

A PRICELESS COMMODITY: THE POLITICS OF SALT PRODUCTION AND COMMERCIALISATION IN THE CROSS RIVER BASIN OF CAMEROON 1916-1961

Henry Kam KAH
University of Buea, Cameroon

ABSTRACT In the Cross River Basin of Cameroon like in other West African territories, the production and sale of salt in the precolonial era was a vibrant industry involving numerous people and trading communities. The exploitation and/or sale of precious salt in some areas was regulated by the village authorities. The British eventually assumed control of this region of Cameroon after the First World War, and instead of supporting this industry, they embarked upon importing salt from other colonial possessions and Europe. Even when World War II affected the supply of salt from these external sources, the British colonial government did not develop the local industry. By 1961, when British rule terminated, this indigenous industry had declined to the extent that the once flourishing brine springs were abandoned in the wild.

Key Words: Salt; Commodity; Production; Commercialisation.

INTRODUCTION

Salt production and marketability engrossed a cross section of the population in the producing areas in Africa. In some areas including the savannah region of Cameroon, local chieftains supervised the production and sale of this resource (Nkwi, 1987: 117-118). Salt was given as a gift destined for nursing mothers, or procured to dowry wives. This condiment enriched many, especially by way of employment. The importance of local salt dwindled when European colonising powers resorted to the unlimited importation of the commodity from Europe and their other dependencies. In the Cross River Basin of Cameroon, the local salt industry was affected by the British importation of salt from South Africa, Spain, Aden, the Suez and Britain.⁽¹⁾ The United Africa Company (UAC) Ltd. played a central role in the salt trade.

Colonial influence notwithstanding, salt remained a priceless commodity in the Cross River Basin of Cameroon. As time unfolded the colonial authorities, in alliance with the UAC, frustrated the indigenous effort at developing a vibrant salt industry. As fate would have it, during the Second World War when salt was imported into the region, large quantities of the locally exploited resource were exported to Nigeria through the Cross River. This paper would not only situate the importance of salt but would more importantly examine, from a historical perspective, the politics that embroiled the salt industry from its exploitation, commercialisation to its demise.

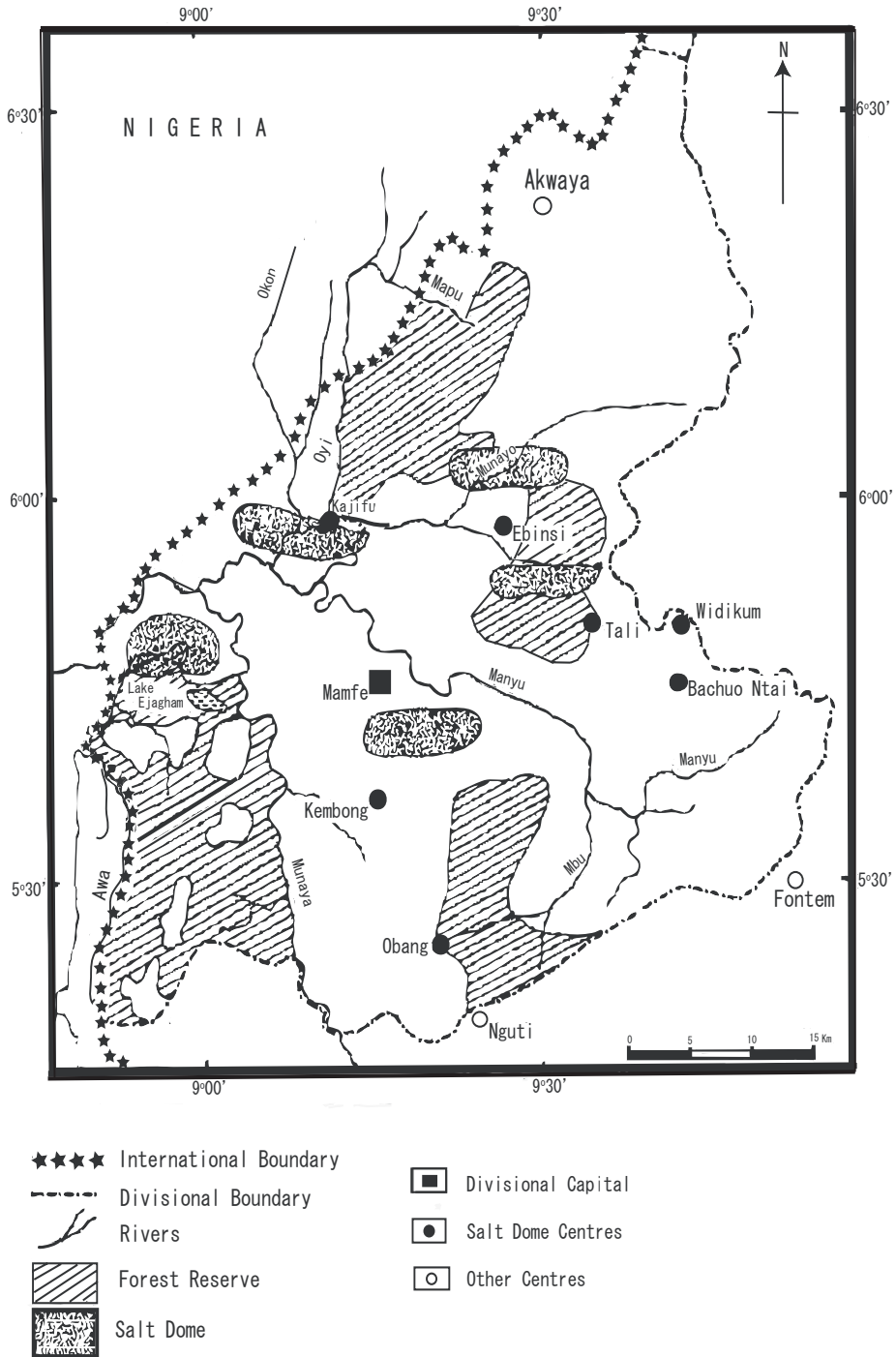


Fig. 1. Salt Domes in the Cross River Basin of Cameroon.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS SALT

The salt enterprise matured expeditiously along the West African Coast including Cameroon because it was an important, multifaceted product. Many middlemen exchanged salt for other commodities, notably livestock. In the Cross River Basin, livestock came from the Bamenda and the Bamileke regions.⁽²⁾ Salt also served as a medium of exchange for other commodities. Those who were involved in its exploitation received remuneration in return. The Banyang served as intermediaries between the salt producing villages of Baje and Mbakang of the Cross River Basin and the grassland communities benefited enormously from the salt trade.

In other areas, notably in the Bangwa country, salt was an important relish. Salt and palm oil were combined, rubbed on a goat as seasoning before roasting.⁽³⁾ When a woman gave birth in her father's compound in Anyang country as in other grassland fiefdoms of Cameroon, she would only be brought to public view after the father had been given a present of salt and food. The woman's companions taking her to the husband's compound, would be given this condiment from the husband.⁽⁴⁾ In fact, salt was very highly valued in different communities because of its scarcity and even used to appease a discontented party.

In addition, the development and exploitation of salt ponds along the West African coast influenced some communities to change locations. These new locations soon became centers of attraction for immigrants. Salt was preserved by notables and chiefs who had direct influence over its exploitation. In the grassland region of Cameroon, the commercialisation of salt was regulated by the royal household, in what became known as the royal trade (Nkwi, 1987: 117-118). The commodity was preserved in long bars and disposed of whenever it was demanded.

In Nsukka in Nigeria, salt was very important not only because it was a necessity, but more importantly because it was a seasoning and a trade currency (Afigbo, 1973: 86). Igbo traders made enormous gains from its commercialisation. The villages blessed with salt ponds received royalties from the neighbouring villages that participated in their exploitation.⁽⁵⁾ Salt remained a relish used by all although its exploitation was a subject of great politicking.

SALT EXPLOITATION AND COMMERCIALISATION IN THE PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL EPOCHS

The exploitation of salt in many West African societies evolved with time. In areas without marine salt, grasses or reeds with a high saline content were cultivated on plots in marshes or rivers. During the dry season the reeds were harvested, burned and their ashes leached to collect the potassium salt. In marine settlements, sea salt was collected through natural evaporation from sea-pans or by boiling seawater (Vansina, 1990: 86; Fanso, 1989: 63).

In other areas, water was channelled into shallow ponds where it was evaporated in the heat of the sun. A thick salty crust remained on the ground, was scrapped up and purified by mixing with warm water. It was then poured through cone-shaped baskets filled with straw. After this process, it was redried in the sun (Fyfe, 1968: 239). The salt so obtained was traded with the interior people through barter. This process of obtaining salt witnessed an improvement following the eventual importation of shallow pans as driers from Europe (Fyfe, 1968: 239). Prior to this, people in Igbo land used bitter herbs in place of salt. Later on, the people began burning a certain grass and the ashes were dissolved in water. The solution was evaporated over low fire to obtain salt (Afigbo, 1973: 86).

In the salt ponds and brine springs of the Cross River Basin of Cameroon, some of these methods were employed to obtain salt but others were introduced. The producing areas of this merchandise included Baje, Ebisi, Boka, Ekokisam II, Oyi, Kesham and Kajifu in the Takamanda area; Nkemechi, Mbakang, Aiyewawba, Afap, Ebinsi, Inokon, Mbinyan, Ngunakang and Talangeiyi in the Kembong area and Igbekaw and Small Feitok in the Banyang area. Some other areas were Ekok, Ossing, Agborkem, Dadi, Ndup, Nsanakang and Abokum. At Aiyewawba, the warm water that continually bubbled up in a basin of rock was collected and boiled to skim salt off the surface.⁽⁶⁾

In Baje whose saline spring hardly flooded in the rains, salt production was very organised and carried out throughout the year. In contrast, salt exploitation in the Kembong salt producing areas peaked in the dry season and halted in the wet season. In Baje, salt exploiters built huts for the exercise. In 1942 alone, there were about 140 such structures. In each hut, two or three men together with their families heated night and day at least two shallow pans of corrugated iron filled with saline water. Each of these pans produced one basket of salt after two days of heating. Each of the over 140 huts produced at least 27 lbs. of salt a day. This was equivalent to a basket full. The village of Baje alone was estimated to produce over 400 tons of salt a year.⁽⁷⁾

Other common characteristics in the exploitation of this relish included the use of the salt ponds by kindred villages. This was the situation in Baje where the other Boki villages of the Danali clan freely exploited the brine springs.⁽⁸⁾ In Mbakang on the other hand, neighbouring villages paid four goats and palm wine annually to exploit this God given resource.⁽⁹⁾ Nigerians flooded the salt towns through special arrangement with the indigenous people. The production of salt was unperturbed in the dry season in many villages because the springs did not flood. Production reached an all time low in the wet season due to the flooding of the brine springs.

The exploitation of salt in the Cross River Basin of Cameroon involved almost everyone. Successful involvement in the trade depended on good neighbourliness and more importantly on the relations between exploiters and the local authorities of the salt producing areas. In other salt producing areas, surrounding villages could not exploit this priceless commodity even when they

offered to pay royalties. The villagers with the salt spring exploited the salt themselves, and sold it to middlemen who in turn marketed it in the hinterland markets. In other areas including Nsanakang and Nsanarati, foreigners were given a free hand to exploit salt. The politics involved in the production of salt was quite intense during its commercialisation period.

When salt was produced in the brine springs, it was exported to the Cross River Basin and beyond. A good number of trade agents and intermediaries such as the Banyang, Igbo, Bali and Bangwa took an active part in the commercialisation of salt. Other commodities, notably livestock, palm kernels, slaves, brass rods and cloth brought in from the Bamenda Plateau, Bamileke country, Bangwa land and Nigeria were used in exchange for this condiment.

Banyang salt traders travelled far and wide. Salt was bartered for livestock brought in by the Dschang traders. The Banyang merchants obtained most of this salt from the Keaka (Ejagham). They visited many markets, which included those of the Bamileke country through Tinto, Tali, Ebuensuk, and Lekeng. The commodity also reached Bamenda through Etuku, Kendem, Widekum and Bali. Other attractive markets visited were Biaoni and Tafu (Fomin & Ngoh, 1998: 40-41). The success of the Banyang middlemen depended on the slaves who carried the salt to the different markets.

Other dealers in salt were Igbo traders from Nigeria. They visited salt producing villages and bought up large stocks of the commodity. During the Second World War, for instance, these traders transported huge quantities of salt through the Manyu and Cross Rivers to the Nigerian markets. The salt so transported was bought in the Takamanda area. Even before the British took control of the region in 1916, a large quantity of salt was exported from the Nsanakang area to Nigeria.⁽¹⁰⁾ In 1944, well into the British administration, most of the Nsanakang salt was bartered for food by the Ikom traders. The Ejagham also exported much of their salt to the Efik traders (Atem, 1984: 34). Throughout the Second World War years, the price of the locally produced commodity soured.

Many other grassfield traders were very deeply involved in the commercialisation of salt. Foremost among these were the Bali who before World War I frequented Tali, an important border market between Mamfe, Bamenda and Dschang Divisions. Here they bought salt, later retailed to other grassland households. The Bali later boycotted Tali for Ikom in Nigeria following the British occupation of Cameroon in 1916.⁽¹¹⁾ Some of the grassland merchants also bought salt directly from the Keaka throughout this period of the salt trade.

Furthermore, organised markets within and without the producing areas facilitated the commercialisation of salt. In Kembong, the third largest market in the Mamfe Division, native salt remained an important staple commodity.⁽¹²⁾ Other significant markets were Tali and Widekum, border markets with Bamenda and Dschang Divisions; and Ebuensuk Basho, Afap where salt was exchanged for Basho palm kernels.⁽¹³⁾ In Ebuensuk, and Tali, slaves and livestock from the grassland were exchanged for the Keaka salt. Meanwhile in Widekum, livestock

was bartered for salt.⁽¹⁴⁾

Indigenous salt also gained a favourable market at Fonjungu and Fowung in the Bangwa area. Their chiefs collected toll from salt merchants at the rate of a cigarette for a cup of salt.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Lekeng, Etuku, Kendem, Biaoni and Tafu markets also traded in salt. Besides, all the salt producing areas had market structures for the sale of salt on a wholesale basis to trade agents.

The price of salt was not uniform. In the areas and periods when the resource was bartered, the people involved agreed on the respective quantities and/or measurements. According to the 8 December 1942 report of the District Officer for Mamfe, H. N. Harcourt, a basket of salt sold at Baje for 2/-. When the salt was transported by canoe to Mamfe, it sold for about 4/- a basket.⁽¹⁶⁾ Similarly on 12 October 1943 the former Mamfe District Officer, J. W. Hartley, said that in Mamfe the price of the local salt was twice that of imported salt.⁽¹⁷⁾ The Igbo made much profit in the sale of the commodity during World War II. In spite of this, colonial interference was overwhelming the salt industry.

COLONIAL INFLUENCE IN THE EXPLOITATION AND SALE OF INDIGENOUS AND IMPORTED SALT

Colonial interference in the indigenous salt industry for the most part inhibited the growth of the industry, as large consignments of salt were imported from South Africa, Egypt, Aden, Spain, and Great Britain. The imported salt sold cheaper and was considered by the authorities to be more refined than indigenous salt. Considerations to prohibit the exportation of the commodity to Nigeria and regulate its price were rife. Above all, no financial support was given to boost or improve production.

The importation of salt from Europe even before the colonisation of the continent frustrated indigenous initiative. Salt was imported into the Cross River Basin as early as 1771 when Lord Cassiles shipped 452 bushels of salt to Calabar. Other ships transported large quantities of the commodity to Calabar. In the 1800s, the commodity was cheap in Liverpool and imported into Calabar. By 1845, salt had become so important in trade that Old Calabar imported 2,984 tons of salt (Latham, 1990: 74-78). When Britain took control of the Cross River territory of Cameroon from Germany in 1918, instead of developing the indigenous salt industry into an enviable business venture, huge quantities of the product were imported from elsewhere. The indigenous salt trade that had already succeeded due to support from the Bamileke, Bamenda and Nigerian markets needed just a push to blossom. The Mamfe District Officer in 1918, W. E. Hunt, attempted to frustrate it. In one of his reports he observed that:

I see no reason why the Mbakang people should benefit by a monopoly to the detriment of the rest of the community. However,

it will probably be not long now before imported salt is again sufficient in quantity and low enough in price to oust the native article from its present favourable position in the market. I note that the salt pans in South Africa are being reworked....⁽¹⁸⁾

The observation of W. E. Hunt was a pointer to the government's very early determination to frustrate the indigenous salt industry in favour of the South African and other salt markets in Europe. They would not develop the Mbakang salt because it gave them unmerited monopoly among the villages of the area. The policy begun by Hunt was subtly sustained throughout the era of British administration of Southern Cameroons.

The government overall policy in Lagos during the colonial era disadvantaged the local salt industry. Chief Secretary to the Government, R. J. Cook, on 6 February 1943 contended that although it was desirable to increase local salt production using the existing methods, there were unlimited supplies of salt available at Suez needing only the shipping facilities.⁽¹⁹⁾ Hook insinuated to the stakeholders in salt to look towards the "unlimited supplies" from the Suez than develop the local industry. He was not concerned with the improvement of the methods being employed in the extraction of the indigenous salt. Meanwhile on 7 January 1943, the Assistant General Manager of the UAC Ltd. had opined that involvement in the local commodity would only offer a narrow profit margin.⁽²⁰⁾

The argument raised by the UAC Ltd. was however understandable because it was the largest net importer of salt into Southern Cameroons. Through this, the company made much gain from its commercialisation. The other major importer of salt into the territory was the John Holt Company. The authorities of the UAC Ltd. were reluctant to support the local salt industry because it would reduce the company's profit margin. The output of the product in Britain and her other dependencies would also be affected.

The colonial government also counted on the custom duties paid into its treasury by the UAC Ltd. Employment opportunities were also offered to British citizens at home and in the colony when salt was imported from home. Aware of these advantages, the colonial government consciously avoided its importance. The more this salt was imported into Mamfe Division, the greater its chances of its overwhelming and killing the industry in the colony.

Throughout the colonial period, measures were equally taken to prohibit the exportation of indigenous salt to Nigeria. The price of the resource was also regulated to encourage the importation of salt. In 1918 for example, W.E. Hunt proposed that importing salt in sufficient quantity would help to lower the price of the indigenous commodity. He also advised that the Mbakang people should not be allowed to increase the selling price of salt because it would be an unearned increment for a resource they contributed nothing to.⁽²¹⁾ This was however untrue because they were investing their time and energy towards the development of the salt industry. Determined to control the exportation of salt, a Public Notice No. 34 of 1942 was published in Gazette No. 11. This notice

Table 1. Salt exports from Mamfe division to Nigeria 1939-1945.

Year	Quantity Exported in tons (000s)
1939	33
1940	35.5
1941	3.7
1942	36.5
1943	38
1944	34
1945	32

SOURCE: File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941), Salt Rationing, NAB; File No. P. 573 Qc/d (1944) 1, Salt, NAB.

prohibited the exportation of salt in the Cameroons Province in general.⁽²²⁾

Meanwhile on 27 March 1943, the Mamfe District Officer observed the difficulty to effectively control the export of salt. This was because production was mainly in the hands of private individuals and the consignments were large.⁽²³⁾ In spite of the avowed commitment to prohibit salt exportation, huge quantities of this product were ferried downstream in canoes to Nigeria during World War II. It so marvelled the authorities that the Resident for the Cameroons Province described this wartime phenomenon as “fantastic.” Table 1 are statistics for the exportation of salt during the Second World War years.

Several acknowledgements were made as to the presence of locally produced salt, which should be assisted, but nothing was substantially done. In 1942 H. N. Harcourt proposed the construction of a coping around the spring at Baje to control the water welling up from the ground.⁽²⁴⁾ Although Baje did not flood, many other brine springs could not be exploited in the rainy season because of flooding. The District Engineer in reaction to Harcourt’s prompting estimated £5 to sink culvert rings for each spring to improve upon the production capacity of the brine springs.⁽²⁵⁾ This was however not followed up. The more the colonial government toyed with the issue of developing the salt industry in Mamfe Division, the more this issue became a major preoccupation of the authorities and the indigenous population.

INDIGENOUS SALT PRODUCTION AND SALE AS A CONTINUING PRE-OCCUPATION OF THE AUTHORITIES IN THE COLONIAL ERA

Several interlocking variables made the stakeholders in salt to discuss possibilities of enhancing production and marketability of the local commodity. Barely two years into British administration of the Cameroons, W.E. Hunt contended that if salt from South Africa would not be imported, salt from the Mamfe springs could be scientifically treated and would give rise to a “a

good paying industry.”⁽²⁶⁾ Twenty-one years later, the colonial authorities spoke of considerations for local salt production to be increased to offset shortages caused by the war.⁽²⁷⁾ This was re-echoed by Harcourt in 1942. He posited that if properly organised, this indigenous industry would “satisfy the needs of the Mamfe and Bamenda Division.”⁽²⁸⁾ This was a tenable argument because at that moment huge quantities of the condiment were being shipped down the Cross River. This was more than the quantity being shipped up river to the Cross River Basin of Cameroon.

In the same year, the Resident of the Cameroons Province mandated the Mamfe District Officer to ascertain from the UAC Ltd. whether they would purchase sufficient supplies of locally produced salt to defray demand from the Bamenda Division. While emphasising the need to satisfy the needs of the Mamfe and Bamenda Divisions, R. J. Cook suggested the prohibition of salt importation, and study selling prices of the local product. The Association of West African Merchants on its part was willing to handle the sale of the local resource as long as this could assure a reasonable profit margin.

Besides, the Ministry of Supply had informed the Nigeria government of a possible general shortage in the supply of salt to the federation. The Ministry advised the government and other West African dependencies to increase the local production of salt. In reaction, Harcourt impressed upon the management of the UAC Ltd. Mamfe on 30 December 1942 to help properly organise the salt industry of Mamfe Division. This was intended to satisfy the demand of both Mamfe and Bamenda Divisions. W. Halley Brown of the company on 7 January the following year recommended a legislation to govern local salt as it did with imported salt. Later, on 8 March 1943, the Resident for the Cameroons Province again pleaded with the company to buy up local salt and to prohibit salt importation to remedy salt shortage.

Again, the year following, the District Officer reported the “limping” of the salt industry, which could not satisfy the demands of Bamenda and Mamfe Divisions. His recommendation was for the government to take direct control of production and to ensure effective control, increase output and sales. Coincidentally, in January of that year, imported salt was not in much demand because the salt ponds in Mamfe were workable in the dry season. At the same time, locally produced salt was being taken to Bamenda for the market. This was enough for the government to become involved and develop the salt industry further.

Although salt was continuously in demand, the politics involved would not spur the colonial government nor the UAC Ltd. to take over this local industry, especially as the latter would gain very little from it. The Ministry of Supply had called on colonial governments in West Africa to increase the exploitation of indigenous salt to no avail. One might infer that most of the local administrators were more concerned with promoting British colonial economic interests than promoting the economic development of the indigenous communities. The Ministry of Supply was not even very committed to assist in the development of the salt industry in West Africa. If this Ministry was committed it would

Table 2. Samples of salt in selected sites.

	Nkemechi	Mbakang	Aiyewawba
Insolvent Material %	1.1	0.5	2.1
Moisture	1.6	5.3	2.7
NaCl	95.4	93.0	93.4

SOURCE: File No. P. 573, Qc/d (1944) 1, Salt, National Archives Buea (NAB)

have issued guidelines and follow-up measures for implementation.

In addition, one could safely contend that the colonial government and the UAC Ltd. were playing a dubious game to the detriment of the local salt industry. The proposals by the government for the UAC Ltd. to buy up salt as they did with palm kernels were not heeded. The government failed to understand that salt and palm kernels were two different commodities. There was salt production in Britain, but palm kernels were a tropical product very much needed in Europe for the soap and oil industries. Salt could not be bought from indigenous dealers because the huge reserves in Europe needed markets in Africa to ensure continuous production.

Other considerations explained why the UAC Ltd. and the colonial government would not encourage the local salt industry. As much salt was imported, British citizens were employed at home and in the Cross River basin of Cameroon. If the local industry was encouraged, the local population would benefit to the detriment of British citizens. This would also mean developing an industry that would in future benefit independent Cameroon by way of export to other countries. Although there was an inexhaustible presence of salt in the brine springs of Mbakang, the colonial government and the UAC Ltd. were not very enthusiastic about developing this local industry. The colonial economy continuously benefited from the customs duties paid on salt by the UAC Ltd.

Samples of salt from three producing areas were obtained in 1940 and sent to the agricultural chemist for analysis, but nothing was done thereafter.

Table 2 presents the results of this examination for three selected salt villages.

After examination, salt from Nkemechi, Mbakang and Aiyewawba were found to contain very small amounts of potash, magnesium and sulphate, and only needed recrystallisation for consumption. Had the colonial government followed up, huge amounts of salt would have been exploited and a good paying industry would have resulted. On the contrary, the price of the product was reduced and its exportation prohibited. Although salt production and saleability remained a preoccupation of the colonial authorities, the lack of enthusiasm in it among others led to its demise in later years.

DECLINE OF SALT PRODUCTION AND SALE DURING AND AFTER THE COLONIAL ERA

Prior to colonial times, salt production and exchange was a veritable industry. With the advent of British colonialism, the industry started limping, for want of encouragement. During the Second World War, its output and sale increased only to decline soon afterwards. In spite of the enormous potential for salt, the British economic interests discouraged this industry and the long-term result was its eventual decline.

The First World War had a negative impact on the salt industry because Bali traders diverted their trading activities from Tali towards Ikom in Nigeria. Not long after, the Tali strategic market at the boundary with Bamenda and Dschang Division was closed. It was reopened to trade only in 1930. Many salt traders in Tali were forced to either abandon trade or look elsewhere for its supply. Very few of them braved the odds to purchase salt from the producing areas.

Besides, the Banyang who served as the forest middlemen between the salt producing villages and the grassfield merchants could no longer exchange salt, cotton and tobacco for livestock by 1923, a few years after the First World War. Some of them left for the Fonjungu and Mangen markets as middlemen in the palm kernel trade flowing towards Nkongsamba in the French sphere of influence.⁽²⁹⁾ The 1914-1916 war had actually slowed down the volume of trade in Mamfe Division. The war affected the salt trade because Banyang traders who usually purchased livestock from Dschang for exchange with salt from Ejagham territory faced difficulties in doing so.

Furthermore, imported and cheaper European salt gradually killed the local salt commercialisation. Its ready availability made it overtake Keaka and Akwana salt from Nigeria (Atem, 1984: 42). As more roads opened up to traffic in the 1950s, imported salt was easily transported to different areas. Prior to this, locally, produced salt had relied heavily on human portage, mostly slaves. The British abolition of slavery and the slave trade additionally affected the local salt industry negatively. Banyang traders by this measure were deprived of the porters. Nature was also unfriendly because more salt was produced in the dry season and little in the rainy season in some producing areas. Demand however remained constant. With fluctuations in the supply of this salt, some people switched to the regularly supplied imported salt.

Among other measures employed to kill the indigenous salt industry, the UAC Ltd. established a storage facility at Baje in the early 1930s for distribution.⁽³⁰⁾ This was a direct intervention, because Baje was one of the greatest salt producing areas. The salt exploitation here had been uninterrupted all year round because the brine springs never flooded in the rainy season. The establishment of a storage facility at Baje was one of the most aggressive attempts to kill the salt industry.

CONCLUSION

The production and sale of salt in the Cross River Basin of Cameroon was a major preoccupation of the communities blessed with salt ponds or brine springs. Its production was regulated by the village authorities. While some villages freely allowed others access to the brine springs or ponds, others demanded the payment of royalties by neighbours or foreigners. There was even greater politicking in the entire salt industry from production to commercialisation. After the British became the colonial masters of Southern Cameroonians, much was done to discourage this indigenous industry. The British became very preoccupied with discussions on whether or not to enhance the local salt industry. As salt was imported from diverse sources and sold cheaply, the indigenous industry gradually phased out. Today, the brine springs and ponds lie idle in the bush.

NOTES

- (1) Files consulted at the National Archives Buea (NAB) carried information on the importation of salt by the UAC Ltd. and the John Holt Company Ltd. from these colonial dependencies and Europe.
- (2) File No. B. 1469/23, Af 31, Mbo Tribe Mamfe Division Cameroons Province 1923, NAB.
- (3) File No. Af 15a, Report on the Bangwa Area 1942, NAB.
- (4) File No. 512, Af 4, Assessment Reports, Anyang-Manta Tribes Mamfe Division 1924, NAB.
- (5) File No. Ce (1918) 1, Ossidinge Divisional Annual Report 1918, NAB.
- (6) File No. 43/17, Ce (1916) 2, Ossidinge Divisional Annual Reports 1916, NAB.
- (7) File No. Ce (1942) 1, Mamfe Division, Cameroons Province Annual and League of Nations Reports 1942, 1943, 1944, NAB.
- (8) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (9) File No. Ce (1918) 1, Ossidinge Divisional Annual Report 1918, NAB.
- (10) File No. P. 573, Qc/d (1944) 1 Salt, NAB.
- (11) File No. 1034, Ce (1916) 3, Ossidinge Division Annual Report 1916, NAB.
- (12) Ibid.; File No. 1460, Af 30, Intelligence Report on the Kembong Area, NAB.
- (13) File No. 1592/26, Af 24, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, NAB; File No. Af 20, Reassessment Report Banyang Clan Area 1933-34, NAB; File No. 117/1920, Af 1a, Notes on Ossidinge Division 1920, NAB; File No. 268, Af 17, Assessment Report Banyang Tribal Area, Mamfe Division 1930, NAB; File No. 868/1923, Ce 1922/1, Mamfe Division Annual Report 1922, NAB.
- (14) File No. 268, Af 17, Assessment Report Banyang Tribal Area, Mamfe Division 1930, NAB; File No. 868/1923, Ce 1922/1, Mamfe Division Annual Report 1922, NAB.
- (15) File No. 1469/23, Af 31, Mbo Tribe Mamfe Division Cameroons Province 1923, NAB.
- (16) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (17) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (18) File No. Ce (1918) 1, Ossidinge Divisional Annual Report 1918, NAB.
- (19) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (20) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (21) File No. Ce (1918) 1, Ossidinge Divisional Annual Report 1918, NAB.

- (22) File No.3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (23) File No.3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (24) File No.3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (25) File No.3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.
- (26) File No. Ce (1918) 1, Ossining Divisional Annual Report 1918, NAB.
- (27) File No. 121, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt NAB.
- (28) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1939) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB. In the few paragraphs that follow the information is obtained from this particular archival source.
- (29) File No. B 1469/23, Af 31, Mbo Tribe Mamfe Division Cameroons Province 1923, NAB.
- (30) File No. 3370, Qc/d (1941) 2, Salt Rationing, NAB.

REFERENCES

- Afigbo, A.E. 1973. Trade and trade routes in nineteenth century Nsukka. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 7: 77-90.
- Atem, G. 1984. *Cameroon-Nigeria Relations 1884-1961: A Study in Political Economic and Social Interactions between Two Neighbouring States*. Ph. D. Thesis, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Fanso, V.G. 1989. *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol.1: From Prehistoric Times to the Nineteenth Century*. Macmillan, London.
- Fomin, E.S.D. & V.J. Nghoh 1998. *Slave Settlements in the Banyang Country 1800-1950*. University of Buea Publications, Limbe, Cameroon.
- Fyfe, C. 1968. West African trade A.D. 1000-1800. In (J.F. Ade Ajayi, ed.) *A Thousand Years of West African History*, pp. 238-252. Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Latham, A.J.H. 1990. The precolonial economy: The lower Cross Region. In (M. Abasiattai, ed.) *A History of the Cross River Region of Nigeria*, pp. 70-89. University of Calabar Press, Enugu, Nigeria.
- Nkwi, P.N. 1987. *Traditional Diplomacy: A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields North West Province of Cameroon*. Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Yaounde.
- Vansina, J. 1990. *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, James Curry, London.

————— Accepted February 7, 2006

Author's Name and Address: Henry Kam KAH, *University of Buea, P. O. Box 63 Buea, South West Province, CAMEROON.*
E-mail: ndangso@yahoo.com

