

# NATIVE POLL

26/2/37 TAX *Decl m*

## NO REDUCTION TO BE MADE

### ROAD WORK FOR DEFAULTERS

From Our Parliamentary  
Representative

CAPETOWN, Feb. 25.

From inquiries made to-day I can definitely state that the Government has no intention of reducing the Native poll tax.

In official circles there is a full and sympathetic realisation of the difficulties which the very poorly paid Natives, particularly on the farms, have in meeting their obligations, but it is felt that if any reduction were effected the first persons to suffer would be the Natives themselves.

The Government, however, intends this year to hand over to the Native Development Account a further £233,000 which represents approximately one-fifth of the total sum received from Native taxation in the Union.

#### THREE-FIFTHS

This will mean that three-fifths of the money the Native peoples of the Union pay to the State in direct taxation will now be devoted solely to Native services. The remaining two-fifths will be given to general revenue.

One of the main arguments adduced by Native agitators in the past has been the failure of the Government to devote the greater percentage of the funds collected from the Natives for the particular benefit of the Bantu races.

It is claimed that the Government's decision to contribute three-fifths of Native revenue to the Native Development Fund should now meet this objection and it is considered only just that the Natives should also make a contribution to general revenue as they benefit directly from many State services, one of which, of course, is policing.

Strength is lent to the Government's decision not to reduce the basis of Native taxation by the findings of a Commission which has just concluded a comprehensive investigation in Kenya into this problem. The Commission decided that a flat rate of taxation was the most equitable for primitive peoples, among whom there was no differences in individual wealth.

Last year in the Union, however, there were nearly 70,000 Native defaulters—a position which has caused the Department considerable concern.

I am now authoritatively informed that at the conclusion of the Session a departmental inquiry will go fully into the system of Native tax collections with a view to obviating the gaoling of a defaulter.

#### ROAD SERVICE

In the House yesterday the Minister of Finance suggested that some sort of scheme might be evolved whereby a defaulter could accept service on national road construction work and thus earn sufficient to pay off his tax.

Before the Native Tax and Development Act of 1925 was passed various systems of taxation were in vogue in the Union, but this piece of legislation established a uniform system of a poll tax of £1 a year for every adult male Native over 18 years of age, and a local tax of 10s. per hut from Natives living in the reserves.

Three-fifths of poll tax revenue will now be devoted to Native education and development services. In addition Parliament contributes an annual grant of £340,000 from Union revenue for Native education.

The local tax of 10s. is used as far as possible within the areas from which it is collected, and where Native Councils exist the money is paid over to them. This latter tax forms the greater portion of income of the United Transkeian Territories General Council.

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