

J U L Y 22nd 1911.

Office of the Sub Native Commissioner,
S e k u k u n i l a n d.

S.K.285/11/412.

The Secretary for Natiwe Affairs,

P R E T O R I A :

In answer to General Minute (Transvaal)
No 4 of June 29th I have to report as follows:-

In former years it has been the custom in Sekukuniland to collect tax at Schoonoord from the southern half of Geluks Location, the Lulu and the nearer Steelpoort farms, slowly throughout the first month of collections. This year owing to Census a month's collections had to be crowded into one week during which about £2800 came in. *in May before tour began*
The Steelpoort farms had this year to pay at the first collecting place, Reitfontein which is half way between Schoonoord and Lydenburg, thus £466 was taken instead of as in former years about £100. It is at this stage that we come into the white farming area.
Our second halting place was at Rooikrans where the collection for the first day was £176 and the second day only £13 which was convenient as it enabled me to settle complaints and clear correspondence.
On June 7th during the trek from Rooikrans to Wemmershoek we drank coffee or peach brandy at every farm house along the road. At Wemmershoek there are very few boys and as was usual throughout the tour there were
many -

many requests for me to supply farmers with labour; only £44.10. was collected though some petty cases were settled.

On June 10th after a long trek by bad road Badfontein was reached, this is the most southern collecting point in my district and is close upon 100 miles by road from Schoonoord. On Monday June 12th £57.10. came in and various farmers were visited.

On June 13th and 14th we trekked to Lydenburg where ~~the~~ revenue was paid in and thence to Krugers Post where the S.N.C., Pilgrims Rest was already encamped, this place bordering on ~~out~~ two districts.

Krugers Post produced £104 and on June 16th we trekked to Ohrigstad and remained three days, collecting £560 chiefly from the natives in the part unoccupied by whites between the Olifants River and Ohrigstad. Many complaints were received of damage to stock and crops by wild dogs, tigers and baboons.

On June 20th Camp was shifted from Ohrigstad : Lydenburg was reached on the 21st and the cash paid in. Camp remained in Lydenburg over the Coronation till June 26th during which time over £380 was Paid by the Mission, farm and Municipal boys.

On June 27th a long trek took us to Boerboomkraal in the Waterval valley, the waggon did not get in till 11 o'clock at night. Three days at Boerboomkraal realised £430 and at this point I was able to pay out on the spot the Treasury refund of £101 for Crown Rents wrongly collected from Welgevonden natives, this matter dated back from 1905. As my senior clerk Mr Yeats was shortly going on long leave, my junior clerk Mr King who had remained at Schoonoord and during June had collected over £200 which he had brought in to Lydenburg and paid into Revenue, came out and joined me.

On July 1st and 2nd we trekked out of the farming area

across the Steelpoort into Sekukuniland via Burger Fort to Mooihoek. Mr Yeats left taking the cash into Lydenburg from which place he subsequently started on leave.

Colonel Damant Native Commissioner for this district joined me at Mooihoek on his journey East of the Lulu. Slightly over £1000 came in at Mooihoek, this being under the average of former years. Crown Rents however were well up to the mark.

Our next centre was at Twickenham under the N.E. slope of the Lulu, here the Native Commissioner left us, £760 was collected and many petty cases settled. Raid fell during most of our stay.

From Twickenham it is a long and almost waterless trek round the Lulu to Sekukuni's kraal at Mhlaletse which was reached on July 13th. The three days' collection here totalled nearly £2000. Sekukuni assisted in arranging his people for payment and in supplying information. Several petty cases and estates were cleared off and by trekking on Sunday before daybreak Schoonoord was reached late that same afternoon.

As I have mentioned the lack of farm labour seems to be almost universal.

Some farmers complained that this year the tax was too late as many had trekked with their stock to the low veld; in former years there was a general complaint that it was too early, so it is impossible to satisfy everybody. Another complaint by farmers is that when they allow their labourers to go to the Rand to work and get money for the tax the boys stay away considerably over the stipulated time and ^{the farmers} they have comparatively no redress.

The farm labourers certificates are too complicated for the majority of farmers to understand, nearly all certificates eventually had to be made out by me or my clerk, the farmer merely signing his name. It would be better if a simpler form of certificate could be

arranged especially to allow of one signature instead of two.

On the Sekukuniland part of the tour the people were found to be short of food owing to the failure of the crops, most of the able-bodied men were away at work.

The district is full of wild dogs, some were shot at Boerboomkraal while our camp was there.

The dog law presses heavily on the remoter part of this district where a few of the kaffir hunting dog type are badly required for stock protection.

Sub Native Commissioners should be allowed more scope in Exemptions from Tax; natives who are too old to go to the Rand but are not old enough to exempt ^{and} are mostly old fashioned plural wived men are the most frequent defaulters and fill our gaols, some of these are quite able to pay £2 but not £4, this matter was mentioned at the S.N.C's conference last year. Some natives who are too sick to come to the collecting centres and fall into arrear, we cannot exempt those in arrear without reference to Pretoria, this should not be necessary as we are in a better position to judge each case.

This year my exemption list has been an unusually long one as in 1910 the acting S.N.C., while I was on leave exempted very few, also after the slaughter of East Coast Fever cattle in 1909 and 1910 the compensation maney was largely used up for tax payment, this year there is no money left and a number of the old men are destitute.

I have always found tax tour a bad time in which to interview chiefs and headmen, because in native centres the tax collection fills the whole day and and there is but little time to talk. In former years both in Pilansberg and Sekukuniland I have therefore made a practice of visiting all chiefs and headmen in the winter months immediately succeeding the tax tour, this also saves me appearing among them solely as a tax gatherer.

The paper of the tax receipt forms this year is too small and too thin and the perforation is bad.

The Card System is more cumbersome than the old tax register, it is more difficult to transport and more liable to damage or loss. In a busy office like this it is a practical impossibility to keep it up to date with our present staff, though it may be workable in a small district or where the official is a Tax Collector only. It takes much longer to look a boy up and is inconvenient in every way and I trust it will be abolished. The Tax Register is far superior and the pass, passport and other details could easily be inserted in the Remarks column.

D. H.

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Sekukuniland.

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