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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

GOVERNING BODY

DELEGATION TO UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1938-1939

DRAFT REPORT OF THE DELEGATION

I.

Preliminary Arrangements

The visit of the Delegation of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to the Union of South Africa originated in a letter, dated 23 December 1936, from the Union Government.

In this letter the Accredited Representative of the Union of South Africa to the League of Nations stated that the Union Government had been interested to observe that, in addition to the steps already taken by the Governing Body in the sphere of Native labour problems, the subject of the regulation of contracts of indigenous workers had been selected as one of the items which might be submitted to the International Labour Conference in 1938.

"In view of this," the Accredited Representative added, "and in the knowledge that the International Labour Office has already devoted considerable preliminary study to the subject of Native labour contracts, I have been directed to state that if the Governing Body would feel disposed to send a small delegation from among its members to inform themselves at first hand on Native labour conditions in South Africa, the Union Government would be happy to extend a cordial invitation to them as their guests during their stay in the Union for that purpose."

The letter went on to suggest that the Delegation might consist of a representative from each of the Government, Employers' and Workers' Groups constituting the Governing Body, assisted by one or two members of the staff of the International Labour Office connected with the work of the Office's Committee of Experts on Native Labour.



At its Seventy-eighth Session, held in Geneva in February 1937, the Governing Body accepted the invitation, expressing its warm appreciation of the generous offer of hospitality made by the Union Government. At its Eighty-first Session, held in Prague in October 1937, the Governing Body appointed the following as members of the Delegation: Mr. F.W. Leggett (Government Group), Mr. C. Mertens (Workers' Group) and Mr. A.N. Molenaar (Employers' Group). The party was later completed by the appointment by the Director of Mr. W. Benson of the Office's Special Problems Section (Native Labour).

It was first intended that the Delegation should leave Europe in July 1938, shortly after the close of the Twenty-fourth Session of the International Labour Conference at which the question of the regulation of contracts of employment of indigenous workers had been examined in first discussion. Owing, however, to the inability of Mr. Mertens to undertake the journey at that time and owing to the impossibility of finding another Workers' member of the Governing Body free to serve at short notice, it proved necessary to postpone the departure and to reconsider the composition of the Delegation.

The Governing Body, at its Eighty-fifth Session, held in London in October 1938, further examined the question of the visit to the Union and approved new nominations. Once again, however, owing to the short time available before the proposed departure, the members nominated were not all able finally to accept. Ultimately, after consultations with the Officers of the Governing Body, the Delegation was reconstituted, as follows:-

Government Group:

Mr. F.T. CREMINS, Permanent Delegate of Ireland accredited to the League of Nations and to the International Labour Office.

Employers' Group:

Mr. J. LECOCQ, General Secretary of the International Organisation of Industrial Employers.



Workers' Group: Mr. C. MERTENS, Vice-Chairman of  
the Governing Body.

Secretary: Mr. W. BENSON, Special Problems Section  
of the International Labour Office.

It was further agreed with the Union Government that the Delegation should sail for South Africa in early December 1938.

Arising out of the composition of the Delegation, one consideration suggests itself. It is obvious that a Delegation composed of one member from each Group will always be at the mercy of any misfortune that may overtake any one of the members and that where such a member cannot be replaced the tripartite character of the Delegation will be totally destroyed. Should, on the other hand, the Delegation be originally composed of two members from each Group, the final inability of any one person to participate will leave the principle of tripartite representation unaffected. Although therefore it is recognised that the appointment to Delegations of the Governing Body of two members from each Group may be a matter of great difficulty, it will be for the Governing Body to consider if this procedure should not be regarded as normal, particularly when the Delegation is undertaking a long or distant mission.

In connection with the preliminary arrangements for the visit to the Union of South Africa, the Delegation is glad to have one final statement to make. Throughout the negotiations the Delegation and the Office received the utmost assistance from Mr. H. T. Andrews, Accredited Representative of the Union of South Africa to the League of Nations. The helpful attitude of Mr. Andrews on the many occasions when the Office consulted him was a large factor in the successful conclusion of the preliminary arrangements. The members of the Delegation wish to record their warm appreciation of Mr. Andrews' services.



## II.

Nature of the Visit.

The Delegation visited the Union of South Africa on the invitation and as the guests of the South African Government. The invitation arose out of discussions of the problems of contract labour by the International Labour Conference. Its purpose was to enable members of the Governing Body to inform themselves at first hand on Native labour conditions in the Union.

The nature of the visit may be said to have been further defined by the time available. The Government's invitation had been for a stay of from four to six weeks. Owing principally, however, to the dates of meetings of the Governing Body, the Delegation was unable to avail itself to the full of the time proposed and the stay was in fact restricted to less than four weeks.

The Union of South Africa is larger than the combined area of Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Its economy embraces very many forms of agricultural and mining production, as well as rapidly expanding manufacturing industries. Its Native population exceeds 6,500,000, and with over 2,000,000 Europeans, 750,000 Coloureds and 200,000 Asiatics<sup>(1)</sup>, the race problems of the Union are of outstanding complexity.

The Natives differ widely in agricultural, educational and economic standards. Of them some 3,000,000 may be located on Native lands, 2,000,000 in European-owned rural areas and 1,500,000 in European urban and semi-urban areas. Approximately 1,250,000 are to be found in European employment at any one time. In this number would be included workers from the Protectorates of South Africa under British administration, from

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(1)

In this Report (1) by European is meant a white South African of European descent who has been born or who has settled in the Union; (2) by Native is meant a member of an African race (predominatingly Bantu) who is resident in the Union; (3) by Coloured is meant a member, resident in the Union, of the mixed races which are the outcome of relations between persons of different race (e.g. Native and European, Native and Asiatic); (4) by Asiatic is meant a person of Asiatic race (predominantly Indian) who has been born or who has settled in the Union.



Portuguese East Africa, from the Rhodesias and from Nyasaland. Very few of the Native men of the Union of South Africa do not enter employment for an appreciable period of their working lives; while agriculture and the gold mines are the chief employers, the whole structure of South African production may be said to be based on Native labour.

As so employed the Native may be separated from his family and at the same time from the communities adjoining his place of employment; he and his family may be permanent dwellers in a European town; he may be temporarily apart from his family in such a locality; he may be away from his family and employed in European agriculture of either the farm or plantation type; he may to most intents and purposes be settled with his family on a European farm; he may be in any of these situations at different times. As regards his rights and duties as a worker, he may fall principally under Union legislation governing employment on mines and works; he may be subject to the separate Union Act concerning labour contracts on farms; he will also come under one of the four different laws concerning masters and servants in the four different Provinces. Other laws bearing on employment (e.g., pass laws, urban area regulations) differ in different localities.

In short, in its Native labour problems the Union of South Africa is a world of complexities.

All this may be a matter of general knowledge. It is necessary, however, to mention it, so as to make clear the shortness and rapidity of the Delegation's visit and the resulting restricted nature of this report which, in any event, is limited by the terms of the Government's invitation. The Delegation saw but a little of Native life and labour on some of the larger gold mines and something less of conditions in some of the Native areas of labour supply, with occasional glimpses at the varied problems of the urban Native and with a few illustrations of recent Native development schemes in rural areas.

At the same time the Delegation believes that, thanks to the admirable arrangements made for its tour, it was within the limits of its visit afforded the maximum opportunities for grasping the outline of South African Native labour problems. It was met at Capetown by Mr. W. D. Norval, Under-Secretary



for Labour, who accompanied it to Johannesburg, and remained with it during the stay there. At Johannesburg it was met by Mr. B. W. Martin, Director of Native Labour of the Department of Native Affairs, who accompanied the Delegation until the final departure for Capetown. To the Native Recruiting Corporation was entrusted the material arrangements of the part of the tour covering the areas of labour supply, and Mr. H.C. Wellbeloved, Native Labour Adviser to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, gave the Delegation the benefit of his wide experience, Mr. Wellbeloved and Mr. James Gemmill of the Chamber of Mines accompanying the Delegation in its visit to these areas. In addition, travelling difficulties were reduced to a minimum by the assistance of Mr. J.P. Grobbelaar, of the Department of Labour, who accompanied the Delegation throughout its stay in South Africa.

In its travels the Delegation was joined by the chief local officers of the Government responsible for labour control and Native administration and by the chief officers of the Native Recruiting Corporation. During visits to particular employments and localities, managers, medical officers, municipal Native administration officers and a number of other persons with direct knowledge of the day-to-day problems of Native labour showed themselves eager to place their information at the Delegation's disposal. A large number of memoranda were communicated to the Delegation by individuals and groups of the most varied outlook. It is, moreover, believed that owing to the tripartite character of the Delegation the members were able to receive frank and illuminating statements from Government officers, employers and trade union leaders. Lastly, a comprehensive introduction to all that was seen and heard was provided by a note furnished by the International Labour Office outlining the main problems of Native labour in the Union and locating them in the general structure of South African life.

In these circumstances this report is restricted to an account of the short visit paid by the Delegation as guests of the Union Government. Nevertheless however limited the tour or the individual member's previous acquaintance with African labour problems, it is hoped that the report will also reflect the knowledge brought to the Delegation's attention by experts of the highest qualifications.



III.

Details of the itinerary.

The Delegation arrived at Capetown on 19 December 1938. It left immediately for Johannesburg, where it remained until 29 December.

Before the departure of the boat-train from Capetown, however, the Delegation had the honour to be welcomed by the Hon. H.G. Lawrence, Minister of Labour. Among other gentlemen who met the Delegates were officers of the Department of Labour, in particular Mr. R.H. Beattie, Divisional Inspector of Labour; officers of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, including the President, Mr. D. McWilliams, and the Secretary, Mr. R. Stuart; officers of the Trades and Labour Council; Mr. R.S. Brooke, Employers' Delegate to the 1936 and 1938 sessions of the International Labour Conference; and Mr. D.B. Molteno, member of the House of Assembly elected by Cape Native voters, and Mr. H.C. Fowler. Even in the short time available many interesting points of view were expressed which it was possible to amplify to some extent on the Delegation's return to Capetown.

On arriving in Johannesburg in the afternoon of 20 December the Delegation was once again met by Government officials and by officers of employers' organisations and of the Trades and Labour Council. Mention should in particular be made of the help afforded the Delegation by Mr. J.F.H. Valks, Assistant Divisional Inspector of Labour, by Mr. W. Gemmill, General Manager of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, and by Mr. A.A. Moore, President, and Mr. W.J. de Vries, Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council.

The following day was spent in a visit to the Sub-Nigel Gold Mine, the Sub-Nigel Native Compound and the Central Native Hospital of the East Rand mines. The Sub-Nigel was at the time employing 7,200 Natives from the Union, South African Protectorates, Portuguese East Africa and Nyasaland. Some of these workers had been recruited and some had come forward spontaneously under the assisted voluntary system. They were working on contracts of from four months to one year (or the equivalent number of shifts) or had been re-engaged under monthly agreements. The Delegation had thus a picture of life



and work on a large South African mine with its many complexities. The fine Central Hospital of the East Rand mines serving a Native mining population of some 17,000 was also of great interest. A tribute is due to the courtesy of the General Manager of the Sub-Nigel mine, Mr. S.R. Fleischer, and his staff.

The next day the Delegation visited Compound and Hospital of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association and a Compound of the Crown Mines.

The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association and the Native Recruiting Corporation are non-profit making subsidiaries of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines. They organise the recruiting, engagement and distribution for the mines of the more than 300,000 Natives who are employed by members of the Chamber. The Native Recruiting Corporation operates in the Union and British South Africa; the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association operates in Portuguese East Africa and tropical Africa, and also manages the central distributing stations used by both organisations. During the year some 325,000 Natives pass through the Johannesburg Witwatersrand Native Labour Association Compound for distribution or discharge. Ten medical officers are employed and other welfare work is on a corresponding scale.

The Crown Mines form the largest gold mine in the world, employing between 24,000 and 25,000 Native labourers. As in the case of the Sub-Nigel Mine, these labourers are from many different territories and have been recruited or have come forward spontaneously and have accepted various periods of contracts. Those re-engaged after the conclusion of a contract may be entitled to leave employment on one day's notice. The Compound of the Crown Mines which the Delegation visited houses some 5,000 Natives. Once again, within the limitation of the compound system, the provision for Native welfare appeared to the Delegation to be on a generous scale. Mr. Wellbeloved and Mr. A.V. Lange, General Manager of the Crown Mines, proved energetic and instructive guides.

In the course of the same day the Delegation was entertained to luncheon by Mr. G.H. Beatty, Vice-President of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, and by the Chamber of Mines and to dinner, followed by a reception, by Councillor J.J. Page,



Mayor of Johannesburg, and the City Councillors. At the dinner a warm speech of welcome was made to the Delegation by the Mayor and replies were given by Mr. Cremins and Mr. Mertens, while at the reception the Delegates had the opportunity of meeting a large number of the leading citizens of Johannesburg.

On the following morning the Delegation visited the Rand Refinery and later at a luncheon given by Mr. Gemmill met a number of officers of the Government, of employers' associations and of European trade unions.

In the afternoon the Delegation had an interview with Mr. Batho, representing the Administrations of the British Protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. On 31 October 1938, no less than 61,377 Natives from these territories were in the employment of gold and coal mines affiliated to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, while an additional large but unascertained number is in other employment. The development of the office of the representative of these Administrations at Johannesburg from a tax-collecting agency to an institution which, in collaboration with the Union authorities, cares for the welfare of the Protectorate Natives appears of great importance. It has been noted that a number of workers are obtained from Nyasaland. There is no representative of the Administration of Nyasaland performing similar functions to those of the representative of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland.

The Delegation next had an interview, all too short, with representatives of Native trade unions in the presence of officers of the Department of Labour and Native Affairs. Under the present industrial legislation of the Union it is impossible for Native trade unions to obtain official recognition in the same way as European unions. The Delegation, however, noted with interest that some 16 non-European trade unions have been formed, with Johannesburg as their centre, that a co-ordinating committee has been established, that the Government Departments are taking steps to secure for these Unions some semi-official sanction and that some of the European trade unions have been of assistance in the organisation. To this important question of Native trade unionism the Delegation will return later in the report.

The Delegation completed the day by attending a Native concert, held at the Inchcape Hall under the patronage of Mr. Martin. This concert illustrated the great artistic talents of the Bantu people.



On 26 December the Delegation had an interview with Mr. W. G. Ballinger, who was adviser to the British Workers' Delegation during the discussions on the recruiting of labour at the 1935 and 1936 sessions of the Conference. Mr. Ballinger emphasised the significance of the Native trade union movement and the difficulties of the urbanised Native who is compelled to support himself and his family on wages, the rates of which may partly be dictated by the needs of Natives whose families are supported by their lands. Mr. Ballinger also made certain suggestions regarding mining employment, notably that the individual workers should receive interest on deferred pay, that facilities for family life should be established on new mines and that the fares of the workers to employment should be paid by the industry, a privilege already granted to Nyasaland recruits.

Later in the day members of the Delegation met Mrs. W. G. Ballinger, member of the House of Assembly elected by the Cape Native voters. Mrs. Ballinger drew attention to the importance of agricultural development in the formulation of social policy. She expressed the hope that experts on African conditions would be appointed to and African problems considered by the Office's Permanent Agricultural Commission.

On the same day members of the Delegation were presented to Sir William Clark, British High Commissioner for Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland and High Commissioner in the Union of South Africa for H.M. Government in the United Kingdom.

An interesting day was spent on 27 December visiting the Native quarters of Johannesburg. This was an introduction to the vast problem of the housing of Natives employed in urban areas, which now appears to be receiving the earnest consideration of enlightened municipalities in South Africa.

In Johannesburg the Delegation was efficiently guided by Mr. A. Immink, Chairman of the Johannesburg Native Affairs Committee, and by Mr. G. Ballenden, Manager of the Municipal Native Affairs Department. Johannesburg has a non-European population of approximately 230,000. The municipality provides accommodation for some 100,000 Natives. The Delegation visited the Orlando Township, housing some 35,000 Natives in family units - a great and praiseworthy enterprise.



It passed through Pimville, which is in striking contrast to Orlando (and the next day had a glimpse of what was described as the equally unsatisfactory Alexandra Township, which is unfortunately outside the City's jurisdiction). It visited the Wammer Native Barracks and the Wolhuter Native Men's Hostel, the municipal beer hall - a wretched but temporary building which is soon to be replaced - and finally on the premises of the Carlton Hotel was shown an example of the accommodation provided for Native servants by their employers, accommodation which is subject to municipal control.

Much of the new accommodation provided, notably at Orlando and the Wolhuter Hostel, gave the Delegation not only an insight into progressive municipal policy in South Africa, but also a deep impression of the response made by Natives to better living conditions. This whole question and that of the responsibility of employers, whether acting directly or through municipalities, for providing more than mere shelter and cleanliness, are problems of social welfare and labour efficiency to which increasing attention is rightly being paid.

On 28 December the Delegation visited Pretoria, the administrative capital of the Union. It met the Hon. A.P.J. Fourie, Minister of Railways and Harbours, Mr. J.H. Hofmeyr, M.P., who was Minister of Labour when the invitation to visit South Africa was addressed to the Governing Body, and the permanent heads of various government departments, including Mr. Ivan Walker, Secretary for Labour, Mr. L.P. van Zyl Ham, Secretary for Mines and, in the absence of the Secretary, Mr. J.S. Allison, Acting Secretary for Native Affairs. At a luncheon given by Lieutenant-Colonel B.J. Schwart, Mayor of Pretoria, the Delegates had the opportunity of again meeting these gentlemen, other prominent civil servants and members of Parliament and members of the local branch of the League of Nations Union. To the Mayor's kind speech of welcome Mr. Cremins replied on behalf of the Delegation and outlined the aims and methods of the International Labour Organisation and its connections with South Africa.

Before lunch, the Delegation, accompanied by Mr. Emmett, Chief Native Commissioner for the Northern Transvaal, visited



the Native compound of the Iron and Steel Corporation. This undertaking employs some 2,300 Natives under daily agreement and has not for some time found it necessary to engage in recruiting operations. It houses 1800 of its Natives in hygienic, if not particularly attractive conditions.

In the afternoon, while Mr. Benson discussed with Mr. Norval various points relating to the relationship of the Union of South Africa with the International Labour Office, the Delegation visited the Native quarters of Pretoria under the valuable guidance of Mr. G. Nicholson, Town Clerk. Of these quarters, so frankly explained to the Delegation, it seems sufficient to say that they are hardly a credit to the beautiful city of Pretoria, but that a comprehensive scheme is in hand for their improvement.

On the following day the Delegation set out on its tour by cars to Natal and the Transkeian and Ciskeian Territories. Throughout this part of its visit it was, as already mentioned, accompanied by Mr. B. W. Martin, Director of Native Labour, and also by Mr. J.P. Grobbelaar of the Department of Labour, and, except for the stay in Durban, by Mr. W.C. Wellbeloved, Native Labour Adviser to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, and Mr. James Gemmill of the Chamber of Mines. It had thus ample opportunity to learn the policy of the Government and of the Rand mining industry in regard to the obtaining of labour.

The first day's drive was long and wet. During it the Delegation passed through part of the Natal coal-mining area, the firms of which are not affiliated to the Transvaal Chamber of Mines. The Delegation was informed that legislation is to be introduced to put an end to the pernicious token system (payment of wages by tokens redeemable at certain stores) and other abuses connected with the payment of wages, which have lingered to the discredit of some but by no means all of these coal mines. A second labour problem on the coal mines of Natal - excessive hours of work - is also, it is understood, being examined with a view to remedial action.

On the 30 December the Delegation lunched at



Pietermaritzburg as guests of Mr. R. Dunlop, South African Employers' Delegate to the 1935 Session of the Conference. Among other guests were the Mayor of Pietermaritzburg and Mr. H.C. Lugg, Chief Native Commissioner for Natal and Zululand. A reply to Mr. Dunlop's informative speech of welcome was made by Mr. Cromins.

In the afternoon, under the able guidance of Mr. R.E. Stevens, Manager of the Municipal Native Administration, the Delegation visited the Native village, the upkeep of the houses and gardens of which is fostered by the grant of rewards, the men's and women's hostels, the Native sports ground and the Native market and beer hall. This visit greatly strengthened the impression gained by the Delegation at Johannesburg of the Native potentialities for better living when encouraged by an enlightened administration. The Native Women's Hostel did not seem up to the standard of the other institutions. With this slight reservation, however, the Delegation left Pietermaritzburg with the impression that for its 13,000 Natives more than a mere start has been made in creating the material basis of healthy living and that the Native response is becoming worthy of the opportunities offered. The combined market, beer hall and eating-place was particularly impressive. The Delegation noted with pleasure the success of these enterprises.

At Pietermaritzburg the Delegation also visited the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation.

In Durban, which the Delegation reached the same night, an opportunity was given the members of seeing a more complicated problem of Native housing and what appears to be the beginnings of a successful policy of reform. Mr. W. Wanloss, Chairman of the Durban Native Administration Committee, Mr. T.J. Ghooster, Manager of the Municipal Native Administration Department, and Mr. R.A.H. Stroet, Divisional Inspector of Labour, were the Delegation's chief guides, as usual most competent and enthusiastic.

Durban has a population of some 67,000 Natives<sup>(1)</sup>.

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(1) 1936 Census: Europeans 89,640; Asiatics 83,523; Natives 64,696; Coloureds 7,680.



The housing situation appears to have been unsatisfactory, owing to privately-owned slum property, particularly in areas until recently outside the municipal boundaries. The municipality has surveyed present accommodation and classified it into four classes, which may roughly be described as good, potentially good, unsatisfactory and very unsatisfactory. The housing policy of the municipality is to bring the second up to the standard of the first and to eliminate the latter two classes by providing municipal alternative accommodation.

The Delegation visited the Lamont Native Location, which at present houses some 400 Native families and is to be extended. This appears to be an admirable scheme. It also visited two hostels for single workers - the Somtseu Road Location with 3000 male residents and the Native Women's Hostel, with 590 residents. Both seemed very satisfactory, although, as at Pietermaritzburg, the accommodation for men was better than for women. Interesting features in the men's hostel of Durban visited by the Delegation is that some accommodation is made for wives paying a visit of a week to their husbands and that a special quarter has been equipped with pleasant single rooms for the more educated Native.

The Delegation was also given the opportunity of seeing the type of private property from which the transfers have been made. That a building declared unfit for human occupation was found to be re-let to Natives was an indication of the difficulties of control. The Delegation also visited the unsatisfactory Victoria Street Beer Hall, which is to be reconstructed under better conditions by the municipality. It saw the facilities open to the higher types of urban Natives in the Bantu Social Centre and in the sports ground.

The next days were spent in an instructive tour through the Transkeian Territories. This area, comprising East Griqualand, Pondoland, Tembuland and the Transkei, is almost exclusively reserved for Native occupation and in the local administration a wide system of consultation of the Natives is in force together with some degree of co-operation in executive matters. The area is divided into 27 districts, each under a magistrate assisted by District Councils of Natives. The districts are in turn under the control of



the Chief Magistrate, assisted by the United Transkeian Territories General Council and an Executive Committee, on both of which (on the former to a predominating extent) the Natives are represented. With a population of some 1,300,000 Natives, the Transkeian Territories form a great Native Reserve in which a consistent effort appears to be being made to develop a prosperous Native peasantry by a ricultural and health reform and in consultation of the peoples concerned.

At the same time the Territories are an important reservoir of man-power for the Rand mines. The Native Recruiting Corporation operates on a large scale through its offices and salaried officials and also (though to a decreasing extent and under the control of the salaried officials) through the trader-recruiter and the Native runner. During the eleven months ending November 1938, the Native Recruiting Corporation obtained for the mines a total of 77,333 labourers. Other recruiters operate in the Territories, notably for the Natal coal mines and sugar estates, although recruiting figures for these other employments were not obtained (they are to be collected in 1939). There is also a certain spontaneous drift of Natives, mainly men, to various employments. This labour exodus, essentially of the adult males, is reflected in the 1936 census, when of the total population residing in the Territories, of 1,172,889 persons, 674,666 were females and only 498,223 males. The other side of the labour exodus is illustrated by the deferred pay and remittances paid out in the Territories by the Native Recruiting Corporation. For the Transkeian Territories and the much smaller area as regards recruiting of the Ciskei, the deferred pay distributed in the first eleven months of 1938 totalled £231,000 and the remittances sent to their families by men on the mines totalled £230,000.

The arrangement for this part of the tour with its continuation in the Ciskei were, as mentioned, entrusted by the Union Government to the Native Recruiting Corporation. The Delegation was accompanied by the gentlemen already named (Mr. Martin, Mr. Grobbelaar of the Union Government services, and Mr. Wellbeloved and Mr. J. Gemmill of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines.) In addition, the Delegation



for several days had the invaluable assistance of Mr. R. Fyfe King, Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, while Mr. S.C. Behr, Mr. E.C. Thompson and Mr. J.B. Clarke, District Superintendents of the Native Recruiting Corporation placed their services fully at the Delegation's disposal during the tours through and beyond their respective districts. In all cases the Delegation was greatly impressed by the efficiency, enthusiasm and courtesy of its guides.

On 2 January the Delegation passed through Ixopo, where the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation were visited, and Umzimkulu to Kokstad. The night was spent at Kokstad, where Mr. Fyfe King gave the Delegation an account of the Transkeian system of Native Administration.

The next day the Delegation was to proceed to St. Johns, via Flagstaff and Lusikisiki. The interruption, however, of the ferry owing to recent rains, forced the party to spend the night at Lukikisiki.

During the journey the Delegation visited the valuable Flagstaff Agricultural School which is organised by the Transkeian Administration and where the Delegation had a practical demonstration of what is being done to improve agricultural conditions and notably to limit and breed-up livestock. The Delegation also visited the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation at Flagstaff. An example was here provided of the value of the systems of deferred pay and remittances. During 1938 a total of over £21,135 was paid out as deferred pay to 2,392 returned labourers and 1913 remittances to the families of labourers at work were paid for a total sum of over £6,834.

The next day the Delegation was able to cross the ferry and reached Umtata, the capital of the Transkeian Territories. During its stay here (4 to 7 January) the offices were visited of the Native Recruiting Corporation at a time when recruits were being medically examined, labour agreements were being drawn up and deferred pay and remittances were being paid out. Valuable figures were also supplied on all phases of the Corporation's work. Interesting visits were also paid to the impressive and dignified Bunga (General Council) Buildings, the at present over-crowded Native wards of the Umtata Hospital,



which is being extended, the farm of Mr. A.O.B. Payne, M.P., a member of the Union Native Affairs Commission, and kraals of Christian and pagan natives.

The Delegation was particularly impressed by the arrangements in the Bunga Building, which appear happily to symbolise the honourable place reserved for Native representatives in the administration of the Territories.

On 6 January a dinner was given in honour of the Delegation by the Management of the Native Recruiting Corporation. Members of the Union Native Affairs Commission, Magistrates of the Transkeian Territories and Superintendents of the Native Recruiting Corporation were among those present. Mr. Wellbeloved as Chairman introduced the Delegation. Speeches were delivered on local Native problems by Mr. Fyfe King and Mr. Payne, while Mr. Cremins, Mr. Mertens and Mr. Lecocq replied.

On 7 January the Delegation left Umtata for Engcobo. The opportunity was taken of a visit to the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation to obtain a comprehensive explanation of the assisted voluntary system.

Under this system the Native is not recruited and does not undertake a long-term contract. Instead, in return for facilities to reach the mines, he undertakes to offer himself for employment on any of the affiliated mines. The worker, while profiting by the services of the Corporation, including advances free of interest, has thus greater freedom of choice in the selection of his employer and of his period of service, and the Native Recruiting Corporation, acting rather as an employment exchange than a recruiting agency, has not to pay a commission on the men recruited. The popularity of the scheme is very marked in some districts. In Engcobo, for example, during 1938 only 223 natives were recruited and contracted to the mines, whereas a total of 6062 were engaged under the assisted voluntary system.

On the next day the Delegation left the Transkeian Territories for Queenstown and King William's Town in the Ciskei. This is a mixed area of European farms and Native districts, the latter being confederated to a limited extent under the Ciskeian General Council.

The problems of the Ciskei, though similar in many of



their details, differ in some fundamentals from those of the Transkeian Territories. As regards Native Administration and development, the local councils have not combined their powers and resources to the same extent as in the Transkeian Territories. There is, however, an interesting current of feeling among the Natives in favour of greater unity, the spontaneous development of which the European administration appears wisely to be awaiting.

As regards employment away from their homes, the Natives, in addition to going to the mines, are also attracted by urban development in East London and Capetown and by the national road development schemes. In the King William's Town area of the Native Recruiting Corporation (excluding East London) there were at the time of the 1936 census 77,078 males and 96,818 females and it has been estimated that 15,400 males were absent, while during the same year 11,377 Natives were obtained by the Native Recruiting Corporation. For 1938 the Native Recruiting Corporation figures are practically the same, 11,215, but it seems probable that the figures of absentees in other employment have increased considerably.

During the Delegation's visit, Mr. A. L. Barrett, Chief Native Commissioner of the Ciskei, and his officers were indefatigable in their explanations of local problems, while Mr. W. E. Wynn and Mr. C. C. Stubbs, District Superintendents of the Native Recruiting Corporation, valuably supplemented the exposition of the recruiting situation given by Mr. Wellbeloved.

On 8 January the Delegation visited the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation at Cofimvaba and at Queenstown, where the party spent the night. Visits were also paid to the finely situated Border Mental Hospital and to the Queenstown Native Location, where some 11,000 Natives are housed.

A very full day was spent on 9 January on the way to King William's Town. Offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation were visited at Alice and at Middeldrift, where a short but interesting talk was had with two traders, who work as recruiters on a commission basis for the Corporation.



The chief part of the day, however, was devoted to the important Native institutions - Lovedale Native School, the South African Native College of Fort Hare, the Victoria Hospital and the Government Agricultural School of Fort Cox. The two first were on vacation, so that only the buildings were seen, but longer visits were paid to the Victoria Hospital and Fort Cox, which, however small for the needs of the Native peoples, can be proud of their achievements and still prouder of their potentialities.

The visit to Fort Cox, in conjunction with the earlier visit to the Flagstaff Agricultural School, was particularly interesting as providing examples of the manner in which South Africa is tackling the essential problems of agricultural reforms in the Native areas. The training of Native demonstrations under conditions comparable with home conditions and the entrusting to them of agricultural plots of the same size and character as the ordinary Native plots seemed to be a programme of great practical value.

A second aspect of reform is the measures taken by the school for encouraging the improvement of livestock - horses, pig, sheep and especially cattle for milk production. In this connection, it may be mentioned that overstocking is the principal cause of soil erosion in the Territories. Much satisfaction was expressed by the authorities in the Ciskei at the agreement already reached among the Natives in some districts in favour of the limitation of livestock as a measure necessary if the evil of erosion is to be successfully combatted.

On the following morning at the offices of the Native Recruiting Corporation at King William's Town, the Delegation had the privilege of examining some of its impressions with Mr. Martin and Mr. Wellbeloved. Among the topics touched on, which had already formed the subject of many informal talks, were the relationship between Native peasant development and the labour exodus, conditions of employment on the Natal coal mines and sugar estates, remuneration on the gold mines, the practicability of Government employment exchanges in rural areas, the future of the recruiting system, the possibility of extending the system of deferred pay, the administration of the funds controlled by the Deferred Pay Board and the question of penal sanctions for labour offences.



A final luncheon was given by the Native Recruiting Corporation, at which were present the Mayor of King William's Town, Mr. Symonds, Senator C. Malcolmess, member of the Senate elected by the Natives and a number of magistrates of the area and superintendents and other officers of the Native Recruiting Corporation.

The Delegation was introduced by Mr. Wellbeloved and welcomed by the Mayor, an interesting account was given of the Ciskeian Native System and of problems of Native administration by Mr. Barrett and speeches were also given by Senator Malcolmess and Mr. Cremins.

The next forty-eight hours were spent in the train to Capetown. At Capetown members of the Delegation separately met government officers, including Mr. R.H. Beattie, Divisional Inspector of Labour, Trade Union leaders, including, Mr. D. McWilliams, President, and Mr. R. Stuart, Secretary of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, and Mr. R.S. Brooke. On the day of sailing, the Hon. H.G. Lawrence, M.P., Minister of Labour, kindly entertained the Delegation at a private luncheon party. Among those present were the Hon. H.A. Fagan, M.P., Minister of Native Affairs, Mr. W.C. Foster, Mayor of Capetown, Mr. D.L. Smit, Secretary for Native Affairs, and other prominent citizens. Mr. Cremins replied to speeches of farewell by Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Fagan.

The Delegation sailed for Southampton on 13 January 1939.

This enumeration of the details of the itinerary is intended to indicate the ground covered and the authorities met. Although certain problems have been touched on, it is not intended in any way as a description of those which were seen and discussed. There is hardly a question connected with Native development in South Africa which has not its close bearing on Native labour. In all spheres, the Union appears to be undertaking large scale plans of national development. For these plans more and better labour will be required. The examples shown to the Delegation therefore of progressive municipal housing, of programmes against erosion and overstocking in the Native Reserves, of better nutrition, of better health, of better education and in short of a standard of life more compatible with modern civilisation are all inextricably connected with the Native labour problem. This account of the journey therefore has had to be strictly limited, for "in informing themselves at first hand on Native labour conditions" in the Union, the Delegation has in a sense been introduced to the central problem and the central hope of South African advancement.



## IV

General impressions.

The Delegation is not called upon, nor does it feel competent, to frame even the most tentative conclusions or recommendations regarding the conditions and regulation of Native labour in the Union. The account of the visit, however, would be incomplete without mention of certain general impressions brought away by the Delegation.

The recording of these impressions appears all the more necessary, as the Delegation felt that the authorities with whom they came into contact were anxious to show not only their successes but also their problems and even their temporary failures. The visit appeared to partake more of the nature of a friendly and loyal exposition of situations as they are than that of a conducted tour. In courtesy to those under whose direction progress is being made and who were so frank with the Delegation, a frank account of the impressions left on the Delegation by the visit appears to be the fitting and the desired response.

The first impression is that of the national and international importance of Native labour questions in the Union of South Africa. The Union has a population of 2,000,000 Europeans, 6,500,000 Natives, 750,000 "Coloureds" and 200,000 Asiatics. The contact between these races, primarily the contact between White and Black, is on a vastly larger scale, is more manifold and has been the dominating note in history to a greater degree than elsewhere in Africa south of the Sahara. Contact largely takes the form of the employment of Native labour in European undertakings. Such employment is on a larger scale than elsewhere in Africa. It has a wide geographical influence through the extensive employment of Natives from Mozambique, the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. All these factors do not imply either that South African policies are of African continental applicability or that the success of other policies is dependent on conditions in South Africa. They mean, however, that in the rapidly evolving circumstances of Africa, (1) the Union has a natural interest in Native labour policies beyond her frontiers, (2) Native labour policy in the Union is equally of interest to territories beyond the Union frontiers.

The second impression to be noted is that of the deep, widespread and intelligent concern which appears to be



shown in connection with Native labour and social problems in the Union. Although a South <sup>African</sup> Native policy has developed, which appears to obtain a preponderating measure of support from the European population of the Union, the working out of this policy is still open to widely varying interpretations, and the ultimate outcome of the meeting of White and Black in the labour market still is the subject of a wide range of prophecy. All this makes for an intensification of interest and of intelligence with the result that, within the bounds of South African racial feeling, the Delegation found a healthy readiness to explore the past, present and future with a scientific desire to eliminate complacency and prejudice.

If these two impressions are justified, it is all the more important that contact between South Africa and Geneva should be close whenever questions affecting African labour are under consideration. Questions connected with the Forced Labour and Recruiting Conventions and the proposals for an international decision concerning contracts of employment are examined later. Here it is necessary to note as a fact that the <sup>two</sup> major decisions so far taken by the International Labour Conference affecting African labour have not been accepted by the chief country of African employment. Whether the delegates attending the Labour Conference have failed to give due weight to South African knowledge, or whether South Africa has too readily rejected any decision in conflict with South African practice, the divergence between Geneva and South Africa on Native labour questions is to be deplored and attempts to minimise it should continue to be made.

In effecting this, the visit of the Delegation may, it is hoped, prove of some use. More frequent contacts are certainly to be commended. Contacts, however, connected with no specific programme of work are of limited value. What is required is closer association between the Union of South Africa and the International Labour Organisation in the actual discussion of Native labour questions.

Two other general impressions are to be noted.

The Delegation was invited to inform themselves on Native labour conditions and the conditions of European workers were therefore not considered. The Delegation comes



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