of tea manufactured in 1928 | 84025 lbs | - | - | 13869 lbs | - | - | 14500 lbs | 700 lbs |
| Amount of Tea sold in Kenya in 1928 | 84025 lbs | - | - | 5367 lbs | - | - | 1550 lbs | 700 lbs |
| Amount of Tea Exported In 1928 | - | - | - | 8502 lbs | - | - | 12950 lbs | - |

KEY:

A - Kenya Tea Co.

D - Jamji Estate

G-I.Q. Orchardson

B - Bureti Tea Co.

E - G.J. Grant

H - Mathews

C - African Highland Produce

F - E.C. Brayne.

Source: KNA/DC/KER/1/2/1928, p 30, 31.

AHP and KTC emerged as the largest and most wealthy companies. AHP alone had by 1930 six estates and roughly 3,200 acres under tea cultivation and though they only manufactured about 9,000 lbs of tea this was set to rise to 250,000 lbs in 1931 (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 42). The KTC on the other hand had five estates with about 2,700 acres under tea cultivation. Over 280,000 lbs of tea were manufactured in 1930 and this was expected to rise to approximately 350,000 lbs in 1931 (*Ibid*). In the same year BTC

had about 1,000 acres under tea cultivation and an output of 300,000 lbs of manufactured tea, while Jamji estate had 800 acres under tea production. By 1931 Kericho was producing a total of about 1.5 million lbs of manufactured tea (DC/KER/1/3/1931, p.4).

The economic slump of the early 1930's equally affected the tea industry. The government levied an excise duty of 10 cents per pound at the end of 1931. Coupled with low prices, the progress of the tea industry was somewhat checked though not totally stopped. There were, by 1932, five factories working and two more were under construction. Agricultural labour in the tea industry slightly dropped. That notwithstanding the tea production economy was steadily on the rise.

In 1933 a restriction scheme was instituted and though it was not legalised, it was nevertheless effectively in force. This restriction scheme was voluntarily effected in order to limit the output from the colony and therefore prevent further falling of tea prices. India, the biggest producer by then, had taken the same limitation policy (Barker, 1965). With such limitation of the output, the tea companies could not extend their acreage under tea cultivation nor could they extend their employment capacity. The DC, J.H. Clive, noted that "... this was a pity as they are admirable employers and their labour is well-housed, well-fed, well-paid and contented [with their terms of service]" (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 6). The tea companies continued to flourish in spite of the limitation of their output and the poor prices obtainable because some bushes planted earlier were starting to bear fruits. A most up to date tea factory, run entirely by electricity at Kitumbe belonging to AHP, was opened in 1934.

Before World War II, the tea industry was practically monopolised by European efforts in the district. Even the prices obtainable for tea continued to rise due to the strict

observance of production limits. So far, the Kenya Tea Growers Association (KTGA) had been formed, among other things, to regulate the tea industry and reinforce the limitations of the output. The KTGA also set export quota for each firm (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 35). But owing to the depressed situation among the Sotik farms due to the collapse of the passion fruit industry, tea was introduced in the area for the first time in 1938. During the year there was a movement to obtain quotas of acreage for planting tea and to erect a central factory. This was eventuated early in 1939 in eleven Sotik farmers, each being granted thirty acres only (DC/KER/1/11/1938, p. 8). By 1939 the Kericho tea industry had expanded greatly to a point of employing more than 13,000 men and boys. By this time the total tea exported amounted to about 84,216 cwts, valued at roughly US \$ 501, 099. It should be noted that the tea exported was about 82% of the total produced, with 18% being consumed locally in Kenya (DC/KER/1/12/1939, p. 35).

Besides coffee and tea, European settlers, especially in the Sotik area, engaged in the production of a variety of agricultural items. Mixed farming was largely practised in the Sotik area as early as the advent of settlers, though animal husbandry was negligible. By 1930 livestock and mixed farming had earned themselves a place in the annual reports as important European activities. In the following year there were four farms which were supported in Sotik under the Agricultural Advances Scheme (AAS) and seven applications for advances from the Land and Agricultural Bank (LAB) had been received (DC/KER/1/4/1931, p. 25). In spite of such financial assistance from the government, many farms were indebted to the financiers apparently due to the inexperience and unproductiveness of the settlers. For example in 1932 alone, three farms were indebted to the Agricultural Advances Board, and nine to the LAB (DC/KER/1/5/1932, p. 25).

By 1933 a certain amount of butter was being made in Sotik. However, it was noted that dairying had not made much progress and this was attributed to the presence of over 25,000 heads of local livestock. This supposedly made it hard to control diseases and improve European livestock. By 1934 the Sotik farmers were contemplating going for grade livestock and dairying on a large scale (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 21). The change to dairying was hampered by the large capital expenditure necessary for fencing and the construction of dips and a creamery. This venture nevertheless managed to pick up and was in its infancy by 1935. And by 1937 cattle farming was becoming of increasing importance on the Sotik farms and was almost forming a basis for mixed farming to which most settlers were beginning to look for a livelihood. The DC noted that

"Animal husbandry seems likely to become an important branch of farming in the Sotik settled area, indeed the only one so far as can be seen at present, likely to keep the farmer on the land in the eastern portion" (DC/KER/1/9/1936, pp. 52-53).

A great deal of pioneering work was done by Matherson, using indigenous livestock, and by Major Caddick who had spent much money and effort in establishing a grade herd. A number of farmers came together and formed a co-operative society to farm cattle on comparatively large scale. First they started with indigenous livestock and it was hoped that after clearing the land and the introduction of dipping, grade stock could be brought in for production. This move, however, required the total elimination of squatter livestock and it was envisaged that the latter would be phased out fairly gradually into the reserve. The prospects for animal husbandry in eastern Sotik were promising and the area later became a home for large co-operative societies herding animals. "Side-shows" in European animal husbandry included the raising of poultry (turkey, ducks and fowls) and rabbits (*Ibid* p. 53).

Even the KTC went into dairy industry in a large scale in 1938. The company was prevented by the Tea Restriction Scheme from increasing its acreage under tea and resorted to clearing its land, turning it into pasturage. They did so in order to obtain manure with which to make compost to treat the existing tea and raise the production per acre besides preparing large areas of land ready for cultivation when the restriction was to be removed (DC/KER/1/12/1938, p. 33). Before the war, therefore, there was a general tendency towards mixed farming and dairying in particular. Some of the grade animals were acquired from Nanyuki and Kabete. The change over from purely agricultural farming, such as coffee and passion fruit to cattle, was not limited to Sotik, but equally covered the Songhor area, thus making the two areas potential beef and dairy regions. Free offers of bulls from the regions had been gratefully received from two sources and it was noted that "...the increased number of constructed dips or which are in the process of being ...[constructed]... in the Sotik settled area clearly shows the trend towards more mixed farming with cattle as a foundation" (DC/KER/1/13/1939, p. 37).

Maize was, together with coffee and dairy, another important crop grown by the settlers from as early as 1932. With the tea estates and their immigrant labour, a market for maize was always at hand. Another advantage was the availability of Dawson mills at Soymet and Tagabi which enabled maize to be a profitable crop. The only problems facing maize production were the low prices offered and the long haulage factors which convinced the DC that maize should be more generally a "native crop" (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 17). Nevertheless the maize growers continued cultivation though handicapped as they were by distance from the market centres, and lack of transport facilities. Brett (1973:92-93) notes that the losses incurred in carriage of settler grown maize and wheat were made

up through higher rates on imports, more especially cheap cotton textiles purchased largely by the Africans. And by 1935 European maize growers had reaped large crops which they could not dispose of (DC/KER/1/8/1935, p. 28) and it was becoming doubtful if farmers in Sotik could ever be able to make a little profit out of maize, even if transport condition was improved. In 1936 the low price and the difficulty of disposal induced many farmers to give up the growing of maize, except for the food supply of their labour. Most of the surplus maize was eventually sold to Lolgorian but a good deal had got rotten in the cribs. The higher prices prevailing towards the end of the year stirred up interest in the crop again and some farmers ploughed up large areas for cultivation. This bore fruits as the prices remained high in the following year and once again it was realised that the crop could be profitable when sound marketing facilities were available (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 36). Thus before the beginning of World War II maize production remained a relatively unprofitable venture. Yet it should be noted here that African peasants were doing very well in the cultivation of maize and thus the inefficiency of the settler farmers could not enable them effectively compete with African farmers, let alone attract enough African labour power in their farms (Berman, 1990:143).

The two world economic depressions during this period had a lot of effect on the settlers' agriculture. Whereas in the 1920s the problem for settlers had been to extract enough labour from the peasant economy to realise profits from the high prices in the 1929 depression the problem was swiftly reversed: how to wind down the settlers' enterprises, disemploy labour and tighten belts for a period of adversity (Stichter, 1982:94). The settlers' response to the depressions of 1920s and 1930s was to turn from the export market to the domestic one and to use political power to compensate for their economic weakness.

They pressed even for more state control of marketing and processing and for the creation of monopoly restrictions to protect them from African and other competitions. Their aim was to control the internal market, since the international ones over which they had little control, had collapsed. Such settler institutions as the Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA) and the Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC) took the lead in attempting to centralise marketing of each product, enforce high standards and high prices and assure themselves a profit. Where purely peasant crops were concerned, they backed controls on African and Indian traders and buyers in order to put surpluses under the control of the state (Mangat, 1969; Stichter, 1982:94).

Other crops of minor importance which were grown by the European settlers included passion fruits, pyrethrum, beans and an assorted number of fruits. By 1936 passion fruit was becoming a popular crop in Sotik where it grew well. Lanyon was the pioneer in the extraction of juice for which he had invented or adopted special machinery. He did prove that passion fruit growing could be a paying crop in Sotik. By 1937 it was anticipated that passion fruit could be the greater hope for the Sotik farmers, although the market was very far from reaching saturation and the crops did exceptionally well in the area (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 33). It was hoped that passion fruit, tea and mixed farming could alleviate the dwindling settlement in the Sotik area. It was therefore surprising when it was noted that in 1939 the passion fruit juice industry had collapsed, thus depressing the entire population of the Sotik area. The major reason for this collapse was infestation of a virus disease which dealt a deadly blow on passion fruits production. The fear of diseases emanating from African crops or animals was not an issue of contention here.

On the other hand, pyrethrum was grown in small acreage by 1936, with Guy of Sotik Estate continuing to rely on the crop, although pyrethrum could not be said to flourish well in the area. Beans were grown fairly extensively on the Sotik farms though greatly damaged by waterbucks and rabbits which were roaming in the area under investigation. The numerous attempts by settlers in crop production in the Kipsigisland, except for tea, had one common characteristic; failure. Settler agriculture in the region was largely a failure until the Second World War brought a sustained period of high prices and rapid growth (Cooper, 1981:9). Characteristic of colonial primary producers, estate export production in Kenya was highly dependent on and deeply influenced by the fluctuations of the international and metropolitan markets for its commodities (van Zwanenberg and King, 1975). Together with a number of militating factors analysed earlier in the study, settler agriculture in the Kipsigisland outside tea production was largely a failure in spite of constant governmental support in terms of land alienation and funding.

5.3.2. Crop Production Among the Kipsigis, 1920-1939

Before 1920, the Kipsigis agriculture had expanded more as a consequence of the people's initiative and response to the money market than as a result of outright government support. Further penetration of capitalism in the area was slowed by the two world depressions of the early 1920's and early 1930's. These aside, and despite half-hearted government support, there was an expansion of commodity production. This aspect is well illustrated in the Kipsigisland by an almost total shift from *wimbi* to maize production. It has already been noted that peasant agriculture dominated the export market in Kenya before 1920 (Berman, 1990:59). The emergent harsh regulations were a

consequence of the success and viability of peasant production during the period. Settlers quickly gained a lively appreciation of the potent threat of African peasant competition, as much in the labour as in the produce market (*Ibid*). Besides, indigenous societies were not simply passive receptors or active resisters of European capital, but a nascent group of accumulators had started to invest their earnings in agriculture with remarkable success (Kay, 1975:104).

During the depression of the early thirties the government faced the challenge of restructuring African agriculture to supplement the badly affected settler production and increase state revenue (Kanogo, 1986:1). The posting of veterinary and agricultural officers to the district in the 1930's must therefore be seen from the perspective of the government's increased intervention in expanding commodity production and not government's conscious effort to improve the lot of Africans.

The agricultural situation of the district, especially of the reserve, was good in 1920. The Kipsigis were able to produce good crops of *wimbi* and maize, but owing to plentiful supply of the latter very low prices were obtainable, not more than R 1/= per a load being paid to the Kipsigis for maize. *Wimbi* was fetching at R 2/= per load. This was in spite of a general constricted market owing to the world depression of the early twenties. Cattle trade was dead. Goats and sheep of which thousands had been sold to fetch hut tax commanded very low prices. Ordinary trade was stagnant and in spite of this, large crops of *wimbi* and maize were obtained from the Kipsigis reserve in 1921, about 13,866 loads of maize and 235 loads of *wimbi* (DC/KER/1/1/1921).

The Kipsigisland is one area which clearly demonstrates a shift from the traditional production of *wimbi* to an over-reliance on maize. Between 1920 and 1939, maize grew in

importance to a status of monoculture among the Kipsigis. Figures of production were steadily on the increase, albeit a few occasions, demonstrating the Kipsigis dependence on maize production not only as an important item of trade but food as well. This was notwithstanding the fact that the colonial authorities glossily neglected African farming in the initial years. The development of crop production was therefore hampered by a number of factors, the chief of which was the half-hearted support from the government. According to van Zwanenberg, the colonial policy during this period was aimed at the curtailment of the economic development of African production in order that settler production be stimulated (van Zwanenberg, 1972:223). This policy was evident in the Kipsigisland as there was lack of a permanent agricultural officer during this period. The intermitted posting of an agricultural officer in the 1930's clearly attests to the neglect of African farming by the colonial authority.

Other problems afflicting African farming included poor weather, especially in the Sotik and Chepalungu areas. Here crop failures were a common feature due to drought or inadequate rainfall. In 1921 there was partial rain failure in the entire district (42 inches below average) and the situation was worse in 1930 when due to rain failure many crops were almost completely ruined in some of the locations (DC/KER/1/2/1927 p. 6). Locust infestation seems to have had some effect when they occurred in 1931 and 1932, and there was a stress in potatoes and beans. So then the increasing production of maize must be viewed from the point of African initiative. After realising that maize was readily saleable in the district due to the large tea plantation labour force, the Kipsigis resorted to its production in order to meet their economic and social needs. It was seen as an easy way of paying hut and poll taxes instead of selling their animals. Therefore increased maize

production was also aimed at preventing the depletion of the Kipsigis livestock through sale for cash money. Equally more resources could be gathered from maize production to be reinvested in animals. These two aspects could eventually lead to an internal conflict between maize producers and livestock husbandry due to diminishing pasture resources.

Maize production was a successful feature of the Kipsigis initiative. But due to the general economic depression of the early twenties the amount of maize bought from the Kipsigis had dropped from about 20,119 loads in 1920 to 13,866 loads in 1921 "...and the European settler farmers also purchased 156 tons of maize from the Africans, a lot of this was from Kikuyu squatters" (DC/KER/1/1/1921, p. 13). But in the following year the figure shot up to approximately 18,592 loads and the European farmers bought about 130 tons of maize (*Ibid* p. 2). The ease with which the hut and poll taxes were collected in 1923 showed that a considerable improvement in the financial position of the Kipsigis had taken place. "During three safaris when a total sum of about Shs. 150,000/= was collected not one head of stock was offered for sale" (DC/KER/1/1/1923, p. 2). Excellent honey harvest, labour in the colonial market and the Kipsigis agriculture in maize were the main reasons attributed to that notable economic recovery. There was a consistent demand for mill sites, as the indigenous owned and worked mills numbered about eight. In the eyes of the DC, "... it would appear as if the *wa-Lumbwa* were beginning to think of other things beside cattle, sheep and goats" (DC/ KER/1/1/1923, p. 14).

The increased trade in maize was however hampered by the present small seeds and badly grown maize "and it was hoped that this would be supplanted with better seeds which would command a better market" (*Ibid*). In order to reap from the industrious efforts of the Kipsigis, the colonial authority introduced such new seeds in 1924, and three

tons of maize seeds, one ton of Canadian Wonder beans and 400 lbs of wheat were distributed among various members of the 17 locations (DC/KER/1/2/1924, p. 6). The area under maize production was increasing enormously as maize was produced for sale every year. "Three lorries appear to make profitable journeys to Lumbwa station, with loads of maize and passengers" (*Ibid* p. 4). It was noted in 1927 that:

"...the maize acreage planted in Belgut must be considerably more than ever before. An encouraging innovation is the use of ox-ploughs of which there are some 65 in use in the District, 36 being in Belgut.... Among the owners were four chiefs, with chief Taptugen of location 5 having 2" (DC/KER/1/2/1924, p. 8).

It is evident that the use of the ox-ploughs was increasingly adopted in order to partake in what was increasingly becoming a profitable maize trade. Extensive cultivation was enabled by the use of the ploughs. In the four divisions of the Kipsigisland, Belgut was distinguishing itself as the most "progressive" with more than half of the total ox-ploughs in the district, hence rural differentiation was being amplified through maize cultivation. The role of chiefs and other colonial functionaries, like headmen can not be underplayed here as being among the first ones to adopt new methods of cultivation (Mwanzi, 1977b; arap Korir 1978). Such chiefs were great facilitators of agricultural innovations in their locations. By 1927 the number of indigenous owned *posho* mills had increased to about 33, with Chief Arap Taptugen 's location 5 having the highest number; 6 (DC/KER/1/2/1927, p. 22; Mwanzi, 1977b). Even those who participated in the army and police forces were more receptive to the new innovations in agricultural production. The DC noted that "... the ex-KAR and police forces give great assistance to the chiefs and adopt progressive methods in agriculture" (DC/ KER/1/5/1932, p. 8).

May it not be misconstrued that maize was the only crop introduced by the colonial state; there were other crops, including beans, rice, wheat and many more. An attempt to grow rice in a swamp at Litein proved unsuccessful. Equally, an attempt to introduce wheat as staple food, though not met with any resistance, did not acquire much prominence as to rival maize. Wheat was cultivated by a few Kipsigis, especially around Litein. Beans, though taken up as new crops, were not cultivated extensively in the Kipsigis district. And so maize production remained the single most agricultural activity of the Kipsigis apart from the newly introduced crops. This demonstrates that the Kipsigis were not passive adopters, but people who would not just take up whatever was given to them. Whatever the Kipsigis adopted, they first tried and found it suitable to their own needs (see Berman, 1990:60). The suitability of maize among the Kipsigis was later to replace their indigenous crop of *wimbi*. The absence of statistics during this period to show how much maize was produced can only be inferred through the increase of ox-ploughs and *posho* mills in the Kipsigisland.

Year after year it was noted that the Kipsigis had a prosperous year and that there was a considerable increase in the acreage under cultivation on account of maize production. Only introduced in 1906 with some resistance, maize by 1930 had acquired an unrivalled position as a major export crop. A community that was predominantly pastoral, with limited cultivation of *wimbi*, was taking up maize cultivation at an alarming rate. By 1928 the Kipsigisland, besides feeding the large labour-force in the tea plantations, was exporting maize to the Maasai reserve in large quantity. The DC noted that:

"...The trade in maize has been better than usual partly owing to increased production and ...to the increased demand on the estates and in [the] Maasai Reserve. Maize markets are being opened throughout the reserve" (DC/KER/1/2/1928, p. 10).

In the same year, 1928, a total of about 113 people owned ox-ploughs, at least one each. Arap Moigi of location 2 led the list with three ploughs, together with arap Borguchut of location 8. A total of about 123 ploughs were in the district. Some Kipsigis in location 10 were paying a European to use his tractor for ploughing land in the reserve (*Ibid* p. 27). At the same time the number of indigenous owned *posho* mills totalled about 47 with locations 5,10 and 3 leading with 9,8 and 5 *posho* mills each respectively. As new water driven *posho* mills were being constructed, the Kipsigis sought to keep the lucrative business in their hands. In 1929 certain Indians desired to install engine driven mills at Kapsamonget trading centre, but opinion in Belgut was determined and unanimous against them. For similar reasons there was a strong objection to the issuance to Indians of any more Temporary Occupation Licences at Kipterre when several Kipsigis were opening shops there (DC/KER/1/2/1929, p. 7).

By 1930 the number of the Kipsigis who owned water driven flour mills had increased to about 73 from 62 in 1929. On the other hand the number of ox-ploughs soared from roughly 113 in 1928 to 246 in 1929. As a result a good crop was harvested and sold at from about shs. 10/ to shs. 12/= per sack of 200 lbs. This was unfortunate because it raised false dreams of another golden harvest in 1930 when the world economic slump greatly disappointed the Kipsigis. Early that year and unaware of the impending slump ahead, there was a general demand by the Kipsigis to procure more ploughs. From January to June, about 60 ploughs were purchased at Kericho, about 70 at Kapsamunget and 15 at Marraboi-145 in all were sold to the Kipsigis of Belgut Reserve, while at Litein about 100 were sold to the residents of Bureti reserve, and at Kipsonoi 4 or 5 ploughs were sold to the

inhabitants of Sotik (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 39). This meant that there was an addition of nearly 250 ploughs to those already owned by the Kipsigis. Of course some of the ploughs had been worn out or broken, but the DC estimated a total of 400 ploughs in the entire district. These were roughly distributed as follows: Belgut - 266; Bureti, 124; and Sotik, 10. It was felt that had more ploughs been in use in Sotik, the frequent food shortages there could not have been prevalent in the area (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 40). But owing to the difficult times the average price of maize dropped to roughly shs. 6/= per sack of 200 lbs. But it should be noted that the average price of maize at Shs. 6/= was much better than in most parts of the country and this was occasioned by the tea estates' workforce (Manners, 1967).

The production of maize in Kipsigisland was a phenomenal and striking feature as agriculture was rapidly becoming an important occupation with the Kipsigis long before even an agricultural officer was sent to the district in 1931 on "flirting visits" (DC/KER/1/4/1941, p. 24). In 1931 there was a general shortage of food and money in south and central Kavirodo districts of Nyanza. The Kipsigis, who still had large stock of maize, utilised the opportunity to buy a good deal of more livestock, the majority of which was in Sotik. It was even feared that certain areas could be overstocked in a few years, especially if the squatters were removed from settlers' farms. In the realm of crop production, an interesting scenario was emerging, especially from those who had acquired some training in the mission stations. The latter started to deny their responsibility established by custom to fence their cultivated plots. The policy which had been followed hitherto was to encourage cultivation but one had to fence against one's neighbours, or any *Koret* could mutually agree to set aside an area of cultivation into which the owner of any

wandering unherded livestock could be penalised, otherwise no question of compensation for damage could be considered (DC/KER/1/4/1931, p. 7). By denying such responsibility, a major change against the Kipsigis agricultural customs was in the making together with that of recognising the importance of crop production. As more and more extensive maize production continued, it became inevitable that animal owners had to restrain their animals from cultivated lands rather than the crop producers fencing out their fields (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:62).

The year 1932 witnessed great-depressed conditions in maize trade which was relatively low, except for the consumption by the tea estate labourers. Even ploughing, though common was hampered and retarded by lack of cash to purchase more ploughs. But owing to the fall in prices of maize, the trade centres were particularly inactive. Maize was thus becoming the major lifeline in the economy of the Kipsigis. This was notwithstanding that no agricultural officer had yet been posted to the district on a permanent basis. The provincial Agricultural Officers only visited and toured the district in 1933 and gave their advice but apparent neglect of African agriculture was evident by the absence of permanent Agriculture Officers in the district whose posting only materialised in 1937.

By 1934, an interesting situation was developing in Kipsigis agricultural landscape. A number of the more advanced Kipsigis were plough-owners and as the Kipsigis did not have a system of land tenure other than that of a community, these plough-owners tended to cultivate very large areas, thus reducing the available amount of grazing fields. It was feared that if the squatters were removed from the Sotik farms with their livestock, then the question of overstocking would almost certainly arise (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 20). Moreover the issue of fencing off agricultural and grazing areas was acquiring prominence.

Besides the system of shifting cultivation by which the Kipsigis moved to other lands at fairly frequent intervals and left their original fields to revert to bush instead of maintaining them as fertile crop producers or putting them under grass was also gradually reducing the area of grazing available. The reduction of grazing area available was one way of not only causing depletion of Kipsigis livestock but also relegating it to secondary position after maize production.

Meanwhile maize cultivation had recovered from the economic slump of the early thirties. By 1936 maize cultivation witnessed continued expansion and though the 1936 weather conditions were unfavourable, only a slight drop in production was noticed. The year witnessed locust infestation in the lower Belgut regions which commonly experience dry weather conditions as well as heavy rains in the Belgut and Bureti regions which rendered the soils too heavy to work besides making weed growth too prolific to cope with. Consequently many seeds planted in ploughed land got rotten before they could germinate (DC/KER/1/9/1936, p. 45). But events in the year that followed even greatly boosted the cultivation of maize. For the first time in the history of the district an Agricultural Officer was posted to the district. Previously only an Agricultural Instructor existed in the district and he was largely concerned with the growing of wattle trees. The new Agricultural Officer inaugurated inspection service at Kericho, Litein and Kapsamonget. Only good, clean and dry maize was passed for sale. Coloured maize was rejected and the Kipsigis started to take the trouble of sorting out their maize before sale. Another event of major importance during the year was the inauguration of a sound marketing system. Previously, the Kipsigis had to market their maize in distant markets in Nakuru and Nairobi. The same maize was then brought back for sale to the tea estates,

rendering the whole system uneconomic and not in the best interests of the Kipsigis producers themselves. The rationale behind such system was that the tea estates wanted an assured constant supply of maize, a thing that individual farmers or traders could not do without any form of organisation. But this was altered by the entrance of the Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA) which held many of the contracts for the supply of maize to the tea plantations. This not only ensured a ready market for the Kipsigis maize but a good price for their produce too (DC/KER/1/10/1937, p. 33).

Without proper methods of soil erosion and the use of manure, extensive maize cultivation gradually led to the colonial government's concern over soil control and conservation. The use of shifting cultivation was unsuited to maize production owing to the available tools and the amount of land under maize cultivation. Besides, the Kipsigis were selling much of the annual manure to the tea estates rather than replenish their soils (arap Korir, 1978). And so, 1937 witnessed concerted efforts by the colonial government to turn the Kipsigis into better commodity producers by offering them training and instruction on better methods of crop husbandry and soil control and conservation.

However it should be noted that though the Kipsigis were growing a variety of crops, including maize, *wimbi*, cotton, beans, wheat, rye, sweet potatoes and vegetables, only maize was considered of economic value and many efforts of the agricultural staff were focused on its production. Efforts were made to improve the quality of maize by introducing an improved strain of seeds. And through the inspection of produce, sooty, discoloured, damp, unsieved and unripe maize was practically eliminated. Bushel measures to standardise the quantity of maize bought at given rates were introduced in 1938 at every centre (Toweett, 1979:40). A total of about 22,499 bags of maize were purchased in six

inspection centres - Litein, Kipsonoi, Sotik Post, Kericho, Kapsaus and Kapsamonget. Of these Litein recorded the highest number of roughly 13,366 bags of maize, an indication that the area had distinguished itself as a maize growing region, producing half of the total of the district's export. The average price was about shs. 4/25, though this varied with the season and sometimes fetched up to roughly shs. 7/25. Most of the maize was delivered to the KFA at their Kericho go-down for the making of *posho* for the nearby tea estates. However some maize from Kipsonoi and Sotik went to the Maasai reserve for consumption (*Ibid*)

By the beginning of World War II maize had assumed dominance over other crops grown by the Kipsigis. *Wimbi* had long been relegated to a secondary crop due to its long ripening period and the colossal labour input it actually entailed. Few other crops introduced and propagated had not acquired the economic importance similar to maize. By 1939 three more inspection centres had been opened and a total of about 64,617 bags of maize purchased with Litein providing more than half-38,595 bags. This was notwithstanding the fact that prices had fallen drastically largely due to the outbreak of the war to about between Shs.3/00 and Shs. 3/50. The year 1939 was also one of the driest years with an annual rainfall of about 57.68 inches against a yearly average of 71.48 inches (DC/KER/1/12/1939, p. 30). Nevertheless maize trade turned out to be a lucrative trading activity and the Kipsigis were already favourably competing with the Indians who had predominated the trade for a long time.

Competition surfaced over maize which both Europeans and Africans grew. The European settler opposition to the development of African agricultural production for the market was aimed at eliminating African competition for product market and for labour

supplies (Zezeza, 1989:72). Such arguments as peasant production introducing coffee and cattle diseases or lowering the quality of reputation of Kenya exporters were intended to function as a smokescreen for the real but less palatable issue: labour (Stichter, 1982:69). That African peasant production proved more efficient and successful due to the African's own initiative and their adaptability and the resourcefulness of their traditional farming systems is a factor recognised by many scholars, (Langdon, 1975, Swainson, 1980, Sherriff, 1985, Zezeza, 1986, 1989, 1990, and Kanogo 1989, and others). The complexity of the grading regulations served to exclude the bulk of African maize from the export market. To Africans was left the growing of domestic market for "lower-quality" maize as food for labourers. As maize became the most widely planted African crop, its price was kept low in the interest of Europeans as employers, especially the bigger employers, such as planters and government (Stichter, 1982:709-71). Nevertheless African agriculture expanded buoyantly in the 1920's at a time when demand for African labour was soaring, expansion of European agriculture was in gear and when expropriation of large areas from the Nandi and the Kipsigis reserves was taking place. In sum, African peasant agriculture in the late 1920's suffered from a complex process of peripherisation in which the insurmountable conflict over labour supply was a key factor. In this context, labour drain, poor weather, lack of government assistance and exclusion from lucrative export crops all combined to push Africa agriculture behind after 1925, relative to the European sector and to what might otherwise been achieved (*Ibid.*)

5.4 The Colonial Neglect of Animal Husbandry

The provincial administration had generally neglected pastoral societies resulting in somewhat steady decline of pastoral economies from the beginning of the colonial rule (van Zwanenberg, 1975: ch.5). This decline was determined in part by the resistance of nomadic pastoral peoples to change and incorporation into the colonial economy and by the decline of the market for cattle - their most obvious point of entry into the economy and due to the falling prices of meat and hides from 1920's and restrictions on the movement of African livestock to protect European-owned herds from disease (*Ibid*). With the decline of the cattle market, pastoral and semi-pastoral societies with access to commodity markets began to move towards cash crop production. The Kipsigis, one of such pastoral communities, started producing increasing amounts of maize, given a growing market in the neighbouring Kericho tea estates after 1925 (van Zwanenberg, *Hadith* 1976:219)

The period between 1920 and 1939 witnessed an outright colonial neglect of animal husbandry among the Kipsigis for a number of reasons. Together with the methods of depastoralising the Kipsigis analysed earlier, the trade in animals was severely restricted for the entire part of this period. The stress and encouragement of maize production received is only comparable to the neglect and almost unrecognised role played by animal husbandry in the eyes of the colonial authorities. The coming of the ox-ploughs, however, gave some attention to bullocks, though animal production was largely ignored. Stichter (1982:99) has summed the situation thus: "Remarkably little effort was made to market or improve the quality of ... African cattle. Quarantine regulations inhibited sale outside the reserves, and although significant the market remained undeveloped. Given the predominance of

European interests, cattle ownership among Africans remained perforce a form of saving, a medium of currency and an insurance against famine rather than an actual commercial resource.”

Rinderpest, East Coast Fever (ECF) and pleuro-pneumonia diseases were frequent in the reserve and though the Kipsigis had their own traditional ways of combating such diseases, the colonial authorities insisted on inoculations. The colonial authorities feared that such diseases would spread to their animals (Harris, 1975). But the cost of inoculation was to be borne by the Kipsigis themselves and the rates were charged per animal. The Kipsigis considered this to be exorbitant and adamantly refused to have anything to do with inoculation and so veterinary restrictions were imposed on the Kipsigis animals (DC/KER/1/1921, p.2). However, inoculations were invariably accompanied with animal casualties and that the Kipsigis refusal of vaccination was probably a result of such high casualties caused by inoculations (Jal. G., Personal communication, January 1999). The Kipsigis could buy and sell their animals within the district but only restricted trade was allowed outside the district. From the early 1920's livestock trade was severely restricted. The only cattle moved out of the district were those bought by the butchers at Lumbwa (Kipkelion) for slaughter purposes. For example in 1921, only about 73 cows and heifers, 79 bulls and 1048 sheep and goats were purchased from the district. Many, if not most of the goats and sheep, were bought at Sondu market from the Gusii and at Marraboi from the Luo and did not really reflect the actual trade of the district (DC/KER/1/1921, p. 3). By 1922 only roughly 11 cows and 50 bulls were purchased from the Kipsigis against about 18500 sheep and goats and it was noted that cattle trade was dead largely owing to the veterinary restrictions. By 1923 the number of goats and sheep had risen to about 23700

while no trade in cattle took place owing to the quarantine requirements. And so for a long time internal livestock trading went on but the quarantine restrictions prevented the trade from flourishing. This, therefore, meant that while some Kipsigis were eager to sell their animals to acquire money for the paying of hut and poll taxes, they could only sell internally. On the other hand some Kipsigis had become wealthy enough and were accumulating wealth in form of cattle by purchasing it from those in need of cash. The internal trade in cattle exhibited aspects of rural differentiation and stratification among the populace. Nevertheless the quarantine restrictions not only aimed at preventing the spread of Kipsigis livestock diseases but also wanted to economically debilitate the Kipsigis by denying them access to their rich livestock resources in order to make them more vulnerable to colonial economic manipulations, such as conscription of their labour (Stichter, 1982:101-109).

The Kipsigis refusal to have their animals inoculated lasted until 1928 when economic considerations forced them to start giving in to the inoculation policy. Yet by this time, however, the Kipsigis had apparently acquired many foreign tastes and did not have enough money to meet their socio-economic needs. Initially they started bringing in animals intended for trade to be inoculated against rinderpest so as to be eligible for trade. Only about 20 cows were vaccinated against pleuro-pneumonia in 1928 and these numbers were considered to be insufficient and as a result the only stock inspector earmarked for the reserve was withdrawn (DC/KER/1/2/1928, p. 31). By 1929 there was an encouraging demand for inoculation and about 1430 heads of cattle were inoculated. Though there was no bad outbreak of diseases in the reserve, the area still remained under veterinary restrictions. The DC noted in 1930 that:

"they [the Kipsigis] are rich in livestock, whose natural increase far more than compensated them for the losses-fortunately few-caused by the epidemic diseases. Their health had been good and although money was not plentiful with them there was no real scarcity of it" (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 10).

The motives for imposing such long quarantine restrictions on the Kipsigis animals are not hard to tell. Though the Kipsigis livestock was in 'good health' and only a 'few epidemic' diseases occurred, the colonial government wanted to pauperise the Kipsigis pastoralists by levying high charges for cattle inoculation (see van Zwanenberg, 1989; 1972). The most urgent reason for the Kipsigis refusal of inoculation was the exorbitant charges levied on their livestock. It was hoped that an ordinary farmer could sell one quarter of his livestock in order to have his entire herd inoculated (arap Cheptuech, O.I., 1997). Secondly the colonial policy of depastoralizing the Kipsigis was still in force. By demanding inoculation the colonialists aimed at depleting the Kipsigis livestock as many animals would have been sold to meet the charges and a few would have died after inoculation to achieve the policy of depastoralization in the Kipsigisland. Thirdly, and equally important, by denying the Kipsigis access to livestock markets outside the district, the colonialists wanted to devalue the importance of cattle among the Kipsigis. Without a ready market, the Kipsigis were bound to reassess the importance of their animals in relation to other economic activities (Allan, 1965). And fourthly, by restricting cattle markets, the colonialists managed to divert the Kipsigis attention to maize production. It is being argued here that extensive maize cultivation during this period was partially a result of the Kipsigis inability to sell their animals and as a consequence resorted to more and more cultivation of maize which had a ready market. It was therefore ironical when the DC noted that the Kipsigis were "rich in livestock" when they intended to make cattle lose

economic value to the Kipsigis. This intended colonial motive did not succeed owing to the initiative of the Kipsigis to raise money through other means, such as labour and sale of agricultural produce (Swainson 1980b). By the 1940's the Kipsigis were "too rich" in livestock that the colonial administration was contemplating culling. The "Great Quarantine Age" in the Kipsigisland lasted until 1934, though there were numerous localised quarantines throughout the Kipsigisland whenever there was an outbreak of cattle diseases. Such quarantines not only prevented the spread of diseases, but also equally rendered the Kipsigis animals unsaleable besides exploiting them through exorbitant treatment and inoculations.

Further colonial neglect of animal husbandry is illustrated by the absence of a veterinary officer in the reserve. After the Kipsigis refused to have their animals inoculated in the early 1920's, the colonial administration recommended that the activities of the veterinary department should cease in the reserve. That also meant that the purchase of cattle by outside traders also ceased as no unbranded cattle could pass along the roads to outside destinations. The withdrawal of the veterinary officer from the reserve did not however affect the settled areas. The Europeans settlers and Indian residents in Kericho continued to enjoy the services of the veterinary officer as their animals were regularly inoculated and treated. The only livestock Inspector earmarked for the reserve was also withdrawn by 1928 on the basis that too few animals were availed for inoculation. For trade purposes however, a visiting veterinary officer or stock Inspector could be dispatched to the reserve to certify and inoculate animals for trade. By the beginning of World War II the district still suffered from the need of the services of a veterinary officer and only a livestock Inspector was posted in the reserve to facilitate trade in animals through

inoculations and branding. It is therefore evident that the colonial administration totally ignored livestock herding among the Kipsigis and even made cattle disposal through trade difficult. The Kipsigis were forced by economic reasons to succumb to colonial regulations to have their cattle inoculated and branded so that they could be able to sell them. Moreover the attractive colonial capitalism was gradually forcing the Kipsigis to look at their animals as items of trade (van Zwanenberg, 1972).

But due to widespread alienation of the Kipsigis land and due to veterinary restriction on the sale of animals, there was a large increase in animals in the reserve causing insufficient pasture resources. The Kipsigis demand of the Chepalungu area was largely due to lack of enough grazing land. The Kipsigis therefore resorted to invading the Chepalungu forest illegally and later, legally spread to the same area after Chepalungu was given back as part of the Kipsigis reserve (DC/KER/1/2/1928, p. 21). Others defied the instituted colonial reserve boundaries and some were living among the Dorobo a few in the Maasai reserve and a small settlement was noticed near Gelegele in the Kisii district (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 21). Most of the immigrants came from Bureti which had started experiencing some problems of population congestion, extensive maize cultivation and later on enclosure of private lands. In addition to spreading out to Chepalungu, the Kipsigis also resorted to becoming squatters on the Sotik, Muhoroni and Londiani farms so that they could get access to grazing pasturelands in these areas. For a long time the settler farmers never lacked any labour as the squatter labour was readily obtainable on account of the availability of grazing lands. The DC noted in 1932 that the Kipsigis agricultural land was ample but grazing was insufficient and about 35,000 heads of livestock owned by the Kipsigis was in the farms. And in 1935 it was noted that:

"... the Kipsigis in their never-ending search for more grazing for livestock are always anxious to become squatters on comparatively undeveloped farms such as those in the Sotik (and Muhoroni- Londiani area). The attraction is the grazing and not the work offered, which is frequently non-existent. That the Kipsigis will agree to work for shs. 4/= per month in order to obtain the privilege of squatting shows clearly that it is grazing and not employment they want"(DC/KER/1/8/1935, p. 14).

Therefore, by 1932 the squatter labour had greatly prospered and accumulated large herds of animals that they became a source of anxiety to the colonial administration (Clayton and Savage, 1974; Stichter, 1982; Kanogo, 1987). The squatter labour was scattered about with their large herds on large farms under little control. The African chiefs did not have jurisdiction to control the Kipsigis squatter labour in the Sotik area nor were the squatters directly controlled by the colonial officers. Their own masters were more often inclined to either favour them or reluctant to co-operate in squatter control. Besides, the individual farmers

"... had the glamour of acting as a sort of feudal lord (which) blinded the eyes of many occupiers to the defects of their vassals. Collectively most (settler farmers) will admit that squatters are more trouble than they are worth, but individually every farmer will tell you that it is his neighbours' not his own squatters, who are the cause of the feeling against resident labourers" (DC/KER/1/4/1931, p. 14).

The main accusation against these squatters was in relation to cattle thefts. It was alleged that the Kipsigis labourers in the Sotik farms were behind the rampant spate of cattle thefts especially from the Gusii, Maasai and the Luo. Since these squatters were not under the chiefs' control, only the European police officers could follow up cases that concerned squatters on the farms. In order to provide police sufficient to maintain law and order in these areas, the liability was thrown back on the reserve which had to pay fines for the maintenance of such police force. The Africans apparently had to shoulder the extra burden of being controlled and this was one way of exploiting and pauperising the

Kipsigis. As further accusations of their squatters' indulgence in cattle thefts continued, the possibility of removing them from European farms was being mooted. In 1934 a police-cum- Administration raid was effected on the Sotik farms and resulted in the prosecution of many employers and employees. This raid¹ proved that the control of squatters authorised and otherwise on unalienated lands and alienated unoccupied lands was to remain a serious problem. The control of squatters on occupied land was itself sufficiently difficult and these areas were considered "maladministered native reserve " (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 9). Such areas were good concealment enclaves for stolen livestock as they were not under any 'tribal ' authority and equally good jumping-off places for livestock thieves in the reserve. Consequently in 1938, four Reserve Headmen were specially instructed to assist in the keeping of law and order on the farms. By the beginning of World War II some attempts had been made to replace squatter labour with casual labour (DC/KER/ 1/12/1939, p. 15).

It should be noted here that there was a countrywide settler campaign against squatter privileges which was in full force by the 1930s due to settler expansion of livestock farming in Uasin Gishu and Nyanza areas. The major complaints in the Kipsigisland were but part of a wider scheme of trying to eradicate the 'squatter menace' (Stichter, 1982:101). Ranchers and dairymen argued that squatter livestock threatened their grade livestock with disease and contributed to soil deterioration. A diversity of local orders came into effect further limiting the number of squatter livestock and enforcing work contracts. Opportunities for squatters continued to constrict throughout the 1930s and the legal culmination of the struggle to turn the squatter into a labourer came in 1937 with the new Resident Labourers Ordinance. This ordinance, based on the recommendations of

the 1932 Carter Land Commission that care should be taken to avoid squatters gaining any form of legal land rights in the European areas, finally explicitly defined the squatter contract as purely and simply a labour contract, and required squatters to work up to 270 days a year (Clayton and Savage, 1974; Stichter, 1982:101; Zeleza, 1989a)

Perhaps the most interesting feature of animal husbandry was that associated with livestock raids. Every year is replete with accounts of livestock raids and it is not possible to give detailed accounts here. All the raids took place along the borders with the Kipsigis being accused more often as instigators. But equally the Kipsigis also suffered numerous raids from the Maasai, Gusii and the Luo, though most of these raids were retaliatory in nature. A graphic account of such raids will not detain us here. But it is worthy noting that stock rustling, which formerly was regarded rather as a sport associated with manhood, took an economic turn during the period. The commercialisation of livestock raids meant that the acquisition of wealth became the main object behind livestock raids. Livestock raids flourished with time and was even made more complicated. Cases of the Kipsigis allying with the Gusii to steal or raid the Gusii stock were reported (DC/KER/1/9/1931, p. 7). It was equally proved that in a number of cases the Gusii not only made false identification of cattle, but also stole amongst themselves and then sold to the Kipsigis. It has also been examined that the Sotik settled area largely inhabited by the Kipsigis squatters acted as a 'thieves' paradise'. And it should also be noticed that such raids involved actual human deaths. It will be hard to prove that more Kipsigis died in cattle raids than either the Gusii or the Luo, but in 1932 alone it was report that:

"... about ten Lumbwa (Kipsigis) have been killed by other tribes, the latter acting in self defence, whilst the Lumbwa have killed one Maasai and one Kişii " (DC/KER/1/5/1932, p. 4).

It is not prudent to argue that the Gusii and Luo were better at killing than the Kipsigis, but it is plausible to argue that the Kipsigis livestock-raiding propensities were obviously not deterred by the fear of death nor the actual value of the livestock.

A number of methods used to curb cattle raids have already been examined. It, therefore, suffices to say that with the intensification of cattle raids, the colonial government sought for more punitive methods of curbing the menace. The levying of fines, the introduction of a police levy and the banishment of the *laibons* featured prominently during the period. The aspect of individual and collective fines was as widespread as the vice of livestock rustling itself. Noting that the district had remained calm throughout 1925 the DC attributed that to the collection of a large number of outstanding fines inflicted on those who had participated in livestock raids. Many such cases abound in the colonial annual reports. Besides aiming at depleting the Kipsigis livestock, the colonial administration used fines as a punitive measure of economically punishing the Kipsigis. But the Kipsigis, rather than being cowed, went in for more cattle raids in order to recoup their losses. The increased spate of cattle raids among the Kipsigis should therefore be seen from the colonial prism of depastoralising the Kipsigis. In order to compensate themselves for cattle lost through fines, poll and hut taxes, new European merchandise and increased financial responsibilities, such as education, the Kipsigis resorted to increased cattle raids. In other words the colonial depastoralisation accentuated and wet the Kipsigis appetite for more cattle raids.

Due to such increased cattle raids along the borders, the colonial administration instituted a police patrol team covering the area between Gelegele on the Kipsigis-Maasai border to Muhoroni on the Kipsigis-Luo border. A European police constable with a

detachment of police was stationed at Sotik in 1926 and their maintenance there was at the expense of the Kipsigis and the Kisii bordering locations (DC/KER/1/2/1926, p 2). The stationing of this Levy Force and the imposition of a police levy on the Kipsigis did not in anyway curb cattle raids. By 1929 there was a recurrence of border troubles which were indirectly blamed on the relaxed efforts and supervision by the European police constable. But in actual fact the police Levy was more pre-occupied with the collection of the police levy than curbing livestock raids. It was like setting up a police force to collect more funds from the Kipsigis for apparently no work done. Persuasion through *barazas* had little effect and the Levy Force stayed on as the DC remarked that:

".... It is no doubt unfortunate that these people (the Kipsigis) should have had to find so much money for the police; but they alone have been responsible for this , and I am confident that the payment during the year of shs. 6/= by every male adult of most of the tribe has done more than anything else to created some sort of public opinion against stock thieving[rustling]" DC/KER/1/3/1930, p 9-10).

If according to the DC, the purpose of the police levy was to create a 'public opinion' against livestock rustling then the Levy Force did nothing to stop the menace other than collect the levy. By the end of December 1930, about Shs. 69, 138 /= were collected from the Kipsigis that year. By 1932 the DC noted that the Kipsigis attitude towards the colonial government was very negative

'... entirely due to the imposition over several years of a police levy and the remorseless collection of fines which in parts have depopulated whole *Koret*... they (the Kipsigis) can hardly envisage the administration as other than tax and fine collections (sic) but there are some indications that they are realising how much stock thieving [rustling] has retarded them (DC/KER/1/4/1934, p 8).

Such an admission by the administration that the Kipsigis were retarded in development largely due to the government's imposition of levies, fines and taxes, is not far from being genuine. The purpose for these levies were therefore to depastoralise and pauperise the

Kipsigis to a point when the Kipsigis themselves could realise the futility of their cherished activity - cattle raids. Apparently the Kipsigis were slow in realising this and hence suffered the wrath of the administration. By 1932 it was apparent to the colonial authorities that fines and levies encouraged the Kipsigis to recoup their losses, (DC/KER/1/5/1932, p. 5) and yet continued with the policies. The police levy amounted to roughly 42,000/= in 1932. It was not until 1939 when the police levy was lifted and substituted with cattle Traders Licences so as to cash in on the thriving cattle trade, especially during the war.

Laibons, the avowed enemies of the colonial authorities in regard to cattle theft, continued to pose problems as the Kipsigis relentlessly continued demanding for either the return of the deported *laibons* or the setting up of new ones. By 1920 it was apparent that Kenduiwa, son of Koileki was almost succeeding his father and this infuriated the colonial administration. But for a period of almost nine years, the colonial authorities seem not to have been bothered with *laibon* activities in spite of frequent cattle thefts. In 1929 however, the recurrence of border troubles and livestock raids were directly or indirectly linked to the *laibons*, though it has already been shown that this was due to the relaxed effort of the police patrol which was largely collecting levies and fines than stopping cattle raids (DC/KER/1/2/1929, p 8). The local colonial administration however implied that the *laibons* were reasserting their powers once more and coincidentally 1929 marked the timely release of "a number of notorious livestock thieves from jail" (*Ibid*). Pierced by unfavourable remarks by the European settlers, the Kipsigis were in a state of unrest and the revolt against the authority reached its apex in October when attempts were made to burn the huts of the chiefs, headmen, elders and those who had assisted the government in any way (*Ibid* p. 8). The disturbed situation of 1929 spilt over to Maasailand and Gusiiland

through cattle raids and counter-raids. The 1st platoon of KAR arrived on 26th October 1929 to restore order. The young men of *Matheawa* and *shilling*, both on the farms and in the *Korets* of Bureti bordering the Kipsonoi, were ordered to hand in their spears to Chemagel police post. At the same time all the *laibons* in the district were told to reside in Kericho under the provisions of the Witchcraft Ordinance, pending the government's decision on their ultimate fate, but this was rescinded towards the end of 1930. But affairs in the Belgut reserves were unsatisfactory and caused anxiety during most part of the year. Belgut was identified as the "stronghold of *Laibonism*, superstition ... and arrogant independence" (DC/KER/ 1/3/1930, p. 11).

After realising that the general resentment against them was ripe in the reserve, the *laibons* became active in urging the Kipsigis to stop cattle raids. In 1929 and 1930, a few *laibons* accompanied chief arap Tengecha's visits to the Sotik settled area and in the reserve to discourage livestock raids. A few of the errant *laibons* attracted the wrath of the people. For example, on October 30, 1930 a large armed mob of the Kipsigis attacked a *laibon*, Kibinot arap Rongoe in Belgut only to be saved by several chiefs who happened to be present in the area. In 1931 one *laibon* wanted to penetrate Sotik and at a large meeting "...it was affirmed that they (the Kipsigis) would rather have any plague than *Laibons* in Sotik" (DC/KER/1/4/1931, p. 4). Nevertheless, the frustrations of the administration's attempt to move the *laibons* out of the district solidified the latter's prestige, as it was later realised that they only supported the government when it suited them.

A lot of propaganda was started by the colonial administration against the *laibons*. The increase of crimes in the early 1930's was blamed on them and by 1934 the colonial administration claimed to have fully revealed their evil machinations when it stated that:

" Apart from the amazing increase in crimes of every kind in 1932 and 1933 *laibons* were found to be in possession of no less than twenty-two (22) firearms of various calibre, and considerable supplies of ammunition, and after eleven of them had been committed to prison for two terms and upwards the case was represented so strongly to government that the "removal of *laibons*" Ordinance, 1934 was passed and received his majestys' assent on 27.8.1934" (DC/KER/1/7/1934, p. 2).

Whether the *laibons* were capable of amassing such large and sophisticated weapons and for what purposes is not clear. What is clear however was the fact that the local administration wanted to deport them with a view to ridding the Kipsigisland of *laibons*. Even the LNC was in support of the removal of the *laibons*. And so they managed to have the Removal of Laibon's Ordinance passed. But the removal of the *laibons* from the Kipsigisland took place in stages. In 1934, only twelve families were removed to Gwasssi in South Kavirondo and ninety-nine families remained in the district. The removal of these ninety-nine *laibon* families was an hectic one and lasted a long time. In 1935, eighteen more *laibon* families were moved to Gwasssi, leaving a total of eighty-one families in the district. In 1936 the total number of *laibons* moved amounted to about 64 men, 95 women and 151 children. About 1248 heads of cattle were also moved together with a large number of small livestock. The number of *laibons* remaining in the district was estimated at about 35 men, 104 women and 155 children - 29 men 82 women and 126 children of these were moved in 1937. Those left behind were under investigation to establish their authenticity as *laibons*. They were all removed to Gwasssi in the following year (DC/KER/1/3-10/1939) .

The removal of the *laibons* was not the end of *laibonism* in the Kipsigisland. In particular the wives of the *laibons* could run away from their husbands back into the reserve or settled areas. As the Talai must marry outside their own ranks, living at Gwasssi,

away from their own people, put too great a strain on the marital bounds of the sons and daughters of the *laibons*. Often they sneaked back to the reserve to marry or get married. Besides it was also possible for any of the Kipsigis to get in touch with *laibons* in the Maasai or Nandi district, or even go to Gwasssi and back. By the beginning of World War II, it could not be assumed therefore that all contacts between the Kipsigis and *laibonism* had been effectively cut off. Worse still, the removal of *laibons* did not have a correspondingly proportional effect on cattle raids. 1938 and 1939 witnessed more cattle raids and border unrest than the previous years even without the presence of *laibons*. What the colonial administration failed to realise was that the Kipsigis could still continue raiding their neighbours for cattle even without the blessings of the *laibons*.

And lastly, the half-concerted efforts of the colonial administration in starting a dairy for the production of ghee clearly demonstrates the colonial neglect of animal husbandry among the Kipsigis. Among the neighbouring Gusii, ghee manufacturing was introduced as early as 1921 (Omwoyo, 1992). But among the Kipsigis the introduction of a dairy for the production of ghee only started in 1925 in Kericho and was closed down in the same year. The main reason given for its closure was its apparent "unpopularity with the Kipsigis chiefly owing to the dairy being far removed from the grazing grounds". The appropriate location of the dairy could not be blamed on the Kipsigis and yet the dairy factory was abandoned. Even by 1932, the colonial administration was still implying that the Kipsigis were "apathetic if not actually antagonistic to ghee factories" (DC/KER/1/3/1932, p. 8). By 1934, ghee making had not taken off and this remained almost entirely a neglected aspect of economic development before World War II.

5.5 Changes In Labour Organisation.

By the close of World War II major changes in the labour organisation among the Kipsigis had already taken root. Migrant labour, hired labour, tenancy and squatting were increasingly becoming manifested in the agricultural production among the Kipsigis. The period between 1920 and 1939 witnessed further intensification of these types of labour, though with minor modification. By the advent of World War II the Kipsigis had distinguished themselves as labour migrants and squatters besides using household labour for extensive maize cultivation and other economic ventures. The Kipsigis case, as illustrated here, was only part of a wider plot affecting the whole of Kenya. Stichter, (1982:80) has noted that throughout the 1920s African participation in the migrant labour market steadily increased. In the early part of the decade the government persuasion and compulsion were prominent features of the labour market - in later years the poor income from crop production in comparison to the income from wages became a more important factor. The change, we posit, reflects the competition of African and Europeans agriculture and the gradual predominance of the latter. Increasingly, it was not coercion which pushed the Africans into the labour force, but what Stichter, (1982:83) calls the 'dull compulsion of economic relations' between the settlers and the Africans (see also Meillassoux, 1981:127).

Within the district the Kipsigis provided their labour in three fronts - for government projects, for tea plantation and settler farmers and outside the district the Kipsigis provided migrant labour force. During the period the government employed chiefs, headmen, "tribal police," clerks, interpreters, teachers and so on. These formed the nascent salaried group of individuals who together with the World War I ex-soldiers and

auxiliary staff, formed the embryonic class of petty entrepreneurs within the colonial capitalist set up (Aseka,1989). With their salaries, they were among the first people to adopt new methods and technologies of farming, for instance, the adoption of hoes and ox-ploughs. They were more receptive to agricultural changes and pioneered most of the innovations introduced by the colonial capitalist state (Ondieki,1975; Mwanzi,1977b). They were among the first to own shops, send their children to schools, grow maize on a large scale for sale, and inoculate their animals against diseases. The educated elite who had gone through the numerous dotted mission schools in the reserve later joined this group of people. By 1924, two 'boys' from Lumbwa Industrial Mission are said to have opened shops in the reserve and 5 *posho* mills were being erected in the Kipsigis district (DC/KER/1/1/1924, p. 5). The role of the chiefs and this group of people in adopting new agricultural innovations can not be down played. Mwanzi (1977b), using the example of chief Tengecha arap Cheborge, argues that the chiefs were instrumental in determining the receptivity of the new agricultural innovations. Chief Tengecha's location in Litein took to extensive maize cultivation, adoption of grade cattle and later the planting of tea due to the role of its chief. Ondieki (1975) labelled chiefs as the agents of social and economic changes during the colonial period. Besides the salaried class, however, many of the Kipsigis provided their labour for government projects, the Public Works Department (PWD) being the largest employer in the sector. Though some of this labour was paid, instances abound when PWD used free and forced labour to realise their projects, especially the making and levelling of roads.

The settler farmers in the Sotik, Muhoroni, Londiani and Songhor areas readily accepted the Kipsigis labour as squatters. Equally the Kipsigis on the other part also

readily accepted to be squatters on settler farms on account of getting an opportunity of grazing their animals. "Consequently the Sotik farmers, with their large grazing areas so coveted by the Kipsigis, had no labour shortage. They were moreover singularly fortunately placed as regards the Kisii, besides labour from Central Kavirondo and Mtende in Tanganyika" (DC/KER/1/2/1926, p. 9). As early as 1920, about 1,000 Kisii and 200-300 Luo were employed by the BEADOC and other local farmers (DC/KER/1/1/ 1920, p. 3). A number of farms, especially in the Londiani-Molo area, also had Kikuyu squatter labour of whom there were about 800 in Kericho district alone (*Ibid*). The Kipsigis usually preferred being in the Sotik area where pastures for their animals were plenty and by 1920 there were approximately 1,646 able bodied squatter labourers in the area. It was argued that because of the right to grazing their livestock a Kipsigis grown up man could even accept a kitchen "*toto's* wage" of about shs. 4 a month (DC/KER/4/1931, p. 15). Countrywide, Stichter (1982:100) has shown that the squatters initially enjoyed a lot of privileges. Some of the Kipsigis even invaded alienated but unoccupied land where they accumulated their livestock in these areas due to their expansiveness and owing to the fact that these areas were not under 'tribal' control. Later and due to problems associated with controlling such squatter labour, it became evident that the only way of solving the problem was to do away with squatter labour. By 1937, the local colonial administration was advocating for elimination of squatter labour in the European settler farms through the legislation of the Resident Natives Ordinance of 1937 (Clayton and Savage, 1974:141).

The largest employer of labour in the district was the tea plantation sector. The tea companies required labour to clear the grounds by cutting trees and uprooting stumps. Besides, more labour was needed in the planting, weeding and pruning stages. Even more

labour was required in the picking and processing of the tea leaves. A large number of the Gusii and Luo labour was employed for such purposes. In addition a number of Sotik and Bureti locations supplied men for work on local farms. But it was noted in 1926 that the bulk of the Kipsigis labour appeared to prefer to work further afield than on farms in the district. Besides the tea companies preferred to enter into contracts for a long time with their labour so as not to waste capital with unreliable, unstable and indisciplined local Kipsigis labour (DC/KER/1/2/1926, p. 11). As the acreage under tea plantation increased more labour was required and at a special Lumbwa Farmers' Association meeting the cost of unskilled "native" labour was fixed at about shs. 12/= plus *posho* and a blanket. By 1928 " ...there was a super abundance of labour and Resident Natives (were) being contracted for a period of roughly three years" (DC/KER/1/2/1928, p. 4). But much of this labour comprised the Gusii, Luo and the Luyha people as the Kipsigis predominated in the Sotik farms as squatter labour. The AHP could boast of getting about 10,000 boys from the Kisii whenever required. The average labour force employed during 1928 was approximately 6,494 people and this was projected to grow to about 7,718 people in 1929. By 1930 the alien casual labourers from north, central and south Kavirondo districts averaged around 13,000 people, most of who worked in the tea estates. The wages averaged about shs. 14/= per adult though children received between roughly Shs. 6 and Shs. 10 per month (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p. 21). By 1931 it was noted that labour had been plentiful and cheaper than the previous year, but the Kipsigis had been ousted from nearly all tea estates because of "... their casual methods". The DC had noted earlier that "... unless they [the Kipsigis] got a ready supply of milk which they prefer to meat, they were not usually anxious to perform manual work no matter what the wages were " (DC/KER/1/3/1930, p.

21). This might explain their nearly total absence in the tea plantations, but nearly total dominance in the Sotik settled area.

The world economic crisis of 1932 notwithstanding, the tea estates continued being the prime employer of alien labour and comprised about 10% of all labour in the colony (van Zwanenberg, 1974). By this time the large tea estates and many individuals had dispensed with the Kipsigis labour who were accused of "... having no idea of regular working: a week of work and two at home is their principle" (DC/KER/1/5/1932, p. 14). Tea production requires regular labour as it has to be picked day after day and such labour was deemed useless. But gradually the Kipsigis were not only employed there as ox-drivers but as tea pluckers as well (DC/KER/1/8/1935, p. 14). Occasionally there were temporary shortages of labour, especially the Gusii in the Sotik area and of plucking *totos* on the tea estates as was the case in 1936 and 1937 (DC/KER/1/9/1936, p. 20). Such labour shortages have been attributed to the wealth of certain "tribes" arising from plentiful agricultural harvests, large quantity of land and livestock and from the profits of trade (Stichter, 1982:43). But poor conditions of work, poor diet, bad housing, ill-treatment and so forth, manifested in the flouting of contract terms, absence without permission, overstaying leave and the idea that a four- hour day was quite long enough were the main causes of labour shortage in the Sotik farms (arap Korir, 1976). But the AHP Company had resident recruiting officers in the Gusiiland and rarely suffered any labour shortages (Stichter, 1982:56). Much of the plucking work was done by juvenile labour though this was disturbed by the provisions of the proposed Employment of Servants Ordinance of 1937 (DC/KER/ 1 /10/1937, p. 13). The Tea Growers Association was in favour of the abolition of penal sections in the case of juveniles but wanted some means of juvenile

identification. By 1939 the tea industry employed about 13, 000 men and boys with the vast majority of them being from the Gusii, Luo and the Kipsigis in that order. A certain number of these were married and had their families, thus the total African population on the tea estates was approximated at 18,000 people (DC/KER/1/13/1939, p. 14).

The contention that labour in the tea estates was plentiful and cheap because of the good treatment, good rates, fair diet and housing has been qualified by both arap Korir (1976) and Osoro (1977). arap Korir has given a critical appraisal of the living conditions in the tea estates and shown that they were far from being benign. It was the economic conditions which drove the labourers into the tea estates rather than the conditions pertaining in the sector. The housing of the labourers in some estates was pathetic, and coupled with overcrowding frequently led to outbreak of diseases, like cerebrospinal meningitis (arap Korir, 1976:64). On the other hand the deceptive recruiting officers in the Gusiiland and the offer of free transport lured many into the tea estates (Osoro, 1977:18). Besides, the tea plantation companies, though with a large capital outlay, encouraged squatter labour as a means of stabilising their labour (arap Korir, 1976:50). It has also been demonstrated that both the pull and push factors motivated the Gusii to offer their labour in the tea plantations in Kericho (Omwoyo, 1992:152). Elsewhere, plentiful harvest in the reserves and the Africans' realisation that it was more profitable to harvest their own crop than to work for wages accounted for labour shortages in the settler agricultural sector, especially between 1935 to 1940 (Cliffe, 1976: 115; Stichter, 1982:97). But in other places new socio-economic forces forced labour from the reserve into the settler sector. Increasing population pressure on limited reserve lands and social differentiation in the peasant economy, engendered both by unequal access to the land, in some areas, and by

participation in the labour market itself are two main push factors identified (Stichter, 1982; 97). Both factors were evidently manifested in the Kipsigisland.

Informal labour protests on the job were widespread and testify to the poor working and living conditions among the migrant labourers. Employers, especially settlers, constantly complained of inefficiency and dishonesty on the part of the labourers. From the workers' point of view, laziness, theft and minor deceptions were often the only way to gain some measure of freedom or personal dignity or to protest against low wages, late payment of wages or unnecessary deductions from wages. Oral evidence gathered by Osoro (1977:72-84) has provided valuable examples of this sort of labour protest on the tea estates in the 1920s and 1930s. In response to deteriorating conditions, instances of dodging work, drinking beer during working hours and theft of pruning knives, hoes, pangas and axes, all of which could be used on the farm at home, were common practices. At times the management imposed collective fines for thefts, but this usually meant punishing the innocent, since those who stole had already run away from the place of work. Protests against harsh *Nyaparas*, cursing them or shouting them down also took place (*Ibid*).

Besides the Kipsigis labour being harnessed within the district, they were also heavily involved in migrant labour outside the district. In 1920 the register of identification tickets showed that about 1,832 able-bodied males left the district for work elsewhere. Yet there were many who went out to work without carrying identification tickets. The enforcement of the Native Registration Ordinance required those going out for work to carry identification tickets. Much of this migrant labour went to Nakuru where wages for unskilled labour was as high as RS 8 /- compared to the local rates of Rs 5 /- in 1920

(DC/KER/1/ 1/ 1920, p. 13). It was noted that the Kipsigis casual labourers preferred to work well away from the reserve. Year after year a number of Kipsigis streamed out of the district to work. In 1921 about 885, and in 1922, 1,056 Kipsigis left the district for work. These went to their former employers while most of the new labourers were of the last circumcised age set called *shilling*. It was rather contradictory that so few of the Kipsigis were employed on the tea estates owing to their unreliable attendance, but many of them sought for passes to go out to work elsewhere. At times, for example in 1931 and 1932, passes to go out were refused due to lack of employment in the Nakuru area owing to the harsh economic conditions prevailing thereby then. But the Kipsigis labour continued to be in demand after that.

In 1934 a tragic event, termed 'Semini case,' occurred at Naivasha, when a party of Kipsigis murdered a European landowner. There was a general outcry against the community and it was suggested that no farmer should employ a Kipsigis in any capacity whatsoever (DC/KER/ 1/7/1934, p. 4-5). And it was demanded that every Kipsigis outside the reserve had to carry a permit to reside outside the district. But a large number of European farmers, rather than laying off their Kipsigis labourers, sent them to Kericho for permits to reside on their estates. This demonstrated how widely acceptable the Kipsigis labourers had become outside their district. In 1935 it was noted that in spite of general disinclination of the Kipsigis labourers, especially in Nakuru district, many of the Kipsigis looking for work there were issued with passes. But this was followed by an outbreak of crime and the issuance of passes beyond Londiani was eventually stopped, except in the case of definite applications by employers for the Kipsigis labourers on their farms. Such applications became numerous and a great number of Kipsigis were sent to Rongai and

Nakuru respectively. This meant that the Kipsigis were not such unremunerative labourers as their reputation suggested. Perhaps it was when they were among their own people, particularly their women, that they found work so repugnant to them (DC/KER/1/ 8 /1935, p. 7). Stichter (1982) has however attempted to show that migrant labour was more attractive to most communities for a number of reasons. It was not only more remunerative, but the migrants were devoid of petty exactions by the chiefs in the reserves besides being forced to work on public projects (see also van Zwanenberg, 1974) As a result it was observed in 1936 that:

" Kipsigis labour is in great demand outside the district and the Kipsigis themselves prefer to go to the farms in the Nakuru area , but trouble with the (community) from time to time had led the police of that area to discourage any uncontrolled influx of Kipsigis and passes are only issued under exceptional circumstances " (DC/KER / 1 / 9 / 1936, p. 20).

Passes were only issued to that area with employers named on the passes. By the beginning of World War II, however, there was always steady demand for Kipsigis labour by farmers from Naivasha up to Songhor and it was sometimes difficult to reconcile the requirements of the Kipsigis passes with that of the demand. Since a Kipsigis pass was only valid for a particular employer, any Kipsigis wandering about looking for work was liable to arrest. As will be seen later, all those Kipsigis who went out to work did so with an intention of acquiring money to buy more livestock. By controlling the Kipsigis migrant labour, the colonial administration therefore sought to ensure that the Kipsigis did not replenish their depleted livestock, a policy which was aimed at depastoralization of the Kipsigis.

The Kipsigis households, being units of production, consumption and reproduction, were thus being gradually altered due to capitalism. Under the migrant labour and squatter

labour systems, men were drawn out or forced off the land, leaving behind their women to maintain production, especially at this time of extensive maize cultivation. The costs of reproducing, maintaining and sustaining the cheap labour force were therefore borne by this "pre-capitalist" sector (Wolff, 1972; Stichter, 1982; Zeleza, 1987). As the tasks and roles performed by men were changed the workers' families remained in the reserve, shouldering most of the burden of food crop cultivation. Besides the women and children who were left behind in the reserves suffered the inconveniences of forced labour in communal undertaking which were common during the period.

The costs of household production- including retirement or social security, education, health and the rearing of the next generation of workers - were borne by the economy of the African 'reserves' which supported the worker's family, his children and himself in sickness, old age or on leave. In this way the pre-capitalist economy became an appendage to the economy of estate agriculture which was subsidising its low wages. In the words of Mahmood Mamdani;

" the pre-capitalist mode of production was thus to be preserved, though not in its original form, but in a perverted form, as a reservoir of labour for the capitalist mode of production" (see arap Korir, 1976:49).

Household relations of production were also modified in varying ways - either in the direction of capitalist exchange or the intensified exploitation of "traditional" obligations in the service of the labour market (Meillasoux, 1985:95). Young men's family obligations, such as herding of animals and cultivation, were weakened and hired labour was sometimes substituted. While obligations to parents and extended kin social networks were loosened, those to elders and chiefs were intensified. Wife obligations to the husband were likewise intensified as they were pressed to take over more work on family

landholdings (Stichter, 1982: 28, Omwoyo, 1997:58). The exploitation of female labour was thus more intensified largely due to the effects of colonial capitalism. Thus capitalism is not exclusive of the domestic economy for it relies on domestic relations to reproduce itself. The domestic market supplies workers' food requirements and also export commodities (Meillassuox, 1981:96). It is by preserving the domestic sector which is producing subsistence goods and services that imperialism realises, and further, perpetuates primitive accumulation which is simply the transfer of value from one mode of production to another through largely destructive means (*Ibid*).

5.6 Trade and Exchange

The imposition of taxes in the Kipsigisland demanded that the local inhabitants develop commodities for sale in order to acquire money. Such commodities included their labour, maize, *wimbi*, hides and skins, honey and livestock. The commoditization of the district received more impetus with availability of European manufactured goods and other acquired services like education. And so the production of commodities for trade and exchange was accelerated to not only acquire money for taxes but also cater for the newly introduced tastes. While the terms of trade and exchange were largely unfair and exploitative some of the Kipsigis nevertheless managed to accumulate wealth and distinguished themselves as a group of enterprising people in various fields. Many Africans in Kenya showed a growing readiness to exploit every possibility for the accumulation of wealth opened by the development of internal and international commodity markets and through labour in the estate sector (Berman, 1990:219). This

section therefore undertakes to analyse the developments attained by the Kipsigis through their own initiatives to raise their standards of living during the period under investigation.

The Kipsigis initiative in the extensive cultivation of maize has already been noted. Maize became the major item of trade and replaced *wimbi* as the staple food crop for the Kipsigis. By 1940, the Kipsigis came to depend as much more on farming as on herding (Middleton, 1965). Hides and skins, initially the main exports, were gradually overtaken by maize. The veterinary restriction during the period, however, prevented the flourishing of the livestock industry which was grossly neglected by the colonialists in order to turn the Kipsigis into crop farmers and labourers. Only an appreciable number of goats and sheep were exported out of the district. Honey was also an important and lucrative product, especially in the Chepalungu area. The sale of these commodities in terms of quantities produced and prices fetched varied from time to time depending on their demand. But the two world economic depressions of the early 1920's and early 1930's, droughts and ravages of locusts were some of the detrimental factors. Otherwise the Kipsigis took the initiative to produce what was in demand, especially maize in order to acquire more revenue. As the figures for hut and poll taxes increased it reflected the Kipsigis ability to earn more money through the sale of commodities and labour.

As a result of the trading activities in the district a number of trading centres began to develop with Kericho and Sotik attaining the status of township. Those trading centres with at least one stone shop by 1920 included Kericho with 10, Lubwa (Kipkelion) with 11, Sotik with 5, Fort Ternan with 4, Kapsamonget with 5, Kampetu with 4, Kipterre with 1, Maraboi with 5, Kapsita with 5, Kablutuet with 2, Mogogosiet with 2, Kapcheriro with 5, and Longisa with 2. Capital accumulation on the part of some of the Kipsigis enabled

them to start small trade and industry hitherto entirely in Indian or European hands. By the end of the period, a number of the Kipsigis had deeply penetrated the maize trade formerly entirely in Indian hands. Such people included the market-oriented peasantry who produced agricultural surplus and accumulated capital, some workers, and such colonial functionaries as chiefs and headmen (Berman, 1990:223). This group of early capitalists accumulated wealth in different forms. The number of hoes and ploughs has been noted and this was an index of their propensity to accumulate more wealth through extensive cultivation. Yet others accumulated wealth in *posho* mills industry. A large number of individuals owned *dukas* in the trading centres and markets while virtually all accumulated wealth in livestock. A few even purchased ox-driven wagons and others built stone houses. And an increasing number invested their money in their children's education in many mission schools throughout the district. Later an increasing number of the Kipsigis were turning to livestock trade, thus joining a few Arabs and Somalis who had settled in the district as early as 1905 and all had dominated trade in cattle for a long time. Trading activities usually provided an avenue for capital investment and further accumulation of wealth.

From the money earned through the sale of agricultural produce and livestock and from wage labour, a group of wealthy people was emerging using their wealth in a number of ways. With some investing in small *dukas*, others in livestock, education, good houses, *posho* mills, ploughs, bicycles, sewing machines, hoes and pangas. Among the rich were the chiefs who were not only innovators who laid the foundation for the phenomenal economic transformation of the Kipsigis society, but were in the forefront in the accumulation of wealth (Mwanzi, 1977b; Ondieki, 1975:6). Thus the development of

commodity production and trade in the reserves was linked to processes of social differentiation and class formation as is evidenced by the Kipsigis case. Berman, (1990:222) has noted that in part, this process grew on the basis of existing pre-colonial differentiation.

5.7 Summary

The inter-war period in the agricultural history of the Kipsigisland witnessed profound changes and the intensification of colonial agricultural policies. The settlers' agriculture received much attention from the colonial government in terms of capital inputs, improved seeds, agricultural personnel, marketing and transportation, yet they were largely inefficient and inexperienced. Nevertheless the tea plantation economy flourished as they kept on expanding land under tea cultivation and setting up more factories. The tea plantation economy became a major employer of labour from the neighbouring three Kavirondo districts.

Perhaps the most profound change was the penetration of capitalism in the reserve. Aspects of primitive accumulation were still evident in form of taxes, fines and levies. These forced the Kipsigis to further entrench themselves in commodity production and the cultivation of maize became a widespread feature in the countryside. Coupled with squatter labour in the settled areas, and migrant labour in the Songhor-Naivasha area, the Kipsigis afforded themselves an opportunity to accumulate wealth in livestock, *posho* mills, shops, ploughs, good brick houses and many more. A group of wealthy and affluent Kipsigis was emerging, thus accentuating rural differentiation and starting embryonic cleavages of class stratification. In other words the inter-war period opened the Kipsigisland to further

capitalist penetration which witnessed the destruction, modification and marginalisation of the Kipsigis pre-capitalist economic structures and their realignment to further exploitation by the capitalist sector. For example, the tea plantation economy with its large work force came to dictate a change from *wimbi* to maize production among the Kipsigis.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 AGRICULTURAL CHANGES DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II TO 1950

6.1 General Overview

Agricultural production in Kenya during and after World War II is intricately related. One can only understand the post-war developments in agriculture with knowledge of the situation pertaining during the war. The post-war agricultural reconstruction was largely a direct response to inappropriate and ineffective agricultural policies of a dual economy in the long- term. In effect World War II marked the beginning of a major transitional stage in which emphasis came to be gradually focused on African agriculture.

During the war, the mobilisation of all the potential resources of the colonial Empire, both men and materials for the purposes of war had to be done. Colonial production for war purposes was therefore increased on an immense scale (Berman, 1990:256). Self-sufficiency in all essential foodstuffs was advocated in addition to producing what Great Britain wanted most (Zezeza, 1989:145). Through coercion Kenyans were recruited and mobilised to serve in the army and in other designated essential services. According to Shiroya (1985) there were about 98,000 Kenyans who served in the armed forces in one capacity or another at home or abroad. Clayton and Savage (1974:232) posit that the maximum total serving at any one time appears to have been roughly 75,000. Local studies do indicate that the recruitment of the able bodied males was a great strain in the various African communities and this had an adverse effect on agricultural production (Ndeda, 1993).

Besides providing manpower, agricultural production was, perhaps, Kenya's major contribution to the war efforts. This requirement had several effects on both the white settlers and African agricultural production. The settlers took this opportunity to advance themselves both politically and economically. Politically they came to acquire immense powers in decision-making in terms of agricultural policy. Moreover, the settlers appear to have achieved predominant influence on the statutory boards and committees which controlled the agricultural and marketing policy (Maxon, 1990:33). They served in several committees where they greatly influenced the government's policy. During 1940-44 period they were advanced 20 million pounds under the Colonial Development Act (Cowen, 1980:126). On the other hand, wartime conditions were unfavourable to African agricultural production. Depleted of their able bodied male manpower through military conscription and massive migrations to towns, devoid of any government assistance and exploited through price differentials, many African peasants were condemned to abject poverty (van Zwanenberg, 1974). This was evident in the food shortages of 1942 and 1943 which led to the formation of a commission to probe into food shortages and famine in the African reserves. The food shortage was a grim but eloquent testimony to the harsh conditions generated by the war and an outcome of the cumulative effects of discriminatory agricultural policies. However, as Zeleza observes, the crisis was a sober inspiration from which future reconstruction of agriculture, in terms of giving official support to peasant farming, sprang (Zeleza, 1989:150).

During the war there was also an increase in individual land enclosures leading to the growth of individual land tenure in most African communities, especially the Kikuyu (Sorrenson, 1970; Muchoki, 1988), the Luyhia (Aseka, 1989), the Gusii (Omwoyo, 1992)

and now the Kipsigis. Individual land tenure led to a growing increase in landless groups of people therefore accentuating the differentiation among the African peasantry. Some African farmers, notwithstanding the extremely harsh war conditions and the official neglect of African agriculture, managed to accumulate wealth through increased commodity production. Discontent among the landless people, the squatters and the mostly wealthy rose (Maxon, 1990:32) and this led to a chain of discontent and disaffection that eventually culminated in the Mau-Mau rebellion in the early 1950's (Stichter, 1981:129, Kanogo 1987).

After the war the colonies were expected to help in the reconstruction of Britain which emerged out of the war as the greatest debtor in the world (Cowen, 1982:142). To achieve this Britain was set to rehabilitate and reconstruct African agriculture in order to make it more profitable in its favour. In 1946, the African Land Development Programme (ALDEV) was started. After the war and during the 1946 and 1954 period, many African farmers strove to continue the acceleration of agricultural expansion that they had begun earlier. ALDEV's main objective was, therefore, to recondition African agriculture in this period of expanded agricultural production mainly through the prevention of the now prevalent feature of soil erosion (Zezeza, 1982:269). The Second World War brought the start of almost twenty years of rapid growth in the estate sector of Kenya and a related expansion of commerce and secondary industry. Settler agriculture expanded rapidly in scale and profitability, and the settler estates began to move towards more fully capitalist forms of production, investing extensively in capital and equipment and attempting to create a completely wage-dependent rural proletariat (Berman, 1990:256). In other words, there was deliberate effort to use the colonies to meet urgent wartime supply needs and for

the post-war reconstruction of Britain. Against this general background, this chapter attempts to explore the specific conditions relating to the agricultural landscape of the Kipsigisland during World War II and after.

6.2 Land Privatisation

Before World War II, it has been noted, the 'land complex' of the Kipsigis was "tribal" rather than being individual. The Kipsigis protest against land alienation by the colonial administration and the mission stations before World War II was in regard to "tribal" lands rather than personal acquisitions. And therefore, by 1939, no individual, family or clan holding in perpetuity was recognised. But before the end of the war the enclosure of private lands was rapidly developing. In his address to the LNC in 1945, the DC said in part that he was:

"... worried about the large scale land grabbing which was taking place throughout the district, and particularly in the area of the Sotik post. People were planting boundaries ... and enclosing areas up to even 200 acres. This was contrary to all Kipsigis custom and at the present rate all good land would have been seized prior to the return of the askaris" (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.10).

Most members of the LNC agreed that the then practice "was opposed to the Kipsigis custom, which did not recognise the private ownership of land, but granted right of use only" (see arap Korir, 1978:29). The LNC meeting unanimously resolved that:

"... this meeting deplores the growing tendency of the claiming of land as private property and the marking of boundaries as contrary to Kipsigis custom, and orders that a standstill order in respect of the acquisition of land in the Kipsigis reserve, shall come into force and remain until the end of the war" (*Ibid*).

Events leading to the enclosure and privatisation of land were definitely beyond the powers of the LNC and no amount of resolutions would have reversed the situation.

Moreover, the prevailing economic conditions during the war dictated the process of privatisation of land. This had been a long process of entrenching the Kipsigis as commodity producers and at the beginning of World War II there had been a rising spectre of private property in land (Kitching, 1980; Cowen, 1982). This new tendency appears to have been started by "certain missionary elements" who enclosed land as their own (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.4). Initially such enclosed lands remained under grass, but more extensive cultivation of maize aided with the use of ox-ploughs witnessed more cultivated enclosures than those covered by grass. Extensive maize cultivation in plots prepared the previous years required one to claim exclusive rights of use of the affected plots and this was effectively done by erecting fences and hedges. Though the LNC favoured the traditional Kipsigis system of occupational rights only, the spectre of land privatisation and individualisation had been effectively laid during the war.

Following the veterans' return from the war, Daniel arap Sitonik, an ex-KAR letter writer formed a political organisation called the Kipsigis Tribal Association (KTA). He became its first president. The impending cattle count pre-occupied the politics of the Kipsigisland and a number of "professional agitators" emerged bringing up issues from the Kipande, land to European settlement (DC/KER/1/20/1947). In the LNC's elections, most of these "professional agitators" and "protesters" managed to win seats in the council. Such people included Micah arap Komuilong', Elijah arap Misoi, Jonah arap Chuma, Daniel arap Sitonik among many others. The change of councillors in the LNC in 1947 had an immediate result in an acute rush for land consciousness in the Reserve. The LNC once again came to distinction as the championing body against land alienation among the Kipsigis. For example, the councillors opposed the survey of Kabianga Veterinary

Breeding Centre in Belgut, although the setting aside of four hundred acres had been approved two years previously by both the LNC and the Local Land Board (arap Korir, 1978:35). When two *barazas* were held, "intense opposition was received from the whole of Southern Belgut" with the local people arguing that they had never been informed of the decision. This opposition was led by the then new LNC members for the area, arap Ketes and arap Komoilong' (*Ibid*). The local authorities threatened that if the Kipsigis did not require the centre, it could be moved elsewhere "... to the more progressive Nandi and Kisii" (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.4). Yet the dispute continued to linger on until April 1948 when the Kipsigis eventually lost the area in the face of the legal machinery of colonialism (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.16).

Consciousness about land further manifested itself in the Kapkatet water supply in Bureti by the colonial government. A hydrographic survey showed that the pump house and the 10,000-gallon storage tank would have to be erected outside the area which had been set aside for a social centre. The LNC members adamantly refused such an arrangement, arguing that the tank and pump house were purely a pretext for the Government to seize Kipsigis land (arap Korir, 1978:36). In Sot Division, the local residents led by their LNC members opposed the construction of Chief arap Baliach's office and a lock-up at Longisa in Location 4. The reason given for this opposition was that both buildings would require guards and this would lead to the construction of a police post which in turn would mean more land alienation. Equally in September 1948 when the Tse Tse Control Field Assistant and the Field Zoologist attempted to get cleared a mile-wide tse tse fly barrier in the area of Kaboson, the Kipsigis were apprehensive fearing that the Europeans were going to take the land (*Ibid*). The leadership role of the councillors on

the issue was of great concern to the local administrators who set out to dismantle it through harassment. Arap Komoilong, who attempted in July 1947 to stop the block planting of trees at Sigorwet in Belgut, was later arrested "for disobeying the lawful order of his chief" and sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment. Subsequently arap Komoilong was removed from the LNC "after it was allegedly discovered that he had once been sentenced to two years' hard labour and a fine of Shs. 75/= for stock theft". Another militant councillor, Juma arap Chuma left for Nairobi where he attempted to enlist the support of Eliud Mathu, the African representative in the Legislative Council (Legico) and the service of a lawyer. He came back to Kericho with an Asian advocate, Chandaria and a clerk, Mungai. But later arap Chuma and Mungai were accused of holding an illegal meeting at Sigorwet and were arrested as a result. Eventually arap Chuma ended up in prison on charges of assault against an Agricultural Scout and malicious damage to property (arap Korir, 1978:38). Such harassment on militant councillors eventually led to the split of the KTA and the formation of the Kipsigis Central Association (KCA) under Solomon arap Mategat. The KCA was due to its activities on land *inter alia*, banned in March 1948 together with *Dinitap Mbojet*; an indigenous religious sect set to oust the whites from the Kipsigisland. Solomon arap Mategat was arrested prosecuted and bound over. By 1950, therefore, the Kipsigis land consciousness was largely centred on the activities of LNC, the KCA and *Dinitap Mbojet*, all of which the colonial administration set to destroy in various ways. However the "Kimulot muddles" had started emerging by 1949 and forms an item of study in the next chapter.

Land consciousness among the Kipsigis was a direct impact of the colonial settler policy of land alienation and consequently led to pressure on land in the reserve. Before

World War II the Kipsigis had already started suffering from the alienation of their land. The favourable market conditions during the war led to an increase in agricultural investment. The fixing of reserve boundaries by the colonial state had long brought an end to earlier patterns of land colonisation and settlement, while growing population and efforts to extend the cultivation of cash crops made land increasingly scarce, competition for which led to the deterioration of traditional patterns of land rights and its transformation into a commodity with a cash market value (Cowen, 1982; Berman, 1990:222). The rising produce prices in the post-war years held out the hope of a prosperous peasant life, if only enough land could be obtained (Stichter, 1981:129). The well-off peasants or 'better farmers' were able to expand cultivation with the aid of the ox-ploughs, though a few peasants hired tractors from the settlers and Indian contractors. As a result more and more land was enclosed and privatised. This disadvantaged the bulk of the poor peasants who relied almost entirely on migrant labour and the emerging full-time rural proletariat. It is therefore evident that land consciousness and thus land pressure among the Kipsigis was as a result of expanded agricultural production and increasing population. But the underlying reason was the limited land available to the Kipsigis as a consequence of massive colonial land alienation (Arap Korir, 1976:42). The principal beneficiaries of the process of concentration of land and wealth were the rich farmers who were actively engaged in commodity production, who employed increasing amount of wage labour and also often engaged in trade. Prominent in this emerging class were two groups - the chiefs and other local state officials with their families and close supporters, and the increasing number of young educated men (Kaplinsky, 1980; Kitching, 1980; Cowen, 1982; Berman, 1990). Between the two social extremes in the reserve the great

mass of the population formed a finely differentiated "middle class peasantry" relying on varied combinations of family labour for subsistence production to satisfy basic consumption needs, the production of a small surplus for cash sale, and regular periods of wage labour outside the reserve (Kitching, 1980; Cowen, 1982; Berman, 1990:223).

6.3 Agricultural Production.

The beginning of World War II marked a major watershed in the agricultural activity in the Kipsigisland. In the first eight months of 1939 the district was in a state of impending war and the last four months the district was in a state of war but realised no active war activities (DC/KER/1/13/1939, p.2). However, the war requirements put a great strain not only on labour but agricultural production as well. The colonial agricultural production for war efforts was enormously increased and the district emerged as an important supplier of agricultural produce and labour. As regards the European community, the most important issue was of manpower versus production, that is, who should go to war and who should remain for production needs.

6.3.1 Settler Agricultural Activities.

The settlers were both involved in the supply of labour and agricultural produce for war efforts. The policy of mixed farming, which had started before the war, was greatly stressed. The main products were pyrethrum, cream, passion fruits, coffee and flax. One notable feature however was that most settler farmers were working on a minimum of man-power and several women being in charge of the farms, men having gone to the war. A lot of effort was put in the production of such products though coffee production was on

the decrease due to unfavourable climatic conditions. But by 1942 farmers, especially in Sotik farms, were gradually turning over more and more to dairying. This had a double effect on squatter labour in these farms. Less labour was required in dairying, thus the squatter labour was on the decrease. And secondly, European dairying led to a consequent desire to get rid of the squatter livestock in the farms. This was eventually achieved before the end of the war (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.2). An Acting Agricultural officer had to be posted at Kericho to concentrate on the increased production of essential crops in the European areas of Kisumu-Londiani and Kericho-Sotik respectively. Though figures for such agricultural produce are missing, it is nevertheless worthy to note that the policy of intensive agricultural production did not exempt the European farmers. They increased the production of pyrethrum, dairy products, especially cream, passion fruits and flax. Dairying was greatly improved both in the Sotik and Lumbwa settled areas with a number of grasses which were introduced to improve the pastures. Preventive inoculations were carried out regularly and the Kenya Tea Company which had taken up dairying distinguished itself with a good hybrid herd and well paddocked fields with regular dipping services.

Perhaps the most important single most agricultural product of the settlers was tea. Though restriction on planting new fields was still in force throughout the war years, a number of concessions were given to almost all companies together with the Sotik settlers. Throughout the war years the tea industry continued supplying immense orders of tea prompting the local administration remark that there was general prosperity in the district in spite of the war (DC/KER/1/18/1945). By 1941, the tea estates employed about 15,000 people - 7,000 being men, 6,000 boys and the remainder were in the Sotik farms.

Infrequent labour shortages were occasionally reported but not on any significant scale to affect the tea industry. The industry continued to increase in production as Planting Restrictions remained debatable and contentious. By 1942 the tea manufactured in Kericho was projected to be well over 16,000,000 lbs. The figure decreased to about 12,399,256 lbs. in 1943, further increasing to 13,059,000 lbs. in 1944, only to drop to 12,206,756 lbs. in 1945 due to drought (DC/KER/1/16-18/1943-5). In 1943, the output of the tea companies was handicapped owing to labour shortage, food shortage and rain shortage. The return from war of the Sotik settlers and the advent of new ones together with the hard work of the Production Sub-Committee, led to further increase in the production of the crop (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.6). This production was geared for the war purposes as committees were formed to promote agricultural production during the war years thus underlying the importance of settler farming activities during the period. It is therefore evident that settler agricultural production kept expanding to keep pace with the wider colonial policy of producing more agricultural products for the war efforts (Brown, 1966). Under the Increased Production of Crops Ordinance (1942) production quotas for wheat, maize, barley, oats, rye, flax, pyrethrum, rice and vegetables were established. To encourage increased production the state set prices that guaranteed to the white farmer a minimum price providing a profitable return above costs, including a minimum return in case of crop failure. For such commodities as coffee, tea, pyrethrum, and sisal, producers were guaranteed through contracts with the ministry of Food in Britain. For the first time settler producers were in a position of being able to sell everything they could produce at guaranteed profitable prices (Berman, 1990:258).

6.3.2. African Agricultural Activities.

The role of the Kipsigis in agricultural production was greatly intensified and the Kipsigis were further entrenched in commodity production. By the beginning of the war maize was so far the most important economic crop grown by the Kipsigis, not only for local consumption in the tea estates but also for sale outside the district. By 1940 the increase in maize production had been maintained and represented about 33,314 bags in excess of 1939, the total for 1940 being at 97,931 bags (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.11). The colonial government was eager to institute the correct methods of husbandry; the use of compost was also being promoted. Work concerning the correct setting of ploughs was increasingly being demonstrated and the colonialists thought that methods of husbandry suffered from lack of knowledge which hindered the yield of the most important crop, namely maize. It was hoped that by intensifying cultivation through better methods of farming the district would produce more than the 4.5-5 bags per acre then in production (*Ibid*). It then became the concerted policy of the colonial administrators to intensify maize production in the Kipsigisland to conform to the general colonial policy of producing more food for the war efforts. Though this policy was hampered by lack of trained personnel and the prevailing low prices at times, the Kipsigis nevertheless seized the opportunity to expand maize cultivation in response to the prices. By 1941 the maize prices at Litein had dropped to about Shs. 2/= per 200 lbs. bag. And so in 1942 there was a great decrease of maize planted, perhaps only half of that planted in 1941, this being the result of poor prices in 1941-42 and lack of manpower due to military conscription (Stichter, 1982:129). The introduction of the Maize Control Board (MCB) in July 1942 led to an increase in prices but this was too late to increase the harvest. The MCB ensured

the inspection of maize to good quality standards, thus increasing the prices. Kanogo (1987) and Zeleza (1989:149) however see this as a move aimed at curtailing African competition in the local and international markets. Towards the end of 1942 shortage of various commodities, including maize, began to be felt and a black market came into existence (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.3). In November a crisis in the maize position occurred when the Tea Estates which normally required about 5,200 bags of *posho* a month found themselves in a precarious position of having on an average less than seven days supplies on hand. Urgent steps had to be taken to meet the situation by importing from both South Kavirondo and elsewhere in the colony via the railway line at Lumbwa (Kipkelion) station. A total of about 4,892 bags were brought in.

The food shortage of November-December does not however imply that the Kipsigis were not producing enough maize. The 1941 Kipsigis Reserve maize crop was, for the first time, sufficient to supply all the district's internal needs in 1942 and allow for an export. But in July to October 1942, it appeared that this was practically the only dry maize in the colony and the MCB ordered a certain amount to be taken out of the district, the ultimate total being nearly 18,000 bags. This left the district short of maize to carry over the October-December period while waiting for the 1942 crop to come on to the market. Eventually about 4,892 bags had to be imported to avert a potentially threatening food shortage situation (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.11).

Inspection of maize was continued and maintained in 1942 and a total of about 97,453 bags of the 1941 high quality crop were sold at the buying centres. Prices, however, were low in the first half of the year, but the advent of Maize Control in July saw an increase to about Shs. 5/=. This somewhat satisfactory increase however came too late

to affect the 1942 crop which was by far less than that of 1941 and the total maize brought amounted to about 54,120 bags only. The year 1943 saw a tremendous increase in the cultivation of maize and it was projected that the district could export more than 100,000 bags in 1944. Judging by the look of the extensive crop in cultivation, the DC nostalgically remembered how the Kipsigis had initially resisted the crop saying: "... Dobbs had, when he originally endeavoured to get the Kipsigis to plant this crop to put armed guards on the fields to stop the inhabitants pulling out this foul weed" (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.2).

When the crop was brought in 1944 an astonishing 192,718 bags were bought by MCB at various buying centres. This was notwithstanding that a considerable amount of maize found its way into the hungry Luo country and the Maasai took its usual quota, not mentioning the unrecognised exchange and buying by thousands of tea labourers. Indeed the "harvests of war" as duped elsewhere by Gordon (1946) were realised that year. The astronomical crop of 1943 led to the building and opening up of more trading and buying centres. Besides, the LNC passed a resolution prohibiting the export of manure from the reserve to enhance maize production. Any suggestions to limit the crop would have caused an unprecedented uproar. By the close of World War II maize production was still high with about 187,905 bags sold in 1945. In April 1945, maize from the district was included in consignments sent to South Africa, indicating a greatly improved quality of the maize produced (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.8). By the end of World War II maize production had attained a position of total monoculture except for a few other crops grown in the district. The enormous amounts of maize produced and exported indicated the increased level of the entrenchment of the Kipsigis in colonial commodity production and their integration

within the colonial economic set up as producers of the required food and raw materials (Amin, 1981:39). Stichter (1982:164) who could like to see agricultural production through the prism of labour postulates that the dismal production of maize during the war years before 1943 was on account of massive labour recruitment for war efforts. In the Kipsigisland recruitment stopped in 1943 and the subsequent availability of labour was enmeshed in the lucrative maize production, resulting in the bumper harvest of 1944.

Other crops produced by the Kipsigis included *wimbi*, Irish potatoes, Rose cocoa and Canadian wonder beans, parsnips, cauliflower, onions, cabbage, pigeon peas and tomatoes. *Wimbi*, the traditional crop had not been totally discarded and had important uses, especially for the brewing of *murek* and the making of *kimyet* for old people. It therefore existed side by side with the all-important maize and other acquired crops. By 1942 the Sotik reserve was also growing an excellent quality of wheat estimated at about 2,000 bags for which Shs. 18/= were being paid at Sotik Post for a 200 lbs. bag (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.11). By 1943, 30 bags of beans and 5,517 bags of potatoes were inspected for sale (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p12). The following year, 1944, witnessed an increased production for 171 bags of beans, 7,744 bags of potatoes and 558 bags of wheat were inspected and sold by the Kipsigis (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.9). During 1945 propaganda for the growing and consumption of wheat had some success when approximately 1100 bags were produced (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p9). By 1945, therefore, the production of other crops besides maize had been equally intensified.

Agricultural production, in general, kept expanding to keep with the wider colonial policy of producing enough food for the war efforts (Brown, 1966). As Bowles (1979:97) notes, such extension of acreage for tribute production was liable to cause soil exhaustion

and erosion. Indeed this was the situation in the Kipsigisland and soil conservation measures were advocated and carried out during and even after the war. The DC found it difficult "... to understand why North Kavirondo and Kericho have to supply practically all the maize for East Africa and why Uganda and Tanganyika do not grow enough for at any rate their own requirements" (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.9). It was realised that such heavy demands on the Kipsigis in maize production would eventually lead to irreparable destruction of their soil and soil conservation measures were instituted. By 1940 the LNC, on its own initiative, passed the Standard Resolution on soil conservation which they had rejected in previous years (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.5). However, soil conservation measures were faced with two major problems - first, the lack of adequately trained agricultural personnel and secondly what the colonialists called "the usual initial suspicion of the Kipsigis". (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.9). But starting from 1940 the majority of the Native Instructors were instructed to devote their whole time to soil conservation activities as soil erosion was steadily increasing throughout the reserve. In 1945 a party of the Kipsigis was taken to the Wakamba reserve by the administration. They returned "...full of concern lest their own country should be reduced to a similar state" (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.9). As a consequence the LNC then unanimously passed various sound soil conservation resolutions and locational committees were set up to implement such resolutions. A small but growing body of landowners provided an example to their fellows of benefits and profits to be derived from good farming systems (Stichter, 1982:129). The role of the agricultural officer in the conservation of the soil cannot therefore be viewed as a way of improving agriculture in the area, but as an attempt to avert an agrarian crisis caused by the colonial need for surplus production of food crops.

6.4. Animal Husbandry.

Apart from recruiting, the main effect of the war in the Kipsigisland was the supply of cattle to the Livestock Control Board for war efforts. Most of the elderly informants who had witnessed the war complained bitterly about their animals being taken away at very low prices. Without using force, the district annual quota during the war could not have been met since prices paid by Livestock Control were too low. In fact, in the year following the declaration of war, complaints about this requisitioning were vociferous and at the end of the year the district had failed to produce the number of cattle ordered (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.4). In 1941 alone about 2,062 heads of cattle were bought at an average price of about Shs. 46/60. Of this number 53 came from Sotik squatters, 20 from a Tea Company and 1,989 from the reserve (DC/KER/1/13/1942, p.3). By 1942 the cattle supplied to the Livestock Control Board totalled to about 1,502 at an average price of about Shs. 50/= per head. This meant that some Shs. 75,000/= entered the district to the Kipsigis, compared to Shs. 96,000/= from 2,062 animals sold in 1941. The decrease in numbers was attributed to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease that restricted movement and led to the cancellation of sales. But the Kipsigis, after realising that better prices prevailed in the Sondu market, pushed their oxen there to fetch higher prices. The following figures prove conclusively that it was the biggest beasts that were taken to Sondu since the average price of 534 cattle bought from squatters on Sotik farms was about Shs. 45/00; while that of 692 cattle bought in the reserve was Shs. 51/80; and that of 276 cattle bought in Sondu market was Shs. 55/20 (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.12).

In 1943, a total of about 3,698 animals were supplied to the Livestock Control Board, noting that this figure was smaller than the required quota. By 1944, roughly

11,352 cockerels and 83,420 eggs were included in the district's list of exports. About 4,804 heads of cattle were supplied to the Livestock Control Board (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.4). Besides selling their animals the Kipsigis also gave cash contributions to the war efforts and in 1944 alone a total of about Shs. 1,142/= were given together with many individual contributions of tobacco (*Ibid*). But the most interesting thing was that an increasing number of the Kipsigis were joining in the flourishing livestock trade. The number of Stock Traders Licenses jumped from 45 in 1941 to 130 in 1942. And if the colonial administration aimed at depleting the Kipsigis livestock and exploiting the Kipsigis people, then the contrary seems to have occurred. The Kipsigis used their earnings during the war and their profits in the stock trade to reinvest in cattle again, mostly heifers, some gotten from as far as Uganda, though most of them came from the Kavirondo districts, but availed at the Sondu market (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.12)

Meanwhile the colonial administration did nothing to improve the level of animal husbandry. While the white settlers were generally shifting from mixed farming to dairy farming and improving their herds and methods of animal husbandry through government assistance, the Kipsigis were grossly neglected though token assistance in free inoculations and the setting up of the Kabianga Animal Husbandry Station were witnessed. The veterinary department was largely geared to assisting the Sotik settlers in clearing the bushes, fencing paddocks, establishing dips and up-grading their livestock with pure-bred Ayshire bulls introduced from the Molo area. It has already been noted how settler concentration and expansion in dairy farming led to the eviction of squatters and their livestock from the Sotik settled area. This was achieved in 1945 with the passing of the Cattle Cleansing Ordinance which the Kipsigis squatters bitterly contested as it coincided

with a dry season when grazing was always bad in the reserve. A total of about 25,000 heads of cattle were destined to be removed from the settled area into the reserve (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.6) with such consequences which will be dealt with later in the work.

Apparently the colonial administration was only interested in the Kipsigis livestock in meeting their war efforts without doing much to improve their quality. Before 1942 all inoculations had to be paid for, but 1942 marked the commencement of free total anti-rinderpest with goat virus inoculations. As a result the number of livestock inoculated jumped to roughly 73,000 in 1942 compared to only roughly 10,000 in 1940 and rising to 23,727 heads of cattle in 1941. But foot and mouth disease and black quarter attracted payment and 8,000 and 26,000 inoculations were done respectively in 1942 (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.12). In 1943, about 103,328 compulsory goat virus inoculations against rinderpest were carried out in the reserve and 7,700 cattle in the settled area belonging to the Kipsigis were equally covered (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.13). In 1944, rinderpest compulsory goat virus inoculations comprised 19,151; blackquarter vaccination, 18,000; and anthrax, 7,000 (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.10). In 1940, the Kabianga Animal Husbandry Station was started with the aim of educating the Kipsigis in animal husbandry. But the utter neglect of the Kipsigis livestock industry is reported in 1943 that the Kabianga Station was "...under the supervision of a keen but unqualified school master [otherwise] ... not one single effort [had] been made to improve or help in any way the livestock position of this cattle minded tribe" (DC/KER/1/16/193, p.13). The same sentiments were reported in 1944 that "...apart from inoculations, vaccinations and so on, ... no signs of veterinary activity have been observed apart from the Kabianga effort"

(DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.10). With this it is therefore evidenced that the war years were unfavourable towards the Kipsigis livestock industry. While the colonial forces did nothing substantial to improve the Kipsigis livestock and only wanted to deplete them for war efforts, the Kipsigis, through their own initiative and industriousness, managed to replenish their livestock through livestock trade and by reinvesting all their earnings in livestock acquisition. The replenishment was so effective such that after the war the colonial administration sought to count, brand and cull the Kipsigis livestock. Given the predominance of European interests, cattle ownership among the Africans still remained perforce a form of saving, a medium of currency and an insurance against famine rather than an actual commercial resource (Stichter, 1982:99).

Of course livestock raids remained one of the most important avenues of replenishing their livestock. Stock rustling continued throughout the war in spite of the imposition of a Special Police Levy in 1939 to deter cattle raids across the Kipsigis border. This levy remained in force for three years until March 1942 when it was realised that it did not achieve much. But then it was still to continue under the Tribal Police Ordinance on reduced rates, largely in order to avoid a sudden drastic reduction in the number of Tribal Police available (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.8). Even then, cattle rustling was rampant during and after the imposition of the Special Police Levy with 1942's cases reaching alarming rates. It was however noted that the majority of the raids were committed in collusion with the Luo and the Gusii livestock raiders; thus there was rustling amongst the Luo, Gusii and the Kipsigis with equal indifference and the situation acquired the proportion of "unrest" (*Ibid*, p.5). The Kipsigis were fined a total of about Shs. 36,000/= for cattle rustling in 1943. At last it was realised that only education and profitable employment could deter the

Kipsigis from livestock rustling and not more fines as the latter provided great impetus for the Kipsigis to recoup their losses through more animal raids. For example, about 211 livestock rustling cases were dealt with in 1943 compared with roughly 177 in 1942 (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.4). The advent of the Kenya Police in 1944 who "... were showing commendable energy and enthusiasm" only managed to reduce the incidence of livestock-rustling and not eliminating it completely. By 1945 a total of about 195 Kenya Police Officers existed in the reserve, but livestock rustling remained a serious issue, as about 229 cases of livestock rustling were reported (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.4).

The *Laibon* Question came to feature prominently during the war (Sialai, 1997). It came to be realised that the conditions under which these people lived were not satisfactory from an 'isolation' point of view. The most difficult question was the marriage of the young men and women with the former being unable to obtain wives in their new habitat whilst the latter could only go to the reserve to obtain husbands. Besides some *laibons* had left their designated area and were at large in many parts of the colony with some enlisting in the KAR and Police forces. Thus the administration of the Gwasssi Settlement in South Kavirondo required considerable tightening and even the idea of moving them to a more distant and isolated place was mooted but not realised. And so there remained constant communication between the *Talai* in Gwasssi and those in the Kipsigisland. It was finally decided that education alone would be used to tackle the problem by sending young *Talai morans* to the Kericho *boma* where they would be put in a camp where they could be allowed to marry and receive education for a period of three years. An integral part of this scheme was that this institution would be under the direct control of the DC and that he had the absolute power to return to Gwasssi any *moran* in the school who did not conform

to all rules and regulations. By 1945, about 20 young *morans* were used as pioneers in the scheme. The boys were undergoing a training programme which included instruction in practical agriculture, handicraft, religion, reading, writing and arithmetic and later animal husbandry. It was hoped that by acquiring proficiency in a variety of subjects the *Talai* would not return to their old practices (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.3). Meanwhile parties of young *Laibon* women were allowed back into the district to be married. Their dowry was used for maintaining the *Talai* boys in school, and was also kept for their marriages later. By 1935, therefore, the policy of isolating the *laibons* at Gwassi had proved unworkable and a token measure of integrating them in the district through education and marriages taken.

6.5 Labour Issues During the War.

Conscription of manpower for the war efforts was one other major effect of the war on the Kipsigis. As early as 1940 it was reported that "... large numbers of the *morans* have gone to service with every man being a "volunteer" (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.2). In the period between August and September 1939, a total of about 120 Kipsigis were recruited into the military forces. A further 924 were conscripted in 1940, bringing the number to about 1044 by the end of 1940 (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.16). By 'voluntary' labour the colonial administrators meant 'non-recruited' labour (van Zwanenberg, 1974; Leys, 1975; Stichter, 1982:83). Given the importance of compulsion and forced recruitment in the early colonial period, it was misconstrued that those who enlisted without being recruited by the administration or its agents, especially chiefs, did so voluntarily. In actual fact such people may have been forced into the labour market by the underlying colonial economic

conditions. Equally, none of these figures should be taken as accurate in an absolute sense, but they may be used for comparisons over time. This is more evident because the figures do not show the numbers of men rejected after joining their units as no exact information is available nor does it include the 306 men who joined the Kenya Police, Tribal Police and Prison Service during the period between August 1939 and December 1940. Evidently the number of the Kipsigis already serving or in the military reserve, though exactly unknown, was nevertheless considerable. In 1941 an additional 379 recruits were sent to the military and it was noted that all the Kipsigis joining the war were 'volunteers' (DC/KER/1/15/1941, p.12). Manifestations of the war in the Kipsigisland included almost continuous recruitment, and the difficulty of recruitment was not getting men to come forward, but in getting men who could pass the medical tests. All recruits were taken to Maseno Depot for medical tests and onward submission. And in 1942, about 739 recruits were sent to join the military forces (DC/KER/1/16/1942, p.14).

Apparently owing to the 'large' numbers of the Kipsigis already in the forces, more recruitment in the Kipsigis reserve was stopped in 1943. By then about 2,031 Kipsigis were serving in the army. A few casualties among the Kipsigis had already been noted. By the end of 1941, about 27 deaths had been reported and during 1942, 20 Kipsigis died in the forces, bringing the total to 47 since the commencement of the war (*Ibid*, p.16). The cancellation of the enlistment of the Kipsigis into KAR and Police lasted until the end of 1944 when a further 500 recruits were enlisted. But this was after a protest from the local administration who termed the cancellation as being "... silly and wrong ... for the Kipsigis are acknowledged to be some of the best of troops" (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.4). But the actual fear of the local administration was that there would be far too many young men left

idling in the reserve and apt to cause trouble (*Ibid*). By 1944, about 2136 Kipsigis were serving in the army, and so far 83 had been killed in action, 25 wounded, 19 invalidated, 5 received distinctions while 159 had been discharged for other reasons (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.12).

Meanwhile many *askaris* started coming home on leave after 1940, and though a few desertions were noted a number reported late owing to the leave coinciding with the circumcision period. The behaviour of the *askaris* on leave and on demobilisation was noticeably changed. The military training given to the soldiers, it was considered, was "... blowing up the heads of the average *askaris* ... who tended to be overbearing and contemptuous of civil authority, particularly the Chiefs, Headmen and Tribal Elders" (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.4). The main area of friction centred on the enclosing of land as private property in defiance of the former rule of beneficial occupational rights only and a background of communal land. This was partly caused by the wealth flowing into the district in form of war wages and family remittances. In 1942 alone about Shs. 132,435/= were paid out as part of family remittances from the soldiers serving in the war and in 1943 the amount increased to Shs. 313,736/= but owing to the cancellation of enlisting the Kipsigis in 1943, the amount dropped to Shs. 200,394/= in 1944. In 1945 a total of Shs. 798,188/= were paid out in the form of allotment, remittances, and leave pay upon demobilisation (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.12). As will be seen later, such money obtained from the war was invested in livestock, land, township plots, extensive cultivation of maize and a host of other avenues which led to rural differentiation and class stratification among the Kipsigis (Palmer and Person, 1977; Amin, 1981:75; Cohen, 1981:2).

At the same time labour in the Tea estates and Sotik and Muhoroni settled farms had its own unique features. Though frequent shortages were reported - the tea plantations even experimented by bringing in Congolese labourers - these were not pronounced enough to upset the position of both the farmers and the tea companies. But the war years led to the intensification of juvenile labour in the tea estates. arap Korir (1976:52) has shown that the tea plantations employers rationalised the use of juvenile labour on the ground that "the dexterity and co-ordination of hands and eyes comes more easily to the juveniles than an adult and he is therefore more easily trained as a plucker". Other researchers have shown how young boys were forced to enlist for labour in the Kericho tea plantations (Osoro, 1977; Omwoyo, 1992:163). And the question of the health of child labourers remained a contentious issue for both the administration and the Medical Department until a scheme was evolved by which hot tea or gruel was served to the juvenile in the early morning. But for the rest of the labour force in the plantation the main issues during the war centred on improving the standards of living in terms of diet, housing and working conditions which in other estates were appalling. At best the labour forces had stone houses with electric lights, water supplies, toilets and nearby hospitals for the community and schools for their children. At worst, they lived in old mud and wattle round thatched huts, without any other amenity at all, not even pit-latrines (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p.5).

In no case did the Tea estate labour forces receive any balanced diet (arap Korir, 1976). The usual ration was $21\frac{1}{2}$ to $23\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of *posho* per day, the theory being that the labourers could exchange their excess *posho* for other articles of diet, principally meat. This problem of rationing was a major one in the tea estates and nothing much seemed to

have happened to uplift the plight of the African labourers, especially the juvenile labourers. Even in Sotik the conditions of the squatter labourers were far from satisfactory and acts of sabotage, such as absenteeism, slackening, murder or theft of settler livestock, and many more, became more pronounced in the area (DC/KER/1/15/1942, p.12). A special magistrate had to be appointed in 1942 to "... streamline and discipline labour force in the Sotik farms, specifically dealing with absenteeism and slacking" (*Ibid*, p.2). Eventually, with the passing of the Cattle Cleansing Ordinance in 1945 squatter labourers together with their cattle were thrown out of the Sotik, Muhoroni and Londiani farms. By 1945 therefore labourers on both the tea plantation and the European farms were continuously being impoverished and exploited. The eviction of the squatter labourers was the height of a tragedy as the settlers had argued, in the early colonial period, that they would not do without the cheap Kipsigis squatter labour. But after shifting to dairying they found the squatter labour and livestock undesirable and dispensable. And in contradiction the military labour was deemed prospering through wages, family remittances and leave pay. Indeed, impoverishment and pauperisation went hand in hand with wealth accumulation (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1981; Leys, 1982).

6.6 Trade and Exchange.

By 1945 much money had entered the district from various economic activities that the Kipsigis had engaged themselves in during the war. These included the sale of livestock, maize, family remittances, gratuities and direct labour earnings in and out of the district. The prosperity of the war, coupled with the greater consciousness of the outside world opened more avenues for the Kipsigis to invest their money in various avenues. As

early as 1940, it was argued that the Kipsigis enjoyed good prices for their maize and cattle (DC/KER/1/14/1940, p15). Even the Indian community of the district had a prosperous year. Their headquarters in Kericho Township reflected the prosperity of the tea estates. The amount of money entering the reserve from the army sources equally provided good business at the trading centres. The major handicap was the shortage of various commodities due to war conditions. There was enormous increase in "native" livestock trading, caused by much money in the Reserve for investment in cattle. More and more Kipsigis entered the livestock trade as indicated by the rise of the Stock Traders Licenses. The importance of maize among the Kipsigis has already been underscored and family remittances from the war highlighted. The gist of our argument is that money was flowing into the district through various economic activities. In 1943 alone, more than Shs. 1,072,895.00 seems to have entered the Kipsigis reserve through the sale of maize to Control Board (Shs. 367,180.00); family remittances (Shs. 313,736.00); cattle sales (Shs. 192,535.00); and through KAR *askaris* proceeding on leave (Shs. 198,448.00) (DC/KER/1/16/1943, p.5).

It was the desire for profitable investments of this capital that led to unprecedented demand for licenses for shops, lorries, education and other European commodities. In 1943 endeavour was made to start building of centres which would incorporate markets, administration and social activities like medical and educational facilities. The chosen areas were Sosiot, Cheptuliet, Kapkatet, Sotik Post and Kapkimolwa. Though there was some opposition at first in the belief that the colonial government could eventually alienate the land around such centres, the agitation fizzled out and the Kipsigis demand for plots of land in these centres was so great. It was noted that "... the Kipsigis [had] taken to markets

and marketing as the proverbial duck and water (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.8). By the end of the war, most of these centres were flourishing in buildings and businesses. In 1944 there were only two markets, by the end of 1946 there were thirty of such markets. Sosiote, for example, had two units - its market which comprised stores, shops and eating houses together with blacksmith and carpenter shops and on the other LNC and Government institutions consisting of Chief's and Assistant Chief's houses, jail and a dispensary (DC/KER/1/17/1944, p.4).

The demand for education was also gaining momentum. By 1940, Kabianga government school had roughly 88 pupils and together with its two out-schools - Kiptere with 70 pupils and Kyogong with 54 pupils and all had a total of 212 pupils. This was a negligible figure compared to the number of missionary schools dotted throughout the reserve and those run by the tea estates, especially for their juvenile labourers and children of their labourers. By 1939 the African Inland Mission at Litein had 20 out-schools, the National Holiness Association Missionary Society at Tenwek had 20 out-schools and the Roman Catholic Mission which was concerned more with religion than education had 6 out-schools. Schools existed practically in all estates and were favourably regarded by the management as magnets for juvenile labour which was so important for tea plucking (Osoro, 1977; arap Korir, 1978). An interesting point was that a Kikuyu Independent School was opened by the Kikuyu on Kapkatungor Estate (pyrethrum) which was manned almost entirely by the Kikuyu themselves. More interestingly a Kipsigis, Solomon arap Mategat opened a school in 1939 in location 11, running it on the lines of the Kikuyu Independent Schools. The school enjoyed the consent of the chief and elders and was subsequently registered (DC/KER/1/13/1939, pp.18-24). By the end of the war more

schools and educational facilities existed in the reserve arising from high demand for such services occasioned by the prosperity of the war. During the war the LNC passed a Special Education Rate of about Shs. 5/= for the capital construction of both mission and LNC elementary schools.

The war prosperity enjoyed by the tea estates, the Sotik farmers and the Kipsigis alike had the obvious result of accentuating social and economic stratification of the indigenous people. It is definitely obvious that those who had directly participated in the war gained more as they were able to compete more favourably with those who did not. Only individuals went to war while the entire household was left behind engaged in the usual agricultural and economic activities. The family remittances and the war earnings were therefore added advantages to such households over the rest. As a result aspects of wealth accumulation were more pronounced during the war with the ex-service men climbing the ranks of the 'moneyed' class of accumulators of wealth.

After the war the colonial state provided the ex-service men with additional advantages over other local population. An allocation of lorries and twenty-five per cent of plots in all markets were kept for the demobilised soldiers. A number of them were recruited into the Tribal Police and some as Headmen while others entered the Government service as lorry drivers, agricultural instructors, trained artisans and so forth. Yet many more were to become better farmers as they were more receptive to better methods of farming. Shiroya (1985) has shown that the average *askari* returned home with better general education and skills than his non-veteran counterpart. Though most of them opted to seek wage employment as shown in the study, those who undertook farming were equally successful due to their openness and receptivity to new ideas. However as Shiroya

(1985:145-148) further attests, their contribution in the political, economic and social spheres of their society was on an individual basis because the prevailing political situation in Kenya did not allow them to form any organisation to further their collective or communal interests in a colonial state.

The seven years of war brought this hitherto neglected district prosperity and advance comparable to other favoured districts. In the words of the DC: "... In one jump the Kipsigis passed from a blanket stage to a state of progress which compares favourably with any other tribe in Kenya" (DC/KER/1/19/1946. p2). And precisely the basic reason was the prosperity engendered by the high price of maize, coupled with large sums of money which had flown into Kericho from the army. As a result money was available for the social services required.

6.7 The Reconditioning Years, 1946-1950.

During World War II, agricultural production in Kenya as a whole was generally spurred by the colonial government policy of supplying the heavy demand for food to feed the troops who were outside and inside East Africa. As a result agricultural lands were strenuously overworked and exploited and thus suffered mainly from soil erosion, degradation and exhaustion. Nevertheless, the ensuing prosperity of the war saw most Africans investing their wealth in livestock, further agricultural production and commercial activities. Post war agricultural policy was partly a reaction to this situation in the African countryside and included measures which were aimed at soil conservation and the culling of animals. These agricultural developments were largely a direct response to the war

conditions in the short-term and a response to inappropriate and ineffective agricultural policies of a dual economy in the long-term (Zezeza, 1989:151).

And as already understood World War II was a watershed period after which African agriculture started attracting the attention of the colonial government hand in hand with settler agriculture. The realisation that African agriculture would be used in the reconstruction of Britain led to the introduction of palliative measures of reconditioning African agriculture to meet that desired goal. The colonies were used to solve the 'problem of the sterling area' in two ways - first the production of the colonial primary products was to be dramatically increased not only to meet British commodity needs but also to provide vital dollar-earning exports to the USA (Swainson, 1977:133). Secondly the colonial imports of goods and services from the dollar zone were to be reduced through investments in production by metropolitan industrial capital within the protected colonial enclaves (*Ibid*, pp.133-4). It is in that spirit that ALDEV was formed in 1946 to "assist" produce more without degrading their soils. Measure of soil conservation and the culling of animals were the two most important activities during this period. According to Brown (1966:137) agricultural development policies in post-war Kenya, between 1945 and 1960 can be divided into three categories. First a recovery phase, 1945-50 in which the main effort was directed to repairing the damage caused by the war policy, regardless of the long-term consequences. Secondly a planning phase, 1951-1955 in which plans were laid for African areas. Lastly a rapid development phase 1955-1960 in which farm enterprise and production both in African and European areas were greatly accelerated. This work adopts Brown's (1966) categorisation and this part deals mainly with the recovery phase up to 1950 while the last two phases will be the subject for the next chapter.

6.7.1. Agricultural Production.

The European agricultural activities were largely concentrated in the growing of tea though animal husbandry and crop production featured in the settled areas of Sotik, Muhoroni, Songhor, Londiani and Koru. The output of tea in 1946 was approximately 12,593,640 lbs. as compared with about 12,206,750 lbs. in 1945 and 13,059,000 lbs. in 1944 (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.6). This was in spite of labour shortage to an extent that a large number of Banyaruanda labourers from the Congo had to be brought in to fill in the disturbing labour gap. Nevertheless the Kericho tea industry continued to expand and increased acreage of tea was planted as a result. Yet the output showed a remarkable decrease in 1946 ranging about 12,224,452 lbs. and in 1947 further decreasing to 8,968,028 due to adverse climatic conditions and heavy hailstorms which affected tea production to a considerable degree. But production appears to have picked up in 1948 to roughly 9,077,951 lbs., and by 1949 the Kericho -Sotik area was producing about 10,579,570 lbs. of tea. The 1950 crop was expected to be higher as new areas came into bearing. The tea plantation economy seems to have had little adverse effects during the war. Expansion of the then existing farms and extension of tea production into the Sotik area appear to have been the major activities in the post-war period before 1950.

The Sotik settled area, for a long period under individual farmers, was invaded in the post-war period by big companies dealing in both tea and wattle cultivation. The uplifting of tea planting restrictions during the war led to the expansion of tea production in the area. Settlement in Sotik in the post-war period increased considerably as there were several applicants for the crown land which was now being offered for European settlement. Tea and wattle remained the major activities for the big companies while the

small farmers concentrated on dairy farming, maize and passion fruit production (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.1). The notable development in the Sotik area was the elimination of squatter livestock in this region and the frequent friction between the Kipsigis 'trespassing' on the European farms. Since the Kipsigis did not readily accept European settlers as the *de facto* owners of the land, they continued to graze on such lands with impunity and in disregard of colonial rules. To the Europeans this was 'trespass' but to the Kipsigis it was a marked feature of passive as well as open resistance. Cattle trespass on the Sotik farms continued unabated for a long time and it was realised that so long as the Chapalungu area was bare of grass and the Sotik farms remained underdeveloped or unoccupied, then it was impossible to stop the trespass. In fact the trespass cases shot up from 145 in 1947 to 423 in 1948 alone (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.4). In 1948 the colonial authority, in order to improve the situation in the Sotik area, proposed to lease about 10,000 acres of the Sotik unoccupied lands to the Kipsigis in exchange for a boundary fence between the southern farms and the "reserve" to be financed by the Government. It was further anticipated that such a measure would reduce cattle trespass and the running of stolen livestock through the farms (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.15). The elimination of squatter cattle started in 1945 and gradually proceeded until 1950 when it was accomplished in the Sotik area. But elsewhere the gradual elimination of squatter livestock continued in Koru, Songhor, Fort Ternan and Muhoroni areas formerly in the Kisumu district (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.16).

Perhaps, African agriculture best exemplifies the theme of this period as outlined by Brown (1966). The main crops grown by the Kipsigis still included maize, beans, wheat, *wimbi* and potatoes. Table 6.1 below shows the amount of crops produced between

1946 and 1950. A casual examination of the table indicates that most crops showed a general trend of increase output every year. However, the year 1948 was disappointing to most of the crops, as there was a drop in the production of maize, beans, wheat and *wimbi*. The major reason attributed to this decline was heavy rains, measuring about 88.08 inches and as a result extremely wet conditions and soil erosion. The circumstances prevailing during and after the war made soil erosion inevitable. Increase in the production of maize during this period spurred the crop to acquire a state of monoculture and maize continued to be the main export from the district. Yet rise in maize production to a state of monoculture was, almost certainly, a development resulting from the colonialist capitalism in its relations to production. In the words of Rodney (1972:257)

"There was nothing 'natural' about monoculture. It was a consequence of imperialist requirements and machinations... Monoculture was a characteristic of regions falling under imperial domination...[for development]"

The figures shown in Table 6.1 below were for the amount sold to the Maize Control. Yet there was an enormous export of maize to the Central Kavirondo and Maasailand. By 1947 the amount produced had reached at least 165,450 bags and though there was a sharp drop in 1948, the figures continued to rise hitting a record high of about 234,522 bags in 1950. Besides heavy rains, wet conditions and soil erosion, the 1948 crop was sold to the Central Nyanza and Maasailand. "A continual stream of donkeys transporting maize to Sondu and Kileges where it was sold for about Shs. 20/= to Shs. 24/= per bag. A similar price was obtained in the Maasailand for maize from the Sotik locations" (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.5). For this reason it was impossible to make an accurate estimate of the export of maize during the season although it would appear that over 60,000 bags of maize were exported to the Central Nyanza for food (*Ibid*). Yet owing to this "black

market" for the maize outside the district, a considerable huge revenue was probably lost by the Agricultural Betterment Fund.

Though the amount presented to the Maize Control in 1949 was about 172,069 bags, it was estimated that over 200,000 bags were produced as large amount of posho was sold to the Maasai and Luo respectively. For the same reason the 1950 exports were put at about 250,000 bags instead of the official figure of 234,522 bags (DC/KER/1/22-23/1949-1950). Unfortunately the effects of this continued mining of the soil spanning

Table 6.1 Crop Production In The Kipsigisland, 1946-1950.

| YEAR | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 | 1949 | 1950 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Maize (bags) | 123,459 | 165,450 | 45,701 | 172,069 | 234,522 |
| Beans (bags) | 12 | 52 | 37 | 41 | 75 |
| Potatoes(bags) | 455 | 415 | 1552 | 1839 | 4373 |
| Wheat (bags) | 451 | 954 | 581 | 683 | 1254 |
| <i>Wimbi</i> (bags) | 1953 | 1157 | 186 | 934 | 2204 |

Source: KNA/KER/1/19-23/1946-1950.

from the war years had began to make itself felt through soil exhaustion and decline in yields as was the case in 1948. Bowles (1979:97) notes that such extension of maize acreage for tribute production was liable to cause soil erosion. This is because, as Bowles (1979) has clearly shown, its big vegetative growth takes a larger amount of fertility out of the soil than other cereals. Its shallow root growth means that while it is in the soil, it

gives no protection against water erosion and the heavy tilling and ploughing of the soil required before planting in the dry season, however, increases the likelihood of wind erosion. Multiple and deep ploughing, as is practised in temperate zones, would simply destroy the soil structure and leave little other than the subsoil for the plant to grow in. Furthermore, the pure stands of maize preferred by the agricultural officers exposed the soil to erosion. Yet prohibition of burning by the same officers was perceived by the Kipsigis as denying the soil its fertility and the latter went on to burn their fields illegally, thereby causing further problems because the burning was not properly organised and timed to suit the soil conditions.

The colonial administration, however, blamed soil erosion on "poor land use" on the part of the Africans and it advocated soil conservation measures colony-wide. In the Kipsigisland the realisation that soil erosion needed to be checked dawned during World War II. But then the colonial administration attributed soil erosion to the crowding of the population around old-time centres while the areas remote from these centres were sparsely populated (DC/KER/1/18/1945, p.2). Their first reaction was to redistribute the population into remote areas by building market centres in order to attract people there. As a result trading centres like Silibwet, Merigi, Kapkoros, Kembo and Mogogosiek were established for the purpose. By 1947 it was reported that "... markets continue to flourish and every effort is being made to develop them more intensively in the hopes that they will eventually help relieve the pressure on the land by offering alternative methods of gaining ... livelihood" (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.4). From these market centres, however, artisan's shops, power mills, and garages were put in place. The major reason was, therefore, not to develop the Kipsigisland as such but to get rid off some people from the thickly populated

areas with a view to averting a potentially agricultural crisis occasioned by extensive maize cultivation.

Equally to recondition the African farms and ensure their recovery from the debilitating and blatant rape of its soils during the war, the colonial government instituted soil conservation measures in 1946 running for a period of five years to 1950. The Agricultural Betterment Fund was established to reward those making progress in soil conservation and thus alleviate the deteriorating agricultural conditions in the Kipsigis reserve. For this reason large scale propaganda campaign was carried out for the restoration of soil fertility. Bonuses, paid from the Agricultural Betterment Funds, were paid on manure actually laid on *shambas* and also by folding on an acre basis (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.3). Locational soil conservation committees were established in every location to impress upon the residents the importance of reconditioning the soil for greater harvests. Trash-lines and terraces were recommended due to the steep terrain of the Kipsigisland. Contour ploughing, fallow fields under grass, dam construction and the growing of fodder crops for the making of silage were all advocated with the view to combating soil erosion. By 1947 soil conservation had taken a firm hold on the Kipsigis imagination as about 80 percent of *shambas* throughout the district had soil conservation measures, either in form of banks or grass strips (*Ibid*).

The LNC shared the awareness of the Kipsigis of the dangers of soil erosion. Thus it passed a resolution which enabled land which had been under the plough for more than three years to lie fallow under grass for a period not exceeding three years without the cultivator losing his right of tenure. This prevented the over-cultivation of land due to the

fear of losing the right of tenure as for the Kipsigis custom any land lying fallow could be cultivated by any member of the community. This allowed land to revert to grass (*Ibid*).

Of course, initially there was a local opposition to soil conservation measures. Some people argued that the bonuses given by the Agricultural Betterment Fund were probably some forms of indirect purchase of their land and so they refused to sell their plots indirectly by not effecting the required soil conservation measures. Chief arap Kirui, the Vice- President of LNC, was one of the leading opposition figures in implementing the measures though he was a supporter at the LNC level. The DC noted that: "In fairness to arap Kirui, however, it must be admitted that he is one of the leading supporters of soil conservation at any rate when it does not concern his own *shamba*" (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.6).

Nevertheless, the most encouraging sign of the second year of a Five-Year Programme was the keen interest taken by a majority of the Kipsigis:

"Twice ordinary [people] brought in the plough wheels of men whom they had found ploughing up and down the hill; while it was a common sight to see Kipsigis standing in pouring rain in their shambas, keenly watching and arguing the respective merits of grass strips and control banks" (*Ibid*).

Be it as it may, it was evident by 1948 that the Kipsigis had realised the importance of soil conservation and pasture control. The Chiefs' Agricultural Committees were central in promoting soil and pasture control and Kipkoti arap Moigi received an Award of Honour from the Governor at the provincial show for his zeal in getting cattle tracks reconditioned and vast tracks of land closed to grazing (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.4). By 1949 over three hundred *barazas* on soil conservation and the restoration of fertility had been held since the opening of the campaign in August 1945 (DC/KER/1/22/1949, p.2). The soil

conservation and manure campaigns lasted until 1950. By 1949 when the campaign was at its peak, soil conservation had become a "universal custom" in the Kipsigisland and the concentration now was on the restoration of soil fertility (DC/KER/1/22/1949, p.9). It could be claimed that:

"... 95% of all cultivation had soil conservation measures; that all steep slopes had been closed to cultivation; and that virtually all cultivation was back fifty yards from rivers and thirty yards from swamps, to prevent the silting of water supplies ... miles of cattle tracks were closed, stepped off and reconditioned; ... and so great acreage of arable had been allowed to revert to pasture" (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.7).

Between 1946 and 1950, therefore, the central theme was the reconditioning of the African farms from the heavy destruction occasioned by the demands of World War II for food. That in this phase agricultural soil conservation was devoted to the recovery of the African land is evident by the aggressive soil conservation and manuring campaigns carried out during this period. The establishment of Group farms under the Betterment Schemes in Chepalungu and Bureti numbering four in total by 1949 were only geared to serve as demonstration for the method. Colonial capitalism had driven the Kipsigis into over-exploiting their arable land in the district and the colonial administration only came in to salvage the situation to avert a potentially explosive agrarian crisis. What was happening in the Kipsigisland was a colony-wide feature. In 1946, ALDEV was started with a capital of about £6million. ALDEV's main objective was to recondition African agriculture in this period of expanded agricultural production, mainly through the prevention of soil erosion (Zezeza, 1982:269). The government realised that African farming required some attention if the food shortages of the war period had to be alleviated. Besides, the government had realised the important role played by African agriculture during the war and it no longer became inevitable that African agriculture had

to be supported for the survival of the colony. This reconditioning phase was one step of acknowledging the importance of African agriculture and the Kipsigisland was one of the important areas in this respect.

6.7.2. Animal Husbandry.

The prosperity of the war years witnessed a marked increase in the Kipsigis investment in cattle. The money obtained from the extensive maize cultivation, war remittances and wages earned during the war was largely reinvested in animals, thus defeating the colonial government's effort of depleting the Kipsigis livestock. By the end of the war, the colonial administration felt that there were too many animals in the reserve and attempted to impose a cattle count on the Kipsigis in 1946. Arap Korir (1978:30-34) has shown that this was one of the first issues that the KTA had to contend with. Most people in the Kipsigisland were opposed to the cattle count as it was feared that it would be the prelude to de-stocking and possibly imposition of animal tax as had occurred in Ukambani (Newman, 1974), Nandi (Maxon, 1989) and Samburu (Lemoosa, 1998). The cattle count also coincided with soil conservation measures when a large number of eroded grazing fields were being closed down for the regeneration of pasture (DC/KER/1/9/1946, p.10), and cattle, together with the over-cultivation of maize, being blamed for the worsening situation of soil erosion in the district. The numerous propaganda *barazas* held to popularise the idea of the cattle count due in 1947 was met with fierce opposition, especially from the old men and the ex-askaris (*Ibid*). The most violent opposition came from Location 5 largely due to the fact that Chief Chuma Arap Kirui was the only chief

who was opposed to the count. "He will not admit this openly, but refuses to speak in its favour at *barazas* and carries out propaganda against it on his own" (*Ibid*).

The administration's response to this resistance was to issue ultimatums and threats to the main agitators, including arap Kirui. A collaborating Nandi chief was brought in December 1946 and the latter "spoke excellently and succeeded in allaying a number of fears concerning the cattle count" (arap Korir, 1978:31). Nevertheless the opposition mounted and even some LNC councillors who had bought the idea of the count would not give it their blessings because of the opposition from their constituents (*Ibid*). 1947 seem to have marked a year of political strife with the chief bone of contention being the cattle count. The immediate occasion for this confrontation was the construction of crushes for the count. According to arap Korir (1978:31) the prime movers of opposition to the construction of crushes were some members of the KTA, principally adherents or ex-adherents of the African Inland Mission at Litein - two members of the LNC, Jonah arap Chuma and Elijah arap Misoi and perhaps chief arap Kirui himself acting in the background.

Bureti distinguished itself as the chief storm-centre of opposition even when its chief, Cheborge arap Tengecha openly supported the count. In January 1947 a group of about four thousand Kipsigis gathered at Kapkatet with the object of assaulting Chief arap Tengecha and lorry loads of women were brought in to pull down his house, an act arap Korir calls "abominable" in Kipsigis culture (arap Korir 1978:32). The local administration led by the DO and Assistant Inspector with police and Tribal Police forces dispersed the crowd without any difficulty. The ring-leaders were rounded up and brought in to be publicly told that they would be held responsible for the law and order in Bureti

and the President of the KTA, Daniel arap Sitonik and a committee member, Vincent arap Chepkwony, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for allegedly assaulting Chief arap Tengecha (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.2). Finally the people of Bureti as a whole were warned that any further disorders would lead to a Levy Force which could have caused them unwarranted financial losses.

In Belgut emotions continued to run high with opposition arising specifically from fears that each Kipsigis family would be left with five heads of cattle only and that the government would take fifty per cent of the cattle for slaughter. Money was also sent to Gwassii to procure *laibon* assistance over the cattle count (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.6). The count was also seen as a discriminatory attack on the Kalenjin, "as only the Nandi, Tugen, Geyo ... and the Kipsigis have been forced to have counts while counts are not being held in the Kikuyu or Kavirondo districts" (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.2). Further opposition was extended to rinderpest inoculations in February 1947 over the setting aside of the Kabianga Veterinary Centre, block tree planting in Belgut, the building of a chief's office and lock-up at Longisa and the water supply for Kapkatet (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.2). As a result of the turmoil of 1947 the cattle count was rescheduled for early 1948. Through intimidation of the leaders in several *barazas*, a few crushes were built in readiness for the count early in 1948. In fact the cattle count issue was so sensitive in 1947 that it largely determined the LNC elections in that year. Opposition to the cattle count was unanimous on the grounds that compulsory culling would follow the count. Others argued that grazing was insufficient owing to the increase in population of the livestock and cultivation and therefore the people demanded that the Crown Land at Kimulot or the unoccupied farms on Sot be added to the Kipsigis reserve for exploitation.

Nevertheless, the cattle count eventually started in Belgut on January 12, 1948. Tribal Police force had to be deployed to forcibly get the cattle counted. By the time the census ended on June 30, 1948 the Kipsigis were voluntarily bringing in their livestock for the count. The results were as follows:

| Location | No. of animals |
|------------------|----------------|
| Location 1 and 2 | 132,038 |
| Location 3 | 70,110 |
| Location 4 | 32,814 |
| Location 5 | 54,072 |
| Location 6 | 36,135 |
| TOTAL | 325,168 |

In the opinion of the district administration, the district was overstocked, more particularly in the lower parts where the carrying capacity of the land was less, the average was three cattle to four acres of pasturelands excluding sheep and goats. All animals were thus subsequently branded S3K and LNC passed rules making branding compulsory (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.7) for all the Kipsigis livestock.

Meanwhile trade in cattle continued and Kileges, Sondu and Kipsaus became the major centres of such trade. Though no cattle were being purchased by LMB by 1948, the Kipsigis were selling over 80,000 heads per year through Kileges, Sondu, Roret and Kipsaus (DC/KER/1/22/1948, p.11). All these cattle were sold by the old method of barter, implying that the Kipsigis were exchanging their bullocks for heifers. But by 1950

auction yards had been constructed at Roret and Kileges and the transactions were in cash. These auction sales were indirectly used for culling purposes because the LNC forbade the importation of female livestock in such sales, thus encouraging the Kipsigis to sell only their bullocks without exchanging them with heifers in return. A third auction yard was planned at Kapsamonget, but the LNC request to establish one at Silibwet was refused by the district administration as this would only be for local sales and would not reduce the livestock (*Ibid*, p.8). It is thus evident that the introduction of auction or sale yards after 1948 was for the purpose of reducing the Kipsigis livestock. The increased exportation of hides from about 1549 frasilas in 1948 to a record 6,015 frasilas in 1950 shows that even internal slaughters of livestock were encouraged in order to reduce livestock in the district (*Ibid*).

Dipping of African cattle was encouraged during this period of the control of cattle diseases, more especially diseases caused by ticks. The Belgut Dipping Scheme was mooted in 1948 and dipping became an integral component of the Group farms in the district. By 1950 the Kipsigis were making use of the government dipping services at Kericho and Chemagel. And a one-mile wide fly barrier was cleared in the Chebunyo area of Chepalungu to prevent the spread of the tsetse fly from Trans-Mara. As part of reconditioning of the Kipsigis animal husbandry, a number of dams were built in the Chepalungu and Sotik areas to open up the area for more pasture-lands. With this it had also been noted that a number of the Kipsigis crossed over to Maasailand due to lack of water in their regions. Grazing control was advocated in overstocked regions to allow for regeneration of pasture. Communal bush clearing, though not readily accepted by the Kipsigis, was encouraged to bring more land under grass (*Ibid*). Paddocking and the

growing of certain grass species for the making of silage were encouraged to ease pressure on available pasturelands. Perhaps the continual presence of a livestock officer and the role-played by the Kabianga Animal Breeding Centre attested to the colonial effort of improving animal husbandry among the Kipsigis after years of neglect. Even then, all these features of "developing" animal husbandry were aimed at making the Kipsigis to limit and cull their livestock to concentrate on crop production. The colonial support given to livestock farming was still half-hearted and was set to marginalise the importance of cattle in relation to crop production. All these were measures of reconditioning of the Kipsigis agriculture to make it productive for the appropriation of African labour and raw materials for the benefit of the colonial government and the metropolis back at home (Swainson, 1977:133 and Berman, 1990).

6.7.3 Trends in Labour Organisation.

During and after World War II a new crop of labour emerged in the district. In 1946, about 1,331 troops were demobilised with almost all joining the labour market in the Kipsigisland. But as already noted a number of the demobilised soldiers joined the Tribal Police Force, others became headmen and some were appointed to LNC while others were trained as masons and carpenters. But a great majority of them invested their war earnings in plots in the market centres, or in livestock trade as twenty-five per cent of plots in all markets were reserved for them and so was a percentage of stock-traders' and hawkers' licenses (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.5). Evidently the war conditions seem to have opened up more economic opportunities for the demobilised soldiers to be transformed into labour

force which was bent to venture into new realms of investments in the Kipsigisland (Berman, 1990:224).

Meanwhile, the tea companies continued to be the chief employers of labour force. In 1946 they employed a total of about 21,921 men in their fields. The wages for the unskilled workers were at roughly Shs. 16/= per head per month plus ration of *posho*. Residential quarters were provided and the working hours constantly remained at seven per day, and some estates gave bonuses for non-absenteeism in order to ensure a constant supply of labour in the fields (*Ibid*, p.8). Earlier in the year the AHP Company had imported a large number of Banyaruanda (Rwandese) labour owing to the shortage of local labour. Thereafter the tea companies had all the labour they required and until 1950 no more shortages were reported. Most tea estates appointed welfare officers besides offering handicraft, spinning and weaving classes together with some medical and health services. And included in their diet were bread and milk (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.16). These inducements rated the tea estates as better employers and by 1950, the bulk of the 70,000 people employed in the district belonged to the tea industry alone (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.19). A partial famine in Central Nyanza caused a glut of labourers in 1948 (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.16) resulting in over-supply of labour manpower.

On the Sotik Farms the wages for the average agricultural labour were at between Shs. 8/= and Shs. 14/=per head per month. Sometimes ration of *posho* was supplied. Moreover the proximity of the settled area to the Native Reserves was a mixed blessing - cases of absenteeism were regularly reported for the labourers who lived at home. But on the other hand the wages were very low, housing was rarely provided and they worked for four to six hours a day (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.8). Those labourers who seriously wanted

money went further afield to Molo and Nakuru where wages were relatively much higher than those in the Kipsigis district. Labour shortages were frequent in the Sotik settled area and more so after the elimination of the squatters together with their animals. Though adherence to the provisions of the Cattle Clearing Ordinance was lax, fear of abrupt labour shortages was the main cause. Nevertheless some labour still remained owing to the unwillingness of the Native Areas to receive back large numbers of squatter cattle. As a result sale yards had to be established in 1950 for the disposal of such cattle (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.21).

In the Kipsigis reserve a large proportion of the Kipsigis youth found work as herdsmen and milkers outside the district principally in Molo and Thompson's Falls areas (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.16). In 1946 a large number of Kikuyu squatters in the Rift Valley and the Kisumu-Londiani district refused to renew their contracts and an appeal was made to Kericho district to assist the farmers concerned. "The response by the Sotik and Chepalungu locations was excellent and large numbers of milkers and herders went out to work" (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.7). Though devoid of labour figures, the Kipsigis labour remained in high demand in the Rift Valley area.

During this phase of reconditioning the Kipsigis farms of free labour was equally required in the soil conservation and fertility restoration measures as well as for the construction of the numerous dams which dotted the whole of the district. Such free labour, as has already been indicated, was not entirely voluntary as the chiefs, headmen and Tribal Police forces were used in coercing people to give such labour. This period also witnessed the making of many roads, especially in the Betterment Schemes and in the

Chepalungu area which were being opened up for settlement and forced labour was extracted from the Kipsigis.

The increased spectre of land privatisation led to an increase in landless cases. In fact the district administration regularly pointed out that "... the whole population can never be supported upon the land, but a percentage must obtain its livelihood from trade, crafts and so on". Yet it has been indicated elsewhere that landlessness created a group of Africans who, if not entirely landless, lacked sufficient land to meet their cash needs (Berman, 1990:223). While extensive maize cultivation and enclosure of land brought prosperity to a number of people, there were those squeezed out of land and were unable to establish themselves in any trade or get work outside the district. Consequently within the district there emerged a group of 'poor' and landless people with small pieces of land, as opposed to the 'rich' and landed people (Kaplisky, 1980; Kitching, 1980). Therefore, the commercialisation of African agriculture led to the emergence of pauperised peasants who had to work for the 'rich' peasants as seasonal or permanent labourers in order to meet their minimal vital requirements. In such a situation, according to Ivanov (1979:139), "traditional communal relations disintegrate and produce rudimentary forms of hired labour in which corresponding communal work is paid with cash money". This aspect was becoming a feature of the Kipsigisland during this phase of economic transformation in which poor peasants could work for other households but were no longer able to invite members of the community to work for them. The poor peasant had to rely on his own family labour if he was unable to provide cash to purchase sufficient labour while a reasonably rich man could get a medium sized farm quickly cultivated, planted and often extended (Stichter, 1982; Hyden, 1986; Berman, 1990:224; Omwoyo, 1992:180).

6.7.4. Merchant Capital

The major exports from the African areas included maize, beans, potatoes, wheat, *wimbi*, cockerels, honey, hides, eggs and wattle. Table 6.2 below shows the amount of exports in the period between 1946 and 1950. Translated into money, for example, the 1948 exports earned the Kipsigis a total of about Shs. 676,071/85, while the 1949 exports fetched a total of Shs. 2,035,591/86 and the 1950 exports soared to roughly Shs. 3,641,230/00 (DC/KER/1/23/1950). This does not include money from livestock sales, labour earnings within and outside the district and salaries of those in the employment of the government and co-operatives in the district. It is therefore evident that so much money poured into the district prompting the DC to remark that "the Kipsigis are prosperous with maize, wheat, wattle bark and cattle" (DC/KER/1/22/1949, p.1), and that "1950 has probably been the year of greatest prosperity the Kipsigis tribe has ever known" (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.1), adding "that Kericho was probably the most prosperous district in the colony" (DC/KER/1/22/1949, p.1). Apart from these it was asserted that after the Second World War the Kipsigis "were to become, perhaps, the most 'progressive' of all farmers in Kenya" (Middleton, 1965). All these observations were almost certainly arrived at on account of the money flowing into the Kipsigisland, occasioned by the agricultural products exported from the district for consumption elsewhere in Kenya and perhaps beyond. In 1947 when the Kenya African Union (KAU) spread into the Kipsigisland, it was noted that "the rich Kipsigis had infinite possibilities for filling [its] coffers" (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.1).

The already established market centres continued to flourish as new ones were being set up. For example, in 1947 alone an information room, two artisans' shops, a second

hotel, two dwelling houses and a large power mill were constructed at Kapkatet trading centre (DC/KER/1/20/1947, p.4). Sosit and Kapkatet were well developed by 1948 to be regarded as divisional capitals for Belgut and Bureti respectively. Even the number of shops for African traders on European farms showed a slight increase (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.16). Two types of markets existed in the Kipsigisland reserve - the "A" type markets like Kapkatet, Kapkimulwa, and Sosit which were built in straight lines and built entirely of red bricks; and secondly the "B" type markets which were built in a semi-circular way and the *dukas* were built of mud. The latter types included markets like Roret, Kipsonoi, Mogogosiek, Kileges, Kabartegen, Cheborge, Yaganik and many others. Evidently, the Kipsigis were heavily investing their wealth in market plots and in the construction of *dukas*

Trade also became another major preoccupation of the Kipsigis. The colonial government intended to relieve population pressure on land by encouraging some people to obtain their livelihood from trade and crafts. Though this was one way of denying the Africans literary education, the Kipsigis, on their own initiative, developed a keen interest in trading, especially in cattle, maize and in retails not only to enrich themselves but also to eliminate competition from alien traders, such as the Indians and Somalis. By 1946 it was noted again that "the Kipsigis have taken to trade as the proverbial duck takes to water" (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.9). In 1948, about 72 Traders Licenses, 315 Produce Purchasers Licenses and 45 Stock Traders Licenses were issued (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.13). By 1949 the number of Traders' Licenses issued numbered about 490, Produce Buyers' Licenses totalled 402 and the Stock Traders' Licenses were 111 (DC/KER/1/22/1949, p.17). In 1950, the district administration had to limit these licenses due to their great demand. Only

about 299 Traders' Licenses, 241 Produce Buyers' Licenses and 115 Stock Traders' Licenses were issued (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.13).

Table 6.2. Exports from African Areas, 1946-1950.

| | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 | 1949 | 1950 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Maize (bags) | 123,459 | 157,390 | 45,701 | 172,069 | 234,322 |
| Beans (bags) | 12 | 52 | 37 | 41 | 755 |
| Potatoes (bags) | 455 | 415 | 1552 | 1839 | 4373 |
| Wheat (bags) | 455 | 415 | 1552 | 1839 | 1254 |
| <i>Wimbi</i> (bags) | 1953 | 1157 | 186 | 934 | 2204 |
| Cockerels | - | - | 15652 | 13824 | 17566 |
| Honey (50 lb. tins) | - | - | 1508 | 867 | 945 |
| Hides (frasilas) | - | - | 1549 | 1284 | 6015 |
| Eggs | - | - | - | 289062 | 533044 |
| Wattles (tons) | - | - | - | 28 | 120 |

Source: KNA/DC/KER/1/19-23/-1946-1950.

In order to effectively compete and even outdo the Indian traders, the Kipsigis pulled their resources together to form a trading company and trading co-operatives. For the first time in the history of the Kipsigis, an allocation of piece goods was made to the Africans in 1946 and this helped establish the new African markets (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.9). The distribution and allocation were made by an indigenous company of the Kipsigis

which was later named the African Trading Company (ATC). Though beset with insufficient capital, the company offered good services to the African traders. By 1948, however, it was realised that the Kipsigis traders had extreme difficulty in obtaining suitable piece goods at a reasonable price. When the quota system ended for piece goods African traders were unable to purchase cloth except at retail prices. As a result numbers of African traders were persuaded to club together to form the company. These traders visited places like Kisumu and Nairobi to purchase all kinds of trade goods required for internal trade and this proved practically successful. By the end of 1948 efforts were being made to establish three African traders' co-operatives with the object of purchasing goods in bulk for internal distribution (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.13). Meanwhile there were already 10 poultry keepers registered co-operative societies with a total membership of about 277 and the total value of produce marketed by them amounted to roughly Shs. 24,605/=. There were also Four Egg Circles which were not yet registered but with about 91 members, selling eggs to the value of roughly Shs. 3,647/= (*Ibid*).

By 1949 a number of African trading companies were launched, including the Kericho Mines, the Kipsigis Produce Company and the Kipsigis Ltd. But the most notable one was the Kipsigis Traders' Co-operative Society which was launched in the same year. Its chief object was the purchase of piece goods, blankets, and other items in Nairobi at wholesale prices and their subsequent distribution to members in their markets. By the end of the year, it had about 141 members and owned two vehicles - a five-ton diesel lorry and an Austin delivery van for the distribution of goods to the markets. But shortly after 1950, the other African trading companies were in abeyance but the Kipsigis Traders' Co-operative Society continued so successfully that a profit of £1,123 was made during their

financial year, thus attracting much acrimony from the Indian traders (DC/KER/1/23/1950, p.13).

Closely related to the Kipsigis interest in trade was their ability to invest in the transport business. In relation to the marketing of maize, it was noted that "the purchase of a large number of African-owned lorries helped set the native markets on their feet as self-sufficient units" (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.9). In 1948 there was still " ample transport for all produce movements in Bureti and Belgut divisions but this was not the case in Sotik and Kapkimolwa locations. At least about 6 new lorries are required for that area" (DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.13). In fact there already existed a branch of Kenya African Transport and Mechanics Trade Union in Kericho (*Ibid*). Besides adequate transport for produce movement, taxi services in the African hands continued to flourish. The tactic of Indian traders sending their vehicles into the areas far away from trading centres to buy maize at high prices so as to undercut African traders was thwarted by the Africans' ability to purchase their own lorries for a similar purpose.

And lastly, education was becoming an ever-important avenue of reinvesting their wealth. For the first time two Kipsigis boys joined the Alliance High School in 1946. Kabianga Government African School became the academic secondary school for the Kipsigis and the Nandi together with offering Elementary Teacher Training courses. Meanwhile the educational facilities continued expanding. By 1948 there were a total of about 86 primary schools, 2 junior secondary schools - Kabianga and Tenwek- NHM - and one Teacher Training College. The chief demand was for the Government Kabianga to become a senior secondary school because the eligible students were being sent to Kisii

(DC/KER/1/21/1948, p.13). By 1950 the demand for education among the Kipsigis was insurmountable.

6.8 Summary

World War II and after, emerged as a critical period as well as a transitional phase in the agricultural transformation of the Kipsigisland. Prior to World War II the government largely neglected African agriculture and even sought to deplete the Kipsigis livestock. But the war period gave rise to conditions which imperatively necessitated due recognition for African agriculture. The need to feed the soldiers demanded an increased production, both from the European settlers and the African peasants. The expanded and extensive maize production during the war was spurred by the requirements of the war and for the first time the Kipsigis started producing astronomical amounts of produce for sale to obtain money which was further invested on land, livestock, education, trade and the likes.

The mobilisation of members of the Kipsigis for war purposes not only helped in giving them exposure to the outside world, outside the traditional homeland, but earned them plenty of money which they invested in businesses back at home. Together with the war prosperity, a group of rich peasants emerged as opposed to the poor peasants who sold their labour locally. As the rich peasants continued with more land enclosures, extensive cultivation of maize and investments in trading activities and education, the poor farmers were being rendered landless and marginalised to less productive areas of the district. As Bureti and Belgut distinguished themselves as the hub of most economic activities, Chepalungu was being continuously opened up through dam construction in order to

absorb the marginalised groups from the latter areas. Thus emerged a scenario of unequal development where sections of the Kipsigis were increasingly accumulating wealth in land, animals and trading businesses while another disadvantaged section was being pauperised and pushed to the periphery of major economic activities, except for livestock herding. Chepalungu area became a refuge for the displaced and poor from Bureti and Belgut (Luxemberg, 1913; Kay, 1975; Lamb, 1975; Bernstein, 1977; Berman, 1990).

The war conditions, however, had one detrimental effect on the Kipsigisland - the continuous mining of the soils together with enhanced accumulation of livestock led to soil exhaustion and erosion. The immediate post World War II period, therefore, witnessed efforts by the colonial government to recondition and rehabilitate the badly affected African lands. Two major approaches were evidenced in the Kipsigisland - soil conservation methods and attempts of culling the Kipsigis livestock through increased trade. The formation of ALDEV in 1946 aimed at increasing crop production without doing more harm to the soils and farmers were encouraged to effect soil conservation methods. Consequently the period before 1950 witnessed large increases in maize production which was previously unknown in the district. As more land came under plough cultivation, less land was available for livestock herding and it was generally felt that the district was over-stocked with human and animal populations increasingly forcing the Kipsigis to spread to the Chepalungu forest in order to get more pastureland. The colonial authority's move of ordering a cattle-count was seen as an effort of effecting culling among the Kipsigis and it was effectively rejected. Nevertheless, more cattle trading or auctioning centres were opened and the Kipsigis were encouraged to sell their animals so as to relieve pressure on land while some were forced by economic

circumstances to sell their animals. By 1950 the Kipsigis of Belgut and Bureti relied more and more on maize production than on animal husbandry. But the contrary was happening in the Sotik and Chepalungu regions. A section of the Kipsigis had, thus, appreciably been depastoralized and turned into "progressive farmers" relying on maize cultivation. The introduction of cash crops like tea, pyrethrum and passion fruits after 1950 further enhanced the position of the Kipsigis farmers in commodity production over animal husbandry and this forms the subject of analysis in the next chapter. From this chapter it has emerged more clearly that although agricultural, land, animal husbandry, labour and trade policies were aimed at achieving maximum benefits for the settlers and the colonial state, the Kipsigis seem to have reacted in their own ways to exploit such policies for their own economic advantages.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0. THE PHASE OF EXPANDED GROWTH IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, 1950-1963

7.1. General Overview

It has already been indicated that post-World War II agricultural production was increased *inter alia* in order to help in the reconstruction of Britain which had suffered enormously during the war and emerged the greatest debtor in the world (Cowen, 1982:142). Thus the first response was to rehabilitate and recondition African agricultural production. This lasted up to 1950 after which concerted and conscious efforts were undertaken to expand the growth of African agricultural production. The period between 1950 and 1954 is regarded as the planning phase in which plans were laid for the African areas. It was during this phase that the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 was formulated. Both crop production and animal husbandry underwent drastic changes after the Swynnerton Plan and the African peasants took advantage of the Plan to expand commodity production. The Swynnerton Plan was therefore a culmination of a gradual process of agricultural re-organisation of the African areas which immediately started after World War II. The Plan allowed African peasants to grow cash crops and engage in smallholder farming. Cash crop production led to further social differentiation and stratification generally in the colony including, the Kipsigisland.

The period between 1955 and 1960 has been described as a rapid development phase (Brown, 1966:24) or the phase of the development of small holder farming (Odingo, 1971:41). According to the Swynnerton Plan, land privatisation was imperative for an intensive type of agriculture and so land adjudication and privatisation were noticeably increased in the African

reserves. Together with creating a group of landed rich peasants who could effectively engage in small holder cash crop production was the avowed colonial policy of creating a landless group of poor peasants who could not only offer their labour in the farms of the rich peasants, but also in the colonial labour market. The African peasants equally participated in the growing of cash crops and in the Kipsigisland tea production became an important cash crop rivalling the already well established maize. The intricate effect of tea production over maize cultivation is well illustrated in the Kipsigisland. Nevertheless both commodity production and the adoption of modern and intensive methods of cultivation deepened rural class differentiation and it was the rich peasants and not the poor ones who were more likely to purchase the necessary inputs for increased agricultural production (Kitching, 1980). The main purpose for such an ambitious agricultural reform programme, as drawn up by Swynnerton, was to create a stable African land owning class with access to capital and income to be derived from the growth of cash crops which had been the preserve of white farmers (Maloba, 1989). The Swynnerton Plan which has been hailed by some as an agricultural success story because of its land reform programme and increased cash crop production (see for example Havelock, 1963; Harbeson, 1973) also had political ramifications in the suppression of the Mau Mau revolt in Central Kenya. The British were not ashamed to admit that the aim of this programme was not only to increase the income of the Africans in the rural areas, but also to create a new class, a rural-based middle class which would offer a moderating influence on African politics (Maloba, 1989). Consequently the Swynnerton Plan amplified differentiation among the rural peasants creating a landless and poor peasantry on one hand, and a rich landed peasantry on the other (Bernstein, 1977; Swainson, 1980; Kaplisky, 1980 and Njonjo 1981). This chapter thus seeks to explore the specific conditions pertaining in the Kipsigisland between 1950 and 1963 against the general background

of expanded growth in agricultural production and its attendant effect on land, labour and social formations.

7.2. Land Alienation and Privatisation

Perhaps one of the notable features of land alienation and the displacement of the Kipsigis took place during this period in the form of "the Kimulot Muddles" in the years 1949-1954. It is somewhat difficult to be precise on the geographical dimensions of the area in Kimulot earmarked for exchange. Nevertheless it suffices to say that the proposals involved the threat of large-scale land alienation for European tea estate expansion. The area in question at Kimulot was apparently unalienated land and as early as 1940 the Kipsigis had sought to make use of it. By 1946 the Kipsigis were still presenting a large number of claims to all the land which they used to occupy - the unalienated crown land at Kimulot and Chesanoi, the Trans-Mara area of the Maasai and the Kisii Reserve up to the Kuja River (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.3).

However, it was not until 1949 that specific proposals of alienating the Kimulot area were made by the PC, Nyanza Province to the LNC. The first proposal was that the Kipsigis should relinquish all rights to an area of approximately 6,500 acres which was occupied by the Kenya Tea Company, the Kerenga and Chebwon Estates whose land was then included in the "native" land unit. Secondly, an equivalent acreage of land in the southern part of the crown land, known as the Kimulot block, should be added to the "native" land unit together with about 10,000 acres in the Sotik area. Thirdly, the remainder of the Kimulot block amounting to approximately 4,500 acres of unalienated crown land should be alienated for European tea production. Fourthly, a plot of unalienated crown land of approximately 4,000 acres to the North east of the Kimulot plot should be alienated for European tea production. Also,

approximately 12,000 acres of suitable tea land known as Timbilil in the extreme western corner of the western Mau Forest Reserve should be excised from the Forest Reserve and made available for European tea production. Finally, the PC stressed that this exchange would be considered to be the final settlement of all the Kipsigis land claims "with the exception of those claims which may be put forward in regard to the Forest Glades and Trans-Mara Reserve" (KNA/LAN/1/76, folio 1/1). The PC described those proposals as Government's "final terms for settlement" and reminded the LNC that the protracted negotiations over a number of years had come to an end (*Ibid*).

The LNC unanimously rejected these proposals and earnestly requested the government to reconsider the proposals, especially the one requiring the Kipsigis to relinquish all rights to the Chebown and Kerenga Estates. They requested that the 999-year lease which had been given to the Kenya Tea Company from 1920 should continue. The PC stood his ground in December saying that the Government decision was irrevocable and that the "council must now accept the proposals *in toto* or reject them" (*Ibid*). Arap Korir (1978:46) has pointed out that to reject the proposals meant the confirmation of the *status quo* as far as Chebown and Kerenga were concerned - that is continued alienation of land and that in any case the lease would not be continued. It would also have meant the loss to the Kipsigis of any part of the Kimulot area and to the 10,000 acres in Sotik. The PC even promised to increase the acreage available to the Kipsigis in the Kimulot area from about 6,500 acres to 7,250 acres should the LNC surrender rights which were inherent to the Kipsigis over Chebown and Kerenga. This and the inability of the PC to precisely point out the boundaries did nothing to reassure the councillors. It was only after further coercion that they finally, albeit reluctantly, accepted the proposals (*Ibid*, folio 1/2).

The resistance of the LNC to the expropriation of their land was clearly notable and in their

language which they managed to put in place that:

"...we are disappointed. Respectfully we point out that we have never suggested exchanging our land at Chebown and Kerenga. We wish to retain that land. We are quite prepared to honour the leases.... Our plea to Government has been that the land at Kimulot should be returned to us, as we claim it to be a part of our tribal land. We were driven from it some years ago and our homes burnt. We have asked that it should be returned to us. If Government is unable to give us all we ask that it should be divided... we did not think that Government would give with one hand and take away with another. We recognise that we are to be given 10,000 acres in Sotik, but this is not good land. We are glad to have it, as it will help us in getting access to Chepalangu, but the land will have to be looked after to prevent it being eroded and trampled out. We know that the leases at Chebown (and) Kerenga are for 1,000 years, but we repeat that we are quite happy to honour the leases and receive the small annual revenue by way of rent. We would have been thankful ... today for all the proposal of Government if you had been able to say that Chebown and Kerenga would remain as Kipsigis Tribal land, although leased to the Tea companies for a thousand years. We ask that you will please present these our views to the government and plead for their consideration (arap Korir, 1978:47)

It is therefore evident that the LNC councillors did not willingly accept the Government proposals of alienating their land, although they finally submitted to such expropriation with the councillors having little option but to do so. But a few individuals continued resisting the alienation of their land, though the general response of the Kipsigis inhabitants of Kimulot was to engage in protest politics and resistance. A number of the Kipsigis defied the Government's order to vacate the area and were subsequently labelled "illegal residents" and eventually prosecuted. One of those who defied the orders was Tapsimate arap Borowo who was then accused of neglecting to obey an order issued by the PC. But arap Borowo argued that he had the right to live on the land in Kimulot, partial proof of this claim being that he had *Kipandes* from the years 1921 to 1924 showing that he had been living on that land and that he had been taxed by the Kipsigis LNC as if he was in the Kipsigis reserve (arap Korir 1978:49). But above all, his central defence was that Kimulot had always been a Kipsigis land, his grandfathers and past generations having lived, died and buried there. He refused to move because as he argued:

"I am taking care of the high places where there were sacrifices made and I wish to take care of the places where *barazas* were held. There is a place called Kipturabach. That is from generation back.... Because our ancestors lived there we want to live there until there are no more people in the world (arap Korir, 1978:40).

Neither a fine of about Shs. 101/= nor a bond of Shs. 200/= nor imprisonment nor forfeiture of his house and crops to the state could make arap Borowo change his stand of not vacating the land. But it was for his militant defiance against the colonial injustice that arap Borowo was regarded as a hero by the Kipsigis population at large. Most of the respondents, about ninety per cent, recalled with clarity the place of arap Borowo in the resistance against land alienation in the Kimulot area. Together with the case of arap Borowo, arap Korir (1978,51-54) recounts another prominent case of resistance, that of Kipsoi arap Chemorore who had lived in Kimulot all his life. Twice arap Chemorore was acquitted from a court because he seemed to have a legal and genuine claim to the land on which he was living. Eventually on February 13, 1952 another Resident Magistrate dismissed the case of arap Chemorore, describing him as a "man of irreproachable character" (*Ibid*). But even then arap Chemorore refused to move from the land.

Other than these cases of individual resistance, massive defiance on a large scale was noticed on the part of the people of Kimulot who equally actively protested. During 1950 they sought the support of the *laibons* whom they sent contributions in their efforts to secure the remainder of Kimulot. They also sought for the support of politicians in Nairobi. Besides defying the eviction orders they overtly threatened the first European who settled in this area. They confronted the owner-manager of Mara Mara Estate of the AHP Company, Horris Borman, who according to them, had occupied land by force within the Kipsigis Reserve. The Kipsigis sought to sabotage the work of the tea company by harassing the clearing labourers, thus leading to a stoppage of work on the clearing. All those who they termed as "illegal residents" and served with eviction orders refused to make any endorsement and upon trial all

pleaded not guilty of the charge. Upon conviction all refused to pay fines and were committed to jail. "It seems ... that they have agreed among themselves, and probably supported it by some form of oath, to resist and defy Government as long as possible" was Deputy Public Prosecutors' observation (KNA, LNA/1/76 folio 13).

During November 1951 the general feeling of the local population was "no co-operation until the Kimulot case has been decided to our satisfaction" (DC/KER/1/24/1951, p.6). In practice this meant that the Kipsigis did not appoint their own representatives to the sub-committee of the African District Council, formerly LNC through whom the Works Supervisor Major Graham could deal with such matters as communicating "the general idea of what is to happen in the area with regard to its development and settlement" (arap Korir 1978:56).

Nevertheless, the Government sought to bring the issue of Kimulot to a forceful end. A large contingent of police force was assembled and as a result the eviction forcibly effected between February 26 and March 13, 1952. With the might of the colonial state so blatantly displayed, the Kipsigis seem to have been naturally cowed. But the Kipsigis continued their resistance in other ways, this time not co-operating with the government against the Mau Mau forces of liberation movement. The Kimulot muddles elicited much opposition from not only the Kipsigis, but also other African communities, political parties like KAU, and African representatives in the legislative council (Legico). Only the colonial government thought that the Kipsigis stood to benefit from such an arrangement. But the Kimulot affair left an indelible imprint on the Kipsigis mind and it is one of the latest features of colonialism that will not easily be forgotten by the Kipsigis (arap Kirui, O.I., 1997).

Meanwhile during this time the Kipsigis population was increasing and the Kipsigisland becoming densely populated. By 1950 there was a total of about 143,298 people living in the

Kipsigis reserve. Bureti had the highest population density of about 155 people per square mile, followed by Kapkimolwa with 152, Belgut with 144, Sotik Post at 139 and Chapalungu with 125. With mounting population pressure, it therefore became imperative that the Kipsigis went in for an intensive type of agriculture to meet the requirements of a growing population.

In Kenya as a whole, the colonial land policy was now geared toward private land ownership, a process that started in Central Province (see Sorrenson, 1967). In the Kipsigisland we have already examined how certain individuals started enclosing or fencing the lands in their possession. By 1955 enclosure was taking place at an increasing pace, so much so that it was impossible to have planned enclosures with roads of access and cattle tracks left between holdings (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p. 15). In enclosing their land the Kipsigis had a common habit of securing a strip of land running from up the hill down into the valley so as to get access to the river for animal and human population.

The privatisation of land ownership contributed to internal differentiation among the Kipsigis peasantry. Ivanov (1979:6) posits at the continental level that those with big land holdings could provide for themselves sufficient income, while those with small lands received a yearly gross income lower than that which was necessary for subsistence. The latter represented the 'village poor' who were continually compelled to seek work in other households or else migrate to cities in search of work. Zeleza (1989a: 59) suggested that: "internal differentiation within the peasantry eventually led to the pauperisation of some peasants who became a rural proletariat or drifted to towns". This process was exacerbated by the Swynnerton Plan that aimed at creating a landless class to provide labour to the landed rich peasants and settlers respectively.

The enclosure of personal and private land continued steadily before independence.

Since there was not much fragmentation, land consolidation was not affected. Land registration and the issuance of titles on the enclosed land holdings were delayed. By 1953 it was noted by a colonial land tenure specialist, John Simpson that the demand for settlement and registration was patchy in the district. His conclusion was that there was no urgency for registration (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.23). This was largely effected only after independence in 1963. Once the enclosure of land started in 1945 the Kipsigis started possessing land as private property over which they had the right to dispose land through sale. Land thus ceased to be communally or "tribally" owned and individuals started to buy and sell land at will in disregard of the Kipsigis customary land tenure systems. Land prices kept on increasing and by 1951, for example, an acre was being offered at about £6 in Sotik, let alone other places in the Kipsigisland.

Another consequence of the enclosure of personal and private land was a tremendous increase in land cases. Table 7.1 below shows the increasing number of cases per location since 1954 when the first cases of land privatisation occurred. Initially the bulky of land cases were reported from Bureti where the earliest enclosures of land started. By 1953 the situation had tapered and Belgut was reporting the highest number of cases. Chepalungu and Sotik came into the scene much later though they were reporting an increasing number of such cases. Most of the land cases were adequately settled by the Native Tribunals located at Ndanai, Silibwet, Longisa, Kapkatet, Sosit, and Kericho town by 1953. However only a few cases were appealed before the DO and very few appeals were taken to the PC as shown in the table below. The increased number of land cases is a clear testimony for the increased demand for land among the Kipsigis as a result of the change from the need for pasturelands to the need for private and personal land, especially for maize cultivation. By 1954 the Kipsigis demand for land still continued and the targeted areas were in East Sotik, South-West Mau, unoccupied crown land

near Tunnel and the Trans-Mara (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p.3). Since the change over to private land ownership started in Bureti and Belgut, those who were squeezed out of these

Table 7.1. Land cases in the Kipsigisland, 1945-1954

| Year | Belgut | Bureti | Chapalungu | Sotik | Appeals to DO | Appeals to PC |
|------|--------|--------|------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| 1945 | 2 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1946 | 11 | 67 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1947 | 19 | 133 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1948 | 21 | 90 | 5 | 21 | 0 | 0 |
| 1949 | 64 | 123 | 4 | 58 | 52 | 0 |
| 1950 | 217 | 193 | 21 | 131 | 68 | 0 |
| 1951 | 420 | 233 | 80 | 260 | 117 | 0 |
| 1952 | 515 | 192 | 69 | 330 | 163 | 11 |
| 1953 | 481 | 143 | 95 | 335 | 122 | 8 |

Source: DC/KER/1/18-28/1945-1953

areas moved to Chepalungu and Sotik. Two categories of people were squeezed out of their lands in Bureti and Belgut - first those who refused to abandon extensive livestock herding found themselves short of enough open land for their animals and secondly those who were unable to acquire as much land as they would require for agricultural purposes due to stiff competition for land resorted to move elsewhere. For these two categories Chepalungu and Sotik provided a safe refugee space. Thus redistribution of population in the Kipsigisland was largely effected due to the prevailing agricultural changes taking place during the period. In 1951 the more distant and inaccessible parts of location 4, in Kimulot and location 5, between Silibwet and Posta, were quickly opened up for settlement through the provision of roads and markets (DC/KER/1/24/1951, p. 18). It was also reported that some of the Kipsigis moved into Tanganyika at Arusha and Musoma areas, Uganda and into the Maralal district of the Rift valley (*Ibid*). Others penetrated Maasailand and by 1953 a few Kipsigis villages were evident in the

Njibiship Valley and some in the Trans-Mara Native Forest area (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p. 23). It was not until 1955 that Kipsigis emigration to Tanganyika was officially stopped though it continued to creep on a small scale (DC/KER/1/29/1955, p.20). Besides, a number of settlement schemes were surveyed and demarcated in 1954 and were settled with the Kipsigis as one way of redistributing population. These included Kimulot, Itambe and Chepalungu settlement schemes (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.40).

7.3. Agricultural Changes Before the Swynnerton Plan

7.3.1. Crop Production

During this period, maize, wattle, beans, *wimbi*, potatoes and wheat remained the principal crops in the Kipsigisland reserve while tea remained the major preoccupation in the settled areas. Table 7.2 below shows the produce from the Kipsigisland reserve in the period between 1950 and 1954. The produce for 1950 has been included to create continuity since this has already been covered. More especially for maize production the year 1950 marked the highest peak during the entire colonial period when maize had achieved a monoculture status. The colonial administration moved in to reduce the extensive cultivation and through a system of rewards and incentives, sought to encourage the Kipsigis to reduce the acreage under maize cultivation and to revert some of the land previously covered by maize into fallow pasture lands for at least three years. However, increased prices for the commodity seem to have created no great impact in the reduction of maize production. It was hoped that by increasing the producer price of maize the Kipsigis could get the required money by cultivating less land. Nevertheless the reduction in the amount of maize produced in 1951 to roughly 121,439 bags was attributed to the unfavourable climatic conditions, especially hailstorms that tremendously destroyed the

crop. In addition to that figure of 1951, however, there was a "very large local trade and trade with the Luo in Kano and Nyakach [which] took place annually. It is probably true to say that this was possible in excess of about 50,000 bags annually" (DC/KER/1/24/1951, p.6). But due to the heavy rains of 1951, measuring about 96.81 inches, the heaviest since 1905 when the first records were taken, maize production drastically dropped to a mere 50,945, bags in 1952, further dropping to 44,903 bags in 1953. This unexpected drop was attributed to waterlogging, heavy rains and "black market" in the trade with the Luo in Nyanza (DC/KER/1/25/1952, p.15).

Just before the Swynnerton Plan, maize production had slightly increased to about 80,266 bags in 1954. Yet a casual examination of the prices would indicate that a continual increase with the 1954 crop fetching roughly Shs. 28/77 a bag. This phenomenal decrease in maize production before the Swynnerton Plan has been hard to explain although it may not be difficult to discern a combination of political propaganda, rewards and incentives for less cultivation and unfavourable climatic conditions which would have most likely taken their toll in the production of maize. But how this exactly happened in the face of increased prices was a total mystery. As Stichter (1982:78) has noted, there was no relation between price and production. The most determining factor was available labour to do practical work in the fields.

Other crops, such as beans, potatoes, wheat, *wimbi*, and wattle had mixed fortunes, Potato production greatly increased and the agricultural officer in African areas described it as a "potato rush". This increase in potato production was partly caused by the demands created by large Kikuyu work camps in the Rift Valley province (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.21). In turn the increase in potato production had a consequent decrease of wheat acreage and production. The planting of wattle, on the other hand, was encouraged in reverting over-cultivated plots into bushlands and this was a measure of soil conservation. Thus the production of wattle showed an

upward trend throughout this period. *Wimbi* production was heavily sliding and by 1953 only about 20 bags were exported. But the high price offered that year once again stirred up its production to roughly 590 bags (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.21). By 1954 onions and garlic had acquired a measure of importance as exports from the Kipsigisland to other region of Kenya.

The pre-Swynnerton Plan period had witnessed a continual effort of improving farming methods. Bureti and especially Arap Tengecha's Cheborge area had shown noticeable improvements in farm layouts. A total of about Shs. 154,980/= was paid out in 1951 for what the Agricultural officer felt was "better and improved agriculture" (DC/KER/1/24/1951, p.16). Gradually other regions in Belgut and Silibwet area in Sotik joined the Bureti location as areas with improved methods of farming. These were areas also notable for land enclosure and thus many landless people emerged from these areas due to their inability to effectively compete with the prosperous and landed peasants of the region. Besides enclosures such prosperous farmers were able to paddock their land, clean the paddocks to do crop rotation and seed selection, spray their cattle and were in the process of up-breeding their animals with the Kabianga improved bulls costing about Shs. 200/= each (DC/KER/1/19/1946, p. 14). By 1954 the agricultural officer estimated that about 56% of the Reserve was under sound land use while another 25% was not yet developed or in use, such as forests, bush and escarpment land. Thus only 19% of the land in cultivation reflected poor land use methods (DC/KER/1/24/1953, p. 14). Consequently by 1954 the use of rewards to encourage farmers to improve farming methods was withdrawn and substituted with loans which caused some misconceptions among the people. Moreover this system of giving loans did not become widespread and popular immediately and slackness in bush clearing of paddocks in many areas was noticed. The Kipsigis on their part

Table 7.2. Agricultural Produce in the Kipsigisland, 1950-1954.

| | | 1950 | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 |
|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| MAIZE | Qty (bags) | 234,522 | 121,439 | 50,945 | 44,903 | 80,266 |
| | @ | 11/55 | 12/95 | 21/77 | 28/35 | 28/77 |
| | Value(Shs) | 2,708,729 | 1,572,635 | 1,106,373 | 1,273,000 | 2,309,252 |
| Beans | Qty (bags) | 75 | 483 | 581 | 150 | 234 |
| | @ | 14/00 | 23/00 | 31/00 | 39/50 | 36/52 |
| | Value(Shs) | 1,050 | 11,109 | 18,011 | 5,925 | 8,482 |
| Potatoes | Qty (bags) | 4373 | 4,765 | 5,585 | 8,956 | 12,063 |
| | @ | 9/00 | 15/00 | 12/00 | 15/00 | 17/00 |
| | Value(Shs) | 39,357 | 74,475 | 67,020 | 134,340 | 205,071 |
| Wheat | Qty (bags) | 1,254 | 1,399 | 1,405 | 1,403 | 450 |
| | @ | 27/25 | 34/73 | 36/86 | 40/95 | 40/55 |
| | Value(Shs) | 34,171 | 48,587 | 51,788 | 57,452 | 18,247 |
| Wimbi | Qty (bags) | 2,204 | 197 | 62 | 20 | 590 |
| | @ | 17/50 | 18/00 | 20/00 | 52/25 | 44/90 |
| | Value(Shs) | 38,570/00 | 3,546/00 | 1,240/00 | 645/00 | 26,491 |
| Wattle | Qty (bags) | 120 | 300 | 1,572/50 | 389 | 787 |
| | @ | 156/80 | 266/91 | 230/38 | 247/18 | 228/25 |
| | Value(Shs) | 18,816 | 80,073 | 362,272 | 96,208 | 179,632 |
| Onions | Qty (bags) | - | - | - | 2,126 | 1,261 |
| | @ | - | - | - | 42/50 | 50/00 |
| | Value(Shs) | - | - | - | 90,355 | 63,050 |

Source: DC/KER/1/23-28/Various Years

thought that by accepting 'loans' from the colonial government, they were indirectly selling their land and the so called 'loans' were actual payments (Bellion, E, O.I., 1997).

Together with the need to improve agricultural methods, a number of Betterment Schemes were started especially in Chepalungu and Kimulot with Group Farms being established in Belgut so that such schemes could serve as demonstrations for improving the methods of farming in the area. The Betterment Schemes at Chepalungu and Kimulot specifically concerned themselves with bush clearing and burning, the making of roads, dams and good drainage

systems with a view to turning such areas into good agricultural land. The Chepalungu Scheme also sought not only to eliminate tsetse fly breeding areas through clearing the bush, but also to erect a fence along the Maasai-Kipsigis border (DC/KER/1/26/1953), p. 15). The Kimulot Settlement Scheme progressed fairly well and by the end of 1953 about 70 families were in occupation and some 60 more holdings were ready for occupation. New roads had been constructed and several wells sunk on the ridges (*Ibid*). Those who were already settled there were issued with certificates of occupancy, a prelude to the title deeds. By the end of 1954 the Marshall - Web 10,000-acre farm was being surveyed for the Kipsigis settlement and came to be referred to as Itambe settlement scheme. These Betterment and settlement schemes at Kimulot, Itambe and Chepalungu became centres of demonstration on betterment and improvement of agricultural methods.

7.3.2. Animal Husbandry

The colonial efforts of upgrading the Kipsigis livestock started after World War II and aimed at controlling the number of animals per unit land, continued during the period. For example, in 1953 it was noted that:

"Now that farm planning has reached such an advanced stage, the time has come to pay particular attention to progress in livestock management and improvement, excellent progress was made with the development of Kabianga Livestock Improvement Centre and several improved bulls (part native, part sahiwal) were issued out to selected farmers" (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.3)

One of the most important items asked for in the plan for accelerated agricultural development was a livestock Improvement or Animal Husbandry officer who could give his full time to this aspect of farming in the Reserve, especially in following up those farmers who had bought the Kabianga bulls. Though there had been a veterinary officer in the district since the

period of World War II, his efforts were largely concentrated in the settled area to the neglect of the Kipsigis Reserve, hence the need for a livestock improvement officer. Noting that the Kipsigis had taken great initiative in improving their livestock industry, the veterinary officer remarked that emphasis had shifted, where cattle were concerned, from quantity to quality (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.20).

Nevertheless the upgrading of livestock was not uniform throughout the Kipsigisland. In the semi-developed, areas such as along the forest fringes and in most of Chepalungu and Belgut, the emphasis was still on hedge-planting and bush-clearing, and it was in the most advanced areas of Bureti and parts of Belgut and Sotik that improved livestock management and up-breeding was stressed. This was mainly done through the segregation of cattle on the holding which in turn meant homestead water supplies, so that a big drive on individual water supplies was made. By 1954 most of the loans to farmers (1/2 ADC, and 1/2 ALDEV) were issued for corrugated iron roofs and brick or stone storage tanks in order to catch the heavy rainfall. From January to June 1955 the ADC appears to have set aside some £20,000 and the government was expected to provide £10,000 for loans for water supplies (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.21). The Swynnerton Plan envisaged extra livestock officers for the Kipsigis Reserve and the livestock improvement centre at Kabianga sold a number of improved bulls and female livestock to the Kipsigisland. Thus livestock improvement emerged as one of the most important activities of Government in the Kipsigisland before and even after the Swynnerton Plan. After domination of maize as the only cash crop of the district, time had come to develop milk as a major 'cash crop' of the district (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.24). This would seem to illustrate well the theme of expanded agricultural growth in the Kipsigisland prevailing during the period under investigation.

Education on animal husbandry was provided, especially at the Kabianga centre so that this could probably enable the Kipsigis improve their livestock production. An annual show was held at Cheptuyet and proved an excellent propaganda instrument for both the centre and livestock improvement in general. The Kipsigis made a remarkable progress in lessons in livestock management. Moreover the advent of a weekly radio programme in the Kipsigis language was of immense value. The weekly broadcast by David Hales on veterinary matters proved a successful media for instruction. As a result "the Cheborge area is improving in its standards of livestock management and it becomes essential that more advanced instruction in silage making, dairy management and calf management be given to these [advanced] farmers" (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.22). Apparently soon Cheborge and Kimulot distinguished themselves as areas with better and improved stock management skills in the Kipsigisland.

Meanwhile control of diseases both in the settled areas and the Kipsigis Reserve was a major pre-occupation of the veterinary staff and much of their work was inevitably taken up with disease control in the settled area (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p. 16). Trypanosomiasis, rinderpest, foot and mouth, and pleuro-pneumonia remained the major diseases. The control of tsetse fly along the Kipsigis - Maasai border was combated through extensive bush-clearing and burning and in 1953 a prison camp of about 400 Kikuyu convicts was set up for the purpose inside the Maasai territory, (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.17). The foot and mouth disease occasioned continued quarantines in both the Reserve and Settled Area and this provided "a most irritating obstacle to livestock marketing" (*Ibid*). Rinderpest was controlled through inoculations, and in 1952 alone about 61,112 cattle were inoculated (DC/KER/1/25/1952, p.20). Together with the dipping service, the use of gamatox spray pumps was encouraged in the campaign against the control of tick-borne diseases. By 1953, the veterinary officer reported that "Every month about 6-10

pumps are sold by the Kipsigis Traders and the KFA without coercion by the Department" (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.16). By 1954 the veterinary officer noted that the control of ticks and tick-borne diseases was one area in which progress was made as a large increased sale of pumps was reported. These became more popular than dips. The estimated figures for sale of these pumps in the reserve was roughly 67 in 1952, 238 in 1953 and soaring to approximately 800 in 1954 (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p. 25).

The contention that the area was over-stocked was still held by the colonial administration. Grazing control was advocated and the Chelaget area was rid of livestock to allow for grass regeneration for demonstration purposes. The heavy rains of 1951 however brought fine grass covering virtually everywhere. By 1954 it was realised that overstocking was not as serious a problem in the Kipsigisland. With enclosures the numbers of cattle found their own economic level and the surpluses were either sold or pushed off to communal grazing, such as in Chepalungu. When all communal grazing could have been used up, it was believed, the squeeze-out would be complete. Meanwhile judging from the vast amount of bush which had remained to be cleared in all parts, there were thousands of acres of grazing land which were yet to be exploited.

The on-going project of opening up marginal areas in the Chapalungu and the drier parts of Belgut through dam construction came to an end in 1952. In consolidating those dams livestock proof hedge had to be built surrounding the dams and cattle troughs fitted to prevent the destruction of dam walls by livestock. Apparently water supply was used not only in opening up new pasturelands and settlements but also in redistributing the Kipsigis population. The Agricultural Department even started drilling boreholes and protecting springs. In spite of comparatively good water supplies, there was, however, demand for water on the spot,

especially at large markets and for the improvement and paddocking of animals. As a result homestead water supplies were encouraged by issuing loans to progressive farmers for corrugated iron roofing and water tanks. In 1954 a pilot scheme for piped water was done near Sotik Township for individual access to water charged at about Shs. 3/= for 1,000 purified gallons and Shs. 1/50 unpurified water. The Kipsigis response to the scheme was enthusiastically positive (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.26).

Yet with all these improvements in production, the local colonial authorities continued with their policy of destocking the Kipsigisland through encouragement of auction sales. By 1951 such auction sales were realising better prices, though equally hampered by quarantine restrictions. Thus to the colonial authorities destocking was not taking place at a speed adequate to cope with the natural increase, notwithstanding the pressing problem of returning squatter livestock, numbering about 20,000 cattle, from the settled areas. In 1952 as much as about Shs. 460/= were paid at Roret for an animal, but the livestock population, now estimated at half a million, was still increasing owing to quarantine restrictions. The veterinary officer feared that the Kipsigis might be forced to do compulsory destocking (DC/KER/1/25/1952, p.16). In 1953 a total of about 5,703 animals were sold at an average price of approximately Shs. 170/= in auction sales as opposed to 2,741 sold in 1952. Together with this the high livestock mortality during January-March dry season, at least 30,000 are believed to have died and the failure to have squatter livestock returned to the Reserve owing to the settlers' reluctance of losing their squatter labour, eased the livestock pressure in the Reserve (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p. 17). By 1954 most of the squatter stock had not been returned to the Reserve. Fort Ternan was the only ward which had not applied the Cattle Cleansing Ordinance while other wards had resolved not to get rid of all squatter livestock. In spite of opposition from the wards concerned, that is Nandi

Hills and Fort Ternan, the council recommended that there would be a total elimination of squatter livestock in the area by 1958. The order made in 1952 concerning Songhor, Muhoroni and Koru wards provided for total elimination of such livestock by the 30th April 1955. Indeed some cattle had been moved into the reserve, but owing to the sales in the auction markets not much pressure was felt. For example a total of about 7,938 animals were sold in 1954, earning the district some Shs. 1,099,451/= as compared to Shs. 649,634/= in the previous year (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p. 25).

Meanwhile, the ever-present incidences of livestock raids were common during the period. The *liabons* were as usual linked with this pastime activity. A number of these *laibon* had already infiltrated into both the Settled Areas and the Kipsigis Reserve. It was thus decided that *Gwasi* become the permanent home of the *laibons* where they could be absorbed with the Suba and Jaluo and that in future *laibon* could be treated ordinarily and educated at Gwassi. The *laibon* colony at Kericho township was due to be dismantled as well (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p. 11). Nevertheless, livestock rustling was now a professional pastime and was carried out by expert stock raiders of all communities. Besides, the low fines of about Shs. 20/= imposed by the colonial courts compared with the value of an animal at Shs. 170/= on average seemed to have given raiders the impetus to take the risk of raiding for stock (DC/KER/1/25/1953, p.27).

Lastly honey production received some attention during the period. A honey refinery building at Gorgor was started in 1953. The separator was to be supplied by the Veterinary Department while the other capital and running costs were to be borne by the ADC and later by a producer's co-operative society. This honey and wax refinery was opened the following year (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p. 25).

7.3.3. Labour

The available information on the tea plantation activities indicates that the tea companies were still expanding their plantations and this was evident in the Kimulot and Sotik areas. The major concerns of the local administration were centred on the elimination of squatter livestock from the Settled Areas of Songhor, Koru, Londiani, Fort Ternan and the Nandi Hills where they eliminated squatter labour. But there was a marked reluctance on the part of the farmers in these areas to realise the difficulties arising out of the squatter problem, more particularly the issue of squatter livestock and its return to the Reserve. Except for Sotik which had tackled the problem earlier, there was no unanimity of public opinion on the question. The problem was even becoming acute for three reasons - first, the number of squatter livestock was increasing and by 1953 the veterinary officer's estimate was about 20,000 heads of cattle and secondly vast areas of the reserve were being taken as individual grazing leaving smaller and smaller areas to absorb the squatters and their animals. And thirdly, due to increased cost of living, the squatter wages were too low and due to insufficient supervision of their activities the squatters were becoming "an extremely difficult lot to deal with" (DC/KER/1/24/1951, p.30). To the settlers, the attraction of a cheap force of hard working resident labourers apparently outweighed the obvious dangers. For example, some 1,400 of the resident labourers were Agikuyu. A number of them refused to be photographed and later ninety per cent of them were revealed as Mau Mau oath takers in some farms. Nevertheless, at the end of 1953 the Emergency Regulations requiring the concentration of resident labourers came into force. Most of these Kikuyu labourers were thus removed to detention camps. As for the rest of squatter labourers, it was hoped that they would all be gotten rid of by 1958 together with their livestock.

One consequence of the Emergency was the heavy call upon the Kipsigis manpower for

the army, the police and for civilian employment as watchmen, herdsman and milkers. The Kipsigis youth continued to fulfil most of the considerable demands made upon them for manpower in the emergency areas and it was estimated that some 15,000 were employed outside the district (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.3). Although the local administration was elated for the young men were usefully occupied, it was nevertheless regretted that there were comparatively few available for development of their own holdings. The Kipsigis were called upon to replace the 'rebellious' Kikuyu or even help in trucking them down. For example, when the Kikuyu squatters in one estate refused to be photographed in 1952 a recruiting party rushed to Kericho for 100 milkers for that estate (DC/KER/1/25/1952, p.26). When the Emergency Regulations confined the Kikuyu into concentration camps, the Kipsigis took over their chores. Of the 1,700 adult male Kikuyu believed to be living in the district at the beginning of Emergency only 400 remained by the end of 1953 (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.2). A census carried out in 1954 revealed that no less than 15,000 young men or nearly 50% of all the suitable youth of the Reserve were outside working in the army, police, prisons, farm guards, night watchmen, or other emergency work. Several thousands more were out working on farms and plantations, in industry and as house-servants so that only a small proportion remained for work at home. The extraction of such youthful labour from the district has been given as part of the reasons for the low production of maize in the district during the period (Sillattee, O.I., 1997).

The opening up of the Chepalungu and lower Belgut areas through dam construction, road building and bush clearing required much labour. Here much of the labour used was communal in nature. Even the dams that had filled up had to be deepened and reconditioned using communal labour. The clearing of the bush along the Maasai border equally drew from communal labour. More so free labour of about 400 Kikuyu convicts were stationed in a prison

camp for the purpose of clearing the bush. Most of the clearing elsewhere along the border was done by communal Kipsigis labour.

7.3.4. Merchant Capital

In the pre-Swynnerton Plan period exports from the Kipsigisland, though with fluctuations, showed a general trend of increasing by 1954. Table 7.2 in the above pages showed the agricultural exports of the district and Table 7.3 below shows other additional exports based on animal husbandry. All exports from the Kipsigisland earned the district a total of about Shs. 3,641,230/60 in 1950. Due to a multiplicity of factors affecting each item, the total earnings dropped for three consecutive years: Shs. 2,138,339.82 in 1951; Shs. 1,825,869.90 in 1952 and Shs. 1,965,168.40 in 1953. The notable factors included "black market" in hides and skins, bush clearing in the Chepalungu which impacted negatively on honey production and the heavy rains of 1951 which affected poultry and egg production. Perhaps the most serious upset during this period was the unexpectedly low yield in maize production. The heavy rains of 1951 destroyed much seed before germination; the 1952 crop did poorly and the 1953 drought tremendously ruined the crop yielding only 44,903 bags. For the second time in the history of the district maize had to be imported from South Nyanza; a total of 5,000 bags worth Shs. 141,750/= were brought in (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.26).

Nevertheless other crops, like beans, potatoes, wattle and onions, and livestock products like hides, honey and cockerels showed an upward trend in 1954. Together with improved prices, the total earnings from all exports had soared to almost the 1950 level at Shs. 3,048,952.50. Even with the depressed output of 1952 and 1953, the district was able

Table 7.3. Other Exports from the Kipsigisland, 1950-1954

| | | 1950 | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 |
|-----------|----------------|---------|---------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Hides | Qty (fransila) | 6,015 | 2,158 | 934 | 2,841 | 1492 |
| | @ | 107/00 | 55/00 | 12/= per hide | 2/= per lb | 62/50 per lb |
| | Value (Shs) | 643,505 | 118,690 | 11,208 | 204,552 | 134,460 |
| Honey | Qty (tins) | 945 | 3,275 | 3,395 | 376 | 302 |
| | @ | 54/00 | 45/00 | 40/00 | 50/00 | 60/00 |
| | Value (Shs) | 51,030 | 147,375 | 135,800 | 18,800 | 18,120 |
| Eggs | Qty (units) | 533,044 | 493,371 | 375,015 | 471,189 | 290,797 |
| | @ | =/10 | =/10 | =/07 | =/13 | =/14 |
| | Value (Shs) | 53,304 | 49,337 | 26,251 | 61,254 | 40,711 |
| Cockerels | Qty (units) | 17,566 | 14,205 | 15,302 | 6,468 | 10,763 |
| | @ | 3/00 | 2/50 | 3/00 | 3/40 | 4/20 |
| | Value (Shs) | 52,698 | 35,512 | 45,906 | 22,636 | 45,433 |

Source: Dc/KER/1/23-27/Various Years

to pay its taxes adequately. In 1952 a total of about £38,651,10.00 were collected in taxes, being 104.46% of the projected estimate of the year. In 1953, £38,447,11.50 being 96.92% of the projected estimate were collected (DC/KER/1/26/1955, p.27). Yet the items shown in Tables 7.2 and 7.3 were not the only sources of income for the district. A number of people earned wages for their labour both in and outside the district, the squatters in the Settled Areas and some in the tea plantation economy which were within the district while over 15,000 Kipsigis were for example, engaged in emergency work outside the district in 1953 alone. Other people acquired their money through various businesses, such as hawking, shop-keeping, livestock selling and so on. Therefore to conclude that the Kipsigisland enjoyed a great measure of prosperity in the pre-Swynnerton Plan period does not contradict the depressed exports of 1952 and 1953 for the sources of income were broad based.

The Kipsigis invested such income in a number of ways. Some invested it in various businesses, such as trade in general goods and in agricultural produce and livestock. Table 7.4 below shows the number of various licenses issued in the period between 1951 and 1954. It is evident that Traders' Licenses showed a consistent increase except for 1953 when the emergency Regulations seem to have negatively affected most sectors of the Kipsigis economy. The decrease in Produce Buyers' Licenses reflected the poor performance in maize production in 1952 and 1953, but was recovering by 1954. The destocking policy through auction sales seems to have been tapering due to the small number of Stock Traders' licenses issued.

Other people invested their money in good houses, especially brick houses and those with corrugated iron sheets while others invested in transport. A number of transport licenses were issued in 1953 and "Taxis now plying on the route Kabossan-Gorgor-Ndanai-Sotik, as well

Table 7.4 Licenses issued in 1951-1954

| | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Traders' Licenses | 257 | 355 | 180 | 325 |
| Produce Buyers' Licenses | 545 | 285 | 167 | 227 |
| Stock Traders' Licenses | 55 | 105 | 15 | 16 |

Source: DC/KER/1/24-27/Various Years.

as Kabossan to Kericho via Sotik post" (DC/KER/1/26/1953, p.21). This development was encouraged and the only worry for the local administration was the ruining of roads during and after the rains. In the December 1954, chief Cheborge bought a car and chief arap Kirui also bought a car and was in the process of building a new permanent house (DC/KER/127/1954, p.10). This period also saw a steady progress in individual enterprise. "There are now six 3 ton lorries, three buses, and two light delivery vans, all owned and operated by local Kipsigis"

(DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.25). The DC remarked that "the number of buses and 'B' and 'C' licensed lorries increased alarmingly as far as the money available for road work is concerned. As a result the Sotik-Bomet road broke up badly during the November-December rains" (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p. 33). All such investments in business, shops, cattle, transport and good houses helped in accentuating rural class differences. Since not all people managed in accumulating wealth in such investments, a group of rich and affluent Kipsigis was emerging in relation to the general populace who continued being pauperised (Bernstein, 1977; Illife, 1983:ch3).

Equally the period witnessed considerable improvement in crop and animal husbandry. In order to be able to produce more, farmers were encouraged to effect improved farm layouts, fence their farms, use improved seeds and improve their farming methods. Initially good farm layouts attracted rewards, but later such farmers qualified for loans so that they could further improve their farms. In animal husbandry, farmers were required to do paddocking, control diseases with the use of spray pumps, clear bushes and even upbreed their animals by adopting sahiwal bulls from the Kabianga livestock centre. Equally they were required to improve their grass for grazing and secure individual and homestead water supplies, possibly by building iron roofed houses and storage tanks. Only progressive and enterprising farmers could have been able to achieve such improvements in crop and livestock husbandry. Thus they could qualify for more loans from ADC and ALDEV and continue effecting more improvements. This led to clear distinctions between the able and wealthier farmers on one hand and poor and pauperised on the other. As more enclosure of land continued, the rich peasants were able to accumulate wealth in land even by buying from their neighbours. Consequently by 1954 one of the major issues discussed by the ADC was the rise of a landless class and the question of fragmentation of

holdings (DC/KER/1/27/1954, p.34).

As the stratification of the population continued manifesting itself between the rich and the poor, clear regional distinctions were also emerging. Bureti division seems to have been more advanced than all other divisions and Chepalungu was relatively backward. Bureti manifested a number of features so as to be considered advanced; it produced almost half of the maize crop in the Kipsigis Reserve, had the first land enclosures, had many shops and the greatest number of ploughs. Belgut was equally advanced except for the low-lying areas bordering Luo Nyanza where rainfall and occasional famine were common. Sotik had enclaves rivalling Bureti, though the southern part of Chebunyo and Ndanai were lagging behind. As a result, when the up breeding of livestock through sahiwal bulls was being advocated in the relatively more advanced regions of Bureti, parts of Belgut and Sotik, it was the age of forest clearing and the making of pasturelands in Chepalungu. Thus regional differentiation was reflected in all aspects of crop and animal production with Bureti leading and Chepalungu lagging behind, probably except for honey production where the reverse was true.

The Kipsigis Traders Co-operative Society survived this period with a number of problems. It suffered losses which were attributed to a poor maize crop in 1952 and no profits from transport. Lack of maize for transportation in 1953, coupled with unsatisfactory supervisory staff almost led to the collapse of the society, except for a loan from the Government that enabled it to survive. The appointment of Collins H. East as Assistant Registrar of co-operative societies in April 1954 saved the Kipsigis Traders Co-operative Society from eminent collapse. As a result of dramatic re-organisation, close supervision and the arousing of the Kipsigis enthusiasm, the society was well back on its own feet by the end of the year. The co-operative represented about 90% of the Kipsigis traders in the Reserve. Other co-operatives

included the Sotik Farmers' Co-operative Society, the Timber Co-operative Society and the Potato Co-operative Society. All such co-operatives sought to promote the local members to be better businessmen in the Kipsigisland.

7.4. From The Swynnerton Plan to Independence

7.4.1. Land

Due to the continuous process of enclosing the land, it was feared that land fragmentation might occur. As a result the African members of the District Agricultural Committee suggested in 1957 that the ADC pass by-laws confining the inheritance of land to the principles of primogeniture in an effort to prevent future land fragmentation. This generated debates from the location level to the council chambers. Majorities of people were not in favour of the idea and felt that land fragmentation could only be prevented under enlightened customary law. In this regard an effort was made in recording customary law in connection with land tenure and allied subjects (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.8). The growing realisation that there was little unoccupied land left in the Reserve led to too much pre-occupation in problems of land tenure and land inheritance. In July 1958 a working party was set up to examine the whole question of customary law in relation to land tenure. A code of land tenure rules and a statement of opinions on land inheritance emerged and this was expected to guide policy on land in future years. Besides, such document was bound to guide the African courts to settle the ever-increasing land disputes over which they had muddled in the dark for many years. The code equally gave regulations on the opening of virgin land, thus preventing the few influential "land barons" from claiming far larger areas than they could ever use (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.332).

The Kipsigis had by this time become increasingly aware of the land problem largely due

to population increase, continuous land enclosures and the introduction of cash crops. A few individuals had grabbed for themselves large areas of undeveloped land on the fringes of the Mau forest. The working party, instituted in 1958 and consisted of elders of the community, formulated rules whereby the remaining areas of undeveloped land in the Reserve could be equitably distributed amongst the members of the community. The demand for land drove some of the Kipsigis into the Maasailand where they settled hoping to acquire land there. Every year as the population increased, the value of land in the Kipsigisland was enhanced and interest in it stimulated accordingly. The development of cash crops, likewise, caused a substantial increase in land values (Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:125). By 1960 land in the high potential areas of the district was changing hands at prices of up to about Shs. 2,000/= per an acre. Shortage of land caused the Kipsigis to look with longing eyes on the Settled Areas of which many parts were, regrettably, not well developed. Toward the end of 1960 the question of African settlement schemes in the Highlands was arousing considerable interest and was causing a good deal of consternation and confusion in the Settled Areas of the District. Gradually most white farmers were reconciled to these settlement schemes and many of them, especially in Sotik, expressed a desire to sell their land or at any rate a part of it. By independence, the wealthy and prosperous Kipsigis were pulling resources to buy off some settlers, besides buying numerous shares in the upcoming settlement schemes (DC/KER/1/1/35/1962, p.8; Okoth-Ogendo, 1991:127).

Together with land enclosure and the general shortage of land was the increase in land cases. Initially, whenever enclosures of land were taking place there was an upsurge of land cases in the African courts. But gradually after enclosures got established there occurred a drastic decrease in land cases, proving the benefits of enclosure in minimising litigation. Most notable was the Kapkatet court which was the centre of the biggest and most highly developed

farming area. Here the land cases dropped to an all time low of 62 in 1957. Rather surprisingly, in view of the recent race for enclosure in the Chepalungu area, there was a marked decrease of land cases in 1957 compared with 1954, 259 as compared with 405 (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.12).

From this point it would appear that there was a growing awareness among the Kipsigis of the dangers of land fragmentation and the need for sound farm planning. Many farmers were in favour of the granting of individual titles for land, though there was considerable suspicion of "land consolidation". Those words meant to the Kipsigis a measure that was imposed by force as a direct result of emergency. However, the questions of consolidation and registration were not urgent in the Kipsigisland as fragmentation did not exist to a large extent. By 1960 the task of land registration had started in two *Kokwetinwek* of the Cheborge area of Bureti Division. The Kipsigis equally took a very sensible view of the problem of land fragmentation and there were several instances during the year when the Kipsigis mutually exchanged land so that they could avoid the risk of fragmentation (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.10). Essentially, therefore, the main issues pertaining to land during the period included the spectre of land shortage, the increasing demand and value for land, land consolidation and eventually land registration. By independence time land was no longer an abundant resource it used to be among the Kipsigis and some people had been rendered landless. This was because of population increase, individualisation and privatisation of enclosed land, increased crop cultivation, improved methods of animal husbandry and of course, massive alienation and appropriation by the colonial administration in favour of the white settlers.

7.4.2. African Agricultural Production

The continued and rapid enclosure of land and the attendant farm improvements led to

the development of small holder farming in the Kipsigisland during the period. By 1955, however, there was too much reliance on maize and the dairy industry in which there was a tremendous potential that was still not adequately developed and there was urgent need for improved livestock to profit from the enclosure and improved pastures on the land. The issue of soil conservation had largely been resolved, good arable farming - such as crop rotation, seed selection, manuring - was being widely practised, individual tenure and hedging was already established over most of the country and land fragmentation had not yet occurred and it was hoped it would not cause split-up into uneconomic patches. It was on this foundation of enclosed, fenced, paddocked, individualised and improved smallholder farms that further developments in the livestock industry and crop production, especially cash crops, such as tea, coffee and pyrethrum, were based. The agricultural policy of the district could, according to Barwell, the agricultural officer, be described in the following words:

(a) Individual ownership of every last inch of the land, (b) Enclosure of all land with stock-proof hedges or fences, (c) The planning of each individual farm or holding in a simple and practical manner, (d) The building up of a sound livestock policy supported by good animal husbandry, (e) Introduction of cash crops grown at a high standard, (f) The improvement of cultural methods of all crops new and old". (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.40)

By 1959 the Kipsigis had almost completed phase I of this policy which was the marking and enclosure of holdings and henceforth all efforts were being directed towards phase II which was efficient management and increased production within the holdings so as to derive profits from the development done (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p.23).

Maize by 1955 still remained a major crop though its production greatly fluctuated and its fortunes started dwindling largely due to the introduction of more profitable cash crops. Table 7.5 shows that maize production in 1955 had greatly recovered when compared to the

1954 figure of about 126,222 bags as compared to 80,266 bags. This recovery was short-lived as 1956 saw definite moves away from over-reliance upon the monoculture of maize in the district. The figure dropped to approximately 63,180 bags in 1956 and a semi-drought during the third quarter of 1957 further reduced the production figure to an all-low 19,402 bags. Though the drought persisted in 1958 a slight recovery was made in the year. The drought conditions of 1957 and 1958 showed the vulnerability of monoculture in maize as the grain had to be imported into the district. For instance, 17,375 bags were imported in 1958 alone (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.31). By 1959 and 1960 other lucrative crops had entered the district, making maize production stagnate at about 60,000 bags level. Though an excellent crop was obtained in 1959, the Agricultural officer noted that "prosperity can never be achieved until the Kipsigis are prepared to work harder to increase the scope of their production and to spread their activities over a more varied range of crops" (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p.3). This could appear to suggest that it was apparent that the time for crop diversification and mixed farming had dawned in the Kipsigisland.

Other crops grown by the Kipsigis included beans, potatoes, wheat, *wimbi*, wattle, onions, cassava, groundnuts, sisal, cotton and castor seed. Table 7.5 shows the annual production figures for some of these crops during the period. Notable improvements included the production of beans, wheat, cotton, and castor seed. Potatoes, *wimbi*, wattle and onions showed a remarkable decrease in production during the same period. But this seems to have been largely dependent on the profitability and marketability of each crop. For example, 1955 devoted an increased acreage to potatoes at the expense of wheat due to the profitability and easy marketability of potatoes (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.17). The decrease in wheat production

Table 7.5 Crop Production in African Areas, 1955 - 1960

| | | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Maize | Qty (bags) | 126,222 | 63,180 | 19,402 | 37,283 | 68,222 | 60,985 |
| | @ | 22/95 | 26/20 | 28/03 | 26/65 | 22.35 | 36.57 |
| | Value (Shs) | 3,275,460 | 1,655,316 | 543,838 | 993,591 | 1,524,800 | 11,534 |
| Beans | Qty (bags) | 118 | 29 | 37 | 1,630 | 2,191 | 2,750 |
| | @ | 34/35 | 40/35 | 40/10 | 41/45 | 37/84 | 37/00 |
| | Value (Shs) | 4,053/30 | 1,170/05 | 1,483/70 | 67,563/50 | 82,920/00 | 101,740 |
| Potatoes | Qty (bags) | 15,917 | 6,984 | 5,907 | 1,351 | 8,542 | 1,246 tn |
| | @ | 18/00 | 30/00 | 32/00 | 25/00 | 17/88 | 256/82 |
| | Value (Shs) | 286,508 | 209,520 | 189,024 | 33,775/00 | 152,760 | 320,000 |
| Wheat | Qty (bags) | 117 | 121 | 40 | 38 | 69 | 66 |
| | @ | 40.55 | 42/85 | 43/26 | 43/26 | 42/60 | 41/81 |
| | Value (Shs) | 4,744/35 | 5,184/85 | 1,730/40 | 1,643/88 | 2,940/00 | 2,760 |
| Wimbi | Qty (bags) | 1,031 | 12 | n.a. | 436 | 112 | - |
| | @ | 32/00 | 30/50 | n.a. | 30/50 | 25/53 | - |
| | Value (Shs) | 32,992/00 | 366/00 | n.a. | 13,298/00 | 2,860/00 | - |
| Wattle | Qty (bags) | 450 | 92 | 103 | 56 | 45 | 28 |
| | @ | 225/51 | 226/92 | 133/00 | 155/00 | 128/00 | 128/57 |
| | Value (Shs) | 101,929 | 20,876/64 | 13,699 | 8,680/00 | 5,760/00 | 3,600 |
| Onions | Qty (bags) | 228 | 1,453 | 957 | 5 | - | 5 tons |
| | @ | 60/00 | 58/50 | 41/00 | 42/00 | - | 1792/00 |
| | Value (Shs) | 137,280 | 85,000/50 | 39,237 | 210.00 | - | 8,960/00 |
| Tea leaves | Qty (bags) | - | - | - | - | 6,0709 | 31,581 |
| | @ | - | - | - | - | =/44 | 2/24 |
| | Value (Shs) | - | - | - | - | 27,000/00 | 71,000 |
| Coffee buni | Qty (tons) | - | - | - | 0.5 | 5 | 6 |
| | @ | - | - | - | 2,160/00 | 2,000/00 | 1,600/00 |
| | Value (Shs) | - | - | - | 1,080/00 | 10,000/00 | 9,600/00 |
| Cotton | Qty (bags) | - | - | - | - | 133 | 133 |
| | @ | - | - | - | - | =/45 | =/45 |
| | Value (Shs) | - | - | - | - | 60 | 60/00 |
| Caster seed | Qty (bags) | - | - | - | 1 | 8 | 11 |
| | @ | - | - | - | 40/00 | 47/50 | 42/15 |
| | Value (Shs) | - | - | - | 40/00 | 360/00 | 463/65 |

Source: DC/KER/28-33/Various Years.

was due to the difficulty with manual harvesting. Mechanisation proved impossible due to varied times of planting and thus ripening - green crops could be seen side by side with a ripe crop (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.25). But owing to the demand for beans by tea estates labourers greater

acres were planted and with the fall in the price of maize in 1958, farmers started to interplant beans with maize (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.29). Similarly wattle production decreased due to the fall in prices and a shift in policy to use the crop for fuel and building only.

By 1958 the wattle barks factory at Sotik remained silent and unoccupied and this was a grim reminder of the instability of prices and demand for agricultural produce. By 1960 the quantity of bark marketed was negligible due to low prices, though the crop was important for poles, fuel and charcoal (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.24). Groundnuts were introduced mainly in the lower Belgut area where the crop did well, producing up to about 16 bags of shelled nuts per acre (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.25). Sisal was grown in the lower areas of Belgut in the form of hedges with the subsidiary object of using it as a minor cash crop. During 1959 a considerable amount was harvested and sold to Muhoroni Millers at a price of approximately 14 cents for a bundle of 25 leaves (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p. 24). And lastly cotton was tried for the first time in 1959 on two *shambas* in the lower Belgut and Kabosson area on the Maasai border. The lower Belgut acreage increased to about 14 acres in 1960 while 50 new growers were issued with seeds in the Kabosson area in the same year (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.25).

Perhaps more notable during the period was the introduction of major cash crops, such as tea, coffee and pyrethrum in the African Reserve. After some years of negotiations and agitation, the first tea seed was planted in African Areas in June 1955. The first nurseries were situated at Kimulot settlement scheme. But the issuance of lucrative cash crops, such as tea and coffee was confined to the rich peasants who were able to effect necessary cultural conditions for the production of such crops. The Agricultural officer noted that "the general policy in [the] Kipsigisland is to lead and encourage the comparatively small number of good farmers by loans, cash crops, improved livestock, flattery and all means" (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p. 18). Thus the

introduction of cash crops further amplified the social differentiation and stratification among the Kipsigis.

The first tea was planted in April 1957 in individual *shambas* and not as block-plantings. A total of about 106 Kipsigis smallholders on the Kimulot settlement scheme planted some 35.5 acres of tea at one-third of an acre per landholder. The large European tea growing companies agreed to process the Kipsigis grown leaf until African owned factories became established (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.1). By 1958 a tea pilot scheme was started at Cheborge and Kabianga. The first pluckings took place in 1959 from the Kimulot scheme and a total of 60,709 lbs of tea leaves worth roughly Shs. 27,000/= were produced. As the farmers started to get financial return from their tea, interest in the crop was greatly aroused and increased the demand for it (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p. 1). In 1959, about 105 acres were planted bringing the total acreage to roughly 171 with plantings now extended to Koiwa and Belgut. Table 7.6 overleaf gives useful statistics concerning tea production in 1960. By independence this crop appears to have rivalled cattle as the dominant agricultural interest of the Kipsigis and "the clamour to plant from all over the district is now deafening" (DC/KER/1/35/1962, p.24).

By 1961 about 280 acres were planted with the crop, 350 more acres were planted in 1962 and 410 acres in 1963, bringing the total acreage to 1,320 by 1963 (DC/KER/1/35/1962, p.24). The crop had a great future in the district. A large coffee nursery was started at Roret in Bureti for the production of seedlings in 1955 and seeds were sown again in 1956. On the same year about 51 farmers in the Bureti Division took coffee seedlings from the Roret nursery. This crop was confined to areas below the 5,800-foot contour. The adoption of coffee was not fast enough, owing to the considerable amount of work which it entailed in the preparation of pits and the land. At the end of 1957, there were 15 acres of coffee

grown in the African areas and the first crop was picked in 1958. Interest in this crop grew steadily in relatively suitable areas and by 1958 three times the acreage of 1957 was planted out and the capacity of the nurseries appears to have doubled in size. In the same year the first Kipsigis coffee co-operative society was formed (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.20). Nevertheless, as it can be seen from Table 7.6, coffee production was relatively of minor importance in comparison to tea which was considered to be the most satisfactory cash crop of the district. Besides, the area suitable for coffee production was limited in size when

Table 7.6 Statistics of Crops in African Areas 1959-1960

| | Arabic coffee | | Tea | | Pyrethrum | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------|
| | 1959 | 1960 | 1959 | 1960 | 1959 | 1960 |
| Total acreage | 74 | 95.5 | 167 | 271 | | 4.0 |
| Acreage in bearing | 14 | 22 | 30 | 73 | - | 4.0 |
| Production | 5 tons | 6 tons | 60,709 lbs* | 31,581 lbs★ | - | - |
| Value to growers | £300 | £480 | £1,350 | £3,550 | - | - |
| Number of growers | 262 | 305 | 245 | 480 | - | -15 |
| Number of nurseries | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Number of seedlings in nurseries | 60,000 | 50,000 | 80,000 | 1,870,000 | - | - |
| Number of factories | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Number of co-ops | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - |

Key: * Tea leaves ★Made tea

Source: DC/KER/1/32-34/1959-1960.

compared with that of tea. Thus the whole of the crop was being marketed as *buni* since the size of the crop could not justify the construction of a pulping factory. Details of the production for 1959 and 1960 are contained in Table 7.5 seen earlier. With a cold and wet year in 1960 the unsuitability of the Roret area for coffee growing became more pronounced and as a result it was

envisaged that the crop would be replaced with tea. By independence, therefore, there was little interest in the crop in the whole district.

Pyrethrum was one lucrative crop targeted for "those who [were] best able to profit from it... meaning progressive farmers" (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p. 18). The crop was grown extensively in the adjoining European areas of Lumbwa and Sotik before the war. Since the war and the introduction of dairy farming, less pyrethrum was grown, but very many of the Kipsigis were familiar with the crops. By 1955 the actual acreage in the Kipsigisland was about 10 acres and it seemed that the Kipsigis were very slow in cultivating the crop because of the deterrent amount of work which it entailed in the preparation of land. Nevertheless the crop had a potential of playing a useful part in the economy of the district. But owing to the reluctance of the Kipsigis to adopt the crop in large numbers, Dr. Krall, the Agricultural officer advised that the growing of this crop be dropped in 1957 (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.20). By 1960, as shown in Table 7.6, only about 4 acres of land were devoted to the crop in the Kipsigisland with only 15 growers. Thus pyrethrum was not a favourable crop before independence on account of its laborious work and owing to the availability of better alternatives - tea and animal husbandry.

Hand in hand with the increased and expanded agricultural production was the improvement in farming methods, enhanced soil conservation and the availability of loans for farmers. Improved farming methods included the whole range of enclosure of land, fencing with hedge materials, individualising land tenure, consolidating holdings, use of manure, crop rotation, farm planning and layouts, paddocking, increasing yields per acre, improvement in all crop culture, such as weeding, spacing and land preparation, crop diversification, homestead water supply, education on a wide variety of agricultural practices, and so on. From such improvements in farming methods it is evident that the accompanying requirements in

agricultural production of any crop were enormous and as such only a few capable farmers managed in the initial stages to produce the desired results. Using farm layouts as a criterion, the colonial authorities distinguished what they called "better farmers" in the Kipsigisland. Table 7.7 below illustrates the number of the Kipsigis entering the category of "better farmers" in 1957 and 1958 respectively. Bureti comes out clearly as the division with the highest number of better farmers followed by Sotik and Belgut in that order. Regional differentiation within the Kipsigisland was thus evident with Bureti emerging as the most advanced region. On the other hand Belgut posted the highest increase of better farmers between 1957 and 1958 an indication of an increased awareness in improving farming methods.

Table 7.7 Number of Better Farmers in the Kipsigisland in 1957 and 1958

| | 1957 | 1958 |
|---------|------|------|
| Belgut | 62 | 178 |
| Bureti | 772 | 801 |
| Sotik | 165 | 180 |
| Kimulot | 10 | 20 |
| Itambe | 2 | 5 |
| Total | 1011 | 1184 |

Source: DC/Ker/1/30-32/1957-1958

Table 7.7 above shows that only a small fraction of farmers in the entire Kipsigisland were better or progressive farmers, about 1011 in 1957 and 1,184 in 1958. This would suggest that only a few wealthy farmers were capable of adopting new crops and effecting the required cultural conditions. Thus the improvement of agriculture seems to have been the preserve of a few rich farmers who continued amassing wealth through the newly offered opportunities, such as improvement of farming methods and introduction of cash crops. The stratification and

differentiation of the population was thus inherent in and enhanced by the introduction of new crops and the accompanying farming methods (Amin, 1981:75; Cohen, 1991:85). Besides, the few progressive and better farmers easily qualified for loans, thus enhancing their position as rich and better farmers. Since the newly introduced cash crops attracted more loans than the traditional crops like maize, there started being a noticeable change from purely subsistence farming with the sale of surplus subsistence crops to the growing of cash crops as such, with the production of subsistence crops relegated to the background (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.26).

A Joint board for loans and water supplies was instituted in 1956 with a capital of about £40,000 and was intended for individuals or groups who wished to install power pumps, rams, boreholes, corrugated iron roofs and water tanks (DC/KER/1/29/1956, p.18). Despite an increase in interest rates in 1957 the demand for loans was greater than the capital available from all sources. During the year about 11 loans from ALDEV totalling roughly Shs. 18,000/= and 32 loans from the ADC totalling to Shs. 40,000/= were given out (DC/KER/1/29/1957, p. 14). In 1958, ADC gave 71 loans totalling Shs. 95,400/= ALDEV gave 59 loans totalling to Shs. 79,000/= and the Joint Water Board gave 11 loans totalling to Shs. 19,000/= (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.19).

The total roof catchment in the district was 459 in 1957 while total roof catchment with water tanks was 49 (*Ibid* p. 22). Since fewer people received loans - 43 in 1956 and 141 in 1957 - then it is logical to argue that some progressive farmers built corrugated iron roofed houses and water tanks without resorting to loans. The Agricultural officer reported in 1955 that for every loan given out for corrugated iron roofs and water tanks 2 or 3 more were installed by private enterprise (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.18). Those aspiring to join the class of 'better farmers' are the ones who more often sought for such loans, but established rich farmers were able to do many

improvements without assistance. By 1958 only 40 farmers benefited from such loans - 13 in Belgut, 12 in Bureti and 15 in Bomet division. The fact that fewer farmers from the advanced Bureti division received such loans attests to the forgone argument. Even fewer loans were issued in 1959, 10 with a total amount of Shs. 13,400/= and in 1960, 65 loans varying between Shs. 600/= and Shs. 2,000/= were issued (DC/KER/33/1960, p. 27).

Accompanying the agricultural developments during this period was the setting up of settlement schemes of which there were three - Kimulot settlement scheme, Itambe settlement scheme, and Chapalungu settlement scheme. These schemes were established so that they could provide a good example to the rest of the Kipsigis on improved methods of cultivation. In the words of the Agricultural officer "an important way of spreading the gospel - of improved farming methods - is by making Settlement Areas - Kimulot and Itambe - model areas for all to see and follow" (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.18). Kimulot settlement scheme for example had about 216 20-acre plots allocated in 1955-1956 by ALDEV. The objective was to encourage mixed farming - food and cash crops and livestock industry - so that the economy could be as broad-based as possible. As a result tea was first planted here and improvement of plots and farming methods was a prerequisite for one to remain a settler. Those showing negligible progress were expelled - 8 in 1955, 18 in 1956, 9 in 1957 and 5 in 1958. Up breeding of animals using sahiwal bulls from Kabianga Livestock Breeding Centre and later the adoption of grade cattle were done in this settlement scheme on a pioneer basis, and for demonstration purposes. This settlement scheme became a model for all aspects of mixed farming while Itambe settlement scheme had a pastoral bias. Chepalungu Betterment scheme aimed at showing how the Chepalungu area could profitably be opened up through dam construction, forest clearing and provision of roads

Table 7.8 Kimulot Settlement Scheme, 1957-1958

| | 1957 | 1958 |
|---|------|------|
| Total number of 20-acre farms | 223 | 219 |
| Total number of 10-acre farms | 22 | 32 |
| Non resident owners | 21 | 21 |
| Working off farm daily | 39 | 44 |
| With stock proof perimeter | 64 | 160 |
| With internal hedges planted | 85 | 130 |
| Number of tea planters | 106 | 125 |
| Number of loans issued | 52 | 52 |
| Spray pumps in use | 48 | 64 |
| Tin roof catchments | 11 | 11 |
| Wells and boreholes | 7 | 26 |
| True rotation grazing | 12 | 37 |
| Sahiwal bulls | 1 | 1 |
| Sahiwal heifers | - | 3 |
| Total cattle on scheme | 2683 | 1989 |
| Total sheep and goats | 2739 | 2625 |
| Evicted during the year | 5 | 3 |
| Left of own accord | 4 | 2 |
| Total evicted since scheme started | 8 | 11 |
| Total left of their own accord since scheme started | 27 | 29 |

Source: DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.24

(DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.20). Table 7.8 above gives information on Kimulot settlement scheme showing the various aspects of agricultural development being stressed with vigour.

Farm mechanisation had also greatly advanced in the Kipsigisland and in 1955 the Agricultural Officer reported that "most of the tractor units continue to flourish, rates for service have risen during the year from about Shs. 40/= to Shs. 55/= per acre ... 10 more tractors were purchased by the Kipsigis this year" (DC/KER/1/28.1955, p.14). But many of these tractor companies were beset with a number of problems, such as lack of business ability, no machine maintenance, dishonest employees, lack of interest in trying to satisfy the customer and poor

standard of work (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p. 19). Faulty maintenance and neglect continued to plague these tractor companies and some went out of business. Lemoosa (1996:31) has however shown that such faulty maintenance may have resulted from acts of sabotage on the part of the Indian mechanics, probably with a clear view of crippling the African enterprises. No wonder therefore when in 1959 it was reported that most of the companies formed previously to buy tractors were bankrupt. "Some bigger African farmers are surviving and ploughing by contract and Asian ploughing contractors have now started to operate" (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p. 25). Apparently only the rich farmers were strong enough to withstand Asian acts of sabotage in order to dominate the ploughing sector. The poor Kipsigis peasants continued to suffer further as a result of exploitation from such greedy Asian ploughing contractors after their companies collapsed.

7.4.3. Settler Agricultural Production

In the post-Swynnerton Plan development in European Settled Areas was most rapid in the plantation areas of Kericho, the Nandi Hills and North Sotik. Elsewhere progress with mixed farming was made, though the settlers were equally handicapped by lack of sufficient capital. By 1956 the extent of agricultural loan indebtedness had increased markedly. In the Northern Settled Area the farmers exerted pressure upon the Government to agree to what almost amounted to an unrestricted return of the Kikuyu to employment. The Kikuyu labour had been restricted in these areas since the advent of Emergency in 1952. Much of this Kikuyu labour went to plantation interests in the Nandi Hills area.

The years 1958 and 1959 were particularly hard ones for mixed farmers due to the

Table 7.9 Crop Statistics in European Areas, 1959-1960

| CROP | YEAR | ACRE-AGE | AVERAGE BEARING | NO. OF GROWERS | PRODUCTION (TONS) | ESTIMATED VALUE (\$) | NUMBER OF FACTORIES |
|---------------|------|----------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| COFFEE | 1959 | 6,00 | 5,800 | 100 | 468* | 187,000 | 99 |
| | 1960 | 5,883 | 5,800 | 110 | 883 | 301,986 | 109 |
| TEA | 1959 | 32,500 | 27,100 | 58 | 11,550 | 4,800,000 | 30 |
| | 1960 | 33,663 | 30,000 | 61 | 12,859 | 5,343,750 | 30 |
| PYRETHRUM | 1959 | 300 | 300 | 15 | 56 | 9,757 | - |
| | 1960 | 236 | 236 | 16 | 765 | 22,277 | - |
| SUGARCANE | 1959 | 1,500 | 800 | 8 | 60 JAGGERY | 1,800 | 1 JAGGERY |
| | 1960 | 2,70 | 1,600 | 12 | - | - | 4 JAGGERY |
| PASION FRUIT | 1959 | 33 | 12 | 7 | 1,571 GALLONS | 631 | 1 |
| | 1960 | 44 | 33 | - | 4040 | 1,626 | 1 |
| SISAL | 1959 | 10,500 | - | 5 | 2,500 | 175,000 | 3 |
| | 1960 | 9,800 | - | - | 4,500 | 340,000 | 3 |
| MAIZE | 1959 | 4,121 | 4,121 | - | 2,375 | 37,250 | - |
| | 1960 | 3,380 | 3,380 | - | 8,275 | 13,240 | - |
| WHEAT | 1959 | 325 | 325 | - | 105 | 2,920 | - |
| | 1960 | 361 | 361 | - | 2,865 | 7,162.10 | - |
| BARLEY | 1959 | 334 | 334 | - | 9 | 130 | - |
| | 1960 | 118 | 118 | - | - | - | - |
| OATS | 1959 | 219 | 219 | - | 27 | 400 | - |
| | 1960 | 231 | 231 | - | - | - | - |
| SUNFLOWER | 1959 | 80 | 80 | - | 5 | 120 | - |
| | 1960 | 39 | 39 | - | 202 | 212.2 | - |
| ESSENTIAL OIL | 1959 | 150 | 150 | 4 | 1,478 IBS | 8,460 | 1 DISTILLERY |
| | 1960 | 175 | 120 | 5 | 1,500 IBS | 12,750 | 1 DISTILLERY |
| CITRUS | 1959 | 100 | 45 | 12 | 50 | 1,850 | 1 PACKING PLANT |
| | 1960 | - | 37 | 10 | 4054 | 2,304 | 1 PACKING PLANT |
| WATTLE | 1959 | 3,423 | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| | 1960 | 3,413 | 500 | 2 | 0 | 0 | - |

Key: * includes Kaimosi

Source: DC/KER/1/32-33/1959-1960

continuing fall in prices of most dairy products and the spectre of foot and mouth and lumpy skin diseases. The abolition of transport subsidy was even a greater upset for the Sotik farmers. Meanwhile the tea plantations continued expanding both in acreage and labour. The formation in 1959 of the Tea Plantation Workers Union (TPWU) heralded a new age in relations between the workers and the management of the plantation. By 1960 the union had a total membership of nearly 20,000 throughout the growing area of the district and had carried out one successful strike to increase the wages of its labour force.

Table 7.9 above shows a graphic picture of the European agricultural activities in the Kipsigisland. In spite of the wide range of agricultural produce few crops were grown in big acreages exceeding 3,000 except for wattle, maize, coffee and tea as the most important cash crop. Notable increases in acreage over the period were tea, passion fruits and wheat. Sugar cane was emerging as an important crop and almost doubled its acreage during the period and the number of jaggery factories increased to about 4 from one. Maize production showed a marked decrease in acreage and value. By independence therefore, few European agricultural activities did constitute a significant proportion of the district economy mainly tea. The African smallholder farming was emerging as an important and significant economic activity of the district.

7.4.4 Animal Husbandry

In the early part of the period the district livestock policy was the improvement of the indigenous Zebu cattle by the use of sahiwal strains and to obtain higher standards of animal management rather than to allow the importation of exotic European cattle. This was accompanied by the continuing enclosure and privatisation of land, paddocking, grassland

improvement, homestead water supplies, disease control through spraying, use of napier grass and other supplementary silage and a host of other requirements. By 1955 loans were only issued to a few successful farmers who had met the following conditions - (a) farm fully hedged and stock proof (b) 1/2 acre of napier grass planted as stock feed, (c) trees planted for fuel and shade, and (d) rotational grazing practised among others (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.18). Several improved bulls - sahiwal crosses - were issued to better farmers and this remained the general policy up to independence. The prohibition on the importation of grade breeds proved unpopular, especially to the wealthy progressive farmers, ADC councillors and certain "disgruntled" Politicians (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.1). Nevertheless, about 76 heads of improved livestock were sold to the Kipsigis in 1957 and by 1958 sahiwal bull camps were built all over the Reserve in addition to the sale of sahiwal blood by artificial insemination at Itambe settlement scheme started in 1956 and Kimulot settlement scheme started in 1957. In the teeth of the opposition to the sahiwal policy, about 144 heads of sahiwal livestock were sold to the Kipsigis, 166 insemination were carried out at Itambe and eight new bull camps were started alongside those already existing at Kapkatet and Kimulot (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.25). Kabianga livestock improvement centre continued to produce more sahiwal cattle besides being an education centre to those who visited it.

By 1959 however unrelenting opposition to the sahiwal policy and lack of support from the local people on bull camps dawned on the local authorities the realisation that it was no longer possible to prevent the Kipsigis from being allowed to try exotic European cattle. A scheme for the gradual introduction of European livestock to selected people in suitable areas was mooted and implemented in 1960 when some 300 farmers bought grade cattle, the favourite being Aryshire. Equally there was great demand for AI service for grade cattle and two were

started at Kabianga and Kimulot. Though the local authorities insisted that the long-term livestock policy in the district was sahiwal up breeding, by independence, the demand for grade cattle and AI services was overwhelming. Nevertheless, like all other agricultural innovations, only the rich and progressive farmers were able to adopt grade cattle and Cheborge and Koiwa areas distinguished themselves as the most advanced in the adoption of grade cattle.

Grass improvement was imperative in livestock development. The policy of eliminating couch grass by raising fertility with close paddocking and moveable night paddocks was encouraged. Napier grass and the use of other supplementary fodder crops were equally advocated. Given the dominance and over-reliance on maize monoculture, the need to control soil erosion gave need for the plots to revert into grasslands. Looking at the improved grassland, the agricultural officer remarked that "grass was becoming an important cash crop of the district" (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p. 23). Rotational grazing and the regular movement of the night *boma* became common place. The confinement of animals in paddocks helped in disease control as they could not get or spread diseases at the communal watering points. As a result homestead water supplies were increased through the building of corrugated iron roofs and water tanks.

Meanwhile control of the usual diseases like rinderpest, anthrax, pleuro-pneumonia and East Coast fever (ECF) continued unabated. In 1955, about 43,406 inoculations were done against rinderpest and 150 Kipsigis were prosecuted and fined for failing to bring in their cattle for inoculation (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.22). In the same year about 17,410 doses of dimidium bromide were sold in the Reserve as a cure for trypanosomiasis. In 1956 the annual rinderpest campaign resulted in 50,000 inoculations being carried out and the figure for 1957 being at 41,382. Perhaps the most interesting was the phenomenal increase in pump spraying amongst the Kipsigis. The use of cattle spray pumps instead of communal dips not only prevented

diseases by itself but also enabled animals not to catch or spread diseases in the communal dips. The advent of a new and cheap pump in 1955 led to high increase in spraying and some small holders in the Cheborge area expressed the wish that spraying in their area be made compulsory (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.21). Between 1500 and 2,000 spray pumps were sold during the year as against 800 in 1954 (*Ibid*, p. 22). Good progress was made in tick control and by 1959 an estimated 5,000 stockowners were spraying their cattle regularly (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p. 29).

Livestock rustling along the borders was still prevalent though even internal raids had started. Most of the animals raided internally were exchanged or sold to the neighbouring communities. An agreed list of debts drawn up for the Masaai border revealed that the Kipsigis owed the Maasai about Shs. 50, 166/25 whereas the Maasai owed the Kipsigis only Shs. 15,499/20 (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.3) in form of compensations. In spite of border committees and payment of compensation for raids and counter-raids, the spectre of cattle rustling along the Kipsigis-Kisii and Maasai-Luo borders was far from over by 1963. The *laibons*, long deported to Gwasssi though a few stayed in Kericho Township, continued maintaining contacts with and exerting influence on the Kipsigis community, especially in time of crisis. For example, *laibons* were suspected of fomenting discontent in the Songhor area when the squatters were removed in March 1956 (*Ibid*, p.9). And some *laibons* still had considerable influence on the more "unsophisticated Kipsigis", their tactics being to offer inducements like rain, cure from illness, return of land from the European, a successful stock raid and the like in return for money. Meanwhile pressure to have the *laibons* returned from Gwasssi was mounting by independence.

Given the current livestock developments taking place, it was the feeling of the Veterinary officer that in general the Kipsigis reserve was understocked, although local areas might have been overstocked. If bushes were cleared on all holdings and more intensive farming

methods practised, including the use of more fodder crops and silage, thousands more acres would profitably be reclaimed. The eventual elimination of squatter livestock in 1958 from the Fort Ternan, Koru, Muhoroni, Lumbwa, Miwani and Songhor areas had little impact on the livestock density in the Reserve since most of that livestock belonged to the Nandi (DC/KER/1/29/1956, p.3). Only in a few areas, like on the Itambe settlement scheme and lower Bomet along the Maasai border had overstocking started emerging by 1960. A start was made on destocking propaganda in such areas by 1961.

Perhaps the trade in animals and animal products countered the over-reliance of maize monoculture prevalent in the previous periods. Table 7.10 overleaf shows the cattle sales passing through the three main sale yards, Kileges, Roret and Kapsimotwa while Table 7.11 shows the value of animals and animals products exported from the district. Cattle sales constituted a major export of the district and before the 1958 trade recessions, were earning the district up to about £204, 382. Hides and skins recorded remarkable increase topping up to £44,590 and £12,451 respectively. Some of the Kipsigis were becoming good poultry keepers and were using well-bred day-old chicks (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.20). By 1957 the poultry industry was expanding and involved 26 licensed poultry exporters. On the other hand sheep and goat rearing was diminishing with the continuous clearing of the forests and bushlands. The need to tether them within paddocks became cumbersome and most of them were sold as a result. The opening of the Chepalungu area through the clearance of its forest seems to have led to an immense drop in the production of honey and wax. The honey and wax refinery at Gorgor had problems marketing its honey by 1957 and was closed down in the following year. Bush clearing and enclosures gradually killed apiculture on the traditional model (*Ibid*).

Table 7.10. Cattle Sales at Kileges, Roret and Kapsimotwa Sale Yards

| | 1954 | 1955 | 1956 |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total sold | 6,307 | 7675 | 6613 |
| Highest price paid | 455/00 | 555/00 | 550/00 |
| Lowest price paid | 10/00 | 15/00 | 10/00 |
| Average price paid | 184/29 | 262/40 | 228/31 |
| Total animals offered | 7,938 | 10,125 | 7465 |
| Total animals withdrawn | 1,631 | 2,450 | 852 |
| Total cash passing through sale yards (in Shs.) | 649,634/00 | 1,377,910/00 | 1,028,050/00 |

Source: DC/KER/1/27-29/1954-1955

Table 7.11 Value of Animals and Animal Products, 1956-1960 (In £)

| | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Sale of cattle | 131,050 | 182,589 | 204,382 | 138,240 | 178,360 |
| Hides | 6,188 | 9,552 | 13,319 | 27,973 | 44,590 |
| Eggs | 4,580 | 3,547 | 2,735 | 2,620 | 1,053 |
| Sheep and Goats | 1,704 | 2,450 | 1,626 | Not known | Not known |
| Honey | 637 | 430 | 360 | 110 | - |
| Poultry | 531 | 879 | 1,035 | 531 | 2,897 |
| Skins | 220 | 2,404 | 3,058 | 4,732 | 12,451 |
| Cream | - | - | - | 2,750 | 5,000 |

Source: DC/KER/1/28-33/1956-1960

7.4.5 Labour

More and more Kipsigis were enlisted into the security forces or as farm guards during the emergency period. The KAR, Police and Prisons were the favoured employers. The DC remarked: "It is remarkable that although over 15,000 - 50% of the youth - are already out on this work it is always possible to get more than [enough labour] when recruiting parties come around" (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.9). Such observation from the DC points out the magnanimity of the Kipsigis labour employed for emergency work, thus

impacting negatively on the collection of poll tax within the district. By 1956 not less than 15,000 Kipsigis youth were engaged in the forces and the effect on development locally and in tax and rate collection was considerable. The Settled Areas of the district still remained under the Emergency Regulations and hitherto strict restrictions were imposed on the Kikuyu labour in these areas. But the Emergency Regulations were relaxed in 1957 and the Kikuyu labour was allowed to return to the Settled Areas, albeit, under strict controls. But owing to the unsatisfactory quality of labour and the scarcity of recruits in the Settled Areas other than the Kericho Tea Estates, the demand for the Kikuyu labour became more vociferous and insistent. Besides, the Emergency Regulations, the settlers argued, would assist them to control their employees more closely and exploit them by getting more work out of their labour. (DC/KER/1/37/1958, p.14). The demand was mainly from the Nandi Hills where tea estates owned large acreages and were not near any ready labour supply. Lumbwa, Fort Ternan, Koru and Songhor areas equally demanded the Kikuyu labour, but Sotik and Kericho remained adamant in their decision not to re-employ the Kikuyu. The Kikuyu emigration into the districts' Settled Areas continued and by 1959 it was noted that there were more Kikuyu labourers in the settled Area than there were before the emergency (DC/KER/1/32/1959, p.17). The end of the Emergency Regulations in early 1960 was followed by a fairly large-scale influx of the Kikuyu, Embu, and the Meru (KEM) into the Settled Area of the district, especially the Nandi Hills and Lumbwa. The labour scenario during the period was mass exodus of the Kipsigis youth for Emergency work and mass immigration of the KEM into the Settled Areas as squatter labour. As a result the spectre of absentee landlord was evident in the Kipsigisland. In the tea plantation the labour force had by 1955 increased to a total of 27,846 with 27,786 being men and 60 women. The Luo headed the list with about 10,000, followed by the Gusii 8,200, the Kipsigis

4,200, the Watende 1,100, the Maragoli 920, the Rwanda 789, the Wanyore 720, and the Suba, the Tiriki, the Tumbi, the Kakamega, the Tanganyika "tribes", the Maasai and the Nyangori having under 100 (DC/KER/1/28/1955, p.33). African Tea Holdings Limited (Brooke Bond) were the biggest employer with 11,000, AHP company 6,700, other Kericho Estates 2,900, the Nandi Tea estates 3,200, and Sotik estates 3,400 (*Ibid*). By 1956 the total number of labour force in the tea plantations had exceeded 30,000 and 35,000 in 1957 (DC/KER/1/30/1957, p.34).

In 1958 the tea companies introduced consolidated wages to all classes of African employees. This meant that food rations were eliminated and cash was given in lieu and the African employees had to buy their own *posho*. Less maize than ever was reaching the hands of the Maize Marketing Board as a direct result of the introduction of consolidated wages on the tea estates. But owing to this reason, and many other grievances, a labour union was formed in the tea plantation estates in 1958 to articulate the needs and welfare of the labourers. The activities of this union, the Tea Plantation Workers Union (TPWU) caused a certain amount of anxiety in the tea industry and by the end of 1959 it had not been recognised by the KTGA. By 1960, however, the TPWU had been well established with a membership exceeding 20,000. It managed to stage a two-week strike throughout the Kericho District tea industry on September 13. The strike was virtually 100% successful in Kericho, the Nandi Hills and North Sotik and tea workers in Limuru and Kaimosi came out in sympathy (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.2) and the workers managed to get a wage increase. The union thus heralded a new chapter in the relationship between the workers and settlers in reducing friction and exploitation of the former by the latter. Towards the end of the year the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) started to operate in the mixed farming areas of the district largely covering the squatter labour.

This labour had lost, by 1958, the right of keeping cattle in their places of work in spite of the two strikes staged at Muhoroni. Hence the formation of a union among the squatter labour in the district centred on the removal of their livestock from the Settled Areas.

In the last decade of colonial rule some major trends which were previously not significant were taking place in the districts labour history - the trends to put them in Ivanov's (1979; 145) words - "the destruction of migrant labour system and the formation of a hard-core native proletariat". Due to a number of factors, the migrant labour system was gradually superseded and a rural proletariat formed. First, there was the realisation that the reserves had to produce wealth for their bursting population (Leys, 1975). Secondly, the Swynnerton Plan opened up the way for expanded commodity production. Thirdly, employment in the civil service provided wide openings for the educated people in addition to those employed in the KAR, police, prisons and as farm guards. Lastly, the enclosure and privatisation of land, started during World War II and at its height in the 1950s, not only gave varied opportunities for wealth accumulation but also pauperised some peasants and rendered others completely landless. All these factors led to the differentiation of the peasantry into rich and "poor" categories (Leitner, 1976; Swainson, 1976; Bernstein, 1977; Njonjo, 1981).

The rich peasants owned enough land, engaged in commercial agriculture and probably had salaried jobs in the civil service. They had the capital or could easily secure loans to adopt modern methods of farming and in the words of Ivanov (1979:145) they were able to employ the poor and landless peasants as wage-workers. The emergence of a rural capitalist class contributed to the destruction of migrant labour as the poor peasants were regularly engaged in wage labour in the farms of the local rich peasants. Once again the Bureti area emerged as the nucleus of a rural class of poor peasants working for wages in the farms of the rich. Bureti, by

independence, was attracting the labour of poor peasants elsewhere, for example in lower Belgut, into its farms. Studies of this process at the Kenya level are abundant - Fearn (1961), Swainson (1976), Leys (1977) and Kaplinsky (1980) and what we have done in the work is to show that the Kipsigisland was no exception.

7.4.6. Merchant Capital

By independence the Kipsigisland produced a wide range of exports, both crops and livestock. Tables 7.5, 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 show the quantity of the produce and the value of such exports. It has been estimated that the total export from the district earned about £249,824 in 1957, £296,991 in 1958, £267,330 in 1959 and £203,972 in 1960. Maize, marketed by the maize Control Board, accounted for more than half of the exports in 1955. But due to subsequent bad weather, the 1958 trade recession and the introduction of consolidated wage for tea workers, the amount exported dwindled to a bottom low in 1958 before showing some recovering. A host of other agricultural products were posted from the district, marketed mainly through co-operatives. For example, two farmers co-operatives had emerged in Bureti and Belgut by 1956 to market agricultural produce besides maize (DC/KER/1/29/1956, p.25). The introduction of cash crops like pyrethrum, tea and coffee helped in improving the economic base of the Kipsigisland. By independence, tea had emerged as the most suitable and important cash crop of the district, replacing the long established monoculture in maize and greatly rivalling animal husbandry.

The sale of animals accounted for about £182,585 in 1957, £204,382 in 1958 and £176,856 in 1959 out of the total exports of the district shown earlier. Continued enclosure and paddocking of land, together with the up breeding and adoption of improved sahiwal breeds

squeezed much of the local livestock and the auction or sale yards at Kileges, Roret and Kapsimotwa recorded high sales.

The number of stock Traders' licenses issued in 1956 were about 48 and though there was a drop in 1957 to 23 due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the number increased to 38 in 1958 and 60 in 1959. And toward the end of the 1960 a number of cream schemes were incorporated as co-operative into the giant Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC). By the independence the livestock up-breeding sahiwal policy and the adoption of grade European cattle had borne fruits in the large sales of milk to the KCC plant in Kericho and Sotik. Milk and cream thus joined the traditional exports, such as hides, skins, eggs, poultry, sheep and goats to mention a few.

Thus, agricultural and livestock products earned the district plenty of money which was in turn invested in various ways. In addition, a number of the Kipsigis were working both in and out of the district, some in the civil service and others in the organised security forces. The salaried group used their income in developing their land and adopting modern methods of cultivation and animal husbandry. This group comprised the great percentage of absentee landlords, but nevertheless was among the progressive and rich peasants comprising the rural capitalists. With increased enclosure and privatisation of land, the value of land was greatly increasing. Besides being able to grab more land through enclosures, this group of rich peasants was also in a position of buying out the land of their poor neighbours. By 1960 an acre was going for about Shs. 2,000/= in the high potential areas of the district, implying that only the rich rural capitalists could afford. With subsequent land shortage resulted the grabbing of land in the fringes of the Mau forest as was the case in 1958 (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.6) or in other less productive areas in the Chepalungu area. Converse to this was the growing number of

landlessness, especially in the high potential areas. These pauperised, poor and sometimes landless peasants resorted to selling their labour to the rich landed peasants. The rich peasants, through misappropriation and exploitation of the poor peasants' labour, managed to accumulate more wealth which further enabled them to expand production and adopt modern methods of production. The snowballing effect of enriching the rich further pauperised the poor (Leys, 1975).

The increased wealth in the Kipsigisland was reflected by the number of corrugated iron roofed houses and the increased number of children in schools. But by far the greatest investment was in the realm of transport and trade. The number of vehicles on the Kipsigis roads and tractors in the Reserve greatly increased and the only complaint was the bad state of roads (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.34). The number of trading centres kept on increasing while the number of shops and people joining trading business equally increased. In 1956 alone 457 Traders' licenses were issued and about the same number was issued in the following year. But in 1958 the number of trader's licenses had increased to roughly 832, shooting further to 1,131 in 1960. By independence it was estimated that over 2,500 Traders licenses could be required (DC/KER/1/33/1960, p.40). In 1958 the local authorities demanded that shops should be built with bricks or stone. As such market traders tended to invest too much capital in stone building and too little in trade stock. Consequently many shops remained half-built because funds ran out. At the same time the increased prevalence of illegal hawking by Asian traders from Kericho and Kisumu caused much unfair competition to established traders in the reserve. The level of profitability for most owners was relatively low due to a number of reasons - ranging from low consumer demands to the high cost of transport of trade goods to the markets. Besides there was a limited range of retail goods which were being offered for sale. Because of low

profitability, up to half of the shops in most trading centres operated spasmodically - usually in the afternoons after the owners had worked in their own *shambas* in the morning (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.28). Even so, the demand for shops continued, and the ADC had to control the granting of additional plots for retail business up to the independence. By independence, the two most successful markets were Kapsuser and Roret in which some excellent shops were to be found. Ivanov's (1979:145) assertion that "wealthy peasants by no means always became capitalist entrepreneurs in the strict sense of the word" is applicable to the trading activities of the Kipsigis before independence. The creation of a merchant class heavily subsidised by farming and wage earning was in the making shortly before independence.

The competition with the Asian transporters and tractor owners had an adverse effect on African transporters and tractor owners. By 1958 it was observed that "many lorries and tractors stand around with the grass growing beneath them because some Kipsigis "company" has come to grief through bad planning or more commonly through misuse of the company's funds by members or employees" (DC/KER/1/31/1958, p.23). While the local administration was quick to attribute the collapse of such African transport and tractor companies to mismanagement and embezzlement of funds, it has been shown elsewhere that the Indian mechanics and spare parts dealers made faulty repairs, sometimes deliberately with the wrong spares or even hoarded important spares so that they could definitely cripple the African transport systems to cut down their competition and as a result most of them fell due to lack of technical knowledge in maintenance work (Omwoyo, 1992:194; Lemoosa, 1996:31). Due to such kind of unfair competition, the KTC underwent two managerial changes to enable it remain afloat. In September 1958, the United African company took over the KTCS as managing agents and in 1960 the managing agency changed to Dalgety Ltd. The fact that other co-

operatives such as the Coffee Co-operative and the Hides and Skins Co-operative and cream schemes were doing very well points a finger to the under hand of the Asians in a realm they had dominated for long.

7.5 Summary

If World War II was a transitional phase in agricultural history of the Kipsigis, then the period from 1950 was one marked with systematic re-organisation of the Kipsigis agriculture. After realising the important role played by African agriculture during the war and the reconditioning of the same by 1950, the colonial government sought to consciously plan and intensify African agricultural production. The Swynnerton Plan of 1954 provided the blue print of achieving this objective. In the realm of land, enclosure and privatisation were greatly stressed. The fencing of the enclosed land with hedge materials like Euphorbia and Eucalyptus trees was encouraged. Farm layout and paddocking became common features. The consolidation of land, though not common, was advocated together with limiting land subdivisions to economically unmanageable units. Perhaps the most striking feature was the emergence of a landed and rich peasantry who accumulated wealth in land by enclosing, buying or grabbing on one hand and the poor peasants, on the other, who often were landless. This phase of agricultural development witnessed the increasing spectre of landlessness.

In the realm of crop production, the major changes brought about by the Swynnerton Plan was the introduction of cash crops, such as tea, pyrethrum and coffee. Tea that had been a preserve for the white settlers quickly earned itself the reputation as the most suitable cash crop of the district. Though coffee and pyrethrum were not immediately hit, they nevertheless contributed to the diversification of crops in the Kipsigisland. Maize monoculture became a

thing of the past, especially with its attendant problem of soil erosion. *Wimbi* cultivation had long been relegated to obscurity save production for local requirements only.

Animal husbandry witnessed drastic changes. Not contented with merely depleting the Kipsigis livestock, the colonial authority came to the realisation that in the Kipsigisland "everything was tied to the tail of a cow" (DC/KER/1/28/1955) and sought to improve the livestock industry. Up breeding with sahiwal stock became a major policy, although importation of grade cattle was allowed in 1960. Provision of paddocks, stock-proof hedges, spray pumps, improved grass and homestead water supplies became common features, especially in high potential areas. For instance, the colonial authority came to realise that grass was a major 'cash crop' of the district. Milk and cream entered the category of export from the district.

Nevertheless all these changes accentuated rural class differentiation, creating a rich landed peasantry on one hand and a poor landless class on the other. The rich peasants steadily ventured into mercantile business and a number of shops dotted the Reserve. Further investments were done in education, iron roofed houses, stone or brick houses, vehicles and tractors, among others. The poor peasants irked a living on their small plots or sold their labour to the rich rural capitalists.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 CONCLUSION

An in-depth analysis of the agricultural changes in the Kipsigisland up to 1963 has been attempted in the study. In a work of this magnitude, a number of issues have emerged and in this conclusion a few salient points need to be clearly re-emphasised.

Theory constitutes a major tool of analysis in social sciences. But in a broad subject, such as agriculture, spanning over a period of one hundred years, not one theory can be consistently applied throughout the entire period. Consequently an attempt has been made to integrate various paradigms of a number of theories with a view to offering suitable explanations and interpretations of specific situations. The study thus adopted the various perspectives of the underdevelopment and dependency theories as well as the articulation of modes of production theories. Such perspectives include unequal exchange, uneven development and the notion of accumulation, class formation, class struggle, the culture of dependence and the idea of exploitation among others. Some of these paradigms find suitable application in specific situations while others are constantly employed throughout the study. In pursuing the factors shaping agriculture among the Kipsigis, we encounter considerable evidence of the influence of internal factors as well as those emanating from outside. One shortcoming of the dependency and underdevelopment theory is its emphasis on external factors as the crucial elements in the changes taking place in the developing world. Cooper (1981) has pointed out that by attempting to make a drainage theory of international exchanges universal-independent of the struggles that take place in specific parts of the world, the dependency and underdevelopment theory runs the

risk of being tautological. The assertion by the dependistas that impersonal market forces produce and reproduce 'development' in the core and 'underdevelopment' in the periphery has long been shelved. Everything that happens in the periphery is not determined by the needs of capital at the core and does not constantly reproduce development and underdevelopment. The results, thus, are not always universal and unclear – that the periphery becomes a ripe fruit perennially sucked dry by the gaping and insatiable capitalist maw at the centre (Berman, 1990:3). Leys (1977) posits that the underdevelopment theory is in the end static - it has a little capacity to distinguish the changing phases on the periphery as it has to deal with varying indigenous conditions and patterns of response in the periphery itself.

Upon such realisation it has become imperative to combine various paradigms of a number of theories to explain certain specific situations. Indeed, as Berman (1990:8) notes, studies that combine Marxist theory with detailed historical narrative are just as vital if we are to achieve a balanced understanding of social transformations and crisis at the periphery of the global capitalist system. The articulation of modes of production theory tries to give emphasis to local situations pertaining in a community and how they are changed to adapt to both internal and external factors. In Africa, colonialism generated a dynamic process driven by distinctive internal and external contradictions rather than a fixed, unchanging conditions of underdevelopment. These contradictions were expressed in a specific historical form emanating from the way a particular capitalist metropolis interacted with various and often idiosyncratic indigenous social forms. This momentous process of linkage is understood here through a particular construction of the concept of 'articulation' (*Ibid.*). It is this process that determined the patterns of class formation and

class struggle and the recurrent crises of accumulation and legitimisation which occurred in a colony. Articulation, thus, becomes a concept for understanding the distinctive forms of uneven capitalist development as emerging from patterns of unequal exchange, the process of accumulation, the forms of labour and the appropriation of surplus value.

Given such background, the study then proceeded to give a detailed historical analysis of agricultural changes in the Kipsigisland, the origin of the Kipsigis and their settlement in their present three districts of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet was attempted in chapter two. The social-political organisation situated the Kipsigis within a social and political framework and how this determined the distribution and utilisation of agricultural resources. Their social organisation was viewed as a historical heritage that had evolved and been sustained in the process of adaptation of the population to its social and political environment. The *Kokwet* emerged as the basic unit of defense, administration as well as economic activities. The intricate and symbiotic relation between the Kipsigis and their neighbours reinforced the interdependence of African communities, given differences in resource endowment and showed a diffusion of ideas, goods and other forms of co-operation or conflict resulting from such resource bases. Cattle rustling emerged as one of the common factors in the interaction between the Kipsigis and their neighbours, though intermarriages, trade and cultural exchanges also took place. Raids and counter-raids became a common feature in the relations between the Kipsigis and their neighbours on the eve of colonial rule and subsequently thereafter.

The Kipsigis pre-colonial economy as the basis of subsequent changes has been well documented. The Kipsigis productive activities, such as pastoralism, agriculture, hunting and gathering demonstrates their response to the constraints imposed by their

physical environment. The Kipsigis emerged as a resourceful people, well versed with their environment and knowledgeable in their economic pursuits. Their innovativeness, dynamism, efficiency, diversity and self-sustenance were reflected in all aspects of their economic fields. The prevalent land tenure system reflected their desire to avail the resource to every member of the *Kokwet* and even beyond. There was no property in land and any natural products upon it. The Kipsigis idea of land as a property was that which one had done some work on, otherwise land never became the property of an individual, nor were the saltlicks, rivers, watering points or foot paths. Nevertheless land was not totally communally owned as certain pieces of land were individually owned. Such diversity and flexibility in land ownership reflected the Kipsigis understanding and adaptation to their environment. Land was abundant and plentiful for all and thus no need arose to appropriate it for private use except the patches very close to the household.

The hunting and gathering system of appropriation of subsistence from natural environment was an established economic activity among the Kipsigis as a way for supplementing their food. The Kipsigis demonstrated an elaborate knowledge and skill of hunting and trapping animals, the purpose of which was also social, the blooding of the spears by the young warriors as a sign of bravery and for social distinction as a good hunter. But even in crop production the Kipsigis exhibited their resourcefulness and efficiency in land preparation, seed selection, weeding, harvesting, food storage and distribution. The social relations in food production were elaborate and geared towards enhancing food sufficiency not only at the household level but also at the *kokwet* and community at large. The Kipsigis knowledge of soils, pests, seeds and the like was superb and their rich vocabulary in *wimbi* production attests to their innovativeness and

adaptability to their environment. The measures taken to alleviate food shortages and famines were as practicable as they were suitable for the peoples involved.

Perhaps animal husbandry was one area in which the Kipsigis knowledge, efficiency, diversity and adaptability was unsurpassed. Known for their love and devotion to animals, the Kipsigis demonstrated a deep understanding and knowledge in animal husbandry, in such fields as grass types, animal types based on colour, sex and formation, diseases and forms of treatment, milk and meat preservation. Being the backbone of the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy, animal husbandry had a multitude of functions in the Kipsigis life. Animals were the source of milk, meat, blood, bedding and clothing. They were used to solve disputes, pay fines, bride wealth and for sacrificial purposes. An elaborate system of sharing animals and animal products existed and afforded all people an opportunity of getting milk even when they did not own any animal. Such stock-associateship also enabled individuals to widely disperse livestock among affinals to guard against instant decimation of livestock by ecological disasters, such as epidemics and drought. It also enabled individuals to establish social bonds and reciprocal relations between contracting parties. Raiding for animals from neighbouring communities became institutionalised in the community with the *laibons* playing a pivotal role in giving the blessings and predicting the outcome of raids. But the ultimate objective of every Kipsigis man was to own a cow - crop cultivation and the herding of goats and sheep were geared toward accumulation of wealth to enable one to buy a cow. Thus animal husbandry appears to have remained the most lucrative enterprise in pre-colonial Kipsigisland. Even labour organisation within the family was geared toward the sustenance of the pastoral economy. The head of the household performed a supervisory role of herding, branding

and watering animals. Women did the milking and watering of animals besides *wimbi* production. Young girls fetched water, did cooking and herding of goats and sheep while young boys were entrusted with herding of calves and lambs.

The establishment of colonial rule in the Kipsigisland was achieved through use of military force on one hand and indirectly through such methods as levying of taxes, seizure of livestock, labour conscription and so on. The implantation of colonial rule in the Kipsigisland brought about a number of external regulations and influences that were set to gradually modify and change the Kipsigis indigenous economy. Such aspects as the monetization of the Kipsigis economy, the levying of poll and hut taxes, the recruitment of the Kipsigis labour for colonial purposes, the exploitation of the Kipsigis agricultural surplus and the introduction of new crops were all set to change the economic and agricultural landscape of the Kipsigis. The ensuing articulation of the Kipsigis indigenous economy with the colonial capitalist one was nevertheless a gradual one. The introduction of the capitalist mode of production did not immediately replace the pre-capitalist mode of production, but rather it reinforced them (Leys, 1985). With time the capitalist mode of production gradually started to establish and assert itself over the Kipsigis indigenous mode of production. The two modes of production were then locked in a complex and sometimes contradictory struggle. But gradually colonial capitalism started to modify, marginalise, destroy or eventually subordinate the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy by utilising it rather than casting it aside.

On the other hand, the pre-capitalist mode of production did not get completely eliminated but kept on reproducing itself diversely in relation to the capitalist mode of production. Both processes of preservation and destruction or conservation and dissolution

existed in the articulation of the two modes of production in their diverse relations, more particularly through unequal exchange. It has emerged more clearly from the study that although agricultural, land, animal husbandry, labour, and trade policies were aimed at achieving maximum benefits for the white settler and the colonial state, the Kipsigis seem to have perceived them differently and reacted in their own ways to exploit such policies for their own economic advantages. By their own initiative the Kipsigis managed to develop certain sectors of their traditional economy which became compatible with the capitalist economy and the two thrived side by side.

Articulation is therefore a double-edged concept where certain sectors of the pre-capitalist economy are integrated into the capitalist economy and other sectors are not integrated for some time with a view of achieving certain goals (Berman, 1990). The rest of this work from chapter four onwards attempted to show the intricate relations between the Kipsigis indigenous agriculture and the colonial capitalist economy with the ensuing transformation of the former through the processes of change and adaptability to the new situations.

New crops were introduced and the Kipsigis encouraged to be commodity producers - a process intensified with the imposition of taxes. This incorporated the Kipsigis peasantry into the capitalist world economy where appropriation of their produce was monopolised by the colonial regime aided by the Indian merchants. The colonial officials, though not entrepreneurs, ensured that production was carried out and that a surplus of commodities, especially maize was made available for sale. The European and the Indian merchants manipulated knowledge which they possessed of profits to be made in distant or foreign markets which the Kipsigis peasants lacked access to. Indirectly or

through subtle means, they appropriated African surplus accumulated through petty commodity production among the peasants.

With their entrenchment in commodity production, the Kipsigis were continually peasantised and lost control over the pricing of the products of their labour. Since the international capitalist division of labour relegated the colonised to the lowest ranks in the production process, the Kipsigis started producing cheap materials and became consumers of imported goods through a system of unequal exchange in which they were further exploited.

Among the major changes that took place in crop production in colonial Kipsigisland was the almost total replacement of *wimbi* by maize as the staple food. A ready settler market in the tea plantations enhanced maize production and the Kipsigisland became a prominent producer of maize. Later introduction of more valuable crops such as pyrethrum, tea and coffee had a downward effect on maize production, but by independence, maize by far remained the most common crop produced throughout the Kipsigisland.

We have also tried to give evidence as to how the early period of colonial rule in the Kipsigisland was characterised by pure appropriation of livestock in the form of booty during the period of pacification campaigns. The seizure of livestock not only paralysed the Kipsigis economy but also forced them into submitting to the colonial establishment. The pre-colonial institutions related to animal husbandry and raiding, especially that of the *laibons*, were destroyed and cattle were used in the settling of all manner of alleged offences against colonial 'law and order', individually or collectively. The *laibons* were rounded up and deported to Gwassu in South Nyanza in an attempt to eradicate cattle

rustling. The colonial administration neglected the development of an African stock industry in the Kipsigisland and the routine inoculations and vaccinations were mostly aimed at preventing the spread of diseases to settler livestock. Nevertheless, the Kipsigis initiatives to continuously replenish their herds and further invest in animals led to increased livestock in the region prompting the colonial administration to count the livestock in 1946 with a possibility of culling. This elicited much resentment from the Kipsigis and the idea of sale yards was mooted to reduce the Kipsigis cattle through voluntary animal sales. Meanwhile, the upgrading of the Kipsigis zebu stock with the sahiwal bulls from Kabianga veterinary centre was half-hearted and proved unsuccessful. The clamour for the introduction of grade animals provided some hope in the Kipsigis livestock industry by independence and thereafter.

Land, the major resource base in the Kipsigisland, suffered enormous appropriation during the colonial period. Being home to the multi-national tea plantations, the Kipsigisland suffered massive land alienation that culminated in the 'Kimulot muddle'. With increased colonial activity in crop production and the ubiquitous livestock herding, the Kipsigis started experiencing shortage of land leading to the enclosure and privatisation of parcels of land in much of the Kipsigisland by independence. Meanwhile the European settler farmers remained a common feature in the Kipsigisland, competing with the local inhabitants in crop production, livestock herding and the procurement of labour besides the ever-suspicious aspect of land acquisition.

Labour power which in pre-colonial Kipsigisland was applied in the creation of use value for societal well-being was further alienated in the colonial period for the generation of surplus and the Kipsigis were forced into the labour market in the interest of colonial

capitalism. Thus there was also a re-location of labour into capitalist product processes, hence draining household labour from the pre-colonial economic activities, such as pastoralism. We have shown how labour was extracted initially by force from the area. We have also shown the manner in which forced labour gradually developed into migrant labour, how a stable wage labour emerged from the ruins of the migrant labour system and how the Kipsigis came to constitute part of the Kenya rural and urban proletariat. In all, we have demonstrated how the Kipsigis were proletarianised and transformed into a labour force, producing exchange value for the colonial state and private capital.

Another theme developed in the study is that of social differentiation and stratification. The process of articulation of colonial capitalism with the indigenous Kipsigis economy and the dynamic mechanism of social change accruing from this process led to the deepening stratification and differentiation of the local population. The chiefs and others in the civil service employment formed the early group of wealth accumulators. They were later joined by the educated elite, the 'rich' peasants, soldiers and some rural wage workers.

This group of the rural rich accumulated wealth in various forms - shops, plots, ox-ploughs, vehicles, *posho* mills, good houses, bicycles, grade animals, and many more. They also proved successful in farming since, with enough capital, they could easily employ more labour and adopt modern methods of farming. On the other end there were the pauperised peasants who relied on wage labour for subsistence – initially as migrant workers and later as rural workers within the Kipsigisland itself. In other words, education, civil employment, enterprising farming, cash crop production and the enclosure

of private land deepened the process of social differentiation among the Kipsigis in their own land.

Moreover, colonial capitalism did not uniformly integrate the Kipsigisland in its quest for articulation. Some areas became the local magnets for colonial activities while others formed the “peripheries within the periphery” (Leys, 1985). The major urban centres of Kericho, Litein, Bomet, Sotik, Longisa and others seemed to have been more developed than other smaller trading centres. Besides productive areas in maize production, such as Bureti and Belgut were more drawn into the capitalist tentacles than the outlying Chepalungu and Sotik. Apparently areas with enterprising individuals or colonial perfuctionaries, especially chiefs attracted intense colonial support and thus more development than other areas. It is on this vein that Cheborge arap Tengecha’s Litein area seemed to have been relatively more developed than other areas by scoring a number of ‘firsts’ in maize and tea production. With these we have attempted to demonstrated how colonial capitalism led to uneven development in the Kipsigisland.

Finally, we have also attempted to show how the imposition of taxes affected the Kipsigis. They responded by selling their animals and later they were engaged in wage labour and more importantly expanded commodity production to earn enough cash for taxes and other requirements. Coupled with the need to buy imported hoes and ox-ploughs, extensive cultivation became widespread as maize attained the status of monoculture, resulting in widespread soil erosion and degradation of the 1940s. The post-World War II period witnessed further evolution of small-holder farming in the Kipsigisland. The introduction of cash crops was consolidated by the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 and led to further colonialist appropriation of the peasants' produce.

By the coming of independence in 1963, therefore, the Kipsigis agriculture had been radically transformed from its pre-colonial state to become an integral part of the international capitalist economy – albeit - mediated through the mechanism of colonial production and exchange.

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(b) Oral SourcesList of Some Informants

| Name | Age | Clan | Sub-location |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|-----------------|
| Alfred K.M. Sillate | 56 | Kapkolwolek | Rongen |
| Paul NGENA | 61 | Kapkolwolek | Kimulot |
| Elijah, BELION | 58 | Kapkolwolek | Cheborge |
| Richard, KOSKEI | 49 | Kipkendek | Manaret/kisabei |
| Joseph Kiprop KIRUI | 40 | Kiptuiyek | Kaplong |
| William TORONGEI | 70 | Kaporia | Leldaet |
| Stephen KIRUI | 65 | Kapkolwolek | Kaplong |
| Philliph CHEBOSE | 54 | Kipsamaek | Kaplong |
| Wycliffe MIRUKA | 30 | Basisek | Bing'wa |
| Ambrose KOECH | 63 | Kipcheromek | Mosonik |
| Paul RONO | 75 | Kipindoeck | Bing'wa |
| Wesley KORIR | 45 | Kipindoeck | Chebwanagan |
| Joice CHEPKWONY | 61 | Chemusar | Roret |
| Simon CHEROGIN | 70 | Chepoin | Roret |
| Phillip TOGOM | 68 | Chepoin | Roret |
| Choget arap CHUMO | 85 | Kapmochoek | Momoniati |
| Arap TOBON | 59 | Bakuserek | Momoniati |
| Arap CHEPTUECH | 63 | Kapchililek | Momoniati |
| Arap CHERUTICH | 67 | Kapkamosek | Momoniati |
| S. T. CHEPWONY | 70 | Kipcheromek | Chebirbelek |
| Patrick LANGAT | 77 | Kapkolwolek | Silibwet |
| Jimmy K. MABWAI | 70 | Kamosik | Township |
| Chumo NGONO | 59 | Kipbaek | Chagaik |
| Kiptul TANUI | 66 | Matabet | Ainamoi |
| Kipkoech LABOS | 58 | Chemuei | Kapkgore |
| Mathias K. NGENO | 50 | Kapecherek | Kalyet |
| William K. MAINA | 55 | Kapkalwalek | Motobo/township |
| Tubulu KOSKE | 64 | Kaborowek | Motobo/township |
| Samwuel KOSKE | 72 | Kiplegenek | Kabartegan |
| Francis BETT | 67 | Kapsoen | Kaparuso |
| Simonarap BARTA | 81 | Kapkesundet | Kabenia |
| Zakayo CHERAMGOI | 62 | Soiko | Kabema |
| Josiah TALAM | 59 | Kikendek | Koimiret |
| John TOO | 68 | Kibomuek | Kabema |
| Samson arap MALEI | 55 | Kibomulek | Ngoino |
| Justus CHERIOGIN | 64 | Kibomulek | Mabasi |
| Joseph CHEPKWONY | 72 | Kapkolwalek | Roret |
| Jason SEREM | 58 | Kapkomutset | Kibwastuiyo |
| Churchil SIGEI | 68 | Kapchebion | Kapsogut |
| Joseph ROTICH | 79 | Kamuchok | Kibwastuiyo |
| Daniel SEREM | 57 | Kapkomutget | Kibwastuiyo |
| Benjamin SOI | 67 | Kiplekemek | Kapsogut |
| Stanley ROTOH | 80 | Komosi | Kibwastuiyo |

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Appendix I Kipsigis Lunar Calender

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Mulgul</i> | January |
| <i>Ngotiololo</i> | February |
| <i>Kiptamo</i> | March |
| <i>Tuatkut</i> | April |
| <i>Mamut</i> | May |
| <i>Page</i> | June |
| <i>Ngeyiet</i> | July |
| <i>Robtui</i> | August |
| <i>Bureti</i> | September |
| <i>Epeso</i> | October |
| <i>Kipsunde Netai</i> (the first)..... | November |
| <i>Kipsunde Nebolet</i> or | |
| <i>Nebo Oyieg</i> (the second)..... | December |

Appendix II. Kipsigis Cattle Names.

| Male | Female | Description |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | <i>Tuoyai</i> ————— | Black cow |
| <i>Kiptuimet</i> | <i>Tuimet</i> ————— | Black head and neck |
| <i>Kiptolelyot</i> | <i>Tolelyoi</i> ————— | Creamy grey |
| | <i>Tilito</i> ————— | White switch |
| | <i>Lelgut</i> ————— | White face |
| | <i>Lelgina</i> ————— | White markings on udder |
| <i>Kimurgut</i> | <i>Murgut</i> | Dark brown, almost black particularly near muzzle |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | <i>Murgugu</i> | Brown or dun marks (spot or stripes on white |
| | <i>Mogondo</i> — | Black, red and white mixed |
| <i>Kibirirmet</i> | <i>Birirmet</i> — | Fawn light chestnut head, white body |
| <i>Kibusyen</i> | <i>Busyendo</i> — | Spotted red on white or black or uniformly |
| | <i>Chemur</i> — | Dark brown all over |
| <i>Kipsityen</i> | <i>Chesitien</i> — | Fawn to light brown |
| <i>Kibois</i> | <i>Chebois</i> — | Light chestnut reddish |
| <i>Kimarus</i> | <i>Chemarus</i> — | Dark, almost black |
| | <i>Cheseger</i> — | White flash or forehead |
| <i>Kimurmet</i> | <i>Chemurmet</i> — | Dark brown head |
| <i>Kipkebe</i> | <i>Kebei</i> — | White ribs and stomach, black body |
| | <i>Kaaro</i> — | Hornless |
| | <i>Keroi</i> — | Black and while (Friesian) |
| <i>Kipsimaatyai</i> | <i>Simaatyai</i> — | Blue roan, almost grey |
| | <i>Sitrwoi</i> — | Almost black with cream and fawn |
| | <i>Singoiment</i> — | Hairy head |
| | <i>Seroi</i> — | Black, with distinctive chestnut line on spine |
| <i>Kipsomoi</i> | <i>Soomoi</i> — | Bridle,(Maasai <i>O-Sambu</i>) |
| | <i>Omoi</i> — | Bridle, used to differentiate from darker shade |
| | <i>Ngomorit</i> — | Having mutilated ears |
| <i>Kimusatget</i> | <i>Chemusatagat</i> — | Black and khaki with reddish forehead |

APPENDIX III

SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. (a) Name Clan
 Sub-location Sex
 Age Marital Status
- (b) Amount of land owned
- (c) How the land was acquired (first occupier, inherited, or bought)
- (d) Number of different pieces of land owned
- (e) Types of crops grown
- (f) Number and type of animals kept
- (g) Names of three nominees
 1. clan sub-location
 2. clan sub-location
 3. clan sub-location

PRE-COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

2. What forms of land ownership existed on the eve of colonial conquest? How did people acquire land? Were there any landlords, or a group of landless people?
3. How did the Kipsigis allocate land for various types of use e.g. cultivation, grazing, hunting? What types of crops did the Kipsigis grow? How was the agricultural calendar for each crop?

4. What animals did the Kipsigis domesticate? Did they always have enough to eat both from crop production and animal husbandry? If not, how did they supplement their diet? What was their main food?

5. Are there any remembered famines among the Kipsigis? If so, what were their causes? What measures did the Kipsigis take to curb food shortages during droughts, locust invasion and periods of famines? Was there a way of predicting such a calamity? What were the consequences of remembered famines?

6. Did the Kipsigis have any form of exchange? If so, with whom, and in what commodities? What was the medium of exchange? Were there trading centres? Was there a group of people specializing in trade? If so, why? If not, why not?

7. How was labour organized? Were there specific jobs for different categories of people? Was there any paid labour? If so, how was it paid? What forms of communal labour existed in Kipsigisland?

COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

8. What economic and agricultural changes did the colonialists bring? How did they affect Kipsigis land ownership and usage? How did land alienation affect the Kipsigis? Were the alienated lands settled by the Kipsigis before the coming of the colonialists? What happened with the misplaced people?

9. How did colonialism affect Kipsigis labour organization? How were individual roles in the society affected? What new forms of labour organization emerged and what effects did they have on Kipsigis pre-colonial labour organization?
10. How did the introduction of new crops and grade animals affect food production? Do the indigenous crops and animals exist?
11. How did the introduction of taxes and *kipande* affect the Kipsigis? How did the Kipsigis respond to the introduction of taxes and what was the response of the colonial government? How did the Kipsigis pay their taxes?
12. What were the objectives of Laibonism or Talai as a social institution? How far was it an anti-colonial movement? How was it organized, and what were its operation? How far was it successful? What led to its demise, and when.
13. How did the Kipsigis sell their crops or farm produce? How fair were the transactions to Kipsigis farmers? Did the Kipsigis take any initiative to produce more food to sell to the colonial officials? If so, what were the colonial government's effort to boost trade in food crops?
14. In what ways would you say the Kipsigis benefited from colonial rule? What were its bad effects as far as the Kipsigis agricultural economy was concerned?
15. Was there a group or individual who accumulated wealth and land during the colonial period? If so, what was the economic and social status of these people or

individuals before the coming of the Europeans? How and why did they accumulate wealth and land?

16. Were there any imported Asian and European goods among the Kipsigis? If so, name them. What were their effects on Kipsigis technology, industry and trade?
17. Did the Europeans establish agricultural farms in Kipsigisland? If so, what farming activities were they engaged in? How did their farming activities affect Kipsigis agriculture, labour and pastoral activities?
18. How did the First and Second World Wars affect Kipsigis agricultural production.
19. Were there efforts made by the colonial government to increase food production among the Kipsigis? What were its efforts to increase cash crop production? What were the effects of the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 on Kipsigis agricultural production?