CECIL RHODES AND THE CAPE TO CAIRO RAILROAD

A THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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Chapter I
RHODES AND THE RIGHT OF WAY

The history of British expansion in Africa gained many of its most colorful and romantic chapters from Cecil Rhodes and his great imperial project, the Cape to Cairo Railroad. Through the Dark Continent Rhodes extended the British Empire and civilization. Expansion was his aim and he dreamed of his imperial schemes of bringing Africa, the last unoccupied continent under the British. "Having read the histories of other countries," he said, "I saw that expansion was everything and that the world's surface being limited, the great object of present humanity should be to take as much of the world as it possibly could."¹

British expansion became almost a part of Rhodes's religion, for he believed that God's purpose was to make the Anglo-Saxon race predominant, and that the best way to help God in his work was to bring as much of the globe as possible under Anglo-Saxon control by spreading its civilization to all parts of the world.² South Africa was to be the sphere of Rhodes's operations. He meant "to have the whole unmarked country north of the Cape Colony for England." To this work of British expansion Rhodes was to dedicate his life. His

¹Verschoyle, F., pseud., Vindex, Cecil Rhodes, His Political Life and Speeches, 1881-1900. Hereafter this work will be cited Vindex, Rhodes., 7.

²Basil Williams, Cecil Rhodes, 50.
dream was to paint Africa red from the Cape to Cairo, Egypt and he earnestly believed this would be possible. He himself said that his ideas were not too big since the history of Africa was only beginning, and big ideas were essential to progress.4

Although not the originator of the Cape to Cairo idea, Rhodes did more than any other person to popularize this phrase.5 Due to him this romantic scheme was made a practical and almost accomplished fact. This he did by adding vast expansions to the English Empire and binding the territory by railroad and telegraph projects. His telegraph forged the way for his railroad. The latter was in his belief the means for conquering the continent.

Closely bound with British expansion in Africa is the story of the Cape to Cairo railway. The history of one is not complete without the history of the other. As the territory was brought under British control, the railroad was extended to hold the newly acquired land, to open the country to settlement and to connect the hinterland with the populated sections.

The trunk line of the Cape to Cairo railroad was not constructed with Cairo as its ultimate goal, but as a means of

3Index, Rhodes, 10.

4Ibid., 592, citing speech, September 3, 1898.

5Sir Harry Johnston, well known writer on African subjects, said the phrase "Cape to Cairo" was coined by Sir Edwin Arnold in a pamphlet published in 1876. - "My Story of the Scheme," Leo Weinthal, The Story of the Cape to Cairo Railway and River Route, from 1887-1922, 1, 69. Hereafter this work will be cited as Weinthal, The Cape to Cairo Route.
connection with the colonized interior. Due to the absence of navigable rivers in Africa the demand soon became manifest for the extension of railroad development with the inland communities. As colonization progressed, rails were rapidly laid. The first section in this great transcontinental line was from Cape Town to Wellington via Stellenbosch in 1857. From Wellington this little railroad pushed north by way of Worcester to Beaufortwest and finally with the discovery of the diamond fields at Kimberley, the railroad found its terminus there in 1885. In regards to this advance Rhodes's first connection with the Cape to Cairo railroad is seen.

Although Rhodes considered the railroad a necessity in his expansion movements, it is interesting to note that the Cape to Cairo railroad as such did not appear as a dominating influence in his early political career, in fact such a scheme was not imagined when the trunk line of this road was being constructed. Thus Rhodes did wish the extension of the railroad into the territory brought under British control, but he did not have this grandiose scheme in mind. Territorial expansion was his first thought. Although not consciously thinking in Cape to Cairo terms he was preparing the right of way for his Cape to Cairo telegraph and railroad projects which were to follow.

From his entrance into politics Rhodes found himself occupied with questions of expansion. He was, in fact, the leader in the movement for northern expansion. In his politics he "made the seizure of the interior a paramount thing....
and made everything else subordinate. As early as 1881 Rhodes urgently proposed in the Cape Parliament the extension of the railroad to Kimberley from the south. In advocating this extension Rhodes was thereby preparing the way for another section in that great transcontinental line.

While the Kimberley line was being constructed Rhodes was taking an active part in preparing the right of way to the north through Bechuanaland. In this struggle for supremacy in the interior were the Transvaal, headed by Kruger, and the British Government represented by Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner of the Cape, and a staunch supporter of Rhodes and his imperialistic schemes. Two rival ideas were to play dominant roles in this race for the interior: the Imperial idea with equal rights for all races and the Republican or Dutch idea with political rights exclusively held by the Dutch oligarchy.

Through Bechuanaland the extension of the railroad was later to be constructed. This territory lay to the north of Cape Colony and was bordered on the east by the Transvaal and on the west by Damaraland and Namagualand. Knowing that the Transvaal was casting covetous glances toward this territory and was arranging for a convention with England whereby it might obtain permission to modify its southwestern boundary,

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6 Vindex, Rhodes, 339, citing speech at Cape Town, Jan. 6, 1894.
7 Ibid., 23-35, citing speech at Cape House, April 25, 1881.
8 Ibid., preface x.
Rhodes was spurred to action. He immediately communicated with the Cape Government, through the colony's Prime Minister in an effort to annex this territory, but to no avail.

Rhodes had strongly opposed "an inch more territory" given to the Transvaal and the road to the interior relinquished to this Boer state. It was upon Bechuanaland that Rhodes based the whole future of the Cape Colony. This territory was, he pointed out, "the Suez Canal of the trade of the country, the key of its road to the interior." The Cape Colony must, he emphasised, extend its civilization beyond its present borders.

In 1884 Rhodes came before the House with forceful arguments for the colony's annexation of this territory. Realizing the importance of railroad extension to the colonists, he appealed to the self-interests of the Cape Dutch and English on this point. The colony had been constructing a system of railroads to Kimberley and "were they going to allow themselves to be shut out from the future trade of the interior,"

The Cape Colony he said had not gone into debt twelve millions just to take the railways to a terminal point at Kimberley. Although Rhodes was not exactly a follower of Sir Bartle Frere, who had as early as 1878 urged the Colonial Secretary to proclaim a protectorate over Bechuanaland up to Lake Ngami, he did believe that the Cape Colony should gradually extend in

9 Parliametary Papers, 1884, V. 57 (c3947), Contains the correspondence concerning the convention between England and the South African Republic.

10 Vindex, Rhodes, 64, citing speech at Cape House, August 16, 1885.

11 Parliamentary Papers, 1884, V. 57 (c2194), enclosure 1 in no. 32.
that direction, and that the civilization of Africa should extend from the Cape of Good Hope. In the development of the north lay the interests of both the merchant and the farmer Rhodes declared. To the north lay not a desert as was painted on the maps, but a land capable of great development in farming, a land admirably suited for colonization. Not wishing to give up the keys of the interior and thereby let the Cape Colony be settled on a small peninsula, Rhodes placed his argument before the House as follows: "Was this House to say after the debt we had incurred that we should allow these republics," that is Stellaland and Goshen, "to form a wall across our trade route. Bechuanaland was the neck of the whole territories up to the Zambesi and we must secure it unless we were prepared to see the whole of the north pass out of our hands."\(^{12}\)

The question of Bechuanaland was becoming of more than local concern, for even the Colonial Office in London awoke to the importance of securing this strip of territory. Germany's sudden appearance on the scene stimulated the interest of the English Colonial office and the Cape. In 1884 Bismarck formally announced a protectorate over Damaraland and Namagualand, the huge territory surrounding Walvis Bay and known as German Southwest Africa.

\(^{12}\)Parliamentary Papers, 1884, V. 57 (c4194), enclosure 2 in no. 32.

\(^{13}\)Index, Rhodes, preface xxiii-xxiv; Parliamentary Papers, 1884, V. 57 (c4194), enclosure 1 in no. 32.
Kruger looking toward possession of Delagoa Bay and the interior and Germany on the west was not a pleasing picture to Rhodes. If the Transvaal were allowed to spread to the interior and across the northern cape border, the Cape Colony would be hemmed in, and the Transvaal would have the trade of the interior. Uneasy about this state of affairs Rhodes unfolded his fears to the Cape Parliament.

Would not Bismarck have some quarrel with the Transvaal and without resources, without men, what could they do? Germany would come across from her settlement at Angra Pequena. There would be some excuse to pick a quarrel....and then Germany would stretch from Angra Pequena to Delagoa Bay. What was the bar in Germany’s way? Bechuanaland....If we were to stop at Bechuanaland West, the ambitions objects of Germany would be attained. 14

Fortunately the Colonial office arranged by the London Convention of 1884 that the interior route would be free from Boer aggression, Lord Derby, the Secretary of the Colonies, stating that Her Majesty’s Government could not agree to any portion of the existing trade route being placed within the Transvaal. 15 The latter republic under Kruger disregarded the Convention terms, though, by proclaiming a protectorate over part of Bechuanaland in 1885.

Rhodes meanwhile did not stand idly by and let his dream of an all red route be dashed aside. Instead he urged that the imperial factor be introduced. Previously stressing Colonial control, Rhodes now changed his viewpoint due to

14Vindex, Rhodes, 114-115, citing speech at Cape House, June 30, 1885.
15Parliamentary Papers, 1884, V. 57 (c3947).
the exigency of the situation. Far better he believed to have the road to the interior under British Imperial Control than under that of the Transvaal. At Rhodes's instigation the Imperial factor did enter the picture. In September 1885 British Bechuanaland was declared a crown colony, while a Protectorate was proclaimed over the rest of Bechuanaland. By "Grandmamma", as Rhodes called Her Majesty's Government, Bechuanaland was saved.\(^{16}\) The way was now open for the railroad to begin its northward movement.

In the extension of the line from Kimberley, Rhodes considered the Transvaal as an important factor. Hearing that Kruger's project of a railroad connection between Pretoria and Delagoa Bay would check the trade with the Cape Colony, Rhodes welcomed the Transvaal's offer for a railroad and customs union in 1886. If the Cape Colony would not cooperate with the Transvaal, the latter would, Rhodes believed, join with the Orange Free State, Bechuanaland, Natal or Delagoa Bay in some such union, thereby destroying the utility of the Cape Colony's railroads and forestalling further expansion in this region.\(^{17}\) If Rhodes's plans of cooperation with the Transvaal had been a success the Cape to Cairo railroad might now have run through the Boer States. As it was his scheme was not carried out by the Cape. As late as 1888 Rhodes

\(^{16}\)Vindex, Rhodes, 218, citing speech at Barkley West.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 132-135, citing speech at Cape House, May 20, 1886.
wished the Cape Government to listen to Kruger's railroad schemes. In fact, he even voted against the extension of the line north of Kimberley to the Vaal river, since he said Kruger, "the dictator of the Transvaal," opposed this line and the Cape would thereby "excite the animosity of the Transvaal," the result being the risk of stopping the trade from the Transvaal.\textsuperscript{18}

Kruger, not getting the desired agreement with the Cape Government, followed another course of procedure. He then decided to prevent any extension of the railroad from the Cape. Every railroad that approached the Transvaal must, he believed, be looked upon as an enemy since he must have his Delagoa Bay line first.\textsuperscript{19}

Rhodes's arguments proved of no avail for the Kimberley to Vaal River extension was voted for in 1888. The High Commissioner, Sir Hercules, believed the failure to carry through

\textsuperscript{18}Vindex, Rhodes, 201-203, citing speech July 23, 1888; R. I. Lovell, The Struggle for South Africa, 1875-1899, 130. Vindex believed that Rhodes's argument against the Vaal River extension was largely conditioned by Rhodes's desire to substitute a railway to Mafeking for a railroad to the Vaal. According to Rhodes the Kimberley Mafeking extension would be his alternative program. See Vindex, 186, in regard to Rhodes's viewpoint.

\textsuperscript{19}L. Raphael, The Cape to Cairo Dream, 94, 95. The general opinion held in Africa and England at this time was that President Kruger was hostile to the northward extension of the Cape Town line to Zambesi. Weinthal said this was not the case for in his conversation with Kruger, the latter always intimated that the railway was the only method to make the land fit for permanent settlement by white people. Sir Charles Metcalfe, the eminent railway engineer, said, although Kruger wanted his Delagoa Bay line first, he was more progressive in his attitude toward railways than most of the people in Cape Colony. - Weinthal, The Cape to Cairo Route, I, 3, 5.
the Kimberley extension would have been fatal since the railroad to the Zambesi was the only way to bring life to Bechuanaland as well as colonial trade to the north.  

Events were rapidly taking place in 1887 which were to affect the right of way of the Cape to Cairo project. In 1887 Kruger against article IV of the London Convention of 1884; sent an agent to negotiate a treaty of protection over Lobengula, the Matabele chieftain. Since there was no protest from the Imperial Government, Rhodes immediately tried to induce Sir Hercules to get England to proclaim a protectorate over Lobengula's dominions. As this proved infeasible it was decided that the Assistant Commissioner of Bechuanaland, J. S. Moffat, be sent to the king to get some kind of an agreement recognizing the exclusive influence of Great Britain in his kingdom. Moffat was successful in obtaining from Lobengula in 1880 a treaty of perpetual friendship with Her Majesty's Government, whereby Lobengula agreed to "refrain from entering into any correspondence or treaty with any foreign State or Power," or to cede or sell any of his land "without the previous knowledge and sanction of Her Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa." The road to the north was once again saved through the instigation of Rhodes. There was no responsibility to England involved in this arrangement, while at

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20Raphael, The Cape to Cairo Dream, 116.
21Parliamentary Papers, 1884, v. 57, (c3947), No. 33, p. 54.
22Parliamentary Papers, 1888, v. 75, (c5524), enclosure in no. 5, p. 15.
the same time it was an effective means of keeping out Kruger and the Boers.

By 1888 definite plans were being laid for the extension of the railroad northwards. Two English companies, the Bechuanaland Exploration and Exploring Companies founded in 1888 were negotiating for a concession for the railroad from Kimberley to Vryburg in Bechuanaland. Sir Sidney Sheppard, the Administrator of Bechuanaland wrote of the advantage that would accrue from the Kimberley to Mafeking section of the line in Bechuanaland and even suggested that this might be the beginning of a trunk line. 23

Sir Charles Metcalfe was asked by the Exploring Company to make a survey of the line from Kimberley to Vryburg. Sir Charles realizing, as he said, that this might be the first section of a great railway from Cape to Cairo accepted the offer. The Cape Colony was not at all disposed to welcome the railroad project since the Imperial authorities favored the scheme. Although the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules, dissuaded him from proceeding with the project, Metcalfe went to Kimberley where he contacted Rhodes, his former Oxford acquaintance.

Rhodes warmly received Metcalfe and his colleagues and immediately wished to join forces with them in the Bechuanaland railway extension. Since Metcalfe realized that the railroad project would not have a chance of success at Cape Town without

23Sir Charles Metcalfe, "My Story of the Cape to Cairo Scheme," Weinthal, The Cape to Cairo Route, I, 97.
Rhodes, he and his colleagues advised their companies to that effect. The companies were not as yet ready to cooperate with Rhodes. 24

Rhodes had, previous to the negotiations with Metcalfe, had his agents Messrs. C. D. Rudd, Rachfort, Maguire, and P. R. Thomas at the Matabele chief's kraal, trying to obtain from this wily chief mineral rights, land or both as a foundation for occupation of his territory. Not the least romantic episode in the Cape to Cairo movement is the story of how these men won this concession. Not until this mineral concession was won and the railroad survey completed to Wryburg was word sent to Metcalfe to "join hands with Rhodes" 25 in the Bechuanaland railroad extension.

The right of way to the north was now open to British expansion, and Rhodes's great dream of extending the British Empire toward the Zambesi was gradually becoming a reality. The Cape to Cairo idea was linked for the first time with the railroad from Cape Town to the interior. The way was finally prepared for the great northern movement which was to follow.

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
Chapter II

THE CHARTERED COMPANY AND THE GREAT NORTHERN MOVEMENT

In the great northern movement both of the British Empire and of the Cape to Cairo railroad, the British South Africa Company was to lead the way. This Chartered Company, as it was known, was to be Rhodes's instrument for bringing the vast interior of Africa under British rule, and in adding great sections to his Cape to Cairo railroad project. The idea of a chartered company to do this work was according to Rhodes, "an accidental thought." Not belittling its importance, though, he added, all the great conquests of the world came from accident.¹ This statement, together with the objectives that Rhodes had in view for his company, gives one an insight into the great importance which he attached to the company in carrying out his imperial schemes. He aimed through its channels:

1. To extend the railway and telegraph northwards toward the Zambezi.
2. To encourage emigration and colonization.
3. To promote trade and commerce.

¹ Vindex, Rhodes, 440, citing speech, Jan. 18, 1895.
4. To develop mineral and other concessions under one powerful organization so as to avoid conflict between competing interests. 2

Although Rhodes had the land and mineral rights to the interior granted by Lobengula in the Rudd concession and the added strength that came as a result of his amalgamation with the Bechuanaland Exploring and Explorations Companies, he did wish through the charter to receive royal recognition and moral support for his aims. Rhodes, therefore, was in England in 1889 seeking the attainment of this objective from Her Majesty’s Government.

Rhodes’s idea of a chartered company to carry out Imperial enterprises did not startle the English people, for an able article appeared in the Fortnightly Review of March, 1889, preparing the way for Rhodes’s request from the Imperial Government. At the instigation of the Bechuanaland Exploration and Explorations Companies, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the surveyor of the Kimberley Vryburg line, contributed this article in which he advocated the opening of Southern Rhodesia by granting a charter to some powerful organization. Through a company this great territory, he said, would be peaceably secured, while advantages would accrue to the natives and to England and her commerce without any expense to the Imperial Government. 3 To wake England to the importance of Africa he

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wrote

........there is positively a race for the interior, and that nothing but a firm policy will maintain British interests and keep open the way for the development of British trade in Africa. It is not generally known that there has been actually a proposal to cede Germany a strip of territory extending from east to west right across the continent north of the Zambezi, which would have effectively barred the passage of the iron track that must ultimately join the Cape with Cairo, and carry civilization through the heart of the dark continent.4

Rhodes, on hearing rumours of a session of African territory to Germany, had asked Metcalfe in Kimberley to write home protesting against such a proposal. "It will come better from you," he said, "as I am looked on with some distrust at home." Metcalfe by publishing his article thereby fulfilled his obligations to the Companies as well as to Rhodes.5

Likewise serving to arouse popular interest in Rhodes's request for a charter and preparing the way for England's forward policy in Africa, were the articles contributed by Sir Harvey Johnston in the monthly reviews and the press in 1888 and 1889. These articles, according to Johnston perhaps conveyed the idea of the Cape to Cairo to the Foreign Office""especially to the imagination of the late Lord Salisbury." At least he writes, the latter allowed the Cape

to Cairo phrase to be used without disapproval. 5

In the London Times of August 22, 1888 the activity of a British north to south movement was revealed. 6 This article, Lord Salisbury believed, would prepare the British public for England's future development in Africa. This view of a forward movement in Africa was not only represented by Lord Salisbury but by the Imperial Government as well. Influential men in governmental affairs were extremely interested in African affairs. Sir Harry Johnston wrote that in the early eighties and nineties interest was keen in African affairs in the Foreign Office, but indifferent and even hostile in the Colonial Office and especially the Treasury. Such influential men as Lord Rosebery, Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Henry Austin Lee, Lord Fitzmaurice, Sir Villiers Lister and Sir Henry Percy Anderson were strongly in favor of any reasonable scheme to secure British commercial and political interests in Africa. 7 Rhodes's request was therefore not to fall on disinterested ears.

Another factor contributing to the success of Rhodes's negotiations with Her Majesty's Government for his charter resulted from his acquaintance with Sir Harry Johnston, who

5 Johnston, loc. cit., 59.
6 London Times, August 22, 1888.
7 Johnston, loc. cit., 76.
like Rhodes, was alive to the importance of Africa to the British Empire. At a dinner given by Mr. Verschoyle, the sub-editor of the Fortnightly Review, Rhodes met Sir Harry Johnston for the first time and the two discussed their African schemes. Johnston told Rhodes of his Cape to Cairo scheme of extension for the British Empire and Lord Salisbury's sympathy with it. He also revealed that the Treasury's refusal to contribute to the cost of administration was causing the British Empire to lose Nyaseland, an important link in the Cape to Cairo scheme. Rhodes immediately made a bargain with Johnston. He wished the latter to see Lord Salisbury at once, to give Lord Rothschild as his reference and to tell the Foreign Secretary that if money was the only hindrance to the Imperial Government's "striking south from the Zambesi to the headwaters of the Nile," he would find the money. Rhodes was willing and did contribute the money for Johnston's expedition to Nyasaland including the necessary amount for treaty making with the chiefs and Arabs in the territory. Furthermore, he promised the English Government 10,000 pounds a year for the administration of the district on the condition that he receive his charter. According to Sir Harry, Rhodes and Lord Salisbury had an interview and the latter accepted his offer.8

No doubt Rhodes realized that Johnston and Salisbury would be of service to him in his imperial schemes. True, Rhodes did require the assent of Salisbury before he could expect to get his charter granted. Johnston's friendship likewise was to aid him. Joseph Chamberlain was not favourably inclined towards the grant of a charter to Rhodes and his new company. There were rumors at the Foreign Office that Chamberlain was going to ask an "awkward question" in the House of Commons relative to Rhodes's application for a charter. On hearing these rumors, Johnston made haste to see Chamberlain and was successful in persuading him to suspend further action.9

The Colonial office was in the meantime giving consideration to Rhodes's request. The national rivalry among the Portuguese, Boers, Germans and English in the Zambesi region, the demands of individual concessions as well as the growing demand for railroad development no doubt influenced the Imperial Government in its decision. Lord Knutsford of the Colonial office said Her Majesty's Government could not give its consent until full consideration was given to the financial and political effects of a charter on Bechuanaland and without recommendation of the High Commissioner and Governor of Cape Colony. Sir Hercules Robinson was all in

favor of granting a royal charter and immediately answered Lord Knutsford to that effect. With the idea that a company under a royal charter would be more directly subject to Her Majesty's Government than a joint stock company would be, and would relieve the Imperial Government from the diplomatic difficulties and expenditure involved, the charter after considerable negotiation was granted to the British South Africa Company on October 29, 1889.11

Extensive powers both of legislation and administration were conferred upon this new company. In fact so all embracing were its powers that one of its chief enemies among the concessioners in the region attacked the charter in the House of Commons on the ground that it was giving to a syndicate of private adventurers as much power as the old East India Company possessed. Furthermore, he expounded, "The whole pith of the charter is, really to confer all these powers on one person - Mr. Cecil Rhodes." Another spoke of the "crown alienating great African territories larger and more important than those of the Hudson's Bay Company." The Secretary of State for the Colonies did not let these

10 Raphael, Lois, The Cape to Cairo Dream, 124-125.
11Sir Lewis Michell, The Life and Times of the Right Honourable Cecil Rhodes, I, 279, citing letter from Colonial Office to Foreign Office May 16, 1889.
12For the Charter, see Parliamentary Papers, 1898, LX (C8773).
13340 Parliamentary Debates, 35, 564.
14Ibid., 567.
attacks go unheeded but vigorously defended Rhodes’s Chartered Company.15

This powerful company, the Colonial Secretary said, afforded the best means of "peacefully opening up and developing the resources" of the territory under its control, at the same time it would secure British interests "with the advance of trade and civilization."16 It was the work of Her Majesty’s Government, he pointed out, to spread the influence of civilization to the barbarous African districts without assuming the responsibilities involved. This would, he added, be possible through the Chartered Company while the control would still remain in the hands of Her Majesty’s Government.17

The sphere of operations defined in the Charter was as wide as the powers behind the organization. Rhodes managed to have no northern boundary set. The country had under its control the region of South Africa lying to the north of Bechuanaland and to the north and west of the South African Republic and West of the Portuguese Dominions.18 As Rhodes later told the shareholders of the chartered company, "we therefore possess the land minerals and territory from Mafeking

15 Ibid., 568–569.
16 Ibid., 486.
17 Ibid., 569.
18 Parliamentary Papers, 1898, LX, (8773).
to Tanganyika - that is, twelve hundred miles long and
five hundred broad. From Mafeking throughout the whole
Protectorate no one could obtain any concessions from the
natives except through the Chartered Company.

With the news that Rhodes's charter was granted,
there was much satisfaction to the people throughout Africa,
especially in Bechuanaland, since the railroad project was
almost a necessity, and especially needed to make effective
Rhodes's "Suez Canal" of the interior. The administrator
of British Bechuanaland, Sidney Shippard, voiced his opin-
ion as follows: "Only by means of a great trunk line of
railway can the advantages of that route be secured to Cape
Colony." Shippard like Rhodes had his imperial dream in
mind for he said, "Everything points to the necessity for
ultimate railway extension to the Zambezi valley, and both the
commercial and administrative center must from time to time
necessarily be shifted further and further north."21

The extension of the railroad to the north was to be
an important project for the Chartered Company to carry out.
In fact Rhodes based the grant of his charter on his promise
to extend the colonial railroad. "It was upon the strength
of this pledge," he wrote in a letter to Sir Gordon Sprigg,

19 Vindex, Rhodes, 420, citing speech, January 18, 1895.
20 Ibid.
21 Raphall, op. cit., 148.
the Prime Minister of Cape Colony, "that my application was favourably regarded by Her Majesty's Government, and that the British South Africa Company has been granted a charter for the development of the country north of British Bechuanaland and the Transvaal. 22

In fulfilling his promise to bring about the extension of the Colonial railroad from Kimberley, Rhodes desired to cooperate with the Cape Government. He sounded out Sir Gordon to this effect and received the reply October 26, 1889 that his Government was prepared to afford the facilities for the construction of the line since on its completion it anticipated purchasing the line. On the day the royal charter was granted an agreement was made between Rhodes representing the British South Africa Company and Sir Gordon Sprigg for the Cape Government whereby the Chartered Company was to construct the railroad from Kimberley to Fourteen Streams with power to continue the line to the boundary of British Bechuanaland and from there to Vryburg, a distance of one hundred and twenty-six miles. 23

In this extension of the railroad to the north Rhodes had to fight against the whole weight of influence of the Afrikander Bond. The Bond under its leader Mr. Hofmeyr, with characteristic foresight wished Kimberley to be the

22 Baron Emile d'Erlanger, "History and Finance of the Rhodesian Railways System." Weinhall, The Cape to Cairo Route, I, 649.

23 Michell, op. cit., I, 281.
terminus of the colonial line, or if it should be continued, through the Transvaal territory to the Zambesi. To get the railroad extended beyond Kimberley, Rhodes had to go to each farmer and buy the right to extend the road.

Mr. Hofmeyr, believing the north was Kruger's inheritance, was so opposed to the extension that he even tried to check Rhodes's plans by a resolution in Parliament which failed. Rhodes obtained his railroad only after a hard struggle in which Mr. Hofmeyr, the Bond and the Transvaal were arraigned against him.

In the negotiations regarding the railroad extension, the Imperial Government of British Bechuanaland played a dominant role. By agreement Her Majesty's Government was to give a grant of 12,000 square miles of land to the British South Africa Company with mineral rights thereon. 6,000 square miles was to be granted for the Kimberley Vryburg section, the remainder to be presented on the construction of the Vryburg-Mafeking link.

Within four days of the agreement work was begun on the Kimberley-Vryburg line. On December 23, 1889, the great northern movement began with the first rails laid out of Kimberley. In less than a year the railroad reached its

24 Erlanger, loc. cit., 649.
terminal point, Vryburg. This unattractive little town which Rhodes spoke of as his own creation was to be the starting point of the expeditions that followed Rhodes's pioneer column into Mashonaland. This Kimberley Vryburg section, together with two-thirds interest in the 6,000 square mile land grant of the Imperial Government was taken over by the Cape Government before its completion.

The British South Africa Company, which began the construction in the first instance retained one-third interest in the land and the mineral grant of 6,000 square miles in British Bechuanaland.

Rhodes had been accused by his opponents of leading the people into some expense in connection with this section of the line (that is from Kimberley to Vryburg). He proved this was not the case in an address in which he said that he had the money for this line before he became Prime Minister and was prepared to build it. The Government at the time had wished to be connected with the Kimberley Vryburg construction in order to promote annexation of this territory through which the line passed. It therefore desired to build the line to Vryburg if the Chartered Company would

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27. Vindex, Rhodes, 587, citing speech at Vryburg, September 3, 1888.
construct the line one hundred miles further. "So you must dismiss from your minds," Rhodes said, "the idea that I led this colony into the Vryburg extension. It was done before I was Prime Minister," he continued, "and at the device of the late Government...."

Although the promise to extend the railroad to Vryburg had been fulfilled, Rhodes did not intend to commence the immediate construction of the line to Mafeking. The finance for this section was, no doubt, difficult but if Rhodes had wished to carry on the work he could have done it. The Bechuanaland Railway, which was the title that Rhodes gave to the Kimberley Vryburg line, was extended to Mafeking at the instigation of Sir Charles Metcalfe. Only after Metcalfe had received a tender from Messrs. Pauling to extend the railway from Vryburg to Mafeking, a distance of one hundred miles at the rate of two thousand pounds per mile, was Rhodes induced to continue the line and to find the necessary finance.

To carry out its obligations to extend the line to Mafeking, the British South Africa Company created the Bechuanaland Railway Company on May 23, 1893. To this


31 Mr. George Pauling was the railway contractor who built the greater part of the railways in the Cape to Cairo chain.


33 This company later became known as the Rhodesian Railways, Limited.
Company by agreement August 4, 1893 the British South Africa Company transferred its rights as well as its obligations in respect to the railway extension from Vryburg to the north. With this transfer went the Chartered Company's one third interest in the 6,000 square miles of land presented for the Kimberley Vryburg construction. In return the British South Africa Company received six thousand shares in the capital of the Bechuanaland Company, the Chartered Company agreeing to a subscription for three hundred thousand pounds debentures in case at par. 34

The negotiations arranged, the railroad was immediately begun and was completed to Mafeking in October 1894. This town like Vryburg now became the last outpost of the railroad. Due to its proximity to the Transvaal border it became the headquarters of a considerable number of mounted police. Within a few years the Jameson raid was to turn the eyes of the world on this little outpost. 35

While the Cape railroad was progressing northwards, events were quickly taking place in the north thereby opening the path for future railroad development. Lobengula challenged the British occupation of Mashonaland by sending marauders over the border to Fort Victoria. Negotiations

34Erlanger, loc. cit., 650.
35Hole, loc. cit., 29.
failing to appease Lobengula and his warlike Matabelees, an expedition of chartered volunteers under Dr. Jameson and of the Imperial Police marched in on Matabeleland, captured the capital, Bulawayo, and put the king to flight on November 4, 1893.

By agreement with the Crown May 1894 Rhodes was able to secure Matabeleland for the Chartered Company and to govern it on lines similar to those of the Crown Colony. "In effect Rhodes", writes Williams "as sole managing director of the Company, became almost absolute in the whole territory extending from Bechuanaland to the Zambesi."36

As a result of the capture of Matabeleland, Mafeking became in 1894 a busy port of entry into this northern territory. Settlers flocked from this town to Bulawayo, five hundred miles away. Railroad development was especially needed to connect the towns, although there was regular mail coach service between the towns.37

Rhodes apparently did not intend to continue the rails to Bulawayo. He told the shareholders of the Chartered Company that if the country warranted further railway development the money could be found apart from the charter, while if the country did not warrant railroad extension beyond Mafeking then he said we had better not build it.38 Already

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36 Cecil Rhodes, 180.
37 Hale, loc. cit., 31.
38 Vindex, Rhodes, 424, citing speech, January 18, 1895.
the company had paid for one hundred miles of railroad
in the Crown Colony of Bechuanaland and had fourteen
hundred miles of telegraph by 1895. 39

Rhodes had built the railroad to Mafeking because
he felt he could not face the people unless he had ful-
filled his obligations. 40 Both for the railroad and tele-
graph to the north Rhodes had sanctioned and raised the
money. 41 In reviewing these developments Rhodes later ac-
nowledged the importance of popular favor in completing his
Imperial projects, "For after all, even if you have the
wealth, it is impossible to carry out a conception unless
you have the feeling of the people with you." 42

The vast interior of Africa was gradually being
absorbed by England and the railroad and telegraph were
quickly developing. All this was being accomplished by the
Company without expense to England. The Company, Rhodes
said, had the courage to forge ahead when the Imperial Gov-
ernment did not and the Cape Government was too poor to do
so. 43

Rhodes, however, did have to find some motive to

39 Ibid., 421.
40 Ibid., 342, citing speech at Cape Town, January 6, 1894.
41 Ibid., 355.
42 Ibid., 340.
43 Ibid., citing speech, January 18, 1895.
stimulate interest in his Imperial schemes. It was necessary to combine his expansion policy with the commercial motive. If he had not done so, he told the shareholders of the Chartered Company, "we should not have succeeded." Mineral wealth was to help the Cape to Cairo project materialize. As early as 1891, Rhodes sent Mr. Robert Williams to report on the mineral possibilities of Rhodesia, in order to enable him to extend his railroad. The railroad, wrote Williams, did follow the mineral discoveries all the length of the route.

Although the Vryburg Mafeking section of the Cape to Cairo chain proved a financial success, Rhodes did not immediately continue the line north, even though the settlers in Rhodesia wished railroad communications. Before construction was to begin on the next stage of the line, that is from Mafeking to Bulawayo, Rhodes wished to bring the Bechuanaland Protectorate, through which the railroad was to run to Bulawayo, under the Chartered Company's control. Negotiations were therefore to follow with Her Majesty's Government before the next link in the Cape to Cairo route was to be completed.

44 Ibid., 440.
46 Metcalfe, loc. cit., 101.
Chapter III
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

Arrangements had been made for the next section in the Cape to Cairo railroad in the late summer of 1894, with a tripartite agreement between the Government of British Bechuanaland, the British South Africa Company and the Bechuanaland Railway Company, Limited for the railroad from Mafeking to Palapye. This line was to be divided into two sections, the first running from Mafeking to Gaberanes and the second, from Gaberanes to Palapye. For each section the Imperial Government was to pay a subsidy of ten thousand pounds per annum for ten years, in conjunction with a subsidy of five thousand pounds per annum from the British South Africa Company for the same duration.¹

Before construction was to begin beyond Mafeking, Rhodes wished two territorial changes made, first that British Bechuanaland, the territory through which the railroad ran to Mafeking, be transferred to the Cape Government; and second, that administrative control of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, through which any extension of the railroad from Mafeking to Rhodesia must pass, be placed in the hands of the British South Africa Company. In regard to the first

¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1894, V. 57, 277, citing the Treasury minute respecting the proposed Bechuanaland Railway agreement.
request, the British Government had been willing to hand
over this territory to the Cape Government when the latter
proved capable of administrating it. Rhodes had negotiated
with Lord Ripon, the Colonial Secretary, as early as 1884
and received his approval for the annexation of British
Bechuanaland but the transfer was not made until Mr. Cham-
berlain entered the colonial office. The Bechuanaland
Protectorate, on the other hand, although within the sphere
of the Chartered Company's operations was not under the
administrative control of the company. Rhodes in a letter
to Lord Ripon November 1896 asked when the Imperial Govern-
ment was going to fulfill its engagement to the Chartered
Company, remarking that he would never have undertaken the
railroad northwards had he thought he would not control the
Protectorate. Lord Roseberry's Government, on the brink
of its downfall, was afraid to make the decision giving the
Company control, although it had no objections to Rhodes's
wishes. As a result it lay with Mr. Chamberlain, Lord
Ripon's successor to carry out Rhodes's demands. 2

As Prime Minister of Cape Colony Rhodes therefore
took the initiative in writing to Mr. Chamberlain, the new
Secretary of State for the Colonies on July 9, 1895. After

2 Williams, Basil, Cecil Rhodes, 256-257.
congratulating Chamberlain in his new position, he set forth his demands. Wishing to take over the Bechuanaland Protectorate at once, Rhodes tried to influence Chamberlain to grant this request by saying that this transfer would save England eighty thousand pounds a year. Furthermore, he promised to build the railroad from Mafeking to Bulawayo within a period of four years and to begin construction on the road no more than a month after the transfer. When could he annex British Bechuanaland to the Cape, was the question he asked of Chamberlain. According to the correspondence with the late Government, the Protectorate was promised to the Chartered Company and there was merely the question, Rhodes said, of when it would be handed over.3

Chamberlain, new to his office, found himself, as he later stated, confronted with the necessity of deciding upon these two important questions, the demand made by Rhodes as Prime Minister of Cape Colony for the latter's annexation of the Bechuanaland Crown Colony and the further demand acting in his capacity as managing director of the Chartered Company for the transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Although Chamberlain was averse to handing over British Bechuanaland since he thought Imperial control would be better, he had no alternative than to transfer

this territory, for the promises had been made by his predecessors. 4

The question of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was not to be decided so easily. Chamberlain did not intend immediately to hand over this territory to the Chartered Company. Indeed he was not even to be rushed into granting the strip of territory that the Company wished. Rhodes was therefore faced with the problem of getting the Bechuanaland Protectorate, or a strip of it, for the extension of the railroad to Rhodesia. To fulfill this objective he commissioned Dr. Rutherford Harris, together with other Chartered Company agents, to lay siege to the Colonial office.

The negotiations between Chamberlain and the Colonial office on the one hand, and the Chartered Company's agents on the other, proceeded just a few weeks after Chamberlain had taken over his office. Interviews followed between Dr. Harris and the Colonial Secretary in the late summer and autumn of 1895. The first interview was held at the Colonial office on August 1. 5

At this meeting Dr. Harris urged the immediate transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Rhodes, Harris later said,

4Parliamentary Papers, 1897, V. 9, "Report from the Select Committee on British South Africa," 311, p. 337. Hereafter this will be cited as "Select Committee Report."

5Ibid., citing Chamberlain's evidence.
pressed for this transfer since the first clause of the Charter stated that its sphere of operations began at Mafeking. If the transfer were made, the Cape Colony and the Chartered Company would be coterminous, an important step in Rhodes's plans for federation would thereby be accomplished. Together with the extension by the railroad from Mafeking to Bulawayo, Harris mentioned a third factor entering into the negotiations. The Dutch colonists were anxious to occupy the land in the Protectorate under the condition that they could secure their title under the Company. With these objects in view, Rhodes was anxious to obtain control of the Protectorate. Moreover his anxiety was increased when he heard that the principal Bechuanaland chiefs, who ruled the territory through which the railroad was to pass, intended to visit England and protest against the transfer. If they were successful in their plea, railroad extension would be stopped and the grant aiding the extension of the line, as promised by Lord Lock with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, would be imperilled. Harris, therefore, brought these arguments before the Colonial Secretary at this first interview. The transfer was desirable, Harris strongly urged, in fact necessary for Rhodes to complete his railroad schemes. "I entered," Harris reported, "necessarily at great length and in minute detail, into all the questions
of the late Government's promise, of Khama's opposition, the necessity for the railway, the question of subsidy, the Boer trekkers, and other matters pertinent to the transfer."

Chamberlain was not to be easily influenced by Harris's reasoning into granting Rhodes's request. True, his predecessors Knutsford and Ripon had pledged that the Protectorate would ultimately go to the Chartered Company, but they had set no date for its cession, and Chamberlain wanted to postpone its transfer to some later date. However, he did express his strong interest in Rhodes's policy of carrying the railroad to Rhodesia. He told Dr. Harris that it was almost the chief item in the program that he had proposed for himself. That program was in his own words "to complete and extend communications in the British possessions." Furthermore the Colonial Secretary realized the immense importance of connecting Cape Colony with the land under the Chartered Company. Rhodes, he told Dr. Harris, could rely "upon getting from me any assistance that it was in my power to render in order to secure the completion of these railway works." It was not absolutely necessary, though, that the Protectorate be transferred, Chamberlain pointed out. Wishing the railroad to continue northwards,

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6 Ibid., 336-37, citing Dr. Harris's evidence before the Select Committee.
he did consent to Harris's demand on behalf of Rhodes, that a strip of territory along the Protectorate's border be put under the company's control providing the Bechuana chiefs could come to some agreement with Rhodes. Whatever might be the fate of the Protectorate, though, Chamberlain explained that he would support Rhodes's application and give him all the facilities that he might require in extending the railway. The net result of this first interview was, in brief, Chamberlain's refusal of the Protectorate but his promise to give every possible support to the railroad. 7

Wishing to commence construction at once on the railroad from Mafeking to Gaberones, Rhodes communicated with Colonial office on August 21. The rapid development of Rhodesia and the urgent demand of the inhabitants required the extension of the railroad. The Company was ready to continue the line subject to the terms of Lord Ripon's dispatch of December 20, 1892. Rhodes wished the land grants, as specified in the dispatch, presented to the Company. These were he wrote:

"(1) One mile on each side of the railroad along the route.

(2) A block of twenty miles square at or near Gaberones, the terminus at which place a township was to be immediately established."

7Ibid., 358, citing Chamberlain's evidence.
Due to the considerable opposition to the railroad extension among certain of the chiefs in the Protectorate, as well as the uneasiness that an influx of white settlers might arouse, Rhodes proposed that a certain portion of the Chartered Company's police be stationed for a time at Gaberones, as a necessary protection to the railroad works and to the maintenance of order. Realizing the great delay and expense that would ensue through asking the Imperial Government to furnish such a force, Rhodes's solution to the problem was the Chartered Company's police.8

Before Chamberlain answered Rhodes's proposal, he wished to sound out Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, in regard to the question of a police force being stationed at Gaberones under the British South Africa Company.9 Although Sir Hercules generally agreed with Rhodes and backed his schemes, he did find opposition to this proposal. If, he answered Chamberlain, the Chartered Company administered that part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate through which the railroad was to pass there would be nothing objectional to their police being stationed at Gaberones, but since the country remained part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, such a proposal was, he believed undesirable.10

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8 Parliamentary Papers, 1896, V. 59 (C7962), no. 6, citing a letter of the British South Africa Company to the Colonial office. Hereafter this command paper will be cited P. P. (C7962).

9 Ibid., no. 8.

10 Ibid., no. 12.
After receiving Sir Hercules reply, Chamberlain had the British South Africa Company notified that the land grants Rhodes request were not as extensive as those set forth in Lord Ripon's dispatch but merely land sufficient for extending the line with sites for stations, yards and the like. Chamberlain directed the chartered company to approach the chiefs along the line and get their approval to grant what was wanted. The Government officials will then, he said, induce the chiefs to agree. As to the question of the police force, Rhodes's wish was not fulfilled. In the meantime Chamberlain asked the High Commissioner to try and obtain for the Chartered Company the lands necessary for the railroad. Further than this Chamberlain would not oblige himself until he had seen the protesting Bechuana chiefs.

In early September the chiefs, Khama, Sebele and Buthenen arrived in London. In an interview with the Colonial Secretary they voiced their fears. As they later put it, "We fear that Company because we think they will take our land and sell it to others. We see that they are not content with the concessions that we have given them, and that they want us also...." Would the Government of

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11Ibid., no. 11
12Ibid., no. 13.
13Ibid., no. 15.
the Great Queen continue protection over them, was the question they asked Her Majesty's Government. 14

Chamberlain informed the chiefs that in time the Bechuanaland Protectorate would be under the Chartered Company's control. Although he was bound by his predecessor's to hand over the territory, this would not be done, he told them, without consideration for their wishes. At the same time he advised the chiefs to confer with the Chartered Company and to try to come to some agreement over the railroad strip. 15

While Rhodes's agents were working for him in London, he in turn was carrying on negotiations for his railroad. Unable to get the whole Protectorate and delayed by Chamberlain in getting the railroad strip, Rhodes took measures of his own with the two remaining chiefs who had not sailed for London. These two chiefs owned about forty miles of land in the Protectorate to be traversed by the first section of the railroad. 16 Both the High Commissioner and Chamberlain were fully in accord with Rhodes's proposal to get the assent of these two chiefs to the transfer of the administrative rights of their territory to the Chartered Company. 17

14 Ibid., no. 22.
15 Ibid., no. 21.
16 Ibid., no. 25.
17 Ibid., Nos. 18 and 19.
As a result of Rhodes's successful negotiations with the two chiefs, the High Commissioner with Chamberlain's approval, by proclamation on October 18, 1895 placed the territory of the two chiefs under Charter rule. The Company was now ready to proceed with the railroad and stated construction would begin four days afterward.

With this agreement Chamberlain was now determined to bring about a final settlement between the Bechuanas chiefs in London and the Company's representatives. No doubt the need for the railroad extension influenced Chamberlain in coming to a decision, for he said "...it is absolutely necessary that the railway to Matabeleland should be proceeded with as quickly as possible and that it should run through the eastern part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate." Also hastening him in a decision was the letter he received from the chiefs in November, stating that they would give the land for the railroad if they were kept under the Queen's protection. They were anxious that a reservation of territory be made in which their rule as chiefs would be maintained under the Imperial Government's supervision.

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18 Garvin, op. cit., III, 50.
19 Parliamentary Papers, (7962), no. 35.
20 Parliamentary Papers, (7962), no. 33.
Chamberlain, therefore, called a meeting at the Colonial office on November 6 at which the three chiefs, their missionary interpreters, some directors of the Chartered Company, including Harris, and representatives of the Colonial office were present. Chamberlain gave his decision by marking on a map ample tribal reserves to be entirely under the crown, the rest of the Protectorate was to pass under the Chartered Company's administration. 22

In this transaction the Company was to gain about a hundred thousand square miles of territory, at the same time it was to forfeit the twenty thousand pounds (that is the ten thousand pounds that was to be presented annually for ten years for the completion of each section of the line) promised by the late Liberal Government, as a subsidy for the railway. Rhodes, after weeks of negotiation, was anxious to bring about a settlement of the question even though it meant a sacrifice to the Chartered Company. He therefore advised the Company's acceptance of Chamberlain's proposals. 23

Far from desirable to Rhodes was the settlement he had received from the Imperial Government. His dissatisfaction was revealed in the wrathful notes that he conveyed to his

22 Ibid.

23 Garvin, op. cit., III, 50.
agent in London. He referred to the settlement as a "scandal." It was, he believed "humiliating to be utterly beaten" by these African chiefs. To Harris he wrote, "They think more of one native at home than the whole of South Africa." As far as the money settlement, Rhodes never objected to this part of the agreement and wrote Harris to give the two hundred thousand pounds, adding "...we would sooner not have it as I do not wish English people to think we have made a pecuniary bargain which is unfair to them." But to be "beaten by three canting natives," as Rhodes put it—he did object to that. The one satisfaction to Rhodes was that his railway could now move forward unhampered on its way to the north.

24 These telegrams are given in the "Select Committee Report", Appendix (1897) S11-I, pp. 595-96.
Chapter IV
UNFORESEEN EVENTS

Smooth progress was not to be the case in the construction of the line from Mafeking to Gaberones. In December of 1895 the Jameson Raid practically brought Rhodes's imperial enterprise to disaster. In fact, Rhodes's hitherto brilliant career of continued successes and great achievements was to be temporarily darkened. Rhodes was not to let this affair check his ambitious schemes though. He considered his public life was just beginning. He was going to remain in politics and work for the development of the Empire. The Dutch and English welcomed him. Indeed the Raid which was so disastrous to himself made Rhodes doubly popular with the loyal English colonists. 

Closely following the Raid were two incidents which especially intensified the urgency of railroad construction through to Bulawayo. The first of these was an epidemic of rinderpest in Rhodesia, which swept away the cattle upon which the inhabitants were dependent for the transport of supplies. About the same time the Matabele tribes once more broke into revolt. Without ox transport the necessities of life rose to famine prices in Matabeleland, while the difficulty in suppressing the rebellious tribes was greatly

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1 Vindex, Rhodes, 507-508.
increased. Railroad extension had to be hastened at all costs to alleviate these conditions.\(^2\)

The Chartered Company once again came to the rescue. Debentures were issued to the amount of two million pounds, the Chartered Company agreeing to guarantee the interest for twenty years.\(^3\) Consequently the line under Messrs. Pauling, the contractors, was rushed forward from its terminal at Palapye, reached in May, 1897.

In a speech at Bulawayo in June 1896 before the line reached this point, Rhodes mentioned the recent railroad developments. He emphasized that the Chartered Company had done their utmost to bring the inhabitants within reach of speedy railway communication.\(^4\) Indeed he thought the best thing the Chartered Company had done was "its steady determination to develop the southern railway...."\(^5\) The railroad was being pushed on with all possible speed at the rate of one mile a day. The rails would, he pointed out, be laid as fast as the Cape authorities supplied them. In this development the mines, he said, would pay the cost, at the same time he ventured to say that if railroad communication was established the mining cost would be reduced by one-half.

"As to the future," continued Rhodes, "when discussing it I

\(^2\) Hole, loc. cit., 31.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Vind EX, Rhodes, 483, citing his speech at Bulawayo, 1896.
\(^5\) Ibid., 487.
think our conversation would begin and end with railways, but we can say no more than that we will give you the railway within the shortest time possible. The one satisfaction Rhodes felt during the difficulties of the rinderpest and the Revolt was that they were hastening the railroad northwards, and the pledge to Salisbury to unite the country by speedy railroad communication was being fulfilled.  

In the fall of 1897 the Cape to Cairo railroad was open for traffic to Bulawayo. This event was the occasion for a great celebration. The opening was attended by a number of members from Parliament and official visitors from different parts of Africa. Even Queen Victoria showed her keen interest in Rhodes's Imperial project by cabling a message of congratulations. Rhodes, although prevented by illness from attending the ceremonies, was, without a doubt happy to see his transcontinental railway scheme 1,550 miles nearer its realization than when he had started.

So successful was the Vryburg Bulawayo line financially that Rhodes became all the more enthusiastic in carrying forward his Imperial project. Up to date the railway to Bulawayo had cost about three thousand pounds a mile and was paying

6 Ibid., 486.
7 Ibid., 490.
9 Howard Hensman, Cecil Rhodes, 300.
10 Metcalf, loc. cit., 103.
about twelve thousand pounds per month. A financial success so far, Rhodes believed the railroad should be extended from Bulawayo to the shores of Lake Tanganyika. He told the shareholders of the Chartered Company that they were responsible for the northern part of Rhodesia as well as the southern. "You have, he explained, "another four hundred thousand square miles there and a railway is effective occupation." 11

In the extension of the railroad beyond Bulawayo, Rhodes did not intend to ask the Chartered Company to subscribe further capital, since it had its obligations. Besides he believed the Chartered Company had done enough for Her Majesty's Government already. He summarized what the Company had done as follows, ".....the English people have at the present moment received eight hundred thousand square miles of territory in the world for which they have not paid a single shilling." But they were not appreciative of this fact for, he continued, "The only thing it had given them is the opportunity to Little Englanders in the House of Commons to indulge in every class of criticism without expense to the country." There was one factor, though, in Rhodes's favor in his scheme for northward extension and that was the change in English public opinion.

11Vindex, Rhodes, 693, citing speech April 21, 1898.
The English people were finally beginning to realize that England by itself was a "hopeless proposition" and that they must keep as much of the world as possible in order to have markets for their trade.\(^\text{12}\)

Taking these two factors into consideration, that is the favourable English public opinion toward expansion and the vast territory added to the British Empire through the charter, Rhodes believed he could get the backing of the Imperial Government in the future development of his railroad from Bulawayo to Lake Tanganyika. He accordingly started for Europe in 1898 to put his schemes on foot.

\(^{12}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 695.
Chapter V
TANGANYIKA PROPOSALS

Arriving in London early in 1898, Rhodes immediately approached the Colonial Office with his request for the cooperation of Her Majesty's Government in the extension of the iron road from Bulawayo to Lake Tanganyika, a distance which he estimated to be between seven hundred and eight hundred miles. This advance of the road had been favourably received by the Cape Government. Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Premier of Cape Colony was, as he stated in a letter to Rhodes, extremely interested in Rhodes's work in the north and endeavoured in his position to aid his new enterprise.

With the intimation that Rhodes intended to push the railway to Tanganyika, Sir Gordon wished to cooperate in this new undertaking for he believed it would "materially promote British supremacy in South Africa." If Rhodes was successful in obtaining the assistance of Her Majesty's Government he would be prepared to confer with his cabinet colleagues with a view to submitting proposals to the Cape Parliament by which the Colony might practically contribute towards the cost of extending the line. ¹ Would Her Majesty's Government look with like favor on his proposals? This was the

¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1899, v. 63 (19323), Enclosure in no. 1, Sir Gordon Sprigg to Rhodes, March 18, 1898.
question which Rhodes wished the Imperial Government to consider.

It was Rhodes's idea to have the Bechuanaland Railway Company, Limited to extend the line with the sanction of the Imperial Government, he therefore submitted his proposition as the director of the Bechuanaland Railway and not as the director of the Chartered Company. His plan was to have the Imperial Government give a treasury guarantee enabling the Bechuanaland Railway Company to raise at Government rates of interest a couple of millions or more. As Rhodes explained to the shareholders of the Chartered Company, "If I or the Bechuanaland Railway tried to borrow two million pounds it would cost us five per cent., but if you go and ask for that amount for us, if you will get up behind our promissory note, it can be discounted for three per cent. instead of five per cent."2

Rhodes recommended that the Bechuanaland Railway Company could raise the necessary funds by further issues of debentures, after provision was made to safeguard the holders of the present debenture issue. The security Rhodes proposed subject to the present debentures would be the whole line of five hundred and seventy-four miles from Vryburg to Bulawayo, of any further extensions, of the subsidies paid

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2 *Index, Rhodes*, 695, citing speech, April 21, 1898.
by the Imperial Government and the British South Africa Company and of blocks of valuable land in the Bechuanaland Protectorate of eight thousand square miles. The British South Africa Company would be prepared to guarantee the interest upon the further issue of debentures required. Rhodes further suggested that the line should be constructed in two hundred mile sections, the funds required raised separately. In this way, Rhodes pointed out, Her Majesty's Government could refuse to guarantee the interest upon the debentures to be issued on any section of the line which did not show satisfactory commercial prospects. 3

After stating his proposition, Rhodes then appealed to the Colonial Office from a commercial Imperial and moral point of view as to the absolute necessity of building the Tanganyika railway. 4 His points were well chosen and could not but awaken the Imperial Government to the importance of this northern territory.

The path of the line would, as Rhodes pointed out, tap the valuable coal fields and traverse the promising gold reefs in this northern territory. Once the Zambezi was crossed excellent cattle country would be brought within reach. The line would continue through territory densely populated with natives and would thereby absorb for many

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3Parliamentary Papers, 1899, v. 67 (C9323), no. 1, citing Rhodes to Colonial Office, April 28, 1898.

years the greater portion of the trade of the Upper Zambesi, the Upper Congo and the western portions of German East Africa as well as Northern Rhodesia. It was probable, Rhodes foresaw, that an important industry in rubber and other vegetable products could be developed in the region.

There was also the highly mineralized areas of Northern Rhodesia and the valuable copper deposits in the Congo State on the borders of the British South Africa Company's territories which would be brought into easy reach by this proposed line.

Besides tapping the wealth of the country and opening new markets to trade, the line would, Rhodes continued, greatly benefit the Kimberley Johannesburg and Rhodesian miner, since there was a great demand for native labor, making the unskilled labor wage reach a high figure. Through the railroad to the north, native labor could be brought into easy reach, thereby cheapening the labor supply. The mining companies of the Witwatersrand had even suggested that they would financially assist in the undertaking in order to get the railroad extended.

Taking these facts into consideration, Rhodes firmly believed that each section of the line would on its completion pay its own way. The proposal for the new connection was strengthened by the extremely satisfactory results which had already been shown by the Mafeking Bulawayo line. The profit
would likewise be maintained on this new section of the line since Rhodesia was rapidly progressing and the goods carried to and from the interior would necessarily pass over this line.

Rhodes then emphasized the desirability of support being given to the projected enterprise by pointing to the "political and international obligations of Her Majesty's Government." The Imperial Government had bound itself by the Brussels Act of 1870 to suppress the slave trade within the territory under its direction. It was therefore "the duty of Her Majesty's Government as well as its interest," he pointed out, to further his proposed scheme, while, "promoting the development of valuable British Possessions, will at the same time serve, on the completion of the railway to Uganda, to close entirely the slave route to the East Coast and thus deal a final blow to the slave traffic through out the greater portion of Central Africa."

From the moral motive, Rhodes continued to the Imperial. The railroad was, he stressed, needed to strengthen Great Britain's Imperial position in Africa. In the absence of railway or water transportation, the establishment of a strong administration was practically impossible. Strengthening his point, Rhodes added that there would have been no rebellion in Bulawayo in 1896 had the railroad been extended. There were now turbulent conditions in Northern Rhodesia and the British Central African Protectorate, therefore he urged
that "the railway should be immediately extended and that peace and order should be secured in the territories for whose administration Her Majesty's Government is ultimately responsible." Since it was the consistent policy of England to encourage railroad enterprises in India by subsidies and guarantees due to commercial inducements there, why, Rhodes reasoned, should not Her Majesty's Government aid him in this case where considerations of equal if not greater force could be stressed. 5

These, then, were Rhodes's well formulated reasons for his Tanganyika railroad extension, which he hoped would find favor with the Imperial Government. Again it must be understood that Rhodes in this extension did not ask the Imperial Government to subscribe any money; all he asked was to borrow money on the Imperial Government's credit. Rhodes stressed in his letter to the Colonial Office that there was not the slightest probability that the Imperial Government would be called upon to make any payment under the guarantee out of Imperial funds. This could only happen if both the Bechuanaland Railway Company and the British South Africa Company failed to meet their obligations, and this, Rhodes told the Imperial Government, was almost absurd to contemplate. 6

5Parliamentary Papers, 1899, v. 63 (C9323), no. 1.
6Ibid.
The Colonial Office was fairly prompt in replying to Rhodes's request, for on July 28, just three months after his letter was written, he received an answer. 7 Again Rhodes had to carry on his negotiations with Mr. Chamberlain. The Colonial Secretary was highly in favor of this railroad development for he looked to the railway as the most advantageous and economical means for the Imperial Government to secure the peace, order and good administration of the territory under the Chartered Company for which the Imperial Government was responsible. The scheme, he wrote, was highly commended by the Imperial Government but before the latter could invite Parliament to give financial support, more definite information was required on certain points. As to the assistance the Government considered giving, this was, for the time being, to be confined to the first section northwards from Bulawayo. Before any definite answer could be given, the Imperial Government required that an adequate survey be made of this line on which a fairly accurate estimate of the cost could be based. In return for the support of the Imperial Government, Chamberlain said that the Imperial Government expected favourable terms for the transport of mails, troops, Government officials and stores. As was the case with the existing railroad. In the event of

7Ibid., no. 2.
this railroad becoming a source of additional profit to the railroad company, the Imperial Government would want a reasonable share of those profits. In conclusion Chamberlain stated that he attached great importance to the substantial cooperation on the part of the Cape Government for its railways would be greatly benefitted by the success of Rhodes's project. Therefore evidence of the Cape Government's cooperation was to be a first condition of any assistance given by the Imperial Government.

This letter closed the first stage of the negotiations between Rhodes and Her Majesty's Government. So far there was every possibility that some agreement could be arranged. Rhodes was truly confident that the way was clear and the time opportune for the great development of his line. Such were his thoughts when he spoke to the Chartered Company. "Your Little England school has gone. Things being limited to the white cliffs of England is over. You must deal with the whole world and here is a chance of your getting another continent." By endorsing the promissory note enabling the rails to go to Tanganyika England would, he said, be getting without expense the whole of Africa.

Very early in the following year, Rhodes was once

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8 Vindex, Rhodes, 704, citing speech, April 21, 1898.
9 Ibid., 703.
more back in England and at once reopened the subject of
the railroad extension with the Colonial Office in a letter
dated January 17, 1899. He had used the interval to obtain
from the Colonial Office the information sought. Sir
Charles Metcalfe, the consulting engineer of the Chartered
Company, had been dispatched by Rhodes to inspect the proposed
route of the line beyond Bulawayo as far as the Zambezi. His
report was, therefore, included for the Government's informa-
tion. Besides the inspection of the route, Sir Charles had
made a detailed survey of the line from Bulawayo to Gweilo
in which he had satisfied himself that there would be no
special engineering difficulties. He estimated the cost not
to exceed thirty-five hundred pounds per mile. Rhodes's
proposals for raising the money for construction purposes was
also entered in this letter.10

Although Rhodes's plans was enthusiastically received
by the shareholders of the Chartered Company and he himself
had all confidence in the Government's support of his pro-
posals, since the first stage of the negotiations had been
so favourably received by the Colonial Office, Rhodes was
to find the Imperial Government still inclined to procrasti-
nate. Again he tried to hasten a decision by giving further

10 Parliamentary Papers, 1899, v. 63 (C9323), no. 3.
proposals which he thought would satisfy the Government.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition, he tried to awaken the Government to the important role played by the Bechuanaland Railway Company, believing this would bring the Government's acceptance of his proposals. Had it not been for the Bechuanaland Railway Company which had undertaken railroad construction in the territory under Imperial control, Her Majesty's Government, Rhodes wrote, would have been compelled to provide the whole cost of the railway in order to develop their own territories.\textsuperscript{12}

Rhodes's additional proposals and well directed remarks fell on stony ground, for Her Majesty's Government considered that while incurring a risk it would gain no adequate financial advantages in accepting Rhodes's proposals. Besides no provision had been made for the Cape Government to participate in the guarantee, and this was the first condition required before Her Majesty's Government rendered assistance. The counter proposals presented by the Imperial Government proved unacceptable to Rhodes as we shall see later.\textsuperscript{13}

During these negotiations Rhodes had to reckon with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hicks-Beach, who lost no

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., no. 4.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Parliamentary Papers, 1899, v. 67 (09323), no. 5.
to Rhodes. His interview with Hicks-Beach was decidedly unfavourable. Rhodes spoke of him as having no imagination or manners. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not to open the Imperial purse to Rhodes for he had no belief in the Cape to Cairo project, and even doubted that Rhodes did. In speaking of Rhodes he said, "I have seen enough of men who control the company and their methods from Mr. Rhodes downwards to distrust them." He believed Rhodes's real game was to boost skyward the shares of the Chartered Company by creating the impression that Imperial credit was reinforcing the Company.

Since the enormous expansion of the Empire had been carried out by private enterprise and at private expense so far, no doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer believed it was good business to refuse an Imperial guarantee, for would not Rhodes succeed in carrying out this enterprise as he had done everything else. The treasury's view was at least practical if not generous. Rhodes had found the means so far for his Imperial schemes without Imperial responsibility, so there was every possibility that he could manage this undertaking.

During these negotiations, the Cape to Cairo project

14 Carvin, op. cit., III, 385.
15 Ibid., III, 386.
16 Vindex, Rhodes, 632.
did not fail to receive its share of attention in the English Parliament. Criticisms both for and against Rhodes's project were brought forward. One member believed the railroad to Tanganyika would tap a great area which had been "specially reserved for such efforts by the United wisdom of Europe." To this he added, "...we shall tap the area of free trade provided by the Brussels Act of 1885..." He very vividly described the immense importance of Rhodes's project as follows, "I believe it is in fact the backbone of South and Central Africa, and if you construct this railway you will give that backbone a spinal cord, and then this dark African continent which has lain so long inert, will at last begin to live and move and have its being."\(^{17}\)

Another Cape to Cairo enthusiast commented as follows, "I, for one, hope that it may not be long before there is a railway constructed to connect Cairo and the Cape. I can conceive of no more civilizing influence that could be brought to bear than the laying down of a railway throughout that great continent, which would open it up to civilization and to trade, and give the final death-blow to that cursed system of slavery that has so long disgraced the dark Continent of Africa."\(^{18}\)

Oppositely inclined was Sir William Harcourt's opinion

\(^{17}\) *Parliamentary Debates*, 42., 570-71.
of the project. He ridiculed Rhodes's project as a "wild-cat" scheme. He was sure it would not be accepted by the House of Commons or the English people and hoped Her Majesty's Government would refuse it. Since, Rhodes said, the Chartered Company was to be charged with no further liabilities, who was to pay for this new extension. In the end the British taxpayers will be the ones who will pay for it, Harcourt said. This scheme would without a doubt develop the property of the Chartered Company north of the Zambesi and be of great advantage commercially to the Company but they are to pay nothing for it, he continued. Rhodes, he said, will say, "Look at the map. You get the railway to Tanganika. You have Her Majesty's sanction for the railway into Uganda......and then you have Kitchener coming down from Khartoum. That gives you Africa the whole of it." Ridiculous was this idea of Rhodes to take the whole of Africa with two million pounds.19

The Secretary of the State for the Colonies could not see the logic of Sir William's reasoning for he answered as follows, "I ask is it one atom more ridiculous,.....than the original proposal to make the Canadian Pacific Railway? The Canadian Pacific Railway has made the Dominion of Canada."

19 57 Parliamentary Debates, 4s., 588-87.
Therefore, he added, "there is nothing more ridiculous and nothing more improbable successful in the proposal now made by Mr. Rhodes than in the proposition of the Canadian Pacific Railway." 20

Although the Uganda railroad was being built with Imperial funds, Her Majesty's Government could not see its way clear to accede to Rhodes's proposals for the Tanganyika line. The Government did present Rhodes with counter proposals. It offered to make a loan on the basis that the railroad from Vryburg to Bulawayo would, at the expiring of the period of repayment, become the joint property of Her Majesty's Government and the Cape Government on the payment to the shareholders of the sum of one hundred thousand pounds by the respective Governments. No guarantee was required of the British South Africa Company, but a guarantee was necessary, according to the Imperial Government, on the part of the Cape Government. 21

These counter proposals of the Imperial Government were unacceptable to Rhodes, for he could not agree to the proposition that the Cape Government be included in the arrangement, when it meant the substitution of the Cape Colony for Rhodesia as the ultimate part owner of the line. At the same time, Rhodes insisted that the guarantee of the British South

20 Ibid., 593.
21 Parliamentary Papers, 1889, v. 63 (C9823), no. 5.
Africa Company was ample without asking a partial guarantee from the Cape Colony. The negotiations ended there. Rhodes said he would not enter into what the Imperial Government should or should not have done. He did say in an unguarded moment, "Chamberlain wanted the earth, and he couldn't have it." Disappointed and disgusted, Rhodes was not to ask the Imperial Government to aid him again. He was now faced with the task of extending the line on his own efforts - this line that he thought was best in the interests of the country, for he said there was no use holding Rhodesia unless the railroad was developed. Once again Rhodes was to forge ahead on his own and prove to the "Little Englishers" that they could not stop him in his Imperial scheme of linking the Cape with Cairo.

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22 Ibid., no. 6.
23 Vinden, Rhodes, 727, citing Rhodes's speech to the shareholders of the Chartered Company, May 2, 1899.
24 Hensman, op. cit., 315.
25 Vinden, Rhodes, 728, citing speech, May 2, 1899.
Chapter VI
GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

While negotiations were under way with the Imperial Government over the Tanganyika extension, Rhodes found time to carry out his visits to King Leopold of Belgium and the German Emperor. The object behind these Continental visits was to be sure intimately connected with Rhodes's Cape to Cairo railroad and telegraph projects. Past events had effectively barred the way to Rhodes's "all red" railroad across Africa. His dream of such a route had been shattered as early as 1890 when Germany, in framing the Zambesi Heligoland Treaty, had insisted on preserving direct frontier connection between her East African Colony and the Congo State. Salisbury said that this agreement would not have been ratified if this narrow strip of territory north of Lake Tanganyika had not been given over to Germany. Although the Imperial Government's agreement with King Leopold in 1894 would have enabled England to establish complete communication between the north and the south, Germany managed to stand in the way of its success by pointing to a former treaty which she had with the Belgians, and thereby checked the English plans. A British route throughout

1E. T. Dugdale, German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, III, 310.

2 346 Parliamentary Debates, 3a., 1867. Salisbury saw no possible advantage in heading this territory. He could not imagine any trade going in that direction, for he said trade seeks navigable rivers or the sea, it does not willingly go across a continent. Ibid., 1868.
was truly impossible, but Rhodes was not to let this interfere with his imperial projects. To get the railroad and telegraph through a friendly state was the problem to be solved. The junction of the German and Belgian colonies was the barrier Rhodes had to overcome. To join his railroad and telegraph with Egypt it was necessary to cross either German East Africa or the Congo Free State. Which route he was to follow would, Rhodes hoped, be decided by his visits to the continental monarchs.

The Kaiser and the German officials were not unaware of Rhodes's desire to push forward his imperial projects and of the necessity of the line extending through either the Congo or German territory to reach the Mediterranean. His intended visit, therefore, was not unexpected and became the subject of official conversation. General von Liebert, the Governor of German East Africa was particularly in favor of cooperating with Rhodes's plans. He urged that Rhodes should be invited to Germany if possible and some arrangement be made with him.

Holstein on hearing of Rhodes's anxiety to visit

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3Robert Williams, in his account of the railroad, states that Rhodes was never bound to an "all red" route. To get the line through some friendly state was equally satisfactory to him. - loc. cit., 115.

4Dugdale, op. cit., III, 49.
Berlin immediately communicated with the German Ambassador in London, Count Hatzfeldt. Since there were important questions to be settled between England and Germany, he wished to know whether Rhodes's influence carried any importance in England. He asked, "Is he a man whom one could discuss questions of compensation on a large scale - I mean, is his influence strong enough in England to carry points upon which he is keen, even against the vis inertiae of Lord Salisbury?" He continued, "Would he be listened to in London even on questions affecting Morocco? Could he be induced to consider giving up Samsiber in return for railway and other concessions. Could his influence make itself felt in dealing with the Samoan question?"  

Count Hatzfeldt was glad to hear that Rhodes was to be received in Berlin for he thought good relations with him were very desirable. In answer to Holstein's questions, he said that Rhodes "would understand a policy of large compensation" on the condition that concessions concerning railways were granted to him. As to his intervening in England on questions other than those involving the Cape Colony and the railroad connection with North Africa, he doubted this. There was the possibility of Mr. Chamberlain's listening to


Rhodes up to a certain point but Lord Salisbury certainly would not. Therefore, Hatfield said, Rhodes's influence should not be overestimated.\(^6\)

Although the German officials were discussing Rhodes's visit to Berlin, Rhodes had not been invited until March. According to Baron von Eckardstein the invitation was arranged between Herr von Buchka, the Director of the Colonial Section, and a Mr. Davis, a business associate of Rhodes. Buchka asked Davis to invite Rhodes to Berlin. If he came, Buchka said, Rhodes would be received by the Kaiser and other leading personages.\(^7\)

Rhodes, no doubt, was delighted with this opportunity to visit Germany for it was one of his "long cherished" projects.\(^8\) In March on his way back to England from Egypt where he had negotiated with Kitchener and Cromer for linking up the railroad with their line in the north, Rhodes visited King Leopold II and the Kaiser.\(^9\) With Leopold, Rhodes failed to make an agreement.\(^10\) The Belgian monarch was

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\(^6\)Ibid., 50.

\(^7\)Ten Years at the Court of St. James, 102-103.

\(^8\)Hensman, op. cit., 316.

\(^9\)E. Dicey, "Cecil Rhodes in Egypt." Fortnightly Review, LXXI, 769. Rhodes was disappointed that the British in Cairo would not give active support to his Cape to Cairo railway and telegraph, for he considered Egypt, under the British, as an outpost of the Empire. The only quarter in which he received any encouragement was from the government of the Sudan under Lord Kitchener. - *

\(^10\)Basil Williams, op. cit., 310.

\(^11\)For these negotiations, see chapter VII.
unwilling to make a deal unless the Bahr el Ghazal should be left to him as was agreed in the Congo Treaty of 1894. Rhodes was therefore all the more anxious to lay his proposals before the German Emperor. Would he be successful in breaking through German East Africa, that solid block of territory intervening between the northern and southern termini of his proposed line? The deciding factor lay in the success of his German negotiations.

Rhodes arrived in Berlin on March 10 and immediately asked for an audience with the Emperor which was graciously granted for the following day. Before his interview with Wilhelm, Rhodes spoke with Prince Hohenlohe and Herr von Bülow as well as the British Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles. Right from the first the Kaiser and Rhodes were mutually attracted, and had several long but unofficial discussions. The first interview was quite informal and friendly, so much so, that when two distinguished diplomats entered the room to bring the "tete à tete" to a close, they were shocked "at the blunt and characteristic frankness with which Rhodes was speaking to the Kaiser."

During the course of their conversation, the Jameson

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15. Ibid., March 13, 1899.
Raid was mentioned. Rhodes told the Kaiser that even before the Raid he had wanted to visit Berlin but had been prevented in London from doing so. If he had been able to inform the Kaiser at that time of his plan to get permission to build the railroad through the Boer countries as well as through the German colonies, the German Government would probably have been able to help him in this enterprise by bringing its persuasion to bear on Kruger. That "stupid Jameson Raid" then, as Rhodes described it to the Kaiser would never have occurred and the Kruger despatch never written. But then Rhodes never bore the Kaiser any grudge on this account. Since Germany could not be correctly informed as to the aim and the purposes behind the Raid it must, Rhodes explained, have looked like "an act of piracy" to the Kaiser and his people, while all he wanted was stretches of land needed for his railroad. This demand, the Kaiser agreed was not unjust and informed Rhodes, that it would certainly have been readily supported by the German Government. 17

Then the subject of their conversation drifted to railroad development. Rhodes was all in sympathy with the Kaiser's Berlin to Bagdad railroad plans and advised him to

build the Bagdad railway and open up Mesopotamia. He would in the meantime do all he possibly could at the Foreign Office to encourage the Emperor's pet project. The Kaiser was just as sympathetic towards Rhodes's railway and telegraph projects which were to go through the German territory. Of Rhodes's projects the Kaiser said, ".....his wishes were approved by me, in agreement with the Foreign Office and the Imperial Chancellor; with the proviso that a branch railway should be built via Tabora, and that German material should be used in the construction work on German territory. Both conditions were willingly accepted by Rhodes. Rhodes, the Kaiser wrote, was grateful that his ambition was fulfilled, only a short time after King Leopold had refused his request. In this first interview Rhodes received the promise that he would be given the facilities for his telegraph line through the German Colony.

Before the next conversation with the German Emperor, Rhodes had a chance to learn what the German people thought of his projects, for the German papers did not fail to play up his visit. Regardless of the fact that public opinion in Germany had not been prepared for Rhodes's visit, it

18 Ibid.
19 Gooch, Temperly, British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914, VI, 95, no. 80. Hereafter this work will be cited, British War Documents.
20 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Basil Williams, op. cit., 310.
must be admitted that the attitude of the press was generally characterized by a moderate and reasonable viewpoint and in some instances by cordiality. True the reports of many organs of German public opinion were decidedly unfavorable to Rhodes's projects. They considered his schemes as constituting a danger to Germany's colonial interest in East Africa. The well-informed, semi-official German paper, the National Zeitung criticized these reports, adding that such opinions did not rest upon any solid foundations. The feeling, it pointed out, against Rhodes which originated in the Jameson Raid must not be cherished for evermore. The general attitude toward Rhodes's project was expressed in the Reichstag. There was indeed no objection to the cooperation of foreign and German capital in the colonies providing this capital was invested in German companies and that the railways and their administration remain in the hands of German officials, with the line being subject to the sovereignty, supervision and control of the German Empire. The German Foreign Office did restrain the German press, for all the semi-official and inspired statements the idea was expressed that all sentiment should

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be excluded and Rhodes's proposals considered from the standpoint of their merits. 27

Although Rhodes had acted on his own initiative in visiting the Kaiser, 28 the English Government was keenly alert to the outcome of Rhodes's visit. In the English official despatches from Berlin, Rhodes's cordial reception received its share of attention. The British press likewise played up the event. 29 Since the Emperor granted an interview to Rhodes, he must, according to one report, consider Rhodes's objects worthy. Furthermore the interview was regarded as a "good omen" not only for Rhodes's scheme but for the relation of Great Britain and Germany in all parts of the world.

The German Emperor received his share of praise in these reports. By granting this interview, the report continued, the Emperor was giving the world evidence of his "breadth of mind" and largeness of view, 30 and effacing in a handsome and magnanimous way the irritating memories of his action on the occasion of the Jameson Raid. 30 With such a fine beginning there was great hope for the future completion of the Cape to Cairo railroad, especially since

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27 James Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy With Special Reference to England and Germany 1890-1914, 190-191.
289 Parliamentary Debates, 4s., 784.
29 Hale, op. cit., 191.
30 Editorial in London Times, March 11, 1899.
England was at both ends of the line and at many places on its course.31

The second meeting of the Kaiser and Rhodes took place at an Embassy dinner on March 14. At this meeting further details were discussed on Rhodes's telegraph through the German Colony. A temporary agreement was arranged the following day. Since the final details had to be worked out between Rhodes acting with von Bulow and the other German ministers the settlement was not signed until the end of the following year.32 Meanwhile the press waxed warmly on the subject of Rhodes and his railroad project. The Post stated that commercial arrangements of great importance had been made between England and Germany. The fact that the commercial interests of these two nations would not clash for a time would, it was believed, yield remarkable results in the field of European policy. This organ favourably viewed the railroad, for it wrote, "The great Central African line will connect the German colony with the commercial activity of the world and will assuredly increase the value of German East Africa."33

The National-Zeitung was confident that a successful arrangement could be made with Rhodes. It readily conceded the

31 Ibid.
32 Basil Williams, op. cit., 310.
33 Dispatch from foreign correspondent in London Times, March 20, 1899.
importance to Germany of Rhodes's railroad project. This journal concluded that the railroad would probably render a much more rapid development of Africa than had been the case for centuries after its discovery. Furthermore it believed the development of the telegraph and railroad was necessary for colonies to be maintained and rendered profitable. On the other hand another German paper continued to criticize Rhodes's negotiations with Germany and regarded them suspiciously. It gave prominence to the communication of a writer who styled himself as an expert. The latter was alarmed at any compliance on Germany's part for Rhodes's railroad to traverse German East Africa. He was very much opposed to German capital being invested in a railroad which he concluded ".... will solely serve British Imperial interests." Far better he believed for Germany to support the railroads from the coast and let Rhodes manage as best he could with his imperial railroad scheme.

The railroad negotiations decidedly lagged. When asked in the Reichstag concerning the subject of Rhodes's visit to Berlin, the Foreign Secretary, von Bulow replied that an agreement had been made between the Trans-African Telegraph Company and the German Government but not in

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., citing the Berliner Neueste Nachrichten.
regard to the railroad. With reference to the railroad von Bulow said there had only been preliminary discussions, and that these were of an entirely confidential nature. No definite decision had therefore been given. In this case as in the telegraph negotiations, Bulow continued, consent would be given only to those proposals which did not infringe upon German rights or involve any prejudice to German interests. Although no agreement was definitely arranged in regard to the railroad, the door was open for future discussion. The National Zeitung, on Rhodes's departure March 16, disclosed that the railroad negotiations were not far advanced, but it did reveal that an agreement had been effected in regard to the points of view from which the project would be considered and this "community of views" would, it concluded, possibly lead to a definite understanding.

Rhodes, after these interviews, became greatly enthusiastic in his admiration of the Kaiser. He looked upon the Emperor as a broadminded man. In discussing Africa's development with him, Rhodes said the Kaiser met him with a "breadth of mind which was admirable." The telegraph

36 Despatch from foreign correspondent in London Times, March 22, 1899.

37 Ibid., March 17, 1899.
agreement with Germany Rhodes looked upon as a "just bargain."

In speaking of his acquaintance with the Kaiser Rhodes said that the Emperor was most kind to him. He was, therefore, glad he had come to Berlin and added, he would go away more then satisfied with what he had accomplished. His friendly reception in Berlin greatly encouraged him in his great African scheme. Thereafter Rhodes became a warm advocate of Anglo-German cooperation.

Rhodes was soon given his chance to demonstrate his German sympathies. Since the Samoan crisis was pending Rhodes was asked by the Emperor to help Germany in bringing about a friendly solution of the problem. He readily agreed to do all in his power to further Germany's wishes in the Samoan question.

On his return to England, Rhodes immediately communicated with the Cabinet, the Foreign Office and the press. In his long chat with Lord Salisbury on the Samoan question, he was given the impression that everything would be satisfactorily settled. He was therefore greatly surprised when he heard of the fighting in Samoa. When English policy was in the midst of coming to a perfect and friendly understanding with Germany in Africa, Rhodes could not imagine how the policy of the Foreign Office could be so short.

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38Index, Rhodes, 720-21, citing his speech, May 2, 1899.
39Hensman, op. cit., 517.
sighted over three little islands in the Pacific. 40

Rhodes created quite a favourable impression on the Kaiser. After the interviews with Rhodes, the Kaiser is reported to have remarked to a minister, "I have met a man." 41 According to the British Ambassador at Berlin, the Emperor was delighted with Rhodes and strongly regretted that this reasonable man was not his Prime Minister. He was in favor of supporting Rhodes's Cape to Cairo line across German territory, but he said his ministers could not rely on the Reichstag which was not yet Imperial minded. 42 The Kaiser always referred in terms of great praise to Rhodes. 43 The Kaiser attributed the settlement of the Samoan difficulties to Rhodes, for he said the whole affair was settled in a very short time after Rhodes had gone to the Foreign Office. 44

Rhodes was happy in winning permission to span his telegraph across the German territory, even though he did not get his desired railroad agreement. The railroad terminus was quite a distance from the German territory as yet, so he was in no great hurry in pressing his railroad proposals.

These friendly interviews with the Kaiser and German officials at least paved the way for any future negotiations which Rhodes

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40 Dugdale, op. cit., 50-61, citing Baron von Eckardstein's conversation with Rhodes in Count Hatzfeldt's letter to Prince von Hohenlode.

41 Müller, loc. cit., 748.

42 Michell, op. cit., II, 257.

43 British War Documents, I, 118.

44 Ibid., VI, 93, no. 60.
might wish to carry on with the German Government.
Chapter VII

OBSTACLES OVERCOME

Although unsuccessful in his negotiations with Her Majesty's Government and failing to gain a favorable agreement with Germany, Rhodes found the ways and means to continue the northern movement of his railroad project. He was to prove that his "wild-cat" scheme, so termed by Sir William Harcourt, could be carried out without the Imperial Government's aid. Rhodes believed it was an extraordinary thing "that a minister", referring to Harcourt, "who had a very fair chance of being Prime Minister of England" should have described his scheme thus. As Rhodes later pointed out, Sir William Harcourt had made a mistake when he said the English people would not accept his project for he added, they "...are determined to have this policy of expansion, and...are determined to support it." The English people did give the Chartered Company "...their hearty support in connection with this undertaking."¹

The first step that Rhodes took in securing the necessary amount for his railroad was to get the financial backing of every mining and land company who held claims in Rhodesia in the neighborhood that the route was to take, by

¹Vindex, Rhodes, 738-39, citing speech, May 2, 1899.
inviting them to take up debentures in the railway. This acceptance of Rhodes’s request was eminently satisfactory for nearly five hundred thousand pounds were immediately subscribed. This amount was sufficient according to Rhodes’s estimate to carry the line forward one hundred and fifty miles. This left about seven hundred and fifty miles more territory to be crossed before the line reached the northern Rhodesian border. With the “flying surveys” that had already been made, Rhodes believed the line could be built for four thousand pounds per mile or three million pounds for the seven-hundred and fifty mile sections².

The question of how this money was to be raised was described by Rhodes as follows: The Bechuanaland Railway Company was to obtain the money by the issue of four per cent debentures, the interest guaranteed by the Chartered Company. Instead of issuing the whole amount at once, it was proposed that six hundred thousand pounds of debentures be issued annually for five years. Rhodes expected this section of the line would be at least five years in the making. Those desiring to contribute to the line would, Rhodes pointed out, receive four per cent interest.³

By the middle of 1899 Rhodes had the desired financial backing to begin his Tanganyika extension. The line.

² Ibid., 729.
³ Ibid., 729-730.
as Rhodes planned it, was to go from Bulawayo across the Zambesi, through northeastern Rhodesia to Lake Tanganyika. This four hundred mile stretch of water Rhodes intended to make use of on his way to Cairo. The name of the company responsible in carrying out this undertaking, was changed from the Bechuanaland Railway Co. to the Rhodesian Railways. Construction work began on this line in June 1899 but was soon suspended.4

Oncoming events were to check the advance of this line. The Boer War broke out, seriously interfering with Rhodes's project. One of the first steps undertaken by the Boers was the seizure of the Bechuanaland Railway and the attempt to take Mafeking and Kimberley, thereby cutting off Rhodesia from its communication with the south. All railroad work was suspended on the northern extension, the branch line from Salisbury to Bulawayo receiving all the attention at the moment.5

Meanwhile mineral discoveries were to influence Rhodes into changing the proposed route. Even before Rhodes had asked Governmental aid in extending the railroad, he had tried to find mineral wealth in Rhodesia to aid him in extending the line. In 1898 he had asked Williams to make

4Erlanger, loc. cit., 651.
5Hale, loc. cit., 35.
a search for mineral wealth in this area. Since the latter
was connected with the Zambesi Exploring Company, Rhodes
granted certain rights to the company in which they would
hold a large interest. These rights included a mineral
concession of two thousand square miles and the right to
locate a township and pier at the southern end of Lake
Tanganyika, which Rhodes considered would be the Rhodesian
termminus for the Cape to Cairo Railroad. In return for these
rights Rhodes stipulated that twenty thousand pounds must
be spent in prospecting for minerals in the area and a steamer
be put on Lake Tanganyika to carry the material necessary for
the construction of his telegraph along the German shore of
the Lake, for which he had recently gained the Kaiser's
sanction.\(^6\) To take over these rights and to carry on the work
Rhodes required, the Tanganyika concessions Company was
formed.\(^7\)

At the same time Williams obtained, through negotiations
with the Belgian monarch, for the Tanganyika Concessions
Company prospecting rights over sixty thousand square miles
of the Katanga district, located on the northern side of
the Congo-Zambesi divide. During 1899 to 1904 expeditions
under George Grey brought to light the mineral wealth that
Rhodes sought, for they revealed the Kansanshe Copper Mine

\(^6\)R. Williams, \textit{loc. cit.}, 111.

\(^7\)\textit{Ibid.}, 115.
in Rhodesia, practically all of the Great Katanga Copper Belt together with gold, tin and diamond deposits. 8

When Rhodes was busy during the siege at Kimberley, Williams managed to send him a searchlight message announcing the first copper discoveries in Rhodesia. 9

While the Boer war checked construction to the north, future events were to cause Rhodes to change the whole route of the northern line. The physical and financial difficulties connected with his proposed route to Lake Tanganyika proved unsurmountable. Explorations showed that construction work beyond the Zambezi would be difficult and very expensive. On the other hand, beyond Victoria Falls rose a fine plateau similar to the territory in Southern Rhodesia. The discovery of the Wankie coal fields in 1901 about one hundred and sixty miles northwest of Bulawayo in the direction of Victoria Falls was one of the chief reasons for changing the route, especially after Metcalfe reported the coal was of inferior quality on the route formerly planned by Rhodes. 10 With these reasons in view Rhodes wisely decided to depart from the original plan and to carry the line by the more westerly route to the Wankie coal fields and onwards to the Falls.

8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Hole, loc. cit., 35.
11 Metcalfe, loc. cit., 105.
As a result of Williams's successful negotiations with the King of Belgium, Rhodes asked his help in trying to secure from Leopold the right to extend his Cape to Cairo railroad through the Congo State to the Nile. Rhodes had, it seemed, failed in all his negotiations with the Belgian monarch. He had sent Mr. Alfred Sharpe to secure Katanga but received no encouragement. Even in his personal negotiations with Leopold, Rhodes failed to get the desired cooperation for his railroad proposals through the Congo region. In his conversation with Williams on the subject of this visit he remarked, "I thought I was clever, Williams, but I was no match for King Leopold." Rhodes found this monarch a difficult man to deal with. Although little is known of what actually happened in the private interview between Rhodes and Leopold, one can conclude from Rhodes's remarks that the interview was extremely unfavourable to Rhodes. In fact always afterwards he spoke of King Leopold with loathing. The story goes that, on departing from the room after his interview, Rhodes caught hold of a military attache, who was passing by, and hissed in his ear "Satan, I tell you that man is Satan." At least Rhodes could not influence Leopold to cooperate with him in his telegraph or

12R. Williams, loc. cit., 113-114.
13L. Michell, op. cit., II, 258.
14R. Williams, op. cit., 310.
railroad project.

To Williams, then, Rhodes turned to negotiate for him in this transaction. In conversing with Williams on the new route for the railroad, Rhodes pointed out the Congo State as the future right-of-way for the line to take. Realizing that the mineral concession Williams had received from King Leopold was too short a duration, Rhodes told Williams to get King Leopold to extend it to a ninety-nine years' lease. The British people he believed would love this idea of a ninety-nine years' lease. The King will agree to this, he continued. If he asks for something in return, give him what he wants, Rhodes said. Then he told Williams, "......you can afford to give me a share of your minerals to assist me with my railway," when you have done this.15

Williams was, as in his former negotiations with Leopold, successful in obtaining an extension of the mineral concession and a concession to extend the railway from the Rhodesian frontier through the Congo State to the Nile. Williams offered this right together with a half-share of the mineral rights he had acquired for the Tanganyika Concessions Company to Rhodes. Due to the extravagant demands of Rhodes's financial supporters on King Leopold to bring

15 R. Williams, loc. cit., 114.
the railroad to his frontier, the scheme failed to materialize. 16

King Leopold did agree, though, to reduce the concession for the railroad to one to connect the Congo with the whole mining area of Katanga as far south as the Rhodesian frontier. Of this line the Belgians were to own sixty per cent and the Tanganyika Concessions Company forty per cent.

Through Williams, Rhodes's Cape to Cairo railroad was to be carried forward. He had promised Rhodes before the latter's death in 1902 that he would do his best to carry out his Cape to Cairo scheme. This he faithfully did. 17

The Cape to Cairo railroad gradually moved forward on the course of its new route, reaching the Wankie Mines in 1903 and Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River in 1904, two years after Rhodes's death. It had been Rhodes's wish that the bridge spanning these Falls should be placed as close to them as safety permitted. He is supposed to have said, "Build the bridge across the Zambezi where the trains as they pass will catch the spray from the Falls." 18 Although he was never able to undertake a journey to the

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16 Ibid.
17 R. Williams, loc. cit., 115-116.
Zambezi and he died before the railroad reached that point, his vivid imagination pictured the future path of the line and the difficulties and obstacles to be overcome.

Due to the determination and foresight of Rhodes, the Cape to Cairo railroad was well on its way in spanning the African continent. Through the realization of this transcontinental road, Rhodes was able to win a vast part of the African continent for the English. Although never to be completed during his lifetime, this gigantic task was not to be dropped, for Rhodes's inspiration remained to encourage others to pursue the work that he had marked out.

The story of the beginnings of this great imperial project, with its exploration, adventure and pioneering, its hardship, defeats and triumphs is truly a colorful record of British expansion in Africa and will always remain a vivid expression of the work of the greatest of Imperialists - Cecil Rhodes.
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