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SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: How much stock do you allow them?-- I allow them five head per working servant and twenty small stock per kraal.

What do they do with the surplus stock?-- I do not know. They disperse it here, there and everywhere. Probably they sell half a dozen fat oxen and during the winter they may kill four or five for their own consumption and the others have been dispersed among their relatives.

DR. ROBERTS : How would you make a beginning on this question of European employment on the farms?-- How would you work it in? Would you work it in definite districts?-- The first thing I would do in this country would be to settle the principles of the future occupation of this country and I think a lot of good would result from that. To go on in the way we are doing is only tinkering with the thing and it will remain so until the foundation principles are settled.

What principles are you referring to?-- The principles, in my mind, are - how far are we going to allow the native to become an owner of land. I think there should be a more definite decision taken as to the area, not necessarily the locality, but the area which is ultimately to come into native possession and which is ultimately going to be occupied by the natives. *it is coming to politics but* I do not think you can divorce the one from the other, because our politics come out of economics ---- Having settled the land question, you have to settle the question as to whether the native is going to be treated in our European areas as a potential equal citizen with ourselves. I know there is a certain feeling in this country that that should be done, but to my mind, if we are going to retain our European civilization at all and particularly if we are going to retain our race

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purity, we cannot afford to fool about with any question of equality so far as political representation goes. Then with those two foundation principles settled, you could make some provision for the development of native areas on modern lines by means of the Land Bank. There are various ways. There will be the gradual drawing of the native out of the European areas and replacing them by Europeans. To try and put in Europeans and thrust the natives out would be to do something which I fear would lead to a great deal of trouble with the native population.

DR. ROBERTS: Would not you try it in a small area first, instead of embarking with it on a large scale? Take a small area in Natal, say this area, where only Europeans may be employed?-- I should not like to put any European --- I should not like to put any small district of the country in that position. I am only putting forward a scheme which has to be carefully worked out.

MR. FRANCIS JOHN CARLESS
MR. PHILIP HENRY O'BRIEN DESPARD, called and examined.

CHAIRMAN: Are there any definite points which you desire to bring before the Commission?--
(Mr. Carless) No, I only wish to say I have dealt with the Native question from the cattle ownership point of view, and I shall be pleased to deal with the position from that aspect, if you care to put any questions to me.

You represent the Mooi River Farmers Association?-- Yes, my friend here will deal mainly with the question of the relations as between the farmers and their tenants. My view is that the whole of the Native question, the whole of the Native problem, is so surrounded by the cattle problem that the two cannot be

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dissociated. As long as cattle constitute their banking and financial institutions, so long will they accumulate cattle and as they accumulate those cattle, as they are doing now, their increase will be due mainly to the protection which they get from the Veterinary Department and they are multiplying as rapidly as the grazing will allow. Where they have eaten off all the grazing, we know that they have died off in large numbers. But where they are able to extend and to exist, their cattle increase at an alarming rate. I believe that it is a fact that at the last census, the native-owned cattle were in excess of the European owned cattle. More than 50% of the cattle in the country now are owned by Natives.

MR. LUCAS: In which district?-- I am speaking of the Union now. And as they occupy and obtain more grazing outside their locations, so their cattle will increase and they will increase more rapidly than the European-owned cattle, because it is well known that low quality animals are able to withstand hardships better than the more improved breeds and will breed more quickly. The time will come when the Union will not be big enough for the Native cattle. They will require all the land and then they will cry out for more land. That is, if this system of cattle banking is allowed to continue. If they could run the whole of the country, they would eventually overstock the whole of the country. That brings us up again to the question of Lobolo, and while I think that most of us thinking men and reasonable people recognise that the system of the practise of Lobolo is more or less a religion when looked upon from the older Native's point

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of view, particularly from the Zulu - I cannot speak of other natives, I can only speak of the position in Natal - but this question, i.e. the Lobolo question, has to my mind been very much abused of late years. It is not now what I would regard any longer as a good practise, it is very loosely administered. It is recognised by the Chiefs and Headmen but there is a very great deal of abuse in connection with it. It is no uncommon thing for a Native to obtain his wife in marriage after having paid a very small proportion of Lobolo, perhaps only one head of cattle, with a promise to pay more as time goes on, and from this ability or from the habit of letting things slide, one often finds that a Lobolo is unpaid even when the Native, who is supposed to have paid that for his wife, have marriageable daughters of his own coming on. Then, of course, the Native of the present day is not such a good Native, under those conditions. But, as a result of his outlook on life, he has not got the same position, he is not the same man as his grandfather; he often fails to pay his Lobolo, he fails to recognise his responsibility and gradually numbers of such men are leaving parental control and becoming more or less free agents, they no longer recognise their responsibilities and obligations. Therefore, I think that every effort should be made to deal with the cattle question through the Lobolo question. How it is to be done, I do not know. I am not sufficiently deeply learned in Native lore and customs. But I do recognise that there is already considerable looseness in regard to the Lobolo question and in a very few years they will recognise that this system is impoverishing them, especially with regard to land and cattle. I had

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an instance the other day where a very reasonable farmer, a man held in very high respect and esteem among the Natives, who had a number of Natives residing on his farm, put it to them in this way, - "You men have too many cattle and your cattle are making you poor. They are no good to you, why do you not sell them". Their reply was "Noone will buy them". To that he responded "Why do you not go and kill them, they are making you poor". They thought over it and within the next two or three months he found that those men were selling their cattle and as a result they were able to save the rest. Before that, they had been so overstocked that the cattle had been dying. I cannot hope to offer you anything in the nature of a solution, but that is the position with which we are face to face here, and I believe that the same prevails in many other parts of the country.

MR. LUCAS: Have you not gone a long way towards a solution by what you indicated just now - getting those people to sell their cattle?-- Yes that is so. That man was very successful in his efforts.

DR. ROBERTS: You said that Lobolo was a religion. That would, to a large degree, explain its persistence?-- Yes, I have watched it closely and there is no doubt about it that it is a religion with them. Nowadays, people, of course, look upon it in a very different light, and the paying of Lobolo is not regarded as an obligation ~~as~~ in the same way as it was in the past.

It is largely a case of a man buying fertility?-- Yes, there is that.

CHAIRMAN: How does the existence of all this

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enormous bulk of scrub cattle affect the position of the cattle market?--It depresses it to some extent, but I do not think that it is responsible for the general depression of the cattle market to any very great extent; for this reason that native cattle do not find their way on to the market except in very rare cases. Natives do not sell; they continue to breed and do not send anything away.

MR. LUCAS: Will not the people who are engaged in exporting beef to Italy buy these native beasts?-- No, they will not, because the quality of the native cattle is too poor.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Do you think it is of any use improving their breed?-- They must have more room to carry the stock. Until they have reduced the amount ~~of~~ of cattle which they have at present it will be fatal to put a better grade of bulls with their cattle. The improved breeds could not stand up to the conditions which prevail at present on these lands held by natives and overrun with stock.

MR. MOSTERT: The better class of stock would die much sooner than the stock which the natives have now?-- Yes, you saw that the other day.

Because unless they are properly attended to, they will go under sooner than the other stock?--That is so.

You say that you have not really thought out a method whereby this present position could be improved?--No.

Do you think the abolition of lebole would tend to remedy it. As a cattle man I should like to ask you whether a farm able to carry a thousand head of cattle would be able to carry a larger number?--No, I do not think so.

Therefore you will never get any further, even if you farm for another 20 years longer; a farm that can only carry a thousand head, can never be expected to carry

any additional numbers?--If the carrying capacity of the land is only a thousand head, then, naturally any excess over that number will reflect on the quality and the condition of the stock.

And any adverse conditions will have the effect of wiping away so many every year?--That is so.

If your area will only carry a thousand head, it stands to reason that you cannot have any more?--That is so.

If you have any more, it will die off?--Yes; overstocking to my mind is the greatest danger that we have to contend with particularly in the native areas.

Where a reserve is able to carry twenty thousand head of cattle, it will only carry that number and no more?--No, that is the position; if you put more on to that reserve it must of necessity affect the general condition of all the stock there, because there is not enough grazing for all.

So all this increase in stock is just so much waste?--That is what I feel about it.

Now you realise of course that it is a serious question and we want to get at some means whereby this can be remedied. Are you in favour of laying out big settlements for natives--settlements for agricultural pursuits and other portions for grazing?--No, I am not.

Say you have an area which you have examined by the experts, and the experts say that that area can carry so many head of stock and no more; the area can carry so many squatters, so many head of stock, so many head of small stock, and everything will be properly demarcated; you will have so much arable ground and so much grazing ground...?--I think that that would be a step in the right direction, provided it is not on too large a scale. ; I have in mind that no large area such as that, administered as a settlement,

should exceed 2,000 morgen. If you get beyond that you are only creating a source of trouble in regard to grazing lands and so on.

My idea was that such an area should be administered by the Chief and Council?-- Well, the chief must be an educated man; he must be a progressive man with a sound knowledge of agricultural matters; if he were not a man of that type, it would be fatal.

And the regulations in regard to that settlement should lay it down that on a certain given date, the cattle in that settlement should be a certain number and no more?--^ses, that would be absolutely essential.

And the Chief -in-Council -- whoever he is-- shall have the right to give instructions that so many have to be sold, and so on?-- Yes, I agree that it will be necessary to reduce the stock, to keep down the numbers most rigidly. That idea appeals to me, if it can be carried out. Naturally, if any such settlement scheme is attempted, the very first question to be dealt with must be the limitation of the number of animals. You have to decide on the carrying capacity of the land and limit the stock to that number or below it. That, I think, is a very good suggestion, and it will be the only means of ever inducing the native to improve the quality of his stock. Under such conditions, applicable to areas of settlement such as you indicate, it would be possible in the course of time to induce the native to recognise the better value of a better quality of stock. At the present moment the native recognises one head of cattle as one head of cattle, big or little, good or bad. He does not discriminate very much, but with education that may come.

CHAIRMAN: What difference would it make to the cattle market if the native cattle could be raised to a

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uniformly good standard?--It would greatly assist us.

It would probably make all the difference between making export possible and not possible?--Yes; it seems a strange thing to advocate on the face of it, that the greater the number of better cattle we have, the better for us from the export point of view; but it would be so, because the final aim of export must be that we shall be able to get good quality of stock in hundreds and thousands regularly. That is to say that we can supply the market in Europe with a constant supply of meat. Of course, we cannot get to that position in a few years, but I think that in a few years' time we should be able to achieve that position for at least five months in every year.

MR. MOSTERT: Shippers will get full cargoes?--Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Moreover, your overhead expenses will be spread over a larger number of animals for export?-- That undoubtedly is a very big and important factor.

MAJOR ANDERSON: This instance which you gave us of the European being able to induce the natives to sell their stock, was that only an isolated instance in that respect?-- It cropped up on the course of a conversation I had a few days ago; it was a voluntary statement made to me.

We have had a lot of evidence from people who have been able to induce their natives to fertilise their lands, but who were yet unable to make their natives see the danger of overstocking?-- Yes.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Were those natives, who you referred to, living on the man's farm?--They were living on his labour farm some distance away.

Did not he perhaps threaten them with eviction if they did not reduce their cattle?-- No; there is an understanding in all cases among us on the Highveld; we limit the huts to a certain number of cattle as best we can; #

I do not know whether in this instance the limit had been exceeded. I do not think any threat had been made to the natives that they would be put off the farm.

CHAIRMAN: What is the limit --- how many head of stock per native?--(MR DESPARD) Personally I limit mine to five; I do not allow them more than that.

Can you tell us what are some of the other limits that are imposed?-- I have heard of other farmers who have imposed a limit of three per head.

What are the upper limits-- farmers who allow more than three or five?-- There are, of course, farmers who impose no limits at all. Those are the people who are causing all the trouble in our areas.

Take those who do impose a limit-- what would be the biggest limit that you know of?-- That is difficult to answer. There are only a few of use who are actually imposing a limit and that is a point on which we are always having trouble. They will not keep within their limits and we have continually to be threatening them with eviction so as to try and keep them within their limits. If we could have some other system of getting labour without having to allow them to keep cattle, it would be far better. But they want to have their cattle for lobola and it does not seem that you are able to get satisfactory labour tenants unless you allow them to have at least a certain number of cattle.

CHAIRMAN: You were going to give evidence on the labour position, Mr. Despard. We shall be pleased to hear from you what the position is here?--I just want to say that I consider that this native lobolo business is a very bad thing. If we could find a substitute for that it would help us a very great deal. With our farmers here we find it a continual source of trouble-- this

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native stock. Even if you offer them higher wages on condition that they do not keep any stock, they will not accept them; they insist on being allowed to keep cattle.

What are the customary conditions of tenant labour here in your area?-- They have to work for six months out of the twelve. That I think is the general practice among the farmers in this part of the country.

Do they get paid during those six months when they work?--Yes, they are generally paid a monthly wage.

Is that invariably the case?-- Yes, most of the farmers pay them. I am speaking for our district and I think all the farmers do pay them. I pay mine and my case is not by any means an outstanding one. Each boy works six months in the year and then he receives £1 per month for his labour; then in addition each working boy is allowed to keep five head of cattle. For instance, if a headman has three working boys, he can keep 15 head of cattle and 30 goats. Ten goats for each. If he has not got ten goats, then I allow him to keep two extra head of cattle. The young boys are paid from 5/- to £1 per month in wages. Most of my boys start off at 7/6. My greatest trouble is in connection with the stock they keep and I am always having to threaten them that they will have to leave the farm if they do not keep their stock within limits.

Do you think the present position is satisfactory so far as the keeping of labour tenants on your farm is concerned?--No, it would be more satisfactory to me and to other farmers as well, if we could have some arrangement whereby the natives could come and live on the farms near our premises and have their families with them and work continuously at a considerably higher ~~1/2~~ salary and not have any stock at all. I think most of the farmers would be

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willing to let them have an acre or so near the farm, or even more, which they could cultivate; but with our labour conditions as they are now-- well, we have to do the best we can. The whole time we have them on our Mooi River farms we know that their thoughts are elsewhere. I should like to have my thorn farm fully stocked with my own cattle and then pay the natives whom I require to work for me, higher wages.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Have you ever made an attempt in that direction and offered it to them?-- I think they will not accept it on any condition.

What do you pay them ^{after} for the six months?--If I require ~~quere~~ quere their services I pay them 30/- per month and £2 per month. They come and work just like any outside labourer. But very few of my boys work for me after they have completed their six months. After their time is up they either go and work elsewhere or they just loaf around. They often do nothing at all. They just stay at home; I have 25 boys and out of those I believe there are two who go and work elsewhere after their time for me is over.

They must be fairly well off if they can afford to loaf all that time?--Well, that is the general rule in this part of the country. They work for six months on the farm and then they go home and hang about without doing any work at all; that is what a native seems to like.

Do they have enough to live on?-- Yes, in a good season they have enough. They have their lands to cultivate. In regard to stock too, on many farms they have no limits at all, but you can imagine that such farms are completely overstocked. I am now referring to cases where the European owners do not require the farms; they

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LOOK UPON them as labour farms and they allow the boys to do there whatever they want. Those farms, of course, are a source of nuisance and irritation to the genuine owners.

CHAIRMAN: Are not such farms being very seriously depreciated in value?--They are undoubtedly.

Do you experience any difficulty in getting your natives to work for you for wages after their six months are over?--They do not like to work after their six months are up. When they have finished their six months they like to go home; some of the younger boys prefer to go to the big towns, to Durban or to Johannesburg; they seem to want to get away from the farm as soon as they can.

MR. LUCAS: During the six months that they work for you are they separated from their families?-- Yes, they are.

Does that possibly explain the reason why they do not want to stay on?-- I think so, but it is not convenient for us to have them there because of the stock that they want to keep.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: If they go to Durban or to Johannesburg they are also away from their families?--It is mostly the single boys who go to the big towns; there are not many of my married boys who go to Durban or Johannesburg, it is principally the young boys.

I am referring to the young boys?-- Yes, the young boys prefer to go to the big towns and there they will work for the same wage as I offer them.

MR. MOSTERT: Do you realise that squatter labour is most expensive labour to the farmer?-- I do realise that, but unfortunately it is the only labour that we can get.

What about the ordinary monthly labour, cannot you get that?-- Only at times. It is not regular. If they have sufficient crops, then the labour is very scarce, and they are most independent. That is another difficulty which we have to contend with.

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Have you ever considered the question as to what this squatting labour is costing you?-- A great many of us have bought farms specially for the purpose of having a certain and assured labour supply; we have tried getting local or roadside labour, but it is not satisfactory. This is the best we can do. By having your regular squatting labour you get boys who are more used to you and also to your work, and you know that you have them available.

So that the labour is a very great thing for a farmer who specially has to buy a farm for that labour and allows that labour to depreciate the value of that farm. It is pretty costly labour, is not it?-- It is very costly, but that is what we have to do here to get labour.

MR. LUCAS: Is it practicable to allow the natives to have their wives up for a fortnight or so every three months?-- The women folk do come up occasionally; their homes are away up there and they all live in a common dwelling here at Mooli River.

There would have to be accommodation for these women if they were to come up?-- They prefer to leave their wives at home to look after their crops.

I was not suggesting bringing them up for all the time, but just having them up on visits?-- I do not know; it would be very difficult to keep them here for a long time. My natives often do their six months without going home. Their homes are about thirty miles away; it is thorn country up in the Highveld and the native generally prefers to live up there in the thorn country.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: What does the poorer class of farmer do for his labour if he cannot afford to buy a farm for his labour?-- He employs volunteer labour and he is at a very serious disadvantage; he is always in trouble to get the necessary labour.

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He cannot depend on his labour?-- That is his principal difficulty; he is always short of what he needs.

And what has he to pay?--£2 or £2.10.0 per month.

And where does he draw this volunteer labour from?-- A good many come from the locations. (MR. CARLESS) In times of plenty they do not leave the reserves readily, except during certain seasons when taxes are being collected, and that is mostly at the most inconvenient time when we least require their services.

What time of the year is that?-- During March, April and May. When we have reaped everything and planted everything for winter-- then they come and stay with us.

Could not the Government assist the farmers by rearranging the times for the collection of the taxes?--There might be objections to that; it might suit the convenience of one district and not of another. Certain suggestions were made in that respect and we found that certain districts did want them during that particular time.

DR. ROBERTS: What do you pay volunteer labourers like that?-- They get 30/- to £2 per month, with food. Of course if they are more skilled-- and we have boys like that-- then they get up to £2.10.0 and £3. For instance cooks get a far higher rate of wages.

Yes, but these class of people would not be moving to and fro?-- There is no such thing as a constant labourer on the High Veld. (MR. DESPARD) Very little labour here works more than six months in the year.

Is that due to the sunshine?--(MR. CARLESS) I do not know; he feels that he wants to rest six months in the year; he has an estimate of his capacity.

Is it necessary for him to rest six months in the year?--No, I certainly do not think that it is necessary, in fact I think it is very harmful indeed.

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