

NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION.
NATURELLE EKONOMIESE KOMMISSIE.

Sitting at

Durban.

April 4th 1931.

Miss Makanya

Joint Council

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Pages 6301-6382)

G. A. Ribbink (PP. all)

..... (PP.)

Official
Shorthand Writers,

I N D E X

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NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION.

DURBAN, 4th April (Saturday) 9.30.a.m.

EIGHTY FOURTH PUBLIC SITTING.

PRESENT:

Dr. J.E. Holloway ,(Chairman)

Maj. W.H.Anderson.

Mr. A.M.Mostert.

Dr. H.C.M.Fourie.

Dr. A.W.Roberts.

Mr. F.A.W.Lucas K.C.

Mr. C.Faye (Secretary).

MRS. SIBUSISIWE MAKANYA (further examined)

CHAIRMAN: In your statement you pointed out that the standard of agriculture could not be raised by the wife single handed; is there much evidence to show that the men are actually taking part in the cultivation of the fields?-- Yes, there is evidence of that.

In what way are they taking part?-- I should say that since the time of the advent of the white men they have been helping in the cultivation of the lands and this is more evident in the mission stations; they are to-day taking their share of the work with the women.

Do they do the ploughing?--^xes.

But very largely the ploughing is still done by the umfaans?--To some extent in the kraals it is still done by the young men and the father does not do it; the young men do it there, but in the mission stations it is done largely by the men themselves to-day.

Is that under missionary influence?--⁺Yes, it is under missionary influence and the education too, and I think it is because the men are not engaged in wars as

they used to be in the time of Chaka and Dingaan that they now take their share in the cultivation of the fields.

MR. LUCAS: Just following that up a bit: when you say the young men are doing the ploughing, does that mean young men who have grown up -- if they do not go to the towns?--Yes, that is so.

Not just the young boys?--No, the young men, but the young boys have to help too.

Do you get instances of men doing the skoffeling and the weeding and so on?--Yes, you do get that in some of the mission stations, but not everywhere.

You do not get it outside of the mission stations?--no, not outside. I have seen cases too where in the kraals the men do that, and I think they would be doing it more and more if they had the machinery to do it; but there is a willingness to-day to share with the women in the agricultural work-- more so than there was say 25 years ago.

CHAIRMAN: You say that the young men do the farm work and not merely the umfaans; but that is still rather exceptional, is not it?-- Well, I am not thinking now of doing farming all the year round.

I am thinking of the ploughing?--Speaking from my knowledge, of what I know, the umfaans come in and have to help in leading the team and the young men handle the plough.

But do you consider that that is a general rule?-- I do, but you do find instances too where young boys of 15 and 16 handle the plough, but they are considered to be young men now.

CHAIRMAN: When you speak of young men handling the plough, you include boys of 15 and 16 among the young men?-- Yes, from 15 years upwards.

Whom we would normally regard as umfaans?--Yes, I suppose so.

Travelling round the country I have seen comparatively little of young men handling the plough?-- Yes, but you do find these cases in various parts of the country.

You do find cases, I know, but it is not a common thing, is it?--Yes, the umfaans come in to help.

The men leave the urban areas chiefly at ploughing time in large numbers?--That is so.

Do these men actually do the ploughing or do they watch the umfaans doing the work?--?--Do you mean when they return to their kraals.....

Yes, when they return from the mines or from wherever they have gone to work?--I have seen them come in to help; of course, there are others who do the work too; I can say that they do actually come in and help in the ploughing.

MR. LUCAS: To what do you attribute the change by which men are doing more agricultural work than they did formerly?-- I think they are more and more realising that they have to come in and supplement what used to be raised by the women. And of course education has done a great deal to change the sharing of the work. Now that education has come in, it has changed their conception which they heretofore used to have in regard to these things.

Is there anything, is any part of the change due to what among white people is called the emancipation of women?--Yes.

Would you say that native women are claiming more rights and more freedom now?--I would.

How is that showing itself?--Well, it is showing itself in this way.....

In what way are they claiming greater freedom, and what sort of rights are they claiming-- that is native women as a whole?--They claim from their men that they should share

in the work; and education too. Largely at these mission stations men and women have studied together-- in these training institutions and there they have shared the work together and that is having its effects....

DR. ROBERTS: Do you find many marriages arising from that community of thought, from mission stations and from institutions; do you find many marriages where the young man from the institution marries the young woman from the institution?--^yes.

Is that on the increase?--^yes, it is.

MR. LUCAS: I am rather keen on any evidence we can get on the change in the attitude of the native women?--

MR. MOSTERT: May we put it this way -- are the women to-day taken into consultation; are the women consulted to-day by the men as far as affairs are concerned, whereas in the past the women were never consulted?-- In the mission stations they are consulting their women, and where they do not, misunderstandings always arise; I have noticed that there is a keen desire for independence and ownership arising from the native women.

DR. ROBERTS: But the native man always consulted his women to a large extent?--In some cases, but not in all matters that he should consult them on.

But he consulted them a good deal; there has always been a comradeship?--I do not deny that there was a comradeship, but I do not think that he consulted his wife as he should have done in matters pertaining to the home too.

With regard to the children-- where they were to be educated and so on?--^yes.

He always did that?--Of course, we are now talking about the mission stations-- the men who have come under the influence of the mission stations.

MR. LUCAS: I should like to go further into this. Take the tribal areas where things are different; is the position of the women there any different from what it was, say 20 or 25 years ago?--^yes, it is different.

In what way ^{is} it different?--I just assert that there is a keen desire for independence in the women and a keen desire for ownership. There is a big change ...

Is that true of areas like Gibulweni's area; would it apply there too?-- Yes; I know of cases in our district where, when the parents have died and the brothers have become the heirs, the girls are not in any way provided for. I am thinking of one or two cases where the girls have actually left their homes and have gone to urban areas where they are working and providing for themselves, whereas in former times, 10 or 15 years ago, that would not have taken place, where the brother would have gone to the town and fetched the girls back to the kraal.

And to-day the girls would resist that kind of thing?-- Yes, they would and when thinking of these things one can say that the men are becoming ^wpoorless in that respect.

They are submitting for it, you mean?--Yes, they are.

Now would you say that the change in the attitude of the women is becoming general, is it becoming widespread?--^yes, it is becoming more and more so.

DR. ROBERTS: DR. ROBERTS: You do not want to give the impression, do you, that the women of to-day are so delightfully free, while the women of 50 and 100 years ago were all tied up?--No, ^I do not, but I want to give this impression-- ^{is} that there has been a change, a change has taken place, and the women at the mission stations are quite different from the women of 50 years ago. I do not mean to say that they

do not have any freedom whatever under the tribal system, but with the advent of civilisation, changes are taking place in our women.

Yes, I admit that, but do you think you would have that fine courage in your native women, do you think she would have that fine bearing,-- the way she looks you straight in the eye, if she had been tied down?-- Well, the native woman has been suppressed to some extent, but she has not yielded. She has been fighting her battles right along. Under the tribal system 50 years ago women would not submit to whatever the men wanted. You take for instance the witch doctors. The women witch doctors, I think, are an example. You find them at the kraals-- they are an example of what you are thinking about.

I am also thinking of women governing the tribes?-- With the Zulus--- we did not have governors of the tribes. Women did not sit as governors of the tribes.

MAJ. ANDERSON: But with the Swazis they did?--^yes. But I want to make myself clear in this that though the women have not had a square deal, although the men have not recognised them as they should have done, or as the women are recognised in a climbing civilisation, yet the native ~~the~~ women have not been entirely suppressed and they have been fighting and climbing. I have given you the case of witch doctors as an example. You find changes taking place all over now. I want to make that clear.

DR. ROBERTS: I do not want the impression to be created that they were entirely subdued and suppressed?-- No, they were not entirely suppressed at any time under the old tribal system; they always had something to say....

MR. LUCAS: What I understood you to say was that they were now claiming more rights for an independent

personality than formerly?--Yes, they are; it has been brewing, but now it has come to the surface and it is now showing itself.

Would you say that the Zulu women-- taking them as a whole-- were all happy and care-free people?--Yes, I would.

It is sometimes said that you do not see the same smiling, happy faces among the Zulu women and the Zulu girls as you see among the women of other tribes?--Yes, that may be; we are a little bit more inclined to be serious, but we do our smiling inwardly.

Do you think they are reasonably contented?-- Yes, the Zulu attaches more importance to dignity and he thinks that a person who is always hilarious is not dignified.

You told us about two girls from your own tribe who had gone to the urban areas because their brothers would not support them?--yes, that is so.

Is the position of these girls in town satisfactory? Supposing they were to acquire some property, would not the brothers be able to come and claim that property?--I think they could do so under the tribal system, but these two girls are not buying any movable property which the brothers might come and claim.

Another point which has arisen in connection with the position of women is this. In a town, supposing a native woman is seduced and has a child, it is claimed that she must leave any question of redress or maintenance to her father to recover from the father of the man. Do you think that that is adequate protection to a woman living in the town; after all she has to look after the child?--No, I do not think that the protection is adequate.

You think that if native women in such instances were prevented from getting maintenance in the towns, that

it would be a hardship; to-day it is urged that when a woman has a baby in such circumstances that she should not be allowed to use the European method of claiming money for the support of the child, but she must let the child go back to the kraal and there be maintained in the ordinary way. Now, is that sufficient protection for the woman and the child, if she wants to keep the child in town?--No, I do not think it is sufficient protection at all. I think provision should be made whereby the woman can secure the maintenance of the child direct from the young man who was responsible.

DR. ROBERTS: Cannot she do that now?--No.

MR. LUCAS: Then you said on Thursday that the tribal system does nothing to raise the position of the women. Do you think it is possible to do anything under the tribal system to raise the position of the women?-- Yes, I think so.

In what way?-- I think it could be done through education in the first place. I think there should be progress in the tribal system where the woman would have an opportunity of participating. . It may perhaps be an educational programme, such as I gave an instance of the other day-- something to encourage the chiefs to take an active interest in education. There might be committees appointed to be entrusted with the educational programme of the community; women should be allowed to participate in these matters and in the Churches too the women should be allowed to participate and to progress.

DR. ROBERTS. But they are so allowed, are not they; they are allowed to have womens' associations?--Yes, they are allowed. But under the tribal system they are not allowed--- they are not consulted on matters which are

for the welfare of the Church and for the welfare of the community. I think we could do a little more by extending our activities in those directions.

MR. LUCAS: Will you tell us what is the Bantu Youth League which you represent?-- It is an organisation which is undenominational and its purpose is to try and weld the young people of the different communities and different Churches and try and interest them in different programmes that are intended to uplift the communities, but the great purpose of the Bantu Youth League is to work co-operatively. We realise that the Church among the Bantus has "sort of divided" the Bantu people considerably and any programmes on which one wishes to launch out for the welfare of the Bantus do not receive so much attention and recognition as they would if there was an organisation which was undenominational and acting for the Bantu people as a whole.

Is it run entirely by natives, or do Europeans take part in it?--Europeans do take part, but it was initiated by natives. It was formerly known as the Purity League. Europeans took part; they could do so as guests and on our Committee we have a couple of Europeans.

Now you suggested that there should be Bantu Social Centres for men and women in the different towns?--yes.

How would you suggest setting them up. I think the Johannesburg one was set up by outside parties and governed from the outside?--⁺es, I understand that part of the money came from the outside and part of the money came from the people of Johannesburg.

Now supposing you cannot get these outside gifts, have you any idea of suggesting how such centres could be started and financed at the beginning? --I thought perhaps that the Native Affairs Department of each municipality

and responsible citizens in a town like Durban, who have natives in their employment would care to take an interest in programmes like that, programmes that would provide recreation and education too for their employees.

MAJ. ANDERSON: You gave us your ideas of the advantages and of the disadvantages of the tribal system, but I am not sure whether you thought that the advantages or the disadvantages were the greater; which do you think are the greater, the advantages of the tribal system--- or do you think that detribalisation has great advantages?--I would not say detribalisation entirely, but I would think of a system which retained the fine things in the tribal system because I realise that when you take a people and make them discard what it has taken years for them to build up, then they have no anchor whatever which they can rest themselves on. I did bring up the advantages and disadvantages of the system but I would not discard it altogether. I wish to live and I hope to live to see the system modified every time and new things added to it so as to make it more enduring and capable of adjusting itself to the changing conditions.

We have been told in one or two places by educated natives and others that the chief occupies a place which almost has religious significance in the life of the natives. Would you say that that is so as regards your knowledge of the natives?--Yes, I would say so.

Do you think that that is a correct statement of the position?-- Yes; we look upon the chief as the centre of our life; that really is the position.

And for that reason it will endure all the longer?-- Yes, but in order to endure, it must adjust itself..

DR. ROBERTS: Do you think in the towns that compulsory education would help the young children, the native children?--^I don't, and as a matter of fact not only in the town but in the country as well. I think it is absolutely necessary that educational facilities should be provided for the children in the towns, who to-day simply roam about and do nothing and learn nothing either.

Would you have this system of evening schools extended further; there are a number of evening schools for natives in Durban now?-- Yes, I am in favour of that being extended.

And these young children should be made to attend?-- Those children would be in employment during the day and would attend their classes in the evenings.

I believe you do a great deal of social work?--^I do.

That is part of your work, is it?--Yes, it is.

Do you find that disease is becoming more rife in the villages, unpleasant disease?-- Yes,

You do find that?--^I do find that.

Is that brought about, you think, by the men coming from Johannesburg?--I do think so.

And coming back from the towns?--Yes; that is brought about, as ^I have said, by the men who go to the towns, and having no families or no family life, they drift into questionable places and they return with these diseases.

And you think that is spreading?--^I Yes; although I have not got the figures, ^I am under the impression that it is, and I think one of the remedies would be for these men ~~to~~ who come and work in town for six months or something like that, to have some sort of home life provided for them; that, ^I think, would tend to decrease the spread of these diseases. It would be a good thing.

Now would you have it that outside of Johannesburg and Durban, the man and his wife should find a home in ~~the~~ villages rather than in these compounds?--Yes. When I think of the young men and of the girls who come to town..... For instance, when a village such as Clairwood is established I think some respectable families might have an extra room where they could take a lodger, a young man or a young woman, who wishes to keep straight. Such a young person could be taken up in such a home and after work would be able to find that home atmosphere which is so essential.

You think the present system is not a good one?--No, the present system is not good; I think what you have suggested just now is an ideal thing. That should be the ideal.

Would you propose that a woman, like yourself, for instance should be appointed by the Education Department, or whatever Department would take charge, to do work of your kind?--We would. Even if it does not come directly, I think it would help a great deal to have the Government giving recognition to work like this and help us perhaps by financing our work, because it is very much needed that something like that should be done. Financial help is very much needed.

Your point is that your people are not wealthy enough to finance that kind of work themselves?-- They are not at all wealthy. We do need some financial assistance.

And Government help and recognition would be very much appreciated?--⁺It would certainly help us in many ways.

CHAIRMAN: There are no other points which you wish to bring before us just now? Then the Commission must thank you very much for your interesting evidence which will be of great use to us.

REVD. HENRY COTTON (CHAIRMAN)
MRS. MABEL PALMER.
MRS. ISABELLE SILILO.
MR. ALFRED ZELALAS MAZINGI.
MR. MAURICE WEBB.
MR. SEBASTIAN MAKULISI.
MR. DENNIS J. SHEPSTON

REPRESENTING THE JOINT COUNCIL OF EUROPEANS AND NATIVES

A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS WERE HANDED IN BY THE WITNESSES DEALING WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE JOINT COUNCIL'S LABOURS WERE HANDED IN TO THE COMMISSION.

CHAIRMAN: We have gone through the various statements which have been handed in on behalf of the Joint Council and there are a number of points on which members of the Commission would like to ask questions. I take it that in regard to a statement like that put forward by Mrs. Palmer, she would like to speak to the points dealt with in that before we proceed with the other questions, and I should like to know whether that applies also to some of the other statements, or whether it will meet the case if we take the other statements as read?--(THE REVD. MR COTTON) I think Mr. Shepston will have a statement to put in with regard to the effects of the Land Act. I want to refer briefly to the housing report, and I want to say that the native population of Durban is 38,000, but owing to the depression and want of employment that total has been reduced by something like 8,000. So you cannot reckon the native population of Durban at more than 30,000 at present.

On what basis is that estimate made?--We got the figures from the Native Affairs Department.

On inward and outward passes?--We take it so.

But one of your statements makes the point that there is a large number of unregistered natives in Durban?--Yes

Would that factor remain more or less constant?--

Yes, I think so.

MR. LUCAS: I am under the impression that one of the municipal officials the other day said there were 45,000 natives working in Durban?--We are talking simply of Durban itself, nothing outside of Durban.

The 30,000 would then just about cover it?--Yes.

(MRS. PALMER) The different sections of us have different points to put before you. (THE REV. MR. COTTON) We want to put in another statement in connection with Amalaita gangs. We want to put that in in association with the name of Mr. Selby Ngcobo who drew up the document. Mr. Ngcobo was here for some time but he has now gone back.

DR. ROBERTS: Do you think he had sufficient knowledge of the subject to make a statement of any weight?--yes, I think so; I think he had the opportunities of getting the necessary information while he was here in Durban; he is a student of Fort Hare and he made the enquiries for us. This is a statement which would be the result of his enquiries in town and the result of his getting into touch with a variety of natives.

Belonging to one or other of these gangs?--yes. First of all the statement deals with the genesis of the Amalaitas and it states: "there is practically no town or city in South Africa which is without its pest of Amalaita gangs. The police have tried their best to cope with these fellows, but it is a wellknown fact that no adequate measures have yet been found of combating their evil ways. It has therefore occurred to me, that if I were to give the facts, so far as I have been able to get them here in Durban, the solution of dealing with these boys would then be found. One way of dealing with the problem is to have a very vigilant police force, but even they do not, and cannot patrol every nook of Durban.

In the rural areas the boys spend most of their time out in the veld-herding cattle and goats. There ^{with} ~~is~~ the open country before them, plenty of free country air, and favoured by warm sunshine the boys become very wild and agile. Boys of one locality, usually boys of the same age, form a gang with a bully at the head; tacit obedience is given to this bully - captain. He it is who gives orders for raids on neighbouring fields; he it is who gives the signal for attack on the adjacent gangs against which traditional hate is maintained. This is akin to party spirit and warfare which are studiously kept up for the sake of keeping the parties alive and intact.

The frolicsome boys become nurtured on the traditions of sport-fighting, which is not different from real fighting in its consequences -- on the glories of faction fights, deeds of daring and bravado. In short, adventure which involves triumph over the adversaries, real or supposed, is their meat and drink.

When the boys come into towns and cities, they bring these traditions with them. The veld spirit manifests itself, however, in a different environment and in wrong channels. Kraal conditions are different from urban conditions; so that acts done in the country and tolerated somewhat may be absolutely intolerable in the towns. The organisation of the amalaita gangs in the town is at bottom the same as that of a gang in the country. The gang is composed almost of coevals and at the head is an elder boy who is chiefly possessing the power I have described. He is, however, a much more criminal sort of person than his simply country prototype. This fellow is usually an old hand at it; the more experienced he is in felony and the more he can come through trying conditions unscathed, the more his position in the gang

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