

## The Coloured Commission

The Government has given earnest of its desire to keep contact with and to help the advancement of the Coloured section of the community by the announcement, published elsewhere, of its intention at an early date to bring into being a Cape Coloured Permanent Commis-

sion, whose purpose it will be to investigate and make recommendations regarding problems affecting the coloured community. This is no hasty decision. The policy was considered before the outbreak of the war, and since the idea began to take shape there has been close and frequent consultation with the leaders of the Coloured and Malay communities as to the methods of establishing closer contact between Government departments which are specially concerned and the coloured people. The Cape Coloured Permanent Commission which, as a result of these consultations, will shortly come into being will consist of seven members of the coloured community who are recognised as enjoying the confidence of their own people, and who may be trusted to represent their special points of view effectively. They will become the recognised mouthpiece of the coloured people in their dealings with Government departments, and to them will be referred for their information and advice any legislation which specially affects their people. They will be a Commission of liaison and co-ordination, and as time goes on and as the coloured community gains confidence in their ability and their experience, the Permanent Commission should prove to be of very great value in meeting the special requirements of their own folk and in bringing them prominently before the notice of the Government and its departments.

The appointment of such a commission is most timely. When the war comes to an end, large numbers of coloured men who have rendered splendid services in the army will be returning to their homes. They will come back with vastly widened experience, and they will have earned the right to the most considerate examination of their needs and requirements by the Government and by the European community. The original intention was that a joint European-Coloured Advisory Board should be established, but as a result of the discussions that have taken place it has become clear that the coloured community desire that the Commission should consist of coloured persons only, and their views have thus been fully met under the new scheme. No doubt they are right. It is certainly all to the good that the coloured people should realise how important it is that they should increasingly develop among themselves a sense of responsibility, and that they should have a commission of their own to which they can represent their grievances and before whom they can state their aspirations. The Commission will have a double task. It will have to keep in close and permanent contact with the coloured people, and it will have to keep in close contact also with the Government and the departments of Government. Experience will show how far the system will be capable of development. That will depend very largely upon the coloured people themselves, and it is good that it should be so. We may, however, feel confident that it is an experiment, long overdue, which may easily have fruitful and far-reaching results.

*Cape Times*

11-3-43

## Four Men Charged

# ARGUMENT ON QUESTION OF BAIL

(Continued from Page One.)

Applications for the release of Sischy, Mothooagae and Mabandea on bail were opposed by Mr. Vermooten on the same grounds as he opposed bail for Marks. He added, however, that they had not taken part in the action to the degree that Marks had done.

Crown evidence would show that Sischy and Mabandea had distributed the pamphlets, and that Mothooagae had printed them.

### MAN'S UNDERTAKING

He would waive opposition to bail once police investigations were complete. He could not give details of the investigations but as a public servant and a representative of the Attorney-General, he could only tell the court that those investigations might be seriously jeopardised and their whole object defeated if the men were released.

Mr. Levitan said that Sischy had undertaken not to take part in the strike if he was released. He asked the prosecutor to show how the release of the men would affect police investigations.

In each case the magistrate refused bail, but gave the men the right to renew their applications as soon as the police investigations had been completed.

Marks was refused bail but was granted leave to renew his application when the police investigations are complete.

Giving the decision, the magistrate quoted from a previous judgment and said he was refusing the application because the arrest was made only yesterday, the trial would be in eight days' time and, in the meantime, the police had their investigations to complete.

### MINE NATIVES IN COURT

Twenty natives employed on the Witwatersrand Gold Mine were charged before Mr E. H. Pells in the Germiston Magistrate's Court to-day with failing to go underground on the instructions of the compound manager, in terms of their contracts. They all pleaded not guilty.

Evidence was given by the compound manager (Mr. B. R. Gernetzky) of the failure of the first native (who was charged) to go underground, after being told to do so.

Mr Gernetzky said that when he asked the natives why they would not go underground, they said they wanted 10s. a day. They were also instructed to go underground by the general manager.

He told them they would be arrested if they did not go down. They replied that they would prefer to be arrested.

In evidence, the native said he had been given a pamphlet, and he wanted to know why the compound manager had allowed them to be distributed.

He admitted in reply to the prosecutor (Mr. Doubell) that he had been given a pamphlet on the way to work on Monday morning, and that he had worked both on Monday and again yesterday.

The magistrate said he was prepared to take into account that the accused and the other natives had probably been misled by irresponsible agitators and people with evil intentions. In his case his contract had expired, which meant that the mine could pay him off that day and arrange for his return to his home.

He discharged him with a caution.

### PLEAS CHANGED

The remaining 19 natives changed their pleas to guilty.

The magistrate reminded them that they were given food, a beer ration and free medical attention by the mine and that they had been perfectly satisfied until the issue of the pamphlets, which had been distributed by people who would not put their name to them. They had been misled by these pamphlets.

At the request of the mine management, the magistrate cancelled their contracts.

Another batch of 53 from the Simmer and Jack Mine then pleaded guilty to a similar offence.

After announcing that he was cancelling the contracts, the magistrate said it would be for the mine management and themselves to decide whether they returned to work or not.

One of the natives said he was grateful for the opportunity of resuming work. "We are prepared to go and work," he said.

# The Star

AUGUST 14, 1946

## NATIVE MINE STRIKE

The strike of native mine workers, threatening as it does serious social and economic consequences if it continues and spreads, requires rapid and far-sighted handling by the Government, whose responsibility in the matter is a primary one not to be evaded by casting the dispute upon the industry from which it originates. The constitution of a committee of senior Cabinet Ministers, therefore, comes none too soon; the committee would indeed have been strengthened by the inclusion of the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister, particularly as the latter, as Minister of Finance, is intimately concerned in the settlement out of which the present unrest arises. The Government is, in fact, a major partner in the industry both because of its direct and very considerable financial interest and because of the importance of the mines to the economic structure of the country.

The origins of the strike are complex and to some extent obscure, but in essence they correspond with similar industrial disturbances elsewhere. The native mine workers differ from most others in being drawn from a very wide and distant field; they are largely illiterate and at a fairly primitive level of civilisation, not racially homogeneous and almost entirely lacking in organisation. Nevertheless they are moved by the same motives of self-interest as any other group, and although to some extent sheltered by their conditions of employment are not unaffected by the changing circumstances around them. This was recognised by the appointment in 1943 of the Mine Natives' Wages Commission, whose report the following year must be regarded as the starting point of the trouble which has now developed. The Government's decisions on that report fell considerably short of the commission's recommendations, and although the claims now being made are extravagant, the report remains the text on which they would inevitably be based in any reasoned statement of demands.

According to the calculations made by the commission, the annual wages of the lowest-paid native mineworker fell short of his minimum cash requirements by from £9 to £10, for although in his employment he is "all found," the cost of maintaining his home in the reserve has risen some 27 per cent. since 1939. To meet this shortfall it was proposed to grant increases totalling over £2,600,000 annually. This would have been equivalent to an increase in costs of 10d. a ton milled, and the commission frankly admitted that it would have put a number of mines out of production entirely and condemned huge bodies of ore to permanent unpayability. Only an equal surrender of Government revenue could have removed these effects. In the event the Government agreed to surrender £1,850,000, and native wages were raised by that amount. If the commission's calculations were correct, the native miner was still not able to meet his minimum expenses, and sooner or later an outbreak was bound to occur. It has probably been precipitated by the food shortage, affecting both the miner and his family, a circumstance which is also beyond the control of the industry.

# 32 OF 45 RAND MINES NOT AFFECTED BY NATIVE STRIKE

Star  
13-8-46

## WORK RESUMED AT SUB NIGEL, NEW KLEINFONTEIN AND WEST SPRINGS

**T**HIRTY-TWO OF THE RAND'S 45 producing gold mines are not affected by the native strike which began yesterday. There is a total stoppage to-day on eight mines and a partial stoppage on two. Natives who struck on the remaining three have either returned to work or are returning.

The number of natives on strike to-day is between 45,000 and 50,000, about the same as yesterday. It is the opinion of observers that the great majority of the strikers are anxious to return to work.

There has been a partial return to work to-day at New Kleinfontein, Sub Nigel and West Springs.

At New Kleinfontein the natives in the main compound have all returned to work. The balance are expected back on shift during the day.

The main compound at Sub Nigel is back at work and the balance are on their way back.

At West Springs one compound has returned to work and the other is on strike.

### AFFECTED MINES

The mines at which there is a total stoppage to-day are Vlakfontein, Van Ryn Estates, Van Dyk, Modder B, Brakpan, City Deep, Marievale and Nourse. There was a complete stoppage on the first four of these mines yesterday, a partial stoppage at Brakpan, City Deep and Nourse. There was no stoppage yesterday at Marievale.

Robinson Deep has a partial stoppage to-day as was the case yesterday. At Simmer and Jack, where there was no trouble yesterday, there is a partial stoppage to-day.

An attempt was made to foment a strike at Rose Deep to-day, but the natives, after hearing an explanation by the mine authorities, resolved to continue working.

The most serious incident of the strike so far took place at Sub Nigel Mine this morning, when strikers attacked police escorting a number of natives to work at the Betty Shaft. (See adjoining column.)

All 6,000 natives at New Kleinfontein returned to work. It was 4,000 of these natives who yesterday demonstrated at Benoni police station demanding the release of three of their number who had been arrested.

About 1,000 natives on the Simmer and Jack mine refused to work this morning

### MARIEVALE

At Marievale, 2,000 natives left the compound to go on the early shift, while some 3,000 decided to strike. Police arrested a few natives who tried to prevent men from going down the mine.

A handful of natives went on strike at Sallies mine this morning, but most of the men are working normally. Three arrests were made here this morning.

An attempt described as "half-hearted" was made to picket the shaft head at Government Areas mine last night and the shifts were late this morning.

Most of the natives from the north compound at West Springs, returned to work this morning under police protection. The south compound remains on strike. Last night there were disturbances in both compounds and stones were thrown at the police.

A police official told The Star this morning that among the people arrested for incitement and distributing pamphlets were two Indians.

This follows yesterday's statement issued by the executive committee of the Passive Resistance Council of the Transvaal Indian Congress pledging support to the strikers.

## POLICE QUELL ATTACK AT SUB NIGEL

**P**OLICE escorting natives to work at the Betty Shaft of the Sub Nigel Mine were attacked by 1,500 strikers this morning.

"The police were forced to open fire in self-defence," a police official told The Star "and six natives were wounded. None was killed by rifle fire. Six other natives were crushed to death by their compatriots in the ensuing panic." As a result of the police action, the whole 1,500 surrendered their weapons to the police and went back to work. The Betty Shaft is now normal. The police eventually collected almost a lorry-load of dangerous weapons.

### POLICE CASUALTIES

Ten policemen were injured by stones in the disturbance, states The Star's correspondent at Springs.

Trouble started at the Sub Nigel mine yesterday when two-thirds of the natives refused to go on shift. A few natives were arrested by five European police from Nigel, but were released because of the threatening attitude of the strikers.

During the afternoon an official of the native recruiting organisation and representatives of the mine, including the general manager, were shouted down when trying to address the natives.

The District Commandant of Police at Springs, Major J. J. du Toit, later went to the mine with 100 policemen, but they were defied by the strikers and were obliged to withdraw.

This morning the strikers became increasingly unruly and intercepted those who desired to return to work. Major du Toit again visited the mine, this time accompanied by 128 policemen.

The strikers collected outside the compound on a railway embankment. They were armed with knives, mallets, sledge hammers, iron pins, steel balls and sticks. Some carried steel balls from grinding machines.

### ATTACK WITH STONES

Unarmed police surrounded the strikers in an attempt to disperse them towards the compound, but the natives began to pelt the police with stones picked from the embankment. It was at this stage that some police were injured.

Armed police, who were standing some distance away, intervened to rescue their comrades. They opened fire on the strikers, picking their targets, and six natives were wounded.

The strikers dropped their weapons and made a rush for the compound. It was at the gateway that the natives were trampled to death.

When the scene was visited by the representative of The Star at 11 o'clock the natives at this compound had already decided to return to work.

# NATIVE MINE STRIKE EASING

## FOUR TOTAL STOPPAGES AND SIX PARTIAL

**T**HE LATEST OFFICIAL SURVEY of the native mine strike position shows that there is a trend back to work. Whereas this morning there was a total stoppage on seven mines and a partial stoppage on four, this afternoon there was a total stoppage on four mines and a partial stoppage on six. Thirty-five mines are in full operation.

At the time of going to press mines at which there was a total stoppage were Vlakfontein, Van Ryn Estates, Van Dyk and City Deep.

By this afternoon Brakpan, whether the stoppage had been total, had resumed full operations. Marievale, idle yesterday, was again fully at work to-day. West Springs, at which yesterday only one compound section was at work, to-day had both compounds on shift.

There are now partial stoppages at Modder B and Nourse Mines, at both of which many natives have returned to work; on the Robinson Deep, where most of the natives on the main shaft affected have returned to the compound from the surrounding mine dumps where they congregated this morning; Rose Deep, Simmer and Jack, and Modder East.

New Kleinfontein and Sub Nigel, previously affected, were working normally to-day.

Two compounds struck at Simmer and Jack this morning. Between 4,000 and 5,000 natives from these compounds began a march towards Johannesburg. They were dispersed by the police at Denver and, on return to the mine, about 800 of them decided to go back to work.

The Germiston correspondent of The Star reports that the strikers at Rose Deep and at Simmer and Jack are talking of a general return to work to-morrow.

There was a clash between police and Van Ryn Estates natives at the Elandsfontein-Kempton Park road junction

## STRIKERS INTERCEPTED ON WAY TO CITY AND DISPERSED

Between 4,000 and 5,000 native strikers, armed with pickhandles, sticks, stones and other weapons, coming from the Simmer and Jack Mine toward Johannesburg early this morning were dispersed by a body of 300 police near the City Deep Mine. Eight hundred later told the police that they were prepared to go back to work. The rest straggled back over the veld to Germiston.

At the Nourse Mines the police reported that native strikers in the two compounds adopted a truculent attitude when they were ordered early this morning to return to work. An official's car was wrecked and the police intervened to restore order. There were some minor casualties among the police and the natives. The police stated later that 90 per cent. of the natives had gone underground.

At Robinson Deep large numbers of natives, ordered to return to work, left the compound and then scattered among the mine dumps, where they were still reported to be squatting or in hiding by noon. Fairly large bodies of police were on duty at Nourse Mines and the Robinson Deep and at other points this morning.

Members of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions passed a resolution late yesterday afternoon to call a sympathetic general strike of members of affiliated unions on the Witwatersrand if the Chamber of Mines was not prepared to open negotiations with the native mine strikers by to-morrow night. The council has formed a committee of five members to take whatever action is thought fit.

Representatives of the council stated to-day that they represented 52 non-European trade unions in the Transvaal, with a total membership of 600,000.

No one was in attendance at the offices of the African Mine Workers' Union in Rosenberg Arcade, in the city this morning.

## ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE SUPPORTING THE STRIKERS

Organisations which are backing the native mine strikers are now coming into the open. Yesterday the Johannesburg District Council of the Communist Party published a resolution expressing its "full support for the action of the African Mine Workers in striking for a minimum wage of 10s. a day and decent working conditions."

The passive resistance council of the Transvaal Indian Congress has pledged its full support for the African Mine Workers' Union in their strike.

Indians have been helping the natives since the strike began. Yesterday the police arrested a number of Indians on charges of incitement and distributing pamphlets at mines. The Natal Indian Congress headquarters has given £100 to help the native strikers.

The Federation of Progressive Students, an organisation operating from the University of the Witwatersrand has circularised members of the public asking for donations in aid of native strikers. The federation says it has decided to give "financial and technical assistance wherever possible."

Mr Raikes, principal of the university, said to-day that he was unaware of the letter sent by the Federation of Progressive Students.

## BAN ON MEETING OF STUDENTS

A meeting which the Federation of Progressive Students intended to have at lunch time to-day was banned by the principal, Mr. Raikes, who issued a notice, reading:

"In view of the disturbed position on the Reef, I regret to have to inform you that I cannot permit the Federation of Progressive Students' meeting to take place. For the present no political meetings will be held at the University."

## STATEMENT BY GENERAL SMUTS

From Our Political Correspondent

**G**ENERAL SMUTS told the Transvaal head committee of the United Party in Pretoria to-day that he was not unduly concerned over what was happening on the Witwatersrand mines to-day because the native strike was not caused by legitimate grievances but by agitators. Appropriate action was being taken by the Government.

What was happening to-day arose not from legitimate grievances but from the work of agitators. The Government would take steps to see that these matters were put right.

The agitators were trying to lead the natives and the country to destruction. The agitators secretly distributed pamphlets and incited the natives.

The native had to be protected from these people.

just before noon. The natives appeared to be marching towards Johannesburg. They were dispersed without difficulty.

The number of strikers now is considerably lower than the 50,000 estimated to be out on strike yesterday and the day before.

## STRIKERS INTERCEPTED

The president of the union, Mr. J. B. Marks, was arrested yesterday afternoon.

In a raid on the offices yesterday, detectives seized a number of documents.

Discussing the march of 4,000 native strikers from Springs towards Johannesburg yesterday afternoon and the march of the strikers from Simmer and Jack this morning, officials of the African trade unions said that apparently the natives had wanted to reach the headquarters of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association in the city to place before them certain complaints.

Police officials pointed out to-day that the congregation of such large numbers and their passage along the public roads armed with dangerous weapons was illegal and might lead to serious trouble.

In the interests of public safety all such congregations and demonstrations had to be dispersed. In any case the natives could get into touch with officials of the W.N.L.A. at any time without having to march in large bodies to the city.

## STRIKERS INTERCEPTED

The march of the natives from the Simmer and Jack this morning started with small groups, who converged near Johannesburg. Timely information enabled the police to intercept a body of about 1,000 near Germiston. Lorry loads of policemen, armed with batons, were rushed to the spot. At sight of the lorries the natives scattered over the veld, back to Germiston.

A larger body of native strikers, however, had by this time reached the outskirts of the city and 300 police armed with batons met them near the City Deep. The natives halted and the police ordered them to disperse. A number of police armed with fixed bayonets stood by.

When the main body of police moved forward the natives scattered over the veld, followed by the police in lorries, while the men with fixed bayonets looked on. Large numbers of natives, exhausted in the flight, were rounded up. Many said that they were prepared to return to work.

At the Nourse Mines about 150 policemen stood by early this morning when officials ordered the natives in the compounds to return to work. The natives were drawn up in two lines, with Shangaans in the one and Xosas and Basutos in the other.

The Shangaans moved out of the compound after some hesitation and then many scattered. The rest were told to get ready for work. The police reported that they showed truculence and that in scuffles some of the natives, armed with iron bars, assegais and choppers, were driven back.

Many of the natives then left the compound.

Later reports stated that almost all the natives who had stopped work on this mine on Monday had gone underground again.

## FOOD AS USUAL

On all the mines the usual food for the native workers is still being provided in the compounds.

Reports from the East Rand state that at Modder B and Van Ryn Estates the strikers are quiet. Some have returned to work. Most are in the compounds or on the veld near the mines.

A coloured man and four natives were arrested outside the compound at the Luipaardsvlei Mine early this morning on an allegation of being in possession of recently printed pamphlets of an inflammatory nature.

The West and Far West Rand have not been affected by the strike.

*S. Star*  
14-8-46

# FOUR MEN CHARGED WITH INCITING MINE NATIVES TO STOP WORK

**A** EUROPEAN, 64 natives and a non-European appeared before Mr. M. Isaacs in the Magistrate's Court to-day on charges connected with the strike of native mine workers on the Rand. Mr. D. O. Vermooten, public prosecutor, appeared for the Crown, and Mr. J. Levitan for the defence.

Sixty-two of the natives were charged with contravening Section 19 of the Labour Regulations Act by refusing to commence work on mines yesterday. They were remanded to August 28 and released on payment of £1 ball in each case, on condition of good behaviour.

## BAIL REFUSED BY COURT

The magistrate warned them not to influence other natives who might attempt to stop work, and said that if they did they would be arrested immediately.

John Joseph Marks (43), non-European school teacher, of Newclare, Bennie Sischy (21), European commercial traveller, Buckingham Court, Leyds Street, Meshack Mothoogae (33), native, Market Street, and Horatius Mabanda (32), native, office boy, Brakpan Location, were charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act with inciting native mine workers to stop work. Details of the charge have not yet been drafted.

The men were remanded to August 22. Mr. Vermooten opposed an application for their release on bail.

### BAIL OPPOSED

Opposing bail for Marks, he said that Marks's release would prejudice the police investigations and that it would be the same as allowing Marks to further take part in what the Crown alleged was a criminal action.

Police investigations were not yet complete, but Crown evidence so far was that Marks was president of the African Mine Workers' Union and that he had issued a pamphlet inciting all native mine workers on the Reef to strike.

As a result about 40,000 or 50,000 natives were already not working. The evidence showed that an attempt would be made to-day to bring the remaining 250,000 workers out on strike.

The Crown alleged that Marks and his union were sponsoring and launching this attempt.

There had already been some clashes between native workers and the police, and there was every probability of further clashes if the strike spread.

### DEFENCE CONTENTION

Mr. Levitan said the police seized the Native Mine Workers' Union offices yesterday and impounded documents. The police had that evidence now, and apprehension of danger in the future or of prejudice to investigations in the future should not affect Marks's right to bail.

As president of the union — a legal body—Marks had that right. He could not be blamed for the clashes between the workers and the police. In fact, his (Mr. Levitan's) information was that the police were responsible for the clashes.

The Court could use its discretion, which had always been exercised in favour of an accused, but in this case it was only concerned with the present charge and whether bail should be allowed on that charge. Bail should be an amount which Marks could pay—perhaps £25.

Marks was a South African citizen, and there was not the remotest possibility of his not being available. He was available all yesterday, and when the police wanted him they found him.

Replying, Mr. Vermooten said the police were still looking for certain witnesses and documents. As soon as their investigations were complete he would bring the matter before the Court and would waive all opposition to bail.

(Continued on Page Three.)

There is, however, another important factor which determines the undesirable form this demonstration has taken. Native mineworkers have hitherto been unorganised and therefore almost inarticulate. The law does not recognise native trade unions, and although some form of recognition has long been contemplated it is by no means certain that it will be extended to organisations on the mines. A pro-war regulation, still in force, prohibits gatherings on proclaimed ground. In such circumstances, such bodies as do exist—and they can scarcely be truly representative—must lead a precarious existence. In the nature of migrant mine labour, trade unionism as practised elsewhere is difficult. In the opinion of the commission these labourers "have not yet reached the stage of development which would enable them safely and usefully to employ trade unionism"; it recommended other means of consultation and guidance. What is certain is that some alternative must be provided to the present hole-in-corner unionism which commits the cause of the native miner to the care of those perhaps least qualified to guide it. The whole history of industrialism shows that merely sitting on the safety valve can cause nothing but explosion. Here again, the need for a defined Government policy is evident.

# 45,000 NATIVES STRIKE AT 11 RAND MINES

## Police in Baton Charge Disperse Benoni Mob

LATE last night there were indications that further compounds were likely to join the strike of native mineworkers when the main shift is due to go underground early this morning.

It is estimated that between 45,000 and 50,000 natives on the Rand are already on strike for a daily wage of 10s. and improved working conditions. Eleven mines are involved. Some have closed down, while others are only partially affected.

Although the strike is likely to spread, no new mines are expected to be involved. Strong police detachments are being sent to possible danger spots this morning in an effort to prevent this development.

Although properties all along the Reef were affected yesterday, the greatest activity took place on the East Rand, where the police were compelled to make a baton charge at Benoni to disperse strikers who contemplated an attack on the police station.

Strikers on the West Rand were soon persuaded to return to work.

At about 9 a.m. the Benoni police received a report that a meeting of strikers was taking place at the New Kleinfontein Mine, on the fringe of the Main Reef Road. Inspector T. A. Louw, the commanding officer, and a party of 34 police went to the spot, where they arrested three of the speakers.

Soon after the police had returned to the barracks a large crowd of natives, estimated to number 4,500, gathered outside the police station and clamoured for the immediate release of the prisoners.

Chief Inspector D. G. Coetzee, District Commandant of Police, arrived at this stage with the Native Commissioner for Benoni. They addressed the natives and urged them to return to their compounds, but the request was ignored.

*Continued in page 4*

## POLICE KEEP WATCH AT CITY MINES

There was little further development last night in the strike at mines in the Johannesburg area.

Police visited the City Deep and Turf Shaft of the Robinson Deep. At Turf Shaft, where a small number of natives had to go on shift, agitators threatened to stop them, but the presence of the police prevented any interference and the natives went on duty.

Pamphlets urging the natives not to go to work were again distributed on mines yesterday.

### *Mine Strike Discussed by Cabinet*

THE Prime Minister, General Smuts, presided over a full meeting of the Cabinet at Union Buildings yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was not called because of the strike of native mineworkers, but it is understood that the matter was discussed.

# 45,000 NATIVES STRIKE

As the situation appeared to be deteriorating, police reinforcements were summoned by telephone from Johannesburg, Germiston and Boksburg and later from Pretoria. In the meantime all available police at Benoni, totalling 90, were paraded in front of the barracks. This, too, had no effect on the crowd. Major Coetzee, in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act, again warned the strikers to disperse.

The natives then retired to the corner of Bedford Avenue and Wiltstead Street, about 20 yards away.

When reinforcements of about 200 police arrived, the strikers still showed no signs of dispersing. Major Coetzee then gave the order to charge. The police rushed the natives with batons and the mob scattered. Most of them made their way back to the mine compound, where they remained for the rest of the day.

Three natives were injured and were taken to hospital. Three of the alleged demonstrators were subsequently arrested.

## TELEPHONE WARNING

During the disturbance a man who gave his name as Marx telephoned Inspector Louw and warned him that the continued detention of the three prisoners would lead to trouble.

There had been little indication earlier of any disorder among the New Kleinfontein natives. They left the compound at 5.30 a.m. as usual, but, instead of proceeding to work, gathered on the rock dumps in the vicinity of No. 4 Shaft. There was a freezing wind, and gradually they drifted back to the shelter of the compound, only emerging later for the meeting on the Main Reef Road.

At other mines there was no untoward incident. The properties in the middle East Rand area on which there was a complete stoppage of work were the Van Dyk, Vlakfontein, the southern section of Brakpan Mines including Witpoort, Van Ryn Estates and Modder B.

With the exception of Modder B, where 1,000 natives set out towards the shafts but turned back half-way, all the strikers remained quietly in their compounds. In most cases they were ordered to begin work, but ignored the instruction.

A few natives at one or two of the affected mines indicated that they were prepared to go underground. Under police protection they were allowed by their compatriots to proceed unmolested. On the whole, the strikers were uncommunicative.

At Vlakfontein 20 natives who refused to work were arrested.

As a precautionary measure, the municipal beer hall at the Brakpan location has been closed on the suggestion of the police.

A "Rand Daily Mail" representative who toured the area found the strikers treating the occasion as a Sunday, except that a few were making purchases at the concession stores. They sat or lay about in blanketed groups, sunning themselves behind compound walls out of the wind. Others strolled along veld paths smoking and talking. At one mine week-end musical programmes were being given through loudspeakers. Many of the giant sheave wheels which crown the head-gears were still.

The only signs of abnormal conditions were the frequent lorry-loads of armed police arriving in the area from the training depot at Pretoria, from Johannesburg and elsewhere.

Suggestions that another demonstration should be staged at the Benoni police station were made at a gathering of New Kleinfontein workers late yesterday afternoon. The proposal, however, failed to find favour, and the natives returned to their rooms.

## ATTEMPTS AT INTIMIDATION

When night shifts prepared to go underground at several of the East Rand Mines last night, attempts were made by fellow-workers to intimidate them. The police, however, were on the spot and made immediate arrests. Five natives were detained at South African Lands, where as yet there has been no other sign of disaffection.

On State Mines, another property where work was carried on as usual yesterday, members of the night shift were intercepted

by between 100 and 200 natives, who urged them not to go underground. Police drove the malcontents back into their rooms and order was restored.

The largest number of arrests was made at West Springs No. 1 Compound, where 400 natives were rounded up. When they intimated that they were willing to return to work, however, they were released.

Steps to prevent intimidation were to be taken on mines in the Benoni area before dawn this morning when strong parties of police were to be present to protect natives who wished to return to work.

In the West Springs round-up a suspected murderer was discovered. He is believed to have been one of the six natives under detention at Springs some weeks ago in connection with the murder of a European. All six escaped from the cells, but four were recaptured soon afterwards. The police are maintaining a sharp look-out for the sixth wanted man.

At No. 3 Compound, West Springs, some trouble arose last night when stones were thrown at the police.

## DRIVEN BACK AND STONED

First news of the strikers came at 4.30 a.m. from the City Deep and the Robinson Deep. At City Deep about 100 agitators had gathered near the gates of the main compound, and when the native miners attempted to leave for work they were driven back and stoned. There are about 4,000 natives living in this compound, and none of them dared leave for duty at Nos. 1 and 4 shafts.

Police from Jeppe and Marshall Square, under the command of the District Commandant, Major J. C. Kriek, were hurried to the area. Some of the policemen formed up between the agitators and the compound, while others crept secretly to the rear.

When the agitators discovered the police behind them, they dashed forward into the arms of the other group of police, and struggled desperately to escape. About 20 arrests were made.

When the natives were told that they would be provided with a police escort to their shafts, they rapidly filed out of the gate. No trouble was experienced with the workers for No. 1 shaft, but after 600 of the 2,000 natives for the other shaft had gone off quietly many of the agitators who had escaped back into the compound ran out. They spread into the veld, closely followed by hundreds of others, and refused to go to work.

Within a few minutes they had gathered near the municipal compound and along the mine railway embankment.

Stragglers in the compound were cleared out by mine police, and small groups of natives who attempted to get to work were stoned by the agitators. Police stopped this, but shortly afterwards some of the agitators gathered sticks and attacked the natives in the area of the mine offices. A group of police surrounded the area and made arrests.

The police posted a small detachment when the 1,400 natives who had refused to go underground returned to the compound.

At Nourse Mines 4,600 workers in the main compound refused to go on shift. Trouble started when 300 willing workers marched out of the compound and were stoned by agitators, who drove them back.

At the west compound of Nourse Mines, where there are 1,400 natives, no trouble was experienced following an assurance from the officials that they would not be molested.

The police had no difficulty in controlling about 3,000 strikers at Robinson Deep. The natives refused to go to work, but did not commit any acts of violence.

Four of the 14 mines in the Springs area were affected by the strike. At West Springs Mine 5,000 employees refused to go underground, but remained in the compound, and the police had little difficulty in controlling them. Nearly every native employed on the mine was on strike. At Sub-Nigel about two-thirds of

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the natives—about 3,000—went on strike, while at Vlakfontein all the natives, totalling about 3,000, also came out.

There was an abortive attempt at Marievale, when 30 of the natives who failed to go on duty in the morning returned to work later in the day.

On the West Rand conditions were lively early in the day, but by the afternoon the strike was at an end.

Natives at two compounds at the Randfontein Estates Mine refused to go on shift yesterday morning, as did 3,500 at the Robinson compound and 1,889 at the Battery Reefs compound.

After the strikers had been addressed by the mine manager and the native commissioner, who warned them that they were breaking their contract by striking, they all decided to go on shift.

About 150 natives, the whole complement of the Lancaster Mine at Krugersdorp, refused to go on shift. One of their spokesmen said that it was not their wish to go on strike, but they were doing so for fear of attacks and victimisation by the natives of neighbouring mines, who, they had been told, were determined to strike. When it was explained to them that natives on the other mines had returned to work, they did likewise.

Only 20 or 30 natives refused to work at the Luipaardsvlei Mine, and they were arrested by the police.

Inquiries at other West Rand mines disclosed that work was proceeding normally.

## INDIANS TO SUPPORT STRIKERS

The executive committee of the Passive Resistance Council of the Transvaal Indian Congress issued a statement yesterday pledging its support to the native strikers in their efforts to obtain 10s. a day and better conditions on the mines.

**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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