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THE TRANSVAAL, OR SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

By S. P. FORD, ADVOCATE (*Transvaal*).(*Read at Meeting of British Association, Bath, 1888.*)

SITUATION AND EXTENT.—The Transvaal lies between 22° and 28° south latitude, and 25° and 32° east longitude. It is surrounded on the north by native territory now under British protection, on the east by Portuguese possessions, Swaziland, and Zululand, on the south by Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Cape colony, and on the west by Bechuanaland. You will see, therefore, how the Transvaal is hemmed in, and that it has no seaport of its own, which is one of the greatest grievances afflicting our President, Paul Kruger. The territory comprises about 119,000 English square miles. It is about half the size of the Cape Colony, six times the size of Natal, and, as compared with the areas of European countries, we may say that it is as large as Great Britain and Ireland taken together.

HISTORY.—The Transvaal was taken possession of in 1839 by a number of Colonial (Dutch-speaking) Boers, who were dissatisfied with the British Government on account of the abolition of slavery. In 1852 the British Government acknowledged the independence of the State, which was thereafter known as "The South African Republic." After this all went well with the State until, in about 1876, a war between it and Secoweni, a rebel chief residing within the limits of the territory, so drained the finances and other resources of the people that general ruin and disorder were fast approaching. It was then, upon the representations of a great number of people residing in the State, that H.M. Government, for the safety and protection, not only of the white people of the Transvaal, but also of the whole of South Africa, sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone from Natal with a body of police, with instructions to annex the Transvaal if he found it ripe for such a measure. On Sir Theophilus Shepstone's arrival, being met almost everywhere with welcome, and very little opposition, he proceeded to Pretoria, the seat of Government, soon arranged matters with the then President (Mr. Burgers), hoisted the British flag, and in a long proclamation gave the reasons for so doing, and promised in Her Majesty's name in other matters to respect the constitution and laws of the land. Everything went smoothly for a time, the debts of the State were liquidated, and a High Court was established. At the head of the latter was placed the present Chief-Justice of the Transvaal, J. G. Hotze, a very able lawyer, and I had the honour of being sworn in as Her Majesty's Attorney-General, both appointments, of course, being subject to the subsequent approval from headquarters. And my own impression is that had the British Governor allowed Sir Theophilus Shepstone to fulfil the promise (contained in his proclamation) of calling together the legislature of the country, and not deprived them, as it did, of all voice in the government, we should never have had the war of 1880-81, nor have suffered the humiliation of retreating from the country,

and seeing it once more an independent state. To the British it was a sad blow, but it was more cruel to those of the Boers who remained loyal to Her Majesty, because they will never hear the last of it from their fellows. Now, however, that a few years have rolled by, many (I for one) see that unexpected good has come out of the retrocession, because no sooner had the Boers the country again in their own hands than they did what to people here would seem altogether opposed to progress and free trade, namely, they granted to landed proprietors who would pay for them concessions to work the mines, or supposed mines, on their land. This had a wonderful run, hundreds of concessions were taken out, and the whole country became quickly alive with prospectors; and gold, silver, iron, coal, and what not, were soon discovered to exist where previously it was not dreamt of. These concessions do not all now exist, as a great many of them fell through for want of payment, or non-compliance with the conditions upon which they were granted, and the Boer Government, moreover, discontinued their issue, substituting the present "Gold Law," which is a marvel of legislation, well suited to the circumstances of the country, the owners of the soil, and, at the same time, to capitalists. Within the last eighteen months some 25,000 or 30,000 people have rushed from the adjoining colonies and states, and the country is at present one of the most prosperous in the world—that is, for its size and age. It is very easy for those who, like myself, know the resources of the country, to predict a grand future for South Africa.

GOVERNMENT.—The legislative power of the Transvaal is vested in a representative institution called the "Volksraad" (or "Council of the People"). There are thirteen districts in the country, some of which return three and others two members. The executive is vested solely in the President, but he has a body called the "Executive Council" to refer to for advice, and generally he does nothing of importance without first consulting them. This executive is composed of the Commandant-General, the Secretary for Native Affairs, two non-official members, the State Secretary, and the Minister of Mines. The President and his executive have seats, but no votes, in the Volksraad.

COURTS.—After the retrocession the High or Supreme Court was continued, but the number of judges has been increased from two to three, and within the last month the Volksraad have authorised the appointment of two more. The fourth is already nominated, and the fifth will soon, I trust, be obtained. Having had the pleasure and honour of practising before this Court, I can assure the people of this country that they need have no fear about intrusting their persons and property within the jurisdiction of our judges. Three of these judges are English barristers, who were for many years advocates at the bar of the Cape Colony. The fourth judge is a Hollander who is universally respected. We have eighteen barristers (or, as they are there called, advocates), and some fifty solicitors (or attorneys, as we call them). Besides the High Court, there is in each of the thirteen districts and at each gold field a magistrate (or landdrost) with limited civil and criminal jurisdiction, and a land court.

LAWS.—The laws in force are nominally the Roman-Dutch, and a few local ones, but practically you may take it that the English laws are the most followed, because most law-suits now-a-days arise out of *modern* commerce and mining, and the old Roman-Dutch laws have little to say on the numerous points which arise on those two subjects, and we lawyers have to go to the English authorities. We have a very fair law-library in the Court-house, composed principally of English text-books and reports. Of course we generally, when on the law points of a case, quote first of all, all the Roman-Dutch law on the subject; but my experience is that in most cases, not arising out of wills, we have to search for English authorities, and that upon *them* the cases are mostly decided.

LANGUAGE.—By law the language of the country is Dutch, but, by an Act passed this year, officials have the right of repeating in English whatever they have first said in Dutch. This law was passed to meet the wishes of the large immigrant English-speaking people, and I am very sorry to observe that at Johannesburg badly-disposed correspondents of English newspapers have attempted to arouse ill-feeling here by misrepresenting the nature and object of this law. To my mind, it speaks very well indeed for the Boers that they could so far restrain their dread of the British as actually to pass a law allowing Boer officials to utter and use the at one time so much hated English language. If the mass of the British portion of the population of the Transvaal continues to observe the same friendly attitude as they have done, the Boers will, ere long, see the justice and necessity of allowing us to take part in the legislation of the country. At present, of course, there is yet a *lurking* dread of the British again getting into power and ruling.

RAILWAYS.—This suggests to my mind to remark on the slow progress of the railways. Here, also, the chief cause of there being none yet in the Transvaal, is the same lurking dread of British influence. The President always says, "First let me have a line to Delagoa Bay, and then you may build as many more railways as you wish." His object is to *secure and establish* a trade with and through a port not British, in the hope that, once done, the trade with the Cape Colony and Natal will be of no consequence. However, I doubt whether the President is so strongly bent on this as he was a year ago, because he has experienced such difficulty and defeat in his endeavours to come to terms with the holders of the short line through the Portuguese territory, namely, Messrs. Colonel M'Murdo and Co., of London, that he, the President, of his own accord, asked leave of the Volksraad this year to negotiate with the Government of Natal for the continuation through the Transvaal of their line. The Natal Government very wisely have neither been asleep nor waiting for a treaty with the Transvaal, but have been industriously pushing on their line towards the borders of the latter. It is already open for 189 miles.

The Cape Government are also busy in planning a continuation of its line, which goes as far as Kimberley, a distance of 647 miles, and it is generally believed that the Cape Government, in conjunction with H.M.

Imperial Government in Bechuanaland, will devise some scheme, either by way of concession to a company or otherwise, for extending the line from Kimberley to the Malmain Gold Fields, which are partly in the Transvaal and partly in Bechuanaland. Fortunately for the Transvaal, it is nearly all flat country through which the lines from Natal, the Cape Colony, and Delagoa Bay, will run, so that as soon as they are once started, no long time need elapse before they are completed.

POPULATION.—Before the rush to the gold-fields at West Wekand last year, the white population was computed at 60,000; now it is nearly 90,000. The natives are reckoned as numbering 600,000, but most of these latter are located far to the north, and are little or no trouble to the residents in those portions of the country chiefly occupied by the white man. We feel as safe in any of the Transvaal towns as the people of Great Britain do in theirs. Nor do we ever dread an invasion from the north, or from the Zulus and Swazies in the east, the very nature of the natives not being to go far away from their own fastnesses and country. They have, moreover, a wholesome dread of the Boers, who are far better able to cope with them than European regular troops, each man fighting on his own account, and the warfare being more guerilla than anything else.

CLIMATE AND HEALTH.—The climate is sub-tropical, but not at all too hot for Europeans. It is dry, and the early mornings, the evenings and nights are, in summer, delightfully cool, making up for the oppression of the weather in the middle of the day. Spring and autumn are simply delightful, and the winter is of short duration. The rains do not fall in winter, but in summer, which greatly modifies the heat. I have often heard English people, fresh from here, remark that they have felt the heat of the English summer more severely than the heat of the Transvaal. Having lived there eleven years, I can confidently recommend any one to try our climate, especially those who suffer from pulmonary complaints, for which, on account of its dryness, it is specially suited.

EDUCATION.—The Boer Volksraad have paid a great deal of attention to elementary education, and aid by liberal permanent grants schools in every town and district. Higher education is also receiving attention, and, as sufficient numbers of students present themselves, no doubt such attention will be increased. At present most of us send our elder children to the Cape colleges and seminaries, or bring them to England.

THE PRESS.—For such a young country, I think our press compares very favourably with that of other countries. We have thirteen newspapers, many of which cover six large sheets.

AGRICULTURE, &C.—The Transvaal affords varied and abundant scope for the agriculturist, and the horse, cattle and sheep farmer. The climate of the southern districts is more peculiarly suitable for the breeding of horses, cattle and sheep, the growth of cereals, vegetables, tobacco,

etc. The northern districts are, on the other hand, better suited for wheat, which is produced equal to any in the world; cotton, coffee, and sugar-cane. The country is *well* watered, but it has few *large* rivers, and the latter are (and will be until locks are constructed as on the Thames) unnavigable for any great distances.

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Compiled from Various Sources.

BY W. A. TAYLOR.

IN 1519, the Portuguese navigator, Magellan, set sail from San Lucar de Barrameda and, having passed through the strait which bears his name and discovered the Marianne or Ladrone Islands, reached Cape St. Augustin, on the south-east coast of Mindanao, in March 1521. After having passed seven days on the island, he proceeded to Zebu, and was killed by the natives on the adjacent island of Matan. Three years later, Ruiz Lopez de Villalobos named these islands after Philip II. of Spain, and in 1571 Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, placed in command of an expedition by the king, visited Zebu, Panay, and others of the Bisaya Islands and, passing on to Luzon, established a colony at Manila. Since then, the Spaniards have had to contend against Chinese and Japanese pirates and the native inhabitants. In 1762, the English took Manila, when the garrison retreated into the neighbouring country, and maintained a guerilla warfare until the establishment of peace between the two countries in 1764. During the long period the Philippines have been in the possession of the Spaniards, the islands have made little progress. Administrative incapacity and indifference, so detrimental to the other colonies of the Spanish crown, have retarded the natural development of these rich and fertile islands also.

The Philippine Archipelago extends from $4^{\circ} 34'$ to $21^{\circ} 13'$ N. lat. and from $116^{\circ} 59'$ to $126^{\circ} 56'$ E. long. It is composed of 1000 to 1200 islands, half of which are of insignificant dimensions and many uninhabited. The most southern island, Mindanao, is linked to Borneo by the Sulu Archipelago; and the long island of Palawan, to the west, is separated from the same island by the Balabac Strait, in which lies the island of the same name. The estimates of area and population are so numerous, and differ so widely, that the following figures cannot claim to be more than rough approximations:—Philippine Archipelago: area, 115,000 square miles, and population 6 millions. Luzon: 44,000 square miles, and population $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Mindanao: 35,000 square miles, and population 600,000. Mindoro: 3900 square miles, and population 60,000 (including Manduque). Palawan: 5500 square miles. Panay: 4500 square miles.

The islands are mountainous and have numerous volcanoes. The Caraballos in Luzon run the whole length of the island, and contain peaks over 9000 feet in height. To the west lie the Zam-