

ON RESUMING AT 2.30. p.m.

PETER MBAU, CAREL MATLASI and THYS MOLOI, examined:

CHAIRMAN: I understand that you represent the natives who live in the urban location? -- (THYS MOLOI): I represent the location and I am the Secretary of the Advisory Board of the Municipal Native Location.

Do you belong to any definite tribes? -- We belong to different tribes. I am a Basuto and so is Carel Matlasi; but Peter Mbay belongs to the Mavenda tribe.

Have you any statement which you wish to put before the Commission in regard to the people which you represent?--

(PETER MBAU): Yes, I have something to say. I have come here to speak about the women and the children - I have come to speak about the children who run away from their parents and the women who run away from their husbands. If the children run away the the father comes to get his child he has all sorts of difficulties. Say we have the case of a daughter who has run away from her husband. If the father comes to the town to fetch her, the law should help him to get her back so that he can take her back to her husband.

Do you mean, if you come to the Native Commissioner's Office, you should be helped to get the woman back? - Yes. There are lot s of women who are walking about here who should be looking after their children. There are women who have cleared away from their husbands and they have come to town and we know that they teach bad habits to these other women who work in the town. Some of these women work for white people and they are married and they come from another place. They have come from their kraals. We have cases where the husband has a couple of wives and these women may have had quarrels with other wives. They

have/.....



have come to town and they come to work there. There is nothing wrong with that, but there should be some sort of law so that she can be supported and be enable to live with her husband. If not, she should be left alone and be able to remain in town in peace. There are some men working in town here and their wives come from the kraals at the request of the husbands; they come here to stay for about three or four months while the husband is here. Well, there is nothing wrong with that. That woman who comes to town in that way at the request of her husband does no wrong, but there are others, who have cleared away from their husbands, and they are the ones who do wrong and that is the kind of person who should be prohibited from coming to the town. We know that some of these men and even piccanins have come from the kraals to the town here. Those people do nothing. They are not even working, they just loaf about. I say that the law should step in and do something to prevent them from loafing about. When they leave home they do not do so with passes, and when they are in town they have not got a pass. There is another thing which troubles us very much in town here. Lots of piccanins come from their homes and they come to work here. When they come into the towns the law lays it down that they must have a pass. Some of these piccanins come here and are hired by a man, but that man does not go to the trouble of taking out a pass for them. Later on the police come and they arrest him for being without a pass and they think he is a criminal. The piccanin is put in gaol. He says " A baas hired me, but he did not take out a monthly pass for me." Well, the police do not do anything to the man who has hired the piccanin, but they

punish/.....



punish the piccanin because he has not got a pass. The piccanin comes here and he knows nothing about the law. The man who has hired him knows more about the law than he does. We say that the Government should see to it; both of them should be punished because they have both evaded the law. Do not punish only the one side, punish the other one as well. I say that because it is that sort of thing which creates criminals in town and those people who become criminals take no notice whatever of the law. I would just tell you what he does. Whatever he says is taken in evidence in court as he is punished. It does not help him at all to listen to what the law says. It is just as bad as if he does not listen at all. That is what I want to say for my people, and I want the Government to look at the civilised people as well. They do not live in the same way as we outside people in the kraals do who are uncivilised. These piccanins when they look for work find out that the one who is educated gets a job much more easily than the one who is not educated; and the same applies to the girls - if they are educated they get a job much more easily while these who are uncivilised do not get jobs. I want the Government to pay attention to these things and I say that the Government should not treat them all in the same way, they should not treat the educated ones in the same way as they treat the uneducated ones. The people who hire these children pick out the ones they want and they leave alone those which they do not want. I am not asking that the Government should punish the people for doing

that./.....



that. I am speaking according to the way in which people are living in town and I want the Government to see if they cannot help us here. The Government should consider all ways in regard to handling the native people. We native people are not standing still, we are also progressing, we are going forward just like the white people do, and we are not going backward. If the Government treats the educated natives in the same way as they do the uneducated natives in the kraals, I do not think it would be nice - it would not be right. I am speaking for our people who live in town here and who feel this. They are living very much in the same way as the white man does and I must say that the white people like us to do so. They are glad to see those educated natives because they help one another and when the white people speak to the educated natives they understand one another. I say that the Government should treat the educated people and the educated children in a different way from what they treat the uneducated ones, and I further say that if a man wants to do any business you should allow him to do so, because it means that he is going in the same direction and acting in the same way as the white people are doing. Here in town there are many people like that. If you go to a white man's house you find a native as well in that house, because the white man cannot live without a native. They help one another in their living and the Government should look after these people and they should see

that/.....



that these people live like the white people and they should see to it that both sides grow together. I want to say that there should not be any division. Our children also play with the white people's children. You see our wives also sittin' with the white people's wives. Our men are working with white men, but there iss still a division between them, and I say that they are dividing a thing which is not divided in the world. In the town here the people are told to leave the town, to go out. The law tells them to do so, but you still find them in the large houses. In each house you go to you find natives. Even very old white men have natives in their houses. That is what I have come to say to the Commission. Each of us has come to make a speech here.

(CAREL MATLASI): I am very glad to see the Commission here and to be able to make a speech. I am glad to have the opportunity of telling you what is in my mind, and this is what I want to say. I want to tell you that there is no money, that there is very little money. I get very little money, ~~xx~~ £1:10:0. per month is very little for a man like men. I am an old man and I should be exempt from paying tax. I have lots of expenses. My expenses are high because the money I make is so little. Really the expenses are not so high but the money is very little. It does not help really to work for £1:10:0. and the wife for 10/- per month, and then to have to pay rent and taxes. Now and then I have to pay a little account here and there and before/.....



and before long a big paper comes from an attorney and I have to pay. I get a demand and a summons. I have children and I want them to go to school, and that is what I want to look forward to, and I want the law to assist me. I do not want the Government to give me any money, but I want to be assisted so that I can get something free. In the Boer war in Pretoria I was shot through my leg and I was badly wounded. Well, I do not want this to apply only to myself, but there are lots of us who have to send our children to school and we find that we cannot pay our rent and our taxes. We live on the Municipal lands and we get only very little money. We have no land of our own and the way in which we work our lands is just enough to enable us to buy things - we have to go to the shops every day. But you have not got a ticky you cannot go to the shops - you cannot buy anything. That is what I want to tell you. We have no money and we are not getting any money and when we do get it, it is generally very scarce. I do not know whether there is any difference between the different wards in the district, but that is the position here.

(THYS MOLOI): I have not got much to say. I am the Secretary of the location and there is a bit of trouble there which worries me. What I have to put to you is very much the same as what Peter Mbau told you. When anything wrong is done in the location we have nowhere where we can take the wrongdoer to. Lots of these people who do wrong are brought to the Sub-Native

Commissioner/.....



Commissioner and when one goes there one is called a liar by the man whom one brings there, and the upshot of it is that the man is let free. Those troubles never come to an end. The man gets back to the location and we try and prevent him from getting into trouble again, but we cannot prevent it. The men who do wrong go back again and do wrong again, because they know quite well that when they are brought up before the Sub-Native Commissioner they are let off free. That is what spoils our living in the Location, simply because the white people like a man who can speak for himself and if he does not have a certain ~~XXXX~~ amount of smartness, if he is not like a white man, he loses the case. The big people are with us. We want the Commission to look into the matter. We want them to feel that our heads are not the same as the heads of the white people. You see, we are still educating ourselves, and we want to develop our brains. If a man who is not educated and developed comes into court the white man does not understand what he means. The white man does not understand the law of the native and we want the white man to call in the native who understands the native law and then we want a man to be dealt with according to that native law. That is the way in which you would be able to manage these people and if they are punished according to native law they will not do wrong again, because they realise that they will be justly and strictly dealt with. But if they come before the court, under present conditions the smart man who should be found guilty gets off simply because

he is/.....



he is smart, while the other man who is not smart does not get off. The native chiefs know the ways of these men and if two of the native chiefs could come here they would understand what is going on and they would say "That man is too smart and he should be punished." And if that man gets off and the other people see it, it will mean that they will do the same thing because the other man has got off, and so things will get worse, and worse. That is the most important thing I have to speak about. Now, I want to say this about education: In the location here we work for the education of our children. We want our children to be taught properly so that they shall be able to live in the right way. But what happens today? -- The police very often come to the location. They come and they ask us for our tax receipts, and they come and search for beer. Some of the people whose places are searched are respectable people, educated people, and they resent this. The police come and they enter a man's hut; they simply turn the tables over, they turn the beds upside down looking for beer. And when your wife is lying ill in bed they simply turn the bed over with her on top of it. Those people who have always been regarded as respectable people get upset, and they get annoyed with the police coming in time and again. There is no reason why the police should come and worry them. They do not know anything about such things as making beer. Sometimes the police even come and search our church looking for beer while the people are holding a service in the church. Surely it is wrong

that the/.....



that the police should come and cause trouble at such a time. We want our children to get ahead, to be educated properly, and to be civilised, but that sort of thing tends to make them go in the wrong direction, it upsets them, and it does not help anybody. We want to get ahead with our education. We want to live and go according to the law, and we want to educate our people accordingly. If a policeman comes there and wants to arrest a man he should know that man; he should see the man and then arrest him. A man would feel ashamed of himself if he is arrested and has done something wrong. I think if that sort of thing is looked into it will have the effect of reducing the wrongdoing which otherwise may be going on.

CHAIRMAN: Do these men have their wives and families in the town locations?-- (PETER MBAU): Yes, all of them have.

Now, do you have any tribe to which you could go if you wanted to leave the town? -- Yes, if I wanted to go away to live somewhere else I could go.

Could you go to a native reserve? -- (THYS MOLOI): I would have nowhere to go.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: Who is your Chief?-- Pafuli.

Could not you go back to his location? -- Yes, I could go back there if I wanted to.

CHAIRMAN: When did you come away from that tribe? -- 2 and 1/2 years ago.

Did you bring your wife with you, or did you marry a wife here?---- (PETER MBAU): I was going about and

got married/....



got married in Natal.

Is your wife a Zulu? --- Yes.

Do you intend to go back to Pafuli? --- I am only sent about. I go about teaching. I am a Minister.

DR. ROBERTS: What church do you belong to? --- I belong to the Salvation Army.

CHAIRMAN: And when did you leave the location in which you were? --- (CAREL MATLASI): I was born in Basutoland.

Were you born in the location? --- Yes.

And cannot you go back there, haven't you got land there? --- Yes, I could go back there, but sometimes people like to stay in the place where they have gone to.

Do you prefer to live in town rather than live in Basutoland? --- I would rather live in Zoutpansberg, in this place, than go back. If I were forced to I would go back.

There is no question of forcing you to go back, it is just a question of wanting to? --- No, I would rather stay in Zoutpansberg.

You said you had no land to cultivate? --- No.

If you went to Basutoland would you have land to cultivate? --- Yes, I would get land there, but I do not say that I want to go back there. I am used already to this part.

You would rather live here without land than be there with land? --- I am used to this part now and I would rather stay.

You would rather be here; would not you be better off there if you had land of your own? --- Yes, I would be better off with land than without land, but I am used now to this part.

Now where were you born? --- (THYS MOLOI): I was born in the Free State.

Op 'n plaas? -- Ja.

So dat jij 'n plek het waarna jij kan gaan? --- Ja.

Waar/.....



Waar het jij geleer om te lees en schrijf?-- In die Vrij Staat.

What kind of work do you do? -- I work in the garages.

MR. MOSTERT: You say that the police come into the church and seek for kaffir beer there?--- Yes.

And do they get any beer?-- No, they do not.

You say the police do not get any at all - then why do they come there again?--- I do not know.

Do they also come to the houses of decent people?-- Yes, they come to the houses of several people.

Do they only come to the houses of people that are not decent?-- No, they come to the houses of decent people as well.

How do the police know who are decent and who are not?--Have the decent people got a notice put up that they are decent?----- No, they do not.

CHAIRMAN: Cannot your location Advisory Board help in order to prevent people from making beer?---- We have tried to.

If that were done the police would not come to search all round?----- We have tried to help and to prevent it, but we cannot.

MR. LUCAS: What happens when you try?---- Well, the police said that they could not select and they must search everyone.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: Who says that they must search everyone?---- We have tried to speak to the police but they will not listen and say they must search everyone.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which people do you find do most of the making of beer, the people who have lived in the location for a long time or the people who have just come

therē/.....



there from their tribes?--- The people who have been there for a long time as well as the people who have been there for a little while. You see the locations are getting bigger and some of the people who have been there a long time make beer just the same as those who have just come from their tribe. Things are getting worse and worse.

It was said at the beginning that there are people living in town who should be forbidden to come there, but how can the people get to know who are the wrongdoers without making more trouble for the natives?--- Well, the police should go about and when they see these people making trouble they should deal with them. Those people do not have any passes and if the police went about they would soon be able to deal with them.

What about the young piccanins who do not carry passes?--- I mean the young piccanins who do not carry monthly passes for work. All the piccanins and big natives have their monthly passes.

You said that the Government should treat the civilised and educated natives more favourably. Now in what way do you think the Government should do that?--- (PETER MBAU): I say that the Government should support them all and these people should get more money - more wages and they should always be able to get to the top. Today these people all have to live in the Municipal Location and there they cannot get on. They have not even got any gardens to make there.

Do you mean that if an educated native and an uneducated native apply for the same job the educated

native/.....



native should get the job and do you think he should get more money for it than the uneducated native?--- Yes, the educated native should get more money because the living in the town is more expensive than outside.

MR. MOSTERT: What rent do you pay in the location?--- I pay 5/- per month.

And then you have a house?-- (THYS MOLOI): I built my own house.

So you pay 5/- for the right to build your own house?-- Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: You said that the Government should help those who want to do business; do you mean those who want to buy and sell to the other natives?--- (PETER MBAU): I say that they should also be allowed to buy and sell to the other natives, in town as well as outside.

You said that you got 30/- per month?--- (CAREL MATLASI): No, I do £2:0:0. per month.

And your wife?-- She does washing. Sometimes she gets 4/- for a bundle of washing and sometimes 10/-.

Have you any children?--- Yes, I have three, one is fifteen, one is fourteen, and one is four; they are all girls.

Do they earn any money?--- No, they still go to school.

other  
Have you any/sources of income?--- No, I have not.

Do you keep fowls?--- No, there is no room to keep fowls.

And do you run a garden?--- No.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: You said that the Government should do away with the division between the natives and the white people. What do you mean by that?-- (PETER

MBAU)/.....



MBAU): I say that the Government is chasing the natives out of the town and that only white people are allowed to be there.

Where do the Government do that?-- Here, in Louis Trichardt they do it.

MR. LUCAS: You mean that they are all driven to live in the location?--- Yes.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: You want the natives to have the right to live amongst the whites in town?-- No, I do not say that the natives should mix in between the whites. I say that down here there are a lot of natives, and a man hires a house. They they come and chase a man away and they tell him "This is not a place for a native; your place is in the location." That is wrong.

DR. ROBERTS: I want to ask you this, Thys Moloi: Does the Municipality supply the materials for the house which you build?--- (THYS MOLOI): No.

You have to get the materials yourself?-- Yes.

They do not help you in any way?-- No.

Do they lend you the money?-- No.

DR. ROBERTS: Where do you get the bricks?-- We have to buy our own bricks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you build with bricks?-- Yes, with raw bricks.

DR. ROBERTS: Could you tell us, Carel Matlasi, which is the smallest amount of money on which a family could live in a location, a man with a wife and three children?---

(CAREL MATLASI): I could not say. I would not worry myself about the salary. All I want is food for my children.

I cannot do anything on the money I earn, and I cannot put my

hands/.....



hands in another man's pockets.

THE CHAIRMAN: How much money must you earn to give the food which they require, the clothing and the food?--- If my wife and my children have to live, the cheapest is £2 per month, but that is not including clothes, and other necessities, and rent.

Where do you get the clothes from?--- Sometimes I borrow the clothes from somebody else, and sometimes someone gives me an old coat.

DR\* ROBERTS: The £2 would be just for food?-- Yes.

And nothing more?--- No, nothing more.

Then x if you do not borrow the clothes for yourself and you wife you would go naked?--- Yes, we would go naked.

How often do you get meat in your house?-- Every day I spend one shilling on meat.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: So you spend 30/- a month on meat and you have only got 10/- left?-- I only spend 1/- per day on meat and the rest I spend on mealie meal.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you drink coffee or tea?--- Yes, I drink coffee. If I don't drink coffee I would not feel well.

DR. ROBERTS: And then you must have tobacco, too? --- Yes.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: How much do you spend on coffee?---- If I have a tickey or sixpence I spend it on coffee; I cannot do without coffee. My wife gives me a 6d. or 3d. now and then to spend on coffee.

What becomes of the money which your wife earns?-- She buys clothing.

Does/.....



Does she buy clothes for you too,?--- Sometimes she buys something for me, but she cannot manage everything, because there are three children as well to be looked after.

DR. ROBERTS: Now what would happen if you feel ill?---- Well, several times lots of our people have got ill and we cannot afford to call a doctor, so we have to suffer.

MR. LE ROUX VAN NIEKERK: If a man is so poor as yourself, surely fifteen years is a very high age for a girl to go to school?---- The child that lives in town, even if she goes to work, works for herself and not for her parents.

And you will not get lobola for her one day?--- No, I will not even take the trouble, because tomorrow or the day after tomorrow they run away from their husband, and then I am in trouble again. I would have to return the cattle that is given to me, and where am I going to get it?

MR. LUCAS: What rent do you pay?--- (PETER MBAU): I do not pay any rent; I live in town here, in a house. The Mission pays for me.

You work for the Mission?--- Yes.

What rent do you pay, Thys Moloi?-- (THYS MOLOI): I pay 5/- per month.

And you have your own house?--- Yes.

What does it cost you to build - you built it yourself, did you not?---- It cost me about £8 or £9.

That is for the bricks and the roof, and you have a door and a window in it, haven't you,?--- Yes.

And does the Municipality here loan you the money? Do they help you to build, and do you pay back a very little

each month/.....



each month?--- No.

And that 5/- per month, does that cover the water and sanitary fees?--- Yes.

You pay only 5/- per month?--- Yes, that is all I have to pay.

Have you got a family?--- Yes, I have a family.

What is the size of the family?--- Two little girls and a boy.

How much do you earn?-- I earn 6/- per day.

So you can live quite all right?--- Yes, I can.

Are there many getting as much as that?--- No, not in this dorp.

You heard what Carel Matlasi said; he gets £2:0:0. per month; is that low?--- I think he is pretty well off if he gets as much as that here. Most married men in this place get about £1:15:0. per month. Those who get £2. per month are well off. <sup>D</sup>ut they have to feed themselves.

Those who get £1:15:0. per month, do they get good <sup>a</sup>?--- Yes.

Those who work in the houses here, do they sleep at the baas's house, or do they have to sleep in the location?--- I am talking about those in the location.

Those who get £1:15:0. do they get the baas's food in town?--- Yes.

Are there any natives here who live in the baas's house and not in the location?--- Yes, but they are from outside and not from the location. Some of them are living there and not in the location, and they have hardly any food. There are men who earn £1:10:0., men with big families, and they walk about asking for food for themselves.

Are/.....



**Collection Number: AD1438**

**NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION 1930-1932, Evidence and Memoranda**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.