Janina M. Konczacki

William G. Stairs and the Occupation of Katanga: A Forgotten Episode in the 'Scramble' for Africa*

No one today is inclined to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Berlin Conference which, in 1885, unleashed the 'scramble' for Africa. The shibboleths of free trade, free navigation of the Congo and the Niger, internationalization of Central Africa and the suppression of the slave trade were used then as mere screens behind which lurked the true aims of the partitioning powers.

One of the men whose life was caught in the web of colonial rivalries, following the Berlin Conference, was Captain William Grant Stairs, a young Canadian from Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1891 he became the leader of an expedition to Katanga, which aimed at the "effective occupation" of that territory on behalf of the Congo Free State, whose head was King Leopold II of Belgium. The latter, attracted by the commercial possibilities, awaited patiently the first opportune moment to implement his secretly cherished colonial designs.

The establishment of European rule in the Congo took place in several stages. In the first stage the commercial potential of the Congo basin and the possibility of constructing railway links were investigated. The second step was to establish a "Free State" with the assistance of the well-known explorer Henry M. Stanley, whose activities in the Congo lasted from August 1879 to the early months of 1884.[1] Leopold's real intention was to turn the country into his private domain. He feared, however, that a purely commercial domination would not prevent the Congo from falling into the hands of the other colonial powers. To eliminate any unforseen obstacles to his secret designs, he created in 1882 the *Association Internationale du Congo* (AIC) and in the ensuing stage of intensified political activity, sought its recognition by other countries. These activities met with a fair measure of success, especially when the timely recognition of the AIC by Germany strengthened Leopold's position at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which was to serve as a platform for resolving the vexing

problems of contemporary colonial diplomacy.[2] Britain, wishing to keep France out of the Congo, originally signed a treaty with Portugal supporting that country's Congolese ambitions. The treaty was never ratified due to the strong pressures at home and abroad, and Britain decided to side with Germany in favour of King Leopold. This change was made more palatable by the latter's attractive promise to "internationalize" that part of Africa.

At the price of some territorial concessions to France and Portugal, King Leopold emerged from the Berlin Conference as the head of the newly created Congo Free State of some 2,400,000 square kilometres.[3] In the far south, the vaguely defined frontier extended to the watershed between the Congo and the Zambezi, thus encompassing the territory of Katanga.[4] In the east the treaties concluded by Stanley with the local chiefs included lands as far as Stanley Falls. According to the Berlin Act, signed on February 26, 1885, powers taking possession of African territories had to effectively establish their authority in regions of their occupation, which would protect the existing rights and, where applicable, freedom of trade and of transit.[5]

Leopold's problem was that the southern areas of the Congo Free State, bordering on the watershed between the Congo and the Zambezi could, at best, be considered as that State's sphere of influence, as no treaties had yet been concluded with the chiefs and rulers of Katanga. Conclusion of such treaties was a necessary pre-condition for the Congo Free State to "effectively occupy" these territories. Leopold had serious reasons to be concerned when within a few years of the Berlin Conference some English circles expressed the opinion that Katanga was open to "rightful" occupation by any foreign power. Above all, it was the imperialistically minded Cecil Rhodes who took a keen interest in the region seeing there great possibilities of expansion for the British South Africa Company (BSAC). George Cawston, a member of the board of the BSAC. And one of Rhodes's associates, boldly told Rhodes that he, Cawston, was "very keen on securing this country".[6] Apparently, Katanga had the richest copper deposits in the world and the presence of gold was also suspected.[7] Rhodes and Cawston were interested in an area roughly 1,100 kilometres by 500, situated between the Barotse and the Nyasa countries to the north of the Zambezi river. In particular, their interest was centred on Msiri's kingdom —Garengaze. Msiri, the independent, wily and despotic ruler, had not, so far, signed any of the treaties with the European powers and this made him a desirable prey in the eyes of potential occupants of his country.

An expedition sent by the BSAC, led by Joseph Thomson, arrived at Katanga in 1890, but because of various mishaps on the march, it

failed to reach Bunkeia — Msiri's capital. A second expedition, headed by Alfred Sharpe, also sponsored by the BSAC, entered Bunkeia on November 8, 1890, but Sharpe had no success in convincing Msiri to sign a treaty and to hand over his country to the BSAC.[8]

In the meantime Cawston approached Stairs who at that time enjoyed a reputation as an experienced explorer, familiar with East Africa and the regions of the Congo Free State, to participate in a new expedition planned by the BSAC.

William Grant Stairs, born in Halifax on July 1, 1863, was the sixth child and the second son of John Stairs and Mary Morrow, members of the "codfish aristocracy" of that seaport town. His father, a stern disciplinarian, was the head of one of the well-to-do merchant families, who despatched cargoes of salt cod to the British West Indies in exchange for sugar, rum and molasses, imported for the grocery shops of the Maritime Provinces. Young William broke with the family business tradition by espousing an army career. At the age of 15 he joined the Royal Military College at Kingston, Ontario, where he completed his training in 1882. He then left for New Zealand, where he obtained a position on a railway construction project. In 1885, Stairs was offered a commission at Chatham, England, and in June of that year, was gazetted a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.[9]

It seems that he enjoyed his new way of life, although he found it difficult to adjust to the everyday, dull routine of an army garrison. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Stanley advertised for officers willing to join his Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, Stairs, with alacrity, submitted an application and was accepted. At the conclusion of the Expedition, in January 1890, Lieutenant Stairs returned to England, where he was offered the post of adjutant with the Royal Engineers at Aldershot. Various honours were bestowed upon him. He was given fellowships of several learned societies including that of the Royal Geographical Society.

Early in 1891, he obtained a transfer to the 41st Welsh regiment and was promoted Captain.[10] As time went on, the glitter and excitement of fame began to lose their appeal as did the routine of a provincial garrison life. Realizing that life was passing him by, this man of action and lover of adventure began to yearn for the life and pursuits of an explorer. Opportunities to realize his dreams were not lacking. Yet, when during the summer of 1890, George Cawston of the BSAC asked him to take part in an expedition to the region situated between the Congo and the Zambezi,[11] Stairs turned down the invitation.[12] He did not give any specific reason for his negative answer. It is likely, that he had not yet fully recovered from the after-effects of malaria which he had contracted during the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition.

Another proposal to go to Africa came from Belgium. Early in 1891, the *Compagnie du Katanga* asked Stairs to lead one of their expeditions.

Compagnie du Katanga, modelled on the British chartered companies, was part of King Leopold's answer to the designs of Cecil Rhodes's BSAC. It was an international syndicate, originally founded as an offshoot of the *Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie* (CCCI), which had existed since 1886. The latter held shares in the *Compagnie du Katanga.* Other shareholders were the Belgian State and a number of English, French and private Belgian investors. Great Britain was represented on the board of directors by the well known African explorer Commander Verney L. Cameron, Sir John Kirk, former British consul in Zanzibar, and M. Pasteur, president of the Oceana Company.[13] Commander Cameron played a prominent role in the amalgamation of the British and Continental interests and on March 12, 1891, the new company, endowed with a capital of three million francs, signed a convention with the Congo Free State. Its purpose was to open up Katanga, establish an administrative system, assist in the suppression of the slave trade and prevent the importation of spirits and weapons of war.[14]

Immediately after its formation the *Compagnie du Katanga* undertook the task of "effective occupation" of the country for which it now became responsible. At that time the kingdom of Garengaze ruled by Msiri, who was a Mnyamwezi, dominated the scene in that part of Central Africa.[15] Consequently, Msiri's submission to the Free State became a necessity. In order to achieve this, the Company organized several expeditions offering Stairs the leadership of one of them.

Prior to the establishment of the Company, Paul Le Marinel a Belgian, received an order from King Leopold to march to Bunkeia, Msiri's capital. Although Le Marinel failed to obtain from Msiri recognition of the Free State's flag, he did manage to establish a permanent station at Lofoi in the vicinity of the capital. Another expedition led by Alexandre Delcommune also proved to be a failure.[16]

Upon its incorporation, the *Compagnie du Katanga,* in turn, organized two new expeditions, one led by Stairs and the other by a Belgian Captain Lucien Bia. It was Captain Bia, who continued the work begun by Stairs after the latter's forced departure from Bunkeia.

The offer of leadership to Stairs, can be viewed as an effort on the part of the Belgians to placate the interests of the British. In fact, his candidature was put forward by the British investors.[17] Stairs accepted the offer, in spite of his poor health, with a feeling that he might never

return.[18] As soon as he was released from his military duties, Stairs devoted all his energies to the organization of the expedition.[19]

The origins of Stairs's white companions reflected the international character of their sponsor the *Compagnie du Katanga*. Captain Omer Bodson, a Belgian, was second in command. Marquis Christian de Bonchamps was a French Cavalry officer. Joseph A. Moloney, an Irishman, acted as the expedition's doctor. Thomas Robinson, an Englishman, joined the expedition as a general factotum.[20] The caravan consisted of 304 porters, 30 askaris, 16 servants and 9 headmen. Including the white members, there were 364 participants.[21]

The choice of routes leading to Bunkeia proved to be very limited. Stairs decided to start from Bagamoyo, on the east coast, and to continue across Lake Tanganyika, returning by way of Shire and Nyasa. The route along the river system of the Congo was out of the question in view of the sequence of falls on the Lualaba river. The other western route, from Benguela, was not seriously considered.

On July 1st, 1891, the expedition left Zanzibar for Bagamoyo, and on the 4th it began its long march. On the first leg of the journey the caravan encountered serious problems in obtaining foodstuffs. The countryside was ravaged by a disastrous cattle epidemic (rinderpest), and a severe drought. Things became even worse when Stairs's caravan crossed Lake Tanganyika and marched in the direction of Lake Mweru. The country was ruined by the Arab slave raiders and the unfortunate inhabitants were forced to flee into the mountains to save their lives. Many of them had died for want of food.[22]

Meanwhile, early in November, events took an unfavourable turn for Stairs's mission. Msiri, who previously had refused to hand his country over to the British South Africa Company by sending away Alfred Sharpe emptyhanded, now changed his mind. Growing apprehensive of the scheming authorities of the Congo Free State he decided to seek British support and therefore sent a message to Sharpe, apparently requesting his protection against the Belgians. The letter, written in English by Daniel Crawford — a missionary residing near Bunkeia — was intercepted by Stairs, who took it away, never revealing its contents, and continued on his journey.[23] In view of the political significance of this incident, it is not surprising that neither Stairs nor Dr. Moloney, the two diarists of the expedition, ever mentioned it.

On November 14th, when the caravan had still some 400 kilometres to cover before reaching Bunkeia, Stairs sent out couriers to Msiri, with a letter and gifts worth £140. The letter, signed "Stairs, the Englishman" announced the impending arrival of the expedition and the amicable intentions of its leader.[24]

On December 13th, when Stairs was some six miles from Bunkeia, he received a visit from Lieutenant Legat, a Belgian resident in command of Lofoi Station near Bunkeia.[25] Msiri's disillusionment must have been great when his spies reported the amicable meeting between the two men to him.

A day later, on his arrival at Msiri's capital Stairs's first impression was one of shock. He recognized the ruler's headquarters — ". . . by the whitened skeletons fixed to stakes all round one section of the town and by a hideous pyramid of human heads and amputated hands placed on a sort of rustic pedestal table at the door of this chief's dwelling." Furthermore he observed that

> The famine is such that, even if one were to offer a treasure, one could not buy food: there is none left. Firewood is wanting and the water is execrable. The missionaries are treated by the chief on a par with black slaves. They are terribly afraid of him. If the king were deposed, the country would immediately return to order, the Wasanga would be our friends and one could achieve great things.[26]

The information previously received from Lieutenant Legat and the resident missionaries[27] was further supplemented by the testimony from a certain Senhor Coimbra who resided in Garengaze for a long time.[28] Coimbra implored Stairs ". . . to put an end to the butchering of men that is going on every day." He also told him of the decline of the country under the rule of the aging despot

> . . . three years ago, one could count ten villages where one now sees only one; . . . the mountains to the south-west were covered, just a few years ago, with flourishing villages. To-day, not a single one is left standing. Msiri's cruelty has caused the exodus of the greater part of the population.[29]

On December 17th Stairs paid his first visit to Msiri. In the presence of some 150 locals, including several of his wives, Stairs reproached the king publicly for his crimes, and exhorted him to desist from his barbarous practices. In reply, the enraged Msiri put the blame on the local whites for spreading unfounded rumours about him. He concluded the audience by offering Stairs his friendship.[30]

Two days later a second audience took place. When a conversation lasting some three hours failed to produce positive results, Stairs requested Msiri, in no uncertain terms, to accept the flag of the Congo Free State; but when the ruler proved to be intransigent, Stairs informed him of his intention to raise the flag that very same day regardless of Msiri's objections. Faced with such flagrant flaunting of his authority Msiri hastily left Bunkeia for a nearby village. The following day Stairs sent Bodson and Bonchamps, accompanied by a

detachment of askaris, after him, with explicit orders to either persuade the king to return to Bunkeia voluntarily, or to bring him back forcibly. Msiri's refusal to return was followed by a brief but dramatic skirmish during which the king was killed and Bodson mortally wounded.[31]

Fears of an attack by Msiri's men on the expedition proved unfounded. Apparently the old ruler was so loathed by his subjects that almost no-one felt like avenging his death. Stairs was now left in the unenviable situation of having to decide upon Msiri's successor, to ensure the safety of his expedition and to defuse the potentially explosive atmosphere amongst the chiefs. He solved the first problem by appointing Mukanda Vantu, one of Msiri's sons as the chief of Bunkeia and the small area around the town, while the authority over the remainder of the country, was to be handed over to the inhabitants of these lands. After long deliberations with the local chiefs this solution was accepted, a treaty was signed, and the Congo Free State flag hoisted on December 30th.[32]

Eventually, Stairs concentrated all his resources and efforts on constructing a fort at Bunkeia. He also had to deal with a threat of mutiny by the porters, due to starvation. Retreat was out of the question because of the agreement with the *Compagnie du Katanga* to hold the country pending the establishment of some permanent form of administration, or the arrival of Captain Bia to relieve Stairs's expedition.

At the beginning of January 1892, Stairs, exhausted and anguished, fell dangerously ill and remained incapacitated for nearly three months. Bonchamps and Robinson were also struck down with disease. Only Dr. Moloney was well enough to attend to day-to-day matters, nurse his colleagues, and bury the Africans, who were dying from disease and starvation at the alarming rate of, on the average, two a day.

As the political situation was gradually defused many chiefs made their submission and soon the authority of the Congo Free State was established within a radius of eighty kilometres of Bunkeia. Finally, on January 30th, relief came with the arrival of Bia's expedition. Seeing the gravity of the situation, Bia recommended an immediate return to the coast of the remnants of Stairs's caravan.[33] After a journey of more than three months the expedition reached Chinde, at the mouth of the Zambezi river, where Stairs came down with a fatal attack of black water fever and died on June 9th, twenty-two days short of his 29th birthday.

The work of "effective occupation" commenced by Stairs had to wait some years before being finalized. Captain Bia completed the con-

struction of the fort at Bunkeia and left it in charge of Lieutenant Legat. Continuing the work of occupation, his expedition proceeded on April 14th to Lake Mweru and then to the south towards Bangweulu. The discovery of rich copper deposits at Kambove by Jules Cornet, the expedition's geologist,[34] was an important achievement.

The solution of the controversial question of the southern boundary of Katanga came only with the settlement of British and Congolese claims on May 12, 1894.[35] By that time most of that country was explored and the existence of important mineral resources established beyond any doubt. The next six years saw the conclusion of treaties with many of the local chiefs and the opening up of a regular communication line with Tanganyika, but little had been done to develop the newly acquired territories. In 1900, the administration of the country passed on to the *Comité Spécial du Katanga* (C.S.K.), specifically created for that purpose by a royal decree.

Cecil Rhodes's earlier unsuccessful efforts to control the mineral wealth of Katanga were partly vindicated by the Comité's decision to accept the participation of British capital. An agreement of December 9th, 1900, between the C.S.K. and Robert Williams, an associate of Rhodes and the discoverer of the rich copper seams in Northern Rhodesia, permitted the latter to undertake exploratory work in Katanga. In fact, Tanganyika Concessions Limited (Tanks), organized by Williams, was granted a monopoly for mineral prospecting. The final result of his activities was the founding, in October 1906, of the *Union Minière du Katanga* with a capital of ten million francs, divided into 200,000 shares, of which 107,000 were secured by the Belgian interests. Further progress had to await the construction of a railway link with Rhodesia, an undertaking which was completed after 1908, when the Congo passed into the hands of the Belgian State.[36]

Until the early years of twentieth century, the absence of any meaningful economic change left the African way of life largely unaltered. The world prices of copper were depressed, but other natural resources such as ivory and rubber lent themselves to easy exploitation. In particular, the rubber boom of the 1890s, provided a strong incentive to activities of a predatory nature.[37]

Thus far, the narrative, and the discussion of events leading to the occupation of Katanga by the Congo Free State authorities, has chiefly centered on the course of King Leopold's colonial policy, aimed at achieving this goal. A little more should be said, however, of events that took place between Stairs and Msiri. This crucial encounter reflected a conflict of interest, but above all it was a clash of two wilful personalities.

Msiri's personal qualities had enabled him to create the kingdom of Garengaze which he ruled despotically. His unlimited powers allowed him to accumulate great wealth in ivory, copper and slaves. His subordinate chiefs were forced to hand over to him all ivory as tribute. Next in importance was copper. As he conquered new territories, he forthwith confiscated all copper mines and established a monopoly of their exploitation. The sale of slaves provided him with a third lucrative source of revenue. Msiri's slaves came from two sources — his military campaigns and the judicial system which enabled him to condemn as many people to slavery as possible. He belonged to that class of greedy, ruthless African rulers who lacked sympathy for the common people and who, without hesitation, enslaved them in order to sell them to foreigners.[38] It is not surprising, therefore, that Msiri was not liked by his subjects. Above all, he was a stranger — a Mnyamwezi using a gang of Wanyamwezi freebooters to rule over the indigenous tribes. As he grew older and the problems of government began to mount, Msiri developed acute paranoia which led to excesses of cruelty, making him the object of universal hatred. Revolts against his tyranny began to spread. To compound matters still further, there was a growing interest on the part of the Europeans in the mineral resources of his kingdom, a threat he did not underestimate. In spite of his disturbed state of mind his opposition to Stairs's demands shows how clear-sighted and determined he could be. European travellers who met him carried with them impressions which were not always entirely negative. Stairs's companion, Dr. Moloney, who had no reason to admire Msiri, wrote as follows:

> . . . his appearance was impressive, and his demeanour thoroughly regal . . . In his prime, Msiri must have looked the ideal of a warrior-king; he was by no means contemptible in his decline.[39]

In Stairs Msiri finally met a formidable adversary, whose personal qualities managed to subdue the powerful ruler, where others had failed. Paul Le Marinel and Alexandre Delcommune of the *Compagnie du Katanga,* and Alfred Sharpe of the BSAC, had proved too weak and too ambivalent. Stairs, on the other hand, acted with unflinching determination. First and foremost he was a soldier. The professionalism of an officer of the Royal Engineers, self-possession, coolness in command, personal courage and a strict sense of discipline were qualities that his military training had instilled in him.

It is interesting that this thoroughly "English" officer was in fact a Canadian, a Haligonian. Although on many occasions he expressed his attachment to the country of his origin, when abroad he chose to call himself an Englishman.[40] One could suggest several explanations.

Firstly, of course, at that time the Canadian sense of national identity was much less strong than it is now. Secondly, in many foreign countries knowledge of Canada was limited and the term "Canadian" was rather vague, whereas "English" as a term was familiar even to the people living in the interior of Africa. Lastly, for those living in the British Empire the word "Englishman" represented not only a quality of Englishness but also a certain ideal of manliness. Stairs may have found it appealing to consider himself as a gentleman brought up in the British tradition, as an officer in the British Army and as a British explorer. At the time of his African adventure, the British ideal of an explorer or that of a colonial administrator was already well defined. It emphasized the qualities of leadership, personal probity, integrity and the ability to inspire trust. Among the virtues most prized by Stairs were energy and courage. He considered the self-imposed norms of conduct, often extremely demanding in the African environment, as a vital part of the "white man's burden."[41]

How then can one reconcile Stairs's decision to assist in the occupation of Garengaze on behalf of King Leopold II, a foreigner, with his ingrained idea of "Englishness" and his loyalty to the British Empire?[42] Stairs does not seem to have had any qualms about this. He was on leave of absence from the army and his superiors must have been well aware of the purpose of his mission, which was obviously not in any conflict with the contemporary official British policy with regard to Katanga.

During the course of the expedition there were moments of uneasiness, when a soldier's honour and his conscience were at stake. A British army officer enlisted in the service of a foreign power could collide with another Englishman serving under the flag of the BSAC. Such a possibility did occur when on December 29, 1891 a rumour reached Fort Bunkeia that a new expedition, sent by the Company, presumably led by Joseph Thomson, was approaching the capital. If that were the case, Stairs was determined to offer stubborn resistance. Dr. Moloney's entry in his diary reveals feelings undoubtedly shared by Stairs when he wrote: "I must confess that the notion of fighting against my own fellow-countrymen while receiving the pay of a foreign monarch, appeared both unnatural and repugnant."[43] Fortunately for both men, after a week of many anxious moments, it turned out that the approaching caravan was commanded by Arabs and not by Thomson as was feared.[44]

Stairs's attitude and actions were largely influenced by his favorable view of the expected consequences of the establishment of colonial administration in Africa. This optimistic view contributed to his willingness to participate in the activities leading to the partition of that

Continent. An explicit and concise statement of it can be found in a speech delivered by Stairs at a special meeting of the City Council of Halifax, held in his honour after his return from the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition.[45] In this speech, he extolled the efforts to expand European trade in Africa and the ensuing benefits which would accrue to the inhabitants of that continent. He also hoped for a speedy suppression of the slave trade through the influence of the railways and the construction of telegraph lines. Moreover, he anticipated that a change in political conditions in Central Africa would benefit the British Empire and civilization in general.

Stairs's speech, and statements of a similar nature in his diaries, reveal the credo of a colonial idealist, who took literally and uncritically the slogans of the current propaganda. He seemed to have entertained no doubts as to the worthiness of his cause. Men of his stamp, ready to sacrifice their lives for Queen and Empire were of considerable use to colonial pragmatists, whose motives were not quite as sincere as Stairs seems to have believed.

The expedition led by him achieved the occupation of Garengaze, which was followed by the annexation of the much larger territory of Katanga by the Congo Free State. Stairs also felt that he had freed the local inhabitants from the cruelty of a bloodthirsty ruler. The irony was that the country merely passed from the hands of one notorious despot into those of some of the worst, most reckless and predatory colonial rulers in Central Africa.

One can be certain that neither the old nor the new system of government proved acceptable to the people of Garengaze. But, as is frequently the case, free choice was denied them. It is one of the truisms of history that often the well-intentioned but misguided pseudo-idealists know not what they do. And Stairs, this late Victorian explorer, and himself the victim of colonial ambitions, was no exception.

NOTES

* This paper was read at the Academic Seminar Series "Round Table on the Berlin Conference of 1885: A Century After," organized by the Centre for African Studies, Dalhousie University on 25 April, 1985.

1. Henry M. Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of the Free State*, 2 vols. (London, 1885), passim; for a good summary of the course of Stanley's expedition see: Barbara Emerson, *Leopold II of the Belgians — King of Colonialism* (New York, 1979), chapter 10, "The Race for the Congo."
2. For a full history of the diplomacy leading up to the Berlin Conference see: Sybil E. Crowe, *The Berlin West African Conference 1884-1885* (New York, 1942) Part I.

3. The official name for the newly created country was *l'État Indépendant du Congo*. "Congo Free State" is a generally used mistranslation.
4. Emerson, Chapter 12, passim.
5. General Act of the Conference of Berlin, signed February 26, 1885, Chapter VI, Articles 34 and 35.
6. Cawston to Rhodes, March 14, 189; BSAC II, Misc. Rhodes House, Oxford. It was quite significant that on a map drawn in October, 1889, the BSAC did not define the northern frontiers. See: Robert Cornevin, *Histoire du Congo* (Paris, 1970), p. 122.
7. In Britain the knowledge about Katanga dated back to David Livingstone's explorations (1866-1873), Verney Lovett Cameron's journey across Africa (1873-1874), and in particular to his letters published in *The Times* during January, 1876, extolling the mineral resources of that area. Also, the missionary Frederick Stanley Arnot of the Plymouth Brethren, who arrived in Garengaze in 1886, upon his return to England in 1888, painted a glowing picture of Katanga, emphasizing its rich deposits of copper.
8. For particulars of Sharpe's expedition see: A. Sharpe, "A Journey to Garengaze," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 14, no. 1, January 1892, pp. 36-47.
9. H. Gerald Stairs. *The Stairs of Halifax;* Public Archives of Nova Scotia, [PANS], CS.St.1, 1962 (unpublished MSS); passim.
10. *The Novascotian*, April 25, 1891, p.2.
11. Cawston to Stairs, confidential letter of July 18, 1890, BSAC II, Misc., Rhodes House, Oxford.
12. Stairs to Cawston, July 20 and July 26, 1890; *ibid.*
13. The British were invited to participate in the hope that they would not press for the occupation of Katanga by Great Britain. However, such fears were unfounded as the British Government did not entertain any serious interest in that country.
14. Rene J. Cornet, *Le Katanga avant les belges et l'expedition Bia-Francqui-Cornet* (Brussels, 1946); pp. 89-93; Joseph A. Moloney, *With Captain Stairs to Katanga* (London, 1893); pp. 2-4.
15. As a young man Msiri offered his services to the aging chief of the Basanga, who were at war with the Balubas. Having helped to defeat the enemy he assumed the position of the chief's successor and, on the old man's death, became the ruler of the Basanga. He then launched a series of military campaigns in the course of which he created the kingdom of Garengaze.
16. J. du Fief, "Les Expéditions Belges au Katanga" (*Société Royale Belge de Géographie Bulletin* No. 2, Mars-Avril, 1892), pp. 110-122.
17. Cornet, pp. 95-96.
18. Moloney, p. 14.
19. William G. Stairs, "De Zanzibar au Katanga, Journal du Capitain Stairs (1890-1891)," *Le Congo Illustré*, 1893, p. 120.
20. Moloney, pp. 14-15.
21. W.G. Stairs, July 4, 1891.
22. *Ibid.*, November 4, 1891.
23. Daniel Crawford, *Thinking Black* (New York, 1913), p. 303; Cornet, p. 193.
24. W.G. Stairs, November 14, 1891; Moloney, pp. 148-149.
25. W.G. Stairs, December 13, 1891. Lieutenant Amédée Legat was in command of the station on the Lofoi set up by Marinel.
26. *Ibid.*, December 14, 1891.
27. D. Crawford, F.L. Lane, and H.B. Thompson of the Plymouth Brethren resided at the Mission station when Stairs's expedition had arrived at Bunkeia.
28. Lourenco Souza Coimbra, son of a Portuguese of Bihé and an African woman. His niece Maria de Fonseca became one of Msiri's many wives. Earlier in his life Coimbra had served with the notorious slaver José Antonio Alvex.
29. W.G. Stairs, December 16, 1891.
30. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1891.
31. *Ibid.*, December 19-20, 1891.
32. Moloney, pp. 198-199.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-228.
34. Cornet, pp. 252-258.
35. Article I (b); C.7360, p. 2. For details see A Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, (Oxford 1919), p. 87.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-91; Emerson, pp. 190-192; *The Times*, June 27, 1918, p. 4.
37. Emerson, p. 191.

38. This aspect of African History has been dealt with extensively by Walter Rodney. See, for instance, his article "African slavery and other forms of social oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast," *Journal of African History*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1966.
39. Moloney, p. 181.
40. W.G. Stairs, passim.
41. H. Alan Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism. British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890* (London, 1965), pp. 36-38.
42. See, for instance, accusations levelled against Stairs in Crawford, p. 303; "Haligonian saved Katanga for the Belgians," *The Mail Star* (Halifax), July 28, 1960; Fergus Macperson, *Anatomy of Conquest: The British Occupation of Zambia, 1884-1924* (Essex, 1981), pp. 44-45.
43. Moloney, p. 208.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
45. *The Morning Herald* (Halifax), September 12, 1890, p. 3.