

You employ them as casual labourers? -- Yes, but the cream of your boys I like to keep to settle down, because that is the only way I have of retaining their services. If I do not get them to come and live on the farms with their wives I know that the day is coming very soon when I must lose the man. He will not do any better anywhere else, but he will be a sufferer and so will I. I want so say this, that we suffer very much in the Northern Transvaal on account of the recruiting organizations. The mere fact that we have so much labour means that we are attracting the recruiting organizations, which are doing their best to obtain our labourers, and they do secure a good many of our people who normally would become farm labourers. A number of these boys decide that they must go to Johannesburg. One cannot say that they are actually recruited, but the story goes round that Johannesburg is such a wonderful town and these boys feel that they simply must go. Johannesburg draws them. Well, they go for a few years and eventually come back. That boy will drift from one place to another and when he reaches the age of forty he is of less use to you than when he was fifteen or twenty. He has not acquired any skill at all - all he has acquired is the veneer of civilization, which is of no use at all. The only way in which you can counteract that is by getting the natives to settle down and stay with you. Well, I have had natives with me in the way I have indicated who have stayed with me for years. In fact, they will never leave. A competent native, of course, gets higher wages, too. Although you have no definite system the tendency is to be generous to a native who is valuable to you.

CHAIRMAN:/.....

CHAIRMAN: What is the longest unbroken period for which you have had a native?-- I have had a native, a boss boy, who has been with me for sixteen years. Of course, that boy is in a class by himself, and he is more like a white man in his work.

Are there not other men of exceptional standing?-- Yes, I have had one who has been with me eight years and others who have been with me six or seven years. I have not had time to have them longer.

Do you mean that they are still with you?-- Yes.

All these boys are doing farm labour?-- Yes. I am not dealing now ~~with~~ mine boys. I might mention ~~and~~ that we also encourage mine boys to settle down on the farm. We own the farm on which the mine is, and we allow any boy who so wishes to bring his wife along and to cultivate a bit of land, if he desires to do so. But, I must say there is not much of that done. A few boys do it, but not many. A few have brought their wives along and they have become permanent settlers there. That is the only way I see of making a native competent in some direction or another. If you do not do that he never improves at all. The experience which he gains in town does not seem to be of any use at all. When he works in town he may have valuable training for some years in one direction, but when he comes back to the farm that does not seem to help him at all - except in exceptional cases, of course. For instance, I have a native blacksmith on the farm who is capable of doing quite a lot of work. He spent fourteen years in Johannesburg as an assistant to a man who ran a broken stone contract and who did certain class of mining work.

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This boy is quite raw and cannot speak English or Dutch, but he is quite useful in his work. He is a semi-skilled boy and he does all the odd jobs on the farm, but that of course is quite exceptional. Generally, speaking, they come back no better than when they went away to the mines or to the towns.

MR. LUCAS: What wages do they pay?-- The boss boy gets £4 per month, and I think that the blacksmith gets £3:10:0., but we changed it to £3:0:0. and perquisites. They all get allowances in food. A boy who is of no use does not stay on, but a boy who is of any use at all, a permanent boy, always gets £2:0:0., but there are only a comparatively small number of those; there are not more than 25 per cent. in that position. The ordinary adult native who has no skill I pay about 30/-. I do not like to pay less. When labour is plentiful you can get them for 25/- ~~and~~, as a matter of fact, but I would rather pay a standard wage. You see, this is the position, the boys talk, and they say to each other "You do not proper wages there." I would rather get youngsters then. Of course, we all go for youngsters, because a boy of fifteen, if he is strong enough, is of as much value to us as a full-grown boy. There are young boys and the majority of them, who are just as strong as the grown men, do very good work. The tendency is to employ as many piccanins as you can get hold of and then go to the other extreme and get some skilled boys for the other classes of work.

CHAIRMAN: What perquisites do you give?-- Normally we do not give anything, but on the farm they always get a certain amount of vegetables, though they are not

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rationed out to them. The natives simply take these vegetables as a perquisite, and we have no objection.

And meat, do they get any?----No, I used to give them meat, but there were so many arguments about the quantity and the quality of the meat, that I stopped it. It did not help me in any way when I gave them meat, and when I stopped giving it, it made no difference.

MR. LUCAS: Do they live entirely on mealie meal, or do they buy meat?--- It is a mystery. As far as the main diet is concerned, they live on mealie meal. They find other things on the veld; they get a lot of nourishment out of what they call maroch, and they mix that with the mealie meal. Of course, I may say that some of the natives buy meat as well.

DR. ROBERTS: You know that the native is a meat eater? --- Yes, I know it; he will eat it in any quantity. But even under tribal conditions he goes for a considerable time without meat.

MR. LUCAS: Still, under tribal conditions he does not work?--- That is so.

You know, a diet like that materially reduces his physical capacity?--- It has been a mystery to me. Theoretically, it should reduce their physical capacity; but in practice it does not, and it is marvellous what work you can get out of him without giving him meat. It is really a remarkable fact.

MR. MOSTERT: Do you give milk to the natives?--- No, we have not got enough milk. If we were running a dairy the boys would get it, but we do not do that. I have certain ideas, which I have not yet been able to

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put into practice, with regard to improving the conditions of the boys, but I may say that it is not in the way of food. It is mainly in my own interests. When I can get these gardening ideas of mine going, and when I get them developed, I can see my way to giving these boys sweet potatoes and cabbages, and all the residue from the garden which they will be able to have. I have not got any idea of getting more work out of them, but my main intention is to make the place more attractive for them, and I think that is one way of doing it. All the same, I do not think it will give me more work.

What is the extent of your labour?--- I run two farms on quite a large scale, and on an average I employ something like 100 natives.

CHAIRMAN: Are they all males?--- No, they are mostly males, but not all; about 75 per cent. are males.

Do you include the piccanins in that?--- If I have 100 I might have as many as 25 women and the rest would be equally divided amongst piccanins and adults.

MR. LUCAS: Do you pay the women, or do you simply acquire their services?--- We pay the women. I pay the women 6d. only. The general standard is 1/-, but my argument is that a woman is not worth 1/-, and in consequence I do not have a large number of women. I refer to my home farm, where I get a certain percentage of women at 6d. The only time when we use them is at reaping-time.

CHAIRMAN: You are putting them on a daily wage and not on piece-work?----- It is difficult to get a native to do piece-work, but what you can do is to

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give them task-work. It is far and away the most successful means of getting a job done cheaply and quickly. If you have routine work which enables you to set a task for a native, you can get at least 50 per cent. more work out of him and he can get away in the middle of the afternoon and feels that he has done well, and in fact he has scored heavily. But you could not say to a native "Now look here, you are getting off just after the middle of the day and I shall give you so much more if you do 25 per cent. more work." The native does not like that.

But you do pay by the number of bags of maize or the number of bags of monkey-nuts?----- Yes, that is so. You say to the native that a contract is so much, and that native wants to do that job as quickly as possible and get away. He wants to get away as early as possible. He does his work, he gets his ticket, and he gets credited with a day's work. I have known many cases where that sort of thing has happened, and I shall give you an instance. On one occasion I was building a dam and we wanted to expedite the work and we gave the boys so many square yards of work to do. These boys started getting off earlier and earlier every day, but they started their work earlier in the morning, so much so that they started at a time when it was almost too dark to see. They never count the time they work, but the mere idea of getting off three or four hours before the sun goes down makes them feel that they have scored heavily. They would go to work in the moonlight and they would knock off in the middle of the day and feel that they have scored. They would be coming down

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early in the morning and finishing their work and they would reckon that they had done me in that way. They would not count at all that they had spent the night on the job.

MR. ANDERSON: Do not you find that the mealie meal diet produces scurvy?--- No, I do not find that, because under the conditions which prevail they get so many other things to eat. They make a form of porridge, maroch, and that prevents any suggestion of scurvy. Then they make kaffir-beer at the week-end, and that prevents it too. There is a law against the making of kaffir-beer, but still they make it. I understand that kaffir-beer is very good for them, and maroch keeps them healthy, and then the native makes what he calls machiel. That is fermented in a tin and that too keeps them fit. They can work all day on that. Every boy makes it, even the piccanins.

CHAIRMAN: Are the constituents of maroch known?--- Yes.

Any succulent vegetable tops?--- Yes, they use the tops of various things - of a vast number of things.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Do you get all your labour supply locally?--- Yes, I do. I might say that I am situated differently from what others are. I bought a large farm ~~x~~ in the adjoining territory, which had 400 native families living on it. This farm was in the Louis Trichardt District. I used to get these natives down in batches. Now I am able to draw piccanins from that farm and young boys, and they come down from time to time, and that being so I cannot claim to get all my labour locally. Through my connection with the mine

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I am able to take a certain percentage of youngsters from the Sekukuni side.

CHAIRMAN: You have a large number to chose from for your permanent labour?--- Yes, but of course these youngsters are very unreliable. There is a tendency for them to run away without reason. You dare not hit one. That is one the changes which has taken place.

DR. ROBERTS: Well, do you think that is a good change?
--- Generally speaking, yes, but the fact of the matter is that you cannot chastise a youngster now. If he does any wrong today you cannot chastise him because you know that he will run away. You will get boys who have been with you for a long time. I have had cases where boys have been with me for a year and eighteen months, and even for two years, and then suddenly - for no rhyme or reason - they will disappear, just after pay-day, or they may even have three weeks on a new ticket. In one case I took the trouble of bringing a youngster back. He has been back about a year now and he has not run away since.

MR. MOSTERT: Do you work them on tickets?---- Yes.
How long?--- Thirty-day tickets.

MR. LUCAS: When you spoke of paying £2 per month, I take it that you meant £2:0:0. for thirty-days?---
Yes. The ordinary labourer gets paid for thirty working days.

When you say that piccanins are difficult to handle, is it not possibly a factor that there is very little play for them?--- That is a most important thing.

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When I mentioned just now that I had certain things which I wanted to do, this was one of them: I wanted to start a football ground. Any bit of amusement keeps them together. A man who has not many piccanins finds it very difficult to keep them at all. But if he gets a humber he finds that he can always be well supplied, because they are much happier together. If there are only a few they really are the hewers of wood and the carriers of water for the big ones. If you have a large number they go together and play together, and they are happy. We could do better if we could only make them happier. I want to say this, from an economic point of view it makes no difference what wages you pay to the native. The main thing is that a native shall be happy. You cannot keep him on the job by simply paying him more money. A boy may want an extra 10/- and possibly you will keep him for a time, but generally speaking the ability to keep natives does not depend on the pay! It depends on the conditions. As to piccanins - every penny you pay to a piccanin finds its way into the shop straight away. We pay on Fridays, and what do they do?--- They at once go and buy shirts and so on. That is all they work for. And if they like a place they will stay there, and if they do not like a place they will go off. If conditions suit them they will stay on indefinitely.

DR. ROBERTS: You have never thought of arranging for schools - evening, or afternoon schools?-- Well, I have a school on the farm but it has nothing to do with me. We have a little church and a little school. It is a social function for them, but it is one way

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of helping them in that direction. It provides a certain amount of entertainment, and it certainly does good, but I want to say this - I do not believe that they understand the meaning of Christianity, or anything like that. Still, the main thing is that it keeps them happy.

MR. LUCAS: Do they learn to read and write?-- It is surprising to see the number that do. But I may say that on the farm they are not learning to any extent. So much of my time is taken up with mining that I am not able on the farm to do as much in that direction as I should like to, and I do think one could do better for the natives on the farms. A large percentage of the farmers on the farms in the Northern Transvaal are pioneers, and they have no time really to think of any frills. With regard to the native situation generally in the North, my feeling is that there has been very weak native administration for many years. The Native Commissioners have not had the power. The tribal system has been encroached upon by the white man in a hundred and one ways, of which I think you all know, and nothing has been supplied to take its place. The white man's laws have been applied to the natives, and the consequence is that the native tribal system has been undermined in very many cases, and no substitute has been given to take its place. The white man's laws do not fit the natives, and they do not please him, and that accounts for the gradual breaking-down of the tribal system. It is not the fault of the Native Commissioners. They have not the means at their disposal to administer the natives. It does not matter what difficulties they are faced with, there is a white man's law to cover it, and they are bound down

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and it is impossible for them to do as in many cases they would wish to do, and I think that the farmers in many cases look forward to the time when the native situation will have been dealt with. We are not concerned with the political situation; we are not concerned with the question as to whether the native has a vote or not. Naturally we have our views on that, but we are concerned with the real native situation. They are not properly controlled, there is no provision to guide them. We had an exceptional magistrate here in Major Harris, who had made a study of native administration, and he was able to do a great deal for the native and with the native, but he had to do it all out of his own head. There was no prompting from headquarters. We feel that the natives are allowed quietly to drift on. Nothing is done for them, and we feel that they are not properly controlled. They are not dealt with firmly enough, and on the other hand there are a lot of abuses to which a native is subjected. He is not firmly dealt with in a hundred and one ways, and there is no proper provision for remedying matters.

MR. LUCAS: Will you illustrate to us some of your hundred and one ways?----- Well, there is the pass law for instance. Now some farmers will tell you that a native should be more strictly controlled and should not be allowed to move about without a pass. Others do not hold with that. You have the man who is running contract labour. Some people are unreasonable and want to keep these men on the farm for the whole of their time. There is a system of

taking a boy out for two days a week. The consequence is that that boy is chained to the farm the whole year round. It cannot be donã. You cannot chain a boy like that. How can he go out to work if he is tied down in that way?--

DR. ROBERTS: How do you mean?--- A man can say to a native "I do not want you now, but I want you next week", and the result is that the boy is prevented from going out. Off-hand I cannot call to mind all these different things. I may say that I did not know about the Commission sooner. If I had done I would have been able to collect facts for you. But I will give you concrete instances to show you what takes place and to show how the native is imposed upon outrageously, and how the prestige of the white man must be undermined, and the respect of the native for the white man must be undermined. We had a platinum mine here and over forty waggons were employed in cartage work. There is a location in between the town and the sixteen miles to the platinum mine. These waggons lived off the unfortunate natives in the location. The moment the natives' mealies were reaped, the stalks which the natives relied upon were simply wiped off by the transport-riders. There is a provision in the law and the Native Affairs Department advised the natives when they complained to make their representations and to put up notices and notice-boards to prevent that sort of thing happening again. The notice-boards had to be put up in order to define the native areas, and then these people who outspanned on these areas could have been dealt

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with, but the fact is that the native is afraid and the Native Affairs Department really should have dealt with the matter themselves. The Native Affairs Department should have had more authority or more time to do for the natives what they expected the natives to do themselves. To ask a native to get his own signboard painted is really asking too much. We know that the law provides for this matter, but owing to the fact that the native question is not taken sufficiently seriously, the natives are not able to cope with the position. Everything was left to the natives, and I say that in a case like that it is not right that that should have been done. I say that it is not right that the relations between the native and the white man should be strained through the occurrences of that kind. If the native chose to put up with the injustice he put up with it, and as a matter of fact it is a wonderful thing to see what the native will put up with. Under his tribal conditions he has put up with all kinds of injustices. He has been taught to bow to injustice, and it is so ground into the native mind that today he still puts up with it and submits to it, but he is certainly affected in his attitude towards the white man, and he has got to the stage, or is getting to the stage, that he feels that he cannot trust a white man.

MR. LUCAS: Is there much distrust here?-- No, I do not think there is much distrust here. In regard to this whole position in the Northern Transvaal, if the matter is carefully dealt with, I think it will be perfectly sound.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: Would you advocate

there being a Native Commissioner here?--- Yes. Major Harris was a man of great native experience. The magistrate is also the Native Commissioner. There is native work in the District which will occupy the full time of an experienced man, but Major Harris could not devote all his time to it. And on the other hand you can imagine what will happen if you have a man who has no experience whatever of native administration.

DR. ROBERTS: Under the tribal system, the meanest man can demand to see his Chief and get justice?-- Yes.

And his complaint will be listened to?--- Yes.

Why does not that apply here?--- The meanest man in a tribe can go to the Chief, so why cannot he go to the magistrate?----- Well, actually they can do so, but they do not carry out the instructions which are given to them by the Native Affairs Department to report injustices to which they are subjected. You see, the natives want a little more than have the legal position pointed out to them. I think we should have native commissioners of high standing deliberately to look after the natives, and to mete out justice. I do not mean that we want men to support the natives deliberately against the white man, but I want the native situation dealt with by men of standing, by men who are guided by justice. The improvement in native administration should spring to a great extent from the native administrators themselves. The laws and regulations applying to them should not be formulated by people from the other side of South Africa, who know nothing about conditions. It should come from this side. When Mr. Neethling was speaking we heard of this Native Joint

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Council, where the farmers of the Union meet the Native Chiefs. That idea came not from Pretoria or from Cape Town, but it was thought out here; but it was thought out because we had a magistrate who was a native man and who was keen. Here is a movement which may be of immense value to the native administration as also to the white man; the idea was born in Potgietersrust, because you had a man at the head of affairs who was personally keen and active. Otherwise it would never have happened. If you had native commissioners, men in a strong position as they were in days gone by, you would have a great improvement in the conditions of the natives and in the relations between the natives and the white men. The only way you can achieve that is by giving your commissioners high standing. They must not be relegated to the position of taxing clerks.

MR. LUCAS: You occupy a dual position, that of manager of a mine and of a farmer. Are there any aspects in your position as the manager of a mine which might be of assistance to us?---- I cannot think of anything special in relation to the mine. The natives on an average get 10/- per month more, and they get meat also. The conditions on the mines are not vastly different from what they are on the farms, because so many of these natives have wives living with them - living with them on the land, and the compound more nearly resembles a native village. There is nothing particular about the position on the mines which calls for special comment.

Well, I do not know. The men on the mine get 10/- per month more, and they get extra meat. Surely the

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difference is rather substantial?--- There is a tendency for boys to prefer the mine to the farm. It is also partly due to the fact that the mines have also a definite shift, definite hours of labour. You have definite hours of labour on the farm, too - from sunrise to sunset, - whereas on the mine the shift ends before the sun sets, and that is a thing which the natives appreciate.

DR. ROBERTS: Have you any age limit for your boys?--- I do not know what the law says. We employ any boy of a certain size and strength. The small boys are of no use. But there are always jobs on top which a small boy can carry out. The tendency is for the boys to prefer the mines.

MR. LUCAS: They get their Sunday off on the mines, don't they?--- Well, on the farm they also get their Sunday off, but there are always certain jobs on the mines as well as on the farms which have to be done.

Do your boys on the mines remain from year to year?--- Some do. The farm boys remain.

Are your boys on the mine local boys?--- A certain percentage are. The boys who have their wives there remain. The majority who have not got their wives with them want to go away at ploughing time. A certain number come back to work when the ploughing season is over.

Those who live away, on the mine or elsewhere, away from their tribes, do they keep up contact with their tribes?----- Yes, perhaps not a strong contact, but they recognise a certain Chief. The tendency would be to weaken the tribal contact to a certain extent.

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Collection Number: AD1438

NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION 1930-1932, Evidence and Memoranda

PUBLISHER:

Collection funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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