

a subsidy towards the payment of interest, and partial financing on a modest scale.

(2) The building societies ; persons who have saved with a view to building may be regarded as desirable settlers and encouraged by loans at low rates of interest.

(3) The sums available for the creation of employment from the internal loan (issued in October 1933 on the basis of the Lausanne Agreement of 1932) ; these should be devoted chiefly to the encouragement of land settlement.

Labour Problems of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland

Recent events and reports of public and private investigations have quickened interest in the South African territories of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. These territories are under the administration of Great Britain, exercised through the High Commissioner for South Africa, who is also the medium of communication between the Governments of Great Britain and of the Union of South Africa.

In an article by a South African correspondent, which appeared in *The Times* of 24 March 1932, the following account is given of the position in the High Commission territories in relation to the Union :

“Originally, the same motive took Britain into all three territories — namely, the rescue of their Native inhabitants from the consequences of the ‘land-hunger’ of surrounding whites. The intention from the first was not to interfere with Native life, law, and custom more than was necessary for the establishment of peace and the maintenance of order. With the creation in 1910 of the new consolidated self-governing Afrikaner State, Britain’s position in the territories became somewhat delicate. British ideas in the sphere of Native policy had long shown an awkward divergence from those of the Afrikaner, but Britain was naturally anxious not to embarrass the new-fledged Dominion by emphasising such divergence, or to weaken its attachment to the Commonwealth, an attachment which for potent historical reasons was bound to be rather precarious. It was then sincerely felt that the eventual political destiny of the territories must lie with the rest of South Africa. But the course taken by Native affairs in the Union since 1910 has made it increasingly difficult every year for Britain to contemplate the surrender of her special South African responsibilities.”

Nevertheless, it has been suggested that in the administration of these territories it has been regarded of more importance not to accentuate the divergence between British and South African Native policies than effectively to apply British Native policy. However this may be, the Government and private investigations in the territories

during recent years have served to emphasise the need for a positive programme in which social, economic and labour policies are co-ordinated. Not the least striking of the opinions thus taking shape is that the system of administration through the natural tribal authorities — the principle of indirect rule which is being thoroughly applied, for example, in Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia and Nigeria, and which may be said to be the official British policy of African administration — can no longer be regarded as adequate as practised in the territories and that it is necessary that account should be taken of evolving economic and social conditions. In other words, the form of indirect rule appropriate in the territories in 1910 is said to be a mere avoidance of responsibilities in the present day, since the intention "not to interfere with Native life, law, and custom" can now be criticised as throwing "the actual burden of policy-making on the shoulders of the chiefs"¹, at a time when autocratic chieftainship is decaying under the pressure of education and economic change.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

Sir Alan Pim, who, under instructions from the British Government, reported in 1932 on the financial and economic position of Swaziland and in 1933 on the financial and economic position of Bechuanaland², stated in regard to Swaziland that, although no reliable statistics were available throwing light on the question how far the consumption and expenditure of the Natives exceeded the receipts from their own agricultural production and from the employment available in the territory, the facts adduced showed that the margin was a wide one. The position, as described by Sir Alan Pim, is that the majority of the 2,800 white population consists of small farmers, whose condition approximates closely to that of the Poor Whites of the Union. "They make a living of some kind, hardly above the Native standard, by growing mealies and a little tobacco, but their methods are backward in the extreme and they are much less willing to learn improved methods than the Natives. They are tending to the formation of a real pauper class, their large families are under-nourished and most difficult to improve or educate so long as they remain under home influence, while their education is a heavy burden on the resources of a small territory." Of the Natives, he reports that 20,000 have been permitted to remain on the 3,767 square miles in European possession. They "have no rights, and are liable to ejection at any time. The conditions on which they are permitted to reside vary widely, but when a money rent of £1 is not charged (the so-called

¹ Margaret L. HODGSON and W. G. BALLINGER: *Indirect Rule in Southern Africa*. No. 1. Basutoland. Lovedale, 1931.

² DOMINIONS OFFICE: *Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland. Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, January 1932.* (Cmd. 4114.) *Financial and Economic Position of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, March 1933.* (Cmd. 4368.)

Kaffir farming) service is required for periods up to six months. It is usually paid for at full or reduced rates, but is sometimes unpaid and very onerous." There are 100,000 other Natives who hold 2,660 square miles of land; but, according to Sir Alan Pim, their standard of living is very low, the available resources are very limited, and they are largely dependent on the earnings of the 10,000 of their younger men who are employed in the mines and other industries in the Union of South Africa.

Sir Alan Pim's report on Bechuanaland shows that between 1929 and 1931 imports were £288,000, £237,000 and £215,000 respectively, and exports £281,000, £210,000 and £179,000. Hut tax is paid by the Natives, who number approximately 150,000, at the rate of 23s. per adult male. It has been suggested¹ that the actual expenditure within the territory averages £310,000 (consisting of imports plus 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. difference between wholesale and retail prices, plus taxation), and the real Native income within the territory £140,000 (Native exports minus traders' profits). Although it would seem probable that a proportion of the traders' profits and a larger proportion of the taxes are expended within the territory, and thus tend to raise the total Native income, there is admittedly a deficiency between expenditure and income which, as in the case of Swaziland, is met by the sale of labour in the Union.

A similar conclusion is reached for Basutoland by Miss Hodgson and Mr. Ballinger. They argue that since the imports into Basutoland for 1928 averaged little under £2 per head of the population, that the exports averaged £1 7s. per head, and that there is a minimum direct tax of 28s. per head for the adult males, the Basuto are compelled to find outside means of supplementing their income, which can only mean absence in distant employment.

LABOUR MIGRATION

In fact the Natives of the territories hire themselves out extensively to employers in the Union of South Africa.

In Swaziland the number of adult males is approximately 26,000. According to figures supplied to Sir Alan Pim, the annual average number of Swazis recruited for the gold mines over a period of five years ending 1930 was 4,580, and an annual average of 700 proceeded to the mines without being recruited. In addition, an average of 1,598 were employed by other industrial employers in the Transvaal, while Sir Alan estimates that at least 3,500 on an average are employed on farm work within the Union, on the coal mines of Natal, etc. This indicates that over 10,000 Swazis on an average leave the territory each year for distant employment.

In Bechuanaland the adult male population is between 35,000 and 40,000. The average number of Bechuanas employed on the gold

¹ LEONARD BARNES: "The Crisis in Bechuanaland", in *Journal of the African Society* (London), Oct. 1933.

mines rose from 1,800 in 1927 to 4,300 in 1932. Between 1927 and 1931 some 5,000 Bechuanaas were engaged for the diamond mines. Between 1928 and 1932, excluding passes for the gold and diamond mines, 13,624 passes were issued. This would make up an annual controlled exodus in the neighbourhood of 7,000. Sir Alan considers, however, that considerable numbers manage to leave without passes. Mr. Leonard Barnes¹ states that the frontiers of Bechuanaland are easy to cross at one hundred points, so that there is in fact no official record of comings and goings that is anything like complete. From the general social evidence, however, he considers that the country is denuded of its adult males in much the same proportion as Basutoland and Swaziland, "that is to say, to the extent probably of 50 or 60 per cent."

In 1921 the African population of Basutoland was 495,000. It is generally believed that the population has since grown and the number of adult males can be taken to be about 120,000. According to the official report for 1932, 58,057 labour passes were issued during the year and 38,010 visiting passes, some at least of which must have been applied for by Basutos seeking employment. Of the labour passes 25,642 were issued for the gold mines and 12,678 for agriculture. On 30 April 1933, according to a statement of the South African Minister for Mines, 31,338 labourers from Basutoland were in employment on the Witwatersrand mines.

On the basis of the above somewhat inconclusive figures it would appear that the annual labour exodus from Swaziland affects over 10,000 out of an adult male population of 26,000, that from Bechuanaland considerably over 7,000 out of an adult male population of 35,000 to 40,000, and from Basutoland 60,000 to 90,000 out of an adult male population of 120,000. In appreciating these figures, it must also be remembered that a number of the adult males remaining in the territories are above labour age, and that the drain of the most active element in the populations is therefore greater than the figures suggest.

It is even more difficult to estimate the period of absence of the individual labourers, though once again there are indications that by this factor, too, the labour migration is a heavy strain on the economic and social structure of the territories. Sir Alan Pim, referring to Swaziland, considers that the proportion of the younger men who were away from their homes for more than six months in the year is very large. He states that enquiries in one district in 1931 suggested that 8 per cent. of the taxpayers had been absent for more than four years and were for all practical purposes permanently resident outside the territory. On the gold mines the period of contract until 1932 was six months (180 shifts) and since then has been nine months (270 shifts). The South African Native Economic Commission² was supplied in 1931 with a test check of Natives arriving for employment in Johannesburg. Of 1,336 Basutos, 1,068 had previously been employed on the

¹ IDEM: *The New Boer War*. London, Hogarth Press, 1932.

² UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA: *Report of Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932*. Pretoria, Government Printer, 1932.

mines, of whom 538 had been home for a period of six months or less, and 415 for twelve months or more. Of 426 Bechuanas, 390 had previously been in mining employment, of whom 215 has been home for six months or less and 130 for twelve months or more. Of 441 Swazis, 300 had previously been in mining employment, of whom 158 had been home for six months or less, and 111 for twelve months or more. Thus, out of the 2,303 Natives coming from the territories for a minimum period of employment of six months included in the test (a test taken in 1924 showed that the average stay of Basutos on the mines was 11.5 months, of Bechuanas 8.1 months and of Swazis 10.1 months), 911 had spent six months or less at home since their previous absence.

CAUSES OF MIGRATION

The figures given above suggest that the fundamental cause of the labour migration is economic pressure, the failure of the Native to earn sufficient money in his own locality to support his family and to pay his taxes. That social and political conditions also encourage labour migration, and that the economic motive includes the desire to satisfy new needs, are suggested by a study made by Dr. Schapera, Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town, into labour migration from the Bakgatla Reserve of Bechuanaland.¹

Dr. Schapera points out that land shortage, over-population and over-stocking, such as exist in the Union of South Africa, are not reasons for the labour migration from Bechuanaland. Moreover, in the case of the Bakgatla the Natives, unlike some of the other tribes of the territory, are usually able to produce sufficient food for their own requirements. On the other hand, their home industries have so far decayed that they are now more dependent on trade goods than upon their own products for the material accessories of life, and they must also find money with which to pay the annual tax. To meet their cash needs the Natives should be able to sell their cattle, since under normal conditions the sale of an ox suffices not only for the payment of taxes but also for the purchase of goods to the value of between £2 and £3. The usual Bantu reluctance to sell cattle is, however, a powerful deterrent, which has been reinforced since the slump in cattle prices by the fact that now little more than 28s. in cash can be obtained for the sale of an ox. In this connection it is of interest to note that Sir Alan Pim's report on Bechuanaland contains suggestions for improving the cattle trade and extending the market for dairy produce. Nevertheless the technical and financial difficulties appear to make improbable any rapid expansion in these directions through the utilisation of the resources at present available in the territory.

In any case Dr. Schapera finds that not every tribesman has cattle of which he can dispose if the need arises. From a rough census made

¹ I. SCHAPERA: "Labour Migration from a Bechuanaland Native Reserve", in *Journal of the African Society* (London), Oct. 1933 and Jan. 1934.

of one section of the tribe he estimates that at least 30 per cent. of the men are too poor in cattle to be able to rely on them as a source of income. If a man has no cattle nor any other means of raising money with which to pay his tax he may, according to Dr. Schapera, be drafted by the chief to work on the gold mines. The chief summons the labour recruiting agent, who, as soon as a man has been accepted for work on the mines, pays up to £2 10s. on his behalf to the tax collector. About 50 men a year at the most are recruited in this way, but others are said to be driven to seek employment by the dread that they too will be drafted to the mines.

In addition to the Government tax, levies are imposed upon the Natives from time to time by the chief to meet the cost of public undertakings. The levy generally takes the form of sending out all the men of an initiation regiment to seek work amongst the Europeans, each man being required to bring back a stipulated sum of money. It is the deliberate policy of the chief that these men should go to work, and a case came to Dr. Schapera's notice where men who attempted by the sale of cattle to raise the sum levied upon them were explicitly ordered to earn it by working abroad. In the past ten years almost all the middle-aged and younger men have been compelled to go out at least once to find money for levies thus imposed upon them.

Sir Alan Pim in his report to the Government mentions cases where a regiment was ordered out to earn money for the building of a church, a school and a new house for the chief.

The economic inducement to seek employment resulting from the desire to satisfy new needs is also emphasised by Dr. Schapera. He states that the young men often go out for the first time to equip themselves with good clothes, then again to obtain the wedding goods with which they must supply their brides at marriage, and later for such articles as ploughs and water storage tanks. Dr. Schapera gives the case of one man as typical. He went out for the first time after his betrothal in order to get himself a suit of clothes "so that when he walked about in the village the girls would look at him". Then he went out again to work for his bride's trousseau, for blankets and a bedstead, and at the same time bought a plough and a tank.

Apart, however, from the economic inducements to seek work abroad, Dr. Schapera finds in Bechuanaland a number of motives which he classifies as restiveness under family and tribal control. The chief has the right at any time to call upon the men of the tribe to work for him, but invariably a call of this sort leads to men making their way out of the reserve to escape taking part in the work. This is especially the case when the chief commands them to undertake work which they feel to be of more direct benefit to the European population than to the tribe. There is a growing feeling that they should be paid for such work, and rather than do it compulsorily and for nothing they prefer to go where they are rewarded for their labour. Occasionally, too, men who have incurred the personal displeasure of the chief will run away and work in the Transvaal, while cases are also known of men who have left the reserve through feeling aggrieved at verdicts brought against them in the tribal court.

Sometimes, again, the boys at the cattle posts run away because they are tired of herding cattle, while generally the desire for adventure and change is another powerful inducement.

In connection with Dr. Schapera's remarks on tribal labour, an account of the effects of the system given by Mr. Leonard Barnes is relevant.

Mr. Barnes states that at Serowe he had an opportunity of seeing a dam-scraping operation in progress with regimented labour (tribal compulsory labour supplied by men of the same initiation regiment). The men were paraded in numbers far exceeding the requirements of the job. Many of them had no tools of any kind; others had nothing more effective than sardine tins. These they would fill with the mud to be removed, balance on their heads in the Native way and solemnly carry for 200 yards to the bank to empty there. In the course of an hour they would perhaps make four of these farcical journeys. Mr. Barnes argues that the tribal labour system has led to a 'can't' policy among the conscripts, who point out with disarming candour that their output at least corresponds with the wage they earn. He considers that if the system is to serve any useful purpose in future the labour will have to be paid for at a fair rate and controlled as hired labour is controlled in civilised countries. As far as he was able to ascertain the tribe would not object to some increase in taxes to this end.

Reference is also made to the system of tribal compulsory labour in the report which Mr. Tagart submitted to the Government in 1931, on conditions among the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland.¹ His terms of reference were limited to the relations between the dominant tribe and the servile Masarwa and to corporal punishment in the Reserve. He points out, however, that the compulsory labour is of a very inferior quality, that the general effect of it is detrimental alike to the interests of the worker and of the employer, and that the system of corporal punishment is maintained almost solely to prevent shirking from tribal labour.

The same conditions do not appear to prevail in Swaziland or Basutoland. Miss Hodgson and Mr. Ballinger, however, criticise the powers of the chiefs as exercised in Basutoland. They state that the chiefs are representative rather of the most conservative than of the progressive elements in the community. When questions are asked why trees are not planted to help to stop erosion, the reply is given that the people are afraid of the chiefs' attempting to "eat up" the man who improves his holding and makes it attractive. It is also said that the chiefs will not allow fencing. Mr. Barnes, too, mentions the discouragement of tree growing and fencing as illustrations of the fact that the chiefs "are almost entirely a static force, which in other aspects is gravely retarding the progress of the country".

A further illustration of the character tribal labour assumes when once habits of wage-earning employment are acquired is given in the

¹ *Official Gazette of the High Commissioner for South Africa* (Pretoria), 12 May 1933. Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, Oct. 1933, pp. 549-553.

following account of a tour made by the Agricultural Adviser of the territory :

" I met two men ploughing. I greeted them. They were rude to me. I argued with them, and told them who I was. I tried to show them that they were not ploughing, but merely scratching the ground, as pigs would do. They answered me rudely. ' We quite understand all you say, but we prefer our old way. Besides we are not working for ourselves. We are ploughing for the Chief, and we want to get home to our dinner.' "¹

EFFECTS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

It is generally found that when a high proportion of the able-bodied male population is absent from an African community difficulties arise in the form of sexual irregularities both among the absent men and in the home communities, disease, conflict between the elders and returned labourers, and food shortage. On the other hand, distant employment often has its economic and educational advantages, economic in the form of increased earnings and educational through new experiences, new standards of cultivation, housing and cleanliness, and general discontent with village stagnation.

For the beneficial factors to be effective, however, it appears that certain conditions should exist in connection with the employment and with home circumstances. The employment should provide lessons easily assimilated by the Natives and transferable to home circumstances, as is sometimes the case with agricultural employment. The earnings should be in excess of home possibilities. Community life at home should not be unduly prejudiced by the temporary absence of the men.

Leaving aside the vexed question of the educational value of the employments in the Union that are open to Natives of the three South African territories, the information available throws some light on the question of earnings and the effect on the home communities of the workers' absence.

As regards earnings, Sir Alan Pim estimates that in respect of the 5,280 Swazis who proceeded to the mines each year from 1926 to 1930, the following sums found their way into the territory annually : (1) £42,811 on account of advances, capitation fees and cash remitted to relatives by the labourers ; (2) £9,536 deferred pay ; (3) £1,238 paid to Natives for accidents, miner's phthisis and compassionate grants ; (4) an estimated sum of £10,000 in the shape of earnings brought back in cash by Natives not on deferred pay. This makes a total of £63,585, which would work out at approximately £12 a head. As, however, compensation grants can hardly be reckoned as earnings, and as a fraction of the first item in the total would have to be deducted as part of the administrative expenses of recruiting, it would appear that on the basis of these figures the average savings of a Swazi mine labourer for each period of contract would be less than £10. Mr. Barnes, writing

¹ *The Star* (Johannesburg), 13 Nov. 1932.

of Bechuanaland, considers that on an average the Bechuana cannot bring back with him more than £7. Nevertheless, wage-earning opportunities within the territories are few (especially in Bechuanaland and Basutoland); the cattle and dairy industries could only be expanded slowly, so that it seems that the Native's earnings in employment are essential to the present economic life of the territories. It has, however, been suggested that they are essential because the absence of the wage earners has prevented the development of home productivity, and that the whole system is a vicious circle which can only be broken by a forward economic policy on the part of the administration.

Miss Hodgson and Mr. Ballinger, in their criticism of conditions in Basutoland, argue that the Basuto is driven out into the Union labour markets because his own resources are undeveloped and that he is able to accept low wages owing to his possession of land at home. A very similar opinion is expressed by Mr. Barnes in regard to all three territories. Referring to Swaziland he states that migration was, in the circumstances in which it arose, necessary and useful, but that it has been carried far beyond the limits of its utility. For example, though the number of Natives going out has risen by 32 per cent. since 1924, the total deferred pay remitted to Swazis has fallen by 41 per cent. in the same period. Labour migration, he states, is thus progressively failing of its primary purpose of bringing money into Swaziland. Many mine boys come back with nothing and accept a fresh advance from the recruiters the day after their return in consideration of a promise to re-engage. Even when they bring back money in excess of their immediate needs, it is habitually invested in scrub cattle — a doubtful blessing for a country in parts of which overstocking is already becoming a serious problem.

With regard to the effects in the territories of the labour exodus, Sir Alan Pim says of Swaziland that the high proportion of absentees among the able-bodied males must have a considerable effect on the social life of the nation. Writing of Bechuanaland, Mr. Barnes states that the labour migration is the main factor in detribalisation. The principal migration takes place in the first four months of each year. A good proportion of the migrants manage to return in October in time for ploughing, but if they know they have someone at home to plough for them they often remain away longer. In such cases ploughing may be done by the wife with the aid of relatives who, however, only help after they have done their own ploughing, so that the husband's lands usually miss the benefit of the early rains. The cattle, moreover, is often slackly tended and when the owner returns home he finds that his herd has actually dwindled. On the other hand, the cost of living in the towns of the Union is too high in relation to Native wages for him to save money and make up for the loss of cattle.

The educational position in Basutoland affords another example of a forward social policy being retarded by the consequences of labour migration. There are over 500 schools in the territory. Mr. Buell¹,

¹ R. L. BUELL: *The Native Problem in Africa*. New York, 1928.

who states that the Basutoland Government expends a larger proportion of its revenue on Native welfare than any other Government in Africa, estimates that 15 per cent. is spent on education. A difficulty would in any event have to be met in the traditional custom of entrusting the cattle to young boys to be herded in distant cattle posts. The continuation of this custom has become inevitable with the labour migration of the young men, and the result is, according to Miss Hodgson and Mr. Ballinger, that the schools are full of girls embarking on the road to culture, while, if the boys reach school at all, it is so late that the first freshness of youth is gone and the work of education is to a great extent rendered futile.

INDIRECT RULE AND LABOUR MIGRATION

The administration of Natives through their natural tribal authorities implies the association of rulers and people in the task of adjustment to the economic changes which are at present more potent in moulding Native society than any theory or practice of government. Sir Donald Cameron, Governor of Nigeria, has warned the chiefs that "if some better methods for the training and guidance of the chiefs in the art of administration are not introduced, Native Administration through the chiefs cannot endure in the modern society in which we all now have to live." Sir Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua, with a less robust faith in indirect rule, has declared that "the mere presence of a white man, even of the most enthusiastic supporter of Native custom, brings with it an influence which works silently for the disintegration of Native society."

In the case of the South African High Commission territories, the suggestion clearly emerges from the investigations recently made that, far from rulers and people being associated in the adjustment to economic change, there is already a gap between chiefs and people which is widening as a result of both the advantages (e.g. industrial training) and the disadvantages (e.g. detribalisation) of the labour situation. The critics of the system of administration hold that the present contradiction between social policy and the economic situation which has been allowed to develop demands a new orientation of labour policy, the creation within the territories of opportunities for free and adequately remunerated employment or production, combined with a lessening of the pressure driving the Natives towards employment in the Union of South Africa. The ratification and application by Great Britain of the Forced Labour Convention and the acceptance of the Recommendation concerning indirect compulsion to labour may do something to improve the labour market within the territories, particularly if it is associated with limitations of recruiting in accordance with the demographic position. The main economic question, however, will still remain, to be solved only by a programme of economic development and general education within the territories.