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Natal Natives No. 5

(4)

How Native Agriculture Has Deteriorated

By G. D. Alexander

WHEN considering the welfare of the Natives their agricultural needs come before everything else. If this contention does not early receive earnest attention and if full consideration is not given to the improvement of conditions as they to-day exist it will lead to a very grave condition arising, for on the agricultural production of the Bantu, with their low purchasing power depends to a very great extent their health, maintenance of physique, resistance to deficiency diseases and their happiness, morality and contentment.

Before contact with Europeans there existed a clearly drawn division of labour between the sexes. The principal duties of the men were, defence, hunting, hut-building and the care of cattle. The women centred their occupations on household duties, the care of children and cultivation of the fields.

The cultivation and harvesting of growing crops still remains to be done by the women—but owing to the need which has arisen for clothing, for the payment of taxes and other expenses such as cattle dipping fees, etc., and the increasing requirements of purchase of food, the ploughing of the land and the care of the livestock are very largely left to adolescent

boys who, in many instances, are lacking in experience, for the men have to go forth to earn wages.

Ploughing by the Natives, with few exceptions, consists of turning over once in the year three or four inches of the ground. Fertilisation is not practised even when large quantities of kraal manure and a plentiful supply of vegetable matter which would make valuable compost is available. The need for rotation of crops is not understood and is, therefore, not practised. It would be quite unfair to blame the Natives for this, for they only know the methods of their forebears and to the discredit of past administrations for their lack of foresight almost nothing has been done to teach the people.

Before the extension of occupation of the land by Europeans, and before farms became fenced and Natives were drafted into locations and the population of both Natives and their stock increased, the present ruinous condition of overstocking and the robbing of the soil of its fertility and the cropping year after year of the same fields with similar crops, did not exist and no serious damage resulted to the land. The livestock did not suffer as they do to-day in so many instances from semi-starvation. To-day,



however, as a consequence of lack of foresight on the part of the State hundreds of thousands of acres are being turned into deserts. Apart from any humanitarian considerations and from an economic viewpoint the policy in the past has been most shortsighted.

The State announced that it was going to purchase more land for the Natives to relieve congestion in the locations and reserves. The amount it was announced would be provided for purchase of the land was £10,000,000, but unless there is a much more extended effort to teach the Natives how to treat the land it will only be a matter of time before similar ruination of the soil will be apparent, as in the past.

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IN the past, and especially over the last 18 years there has been a steady decrease in the agriculture and in consequence in the prosperity of the Natives, and a heavy price will have to be paid for the failure to check this. The result is very apparent to-day and can be observed in many directions: In the increase of deficiency diseases resulting from malnutrition; in the lowered physique and stamina of the people; in the insufficiency of the labour supply on which this country is so vitally dependent; in the robbing of fertility of the soil; overstocking resulting in soil erosion and to the decline in morality, in honesty, courtesy and contentment and in the many virtues and lovable qualities the Natives were originally endowed with.

Many organisations at congresses discuss the position of the Natives—Chambers of Commerce and of Industries, Agricultural Unions, anti-Tuberculous Societies and others. Theories are propounded and suggestions are brought forward for the betterment of the Natives including

the raising of wages; methods to check malnutrition; to combat deficiency diseases, etc.; and protests are made at the export of European produced foodstuffs. The essential needs of vitamins is stressed to an extent almost amounting to an obsession. The provision of orange juice and of milk and butter are advocated as cure-alls. But how many realise that the main cause of deterioration in the Native race is that they are progressively producing less and less of their own food requirements and are without purchasing power to buy food to replace the shortage in their own production?

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THE purchase of milk and butter by the State and distribution to the Natives has been advocated from several directions.

Among the Native owned cattle there are approximately 1,900,000 cows. These being of the scrub type produce little milk, but if they produced on an average half a gallon per day they would, allowing for the period between calving produce 735,000 gallons per diem, equivalent to 267,275,000 gallons per annum. But the actual production is only a small fraction of this for the reasons that overstocking makes it necessary for cows to spend all their time searching for food and they do not obtain sufficient for maintenance which must be supplied before there can be appreciable production.

This condition becomes progressively worse when conditions exist causing further depreciation of the already deteriorated pasturage especially during the winter months.

This affects the rate of increase which, among the Native cattle, shows a very low ratio of calves to cows amounting to about 25 per cent.

Failing to realise the cause of the insufficiency of milk all attention is centred on the effects, and it is advocated by some that dairies to produce milk to be provided to Natives should be established on the borders of locations, and by others that the State should supply free milk and butter.

Lack of realisation of the steady decrease in Native production; of the diminishing of their assets; and decrease in spending power will result in a condition that will most seriously affect this country agriculturally, industrially and commercially and will before long limit production and raise the cost of living among the Europeans.

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THE following figures extracted from official statistics may enlighten some readers of the trend in the decrease of Natives' agricultural production and decrease in the value of their assets:

Description—	1	2	3	4
Cattle	3,949,446	4,992,353	5,134,266	141,913
Woolled Sheep	2,942,068	3,298,673	3,824,600	525,927
Non Woolled Sheep	820,031	609,027	1,066,031	457,004
Angora Goats	248,981	86,975	323,280	236,305
Other Goats	3,582,592	3,434,239	4,657,342	1,223,103
Bags (200lb.)—	Bags	Bags	Bags	Bags
Maize	5,587,150	2,587,000	7,263,280	4,676,280
Kafircorn	1,673,650	720,085	2,175,730	1,455,645
Lbs.—	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.
Wool	10,946,000	1,656,000	14,229,800	12,573,800
Mohair	626,000	226,000	813,800	587,800

In 1921-1922 the Native population was approximately 4,765,000. In 1935-1936 it had reached 6,500,000, an approximate increase of about 30 per cent.

In column one of the table hereunder is given the production of some of the principal items of agricultural production.

In column No. 2 is the production of the increased population in 1935-1936.

In column No. 3 appears the production there should have been

to maintain the same ratio per capita as existed in 1921-1922.

In column No. 4 is shown the shortage if the figures of the population to the production as in 1921-1922 is taken as a basis.

CONSIDERATION of these figures will show that in regard to the grain produced (maize and Kafircorn) the ratio per capita to the Native population in 1921-1922 was approximately 1½ bags and in 1935-1936 it was approximately one-half bag. Small stock, mainly used for food consumption and excepting woolled sheep and Angora goats though these were also a supply of animal protein, was in 1921-1922 approximately .97 and in 1935-1936 .6.

The production of wool and mohair in 1921-1922 per capita was approximately 2½lb. and in 1935-1936 approximately ½lb.

As a consequence of increase in the Native population and a decrease in their production, large quantities of food have to be purchased which formerly to a large

extent was produced by the people.

Owing to the methods adopted to maintain the price of European grown maize Natives, in recent years, have had to pay 15s. per bag and upwards for maize.

There has been culpable neglect by the State for years past. While since Union there has been State expenditure on European agriculture amounting to approximately £100,000,000, a quite negligible amount has been spent on maintaining the health and wel-

fare of the Bantu who are so vitally essential for the development of mining industries and to European agriculture.

In the valuable report of the Native Economic Commission of 1932 a grave warning was given of the deplorable results which would follow if the position was not realised, but it was not until five years later that any serious effort was attempted to undertake instruction of Natives in better agricultural methods, and even then the provision was quite inadequate, and it is submitted the scheme adopted is not on the best lines.

Such action as has been taken however, shows a belated awakening and an endeavour to retrieve a situation that has cost the country dear and will necessitate a huge expenditure before the consequences of past neglect can be overcome.

The Native Agricultural Department is not to blame. It has been stinted for funds and hampered in its efforts to develop on sound and progressive lines.

With the funds at its disposal it has done excellent work in some directions and it is earnestly

endeavouring to bring about improvement.

THE inauguration of Native agricultural shows by the Department has helped to interest Natives in agricultural production and has tended to create emulation.

Any effort to reduce the evil of overstocking by Natives is discouraged and practical propositions to deal with this evil remain unconsidered.

One of the greatest obstacles in the way of Native progress is the quite mistaken idea prevalent among the majority of Europeans that the Native cannot learn and cannot progress, but must always remain in an ignorant and backward condition. The Natives in the Union, it is contended, are quite equal in intelligence to the Negroes in the United States of America.

In the Southern States in that country Negroes own 1,000,000 farms valued at £400,000,000. They have 51 banks with reserves of £4,000,000 and they are transacting an annual volume of business amounting to £15,000,000.

posed to do to-day what he (Sir Thomas) suggested that he should do fourteen days ago? He knew that the right hon. gentleman depended on his docile majority—the hon. member for Port Elizabeth called it a willing and docile majority—(laughter)—but he (Sir Thomas) hoped that this would be a lesson to the Prime Minister, and that he would profit by the experience, and that when they on that side of the House tendered advice as to the best manner of carrying on the business of the country, his right hon. friend would accept the advice in the spirit in which it was intended. When they came to the end of the session, and realised that, owing to a good many days being wasted, in consequence of the manner in which the Government had conducted the business, the right hon. gentleman would realise that the responsibility would rest entirely on his shoulders, and on those of the gentlemen who sat on the Treasury benches. He (Sir Thomas) welcomed the motion, and he was exceedingly pleased that, after fourteen days, the Prime Minister had seen the common-sense of the proposals made by the Opposition. (Opposition cheers.)

The motion was agreed to.

NATIVES LAND BILL.

SECOND READING.

The adjourned debate on the motion for the second reading of the Natives Land Bill was resumed by

*Mr. J. X. MERRIMAN (Victoria West), who on rising was greeted with cheers. It was with very great reluctance (the right hon. gentleman said) that he rose to speak on this measure. It would have been more convenient to have given a silent vote, but he felt, and he was afraid, that after many years of devoted attention to this question of the native policy of South Africa, he would not be doing his duty if he did not give this House—for what it was worth—the result of his experience through these years. (Hear, hear.) First of all, he would say that he hoped this House would recognise the very grave nature of any step they might take which had to deal with native policy. (Hear, hear.) They were dealing with the welfare of the future of four millions of their fellow-subjects, for whom they were responsible, and who had no voice in that place. They had to consider that, when they were dealing with the Government of England in passing the Act of Union through the House of Commons, they gave very emphatic pledges with regard to their attitude in regard to the natives who were placed in their care. They satisfied them that they would be dealt with with the most scrupulous justice and with the utmost toleration. He well recollected, when that Bill was passing through the House of Commons, the only speech which lifted the discussion out of the rut of party politics was that delivered by Mr. Balfour, and the attitude which he recommended to his side of the

House was that we in this country were responsible, upon us would fall the result of any mistakes that we made, we should have to pay, and we should, therefore, be left to manage these affairs as we were guided. He (Mr. Merriman) had said that these people were voiceless. They should recollect that. In the future of South Africa, they would be judged by the way in which they handled this important question. The gold mines would perish after a time. No one could tell what the future of this country might be; but, as far as they could see, the natives would always be with us, and one of the great tasks which was imposed upon the white races of South Africa was to civilise and bring the natives up, and not to trample upon them and repress them. It was in that spirit that he and his hon. friend who had introduced this Bill had in the past tried to act. It was a spirit in which the Parliament had tried to act.

In speaking for South Africa, they were proud to be able to point to the example set by this country in regard to the liberal treatment of natives. Mr. Rhodes and he always agreed that the one thing which made politics interesting in South Africa and took politics away from the mere wrangle as to whether one section was to dominate another, was this native question. Upon whether they did their duty or not depended the future, not only of this part of South Africa, but of the whole of Africa. It was not we who were going to pay for any mistakes we made now, but we could depend upon it that those who came after us would have to pay for any mistakes we made in dealing with any matter of native policy at the present time. Therefore, he said this matter must be approached with caution. He deprecated and he hoped they would not hear any of those heated speeches which sometimes they heard outside this House, and sometimes in this House, too. They must recollect that they were not speaking to their own race merely. He might quote the words of a very wise man, speaking more than one hundred years ago of the situation of England in India. They applied with double emphasis to our situation in this country. Mr. Burke, after having described the position of the English race in India, said: "All these circumstances are not, I confess, very favourable to the idea of attempting to govern India at all, but there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer, and we must do the best we can in the situation. The situation of a man is the preceptor of his duty." Let them remember that the situation of a man was the preceptor of his duty. Our duty as the superior race was not to repress and keep these people down, but, while we made ourselves worthy of our position as the dominant race of this country, we should try and lift these people up at the same time.

He should like to emphasise another and brighter side of the question, and that was

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£36 18s. per annum from the date of his retirement; the increase in the pension being utilised to liquidate the amount of contributions due; (6) that the pension of £437 10s. per annum awarded to Sir George Turner, formerly superintendent of the Pretoria Leper Asylum, be increased by £250 per annum, to take effect from the 1st April, 1913; (7) (a) the condonation of the break in the late D. D. Birrell's service under the Government of the Cape of Good Hope—from August 1, 1901, to December 14, 1903—so that this officer's contributions to the Pension Fund in respect of the period of his service from April, 1885, to July, 1901 (£42 5s. 9d.), may become available to his widow and a proportionate benefit may accrue to her from the Widows Pension Fund, and (b) the award to her, in terms of Cape Act No. 32 of 1895 (section 33), of a gratuity of £100; (8) the award to Eliza J. Pratt, of a pension of £1 per month, to take effect from April 1, 1913; (9) the award to W. Makenana, formerly labourer, Railway Department, of a pension of £1 per month, to take effect from April 1, 1913; (10) the award to P. Kelly, formerly clerk, Postal Department, of a pension of £1 per month, to take effect from April 1, 1913; (11) that the break in the service of J. Williams, formerly blacksmith, South African Railways, from or about November, 1877, to April 1, 1879, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of his previous service, and that the period of his service between April 1, 1879 and June 1, 1880, be admitted as part of his continuous service for pension purposes; (12) that the break in the service of Edith J. A. Black, teacher, from October 1, 1908, to December 31, 1909, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of her previous service; (13) that the breaks in the service of Magdalena Marais, teacher, from April 1, 1909, to September 30, 1911, and from January 1, 1912, to June 30, 1912, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of her previous service; (14) that the break in the service of D. G. Roux, teacher, from January 1, 1907, to June 30, 1909, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of his previous service; (15) that the break in the service of D. J. W. Wium, teacher, from January 1, 1910, to December 31, 1912, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of his previous service; (16) that the break in the service of Anna C. le Roux, teacher, from April 1, 1894, to June 30, 1900, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not counting as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of her previous service; (17) that the break in the service of D. J. Retief, teacher, from January 1, 1909, to December 31, 1910, be condoned, being regarded as special leave, not count-

ing as service, but preserving for petitioner the benefit of his previous service; (18) that the Superintendent of Education, Natal, be authorised to place the name of A. Day, teacher, on the register for pension purposes, in pursuance of Act No. 31 of 1910 (Natal); (19) that the petition of H. T. Smith be referred to the Government with a view to the possibility of his being reinstated in the Public Service; (20) that the petition of D. Collenette be referred to the Government with a view to his reinstatement in the Railway Department.

II. That it is unable to recommend that the prayers of the following petitions be entertained, viz.: (1) A. Harris, (2) Anne O. Edmonds, (3) Johanna J. Screech, (4) P. J. M. Brocklebank, (5) C. Murison, (6) N. J. Lerhoto, (7) J. G. Sutton, (8) A. P. van Straten, (9) N. W. Pentz, (10) V. Begley, (11) W. Greenwood, (12) L. M. Sculphort, (13) A. J. S. Young, (14) H. J. McDonald, (15) F. Thomas, (16) H. W. Brauns, (17) Charlotte A. Turner, (18) W. Matthew, (19) With reference to the petition of M. J. de Beer, your Committee is unable to make any recommendation thereon, as the subject matter of the petition appears to be one to be dealt with by the Provincial Administration.

The report was set down for consideration to-morrow.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The PRIME MINISTER moved: That the Sessional Standing Order giving precedence to the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure by Committee of Supply during evening sittings, adopted on the 2nd May, 1913, be discharged.

Mr. C. J. KRIGE (Caledon) seconded.

Sir T. W. SMARTT (Fort Beaufort) said he would be remiss in a most pleasing duty if he did not congratulate the Prime Minister and the members of the Government on at last realising that the business of the House should have the first consideration of the House. On May 2, when the Prime Minister moved the Sessional Standing Order which it was now sought to discharge, the Opposition, and the right hon. member for Victoria West, with his long Parliamentary experience, tried to explain to the Government to what confusion the business of the country would be put if the Government forced the motion through. The Opposition welcomed the Government's change of front, but was exceedingly sorry that fourteen days of the session should have been wasted by the obstinacy of the gentlemen on the Treasury benches. He hoped this would be an example by which his right hon. friend would profit, and that he would realise that, when the Opposition tendered advice to the Treasury benches, it always did so with the best intention. (Loud Ministerial laughter.) Hon. members might laugh, but could anybody say that this advice was not tendered with the best intentions, when the Prime Minister pro-

to point out that the natives were not only a danger and a responsibility to us in this country, but, if they were well managed, they were an invaluable asset to the people of this country. (Hear, hear.) Let them take our trade figures and compare them with the figures of the other large British Dominions. Our figures were surprising when measured by the white population, but if they took the richest Dominion that there was under the British Crown outside South Africa, and took the trade value of those figures per head of the white population, and multiply those figures by our European population, then they might very well apply any balance they had to our native population, and then they would see, strangely enough, that upon that basis it worked out that the actual trade of three natives was worth about that of one white man. That of course, was a very imperfect way of looking at the value of these people, because the trade value of some of these natives was far greater than the trade value of some of our white people, and the trade value of an ordinary white person. He had merely indicated these trade figures to show what an enormous asset we had in the natives in that respect. Let them think what the industry of the natives had done for us. Who had built our railways, who had dug our mines, and developed this country as far as it was developed? Who had been the actual manual worker who had done that? The native: the coloured races of this country. We must never forget that we owed them a debt in that respect—a debt not often enough acknowledged by what we did for them. Proceeding, he said that they ought to think what they owed to the docility of the natives, and the wonderfully easy way in which they had been governed when treated properly. He also paid a tribute to the honesty of the natives. He went on to say that he wished to show the way in which a Bill of this nature should be approached.

The Bill was of the very greatest importance. What must strike anyone was the fact that though this Bill was really, to a certain extent, a beginning, or was thought to be in certain quarters, of a revolution in their dealing with the native races, it was not even mentioned in the speech of the Governor-General. It fell upon them like a bolt from the blue. He remembered the afternoon. They had heard a very impassioned and very heated speech from the hon. member for Ficksburg on the enormous danger of squatting in the Free State, and that was the occasion for introducing a general statement of the policy of the Government towards the natives and the introduction of this Bill. He did not think that that was the way they liked to see a thing of this magnitude approached. They often heard demands for what was called a general declaration of policy with regard to native affairs—a policy which should be applied to the highest civilised native, the

owner of a farm and the naked barbarian. They could not do it. People who demanded a general declaration of that kind had not had the experience which some of them had had. The hon. member who spoke before him said that he was in favour of the underlying principle of the Bill. What was the underlying principle? The underlying principle was what one read into the Bill. One hon. member read into it that it was the separation of the two races. That might have been done when the two races first came in contact at the Fish River, but it could not be done now. Since then they had been developing the country with the labour of these people. They had been advancing by our aid. They had mixed themselves up with these people in an extricable fashion, and then some said "Haul your native policy out of the drawer and begin with a policy of separation." He was sure that the hon. member who had brought in the Bill had no idea of that sort in his mind. Another person had the idea that they were going to set up a sort of pale—a sort of kraal in which they were going to drive these people. Then another gentleman sneered at the policy hitherto adopted, and he said that one side said that the policy towards the natives should be firm and just, while the other side said that it should be just and firm. He was sure that members on both sides of the House were absolutely in favour of a just policy towards the natives, and every man charged with the administration of public affairs should see that the policy towards the natives was firm—when they promised the native something that promise should be fulfilled.

When they made a stringent squatting law they should not break that law just for their own convenience. (Hear, hear.) That was not firmness and that was not justice. It was an unworthy sneer to have said that native policy should be firm and just as if it was a mere phrase. It had fallen to the lot of his friend by some malign dispensation of Fate to introduce this Bill, but he felt certain that he would not depart one jot from the policy of firmness and justice. He was annoyed the previous night by hearing a certain section of people carping at his hon. friend for following a certain direction in regard to the native labour policy. He (the speaker) knew how his hon. friend, since he assumed office, had devoted his attention to this question of native labour, to see that the question was put right. It seemed ungracious for that section to have seized that moment for making little pricks at his policy. His hon. friend was old enough to recollect, as he did, a famous occasion when they had another Minister who determined to lay down what he termed the native policy for all time for the guidance of South Africa, and it was called a policy of vigour. For that policy of vigour they were still paying the interest on four millions of money every year. Sometimes he felt inclined to remind his hon. friend of the saying of his favourite

statesman Lord Melbourne, who on being approached by people to do the most impossible things, would say "Can't you leave it alone?" Sometimes he felt like that. But there was the Bill, and they must approach it with the greatest reserve and toleration. In a few words he would like to deal with some of the criticism that had been advanced with regard to the measure. It seemed to him that they had not got sufficient information. Beyond the bald statistics which were given by the Minister in the course of his interesting and moderate speech, they had nothing. They were going into a thing that would stir South Africa from end to end, and which affected hundreds of thousands of both races. They had no information as to what were the ideas of the natives. It was unfortunate that, owing to this lack of information, wrong ideas had got about with regard to this Bill. It was difficult to find out what the native thought about these things; he doubted whether anybody could say that he had got at the mind of the native. The only way, and he must say that he did not take it as a real indication, was what they wrote in their newspapers. He was alarmed, but not surprised, at some of the articles in their newspapers, because they took their views from the heated speeches and writings in party newspapers all over the country, and they were very much alarmed. He thought that before a Bill of this sort was passed, there should be some attempt made to get their views. As far as one section was concerned, the Bill was going to set up a sort of pale—that there was going to be a sort of kraal in which all the natives were to be driven, and they were to be left to develop on their own lines. To allow them to go on their own lines was merely to drive them back into barbarism; their own lines meant barbarous lines: their own lines were cruel lines. All along they had been bringing them away from their own lines. It reminded him of what an English writer said about a similar policy of Ireland, because when the English went to Ireland they regarded the native Irish in the way some extreme people here regarded the natives of South Africa. They thought they would root them out. They treated them as dogs, and thought that they were dogs. They set up a pale. They set the Irish within that pale, to develop upon their own lines, but there were always Englishmen living in that pale, just as in the same way they found Europeans living among natives. Sir George Davis in describing this policy wrote that it was the intention of the Government to set up a separation between English and Irish, intending in time that the English should root out the Irish. If they changed the Irish for natives they would see how the illustration would apply. A policy more foredoomed to failure in South Africa could not be initiated. It was a policy that would keep

South Africa back, perhaps for ever. (Hear, hear.) What would be the effect of driving these civilised natives back into reserves? At the present time, every civilised man—if they treated him properly—every civilised man was becoming an owner of land outside native reserve, and therefore he was an asset of strength to the country. He was a loyalist. He was not going to risk losing his property. He was on the side of the European. If they drove these people back into reserve they became our bitterest enemies. Therefore, he viewed anything that tended that way with the gravest suspicion. Again, in this Bill there was not sufficient distinction between those natives who tried to educate themselves and the ordinary raw barbarian. They were all classed under the word "native."

What they wanted to prevent, however, was communal land tenure of the natives outside the reserve. It was rather hard to leave it to the Government of the day to say whether a native should be driven into a kraal or helped on his way. He recognised all the difficulties of this question in Cape Colony. In Cape Colony one of the last Acts that was passed by them was an Act forbidding any purchase of land by natives on communal tenure outside the reserve. Communal tenure was a tenure of barbarism—no matter what his hon. friends on the cross benches might say. He was strongly opposed to it, and he hoped that in any measure which they passed, they would make a differentiation between the two classes of purchase. It was contemplated to take land from native people, and land from white people, by the advice of a Commission. Of course, it was true that they would have to introduce a Bill, which would probably have a very rough passage through the House. He came now to what was the main object of the Bill, and that was: to do away with the squatting evil. Why was there a squatting evil? Was it the fault of the native? (An hon. member: No.) Was it the fault of the law? (No.) They had got the most stringent laws concerning natives of all the laws in the whole country, in the Province of which his hon. friend (Mr. Keyter) was a member. He did not think anything was more surprising than when they came to look at the increases in the native population in the Orange Free State. They had a huge native population in the Cape, and the increase during the census periods from 1904 to 1911—he wanted hon. members to pay some attention to this, because it showed the value of legislation—the increase in the Cape Province during that period was 8.33 per cent. In Natal, which had a huge—in fact, an overwhelming—native population, curiously enough, the increase was the same, even to the actual decimal figure, viz., 8.33 per cent.; but some allowance must be made, because a large number of natives were out at work in the mines. Now, in the Transvaal—and in taking the Trans-

yaal figures these did not apply as regarded squatting, because the increase was mainly due to the number of natives employed in the mines. In the Transvaal the natives increased by 50.1 per cent. Now, when they came to his friend's little State, where the most stringent laws were made to keep out the natives, how much did they suppose the natives increased in the Free State? By no less than 44 per cent. (Opposition cheers.) Was that the fault of the natives? No, it was because—having the most stringent laws—the people found it best to evade those laws. (Hear, hear.) He hoped his hon. friend would be a little tolerant. Do let him pick the mote out of his own eye before he tried to pick the beam out of other people's. (Hear, hear.) In the Free State these laws were very severe; for instance, punishments—amazing punishments—were given, and yet the result was the increase in five years by 44 per cent. of their native population. This was something that they should take a warning by. They were going to do away with the squatter in appearance, but he would still survive as a labour tenant. They might do away with the labour tenant, and he would still be surviving as a labour servant. How was the Government to distinguish between these? They had in the Cape a law which stated how many labour tenants a man should have upon his farm.

What they wanted in this country was administration and not mere legislation, and if they were to put the laws which they had into force in the Free State at the present time he had no doubt that there would be a rebellion. (Hear, hear.) They would have platforms swarming with people who would say that they could not grow one bag of mealies without the natives. But they had the laws to do it. Now they went and tried in this Bill to make a uniform law. That his poor friend the Minister of all people should be the author of a uniform law on native matters! (Laughter.) He said this more in sorrow than in anger—(laughter)—because the conditions were totally different in the four Provinces. In the Cape they had their laws, and he did not think that any reasonable man could object to them. They had minimised their squatting evil, they had done away with the communal purchase of land by natives, and they had given their natives ample reserves. In Natal they had a system which had apparently worked well. At any rate there they were very much mixed up with this tenant business. They might pass a Bill and find that the whole population of Natal—white and black—against it, and thus they might have to alter the Bill.

Mr. M. W. MYBURGH (Vryheid); No.

*Mr. MERRIMAN: The hon. member speaks for the whole population of Natal. (Laughter.) In the Free State, proceeded Mr. Merriman, we were in an entirely different position, for there the people had most excellent laws from their point of view for keeping out the natives—strin-

gent, Draconian, and violent laws, but they were not carried out, and the natives had flooded the country. All they wanted to do was to turn the native from a tenant to a labour tenant, and then salvation would be at hand. He could not see very much difference between the two, except that one was a contented advancing man and the other a discontented man approaching very closely to the Russian serf—he was a soul. Shortly we should hear of a farm being up for sale with so many souls.

In the Transvaal the problem had been complicated by the decisions of the Court and the curious way in which some ground had been given out in the Zoutpansberg district, where, he was told, farms had been given out on which the natives had been living for years, and these farms—with the natives on them—had come into the possession of companies and individuals, and now it was proposed to turn the natives off. That would not be an agreeable thing, but he would not offer an opinion now as to the justice of it. Every good Government, went on Mr. Merriman, should set its face against communal purchase. The matter was complicated by the fact that in the Union we had not only natives in different stages of advancement, but the laws in the four Provinces were entirely different, and they proposed to cut the Gordian knot by passing the Bill. But that would be a mistake without more information than they had at the present time.

He would like to revert to the state of things which had grown up under the Draconian laws of the Free State. According to a very interesting Blue-book containing reports of magistrates, one magistrate had reported that "the pernicious system of squatting was detrimental to the working farmer, the native reaping the whole of the benefit." The man who worked generally reaped the whole benefit in the long run. In the Harrismith district there were some 40,000 natives against some 3,000 Europeans. How did they get there? Having been a Free State burgher, he knew that the natives had not forced their way in. These natives ploughed on the half-shares, and he would like to know whether they were labour tenants or squatters. If they were squatters it would require very little dexterous management to convert them into labour tenants. The Magistrate of Hoopstad, went on Mr. Merriman, had referred to the pernicious system of native squatters. But why did not the Free State magistrates do something and put the law in force? That was the principal reason why the House was forced to pass that Bill without information, and without giving any opportunity to people who had the deepest interest in this matter to have their views heard, or to let them know what the House was going to do because the magistrates in the Free State would not enforce the law. He did think that was rather hard. In conclusion, Mr. Merriman said: I dare say I may have said a great many things which may be distaste-

ful to my hon. friends, but I do claim their attention because at a time when they were not in such a dominant position as they are now, I pleaded for right and justice for them. Therefore, they should not take it amiss from me, because now they are in a dominant position, I plead also for justice, toleration, moderation, and delay in this matter. I do not like the amendment of the hon. member for East London, because we want to consider the matter. I think we should read the Bill a second time and then send it to a Select Committee, where we shall be able to hear the views of people interested on both sides. I shall with reluctance and apprehension vote for the second reading, but I shall certainly vote afterwards for having the Bill sent to a Select Committee. (Cheers.)

*Mr. F. D. P. CHAPLIN (Germiston) took it that as the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Merriman) had agreed to vote for the second reading, he accepted the principle of the Bill. He thought the right hon. gentleman in claiming that more information should be given did not perhaps give sufficient weight to the fact that the majority of that very important Commission, which sat two years ago, recommended definitely in favour of legislation somewhat on these lines, and it seemed to him (Mr. Chaplin) that whether the Bill was sent to a Select Committee before the second reading or not, no possible harm could be done by having a full discussion on the matter. He hoped the subject was one which could be handled without any display of party heat. The difference in the point of view varied according to the time which had elapsed since the white people in a particular part of the country had been forced to treat the black man as their enemy. The longer the time had elapsed the more tolerant became the feeling of the white population towards their coloured fellow-subjects.

It was satisfactory to some of them to see that in this Bill there was evidence of something like agreement on native policy in one, at any rate, if its most important features between the various sections of the Cabinet and of the Nationalist party. In the past there was no doubt that they had had placed before them very divergent views. He was glad to see that what was evidently in the minds of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet was not a policy of segregation such as he understood was advocated by the hon. member for Smithfield and such as he understood was advocated by the hon. member's allies on the cross-benches. Mr. Chaplin went on to say that, although they were not in favour of a policy of that kind, it was surely not unnatural that the white people of South Africa should take stock of the position and consider how they were going to preserve their position as what was and what must be the dominant race in the country. It was a *sine qua non* that any legislation of this kind must be carried out without fear

or favour, with absolute justice to all parties concerned, and without a suspicion of favouritism or political influence. There was no doubt that the adoption of a policy such as was outlined in this Bill would greatly diminish the difficulties of native administration. He thought there was a great deal to be said for it in that it would tend to train the native towards a state of civilisation which was peculiarly suited to the native, i.e., that where the natives became collected together in thickly-populated districts, native districts, as they were to be termed under the Bill, it might be possible to encourage the native to take part in local self-government, where he would not come in conflict with white men's ideals and white men's vested rights, and where he would be able to train himself and become a fully-civilised member of the community. But, of course, they must recognise that if this policy were to be carried out great sacrifices would have to be made.

As to those people who were anxious for complete separation, anxious for what the right hon. gentleman had called a pale which would be more effective even than the pale which was met on the Russian frontier, these people, when they said that this policy should be carried out in thoroughness and entirety, must see that, in the effort to diminish the points of contact between the native and white man, the white man must accustom himself to do without the black man's labour. The plain fact of the matter was that we were not in this country prepared to do without the labour of the black man, and we were certainly not prepared to make that sacrifice. But, if we were not prepared to do that, we must face the fact, and he, for one, saw no reason why we should not face that fact. The whole civilisation of this country had been built up on native labour and, as the right hon. gentleman had said, the native was one of the greatest assets we had in this country, and so long as he remained in anything like his present civilisation, so long would he be needed, as the hon. gentleman said in introducing this Bill, as a labourer. It was idle to deny that in the future the question was bound to come to the front as to what the status of the native was going to be. He could not say that successive Governments in the Transvaal, either before the war or since, had done much to educate the native. However that might be, the native was going to educate himself. When we had got further in that stage, the question was going to arise how were they going to treat the educated native? Were they going to treat the native in all respects equal to the white man? If they did this, it was impossible to confine him to reserves, it was impossible in the end to deprive him of the franchise, and they had got to adopt definitely and for all time the principle that civilisation was the thing that counted. He did not think the time had arrived for that yet, but undoubtedly that question would come to the front. Later on, assuming that the

for J. R. Jones
F. D. P.

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