

JOHN (JACK) HELLIWELL: NYASALAND

*(From partial draft for an article in the Police Magazine,
by Sheila Carteret Robinson)*

In July, 1953, he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Police in Nyasaland. Shortly afterwards, the disturbances broke out and the Deputy assumed command of police operations in the field. A small section, consisting of police officers, members of the Special Branch, the Administration, and the King's African Rifles (KAR), worked under him during this period, and his first move was to commandeer the detective's office at Limbe Police Station for the "Operations Room".

We blinked in astonishment as the Deputy got busy. In one day, he had maps fixed on the walls, a doorway knocked down through the wall between the "Ops. Room" and the office next door, and six telephones installed, three in each room. We were most impressed – things did not happen as rapidly as this in Nyasaland!



But the Deputy soon found that two rooms delegated to "Ops." were not large enough for our needs. In a short while we were moved lock stock and barrel, into a private house in Limbe, quite close to the Police Station, where Special Branch was installed in the bedroom, on the one side, and the "Ops. Room" with the Deputy, a member of the Administration and one representative of the K.A.R, in the sitting room on the other side.

Again we had to readjust ourselves, but it was quickly done and for the next six weeks he was a force to be reckoned with. Our headquarters was invaded by detachments from Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and British South Africa Police, but we soon settled down to an orderly routine, and meetings were held with equal dignity whether they were official ones in the "Ops. Room", or private ones in the bathroom. And through it all the Deputy's dry sense of humour made us feel that things were not so bad after all.

The Deputy has had much to do with the reorganisation and expansion of the Nyasaland Police Force since the eventful disturbances of 1953. He was responsible for organising the Police Mobile Force, and compiled the Force Standing Orders, which were first published in 1954. In 1954 he was also instrumental in establishing the Officers' Mess and Police Club at Headquarters. He acted as Commissioner of Police in 1954, and was appointed Provisional Member of the Nyasaland Legislative Council that same year.

By his guidance and able administration the Deputy has been the source of inspiration to many members of the Force since his arrival in the country. But he has not always been content to sit back in his chair and write directives! He has the uncanny knack, during inspections, of being able to unearth the very "skeleton in the cupboard" which Officers in Charge wish to avoid!

He also has an astonishing memory, much to the consternation of some of the junior officers who have served under him.

It is the Deputy we have to thank for reviving the Police Magazine, and his advice and assistance were invaluable in getting the Magazine started.

