Government Publications and Annual Departmental Reports relating to African Countries Prior to Independence

Government Publications relating to Basutoland (Lesotho), 1868-1966, with the Annual Departmental Reports

including some materials relating to Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Swaziland

a guide to the microfilm editions

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The collections in this guide form part of the Government publications and Annual Departmental Reports relating to African Countries prior to Independence series launched under the auspices of the African Studies Association of the UK with Professor Neville Rubin as General Editor.

Guide incorporates information and brief descriptions received from Dr. Thackwray Driver.

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A brief introduction

Government Publications relating to Basutoland

This microfilm collection comprises a series of Government documents on Basutoland, the colonial name for Lesotho, gathered from a wide variety of sources covering the entire colonial period from 1868, when the territory became a British Protectorate, until the formation of the independent state of Lesotho in 1966. It includes the Annual Reports, Blue Books, Proclamations and Notices, Law Reports, the Proceedings of the National Council/Legislative Council, Gazettes, financial reports and numerous miscellaneous reports. Also included are some documents from the pre-colonial period, published in the consolidated "Basutoland Records", compiled by the Secretary of Native Affairs of the Cape Colony in 1883.

The constitutional and administrative uncertainty that characterised the British colonial rule of Basutoland and the fact that the territory did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office, meant that the official documents on Basutoland did not conform to the standard colonial reporting format. A number of series of reports were initiated and ceased and series were frequently renamed.

Basic information on the administration, economy and society of Basutoland were published in the series of Annual Reports from 1919 to 1965 (though were suspended during the Second World War) and statistical data is available from the Blue Books for the period 1926-1946 and the Annual Statistical Bulletin for 1963/4-1965/6. Other information on Government finances is only available for the late colonial period, from 1952/53 to 1965/66.

The major administrative matters for Basutoland are covered in the Proclamations and Notices for the period 1868-1960 and the Government Gazettes for South Africa for the period 1960-1966. Administrative matters are also in the earlier Government Gazettes published by the High Commissioner for South Africa, who oversaw the administration of the three High Commission Territories (Basutoland, Bechuanaland, now Botswana and Swaziland). However, as the major administrative matters for Basutoland are also covered in the Proclamations and Notices the earlier Gazettes have not been included in this collection.

The Proclamations and Notices primarily address legislative matters and were published until 1960, when they were replaced by annual "Laws of Basutoland". Cumulative collections of the Laws of Basutoland were also published in 1949, 1958 and 1960. Customary law is addressed through a series of reports on "Native Laws" or the "Laws of Lerotholi" published in 1873 (not available for filming), 1922, 1946, 1955 and 1959.

Meetings of the National Council, originally comprising the chiefs, but gradually including commoners representing various interest groups and eventually constituencies, are recorded in a series of Proceedings for the period 1927-1958 (also included is an earlier report of Proceedings published in 1879) and subsequently the Official Report of the Legislative Council Debates for 1961-1965.
Constitutional and political matters are dealt with in a series of miscellaneous reports, including British Parliamentary papers on the history of discussions on transfer of the three High Commission Territories to the Union of South Africa (1952) and constitutional arrangements (1959). There is a report on the first general election in 1960 by J.P.I. Hennessy and a report on discussions around independence. Also included is a British Parliamentary paper on "medicine murders", which mentions the role of chiefs in these murders.

Also in the series of miscellaneous reports are sections on agriculture, forestry and land tenure, education, development plans, which includes the report of the Pim Commission on the Financial and Economic Position of Basutoland published as a British Parliamentary Paper in 1935, and census reports.

This is a unique collection drawing together a number of official documents presently scattered through a wide-range of libraries and other collections. Many of the documents are rare, or contained in incomplete series. The collection includes some important documents that have rarely been used in writing the history of Basutoland, such as the reports of the National Council, and making these document more widely available is important for the development of the historiography of Basutoland.

**Annual Departmental Reports relating to Basutoland**

The microfilm collection of *Annual Departmental Reports* is published as complementary to the *Government Publications* collection. As mentioned above, the official documents on Basutoland did not conform to the standard colonial reporting format due to the fact that the territory did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office and, as a consequence, the *Annual Departmental Reports* collection is somewhat smaller than has been previously published for similar collections in the series. The departments covered are Agriculture, Education, Medical, Judicial, Police, Treasury, Public Works, Prison Service and Registrar of Co-operative Societies. Like the *Government Publications*, these annual reports occasionally incorporate information for the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland.
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Government Publications and Annual Departmental Reports relating to African Countries prior to Independence

Launched in the 1970s under the auspices of the African Studies Association of the UK with Professor Neville Rubin as General Editor, the Government Publications series is a major series of microfilms of official documents published during the colonial period (including Annual Reports, Blue Books, Government Gazettes, together with Supplements containing Legislation) which covers most of the former British colonies in Africa. The Annual Departmental Reports series is published as complementary to the Government Publications series and contains reports issued by the various Government Departments in each country for the whole period of colonial rule.

The documents have been compiled from various sources making available on microfilm one unique collection providing a rich history of the development of each country in the series.

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