NATIVE AFFAIRS IN SOUTH AFRICA¹

NOR many days after opening the First Union Parliament at Cape Town, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught received the Basuto Chiefs in audience on the occasion of his visit to Bloemfontein. There were about 100 chiefs, petty chiefs and counsellors headed by the Paramount Chief, Letsie, and the address which they presented to the Duke on behalf of the Basuto nation was noteworthy for two points which it contained. They described themselves as a nation progressing slowly to civilisation amongst the other nations of the Empire; and they expressed their ambition to take their place eventually as a nation within the South African Union.

The address was remarkable as indicating the working of the Basuto mind towards the changes likely to result from the union of all the provinces which was taking place round them; and it is because the Blue Books for 1909 which are now before us were compiled when union was imminent, and it was recognised that fuller information than usual regarding the attitude of the natives should be given, that they are worthy of increased attention. Moreover the Natal Report is the first that has been issued, since the Act of 1909, "For the better administration of Native Affairs," in that Colony, received the Royal Assent. The coming into operation of that Act, with the machinery thereunder, is undoubtedly the most notable event affecting Native Administration that has occurred

¹ Cape of Good Hope. Department of Native Affairs. Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1909. [G. 19-1910] Cape Town: Cape Times, Ltd., Government Printers.

Cape Colony. Reports (Interim and Final) of the Native Affairs Commission, 1910. [G. 26-1910] Cape Town: Cape Times, Ltd., Government Printers.

Colony of Natal. Department of Native Affairs. Annual Reports for the Year 1909. Pietermaritzburg: Times Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd. Price 1s. 9d.

Southern Rhodesia. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, Matabeleland, for the year ended 31st December, 1909. Presented to the Legislative Council, 1910. [A7-1910] Salisbury: Printed by the Government Printer.

during the thirty years since the first Blue Book of the Colony was published. There are many indications in the report of the Secretary for Native Affairs that he thoroughly recognised that the important innovations which had been introduced would attract a greater number of readers than usually devotes itself to Blue Books, and that it would be desirable to give as much information as possible. It is impossible to do full justice to this report here, but it well deserves the close attention of those who followed the trial of Dinuzulu, the Rebellion of 1906-7, and the incidents which led up to it.

In Cape Colony, in accordance with the wishes of the House of Assembly, a small Commission was appointed, antecedent to the Union, to institute an inquiry into the condition of land tenure and other matters as affecting Natives in certain of the Eastern Districts, with a view to the good government of the Native community. Their report forms one of the Cape Colony Blue Books of the year.

In carrying out their duties they met the people at the brink of the great constitutional change in the history of the country, and while they found that anxiety for the future naturally existed, it was for the most part "suggested rather than expressed in assurances of loyal obedience to the decision of Parliament, coupled with the hope that the voices of statesmen who have stood for liberal treatment of the Native races in the past will not be silent in the Councils of a united South Africa" (p. 44). The expressions of confidence and devotion, made with undoubted sincerity, were a significant index to the state of the Native feeling under the present administration, and upon examination of the facts the Commission considered that their acknowledged contentment under Colonial rule was co-existent with, if it did not arise from, a wide sphere of usefulness in the body politic. They found in the Colony at the present time "Native Ministers of Religion, newspaper editors, law agents, farmers, shopkeepers, labour agents, teachers, clerks and interpreters in the public service and in lawyers' offices, police constables, masons, bricklayers, carpenters, cobblers, store-boys and shop assistants, stevedores, checkers, packers, shunters, compositors, postmen, coachmen, grooms, gardeners,

farm labourers, domestic servants, labourers in the mines, on railway and road construction, irrigation works, De Beers Explosives Works, and indeed upon every conceivable undertaking in which a demand for unskilled or half-skilled labour makes itself felt." When we read this formidable list and realise what great opposition there was at one time, and indeed still is in some quarters, to the Native becoming a skilled worker and so a competitor with the white man, we must allow that under the generous policy of the Cape Colonial Parliament, the manner and extent of the progress made by the Natives there have exceeded expectation. More than half the able-bodied men, 108,798 out of an estimated 203,541, leave their homes for work now, of whom nearly half were absorbed by the Transvaal mines in 1909, thus giving a complete answer to the now happily less frequent charge that the Native is not a worker.

The Commission consider that educational progress has been rapid, in response to the assistance voted by Parliament to Native schools, and that religious teaching, the location school, the example of the trader, the farmer, the Government official, and the townsman, have worked a great change in the native during the last 25 or 30 years. His wants and his habits of life are completely altered. "The location shop which formerly contained little more than blankets, beads, hoes, and red ochre, is now in a position to supply ready-made clothing, boots, saddles, ploughs, spades, tea, coffee, sugar, soap, and tinned foodstuffs. Few locations have not at the least a few residents whose household equipment includes a bedstead, table, chairs, cupboard, knives and forks, plates, cups and saucers. There are locations in which the national dress is now never seen, or is seen so seldom as to call forth remark. This change has very greatly added to the consumption by the Native of dutiable merchandise. . . . The increasing wants of the Native and of his family demand a higher purchasing power than the produce of six acres of arable land and the increase of six or seven head of cattle enable him to command; and the result is demonstrated in the figures which have been quoted, showing the number who go out annually in search of

remunerative work. A healthy feature of the economic situation is the freedom with which in this Colony the women and girls go into domestic service."

The Commissioners who have drawn up this report are: Col. W. E. M. Stanford, C.B., C.M.G., M.L.A., J. C. Molteno, Esq., M.L.A., and C. W. H. Lansdown, LL.B.

They conclude it in the following words: "Finally the Commission have to record that from every quarter have been received most satisfactory reports of the general state and conduct of the Native people. That they are remarkably law-abiding is illustrated by the small number of police required for the administration of justice; in the Transkeian Territories, besides their own Headmen, there is on an average but one policeman to every four thousand of population. There has been little crime of a serious nature, and the percentage of convictions for drunkenness is extremely low. To their credit also be it said that they invariably respect the persons of European women and children left unprotected in their midst. Generally, the Native people are rising in the scale of civilisation; they are advancing intellectually; and by their loyalty, their obedience to the law, their large share in the industrial life of the country, and their direct and indirect contributions to the public revenue, they are responding worthily to the generous policy of this Colony in the Administration of Native Affairs."

The Eastern Districts traversed by the Commission included the District of Glen Grey; and the working of the Act, No. 25 of 1894, and of the Transkeian Proclamations developed from it was fully considered by them. Reviewing the history of the Act (pp. 19-20) they express the opinion that "it constitutes the best adaptation of the European system of rigidly defined individual allotments to the requirements of the Native people." Their conclusions in relation to the policy wrapped up in the introduction of the individual system of land tenure amongst the Native people are noteworthy, and should prove of assistance to the recently appointed District Native Commissioners in Natal, where this question is receiving much attention. They have no hesitation in record-

ing the opinion that the conversion of Native land tenure from the communal to the individual system is a necessary and beneficial step. They do not find that the power of the Chiefs is thereby undermined. The Chiefs and Headmen were everywhere discharging important and useful functions as Government servants in the administration of District affairs, and doing so more in deference to the traditions of the posts they were occupying than in direct return for the disproportionately small allowances which are paid to them for their services. The advantages of the system lie in the solution which it presents of the tendency to congestion, or what under the communal system would amount to congestion in Native areas. Given more productive cultivation the locations are capable of carrying a far larger population than they do at present.

The Glen Grey District Council is working satisfactorily, and in regard both to its financial position and to the active discharge of its functions in local administration, the Council has improved greatly during the last few years. It has recently undertaken a model farm scheme, from which there is every reason to hope that valuable results will follow.

There is not, however, any desire for the establishment of District Councils elsewhere, though the policy of the Government is to encourage the management by Natives of their own affairs. In a number of Mission Locations Village Management Boards have been established on exactly the same lines as in European village communities. Their failure has been complete, where the co-operation and guidance of European friends have been wanting, and the Commission have no difficulty in suggesting the reason why. In the present stage of development the requisite number of Native men fitted by training, as well as by local influence, to discharge unaided the duties of a Board, the constitution, procedure and functions of which are part of an unfamiliar and foreign system, must be hard to find within a small area. The extension of the District Council system is recommended as offering great advantages in regard to education, road-making, plantations, and facilities for the general representation of local interests.

The views of the Commission upon the above points in their

report which have been touched upon, are fully confirmed by the official statements of magistrates and others, which are presented in the Blue Book of Cape Colony (pp. 39-48). And when we turn to those from the other parts of the Colony we find the natives everywhere maintaining their character as loyal and law-abiding members of the community.

It will come as a matter of surprise to many, as it evidently did to the Resident Magistrate making the report, that any body of natives had so far advanced in thrift and self-restraint as to withstand all temptation to drink when no restrictions were in force in the district. He had seen very little drunkenness since coming there, and the reports from the police, the Inspector of Locations, and the Scab Inspector, whose duties take him much among the people, are to the same effect. In Walfish Bay District the limited sale of liquor to the natives is permitted, but in the Magistrate's opinion total prohibition would be beneficial. In the Transkei, Tembuland, East Griqualand, and Pondoland permits can be issued by Resident Magistrates authorising the supply of intoxicating liquor to natives. In one district the restrictions were removed by the Licensing Court in 1908, owing to the natives having a free run of the canteens in the neighbouring district. The results in the opinion of the Magistrate have not been satisfactory.

Though the general health of the Natives has been good in the Colony proper during 1909, many outbreaks of enteric fever are referred to in the reports. In one district it spread in all directions, and the Natives were powerless to ward it off. The situation was becoming very serious indeed, and things were about at their worst when the drought broke, and after some good rains which fell early in September the disease gradually died out, and only an occasional death was heard of after that. The outbreak was, as usual, attributed to the bad and stagnant water used by the Natives owing to the previous long spell of scarcity and drought. The increase of tuberculosis and syphilis is again frequently referred to (see *Journal* of this Society for October, 1909).

From almost all districts come satisfactory reports as to the supply of labour. The crops, the activity of Labour Agents, and the treatment accorded in the mines have usually been

considered the chief factors controlling labour emigration. But from more than one quarter we read that the railway accommodation is now far from sufficient or satisfactory when travelling to work. To remain crowded in large numbers into small and ill-provided trucks, for two days and two nights in certain cases, must be prejudicial to recruiting, and in their own interests the Mine Managers and the Railway Department should see to the amelioration of this condition of affairs. It is one which can no longer be put on one side.

Turning to the Natal Blue Book we observe with much satisfaction the extent to which the Government has been able to give effect to the recommendations of the Native Affairs Commission of 1906-7. The Natives of Natal and Zululand are fifty years behind those of Cape Colony, but the time had undoubtedly arrived for revising the past policy and giving them, as the older Colony had done, more opportunities of usefulness, and a larger share in the industrial life of the country. The Commission did not recommend the extension of the franchise beyond what already existed, not believing that the time had come for this, but a system by which the opinions of all, from the Chiefs to the Kraal Natives, could find satisfactory expression through Commissioners and a Council for Native Affairs, by whom they would be adequately protected and represented. Both the Commissioners and the Council have been conceded; and the names of those who have been appointed are a guarantee that while the feelings of the Colonists will be regarded, they will actively promote the advancement of the Natives as members of a civilised community. It must not be forgotten that the number of Natives under the immediate control of the Department for Native Affairs has grown from 350,000 in 1878 to 1,040,000 in 1909, and that the whole social life of the Natives, individually and collectively, has been affected by the advent of an increased number of Europeans amongst them. The problems that arise and have to be settled without delay are often of extreme complexity, and we should extend to those who have undertaken the new Native policy our whole-hearted sympathy and generous support.

The Colony has been divided into four districts with a Com-

missioner at the head of each, and they, together with four non-official members, form the Council for Native Affairs. The Secretary of the Department is Chairman. From the Blue Book we learn that the following were among the subjects in connection with which the Council, after discussion, passed resolutions or framed reports for transmission to the Government: The status of half-castes and the erection of schools for them; Native Education Advisory Board; Mission Work and Policy; Advances to Natives seeking work outside the Colony; Unsatisfactory treatment of Natives on Transvaal Mines; Labour, Public Works Department; Communal Purchase of Land; Landlord and Tenant; Individual Land Tenure on Charlottedale Mission Reserve; Training of Teachers, Edendale School; Rules for controlling Native Assemblies; Beer Drinking Assembly Regulations; Apprenticeship of Native boys and girls; Lobola. This list is very suggestive even to those who are unaware of the battles which have been waged over such questions as the status of half-castes, the attitude of landlords towards their native tenants, and compulsory labour under the Public Works Regulations, which used to be not very unlike the *corvée* system that ruled in France in the eighteenth century, until it was swept away during the great Revolution in 1794, together with other intolerable burdens which oppressed the peasantry. The Secretary for Native Affairs reports that action has, in connection with a number of the foregoing matters, been already taken in accordance with the recommendations of the Council. We would express the earnest hope that this body will be permitted to exist under the Union, and its powers enlarged, so as to enable it to carry out the reforms which the Province is anxious to introduce.

From the interesting reports of the District Commissioners we can only take one or two of the more important passages. "The power of transportation (of Chiefs) by order of the Supreme Chief, from one part of the Colony to another, is a most powerful and effective weapon. Its effects are far-reaching and beneficial—an occasional transportation, such as that of Silwane, has the effect of preventing many troubles—exemplifying the old adage that 'prevention is better than cure.'"

"As far as can be ascertained the Natives generally are pleased with the creation of the District Native Commissioners, and feel that the Government is endeavouring to meet them in a manner they understand and appreciate. Several Chiefs and men of importance have visited me at my office here, and I feel sure that much good will result from the new order of things." "The desire amongst the Natives to have their children taught is growing, and the schools in the Division, more especially in the Inyanyadu district, where the majority of farms are owned by Natives, are well attended." "Perfect peace has reigned during the last year, for which there can be only one reason, viz., the removal of Dinuzulu from Zululand. The same peaceful state of affairs prevailed during the whole time he and his two uncles were exiles in St. Helena. The answers of the Zulus with whom I have discussed the subject of his conviction have been invariably: 'He has no one to blame but himself.' His sons (the eldest of whom is about 18 years of age) are living quietly in the Nobamba and other kraals. The Usutu Kraal has ceased to be a centre of attraction to the Usutu faction, and of apprehension to the loyalist."

As the terms of the Order dismissing Dinuzulu from his office as Government Induna and Chief, which appeared in the Natal Government *Gazette* of April 20, 1909, are not well known in this country, it will be of interest to quote them here:

Order by the Governor of Natal and Supreme Chief over the Native Population.

In the matter of Dinuzulu Ka Cetshwayo, an Induna of the Government, and Chief of the Usutu Tribe, in the Province of Zululand.

Whereas Dinuzulu Ka Cetshwayo was, in the year 1897, taken into the service of the Government of the Territory of Zululand as Government Induna and as Chief over the people residing in the location marked off for the Usutu in the said territory, upon the condition that the position assigned to him by the Government and the salary thereof should be held during the pleasure of the Government, and should be strictly

dependent on the manner in which he should behave and obey the laws laid down for his guidance, but that it should not be withdrawn without the authority of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies :

And whereas the territory of Zululand has been annexed to, and forms part of, the Colony of Natal under the name of the Province of Zululand ;

And whereas the said Dinuzulu Ka Cetshwayo was, on the 3rd day of March, 1909, convicted before the Special Court constituted under Act No. 8, 1908, of the crime of High Treason ;

Now, therefore, under the authority vested in me as Governor of the Colony of Natal and as Supreme Chief over the Native population, and acting herein with the authority of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, I do hereby order that the said Dinuzulu Ka Cetshwayo be dismissed and removed from the service of the Government of Natal, and from his office as such Government Induna and Chief as aforesaid ; all the authority conferred upon him in respect of the said office being hereby withdrawn ;

This order shall have effect as and from the date upon which criminal proceedings were instituted against the said Dinuzulu Ka Cetshwayo, to wit, the 2nd day of Dec., 1907.

Given at Government House, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, this seventeenth day of April, 1909.

MATTHEW NATHAN,
Governor and Supreme Chief.

In presenting his report for 1909 to the Legislative Council, the Chief Native Commissioner of Matabeleland compares the condition of the Native population as it existed a decade ago with that of to-day. He says that with the consistent policy of the Government, under which the laws and regulations affecting the Natives admit of their progress, the advance in prosperity is most marked. The acquisition of wealth has created a tendency towards independence ; in fact, contact with civilisation has made the Native think. Where they have been brought into such contact, the younger generation is gradually breaking away from the tribal system. The masses continue to recognise tribal authority, but in a less degree than

formerly. Chiefs complain that their authority over their people is not what it was, while parents no longer have that control over their children which they formerly exercised. The natives are in a transition state, and are becoming more enlightened as each year goes by. It would be a mistaken policy to attempt to arrest this individualistic tendency. No legislative measures can counteract the influences of civilisation, whatever the effect may be on the Native. In the matter of education, the efforts of the missionaries have not been without success. They have created a keen desire among the population for advancement in this direction, and it is a noteworthy fact that the older people have recently expressed a desire to have their children sent to school. At the present time there are 104 Native teachers and preachers under the control of the missionaries. The Native is clamouring for education, and he intends to have it, and the Administration affords every facility, when approached by the various missions, for furthering their work amongst the Natives. Several of the Chiefs are having their sons educated, notably among them Gambo, whose son and heir is at present receiving instruction at one of the Wesleyan Missions.

The Rhodesian Labour Bureau continues to supervise and control all recruiting operations, and has succeeded in preventing any recurrence of the high mortality amongst the Natives drawn from Nyasaland, to which reference was made in this Journal in October, 1909. The system which is in force is to see that the Native when he proceeds to work is actually fit to undertake the work for which he is engaged, and to hold the employer responsible for his return in sound condition for repatriation. If unfit to return to his home he is either detained in the compound or sent to hospital, as the Medical Officer may direct, the expenses of treatment being charged to the employer.

This digest, short as it is, of the views and opinions expressed in the Blue Books of the year, gives us some idea of the state of Native affairs in South Africa at this momentous period of that country's history. There are many who will watch with the keenest interest how the Native Problem is in future going to be handled.

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