

1933¹, "it is understood that President Roosevelt would like to see the adoption of the Amendment." In spite of the 13 States recently added to the list of ratifications, however, opposition to the Amendment remains, and in 15 States resolutions for ratification have been unsuccessful. The Secretary of State for Labour, Miss Perkins, had the need for immediate ratification in mind when, speaking of the codes, she said: "We must bear in mind that such an action covers only the emergency period which, under the law, does not extend beyond two years, or even less, should President Roosevelt by proclamation declare that the emergency has ended. Consequently the move for the ratification of the Child Labour Amendment must go on. This is the time to make permanent, through the Amendment, a beneficial change in the standards so as to keep boys and girls out of industry and give them the chance in life to which they are entitled."

Aspects of the Poor White Problem in South Africa

The Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South Africa has published a report embodying the results of its investigation. This resulted from a visit paid to South Africa in 1927 by the President and the Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the greatest part of the costs was borne by the Corporation. Two American sociologists took part in the investigation for a time, but essentially the report is due to South African experts.

The report has been published in six sections, each under the signature of one of the investigators.² Thus, although the members worked in the closest contact with each other, each of the authors of a section bears the full responsibility for his or her part. Joint findings and recommendations, however, were also agreed upon by the investigators as a whole.

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE POOR WHITE PROBLEM

For the purpose of the investigation the term Poor White was taken to denote: (a) as regards their origin, persons of European

¹ Quoted by *American Child*, Dec. 1933.

² CARNEGIE COMMISSION: *The Poor White Problem in South Africa*. Part I. *Economic Report: Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, by J. F. W. GROSSKOPF. XXXIII + 245 pp. Part II. *Psychological Report: The Poor White*, by R. W. WILCOCKS. 206 pp. Part III. *Educational Report: Education and the Poor White*, by E. G. MALHERBE. 364 pp. Part IV. *Health Report: Health Factors in the Poor White Problem*, by W. A. MURRAY. 154 pp. Part V. *Sociological Report: (a) The Poor White and Society*, by J. R. ALBERTYN; (b) *The Mother and Daughter in the Poor Family*, by M. E. ROTHMANN. 217 pp. Stellenbosch, 1932.

descent who gained or are still gaining their livelihood chiefly by farming; (b) as regards their economic condition, a class consisting principally of poor *bywoners*¹, hired men on farms, owners of small-holdings or of small undivided shares of land, poor settlers and the growing group of unskilled or poorly trained labourers outside farming.

It is pointed out that an exact enumeration of the Poor Whites is not practicable. So long as such an enumeration has to be based upon individual personal estimates of what constitutes a decent standard of living for white men, varying traditional standards in different parts of the country render the result highly unreliable. However, from data obtained from questionnaires sent to practically half the schools in the Union, in which the principals were asked to classify as very poor families those who were largely supported by charity or who subsisted in dire poverty on farms, it appears that 17.5 per cent. of all the families with children at school can be described as very poor. These figures, it is added, were obtained in 1929-1930 before the effects of the present depression were noticeable. By another calculation based on the Census returns, it is shown that more than 220,000 persons may be taken as the white population group supported by the occupations of shepherds, foresters and woodmen, *bywoners*, railway labourers, labourers in general, unskilled industrial workers, transport riders and diggers, i.e. men in the lowliest occupations performed by Europeans in the Union.

In both cases it is pointed out that the figures would include persons who are not Poor Whites in the terms of the investigation, though the second calculation omits other Poor Whites who would be furnished from the hundred thousand persons classified as farmers. Although a perusal of the reports leaves the impression that the term Poor White is relative to the high standard of European living in the Union, the fact remains that in a population of approximately 1,800,000 Europeans, something approaching 200,000 persons are living in conditions which are beneath the minimum standards believed necessary for the maintenance of European civilisation.

GENERAL ASPECTS

It is this aspect of the question which characterises the Poor White problem in South Africa as distinct from any other problem of national poverty (there is a similar problem in the Southern States of the United States of America). As the Report states, the term Poor White could hardly have come into common usage except in a country inhabited by an inferior non-European population as well as by Europeans. It implies that traditionally the European inhabitants have a higher standard of living. The criterion of a European standard of living depends on the views commonly accepted in the white community. An increase of the average welfare of the Europeans (especially if accompanied by an improvement of the standard of living among a

¹ *Bywoners* are landless rural persons to whom the resident owner of a farm has given permission to live on his farm. Formerly tenants, they are to-day mostly in the position of servants.

part of the non-European races) is sufficient to make the position of the less prosperous Europeans appear relatively unfavourable.

While, however, the peculiarities of the South African problem may be traced to the contact of races, it is not clear to what extent this contact constitutes one of the fundamental causes of the problem. Dr. Grosskopf, in his Economic Report, states that "droughts and other natural disasters, relative overpopulation of the farms in a district, and the pressure of cheap, non-European labour are amongst the most important causes" of the drift to the towns. He gives figures which show that between 1911 and 1921 in thirty-seven Cape rural areas the European population decreased by 20.3 per cent., and the Native population increased by 10.2 per cent., and in thirteen Free State rural areas the European population decreased by 16.5 per cent., and the Native population increased by 22.8 per cent. Nevertheless, elsewhere he adds that conditions of abject poverty are largely met with among the landless farming class along the west coast of the Cape as far as Namaqualand, along the south coast as far as Knysna and in the southern Karroo from Prince Albert to Jansenville, in most of which districts the non-Europeans are less numerous than elsewhere. In a book published in 1930¹ Professor MacMillan analysed poverty in the Cape coastal districts and found "that the proportion of white people was unusually large (50 per cent. and more), and, the non-European people being almost all 'Coloured', any peculiar ills this area may have cannot be attributed to Native complications." Professor MacMillan also says, after describing agricultural conditions and the South African land system, that "in face of all this it might have been expected that the continuing exodus from the farms of poor men (voters all), whose heart is obviously still on the land, would have given rise to an irresistible cry for land reform. It is highly characteristic of South Africa that no such voice is ever heard, and that the form of discontent is a peculiar non-sequitur — an almost delirious demand that 'the Government' should 'tackle the Native Problem'."

It is, moreover, noteworthy that the accounts of agricultural conditions among the Poor Whites in Dr. Grosskopf's report stress such matters as the pressure of population, uncertainty of tenure, overstocking, erosion and drought, so that the general picture resulting bears a strong resemblance to the picture of conditions in the Native Reserves given in the Report of the Native Economic Commission.² In other words, in addition to the Poor White question there is a Poor Black question, and although both are complicated by race contacts the origin of both is to be found in agricultural conditions rather than in the conflict of races.

THE RACE PROBLEM IN POOR WHITE RURAL AREAS

The fact that the Carnegie Report is limited to the Poor White dims the analysis of the fundamental causes of a problem from the effects of which other classes are suffering. On the other hand, the

¹ *Complex South Africa*. London, Faber and Faber.

² Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Oct. 1932, pp. 543-553.

complications added by the confrontation of different races having different standards are clearly illustrated and merit consideration in connection with schemes for European settlement in tropical or sub-tropical territories.

Dr. Grosskopf's report describes how the Bantu migration, which brought them into touch with the advancing white colonists about the middle of the eighteenth century, has continued as a peaceful penetration during recent times. Although the towns have been affected by this movement, the Natives who still own a few animals are not inclined to become permanent town labourers. Far more readily they enter the service of farmers who allow them to keep a few head of livestock and to build huts for their families. They thus become squatters and in return for land privileges perform labour services for the farmer. Dr. Grosskopf states that landless White agriculturists generally complain with bitterness of the favourable conditions frequently offered to Native squatters. There are farmers who give the squatter grazing rights for more livestock than they allow to a White bywoner. In parts of the Transvaal bywoners and Government officials stated that the Natives on bushveld farms who have to work only ninety days in the year in return for their land privileges are often far more prosperous than most of the Poor White farm population. Moreover, in many of the maize districts farms are to be found where Natives are the real producers from whom the owner obtains his share. This type of contract is really illegal, but the law is said to be frequently evaded. For this reason, there is growing bitterness among the Poor Whites on farms against the Natives and against the wealthier farmers.

In addition to the lower rates of reward required by the Native agricultural worker, other factors encourage his employment at the expense of the Poor White. Dislike of working under a boss, of wage-earning labour and of so-called "Kaffir work" all tend to make it difficult to place a White rural worker. Dr. Grosskopf reports that to-day one sometimes finds poor men who refuse to milk or to drive their employers' ox-waggon "because this is work that is now mostly done by Kaffirs". Another advantage in the employment of Native labour is that the farmer and his wife are able to obtain the assistance of the Natives' wives and children, while the farmer is more confident in his position as master than when he is employing those whom he regards as racial equals.

THE POOR WHITE PROBLEM AND THE RACE FACTOR IN INDUSTRY

It is, however, when the Poor White, through his failure as an agriculturist, endeavours to secure a footing in industry that he suffers most from Native competition. As the joint findings of the Commission state, in many cases the areas inhabited by the Natives have become too small to support them and they have in addition acquired a certain number of civilised needs. For this reason they seek wage-earning employment within the European economic system. As, however, a considerable number of the Natives do not rely solely on their wages

for the support of their families and as their standards of living are still low, they have established a low scale of wages for certain forms of unskilled work which depresses the scale of wages of the unskilled European. Moreover, since there was an insufficient supply of European labour at the time when modern economic development suddenly sprang up in South Africa, the economic system came to be organised on the basis of cheap Native labour which has greatly contributed to hindering the Poor White from being absorbed in the new industrial system. For these reasons unrestricted competition on the labour market between the unskilled non-European and the Poor White, and the low wages the European receives as a result, create conditions of poverty which have a demoralising effect on the European.

Moreover, the Native is acquiring increasing industrial skill. According to Dr. Grosskopf, in the northern and eastern parts of the country most tradesmen have Natives in their service, many of whom perform skilled or semi-skilled work. In Bloemfontein, such Natives were paid on an average 25s. a week, and in rare cases £2 or £3. On the Witwatersrand, the unskilled Native receives an average wage of £1, and the semi-skilled Native up to £2 and more. In smaller towns, moreover, Natives often start a trade on their own account. One small town is mentioned as possessing an independent Native builder, blacksmith, cobbler and bicycle mechanic, all of whom often work for Europeans.

THE COLOUR BAR

In these circumstances, the development of colour bars in employment is not unnatural. Dr. Grosskopf finds some justification for the bar in the fact that so many of the Natives merely enter industry to supplement their tribal earnings and are therefore not wholly dependent on their wages for their support. He adds, however, that it is impossible to maintain a colour bar permanently. It should serve mainly as a palliative and the idea should by no means be encouraged that an unskilled labourer, if he is White, is always entitled to higher pay than the non-European for work of the same quality.

The joint findings of the Commission also point out that it would be insufficient for the State to provide the European with employment without at the same time taking measures to ensure that those assisted are spurred on to greater personal efforts. A policy according to which the unskilled or poorly-skilled Poor White is protected by reservation of work against non-European competition in certain spheres would make such competition all the more severe in other parts of the labour market where the colour bar is not applied. The Commission holds that it would be disastrous to the Poor White himself if any protection given to him is of such a nature that it finally results in impairing his ability to compete with the non-European on the labour market.

Here again the Carnegie Commission's conclusions may usefully be taken in conjunction with the report of the Native Economic Commission, which shows how in industry the pressure of the tribal Native is not merely, and in most cases is not directly, exercised on the Euro-

peans driven out of agriculture, but on the large and growing class of urban Natives. As is the case of the Poor Whites, these urban Natives have failed to survive agricultural competition in their own localities, have been attracted to the towns and in the towns their wage standards are depressed by the competition of temporary workers who still have a footing on the land. The problem, therefore, appears more economic in its causes than insistence on the factor of colour would suggest. Moreover, since a colour bar, even if effectively applied, can be a palliative for the Poor White only, the problem of different standards of needs among the competing labour forces will remain as the fundamental problem of South African civilisation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The factor of race contact appears most potent in its psychological aspects. Examples have already been indicated. The investigators, whether dealing with economics, education, sociology or the position of the Poor White woman, find it necessary to return again and again to the mental and moral results of the fact that the Poor Whites regard themselves and are regarded firstly as Whites and only secondly as Poor.

Dr. Malherbe, in his Educational Report, points out that the development of vocational and industrial training among the Europeans was prejudiced by the parents' conception of the place in society due to their children by virtue of their colour. In 1879, a school inspector reported that he found a disposition on the part of the farmers to be rather indignant at their children being taught industrially, and that this prejudice still survives is suggested by a school inspector's statement in 1925 that "at nearly every school where the teacher had made an attempt to lay out a garden with the assistance of his pupils, it happened and still happens that parents sent messages more or less of the following nature to the school: 'Tell the teacher that if he wishes to lay out a garden he should engage a Kaffir.' 'My children are not Kaffirs to do the digging and carry water in the hot sun.'"

Dr. Wilcocks, in his Psychological Report, analyses the prejudice against Kaffir work. He points out that the term has no clearly circumscribed meaning. It is applied to manual labour and particularly, though not exclusively, to its rougher or heavier forms which are considered fit for the Native but beneath the dignity of the European. Often, however, the term is not applied to manual work as such, but rather to manual work when done for a master and for a wage. Sometimes Europeans apply the expression to their labour if the wages paid them are more or less the same as those which Natives would receive or if the wages are lower than those they consider due to a European. Domestic service is all the more readily considered to be Kaffir work if the wages are low.

Dr. Grosskopf gives examples of objections to working under another European. As early as 1897, in the Transvaal Volksraad, a proposal was made that poor burghers should be employed on road-making. According to the minutes, a member "concurred with the

member for Carolina, that there was no disgrace in work ; but in what way ? If we considered the matter carefully we should become convinced that our burghers could not work on the roads, for in road-making you usually had foremen who gave orders and to whom a man would have to apply for work. This was his only objection, for he thought that the burghers would consider this an insult."

Nevertheless, the psychological aspects of the Poor White problem in many respects result from other factors than that of race contact (e.g. effects of isolation, natural calamities, State aid, ill health, poverty, etc.), while the contempt for Kaffir work is sometimes said to be even more pronounced among recent immigrants than among South-African-born Europeans.

THE POOR WHITE AND WHITE CIVILISATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The joint findings of the Commission declare that the great majority of Poor Whites are of normal intelligence. The Poor Whites' intelligence is lower on the average than that of the European population as a whole, and the percentage of them classed as sub-normal is approximately twice as large as that of the European population as a whole, but about one-third of them have more than average intelligence and some are even exceptionally gifted. In addition, the development of the intelligence of the Poor White child clearly suffers from unfavourable environment. Hence their potential intelligence is higher than would appear at first sight.

On the other hand, Dr. Malherbe, in his Educational Report, gives figures to show (1) that the average size of the family tends to rise the lower the economic position of the family, and (2) that the average intelligence of children of large families is less than that of children of small families. Out of 49,434 families studied 17.53 per cent. were classified as very poor and the average size of these families was 7.11 ; 30.97 per cent. were poor, the average size of the families being 6.13 ; 47.78 per cent. were of average income with families of 4.84 ; and 3.72 per cent. were well-to-do with average families of 4.64. As regards point (2), 29,221 school pupils were classified, and a graph was drawn showing that the percentage of bright children contributed by families was 33 in the case of small families and 20 in the case of large families, whereas the percentage of dull children was 20 in the case of small families and over 30 in the case of large families.

Dr. Malherbe concludes by attacking the South African preoccupation with the numerical ratio of Europeans to non-Europeans. He states :

"The somewhat crude preoccupation with mere *quantity* which characterises the public reaction to the announcement of falls in birth rate will have to be modified by considerations of *quality*. To be lured into condoning, or even approving the high birth rate in the Poor White population, because that of other classes is falling and to be so lured because, on purely quantitative grounds, we fear a dwindling White population, is to make the most dangerous of all errors. . . . The thing which will enable us to survive culturally as well as physically is *quality* rather than mere *quantity*. It is precisely

that bottom fifth of our Whites which, owing to their rapid increase in quantity and not in quality, is giving us all this trouble and anxiety. That is what has induced us to-day to investigate the Poor *White* problem and not the problem of poverty in general as it obtains amongst all races and colours in South Africa. . . . It is no use to try to console ourselves with the idea that a similar differential fertility exists in Europe. The fact remains that South Africa's white population is in a unique position, viz. that of educative leadership. "

Labour Conditions in the Dutch East Indies in 1931

The first volume of the annual report for 1932 on the administration and the situation of the Dutch East Indies ¹ contains much interesting information on labour conditions. The main points in the report are summarised below.

THE EMPLOYMENT ABROAD OF DUTCH EAST INDIAN LABOUR

As a result of reductions of staff in undertakings in some neighbouring colonies, 3,431 Javanese emigrant workers returned to their native island in the course of 1931. During the year only one permit to recruit workers for abroad was issued, authorising the engagement of 450 Native workers for an agricultural undertaking in the Federated Malay States.

A tour of inspection made during the first half of 1931 by a labour inspector of the Dutch East Indies in undertakings in British North Borneo employing workers recruited in Java showed that the working conditions of these workers were satisfactory.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND PLACING

During 1931 there was a marked increase in unemployment in all sections of the population. Among the Natives it was chiefly represented, as in the previous year, by a general fall in the standard of living. Gradually, however, and especially during the second half of the year, there came to be a large class of unemployed Natives (officials, clerks, skilled workers, etc.), who, having lost all contact with their villages, found themselves in an isolated position similar to that of the unemployed Europeans. It is significant to note in this connection that the number of Native applicants for work regis-

¹ *Indisch Verslag, 1932. Vol. I. Tekst van het verslag van bestuur en staat van Nederlandsch-Indië over het jaar 1931.* The Hague, Rijksuitgeverij, dienst van de Nederlandsche Staatscourant, 1933. 396 pp.