

AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

I.—DETribALISATION AND THE WASTE OF MAN POWER

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bechuanaland Protectorate reproduces the general economic features of the other High Commission territories. The population appears to be stationary in number; economic advancement is almost entirely arrested. Standards of living are falling. The country only keeps itself going by sending its manhood abroad to seek employment. Collections of native hut tax were actually smaller in 1928 than they were in 1917. Such figures as are available seem to show that imports have not risen appreciably since 1925, and that exports in the same period have only increased by some £20,000, or about 6 per cent. So far as the native population is concerned, one may say that it takes 150,000 people to herd some 600,000 head of cattle, produce £8,000 worth of cream, and grow rather less kafir corn than they need for their own consumption. On the face of it, it is not a striking record of human endeavour.

This failure in native development has amounted to a positive stimulus of detribalisation by compelling the tribesmen to sell their labour for long periods in spheres of European industry in neighbouring territories. The incredible thing is that the Protectorate Government has at one and the same time encouraged such labour migration and striven to preserve unchanged the old tribal custom and methods of rule. In its eagerness to dance to any tune the Union cared to pipe, it seems never to have perceived that the first aim must be destructive of the second. Like another Penelope, it has spent the night of its economic lack of policy solemnly unpicking the work done in the day of its administrative impolicy—the only difference being that Penelope knew what she was about.

OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT.

Admittedly, native development has been faced with formidable obstacles. The country is semi-arid, in spite of its rich pastures, stock-raising and dairying are, perhaps, its only important farming potentialities. It is, in any case, remote from markets, and transport charges are exorbitantly high. In recent years particularly, the Customs Agreement with the Union has pressed unfairly on the Protectorate. Thirty-five years ago rinderpest carried off 95 per cent. of its cattle. For more than half a century its herds were infected with contagious pleuropneumonia, and they were wholly freed from it only in 1927. Thus export trade in cattle has always had to work under hampering restrictions. Even now that the territory is "clean" its neighbours jealously protect their own markets. In such circumstances, some may say, what wonder that many men had to migrate to seek the means of continuing life elsewhere. And is it not something to have conquered lung sickness and raised the cattle population to 600,000 in 35 years?

The British authorities stepped in in 1885, declaring a protectorate and their intention of interfering as little as possible with tribal law and custom. Their first subsequent act was to tax the tribes and demand from them something they had never possessed—namely, money, thus immediately imposing a profound modification of tribal custom. The imposition might have been balanced by a simultaneous offer of the means of making money, i.e., by stimulating tribal economic development. If the conditions at which we glanced in the previous paragraph made an effective offer of the kind impossible, then there was only one logical alternative. That was to recognise that the tribe would have to go outside the tribal system to acquire the money, and that acquisition would ipso facto necessitate some measure of detribalisation. This recognition has never been made by the Protectorate Government, which has consequently never sought to adapt the tribal system so as to compensate for the tendencies towards detribalisation thrust upon it, and to give it a chance of subsisting them once more into itself. The failure to ease the tribe's transition from a subsistence economy to a money economy has made the present administration of the Protectorate the reductio ad absurdum of indirect rule.

ECONOMIC REALITIES.

We shall give detailed grounds for this judgment later. Meanwhile it is desirable to look a little more closely at the economic actualities of the day. Apart from difficulties of marketing, there is another serious brake on economic development—namely, the heavy wastage of man-power. Of this there are six main causes:—

- (1) Emigration.
- (2) Venereal disease.
- (3) Malaria.
- (4) Malnutrition.
- (5) Regimented labour.
- (6) The "slave" system.

The last two items will be discussed below in connection with the administrative problem. As regards the question of nutrition no accurate survey has been made. The staple foods are kafir corn and milk, and it seems likely that a high proportion is taken, by the men at least, in the form of a strongly fermented beer. The people sometimes kill their goats and sheep for meat, but game is much scarcer, and the hunting dog, therefore, much less copiously supplied, than once it was. Probably the only times when they are not seriously short of meat are when

their cattle die in large numbers from starvation or disease. Fruit and vegetables are almost unknown, except for the oranges which the Bakgatla grow with fair success at Mochudi. Quantity is perhaps even less satisfactory than quality, for in the frequent years of drought when crops fail or partially fail, the people are left with insufficient grain for their needs and are often too poor to supply them by purchase. At such times also most of the milk is needed for the calves. Some of the chiefs have attempted to deal with the position by forbidding any man to sell his grain unless he has at least a three years' reserve in hand. The ruling has been fairly effective in stopping trade, but less so in securing an abundance of supplies; for native husbandry is such that a man will often not bother to plough his lands and put in a crop, if he knows that he has an unaccounted-for ration in his granary. Certainly the general impression borne in upon the observer as he watches the people in their villages is of the wide prevalence of deficiency diseases. But the whole question needs systematic investigation.

DISEASE.

The scourges of venereal disease and malaria are also obviously hard at work, though here again no exact statistical information is available. A member of the European Advisory Council recently observed to his colleagues "I daresay fully 20 per cent. of our native population are a useless drag on the progress of the country owing to their being totally unfit through syphilis, and I would go so far as to say that 70 per cent. of the population are enervated and in some way deleteriously affected by this disease, thus lessening to an alarming extent the native's efficiency and ability to earn and promote his own welfare." The principal medical officer himself has stated in regard to malaria, "Taken as a whole the standard of living of the Bechuanaland native is below that of most of the natives of South Africa. No doubt malaria is an important contributing factor. One of the medical officers in his report says of the natives of his district: 'The majority of the people are rotten with the infection and chronic malarial pains are a common complaint.' Can one wonder that with such a physical disability and its resultant mental lethargy, they only make such efforts as will supply them with the absolute bare necessities of life—this in turn lowering their resistance to malaria when it comes their way?"

There remains the question of emigration. We have discussed it at length in dealing with Basutoland and Swaziland, and endeavoured to show that it is one of the crucial points in the whole administrative and economic problem of the protectorates. It is the main factor in detribalisation, and it is essential for any policy which aims at maintaining tribal rule in the Protectorate to devise some rational check upon it. Such a check is as imperative in the interests of the whole native labour force of South African industry as in those of the protectorates considered by themselves. And the first step, we have argued, must be to abolish recruiting.

EXTENT OF MIGRATION.

Bechuanaland has even less reliable information as to the extent of labour-emigration than the other territories. Natives leaving the territory are supposed to take out a pass, but in practice few of them trouble to do so. The frontiers are huge in length and easy to cross at a hundred points, so that there is, in fact, no official record of comings and goings that is anything like complete. But from the general social evidence it is plain that the country is denuded of its adult males in much the same proportion as Basutoland and Swaziland—that is to say, to the extent probably of 50 or 60 per cent. The Johannesburg gold mines are debarred from drawing labour from regions north of latitude 22. Roughly speaking, therefore, the Bechuanaland people, living nearer the equator than Serowe, are not available for recruitment, and actually the numbers of Bechuanaland who go to the gold mines are smaller relatively to the total population than the corresponding numbers in either Swaziland or Basutoland. But this gain is fully offset by the proximity of the diamond workings in the Lichtenburg area, at Kimberley and even in South-West Africa. Bechuanaland labour goes out freely, not only to all these areas, but to the towns and farms of the Western Transvaal, the Northern Cape, and both Rhodesias as well. Thus the dispersion is pretty complete.

The Government, with its habitual penchant for the line of least resistance, has always favoured this dispersion, as simplifying the fiscal problem; and annual reports after annual reports complacently announce that "the Protectorate offers a large field of operations for recruiters of native labour for work on the mines and elsewhere outside the territory." But their preference is shared by no one inside the territory, except, possibly, by certain traders who happen also to be recruiters and who say they could not keep their heads above water but for recruiting fees. For obvious reasons the missionaries object to it. Members of the European Advisory Council have repeatedly directed the Government's attention to the loss which labour-emigration means to the whole territory. "Anything," as one member put it, "anything that will tend to improve the native's method of farming and

help him at home, developing his own country and so promoting the native's true welfare, must react in the prosperity of the territory, and all of us who live here."

THE NATIVE ATTITUDE

The attitude of the natives themselves is acceptance of an evil they see no way of avoiding. It is quite certain that very few of them would work abroad for wages if they could earn money at home. The main emigration takes place in the first four months of each year. A good proportion of the migrants manage to return in October in time for ploughing; but if they know that they have someone at home to plough for them they often remain away for more than a year. When a married man goes on contract he usually leaves his wife in the charge of his parents, and, if he can, arranges for them to help her with the ploughing and the care of cattle, etc. It not seldom happens that she has to hold the plough while her father-in-law drives the team; in any case, she only gets the help of her husband's relations after they have done their own ploughing, so that she usually misses the benefit of the early rains. As regards cattle, they are often very slackly tended by the relatives, who, after all, receive no compensation for any trouble they may take. Consequently the owner may find on return that his herd, so far from increasing, has actually dwindled. On the other hand, the cost of living in the towns of the Union is too high in relation to native wages for him to save money and make up for his loss of cattle. It is a system which leads to domestic complications and the neglect of lands and stock, and so to diminished output. Prolonged separations of husbands and wives have an effect on the survival rate of the tribe which no one has yet tried to measure accurately, but which must be severe. Human nature being what it is, the men when they are away get into trouble with other women, and their wives with other men. A considerable percentage of the chief's time is taken up in hearing cases which arise out of such difficulties.

COMMON SENSE.

In general, the tribal sentiment towards them is one of free-thinking common sense. If a husband leaves his wife for long periods he must put up with moderate infidelity on her part. It is even held that a woman should not allow her child-bearing capacity to fust in her unused, even if she has to seek the required stimulus from someone else than her husband. Infidelity, even when marked by an "illegitimate" birth, is not very frequently brought forward as a ground for divorce; it seems to be regarded as incidental. But family life is often broken up by the results of the unwillingness of a wife who has long enjoyed comparative independence to re-submit herself tamely to her husband's authority.

Of late years there has also been a large increase in the numbers of children born of unmarried women, a phenomenon closely related with the labour-migration of so many young men. When the young men return after long work abroad they cohabit with their betrothed or with unattached girls, for whom their traveler's assurance and knowledge of men and cities seem to have a special attraction—of the same kind, no doubt, as Desdemona felt for Othello. It is common enough, too, for a youth to put a girl with child and then slip off on contract to avoid the consequences.

One chief stated to me that there was no household in his stad which had not "lost a man on the mines," by which he meant that in every one a man had gone abroad to work and never returned. On the average, however, the percentage of permanent loss through labour emigration must be smaller than this evidence suggests. But what is unquestionably true is that, when the men come back, they come back dissatisfied in mind and out of love with the old tribal life. They have acquired tastes in food, clothing and amusements which tribal life offers no means of satisfying. The loss of a steady cash income is a thing they feel heavily, for though tribal economy does not yet work on a cash basis, the presence of white traders in tribal areas does involve the temptation and the opportunity to spend money without any general possibility of earning it. A man in employment can buy a new pair of trousers every six months; living in the tribe he may have to weather an interval of two years between pairs. The thing touches his personal pride. Such an instance may seem trivial, but clothes are of quite absurd importance to the semi-detribalised native, and trivialities of the kind mount up in the aggregate to the detribalisation problem, which is not trivial at all.

THE CHIEFS.

The chiefs on the whole do not like the mines or any other spheres of outside employment for their men, and they are inclined only to let men go as a last resort when taxes and levies cannot be got out of them in any other way. But in special circumstances the rule may be departed from. At least one chief makes use of the mines as a kind of penal settlement, calling up batches of people he dislikes or disapproves of from time to time, and sending them off; and no doubt in this plan he co-operates not unprofitably with the recruiting agent. It is applied especially to those who are more than three years in arrears with their hut tax; in their case it is perhaps thought of chiefly as a way of saving them from imprisonment by the Government. In certain tribes, also, there is a custom known as sethako, by which the chief gives each recruit £s. for food on the journey to Johannesburg, and receives

in return a tribute of £1 when the boy comes home at the end of his contract.

It is the well-defined policy of the chiefs to discourage the emigration of women as far as they possibly can. One of them, indeed, would only agree to the extension of the road motor service to his territory on condition that his own tribesmen were employed as conductors to see that women of the tribe should not use the service as a means of leaving the territory; he was even at pains to come to an understanding with the station master of the nearest station on the railway, by which tickets to destinations outside the Protectorate should not be issued to women.

But in spite of these limitations and precautions most of the men between the ages of 20 and 45 do go abroad to work; and they are followed, though in smaller numbers, by women.

(Continued in next column.)

(To be continued.)

AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

II.—THE PROBLEM OF MATERIAL AND MENTAL POVERTY

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bechuana differ from the south-eastern Bantu in living in large villages, or towns as one might almost call them. As a consequence of this peculiarity, their farming economy expresses itself diagrammatically as a series of concentric circles. The bull's-eye is the village itself, the seat of the chief and the headquarters of the tribe. Broadly speaking, the village is the home, the one permanent home, of the people, who, however, are accustomed to leave it at the chief's order between the time of ploughing and the time of reaping. Outside the limits of the village in a roughly circular belt, which may be 12 or 15 miles deep, are grouped the arable lands of the tribe; beyond them is a much broader belt of cattle posts and pastures; and beyond them again the hunting stations of the richer members of the tribe.

It was probably for geographical reasons that the Bechuana departed in this way from common Bantu custom. The tribes are not very numerous groups—their average strength is well under 20,000; and the total territory they occupy is the best part of 300,000 square miles. They are thus but a few grains of humanity dotted about on a huge expanse of steppe. The country is not sufficiently broken up into hill and dale to throw people naturally into compact groups. If each tribe were to spread itself more or less evenly over the whole tribal area, the chief's control would be greatly weakened, his administrative troubles would be increased, and that close cohesion and solidarity which it has always been a governing principle with the chiefs to maintain would be lost. The village system with its concentric rings is doubtless an attempt to surmount these difficulties. Its convenience from the standpoint of the chief is obvious; and throughout the period of British protection the chief has shared that convenience with the trader, the missionary and, to some extent, the British Administration. In the old days the people did not leave the village to plough or reap until the chief gave the word of command; and upon his word also they desisted from reaping and ploughing, and returned home. This drill is still largely in force to-day.

THE HERD BOYS.

Such a mode of communal life has one accompaniment which is of great importance in modern conditions. It means that the cattle posts, remote as they are from the village centre and the main life of the tribe, have to be manned by people who can see that the stock are properly grazed and watered, the calves fed, and the cows milked. Tribal custom has decided that this work shall be done in the main by the youths who have not yet been formed into a regiment—by youths, that is, whose ages may range from 12 to 24. The herd boys are pivotal in the economic life of the tribe.

Naturally, they are relieved from time to time, the frequency of reliefs depending on the ratio between the number of available youths and the number of cattle posts. But in most tribes all the youths spend the bulk of their time away in the distant bush, pretty completely cut off from village influences. When, every now and again, they do come home, they come with sexual hunger extremely keen set, and they look, in conquering mood, to the village maidens for its appeasement—willing, if that may be, but if not, then unwilling. It takes a shrewd girl to dodge their ardour. Menstruation can often be effectively pleaded; yet the pretext has a weakness—the essential impermanence of its validity.

But the system has other and more serious social effects. It makes it extraordinarily hard to bring the boys within the range of education. That in itself would be bad enough in the general circumstances of to-day, although it would not upset any ancient equilibrium of the tribe. But it is not all. With it goes the fact that the main benefits of the educational efforts of missionaries and Government fall to the girls. Average school attendances show about 75 per cent. girls; probably nearly 90 per cent. of the girls get some kind of education, while only some 20 per cent. of the boys get any education at all, and, even of those, many start too old to reap full profit from its influence. This is a situation which really does bid fair to shake the traditional balance of forces within the tribe. What is going to happen to the tribal system when all the women are educated and half the men uneducated is a point which has not yet been sufficiently considered in the High Commission territories.

LEAVING THE VILLAGES.

From this angle it is perhaps a favourable sign that the people are beginning to remove away from the villages and set up their homes near the lands and even further afield in the neighbourhood of the cattle posts. The tendency, which, though new, is well marked, springs from a variety of causes. The people are finding that living is cheaper away from the villages, with their stores and other tempting amenities. Again, in a country which is woefully short of surface water, the drawing and carrying of water can be a great inconvenience among the concentrated population of a village; women and girls, by whom the water-carrying is done, sometimes have to walk long distances to and fro, and to queue up for hours waiting their turn at the wells. In some cases, without doubt, people uproot themselves from the village and settle elsewhere mainly in order to simplify the water problem. In others, they do so to escape the call for regimented labour, and to keep away from the chief. But, whatever the full account of the matter may be, fewer people come back nowadays after ploughing and reaping, notwithstanding the chief's order. The Government might well look around it for ways of strengthening and directing this spontaneous trend. For if the people came to live in more numerous but smaller villages, sited at tactical points, the improvement of agriculture and husbandry would be facilitated, the water problem would become more manageable, and there would be a better prospect of getting the boys to school. As regards the last point, another hopeful line is the development of dairying. Whenever a household becomes able to earn a steady cash income by selling cream, an immediate inducement is offered to the grown men in it to stay at home and tend their cattle. And that would have the double advantage of checking labour emigration and releasing some of the herd boys for education.

At both these processes take time. In the meanwhile, as a temporary expedient, it may be necessary to consider the possibility of catering for the herd boy's needs by the establishment of bush schools, though there are obvious difficulties confronting such a project.

SCALE OF LIVING.

An idea of the average scale of living among Bechuana natives may be got from the following tables

relating to trade in the Bamangwato reserve in 1930.—

IMPORTS.

Meatles and meal	£3,451
Wheat and meal	2,272
General merchandise	72,915
Sundries	3,065
Total	£82,683

EXPORTS.

Kafir corn	£280
Meatles	480
Cattle	34,336
Sheep and goats	3,184
Hides (cattle)	11,259
Skins (sheep and goats)	369
Karosses	3,294
Sundries	1,670
Total	£55,972

The population of the reserve may be taken as somewhere about 60,000. The table of exports, being compiled from traders' returns, does not include cream sent direct to the creamery; but, when allowance is made for the omission, it is clear that the exports do not amount to more than £1 per head of the population.

According to the above figures there is a surplus of imports of £27,611. So far as the natives are concerned, the true adverse balance is not as heavy as this, because, while the export figures represent purely native production and trade, the import figures include stock brought in by the traders for sale to the handful of European residents in the reserve. But even so, the true balance against the natives must be quite considerable. It must be remembered also that the native population has to raise an annual fund of some £20,000 in respect of Government taxation and tribal levies. In the aggregate, therefore, it has liabilities amounting to between £40,000 and £50,000 more than it can meet from the proceeds of its exported produce. These excess liabilities are presumably met by wages earned inside and outside the territory and by indebtedness incurred with the storekeepers.

PURCHASING POWER.

On the whole, the purchasing power of the Bamangwato does not seem to be on the increase. In the last couple of years, especially, the natives have been badly hit by the fall of prices for cattle and hides; and because of lower prices they are disposing of fewer beasts. Other sources of revenue, too, are drying up, such as the sale of wild animal skins and ostrich feathers; a good lion's skin used to fetch £10, but nowadays it seldom goes for more than £2 10s., and there is much less game than there used to be. Attempts to ease the pressure are made, as we noticed, by removing away from Serowe to the lands and the cattle posts where living is less expensive; also by selling cream, and by transport riding with wagons, of which quite a number are owned among the Bamangwato. A dairy costs perhaps £200 to put up, and a good man with a sizeable herd sometimes makes from his cream as much as £30 a month in the season and from a third to a half of that amount out of it. But dairying is at present on so small a scale that the average earnings must be considerably less than this. The outlay on a wagon, on the other hand, together with trek gear and a span of 16 oxen, cannot be much less than the cost of a dairy, yet the wagon does not as a rule bring in more than some £30 a year. Probably many wagon-owners would do well to dispose of their wagons and build dairies instead.

On balance, it appears likely that the native community, even at present standards, is living beyond its income and eating into capital. There is evidence, too, that of late years standards have dropped. For example, traders once never thought it worth while to stock any article below 1s. in price; to-day they are obliged to stock many sixpenny lines, and a good deal of trade takes place in them.

Plainly, the rut is deep, and it will be hard work getting the natives out of it. The initiative and the main task of rescue lie, or should lie, with the Government. But there is much work which calls for the personal, the intimate, touch that the Government cannot give. One wishes sometimes that the missions could widen the scope of their activities, or give them a different emphasis. The medical mission is an established and an important fact. Is it impossible that the economic mission should make its appearance? The need for trained workers in the economic field is very great—men and women who should live in the same close and friendly contact with the day-to-day life of the tribes as the missionaries do, and who should unobtrusively select, stimulate, foster and guide the appropriate lines of tribal economic development, with reference not only to the traditional habits and aptitudes of the people, but much more to the all-important factor of markets. Some experiment of the kind has, I believe, been made with success by the London Missionary Society in the South Sea. No doubt lack of funds and of suitable personnel are the main reasons why it has not yet been tried in South Africa.

MENTAL POVERTY.

Deeper perhaps than the problem of material poverty lies the problem of intellectual poverty, poverty of character, poverty of culture. The Bechuana natives, as a group, are today cowed in spirit by the harshness of their chiefs, chilled by the vacillations of British administration, and perplexed at the disintegrating changes in their old life which they feel but cannot understand. The prime need is to set their minds in motion and to accustom them to standing firmly on their feet. Their life calls out for a new integration, their minds for schooling in team work and the art of citizenship. British protection has robbed them of their old interests of fighting and hunting, and in consequence they concentrate out of due measure on the only one that remains to them—the drinking of beer. Where the two first were is now only a void, which Government and missions have done nothing effective to fill. Their place should be taken by a strong communal life in the social, aesthetic and intellectual realms.

It may seem a far cry from Bechuana to rural England, but there is in this matter much guidance to be found in the revival of English village life since the war. Two of the outstanding features of that revival have been folk-dancing and popular choral singing. To both the Bantu mind is pre-eminently attuned and both, one would say, could be methodically developed in the villages of the Bechuana without the highest difficulty. Mutual competition festivals in which choral singing, church choirs, village choirs, tribal choirs might also would find a wide spontaneous response. There is good reason for thinking that

out of singing and dancing contests of this kind would naturally grow a village drama and a system of dramatic competitions. Games, such as football and athletics, also have a ready public awaiting them. All that is wanted to set every one of these expressive and unifying activities in vigorous train is initial stimulus and a little gradually diminishing guidance. Native talent would soon provide all the organisation required, except perhaps for some loose supervision designed to make a rough whole of scattered movements and to keep them in touch with standards better than their own. Much of the ground-work could be done by the more or less educated natives, for whom tribal life at present is so empty a thing.

In the soil prepared by such movements and their social results there could soon be sown fresh seeds of thought and imagination in the form of lectures, discussions and debates, which in turn could be irrigated and fertilised by the establishment of small village libraries and of reading rooms, where perhaps selected films might also be shown from time to time.

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AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

III.—SOME DIFFICULTIES OF THE EUROPEAN FARMER

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The position of the European ranching and farming community may conveniently be considered by itself. For though their economic interests are virtually identical with those of the natives, since both are dependent upon an export trade, their mode of life and methods of production are so dissimilar as to make their needs widely different in degree. The actual relations of the two groups, European and native, are superficial and insignificant, whether in the social, the political or the economic field. Socially and politically the normal South African tradition of segregation is followed as a matter of course; and economically neither group forms a market for the other, except that the settlers employ a certain number of natives as labour, and the natives buy small numbers of pedigree stock from the settlers to improve their herds.

The settler is not unduly burdened with direct taxation. In much the same way as his counterpart in Swaziland he is liable for a £2 poll tax, and for income tax on approximately the Union basis; but if he pays the latter the poll tax is deducted from his assessment. Income tax has only been in force since 1922. For the few years previous to that its place was taken by a cattle tax and a cattle export duty, imposts which turned out to be unpopular, less from their actual weight than from their intrinsic character. But until after the outbreak of the Great War the European was scarcely taxed at all, except through the Customs. Nor has he much ground for complaint at what he receives in return. He sometimes criticises the Government, and with reason, for extravagance, as one used to the ways of democracy, he is apt to feel "taxation without representation" as something of a hardship; but with his present numerical strength and economic importance he cannot seriously expect more political influence than the Advisory Council gives him, and on the whole is sensible enough not to do so. Meanwhile, the provision that has been made for him in the way of schools, medical services and hospitals, veterinary and dairy services, etc., is at least commensurate with his contribution to the revenues of the country.

LITTLE PROGRESS

At the same time the settler community has not made any impressive advance either in numbers or in wealth. The former have risen in the last 20 years at a lower rate than that of the natural increase; and, without going into detailed figures, it may be said that this retardation reflects the general economic circumstances of the group.

In truth, the settler finds many obstacles in his path, not all of them inevitable accompaniments of pioneering in a remote area. First is the absence of any home market. In spite of the fact that the few hundreds of settler families have 100,000 natives within commercial range of them. But both natives and Europeans are engaged mainly in stock raising, for unquestionably the best potentialities of the country lie in that direction; quite properly, the native population supplies its own requirements in meat and milk. In the circumstances it is hard to see how a home market for the European farmer can be built up, except by means of mining. A mining law, which is an essential forerunner of mining operations, has been on the stocks for years, and its promulgation now seems actually to belong to the near future. It is understood that powerful interests are only awaiting the issue of the law to start upon development. On general grounds it is a matter of deep regret that the opportunity has been missed of making an experiment in tribal mine ownership and mine development under European direction; and it now appears that for legal and other reasons development, if and when it takes place, will follow the usual lines of European exploitation which the Transvaal and Rhodesia have made familiar. But this particular point does not directly affect the question of a home market for the settler. For him the opening up of mining on any considerable scale, by whatever method it should take place, is perhaps the brightest of visible hopes.

EXPORT MARKETS.

In the meantime he must scratch round for export markets as best he may. It is a discouraging job. In Southern Rhodesia and South-West Africa there is a total embargo on Bechuanaland cattle. In the Union also the restrictions are severe. Export of Bechuanaland cattle to the Union's open markets has been prohibited for more than eight years, and there is little prospect of the prohibition being lifted. A minimum live weight of 800lb. for all exported animals was imposed in March, 1924, and in January, 1926, it was raised to 1,050lb. for oxen. (The Union's weight requirements, though they do constitute a grave handicap to Protectorate producers, are not invariably fulfilled; fortunately for Bechuanaland, the Union border is smuggled over it.) As regards cattle consigned for export overseas, the Union naturally does not interfere, and they may pass through to Union ports without restriction as to weight. Recently Protectorate cattle have been finding their way in small but helpful numbers to Angola and, through Northern Rhodesia, to the Belgian Congo.

In the aggregate the Protectorate has been able for the last six years to dispose of perhaps 40,000 head of cattle annually, and the annual value of the trade is probably under £200,000. These figures, of course, include exports of native-owned cattle as well as European-owned. The restrictions on the markets hit the natives just as hard as they hit the Europeans; but in spite of them, or perhaps because of them, the European farmers gallantly persevere with the improvement of their herds, and the more enlightened of the tribes are beginning to follow suit. The project for a new railway from Rhodesia to Walvis Bay through the Protectorate is enthusiastically spoken of, and the British Government has advanced funds on the Protectorate's behalf towards the cost of a preliminary survey, the

theory being that such a line would afford a shorter and less expensive outlet to the meat markets of Europe. It seems to be overlooked that Southern Africa is already overprovided with railways, having regard to its actual and potential traffic; that the opening of the Benguela line has deprived, for a good many years at least, any possible Rhodesia-Walvis Bay line of most of such utility as it might have had; and that, if a Walvis Bay line were constructed, there would necessarily be a general rise in rates to keep it and existing lines in being.

DAIRYING.

Notwithstanding every difficulty, there has been a steady expansion of the cattle industry and the number of head officially recorded as exported during the first seven months of 1930 was greater than the corresponding figure for the whole of 1923—19,785 as against 18,147. The dairying industry has gone ahead more rapidly, for there is an unrestricted market in the Union for butter, and the High Commission territories are partners with the Union in the arrangements made under the Dairy Control Act. A large, up-to-date creamery has been established inside the Protectorate at Lobatsi and the exports of butterfat and cream have risen from 166,160lb. in 1923 to approximately 450,000lb. at the present time. Of the latter figure about 120,000lb. represents native production, with a cash value of some £8,000. In addition, the settlers have made a beginning with cheese-making and now export some £7,000 worth of cheese a year. Of late the Dairy Control Board's scheme for subsidising the export of butter overseas has led to revised methods of grading cream, which seem for the moment to bear somewhat hardly on producers, and there has consequently been some murmuring among farmers that the Board is "simply a device of the manufacturers to exploit the producer." But the influence of farmers upon the Board is enough to warrant the surmise that this particular trouble will work out its own solution.

At all events, it is clear that the future of farming in Bechuanaland depends upon a balanced alliance of beef-production with dairying. The Government is wisely directing its efforts accordingly. Its search for new markets is unremitting. Subject to unavoidable veterinary limitations, it is doing all it can to facilitate the import of pure-bred stock. It has established "bull camps," where natives may send their cows for service, with a view to breeding up their herds. It has engaged a staff of dairy experts and native demonstrators. Under its auspices there has been a good deal of research work on indigenous pastures, and it is endeavouring to set up an experimental grass station to determine the best food values for local cattle.

THE TRANSPORT PROBLEM.

Bracketed first in order of importance with the problem of production and marketing is the problem of transport. For the Bechuanaland settler in the conditions of to-day it is an urgent one. Prices of all farming products have fallen below the pre-war level, but railway rates for him are on the average 80 per cent. above those of 1914. For every purchase he makes he must effect a corresponding sale and onerous transport charges have to be added to the price of the former and deducted from the proceeds of the latter. A single instance will illustrate the severe weight of the burden. Suppose a farmer in the Tuli Block buys a load of timber for building. He pays, say, £15 for it in Durban. Railway and motor lorry charges to his farm would amount to £15 13s. 4d. In order to meet the total bill he would have to sell, let us say, 50 sheep in Johannesburg at 15s. 6d. a head; and it would cost him £7 10s. to rail them to market. Thus his £15 purchase in Durban would add no less than £22 10s. to railway revenues.

Nor is his expenditure on transport of benefit to the Protectorate, except very indirectly, inasmuch as the Rhodesian Railways (which own the line through Bechuanaland) may be liable for income tax to the Protectorate Government. Both the railway itself and the various road lorry services operated in Bechuanaland by the South African Railways are strictly foreign services. The latter are not even liable for income tax, and although the value of the facilities they offer is not in dispute they are open to precisely the same objections which we noticed in the case of Swaziland, for they carry practically their entire revenue out of the country and spend it abroad. The Rhodesian Railways do no doubt afford some employment for Protectorate natives and pay out some thousands of pounds in wages in the Protectorate every year, but in their case also the bulk of the Bechuanaland revenue is money permanently lost to the territory.

GIVE AND TAKE.

On the whole it is true of the present transport system that, so far as the inhabitants of Bechuanaland are concerned, it takes away with one hand most of what it gives with the other. European traders, in fact, have sometimes opposed the extension of Union lorry services to their districts on this very ground; they prefer to continue using the antiquated ox wagons of the past, because these are usually hired from native owners who are the traders' customers, so that the payment of transport charges automatically increases business done at the stores. The point, of course, constitutes a strong argument against constructing further railway lines in the territory to compete with the existing one. A new line, such as the proposed one to Walvis Bay, must have the effect of raising, or preventing the fall of, rail rates for Bechuanaland traffic. The best hope of rate reduction lies first in a return of boom conditions throughout Southern Africa, and then in making as general as possible the use of the existing line by Bechuanaland interests.

It may be said that geographical position, huge area and scattered population, and the paucity of traffic on offer make it inevitable that Bechuanaland should pay through the nose for transport. And certainly it is true that lower charges and increased traffic are mutually interdependent. At the same time it cannot be maintained that the present system represents the practical optimum. It would be a real economy for the Protectorate to operate its own road services on lines similar to those suggested for Swaziland—that is to say, by a locally organised Road Transport Board, spending its revenue in the territory, employing local labour, having local repair shops and possibly a local assembly plant, and eventually perhaps its own rolling-stock on the railways. Such a board would not only be responsible for road motor services; it would be responsible also for roads policy and the upkeep of roads. If all its mechanical requirements were purchased in Britain the Imperial Treasury might consider guaranteeing a loan for its initial finance.

Bechuanaland has also been forced to hold the least wholesome end of the agreement with the Union about Customs. The arrangement by which the territory is treated as part of the Union for Customs purposes is not in itself unfavourable; for the Union does all the work of duty collection and pays over to the territory a fixed percentage of the total Customs revenue. As that percentage represents the proportion borne by Protectorate imports to Union imports at the time of Union, the Protectorate gains in so far as Union imports since 1910 have risen more quickly than its own. And the gain is greater by the extent to which the Protectorate's recent Customs agreement with Southern Rhodesia has diverted trade to Rhodesia from the Union. But in every other respect the Customs position is less than fair to the Protectorate.

The tariff policy of the Union is designed first to secure the home market for her own producers, and then to foster secondary industries with a view to expanding the home market, extending the range of employment, and generally building up the amenities of urban life which are regarded as essential to civilisation. Whether or not such a policy is really suited to the needs of the Union as a whole, it is certain that it is sharply opposed to the interests of the primary producer for export, since it increases his costs of production and thus weakens his competitive power in world markets. The Union farmer receives compensation for those disadvantages in the form of State subsidies, direct and indirect, amounting to millions of pounds a year. The Protectorate farmer, on the other hand, gets no such solace for his increased costs of living and of production; he has no interest in the secondary industries, which are being developed partially at his expense; and even the markets which theoretically follow that development are kept to a great extent out of his reach by the Union's embargo on his chief product—livestock.

Why should the High Commission territories acquiesce submissively in a system which affects them so vitally and so detrimentally? They are expected to drain themselves of native man-power to supply the Union's industrial needs; it is believed in some quarters that the Union's cattle embargo is not unconnected with the maintenance of the labour supply by means of the impoverishment of Protectorate natives. The territories are expected to keep open to the Union such markets as they have and practically all their requirements are, in fact, bought from or through the Union. They must accept any tariff changes the Union cares to impose, regardless of the bearing of such changes on their own interests or even sentiments. Thus when the Union undermines the tradition of Imperial preference in its trade treaty with Germany, the Protectorates must do the same, although their inclination is to tighten their trade links with Britain. Similarly, they must pay a duty of 5s. per 100lb. on flour and meal in order to subsidise the per 100lb. on sugar to subsidise the sugar planters of Natal; and duties of 25 per cent. on clothing and soap, 30 per cent. on grocers of the Cape and the Orange Free State; a duty of 12s. 6d. per cent. on boots and shoes, and 20 per cent. on hardware and furniture, to subsidise Union manufacturers. The system might have been specially designed to secure the economic stagnation of the Protectorates.

THE RHODESIAN POSITION.

The two Rhodesias, finding themselves in an identical position vis-à-vis the Union, decided to assert their right to trade and alter their tariffs at will to suit their own needs—a right which, as the Union Minister of Finance observed in Parliament, "the Union Government does not, and has no wish to, contest." Why the High Commission authorities did not take up the cudgels on behalf of their territories at the same time and in concert with the Rhodesias is not easy to understand. But they did not.

At the beginning of 1930 the Rhodesias, by their energetic and timely efforts, secured a new Customs agreement with the Union in which the following crucial points were embodied:—

- (1) On imported goods purchased from open stocks in the Union, the Union undertook to pay over to Rhodesia the duty originally collected, less a small charge for expenses.
- (2) On certain specified goods of the kind, on which Rhodesian rates of duty were higher than those of the Union, the Union undertook to collect the difference and pay it over to Rhodesia.
- (3) Rhodesia undertook to admit Union manufactures (with certain exceptions) free of duty on the understanding that the Union Treasury should make her a compensating payment of 12 per cent. of the value of the imports in the case of certain classes of goods (mostly foodstuffs) and 6 per cent. in other cases.

By these means Rhodesia safeguarded her freedom of action in fiscal policy generally and her British preference in particular, and avoided the expense of helping to protect Union industries in which she had no interest and which sometimes competed with her own.

It is urgently necessary that the Customs agreement between the Union and the High Commission territories should be revised so as to secure similar safeguards for the latter.

(To be continued.)

REFUSE IMITATIONS



AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

IV.—THE PROBLEM OF THE POWERS OF CHIEFS

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

The main problems in the three High Commission territories may be viewed from two angles, the economic and the administrative. And in all three the economic situation is generally similar. The same may also be said of the administrative situation; but the Bechuanaland Protectorate has a special interest, since there the problems of administration, common also to Basutoland and Swaziland in their degrees, stand out in most conspicuous relief.

At the heart of the administrative problem lies the chieftainship. This venerable institution, on which, for centuries the whole tribal system has centred, has so far made little progress in adaptation to modern conditions, and with every passing year the results accompanying its failure become more unfortunate. The fact has been obvious to every competent observer throughout the rise of industrialism in the Union, that is to say, for the last 30 years. Yet no coherent attempt has been made to meet it. Responsible British Administrators have clung with so much obstinacy to the doctrine of "festina lente" that the question now is whether enough time remains to put straight the mess to which their Fabian procedure has led. The situation has outpaced them, and in the case of the Bechuanaland Protectorate it seems that things will have to get worse before they can get better. At least, it is clear that to-day time is the essence of the problem, and that someone must "festinare" in good earnest, if it is to be solved.

THE IDEAL CHIEF.

Before western economic organisation established its present dominance in Southern Africa, the ideal of chiefly rule was not ill-suited to the somewhat stagnant life the Bantu had evolved for themselves. The chief was semi-mystically regarded almost as the incarnation of the soul of the tribe. He was the living link between ancestors and posterity, at once the symbol and the vehicle of the tribe's continuity. In the practical sphere, in the religious, social and political life of the tribe, he was supreme—high priest and rain-maker, legislature, judiciary and executive all in one. He was both Chancellor of the Exchequer and Comptroller and Auditor-General. All the important agricultural phases of tribal life were regulated by him, and no man might begin to plough or to reap till the chief gave the word. Heads of families were responsible to him through the sub-chief of their district, for all acts of the members of their families; and they were also judicial courts of first instance, from which appeals lay to the higher courts of the sub-chief and the chief. At the same time, there were acknowledged restraints upon the chief's arbitrary caprice. He was expected to use any surplus wealth that came his way in the interests of the tribe—e.g., by allocating cattle to the poorer members for their subsistence. He was expected to seek and attend to the advice of a council; indeed, among the Bechuana constitutional practice recognised three distinct councils, first an intimate or privy council of royal headmen who were regularly consulted as a matter of course; second, a somewhat wider council, comprising the royal headmen reinforced by such district sub-chiefs as happened to be affected by the matter at issue; and third, an ecclesia of the whole tribe. He had regularly to hold a *kgotla* or public assembly, at which all affairs of State could be discussed and where every member of the tribe was free to express his opinion; and the *kgotla* was effective enough as an organ of public sentiment for the anthropologists to be able to speak of the political system of the Bechuana as the most democratic known among Bantu peoples. Further, the tribes have always had an innate tendency to be fissiparous; pretenders or usurpers in the form of the chief's sons, younger brothers and so on were continually cropping up, so that a chief could only prevent the disintegration of the tribe and the consequent collapse of his own prestige and authority by carrying the large body of the public with him.

TRIBE AND TRIBESMAN.

Obviously, such a system is capable of bearing very hardly on the individual subject; and the careers of even benevolent despots, such as Khama and Linchwe, show that it often has been so. But individual inconveniences and burdens were on the whole accepted by a patient public as part of the inevitable wear and tear of life and as being in the general interest of the tribe. And certainly, until the impact with white civilisation, the system did fulfil well enough its primary function of fostering strong tribal solidarity, and so providing machinery for preserving the tribe's independence and increasing, if that might be, its renown among its neighbours. Even to-day, when the chiefs are coming in for a good deal of criticism from their own people, there still survives much of the old popular faith in the tribe as an ultimate atomic unit and in the chief as its true embodiment according to nature. There seems to be little popular affection for the chiefs as persons, but there is an immense respect for them as symbols. Nowhere among the Bechuana, or for that matter among the Basuto and the Swazis, have I heard any proposal for the serious mutilation of the chieftainship, still less for its abolition. In Bechuanaland, in spite of all the heated censure of the policies and methods of government employed by chiefs, even the most violent agitator suggests no more drastic reform than the establishment of a statutory council to co-operate with the chief. In this connection, it is essential to remember that all heathen Bechuana, and very many Christian Bechuana also, believe that the chief is literally responsible for bringing rain. The belief explains, in some considerable part, why there is so little desire among natives to see the chieftainship abolished. Rain is even more vividly a matter of life and death to the Bechuana than to most people; and once the faith that the chief is the sole person capable of providing rain is understood it is easy to follow the confusion of ideas by which it operates as a powerful buttress of the chieftainship as a political institution. And no doubt some form of chiefly rule is still what the people desire and think of as most congenial.

NEW AND OLD.

Meanwhile, for several decades the chieftainship has been subjected to two great modifying influences—British protection on the one hand and economic contact with the Union on the other.

Under the former it has contracted a kind of dry rot. In the old days a chief could only maintain his position by means of a vigilance as sharp as that of the priest in the Golden Bough. Not to keep his council on his side and not to seek the support of the tribe was simply to manufacture openings for possible usurpers; and exile or assassination was the expected wages of wanton usurpation. To-day he is

physically strengthened but morally weakened by the Government which stands between him and the consequences of failure or neglect. "We used to get better chiefs in the old days" is a complaint frequently heard from intelligent natives in the protectorates. Buttressed up by the British Raj, a chief has been able to do very much as he liked. His council have become mere courtiers and flatterers, selected by himself as being easy tools to work with; and it has become safe to ignore the main body of the tribe. Paradoxically, one effect of British protection has been to make tribal rule not only less self-sufficient (that was perhaps inevitable), but actually harsher and more capricious. There has thus been a real loss of personal freedom among the Bechuana since the British came. Possibly South African history may suggest that the loss would have been greater had British protection been withheld; but the British Administrator cannot becomingly make use of the plea.

THE FERMENT.

Concurrently, the industrialism of the Union has become a dominant factor in the life of the tribes. A large proportion of the adult males go out each year into the Union to work, with the moral and social consequences already indicated. There they become familiar with a wage and labour system of the Western type, and steeped in the ferment of ideas and the mental unrest in which wage-earners the whole world over to-day have their being. The trends of thought thus set up often lead natives who are still regarded as unsophisticated much farther afield than their white rulers are generally aware. During a recent tour of the Bechuana country I was asked pertinent questions about one Cardinal Wolsey, who had come to grief in attempting the simultaneous service of Pope and King, and about a certain King Charles I., who had been beheaded by the people. I found among the more intelligent men an unexpected interest in the course of English political history—in the passage of power from the Crown to the aristocracy, from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie, from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, and they were frankly speculating about the possibility of tribal development following comparable lines in the direction of an accession of dignity for the chiefs, together with a reapportionment of effective power on somewhat democratic principles.

When the Bechuana are not selling their labour to Europeans, they live by disposing of their cattle, grain and dairy produce in European markets. This fact, in turn, is implanting a new spirit of individualism in the tribes. There are large numbers of small farm dairies in the Bamangwato reserve, for example, and most of them are run by private enterprise. Thus even among those who have never been outside Bechuanaland a class is springing up with an awareness of new notions, however vague and unformulated at present, of economic and political liberty. Again, one of the most marked characteristics of the younger generation of Bantu all over Southern Africa is an anti-European sentiment unknown to their forebears. The Bechuana youth have not escaped this influence, and in them the old tribe-consciousness is being supplemented and perhaps superseded by a novel consciousness of race. They are looking gropingly for race leadership, awaiting a race leader; and though they do not yet behold him, it is hardly too much to say that they feel subconsciously that the chiefs are potentially subordinate, as it were, to the shadow he casts.

BRITISH PROTECTION.

The effect of British protection, then, has been unwittingly to cut off the rule of the chiefs from the democratic forces which once helped in guiding it, and to transform it into a simple tyranny; in seeking to shield it from change the British have precipitated its decay. And, simultaneously with this movement towards autocracy within the tribe, the development of the general economic situation in South Africa has produced a context in which an autocratic chieftainship is more and more out of place.

Such is the predicament in the midst of which the chief sits to-day, like a child on a sand castle in a flowing tide. The observer cannot help feeling a good deal of sympathy for him. Left largely to his own devices by the British authorities and receiving little positive leading from them (except in purely technical matters), enjoying, moreover, a mere veneer of education, which is quite inadequate to enable him to grapple understandingly with the position himself, he drifts in a very real bewilderment. The dilemma is in a way accentuated by the accident that the present chiefs of all the most important tribes are very young men; they have all been at school in the Union and there absorbed the new Bantu race-consciousness, which in their case and in the general circumstances of the Protectorate manifests itself not so much in actual hostility to Europeans as in a kind of pride that makes them anxious to dispense with the counsel of Europeans, even when it is on offer. Small wonder that the larger vision passes them by, and that lack of inspiration drives them back upon the one task which any man, however perplexed, can understand—namely, that of hanging on to what he has. And, indeed, with proper application the post of chief can be made quite a cosy little billet. Its holder receives from the Government a commission of 10 per cent. on the total hut tax collected from his tribe. He keeps the fines paid into his court. The labour recruiting agents often bring extra gratia to his mill. He is free, without seeking Government approval, to make special levies from his tribe, whenever he can induce them to pay; one chief lately raised a levy of £8 10s. from every taxpayer—a sum representing more than five years of Government taxation. (It is true that such a levy must be imposed for tribal purposes, but it is equally true that no one asks what happens to the money collected.) He also reaps the benefit of the regimented labour system, by which his lands are ploughed, cultivated, and reaped, his cattle tended, even his houses built, by pressed labour for which he does not pay.

(To be continued.)

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AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

VI.—THE POSITION OF THE SO-CALLED SLAVE TRIBES

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The so-called slave tribes form another essential feature of the Bechuana tribal system as it operates at present. From the standpoint of British suzerainty they put an awkward poser to the theory of indirect rule. Is slavery (if that word can fairly be applied to the facts) to receive tacit support as being part and parcel of customary tribal rule; or is it to be firmly given its quietus at the expense of the principle of indirectness? The answer given in Bechuana land is not entirely unambiguous. In the eye of the statutory law, of course, the "slaves" are just as free as anybody else; the British have not compromised there. But as regards the actual life lived by the subject peoples, the Government seems again to have taken the line of least resistance, leaving matters to the tribe and only intervening when some particularly striking case of ill-treatment came to light.

The important, practical question is what kind of life the "slaves" actually lead. The facts are not easy to come by, partly because the chiefs and the owners are busily concerned to conceal them, and partly because most of the "slaves" live in the less accessible parts of the country. Again, there are several different classes or tribes of "slaves," and their conditions vary somewhat; even the same class is sometimes accorded rather different treatment by different owning tribes. And, as everywhere, there are good owners and bad owners in each tribe, so that treatment also differs from household to household. So no complete general statement is possible.

Our method, therefore, will be to take two characteristic examples of "slave" types—the Bakgalagadi in the southern Protectorate and the Masarwa in the northern, and to describe briefly their place in the life of the owning tribes.

AN OLD SYSTEM.

The slave system is common to all Bechuana tribes, is of considerable antiquity among them, and was probably brought with them on their migration southwards to their present territory. Of that territory the Masarwa (which is simply the Sochuana name for Bushman) were in occupation when the Bechuana invasion began; or, if not occupying it, they were at least leading undisturbed their nomadic, hunting life over it. The Bakgalagadi were the first of the Bechuana waves to arrive, and they are said now to have more Bushman blood in their veins than other Bechuana, though the Bushman admixture is traceable in all. Whether the Masarwa were ever slaves to the Bakgalagadi is not, I think, known. But what seems to have happened is that the Bakgalagadi were gradually pushed westward into poorer and more waterless districts by subsequent waves of immigrant Bechuana, so that they became impoverished and automatically drifted into service under their wealthier compatriots. To-day they still live for the most part along the margin of the Kalahari Desert, but some of them own considerable numbers of cattle, and their economic condition is perhaps little lower than that of their owners. Compared with their owners they are an inferior people, and if the shortage of surface water did not severely restrict the expansion of their herds, they would soon be a prosperous one.

The Masarwa's story has probably been similar. Finding their old hunting-grounds gradually closed to them by the incoming Bechuana, they too, edged westward into the desert, leaving some of their number in Bechuana hands. And the desert, in spite of the difficulty of maintaining life there, has always been their refuge whenever the service into which their Bechuana masters pressed them became too irksome. The runaway "slave" is still a frequent source of exasperation to Bamangwato owners, although he has no sure sanctuary to run to and economic necessity as a rule soon drives him back to bondage. For even a Bushman is hard put to it to support family life permanently on wild roots and the much diminished game supply of to-day. Even to him crops and cattle are becoming necessities; and he can only find them with his master.

ECONOMIC FUNCTION.

The Bakgalagadi in the modern stage are differentiated more by economic function than by theoretical civil status. They are a class of cattle herds, tied pretty closely to the cattle of their masters. Large cattle owners among the Bechuana like to split up their herds in various parts of the country, partly as a primitive form of insurance against disease, and partly because they do not like their chief or their neighbours or the Government to know exactly how many cattle they possess. The Bakgalagadi are used to help in this concealment. They are subservient in the sense that they are not regarded as full members of the owning tribe either for religious or political purposes. But though they do not usually attend the chief's kgotla, they are free to, and sometimes do; and this is true also of the Masarwa, at least among the Bakwena and certain other "owner" tribes. Nor are the Bakgalagadi always dispersed among the households or at the cattle posts of their owners. In some places they live their own sub-tribal life in their own villages under their own headmen; and in such cases the rights of their "owners" over them are somewhat shadowy. Numbers of them, indeed, are quite unclaimed. The "owning" chief would normally consult a Kgalagadi headman in relevant matters and would not discriminate between him and other headmen on grounds of his being a Kgalagadi. The Bakgalagadi may own property, and, as I said, some of them have quite respectable herds of cattle.

They pass from one owner to another by inheritance and "slave" families remain attached to owning houses from generation to generation. A child born to a "slave" woman becomes automatically her master's "property." But there is no traffic in slaves; they are not commonly bought and sold, and probably never have been. True, if a man sends word to a friend of his that he is short of a servant, the friend may offer him a Kgalagadi as a loan or a gift, just as he might lend or give him a horse. On the other hand, he would perhaps be equally likely to send his own son to perform for a while the service needed. To-day "slaves" are often treated quite well by native masters, and in some cases are even paid wages in cash or in kind more or less regularly. To this extent the system appears to be improving itself. But payment, when given, is given merely as an act of grace, and not on any contractual basis. And masters of an other type still use great harshness even brutally. Among every tribe many tales are told of dissipation and other cruelties, and it is impossible to doubt that such episodes are of frequent occurrence.

Probably speaking however, the Bechuana seem in practice fairly free to move about the country as they like and even to leave the territory to work on the mines of the Union or for other European employers. Probably they have no effective means of redress in case of ill-treatment by a

master, except escaping from his service. Among the Bakgaladi, if they do this, they are not usually followed and recaptured; and perhaps this holds as a general rule among the Bakwena and the Bamangwato also. But the Bamangwato are not so easy-going with their Masarwa.

While the Bakgalagadi are at work for a master tending his cattle or ploughing his lands, tribal convention accords them the "use" of the herd; that is to say, they may drink the milk of the cows, provided the young calves do not go underfed, and they may use the oxen for their own ploughing. If a beast dies, they are not generally liable for the loss; they may eat the meat, and are only required to report the loss and render the hide to the master.

THE MASARWA.

Theoretically it may be that the position of the Masarwa among the Bamangwato is not dissimilar. Their rights in relation to their masters' cattle, for example, are much the same. But in practice their lot is distinctly more unhappy. Seldom or never are they paid wages, the master thinking that he has done quite enough for them if he provides food, milk, and an occasional blanket. If they try to run away, they are usually pursued, and brutally punished when captured. In general, of course, they have nowhere to run to, except to the chief, who then uses them for his own purposes, like any other master—a mere leap from the frying-pan into the fire from the standpoint of the fugitive. It is a curious commentary on the whole situation that the Masarwa, who have hitherto evinced a tenacious instinct for avoiding white civilisation like the plague, are now beginning to turn to the Johannesburg mines as a respite from service under their Bantu masters.

There seems to be no absolute prohibition against the ownership of property by Masarwa, but a master may at any time, upon application to the chief, confiscate from a "slave" whatever property the latter happens to possess. Masarwa do not often own anything except a few head of cattle and perhaps some goats. A case occurred a few years ago, however, where one of them by the careful collection and sale of goatskins, ox-hides and the pelts of wild game, had contrived to buy a wagon and a team of oxen to pull it. The whole outfit represented a cash value of nearly £150, a considerable fortune for a Masarwa. Such a rise to wealth by a "slave" was considered an undesirable precedent, and the late Chief Sekgoma, who was then ruling, authorised the man's owner to dispossess him of wagon and team, on the grounds that Masarwa ought not to be allowed to acquire the means of independent livelihood.

Unlike the Bakgalagadi, the Masarwa are racially distinct from their masters, and, although they have now been largely assimilated to the latter's culture, are by origin of a more primitive, prepastoral type. For this reason, they are often treated with an instinctive contempt and a disregard of common humanity, such as the Bakgalagadi are not failed upon to endure. A good illustration is the recent notorious case of Rayaba, one of Chief Tshekedi's headmen, who accused a Masarwa of having stolen a cow and thereupon hauled him out into the bush, pinned him prone on the ground by means of thongs, stakes and logs, and flogged him to death. In a most matter-of-fact way Rayaba admitted to the flogging when he was brought to court on a charge of murder. "I did not beat him so severely as I have seen others beat their Masarwa," he said. "There was no blood running on the ground. I started beating him just as the sun went up and it was not yet very high when I stopped." Whether or not Rayaba's treatment of his "slaves" was typical, there is good reason for thinking that his general outlook in respect of them was so. At least it is clear that for every case of systematic torture which comes to court, many must go undetected. And there is evidence that, besides flogging, other methods in use are the cutting off of fingers with an axe, the burning of hands, and the branding of flesh with a hot iron. After mutilation or torture, the victim is sometimes, perhaps more often than not, left helpless in a waterless country infested by lions, hyenas, and wild dogs.

"HUSH-HUSH" OFFICIALS.

Of course there is a law that the Masarwa are free to leave their masters' service, and there is a law which makes it an offence to commit violent assault or to inflict grievous bodily harm. But these things make little practical difference in the lives of the "slave" people. On the whole, the "slave" system has had the support of the district officials, who are to some extent involved in it and to some of whom it is or has been a source of private gain. There is also a well-known missionary who owns herds of cattle in a certain tribal reserve, where they are tended by Masarwa under the direction of the chief. The chiefs and the principal headmen, in their turn, are extremely reserved on the "slavery" question; which is not surprising, when it is remembered that most of the Masarwa are owned by the chief and his immediate entourage. Overtly the line taken by the district officials seems to have been that "slavery" is a matter of native custom, and must be left to the chiefs to deal with. Tacitly they have always been anxious to ensure that it should not be shown up. An official inquiry is, at the moment of writing taking place. But that is due to the initiative of the new Resident Commissioner, before whose time there has been no attempt either to fully study or publish the system, still less to break the system down or modify it. The prevalent attitude is well exemplified by the observations of a certain Resident Magistrate when the "slavery" question cropped up in a celebrated case which was being tried before him. "To say that the Masarwa is a slave is," he remarked, "a sinister propaganda against the Government. The Administration is being attacked under cover of a criminal trial." In consonance with this unintelligent touchiness the district officials generally have been inclined to shield the chiefs whenever the system and its results threatened to get them into trouble.

What some at least of the subject tribes are capable of is shown by the economic progress made by certain of the Makalaka in the north of the Bamangwato country. By their industry and application as farmers the people have risen from virtual serfdom to a degree of wealth in grain and stock higher than many of the Bamangwato enjoy; so true is this that for fear of their further advance the authorities of the ruling tribe now keep them deliberately short of land and of schools. Certain Bakgalagadi owners in the Bakwena reserve and elsewhere have similarly improved their status by means of the habits

of thrift and hard work which their subordinate condition first imposed upon them, and which those who were their masters are tending to lose by reason of their very privileges. There is also evidence of the mettle even of the despised Masarwa. A section of them at the Botletli River have lived alongside the Makalaka as their equals for many years. When the Makalaka in Khama's time were permitted to work for themselves, if they preferred it to service with a master, they quickly seized their opportunity; and these Masarwa followed suit. To-day both groups are comparatively rich in cattle and even own a number of wagons. The Botletli Masarwa are probably the only Masarwa who are unrestricted and more or less secure in the ownership of property. They form a precedent of which the Government might well work in affording similar opportunities to less fortunate Masarwa elsewhere.

(Continued in next column.)

[To be continued.]

AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

VII.—THE ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURE

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Such, then, is the system to whose preservation the main efforts of British administration have been directed. The quality of these efforts has suffered throughout from the fact of the protectorate. The British came into the Bechuana country to keep the Boers out, and they have ever since been inclined to suppose that in safeguarding the Bechuana peoples from outside aggression—Africaner on south and east, German on west—their duty has been done. It is, of course, an arguable point of view; but its results have not been happy, either from the Bechuana standpoint or from that of the European settlers who were encouraged to enter the country after the Boer War. To the latter it has meant simple stagnation; to the former that "tribal law and custom should be interfered with as little as possible," or, in other words, that no systematic and sustained attempt to assist the internal life of the tribes need be made. As we have seen, tribal custom is not always so fine a thing, or worthy of such august support; and, in fact the mere passivity of the British (combined with the operation of external economic forces to which little attempt at adaptation has been made) has led to a degeneration of tribal rule.

Admittedly there are here, as everywhere, two sides to the case. If the predatory instincts of the Boer had not been short headed in 1885, the Bechuana might now be in worse plight than they actually are. The British have rendered valuable veterinary aid; they have done a little for education; they have established such medical services as the country could afford to pay for; and, very recently, they have established two good hospitals and given some assistance in boring for water. But the old tribal life is disintegrating under their hands, and so far they have done nothing either to repair it or to put a substitute in its place. Today the Bechuana are probably poorer and certainly less congenially governed than at any time during the last 30 years. The policy of simple protection has manifestly failed, and the British are faced with the alternatives either of pulling themselves together and making a job of government, or of making room for other and perhaps less benevolent suzerains.

THE POLICE MIND.

The trouble is that the Bechuana-land Protectorate has never had any first-class mind seriously at work upon its problems. And the local administrative officers, lacking light and leading from above, have hardly been of the calibre to take charge, and frame a constructive policy of their own. Drawn for the most part from the police service, they rejoice, as a group, in the mental habits and range of outlook customary in that walk of life. The passage of some law examinations has won them promotion to the rank of resident magistrate, but their administrative grounding has been narrow and their training in economics almost non-existent. Thus their general capacity has rested at a lower level than the importance of the task they have been somewhat unfairly saddled with, and they have never risen to an adequate comprehension of what one may call the gravitational field in which that task has to be discharged.

If they have failed, failure lies less at their door than at that of the superior authorities who appointed them. Most of them are now long-service men, and they have doubtless received so many rebuffs and so little encouragement from on high that it would be strange indeed if their spirit had not become enfeebled. The method of selection of their successors is of material significance to the future well-being of the territory, and we shall recur to it later.

The regime as a whole has resulted not only in incoherence of policy, but in a general laxity of administration. A few instances will throw a good deal of light on the latter point. One is a story told of the new Resident Commissioner, and I am able to vouch for it as authentic. Shortly after his arrival in the country he was touring the tribal reserves, and expressed a desire to meet three of the chiefs at a certain place. When the appointed time came only two of the chiefs were

there. The Commissioner inquired about the third. No one seemed to have any definite information, but there was a feeling that he had been unable to come. On this the Commissioner, who had been used to better things, sent forth a brace of police messengers to greet the absentee, renew the invitation, and bring him in in handcuffs if it were not promptly accepted. There was a brief interval, and the man arrived at a steady double. Not only that, the hut tax receipts from his area were trebled at the next collection. Other revealing examples indicate that it has not been uncommon for Government servants nearly to double their salaries by making a selfish use of privileges; in one or two instances "perquisites" have been pushed up to a figure which has made a public scandal of the delinquents' disloyalty to Crown and taxpayers. Such things become intelligible when it is realised that until recently officials who use their own cars on business have drawn a mileage allowance of 1s. 3d. a mile. The rate has since been reduced to 1s. a mile for the first 200 miles travelled in each month, and 8d. a mile thereafter. Even so, it should be quite easy for a man to replace his car out of his mileage allowance every 18 months or so. For 1,500 miles of motoring through the territory over every kind of road, I found that my own costs worked out at exactly 3d. a mile for petrol, oil, and repairs. The method of granting mileage allowances is plainly open to objection; when an officer cannot discharge his duties without a car, it would be preferable to pay him a salary that enables him to run one, and require him to meet his transport costs out of that. Travelling allowances for officials nowadays absorb some £9,000 a year, an addition of more than 20 per cent. to the aggregate salaries of the whole European staff.

NON-INTERFERENCE.

However, with matters of detail of this kind the new vigilance imported by the present Resident Commissioner may be expected to deal. The broad criticism of the Government is that its record has so far been one of pretty complete failure to establish fruitful relations with the natives. The policy of non-interference with tribal custom sounds liberal enough, but it has this weakness, that, while it cannot wholly absolve the Government from the duty of occasional intervention, it leaves them without any clear principle whereon intervention should be made. The completer the form in which it is applied, the wider the pretext it affords for governmental indolence of thought and action. For it erects the insufficiency of tribal custom into a general scapegoat for every kind of failure, whatever the true responsible source. The tendency for actual administration to fall between two stools is thus very strong; and, whatever profession may have been, practice in Bechuanaland has for many years been a confused hybrid of native custom and European administrative and legal ideas, in which neither the chiefs nor the rank and file of natives have ever felt sure how they stood. Most of the abnormally numerous Privy Council appeals which have come out of the Protectorate in the last decade are traceable to this confusion. The upshot is that the Government is held by its wards in an esteem very different from that usually accorded to British colonial authority. Even the chiefs, who have been given much more rope than their administrative merits entitle them to and who might be expected to look with kindly regard upon the authors of such favouritism, champ aggressively at the bit. For they are aware that the present state of affairs cannot possibly last; Bechuanaland cannot stand still indefinitely while its whole field of economic reference is in rapid motion. They suspect that the Government, in spite of its non-interference principles, will be driven to curtail their powers, and evidently there is good ground for their suspicion. They are alarmed by the deposition, long overdue as it was, of the Bakwena chief, Sebele, who had for years been a pernicious influence upon his tribe; they are

alarmed at the prospective proclamation dealing with the powers of chiefs, and none the less so because they do not yet know its contents. A quite unprecedented movement is already taking place for some kind of organisation among themselves to stand up for what they consider their rights. And the Government has drifted into the position that it cannot now carry out any of the vitally necessary reforms without the bitter resistance of the chiefs, who embody the sole effective administrative machinery at its disposal and whom, at the expense of the well-being of the tribes, it has been at such pains to conciliate. At the same time, it has no hope of neutralising the opposition of the chiefs by an appeal to popular support from the tribesmen. The chiefs' "reign of terror" is still too firm for that. Besides, the Government is in any case looked upon with copious cynicism and lack of faith by the rank and file; and when it comes along and starts talking about progress and reform, their quite simple reaction is to think, "We give it 25s. hut tax to keep it quiet; what on earth does it want now?" That is one result of an indiscriminating "indirect rule."

THE DILEMMA.

In a nutshell, then, the status quo cannot be maintained, yet any movement of reform, whether from above or from below, is practically bound to create deadlock. To find a way out of the dilemma will require much more courage and determination than the responsible authorities have hitherto shown. Radical handling is called for. New impulse and new direction to policy could perhaps best be lent, as I have suggested before, by an authoritative commission of inquiry into the whole situation of the High Commission territories. But whether or no a commission is appointed, and whatever degree of assent from the chiefs official diplomacy is able to win, certain obvious lines of reform need to be tackled. And time is no less important than firmness. Changes such as these tentatively outlined below cannot be made with a stroke of the pen, and may take years to complete. But, if tolerable rule is to be established, they need to be put in train with the minimum of delay.

(1) The present autocracy of the chiefs should be watered down to some form of government by statutory council. The chief should preside over the council, and for the present retain control of the balance of power in it. But the council should represent all phases of political sentiment within the tribe, and the appointment and removal of councillors should not be left to tribal custom in the present acceptance of that phrase. For, otherwise, the chief will simply select his own councillors, as happened some years ago in the case of Sebele. But, of course, this does not mean that the tribe should not be consulted in such appointments and removals by means with which they are familiar. The council should be competent to discuss, and any member of it to raise, any matters whatever—legislative, administrative, financial—affecting the tribe.

(2) Tribal finance needs to be put on a modernised footing. Separate tribal treasuries should be established and their relations with the Government Exchequer defined. The Government should be the sole taxing authority, but certain revenue other than taxation should be earmarked for the tribe, and the Government might, as in Tanganyika, return some proportion of its tax revenue to each tribe for expenditure by the tribe on tribal purposes. In the case of approved ad hoc special levies, the Government might delegate its taxing powers to the chief's council, on a request from the council endorsed by the tribal kgotla. All matters of tribal finance should be open to discussion in kgotla. Tribal treasuries should keep proper accounts, and their transactions should be submitted to Government supervision and audit.

(3) Regimented labour should be restricted to adult males in full health and should be paid for at standard rates from tribal funds; and there should be generous provision for exemption where a person can show that he is already engaged on work of tribal importance with which regimented service would seriously interfere.

(4) Definite attempts should be made to secure some suitably specialised education for the sons of chiefs and headmen, which will really help to fit them for their coming responsibilities. Might it not be possible to arrange for the Government school at Tabora in Tanganyika (or any more appropriate institution) to take such students from all three High Commission territories?

(5) Genuine opportunities for a self-dependent life should be provided by the Government for the Masarwa and other so-called slave peoples. They should be given effective security in the ownership of property, and suitable areas up and down the country should be set aside under Government control, where such people might plant crops and graze cattle whenever they elect to leave their masters and seek an independent livelihood.

(6) It is essential that the Government should control the system of personal violence that is at present indulged in with such disgraceful freedom by chiefs, regimental officers, and headmen. The system derives from a long-established custom of cruelty and torture, but the respect for tribal manners which thinks it entitled to consideration on that account is surely exaggerated. To define by law conditions on which floggings shall be permissible is of little use by itself and so long as the onus of seeking redress is left upon the victims. It should be for the Government to take steps to inform itself about every assault that takes place, and to take action when necessary. At present many floggings are administered with a sadistic frenzy that makes no pretence of being judicial.

(To be concluded.)

Thurs., 3. 9. 1931.

AFFAIRS IN BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

VIII. — SOME POSSIBLE REPAIRS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINE

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The tribal reforms suggested in the last article will, one may surmise, be partially covered in the big proclamation which the Government is engaged in preparing and whose main object is to particularise the powers of the chiefs. But obviously they go very much further than the intentions of the Government are likely to go. For it must be remembered that, even if the new Resident Commissioner's private opinions should lean towards a vigorous policy, they are obliged to run the gauntlet of the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State for the Dominions—both exalted functionaries having other preoccupations besides that of providing good government for obscure African protectorates.

Yet, if the Government contemplates any serious reforms at all, one thing stands out with great clarity, and that is that they cannot be successfully carried out with the machinery of government through which Britain has so far been attempting to work. A prerequisite, or at least a necessary concomitant, of tribal reform is a thorough overhaul of what may vulgarly be termed the High Commission's old iron. It is suggested that there are four major points for consideration by a commission of inquiry, should one be appointed, and in any event by the British Government.

The first concerns the appointment of administrative officers. I have already indicated that the present method of selection has (no doubt with individual exceptions) hardly succeeded in enlisting the services of quite the class of man that the work calls for. This is partly because the field has as a rule been restricted to people who happened to be at a loose end somewhere in Southern Africa. Candidates for the administrative services of East and West Africa, on the other hand, are selected with very considerable care from a very wide field of choice by a special department of the Colonial Office. That department has exceptional experience in the delicate task of measuring character and capacity by standards which are reasonably uniform without being mechanical. After selection, successful candidates are put through a course of special training, before they are sent out to their posts. The general argument put forward in previous sections has, I hope, made it plain that the furtherance of British policy in Africa depends no less on the work done in the High Commission territories than on that done in the tropical dependencies. If this is so, equal quality of administrative material is needed in both places, and the method of appointment to both should be the same. It seems highly desirable that in future the High Commission territories should be furnished with that material direct from the Appointments Department of the Colonial Office, and that they should provide for a cadet or "assistant district commissioner" grade in their establishments.

AN ANOMALY.

The second point concerns the strange fact that at the London end the Dominions Office, and not the Colonial Office, is the responsible department. It is an absurd anomaly. The Dominions Office is a diplomatic department, not an administrative one; it has no interest in direct colonial responsibility and is not equipped for carrying it. Its dominant concern is with such high matters as holding the Empire together and seeing that no smallest ground of offence is given to anyone who might conceivably break away from it. Everyone knows that when, during an Imperial Conference, a Dominions Prime Minister happens to enter the Dominions Office, the permanent officials of that dismal vault all assume a supine position and, waving their legs obsequiously in the air, cry in unison, "Wipe, Lord; for, lo, thy servants are stretched out to be as doormats beneath thy feet." Our argument throughout has been that the High Commission territories need to cut loose, as far as they can, from the apron-strings of the Union, to cease serving its needs without adequate return, to order their house so as to be able to treat with the Union as one independent economic entity with another, and not to be afraid of combating Union policy when it runs counter to their own interests. How can such a line be taken by a department and by officials whose main job is to keep the Union smiling and contented with life in the Empire nursery, to soothe it when it gets fractious, and to avoid all suggestion that any reasonable being could possibly criticise it? It may be objected that to transfer the High Commission territories to the charge of the Colonial Office would make little odds. The same roof shelters both Colonial and Dominions Offices, and even the officials interchange freely from one to the other. In a sense it is true that the two groups of officials are in themselves much of a muchness. Nevertheless, tradition and practice in the two departments are very different; the Colonial Office is accustomed to making use of the imperative in its speech, and even, on occasion, to taking charge of a situation. Its officials may have similar limitations to those of their colleagues of the Dominions Office, but at least they have different complexes. And the Colonial Office escapes the complex, fatal in this connection, which represents it as the summum malum to press a divergence of opinion with another member of the Empire. The proper government of the High Commission territories must involve some opposition to Union policy, and it can only be established by people who have both convictions and the courage of them. The Dominions Office has no convictions, since convictions do not form part of the diplomatic apparatus; and it is mortally afraid of giving the Union a chance to grouse. The Colonial Office is the organ by which the British democracy implements such convictions as it has been able to reach on the question of African government, and there is every reason why the High Commission territories should be brought under its charge. To leave

them under the Dominions Office is simply to give evidence of lack of serious purpose with regard to them, and to suggest that they are but pausing there for a space, before being incorporated in the Union.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER.

In the third place, the High Commissionership call for consideration. The separation of that office from the Governor-Generalship, with which it had been linked for 20 years, was not only a logical and necessary step, but one calculated, so far as it went, to benefit the Protectorates. But it is a question whether it would not have been better to go further and abolish the High Commissionership altogether. Under present arrangements, the High Commissioner's is a dual position. He is Governor and legislative authority in the three territories outside the Union; and he is also the British Government's representative inside the Union. The combination lays him open to similar objections to those which we found in the case of the Dominions Office. In his second capacity he is continually called upon to conduct delicate negotiations with the Union Government upon such matters as tariffs, subsidies for Empire communications, treaties with foreign countries, and so on; and more often than not the success of his efforts will depend on the good will of Union Ministers and the cordiality of his personal relations with them. The territories could expect to derive advantage from the High Commissionership only if it were systematically used as a buffer between them and Union influences. But this is scarcely possible while the High Commissioner has a second capacity in which it is his duty to cultivate the closest and friendliest relations with Union authorities. Success in the one task is incompatible with success in the other, while the Union's ideas on native affairs remain what they are.

These are arguments for keeping the High Commissionership distinct from the representation of the British Government in the Union; and they seem to me conclusive. But the further question arises whether the High Commissionership, even so separated, is really of any value to the High Commission territories themselves. In the days when the territories were first brought under the High Commission, the step, I take it, was meant to be and perhaps was an economy. The Resident Commissioner was intended to be a subordinate official with the High Commissioner over him as the effective governing authority; and each territory in contributing to the cost of the High Commissioner's office if not to his salary, was to get its Governor for about one-third of what it would have had to pay if it had not been sharing him with the other territories. But time has altered all that. The relative importance of the Resident Commissioner has steadily grown, and as the man on the spot he is, or ought to be, the man trusted with the primary responsibility of government in his territory.

LUXURY AND COMPLICATION.

The High Commissioner's office may or may not have been useful in securing some co-ordination of policy, legislation, and procedure in the three territories; but it is safe to say that it has done little in this respect which could not have been done equally well direct from Downing Street. It may have been useful in negotiating with the Union on behalf of the territories for expert assistance in animal diseases, locust control, electricity schemes, road motor services, etc., but it is safe to say that it has done little in this respect which could not have been done equally well by each territory for itself or by a periodical conference of Resident Commissioners. In the circumstances of to-day, the High Commissioner's office is, to be blunt, an unnecessary complication from the standpoint of the Resident Commissioners, and an unnecessary luxury from the standpoint of Downing Street, which naturally delegates to it much of the work it should properly be doing itself. The territories would, quite possibly, get better value for money if they spent what they now contribute to the High Commissioner's office in attracting the best quality of administrative material to service within their own borders.

There is, of course, no suggestion that the members of the High Commissioner's staff are not very busily employed. But it is suggested that they are employed on work which would be more suitably performed either in the territories or in London; that a relaying station in Capetown is redundant; and that the time has come to dispense with it and to regrade the Resident Commissionerships as junior Governorships directly responsible to the Secretary of State.

These considerations lead on naturally to our fourth and final point, the question of annexation (it relates only to the Bechuanaland Protectorate and to Swaziland, for Basutoland has been annexed to the British Crown since 1867). Annexation is an idea which occurs naturally to the observer who sees how perniciously the notion that the be-all and end-all of British policy is to protect the natives from a harsh outer world has worked out in practice in South African conditions. The need is for some sharp re-orientation to emphasise strikingly that Britain's office is to make a job of active government in a much wider sense. Annexation might give this, or help to give it; on the other hand, the desired result might be achieved by other means. The question is complicated by a number of difficult legal issues and cannot be discussed at length here. Against the idea must be set the fact that annexation does not seem to have done Basutoland much good or to have an appreciably distinguished policy there from policy in Swaziland and Bechuanaland. Nevertheless it deserves the careful attention of the British Government.

(Continued.)

Thursday 3. 9. 1931

F. A. W. LUCAS

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THE STAR, JOHANNESBURG, TRANSVAAL

BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE

COMMENTS BY A NATIVE

To the Editor of The Star

Sir,—The arguments and deductions contained in the article of The Star of August 27 to prove the degeneration of the system of tribal rule, are false in fact and figure, and the conclusions are both unjust and misleading. All the more so, as they are a generalisation arrived at by singling out one tribe—the Bamangwato—for specific treatment by way of illustration.

The division of the political forces into (a) the royal headmen, in bitter opposition to (b) the common headmen led by the chief, and (c) the common masses, whom tradition inclines towards support of the chief, is a vital error.

Actually, more than 95 per cent. of the princes and headmen are with, and for the chief. Such are the descendants of Sekgoma I.—the Khamanas, the Seretses, the Mokhuchwanas, the Mphoengs, and the Mathibas, to mention only a few outstanding. The common headmen and the common masses are anything from 95 per cent. to 99 per cent. with and for the chief. This leaves less than 5 per cent.—a liberal allowance—of royal headmen, forming opposition to the chief.

This opposition goes back to the days of Khama, if not beyond, who expelled one prince or headman who opposed him, after another, not even excepting his then only son and heir—Sekgoma II. The motive was the principle of one kraal, one bull. Later, Sekgoma himself, once an exile, found it necessary to banish more than one princely headman. Now, Sekgoma's successor, the present regent, finds himself faced with the same necessity for the assertion of the same principle—one kraal, one bull. The headmen forming an opposition to the chief's rule are, in one way or other, connected with these erstwhile exiles. (They were always allowed to return after a shorter or longer interval).

THE HOUSE OF SEKGOMA

It is fallacious to state that the natural order of things is reversed, and that the chief has elevated commoners above the princely headmen. The house of Sekgoma I still constitutes the Supreme Council, and the highest offices in the tribe are held by them, such as the chief's first and second assistants, governors over subject tribes, receiver of taxes, etc. They are not disregarded much less persecuted by the chief.

On the day of Sekgoma's funeral, in

September, 1925, the writer was present at the Kgotla in Serowe, when with almost one voice the people chose the present regent, then at school, and said literally that no other course nor name was thinkable. There were some dissentient headmen, princes in fact, who wished a council to rule instead. The fact that they were princes, educated, wealthy and powerful, is significant, and may explain their discontent. A new nucleus of opposition to the present regent was thus formed, even before he was formally proclaimed, and it was bound to attract to its ranks any element of pre-existing, though inarticulate, opposition. Thus came about a series of minor reprisals which have culminated in the present state of strife.

No intelligent observer can fail to realise the fact that tribalism is but a cramped and cramping form of society. The condition is not, however, one of complete stagnation. Some little advancement is made, some few fresh ideas of progress filter in and are entertained, some few dreams are dreamt, and some few visions are seen. All this happens by the comings in and the goings out of people; by teachers, by traders, by travellers, by papers, by preachers, by legislators, and by labourers. The tribal ideas of progress, however, outstrip the tribal law, life, and practice. It may be said that the tribal consciousness is in advance of the tribal organism. But it must be noted here that this disease of disequilibrium of ideas and practice is common to all society anywhere—advancing or advanced.

EDUCATED NATIVES

In any case, this necessarily leads to anomalies and hardships, which fall principally on the intelligentsia of the tribe, if they cannot fall in with, and act as a leaven on chiefly rule and tribal law. This I think they can. It is difficult, but in the measure that they are intellectual, in that measure will they succeed.

For an educated man, there is indeed no scope for self-betterment, socially, educationally or economically in tribal life in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, but there is ample scope for real service and sacrifice and for pioneer work in the tribal system. It would be a pity if education unfitted the Bechuana young men for their homes and their people, for how ever could real salvation come to Bechuanaland? And if the defects of African systems of government cannot be improved, and the good in them demonstrated by Africans themselves, practically, then an educated African is a Europeanised African—a dis-Africanised product of schools. Happily this is not the case: It is not true to say that the outlets for the energies of the educated men are closed up. On the contrary, all Bechuana tribes are at pains to open up channels of employment for their educated youth at

home, as an inducement to make them stay home.

The educated Bechuana are mostly of the wealthy aristocracy, who are thus the hereditary leaders of the people. Their words in councils of State carry more weight than do those of the uneducated. This has always been, since the Bechuana first knew schools and churches, and it continues to-day. Education is not despised, and the educated man is received in a higher class than his own.

NO DISAFFECTION

There is no warrant for such a positive statement and pernicious dictum. There are several intelligent men at Serowe, who while recognising the drawbacks of the tribal system, and of the present regime, are not therefore revolutionary, but are on the contrary helping in the affairs of the tribe. The chief and the princes in rank immediately below him are all men of good education and unquestionable intelligence. They co-operate as well as can be desired. No single intelligent man has ever quitted the tribal domains in Serowe or anywhere in Bechuanaland because of disaffection or dissatisfaction with the chiefly rule or tribal system.

In conclusion, let me say that some of the accusations brought forward by the writer of these interesting and thought stimulating articles on the Bechuanaland Protectorate are, unfortunately true, and that several acts by the chiefs and Government in the administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate are scandalous, and clamour for impartial inquiry and speedy redress. Nothing, however, is gained either by exaggeration of the facts, or by showing one side of the picture only.

S. M. MOLEMA.

CIVIL SERVANTS IN RURAL AREAS

PROTEST MOVEMENT

A meeting of Nylstroom and district public servants this week passed the following resolution, states our correspondent: "This meeting, representative of all Government departments, views with alarm any alternative proposals to the abolition of local allowances in certain areas whereby our substantive emoluments might be reduced. We adhere to our original stand that the cost of living in this and other rural centres is the same as or higher than that prevailing in centres in which local allowances are paid. We submit that if a 100 per cent. reduction was justified in rural centres a similar percentage cut is justified in their areas before economies are effected by touching our substantive salaries. We deprecate service associations associating themselves with any such proposals."

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