

F. A. W. LUCAS

NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION.
NATURELLE EKONOMIESE KOMMISSIE.

Sitting at

Johannesburg

May 15th, 1931.

Alexandra Township also 8283
Krugersdorp Adm Board
Western Transvaal do
Springs do
Thema

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Pages 7914-7990...).

J. Lewis (P.P.)

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Official Reporters.

(P.P.)

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THE NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

At Johannesburg,

Friday,

May 15th, 1931.

102nd PUBLIC SITTING

Present:

Dr J.E. Holloway, Chairman,
Major W.W. Anderson,
Dr H.C.M. Fourie,
Mr F.A.W. Lucas, K.C.,
Dr A.W. Roberts.

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Friday, May 15th, 1931, 10 a.m.

7914

Evidence given on behalf of ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP RATEPAYERS'

ASSOCIATION BY Emanuel Peter Mart Zulu, and

Samuel William Maegar.

(Evidence interpreted by Mr Fahey.)

THE CHAIRMAN : There is supposed to be another witness ?--- (Mr Mart Zulu): Yes: he is not here yet.

Is he coming ?--- Yes.

When ?--- Any moment.

You represent the Alexandra Township Ratepayers' Association ?--- Yes.

In the Alexandra Township have you natives alone, or are there other people too ?--- Coloured people.... We have asked Mr Fahey to interpret for us as we want to speak our own language.

Have you a large number of coloured people living in Alexandra Township ?--- Yes.

What is the biggest proportion, native or coloured ?--- The natives.

Have you any idea of what the proportions are ?--- I should say between 300 and 400 coloureds; about between 800 and 900 Zulus; Xosas about 600; Abasutu, 1,114.

Are there any other races there ?--- Yes, mixed up, but not worth counting separately; mixed up with the population

I mean, apart from native and coloured, are there white people or Indians ?--- No.

You give 25s/- per month as bus fares: is that from Alexandra Township ?--- Yes.

Is the bus the only way of getting in to Johannesburg ?--- Yes.

Do they get a monthly ticket ?--- No.

So that the 25s/- is paying the bus fare every day ?--- Yes.

/ What

What do the buses charge ?--- Sixpence each per taxi and fourpence each per bus.

One way ?--- Yes, single journey.

Coming in by bus, you would allow a certain amount for the family to come in, in your 25s/- ?--- Yes.

You complain about the heavy cost of property there. Will you explain to us to whom does the property belong that has not been bought by natives ?--- It is owned by a company; I think among the owners are Mr Papenfus, K.C., Mrs Campbell and others.

What is the company called ?--- Alexandra Township, Limited.

How do they come to have the right to sell land to natives near Johannesburg when other people have land and cannot sell it ?--- They were given permission by the Government.

Was this before the Natives Land Act ?--- Yes.

Do you know when ?--- I think about 1905.

How do they sell the land: do they put it up for auction, or have they got a fixed price ?--- The price is fixed according to the size of the stand. In the beginning they varied between £35 and £40 per stand, but to-day the price has gone up and weighs heavily on prospective buyers.

Does the company fix the price, or do they put it up for auction ?--- The company fixes the price.

Is land sold by natives who have already got it, to others ?--- Yes.

Do they get prices somewhat similar to those which the company charges ?--- No. The price has improved because the land has improved, the holdings have improved, but there is more land bought from native holders than from the company because the company charges more. A small stand to-day costs as much as £200.

/ You mean

You mean a small stand with the house on it ?--- Bare; just the land; unimproved land.

Bought from the natives ?--- No, from the company.

Is the company's price £200 ?--- Yes.

Is there one fixed price for all land ?--- No. As I said, the price varies according to the size of the stand. I say it is for a small stand as much as £200.

And a big stand ?--- Some stands cost more than £200, but others again, I don't know why, cost about £100 each. There is a big variation in the price of the stands.

What would the size be of a stand that costs £200 ?--- For example a plot measuring 144 feet by 82 feet, one of which I know, costs £200.

Have the natives got unimproved land to sell there ?--- No.

So the natives sell the land with the buildings they put on ?--- Yes.

Can you give us an idea what sort of prices they get ? What is the best price that you know of a native selling his stand and buildings for ?--- A friend of mine got as much as £100 for his stand, selling it to a native; it had a house upon it.

With the house ?--- With the house; the whole thing.

Is that the best price that you know ?--- I don't know of any one.

What is the lowest price that you know of ?--- I know of no-one who has sold at less than £80.

So the native gets from £80 to £100 ?--- Yes.

Is there any local government for the township ?--- There is a Local Health Board.

How is that constituted ?--- The Sub-Native Commissioner, Mrs Campbell and Mr Grimmer, and the others are natives. There are eight of us on the Board.

Are the natives elected ?--- By vote, yes. / MR LUCAS

MR LUCAS : In wards, or for the whole area ?--- For the whole area.

THE CHAIRMAN : What is the rule with regard to native beer ?--- We are not allowed by law to brew our own native beer, but the people complain bitterly about that. They wish to have liberty to make their own native beer.

It is the general law of the country that they are complaining of now which prevents them from making their own beer ?--- Yes.

They as a local authority have no say in that matter ?--- No, we have no power to over-ride the law of the land. But seeing that we have the privilege of making regulations for controlling the management of certain of our domestic matters, perhaps the authorities may entrust us with the privilege also of regulating the making of native beer, so that there would be a minimum of abuses.

Have they the right of grazing animals on the commonage in addition to the right that they buy land in the village ?--- There is no commonage there at all.

Does that mean that the natives at Alexandra township have no animals ?--- A few of us who are more advanced than others do own stock, but we have to have it put in a confined space in the same way as one keeps a pig in a sty. It is a complaint of the natives living in this township, that they have no commonage.

MR LUCAS : Have there been many cases where natives have forfeited their land for not paying instalments ?--- Yes, and we complain very much indeed about that. Let us take the case of a man who has to pay £100 for his plot. He pays instalments up to £80 and then finds difficulty in raising the next instalment in time. There is a foreclosure; the buyer loses not only his land, but also his money. When I speak of the land I include the improvements that have been made

to it in the meantime.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Is it not put up to auction ?---No. All that happens is that we people concerned get short notification from the company stating that, seeing the buyer is in arrear for a few months, two or three months, then the land is to be taken away from him.

The company take back the land with all improvements on it ?--- Yes.

And collar the instalments that have been paid as well ?--- Yes. That is a matter which we natives cannot understand at all.

MR LUCAS: Is it the company you are speaking of now, or private individuals ?--- I am speaking of the company.

Have any cases of that kind happened in the last twelve months ?--- In our own way I would say (using a Zulu idiom) it is almost a daily occurrence. (Mr Fahey: He means that it happens occasionally.)

Is there any taxation on the land for the purposes of your health committee ?--- You mean a levy by the health committee ? Yes.

What is it ?--- Three shillings a month. That is a sanitation fee.

But there is not a tax, an assessment rate, on the land ?--- That is a matter which is still being discussed. There is no such rate at present.

Because if you impose that, the township company would have to pay it on their vacant land, as well as the natives ?--- As I say, the matter is still being discussed, but so far the company has been fortunate enough to escape that.

Are you on the health committee ?--- Yes.

Does the revenue that you get from the sanitary services bring in enough money to pay for all the services in the township ?--- The revenue is just about even with the out-go.

/ We get

We get licence fees from storekeepers, and also for vehicles. We make the people living there pay 2s/6d too for each dog they may keep.

That is, a year ?--- Yes.

Do you give sanitary services to anybody outside the township ?--- Yes.

To whom ?--- European police, for natives, and for a few Indians living along our boundary.

Is that police station outside Alexandra Township ?--- Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you any difficulty with illicit beer brewing inside the township ?--- When you say "beer," do you mean native beer ?

Native beer or any other intoxicating drinks ?--- Yes, there is, but I think it is because of the restrictive laws applying to the brewing of native beer that there is that evil.

Is there much of it ?--- I could hardly tell you the extent of it, but I know it exists; and I know that because of the restrictive laws to which I have referred, the makers of these intoxicating beverages always do their best to make some drink which will ferment as quickly as possible, so as not to attract attention.

Is this brewing for their own use, or do they sell it to other people ?--- Both.

What sort of people buy it other than stand-holders ?--- Well, I suppose if I felt very much indeed like a drink, and I had an opportunity like that of buying some, and felt I would not be detected, I would buy it, because I am not allowed to make my own.

Have you any difficulty about natives coming in from elsewhere to buy beer there - natives for example who work elsewhere ?--- I don't think so, because I have observed that

natives living outside the township go there for the purpose of getting these drinks.

MR LUCAS : Do you think, if the township were given the power to control the brewing of beer, and the disposal of beer, that you could keep the township in order ?--- Yes, I think so.

How would you suggest that could be done ?--- I think it could be done by allowing each plotholder the privilege of making so much beer in respect of such and such a period; and I think also by making a stipulation that at no time should more than a particular quantity of beer be in any one home, for instance, four gallons.

Do you think that could work say in Alexandra Township without attracting to it, especially at week-ends, very large numbers of natives from elsewhere ?--- Naturally, but if the same rule were to be adopted in regard to adjoining properties, then that risk would disappear. People who invite their friends to join them over a pot of beer, very soon have many friends, beer-drinking friends; and it may even spread so far as to attract persons willing to buy. I think, speaking generally of the Transvaal, it would be a good thing were the authorities to allow natives living in areas where there are many natives, to brew their own native beer.

What I would like your opinion on, is with regard to the possibility of making a successful experiment with a clearly defined area such as Alexandra Township ?--- I think I tried to explain that the experiment would succeed if it were not confined to one area, because it would be like nectar for bees, for one who heard of beer being available there, and being able to get to Alexandra Township, would go there; and that would spoil the experiment.

Wouldn't it be dangerous to try to make a change like

/ that

that for the whole Witwatersrand ?--- I think it would be found from experience that there is more danger from the present system than there would be from the system I advocate.

In your statement, near the beginning, you say, "Our economic and social grievances are so self-evident and palpable that there is no point in talking about them now, and we will be concerned in giving you evidence of the unenviable position of the huge majority of natives in our area." Are there any such economic and social grievances that you want to refer to that are not mentioned in this statement ?---Yes.

What are they ?--- In regard to existing areas where natives are allowed to buy land from Europeans, I think the Government should insist always, before a transaction is put through, even where permission has already been given by the Government for the selling of the land, that a valuator approved of by the Government should value the land before a price is agreed upon. But in regard to future native areas, that is, potential native areas, I think it would be still better were the Government to exclude all private companies and have its dealings direct, departmentally, with the native buyers. It seems to us, too, that it is iniquitous that companies under the protection of the law should be allowed to deprive a man who has been struggling very hard to acquire a piece of land, and has failed through not being able to pay a few of the last instalments, for some reason or other -- I think it would be better in such cases if the law could be so altered as to permit of some benefit accruing to persons who have got so far with their instalments as to have benefitted the sellers. I don't think sellers should benefit unduly at the expense of buyers; that is my point.

We know the points that you have made in this statement. What I am asking about is, what points are there

outside the statement that you want to deal with in your evidence ?--- I have merely said that - I understand your question - because I wish to make clearer, if possible, what I had already stated in evidence in reply to questions. But there are other points. A general complaint that the natives have is that the accommodation provided for them on the railways is poor, even in the case of a native who takes out a second class or a first class ticket.

THE CHAIRMAN : Mr Lucas has already pointed out that you do not need to repeat the things that are already put in this statement ?--- But I don't think that is mentioned in the statement.

MR LUCAS : There is something about paying second-class fares and not getting as much for it as the European gets ?--- I did not know that: I am sorry. The reason for that is that this document has only been handed in to you at the last moment and I have not had an opportunity of reading it. I don't know whether the statement refers to Pass Laws?

There is one reference, but what is the reference you want to make ? I will put my question about that first and see whether it is what you want to say. There is a proposal here that advisory bureaux should be set up to advise natives as to what the law is. You say they are wasting a lot of money on going to law. Is that the point you wanted to make ?--- Yes, that is the point I wanted to make.

Will you explain what sort of bureau you have in mind, and how it should be constituted ?--- The idea is the principal thing in my mind; the details are a little bit beyond me. I do happen to know that the Government has in the Native Affairs Department some very good officials who, if the law allowed it, could certainly give our people very

/ much

much help in regard to such matters. And I would go beyond that and say that there are also natives who could be of much help, especially if those natives were to co-operate with such Government officials in helping persons who find themselves in difficulties.

What provision do you make in Alexandra Township for medical treatment ?--- There is of course the Medical Officer of Health, who has been chosen by the Health Board; but the people living in Alexandra Township usually go to doctors chosen by themselves when they need their services.

Are there doctors living near there ?--- There is one living near there.

What does he charge per visit ?--- For one visit generally half a guinea. Some do not go to him because, as with white people, we sometimes like to have another doctor for something different, and in such cases they have to pay as much as a guinea for the doctor's services. That is very hard on people who have only limited means, and where for example such a person badly needs to be operated upon, the inability to pay usually means that that person is doomed, must die.

To come back to the point you were going to raise about the Pass system, what provision is there for a native in Alexandra Township who wants to be out after nine o'clock at night, in getting a special ?--- You mean within the township?

If he wants to go to Johannesburg ?--- There is no issuer of passes who is living with us who has been chosen by us. There is just the usual Government machinery. You have referred to the special pass: that of course can be obtained. It has to be paid for.

Where can it be obtained ?--- At the Pass Office here

in Johannesburg.

I mean the special pass to be out after nine o'clock at night: you don't pay for that ?--- There is no such thing there; you cannot get it.

Is there any difficulty in Alexandra Township for a resident there to be out in the township after nine o'clock ?--- There is no difficulty at all. In regard to that matter we hope that the Commission may be able to influence the Government to deal in a fatherly way towards us natives, because it does seem hard that when a person is obliged to be out after nine o'clock, and happens not to have a special pass, that person is liable to arrest and to punishment as a criminal. When I say "arrest" I include handcuffing. It hurts our feelings. It is a degrading thing. There may be persons who ought to be prisoners, but to handcuff a man who has not taken out a special pass, but who had very good reason for being out after nine o'clock, seems not reasonable. Another effect that procedure has is to make the natives begin to feel that arrest is after all not a thing to be ashamed of or to fear, and persons become bolder because they have become now so accustomed to seeing this going on, it no longer has much effect. I am speaking now generally, but to the decent thinking native it is a hurtful thing.

DR ROBERTS : On page 5 of your statement, in the middle, you say - you speak of "iniquitous and inhuman laws." "There is no question of dealing with the modification of the Colour Bar Act and the other iniquitous and inhuman laws which keep us from using our brains and energy in the best market and to the best of our ability." These are strong words: will you explain to which laws you refer ?--- (Mr Fahey): The copies of the statement are not the same, apparently. They were not able to have the whole of this

typed out, in view of the short time.

THE CHAIRMAN (re-reads the sentence quoted in previous paragraph of this record by Dr Roberts): Dr Roberts wishes to know what laws you refer to ?--- That perhaps is strong language, but English is strange to us. What we mean to convey is that there are certain laws which weigh heavily upon us, including the law, for example, which does not allow a native to buy land. In our home country we are not allowed to buy land, but if we go overseas we would be allowed to buy land.

DR ROBERTS : Still I am glad you admit that the words are perhaps unhappily used. Then on the last page you refer to the disgrace that the native who wishes to become a doctor has to go overseas, but not for all the classes; they can be taken in this country ?--- What we meant by that is that up to now it has not been possible for a native to qualify fully to become a medical practitioner here in South Africa. At least I know of no instance where that could be done.

No, but still that has changed. The other statement that I think is rather strong is in the last page of your statement, "But conditions as they are at present make it impossible for the greater part of the population of South Africa to acquire any education whatsoever, and we have the wicked paradox of the section of the population that needs education most being debarred from it." That seems to me to be rather strong, because although it is quite true there are many natives not obtaining education, you must remember that there are nearly half a million at school ?--- There again, sir, you have caught us because English is a strange language to us. What we wish to convey is that there is much difficulty in the case of a native who wishes to become

a medical man or a qualified surgeon or a qualified lawyer.

This is also perhaps an instance of language that might be modified: the sentence following that is, "The Native Affairs Department, on which a considerable amount of revenue is expended, could be more useful to us than it is at present." Let us see how it could be more useful: I will take the message to them ?--- (No reply): (Mr Fahey): It seems to be strange to him, sir - the statement.

THE CHAIRMAN : Who wrote the statement, if the witnesses who put it forward don't know what is in it ? Did they write the statement ?--- There is a third man here also working with us on this, but unfortunately he has not been able to come. The man who would have answered that question is not here.

Still the statement comes from an Association, and the chief witness of that Association does not know what is in it. It is merely wasting the time of the Commission ?--- It was done by the Association through electing three spokesmen, and each spokesman had his own particular section to which to confine himself.

DR ROBERTS : And the one whose section this is, is not here ?--- He is not here.

THE CHAIRMAN : The Commission thanks you for appearing here and for giving your evidence.

(Tea adjournment.)

Evidence on behalf of KRUGERSDORP NATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

by JOHANNES WILSON MONOGANE (Mr Fahey interpreting):

THE CHAIRMAN : I think you should have an opportunity of saying, first of all, what you wish to generally ?--- We have tried to make that statement embrace all the representations we wish to make to the Commission, but if you ask me to speak to the statement may I just mention a few points ? One is that the native feels, generally speaking, that he is underpaid. The result of that is an adverse reaction on the native in many directions, even in causing what white people call crime. I would mention in that respect the example of our women-folk who through lack of money stoop to making harmful beverages which are intoxicating, and sell them. Indirectly it makes some natives turn into hooligans; by "hooligans" I mean what is popularly known as Amalaita; young rascals who go about after night-fall prowling about the towns, in the country, to see whom they can victimise, actually looking for money. Another example is that I think I am right in saying it leads to some of our young people being tempted and giving way to temptation, to enter places where they can steal. Another example is that it leads to immorality. Girls get mixed up with the making and selling of intoxicating drinks, and in the end sell their own bodies for gain. My statement, Mr Chairman, refers particularly to conditions in Krugersdorp. One of the matters in regard to which we natives complain there is that we are required to pay what we consider unduly high rent to the municipal authorities for the places we occupy in their area.

MR LUCAS : What rent do you pay ?--- 12s/6d for a single room per month.

/ Is that

Is that to the municipality, or is that to private owners ?--- To the municipality.

Are there any two-roomed houses ?--- Yes.

What is the rent for them ?--- A guinea a month. The reason why I mention that is that it breeds an evil. One of the results is that the poorer people are compelled, husband and wife, to share the same sleeping room as their children. One of the things we have been representing to the municipal authorities is that a person who has occupied a stand for as long as twenty years should be allowed to acquire that stand in freehold, but our representations have been unavailing. We would very much like to have the native point of view in our own municipal area, Krugersdorp, and I think it would be a good thing in other towns, to have some one in whom the natives have confidence, whether it be a European or a native, who could represent that view and be elected by us natives.

Does your advisory board meet any of the town councillors to-day ?--- Only occasionally when we go as a deputation.

Who is chairman of your board ?--- The superintendent of the location.

And does he report direct to the council, or does he have to go through another official ?--- Not being a member, he has to do it through a member, a councillor.

Is he under the sanitary inspector, or does he deal direct with the town council ?--- Not direct with the town council; he is under the chief sanitary inspector.

THE CHAIRMAN : Will you go on, please ?--- We who have had a little education feel very much that native children, particularly in urban areas, who through lack of means on the part of their parents are not able to attend school, should be given some help so that they may get education.

The Government may perhaps be able to help in that respect, because after all we are all the children of the Government; we are all the subjects of the Government. In towns children who for that reason are not able to go to school, become loafers, and may very well, as does happen at times, become ne'er-do-wells. That is about all I think, sir, that we wish to represent generally.

MR LUCAS : Do you find that the physique of the people in the location of Krugersdorp is as good as that of natives who come to Krugersdorp from the reserves ?--- I think the natives living inside Krugersdorp municipal area are on the whole of a better physique than those who come from the reserves.

THE CHAIRMAN : You have referred to immorality as one of the effects of low wages: do you mean that the wives or daughters of men living in the location practise immorality for profit ?--- Well, I would hardly put it specifically as you have put it, Mr Chairman. I would prefer to put it this way, that this evil appears where there is illicit selling of intoxicating drink, and that the men who go to such places to get such drink, eventually seduce the women-folk who are at such places, and then money passes for what happens.

In European communities when one speaks of a prostitute one means a woman who goes to a man and who gets paid for that, and she does not much care which man it is; she will go to one man to-day and she will go to another man to-morrow, whether she knows the man or not. Does one find that sort of prostitution among native women ?--- Our people are not like that.

But there are women who go with men to whom they are

/ not

not married, and who are kept by those men: is that not the case ?--- Yes.

Is the general practice that a woman stays with one man for a time until they get tired of one another, and then she goes to another man ?--- Yes, that does happen, but of course we do not look upon it with favour.

Naturally. But then the immorality is not a source of profit for the men; it is a source of expense for the men ?--- Yes.

Now house-breaking is also mentioned. Do you think the natives who work during the day go in for house-breaking during the night, to get more income ?--- Yes, I think I am right in saying that that does sometimes happen. But may I just explain that with our people, in our social order, before you white people came - if a man who was well off had a feast, it would not be theft on the part of some poor person who was not anything like well off, who happened to cut off on the sly a piece of meat before it had been prepared, or even after it had been prepared, for eating. So I think in saying that when our young people go into houses to take things, they do not look upon that with the same sense of abhorrence as in your social system you white people look upon theft. It is a poor person benefitting from the wealth of the rich.

Do you refer now to natives taking things from the houses of white men ?--- Yes.

Among the Europeans the house-breakers are very frequently people who live by that alone ?--- That is not so with us; at least I am saying that in speaking generally. The cases I have in mind are of persons who are in employment and do get a certain small income, but try to improve it by

/ doing

doing things that they would not do were they seen.

You say that in some cases they are men in work ?
Do you mean in other cases they are men who are not in work but who are just professional criminals ?--- (Mr Fahey): It is the cautious way the native has of expressing himself. He does not want to make his statement an omnibus statement, to take in everybody. He is only speaking within his knowledge.

Do you know of natives who make their living purely by house-breaking ?--- I don't think there is a single one in the area from which I come who lives like that, by thieving alone.

MR LUCAS : What is the house-breaking done to get - what sort of goods ?--- Anything that would be of benefit to the person stealing; that is, for example, if he saw clothing and he thought it might be useful to him, he would take that; blankets, even money, even food.

THE CHAIRMAN : Now in regard to the Amalaita, it has been explained to us that the origin of that movement is purely that in the native tribal conditions, the young men always have a little bit of fun in fighting with the boys of another kraal; and when they come into towns, they fight in the same way. Now you say they do it for making money ?--- No, I would not connect the two things at all, because this "laita" development is an entirely new phase in the life of the native, and it only exists in the towns; its whole nature is quite different from anything you find in the native areas.

I know that, but it has been explained to us that it is the same sort of spirit which you have in the fights between boys of one tribe and boys of another tribe, which they do for fun ?--- (Mr Fahey: I think what the man means is that

/ there

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