

Besides producing fibre, these plants could be cultivated in such a manner as to act as hedges, dividing each plot holders lands and on steep slopes, planted in 2 or 3 rows along the contour of the hills, thus arresting the soil and at the same time preventing cattle from destroying crops.

Varieties of plants suitable to existing rainfall in each area could be planted. In the case of country, where the Lalla Palm grows, Furcraea or Sisal would be suitable.

In the thorn areas with a rainfall less than 15", the Brazilian aloe would stand up to the severe conditions, although this plant has not been introduced into this country yet and might well be experimented with, together with other varieties not yet tried.

The following extract from the "International Review of Agriculture" indicates how useful the plant might be to the abovementioned areas. -- "The Brazilian aloe is a hybrid of the Mexican variety "Henegreu", and is cultivated for its fibre which is of a better quality for industrial use and more easily extracted than that of "baca". It is used for making rope, cloth, sacking, carpets, etc., Its cultivation requires a non-acid soil, containing upwards of eighteen per cent lime and less than one per cent nitrogen. A dry climate is preferable with little precipitation. Two years are required on an average for the plants to attain full growth, then they will produce continuously for sixteen years at the rate of two crops a year of 15 leaves per plant. The yield averages about 3000 lbs to the acre. The fibres are 3 feet in length. The waste matter is utilisable as a fertilizer and also for the manufacture of industrial alcohol. This crop may convert arid unproductive soils into fertile lands. --"

The problem of extraction of fibre and working it into saleable articles would not create any difficulty to Natives as they have the necessary patience and inclination to spend considerable time on work for which they receive little reimbursement.

Although the price of fibre has dropped to a very low figure, it is only in proportion to the low price of many other raw products at the present moment and is likely to improve when trade revival takes place.

Should you require any other information relative to the subject of agriculture in Native areas in Natal and Zululand I shall be pleased to furnish you with what you need.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(sgd) H.C. Meyer.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICER: NATAL:  
NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

Natives may be induced to grow other fibre plants; but it is certain that they would object to the replacing of their ilala, where the ilala is tapped for wine.

(sgd) C.F.

14/10/31.

COPY.

NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL  
EXTENSION OFFICER: NATAL;  
UMKOMAAS,  
7 October, 1931.

Major Anderson,  
Member of the Native Economic Commission,  
FRETORIA.

Sir,

Our Department has brought to my notice that you are enquiring for information about the "Lalla Palm" and I presume that the economic value of the fibre content of this plant to the Natives is what would be of interest to you.

As you are aware the Palm occurs chiefly along the cretaceous formation of the Zululand Coast and is used by the Natives for extracting fibre for their own use and I think is made use of simply because no other plant in their area can supply what they want.

From an economic point of view I am of opinion that its growth is too slow and that other fibre plants could be introduced into all Native areas where the rainfall is low and the soil poor, which could supply the Natives with sufficient fibre for their own use as well as for establishing home industries, such as the making of ropes, mats, carpets, cloth, sacking and fancy articles.

While doing my rounds supervising Agricultural Demonstrators in most of the Locations of Natal, the thousands of acres of broken thorn country, gradually being destroyed by soil-erosion, point to the pitiful state these areas are rapidly declining into.

Overstocked by goats and cattle, no check is made on the soil washing away and it requires some hardy aloe type of plant to arrest any further damage being done.

Plants such as Brazilian Aloe, Sisal and Furcraea would be ideal for Natives to cultivate in these areas.

/ Besides

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(sgd) G.F.

14/10/31.

F. A. W. LUCAS

COPY/WEM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,

No. 1723.

PRETORIA.

12 October, 1931.

The Secretary for Finance.

Sir,

I have the honour to advert to your letter No. F.33/233/2 of the 9th September, with reference to the desire of the Native Economic Commission to be furnished with a report upon the operation of the provisions of the Bechuanaland Protectorate legislation governing credit sales to Natives.

2. The working of the provisions of the Protectorate Proclamation No.38 of 1923 is at present under consideration by the Administration in consequence of representations which have been made by the trading community. The main purpose of this legislation was to safeguard the interests of the Natives by discouraging the giving of credit, a practice which is admittedly open to abuse, but it has been represented that the procedure prescribed by the Proclamation in cases where credit is proposed to be given, namely attestation of the contract by a Magistrate after prior consultation with the chief of the Native concerned, is so cumbersome that in practice it is rarely adopted. It appears that under present conditions the better class trader rarely gives credit, which is said to be detrimental to the trader's business and the interests of the Natives, and that other traders have continued to do so in the hope that by invoking the aid of the Chiefs or by other means they would succeed in securing payment of the debt. Certain Native Chiefs have expressed their view as to the undesirability and evil effects of a system under which Natives

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can obtain credit, - even though the trader was aware at the time that the debt would not be recoverable at law, - and subsequently, taking advantage of the law, evade legal responsibility for the debt. They have stated that they do not wish their people to evade their legitimate obligations and it has been urged that from an educational and moral point of view it is inadvisable to legislate in such a way as to allow a Native to incur obligations which he knows that he can evade if he wishes to do so: it is said that the temptation is too great. On the other hand it is not desirable to encourage credit sales indiscriminately and it is most inadvisable that anything should be done which would allow of Natives piling up indebtedness and thus falling into the power of traders, some of whom might be less scrupulous than others in such dealings.

3. In view of the criticisms outlined in the preceding paragraph, the Administration has at present under consideration the issue of amending legislation, and while no decision has yet been reached, it may perhaps be of interest to the Commission to see the enclosed copy of a draft amending Proclamation which has been prepared and is at present under consideration.

4. No observations would appear to be required in respect of Proclamation No.3 of 1921 which provides for the re-opening and investigation of transactions in cases where action is brought against Natives upon bills of exchange, promissory notes, etc. No criticism of this legislation has been brought to the notice of the Government.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

(Sgd) B. E. H. Clifford,  
IMPERIAL SECRETARY.

P R O C L A M A T I O N

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER.

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WHEREAS it is expedient to regulate the recovery of debts incurred by Natives living in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (hereinafter referred to as "the Territory") in respect of the sale to such Natives of goods and livestock:

NOW THEREFORE, under and by virtue of the powers in me vested I do hereby declare, proclaim and make known as follows:-

1. Proclamation No. 38 of 1923 is hereby repealed.

2. (1) No action shall lie in any Court for recovery of a debt due by a Native in respect of goods sold and delivered under a contract entered into after the commencement of this Proclamation by a person other than a Native if the value of the said goods together with any other goods sold on credit by that person to that Native at the same time or at any time during the same calendar year for which payment has not been made exceeds Twenty-five pounds. For the purposes of this Proclamation the term "goods" shall be deemed to include livestock.

(2) No such debt as is described in sub-section (1) shall be recoverable in any Court unless proceedings for the recovery thereof shall have been instituted within a period of two years from the date of the sale in respect of which the debt was incurred and no

/interest



interest shall be recoverable on the amount of any such debt in respect of any period prior to the expiration of six months from the date of the sale or subsequent to the expiration of two years from that date and in no case at a rate exceeding seven per cent per annum on the amount of the debt.

3. (1) No debt ~~is~~ in respect of the sale of goods incurred by a Native to a person other than a Native shall be recoverable in any Court unless at the time of the sale a declaration in the form prescribed in the Schedule to this Proclamation has been signed by the debtor or attested by his mark, which mark shall be witnessed by two witnesses who shall sign the same, and unless a note shall at the same time be delivered by the seller to the purchaser stating the quantity, nature and value of the goods so sold.

(2) No action shall lie in any Court against a Native on any Promissory Note or acknowledgment of debt if it shall be proved to the satisfaction of the Court that such Promissory Note or acknowledgment of debt was given in respect of a debt due on the sale of goods by a person other than a Native, which debt would, under the provisions of this Proclamation, not be recoverable.

4. No debt incurred by a Native in respect of the sale of goods by a person other than a Native which under the provisions of this Proclamation would not be recoverable shall be available as a set-off in any claim by the debtor against the seller of such goods.

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5. In this Proclamation "Native" shall mean any aboriginal Native belonging to any tribe of the Territory and shall include persons of mixed race living in the Territory as members of any Native community or tribe.

6. This Proclamation may be cited as the Bechuanaland Protectorate Credit Sales to Natives Proclamation, 1931, and shall have force and take effect from the                      day of                      1931.

G O D   S A V E   T H E   K I N G .

Given under my Hand and Seal at                      this  
                    day of                      One thousand Nine hundred  
and Thirty-one.

High Commissioner.

By Command of His Excellency the  
High Commissioner.

Imperial Secretary.

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