

DROVE GIANT BULLDOZER 75 MILES IN EIGHT DAYS

ABERCORN: A 20-ton bulldozer and scraper, costing about £12,000, is now hard at work putting an all-weather surface on Abercorn aerodrome.

The 14-ton tractor and blade is a Le Tourneau "Tornadoizer," and is one of only four such outfits in Africa. It is powered by a 180-h.p. Euda diesel engine and, with its 6-ton scraper vehicle, can do 25 m.p.h. on the road. The scraper can pick up and spread ten tons of ground in one load. Fuel consumption works out at about four gallons per hour.

Mr. Frank Shaw, the operator, who is a Manchester man, drove this unwieldy vehicle nearly 750 miles in eight days, from Lusaka via Broken Hill, Moushi, Kanona, Mpika, Chinsali, Isoka and Tunduma to Abercorn.

SCRAPED PAINT

Its width is 11ft. 3in., and this proved to be exactly the width of one of the first bridges encountered, so that the machine, edging forward slowly over a bridge built to bear 12 tons, actually scraped the paint from the girders on both sides. Other bridges were even narrower and the bulldozer blade had to be dismantled before the machine could cross.

Some timber bridges were specially strengthened to take the load and two collapsed immediately after the vehicle had passed.

It runs on four enormous rubber tyres about 5ft. 6in. in diameter and 21in. by 25in. in cross section. They are the same tyres as were used for Lancaster bombers during the war but with a special heavy duty tread. The cost £250 apiece.

Each side pair of wheels has its own clutch and steering is done by manipulating the clutches as

in a tank, so that the machine can turn in its own length. All electric winches winding in 7 ton wire cables. There are controls are worked by compressed air and all the operations of the bulldozer blade and scraper are carried out by four forward gears and four reverse.

Describing his journey Mr Shaw said: "It was quite an experience for me, after having seen hardly anything of Africa except Lusaka, to find myself driving such a distance through the bush. We came along very well at an average of 19 m.p.h. as far as Isoka, but there we had a broken fuel connection and had to come the rest of the way on five cylinders.

"The long stretch of old bush road from Tunduma was a nightmare. There are only narrow car tracks for miles where the new road is not finished and I had to crawl along in low gear, working hard to avoid trees. It was a relief to get out on to the main road again and drive into Abercorn in top gear."

SIX MONTHS

The work on the aerodrome is scheduled to take about six months, during which Mr. Shaw will be coaxing his machine backwards and forwards over the surface continually throughout working hours. In the still African air he can be heard doing so from seven or eight miles away.

"It takes me," he said, "about half an hour to demolish and uproot a tree 18 inches in diameter. I nose about round the roots until it is loose. Then I build myself a little ramp and charge it from an angle so that the bulldozer blade gets under the main roots and over she goes"

YOUNG FARMER RETURNS TO U.K. DISSATISFIED

ABERCORN: Mr. M. C. Gregory, who has been in Abercorn for over 18 months with a view to starting large-scale farming of staple crops in the district, has returned to England disappointed in his hopes of settling permanently in the northern province.

Mr. Gregory was accepted as a promising settler by a selection board in London and came to Northern Rhodesia expecting to receive Government assistance provided he, on his side, fulfilled the requirements of the Colonial Office. This he made every effort to do, but circumstances have been against him, and the aid he seemed entitled to expect has not so far been forthcoming.

ONE CONDITION

One of the conditions required is that a settler should spend at least a year learning local methods with an established farmer. This type of farming, however, is not as yet practised in the Abercorn area, most of the settlers being retired or of independent means and conducting such activities as essential oil distilling stock farming or simply running more or less self-supporting estates.

Mr. Gregory went to Mr. Gleeman's farm at Timpwe as the best opportunity of studying local conditions. Here he employed ten natives and farmed land which Mr. Gleeman placed at his disposal. He also explored the countryside on foot for scores of miles, acquainting himself with soil, bush and water conditions in the greatest detail.

He bought small stock, a tractor and a lorry out of his own resources and, after this careful preparation, selected the land he desired to take up.

On applying for Government assistance, however, Mr. Gregory was at first told that the

policy of financially supporting settlers was not applicable to the northern province, where there was no market for farm produce and where transport costs precluded export.

On this being queried, the authorities withdrew their contention that the policy did not apply to the northern province and, as ground for refusing assistance it is believed they said that Mr. Gregory had not had sufficient experience with an established farmer.

Mr. Gregory decided that he could do nothing but sell his stock and implements at a loss and return to England.

DIRECTOR'S VISIT

Since he took this decision, Mr. Martin, the Government's agricultural director from Mazabuka, has visited Abercorn and has met representatives of the local Settlers' Association. It seems that he was astonished at the bulk of the local market in grains and native food-stuffs and the large quantities imported from outside the territory. He asked to be provided with detailed estimates of the requirements of the area and these have now been sent to him.

Thus with Mr. Gregory on the point of flying home, there was substantial prospect of a more favourable Government decision in his case.

ABERCORN TSETSE CLEARING

ABERCORN: The 14-year-old experiment at Abercorn in control of tsetse fly infestation by "discriminate clearing" is to continue.

The decision of the meeting of experts, held at Abercorn some weeks ago, was that the work had been successful and should certainly be maintained. Mr. J. H. Venning, the field assistant here, who has been in direct charge of the conduct of the experiment for many years, was highly congratulated on the way in which the fly pickets and their returns had been organised and is to continue in his post on his return from a two months' holiday.

TO TAKE OVER

On Mr. Venning's return, the Northern Rhodesian Government will assume full and direct responsibility for tsetse fly eradication in the area. The headquarters of the experiment will be moved from Mkoma to the present fly-pickets' camp on the Mpulungu road.

BUILDING OF NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL TO BEGIN SOON

ABERCORN: The plans have arrived in Abercorn for the airport's new terminal building and construction is due to begin in two or three weeks.

The building, it is understood, will be nearly 60 ft. in width and will contain a large waiting room with cloakroom accommodation, an office for meteorological and radio staff and another for operating staff.

A recent Gazette notice announced that the resident radio operator at Abercorn would act as customs and immigration officer, thus providing a complete and self-contained air port of entry into Northern Rhodesia from the north and east.

TAKEN OVER LAKE REST HOUSE

ABERCORN: Mr. G. H. Yardley, of Luanshya, has just taken over the rest house at Mpulungu, Abercorn's lake port. Mr. Yardley has been 11 years mining at Luanshya, and expects many holiday-makers from the Copperbelt to run down for the fishing. He soon have a boat and other facilities available for visitors.

ABERCORN: Mr. Lionel Smith, local director of Messrs. Thatcher and Hobson, the transport contractors, has just left with Mr. J. H. Venning, of Chisungu, for a fishing holiday in Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. They plan to make a two months' tour of all the best spots for trout and game fish and are equipped with gear ranging from a five-ounce trout rod to a 100 lb. spring balance.

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