

possible to secure financial returns over and above the normal emoluments of the individual labourer. If such a possibility materialises it recommends that any money so obtained be placed in a Native Trust Fund to be utilised for the sole purpose of providing additional social services for the Native communities.

#### CO-OPERATION OF CONTROLLING AGENCIES

The final chapter of the report advocates measures which have a certain political as well as economic significance in that they call for the collaboration of all parties interested in the development of the Protectorate. It is suggested that to forward economic development it will be necessary to call in the aid not only of different departments of Government but also of missions, planting and other associations, and individual experts. Close co-ordination will be necessary among all these various agencies and it is thought that a small organising body should be set up to plan and co-ordinate any schemes of development. With this body the Labour Department and such other departments as may be responsible for controlling the movement of labour should keep closely in touch, in order that the emigration of surplus labour may be wisely controlled.

## Native Labour on Zululand Sugar Estates

The report <sup>1</sup> has recently been published of a South African Committee appointed in March 1935 to enquire into a series of questions connected with the Native labour supply. One part of the report concerns the requirements of the sugar industry in certain districts of Zululand, and is in substance a continuation of the 1932-33 report of the Native Affairs Commission in which were examined problems of malaria-tolerant labour, labour competition between mines and estates, and general conditions of employment as affecting the South African sugar estates. <sup>2</sup>

#### LABOUR DEMAND AND SUPPLY

In the districts covered, the Committee estimates that an annual average Native labour force of 11,700 is required by planters and 2,100 by sugar mills.

It has not proved possible to meet this demand solely by Zulu labour. Without seeking employment Zulus have no difficulty in growing sufficient food and keeping enough cattle to supply their

<sup>1</sup> UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT: *Report of Departmental Committee appointed to enquire into and report upon certain questions relating to Native Labour in Zululand, the Transkeian Territories and the Ciskei*. Pretoria, Government Printer, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXX, No. 1, July 1934, pp. 98-101.

needs, and when employment is sought there is a preference for urban areas where in addition to town attractions the conditions of wages, housing, feeding, and treatment are more favourable. Moreover, the High Veld Natives do not like working in the hot climate of the sugar belt and many who do not object to the actual work of the sugar-cutting season dislike weeding and other work of the off-season, which they regard as women's work.

Labour has also been obtained from Basutoland and the Cape. Owing to malaria in the sugar belt, however, the Basutoland administration has prohibited recruiting and the supply of labour from the Cape has also declined heavily.

The labour short-fall has been chiefly met by Natives from Portuguese East Africa, of whom from 5,000 to 7,000 are estimated to be the annual average requirement. Under the Mozambique Convention of 1928 such Natives, unless in possession of a Portuguese passport, were required to be regarded as prohibited immigrants. The 1934 amendment to the Convention, however, authorised the granting of permission for a limited number of such Natives to remain temporarily in the Union, and these the Committee proposes should be confined to a restricted area and subject to the control and protection of the Native Affairs Department.

#### THE PROBLEM OF MALARIA

The question of the labour supply is closely connected with that of malaria. The districts covered by the report are highly malarial. A medical report in 1931, the Native Economic Commission in 1932, and the Native Affairs Commission in 1934 recommended that the labour requirements of the districts should as far as possible be met from areas where the population has acquired resistance to malaria, and that with this end in view the recruiting of such labour for other areas and employments should be limited.

To give effect to these recommendations an agreement was reached between the Transvaal Chamber of Mines and the sugar industry by which the mines undertook to restrict the recruiting of malaria-tolerant labour to a maximum of 2,000 labourers a year pending revision of the Mozambique Convention. Now that the Convention has been revised the Committee recommends the continuance of the agreement and invites the sugar industry to re-open negotiations with the Chamber of Mines. At the same time the Committee does not recommend restrictions on non-recruited labour, pointing out that it is not desirable and is certainly not in the interests of the Natives that employment in the mines should be closed to them.

This programme for the retention of the local labour supply and the regularisation of the position of the Portuguese Natives would, however, be incomplete without the discouragement of the employment of external labour with no particular tolerance to malaria. For this reason the Committee also recommends that within the malarial area only local, malaria-tolerant labour should be employed and that all recruiting for employment therein should be prohibited.

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Committee's report advocates improved conditions of employment both as protection against malaria and as a means of attracting labour. It emphasises that, if the Government intervenes to secure for the sugar industry a privileged position in obtaining suitable labour, it can also rightly insist on a sufficient measure of control to ensure proper conditions of employment.

The Committee considers that the Native Labour Regulation Act, which regulates Native employment on mines and works, should be amended to include the whole of the sugar industry. The planters are reported as fearing that this would mean that regulations comparable to those in force on the goldmines would be applied and would be too exacting for the resources of the industry. It is pointed out, however, that different regulations already exist to meet the varying conditions of mining in the Transvaal on the diamond diggings, on the Natal coalfields, and on the diamond mines of the Orange Free State.

The report continues that conditions as to wages, housing, and feeding in the sugar belt are not even. The conditions on the larger sugar estates and farms are generally good, but this cannot be said of some of the smaller properties. These shortcomings have an adverse effect not only on the employers concerned but also on the reputation of the industry as a whole. The report adds that the best opinion in the sugar industry already realises the need for bringing unprogressive employers more nearly into line with the better managed estates. It is thought that it would be comparatively easy in consultation with representative planters to draft a set of simple regulations which, while making due allowance for the financial circumstances of the smaller estates, would provide powers whereby inspectors might be enabled to bring pressure to bear upon employers who neglect the simplest precautions in regard to housing, health, and medical attention.

The Committee also recommends that staff should be appointed under the Native Affairs Department to register all Natives employed on the estates and mills, to render reports to the Portuguese Curator of Native labour on the presence of Portuguese Natives, to act as immigration officers, to supervise the collection on the sugar estates of Native tax, to administer the laws and regulations limiting the penetration of Portuguese labour and providing for its return to Portuguese territory, and to investigate complaints and promote improved conditions for Natives employed in the sugar industry.