Minutes of oral evidence before the Native Economic Commission
Volume 7: 1930 Cofimvaba, Butterworth, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp, Queenstown, King William's Town
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NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

COTIVABA DISTRICT ST. MARKS 22nd NOVEMBER 1930 10.30 a.m.

FIFTYFIFTH PUBLIC SITTING

PRESENT:

Dr. J. E. Hollaway, (Chairman),
Major W. R. Anderson, Mr. A. M. Mostert,
Dr. H. C. M. Fourie, Dr. A. W. Roberts,
Mr. F. A. W. Lucas, Senator P. W. LeRoux Van Nierkerk,
Mr. C. Faye, (Secretary).

MR. LANGA WILLIAM MASIZA,

CALLED and examined:

CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to make a statement to the Commission?—Yes, sir. I am sorry, I did not know I had to make a statement by myself; I thought I would be cross-examined, but, at the same time, I find that I am to make a statement.

I wish, first, to refer to Native education. Native education as it is now, comes only from the missionary side. Missionaries have assisted Natives to build school buildings; the Government pays nothing for it. There is a little assistance, of course, nowadays, in connection with furniture and school books, but the whole of the buildings, the sites and everything are provided by the missionaries. The State itself does nothing as regards the buildings themselves, which means a big tax to the Natives. We, as taxpayers, think we should have something to assist us in the building of schools.

Some of these houses, being poorly built, are injurious to children; young children are crowded in a space that is not adequate for the numbers. There is very little ventilation, consequently some of our children get ill—sometimes because the windows are too small—and the eyesight of the children fails. That is the outcome
of the State not doing anything to assist the people in building the houses.

I now pass on from the buildings and come to the school syllabus. When I was a schoolboy, there was a syllabus in our Colony here for both Whites and Blacks. When Dr. Muir came on the scene, something new was introduced. There was an European syllabus and a Native syllabus. Anyone looking at that Native syllabus will see that, in colleges it falls far below that of the European. Why that is, I do not know. I do not think it is due to the fact that the Native is incapable of rising up to the level of the European when he studies; I do not think that is so. But, for what reason it was done, I do not know.

In the next place, you find that the result is this: a Standard IV boy - I will begin there - in the European school, is higher in intelligence than the Native boy. The things the boys learn now in the Native school are not in the European school; they are higher in the European school. In Standard V it is growing worse still. Standard VI the same. So that, when this Native boy rises up to the stage of taking his matriculation, or the high school course, as I would call it, he finds clearly that he is inferior to the European, because some of the subjects, to him, are quite new and he has to work hard to come to the level of the European boy who has got these things from St. IV upwards; certain subjects which he should have been given time to study easily are simply put into one time and his mind is muddled up.

They scramble sometimes to pass through, but in most cases they fail. That is our complaint. We think the syllabus should be the same. We Natives have got you as an example to copy from and, if we keep on together, I
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think we will go along very well; but we begin to take
two ways - two streams - one going one way and the other
the other. In the course of time the Native will have
to run a very, very hard race in order to catch up with
his European compatriot. That is our complaint.

I now pass on to the salaries of teachers.
Everybody knows that the Native teachers are very poorly
paid indeed. I do not think there is any dispute as to
that. I have been before administrators on this question;
I have seen the Prime Minister of this country on this
question. They have promised us this and that, but
what has been done to better the emoluments of the teachers?
They are still, very, very inadequate - very, very low.

When a man goes to school, he is educated, Christianised
sometimes. It simply means one thing; that is cost of
living is rising. Unless we are told that we must have
skirt trousers and a skin coat, which we can get from our
goats or our father's goats, we cannot expect to live on
the salaries that are paid to teachers. It is time the
cost of living of an enlightened Native were realised and
his salary be commensurate therewith; when standard of
living is nearer that of the European than his more backward
brothers. I have touched on the salary.

There is great dissatisfaction amongst the
Native teachers generally and even the Natives generally
feel that, after their boys and girls have been taught,
when they take up posts in schools they just receive small
sums of money on which they cannot live. For that reason,
there is a big complaint coming on amongst the more en-
lightened of our people. Whilst I am touching on this,
I think it is much better for me to say at the same time,
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that, even an ordinary Native, if he has to work and be paid the standard of wages usually paid, it is much below his needs.

I believe you are all acquainted with this - I believe I am correct in saying so - that from April 1928 there were increments promised to Native teachers of £3 a year, but they have not been forthcoming, and it is now 1930. I think they are really overdue. Why, we cannot explain. I am an ex-teacher now but I am sure the teachers do not like to agitate; they would rather get things peacefully. Unfortunately, a thing that I do not like personally has been started in the Transvaal; all the teachers are suing the Government on account of these increments not being paid when they were promised. I was a teacher for 36 years but never before have I seen the teachers so hard pressed for these increments to be made as they are now, during this time of depression. When these people have to send their children to school and fees are required to be paid, they have to incur very heavy debts. Why? Because they find they were promised something which was never paid to them.

I think I have touched on the important part so far as education is concerned.

My opinion and the opinion of many of my friends is that the Government should step in and assist us in connection with the building of houses; that would cheapen matters. There is one house being built near my home; it will cost about £300 to £400. It has to come out of our own pockets.

SENATOR VAN NIKKERK: Do you not appreciate it all the more? - Yes, but I feel, at the same time, that the Government should do something. We think, as people who belong to the State, we should be assisted.
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I will now pass on to the land question, the occupation of land particularly in the surveyed districts. Tsone, Nqamakhwe, Butterworth, Idutywa, were the first districts with surveyed land; that is nearly twenty years ago. People were promised that land would be inherited directly by their children.

CHAIRMAN: Are you going into the question of the line of succession that was laid down by Proclamation 87 of 1921? Yes, something like that.

I do not think you need go into that; the Representatives of the Bunga have already gone fully into that? Well, I will leave that alone. One of the subjects here is about tribal and detribalised Natives. Well, I stay in Pingoeland. Pingoeland is more or less detribalised. Why? the question is always asked, has this come about? Well, that to me is quite clear; the cutting off of the authority of the chief by the Government has caused the detribalisation of the Native. Where a chief still has authority and power over his people, there is less detribalisation. Where the chief has no authority - or if he has any it is so little that it is useless - there, of course, the Native gets easily detribalised. You find them flocking into the towns; you find them in the locations there. In the first place, some of them go to find work in order to pay taxes and support their families and keep their homes going in proper order, as there is nothing to be earned in the neighbourhood. Some of them stay there until they have wives and children and these people forget all about their homes.

Nowadays, that is being caused directly by the shortage of land. In the surveyed districts, if you counted the number of young men who are going to be married
and who have been recently married, you would find that they outnumber the man who has got land; and where is that man to get land from? When he tries to find land he cannot get it and then when he has not got it, the next thing he does is to take his things and go and find work somewhere else. Where he finds work he remains, because he has no other home, no head. I think I have touched on that as far as I can.

Well, then, there is this question, which is always misunderstood, I may say, by some people who are not Natives, namely the question of lobolo, as they call it. I, personally, do not care much for it; at the same time I find that the doing away with the custom will, in the long run, destroy the real thing that keeps the tribe of the Native generally. I find, although I am not an enthusiast about it, that, at the same time it should not be done away with. It is the only means of keeping the good characters of our women. They are proud of it. They keep themselves clean for the simple reason that, when they go to their new homes when they are married, they wish usually go there feeling proud that they have got something in their home - not that exactly, but I think it is a bridge by which the two families are connected - and which have been kept apart before; by destroying that bridge, it might make the marriage almost valueless.

It seems to me that the Native was a very deep thinker in olden times. When this young daughter marries a young man somewhere else, when the young man dies, the woman can come back home and enjoy the life at home freely without being scorned at, because they know that the woman has something in the home here. That is the most vital point about it. Now, if she were not lobolo-d, as they
call it, and were simply married according to the way
they do it sometimes in some places, the result is, when
they part or the man dies and nothing is left, she hesitates
to come home. The children are scattered about the country
and they become the 'amahle hali' of these people in the
towns they call 'machepe'; whereas, if things were allright
she could easily go home and her children be brought up in
the proper way of red children.

I think I have touched on that part of the
migration of Natives, because I have told you how some of
these migrations are caused.

With regard to agriculture; in connection with
this, the Natives just now are beginning to open their eyes
to it. They have not reached a very high standard yet,
but they are moving forward now far better than they have
been during the past ten years. But, in most cases, when
we want to use our lands properly, where we could have got
on better with a little irrigation, easily done,—if we
could only have got something to help us in connection with
the formation of dams in forests—we could have made more
that where
progress. However, I think it is a good thing, it is
quite possible to have this water drawn so as to cover many
lands, the Government should do something to help us and
that that would improve agriculture and put it in a better
way. I have grown up in the country; I am not a townsman.
I will leave out some of these questions such as urban
areas, administration, and such things. I have not any
good knowledge of what exactly goes on there, but at the
same time there is one thing, I think, that is done in
some place—I believe in most of the places here—and I
believe it should be done in every other district where
there is a location, namely, that there should be an advisory
board. It is the only means of these people saying what they want. Though in most of the locations there is still a long way to go towards improvement, I was in East London once and stayed there for a week, attending a certain conference or meeting and, at the end of the second week, I was almost ill through the unhealthy condition of the location.

DR. ROBERTS: Which location are you referring to - the East or the West? - The East Bank; I do not know much about the West. I remember one night when I was walking down one of what they call the main streets there, I stood there and there was a strong stench, so strong that it made my head ache. Those of you who are always breathing fresh air will feel it much more or quicker than anyone else. I am a man who is living in the open country where you get very fresh air, and when you live in these other places, you feel very nasty indeed. So the Government should urge the municipalities to make these locations as clean as and as good as they can.

I was at Queenstown once; I was not there long and was disgusted with the way things were done. I do not know whose fault it is. The location is really not clean. The latrines are not kept as they should be; that is where all the sickness comes from. There should be as many as possible along the streets, so as to allow people to free themselves quickly. Some of them go round a corner. The whole location is simply a stench.

When a man sees a latrine is 200 or 300 yards away and is wanting to make use of it, he simply goes round the first corner. This renders the whole location very unhealthy indeed.

I believe the question of cattle has been touched
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upon and also labour, by the Bunga.

CHAIRMAN: We discussed these matters with the Bunga Representatives for three days. So kindly confine yourself to things of more importance to your district, because the general questions have been very fully dealt with. With regard to my district and the adjacent districts, I think I have touched on the points I really wanted to speak about and, of course, if I have left anything out, some of my friends somewhere else will have filled up the gap, so I will not take up more time in speaking of these.

In coming here yesterday, we passed through a portion of Tsamo district and it struck us that that was very well cultivated in comparison with other districts. How does that compare with other districts? In some places people have been a little bit slow and in others they have done a little better.

The portion we passed through was between Engoobo and here; do you know it? Yes.

The portions farther west? You pass over a little bridge, I believe; well you passed near my place.

Do you think the agriculture is better there? They are doing their best.

Why is the agriculture better in that district than in so many other districts? Well, I cannot say exactly why but it depends upon the enlightened people being many; in some of the districts very few of the people are enlightened; they do not take advantage of their chances.

An explanation was given to us that many of these people go and work in the neighbouring districts in the Cape Colony, they see better methods there and come and apply them, but a Native here said that they did not learn better methods from the farmers. What is your view? Well, whilst I
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could not wholly contradict him, I may say what I do is what I have copied from European farmers.

Have you been out working on farms yourself?—No, but simply passing round the district and looking and seeing what has been done there.

You are a teacher and therefore you are accustomed to seeing new things and adopting them, but does that apply to people who have not had your education?—Only a very small percentage of them; the majority of them do not.

The people who have gone to work on European farms are people who have not had very much education?—Yes.

But the things they have learned to do on European farms, do they come back and practise them on their own holdings?—Yes; some of them do and they do it well, too.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: You spoke about the low salary of teachers; what is the average salary of a teacher?—I will take the lowest and the highest; then you can strike the average for yourself. The lowest is just now £54.

Take the men first?—The men are £60 and the highest, of course, is £108, with the exception of certain allowances which make it a little higher in some respects.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: What would this allowance be, £10 a year?—No, there are different standards. If you take Standards V or VI, you go on that and your experience.

What would be the average allowance, £10?—Do you mean a year?

Yes?—About that.

DR. ROBERTS: And the good service allowance?—Yes, that puts it a little higher.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: That works out at an average of about £90 a year?—Yes.

CHAIRMAN: What is the highest salary?—£120.

DR. ROBERTS: If you tell me you are going to take
the highest, it belongs to a very few, and the lowest belongs to a good many; you add the two together and divide by two and get the average?— I do not do that; I only tried to tell you the highest and lowest so that the average can be arrived at by anybody.

**SENATOR VAN NIEKERK:** Say, for argument’s sake, the average was £8½, that is for a man who lives on the countryside, where living is cheap; he gets a house, usually free, food cheap and so on?— £8½ for an average is a bit high.

But what does a clerk or interpreter at the court get in town? or an ordinary educated Native in the town—what does he get—more than £7.10.—generally?—I do not know, but they begin with about £6 and then rise to something like £140, according to the length of service.

But do you think these teachers are underpaid as compared with such people as interpreters?—Yes, very decidedly so.

Have you found that?—I will take, for instance, the accounts collector at Tzamco——

Those are fat jobs; you do not get many of those?—Yes. The interpreters also, none of them get less than that.

I remember one at Tzamco, too,—long ago that was,—he got £14½.

But a teacher works less than anyone else; he works fewer days in the year?—I differ with you there; the days may be few, but the work is more.

Another thing I want to know is, have you not found that the cost of living has gone down?—No, it has not got down yet; I think it is as high as it ever was.

Not in foodstuffs perhaps, but in clothing it has gone down considerably, has it not?—In foodstuffs there is no difference in the Transkei that I have noticed, and clothing too; if it has to come we will have to feel it later on.
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rather than now.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Measles are cheaper? — Measles and wool are nothing; they have gone to the lowest they can go.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: You spoke about increments?— Yes.

Increments were only promised if money were available; is not that so? — I noticed that in the Ordinance there, but at the same time, if you promise a man anything, he expects it.

Were not a good few teachers helped by raising them to the minimum notch? — I said, when I was addressing you in the first instance, that something has been done.

You said the depression makes it hard for a teacher nowadays to come out on his salary; the depression does not affect a salaried man, does it? — It does.

How? — The salaries that are paid to the teachers — I am a teacher — are not adequate for my cost of living; I have to supplement it. You will understand I am a country teacher and, as a country teacher, therefore, my salary has been supplemented by some of these things that have gone down to nothing today. Therefore, if I cannot sell my wool —-

Quite so, but that is exceptional now; an ordinary teacher gets no supplementary salary by selling wool or mea- 

les? — The supplementary things that enabled me to live have gone down in price, consequently the depression is felt by the teacher.

MR. LUCAS: Do all the teachers supplement their income? — Most of the teachers in the Transkei do. They could not live if they did not do it.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Now, just two questions more. You spoke about the detrivalisation of Natives and their going to towns, etc., because they have no land; but can you expect all the Natives in future to have land? — No;
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I know that must come.

So you take it as natural evolution?—Yes.

You only stated as a fact why some of them do go to town?—I know, in the future, we shall have to tackle the question, because some of these boys will have no land at all.

You said, if a woman was not lobolo'd, she could not be a woman of good character?—Not quite that, I said they were proud of it.

You said they could not be?—Well, if I put it in that way, it was a slip of the tongue. I said she is proud of it; she keeps herself clean for the simple reason that she wants to go to her home as a good girl. You understand, I said myself clearly that I am not an enthusiast about it.

DR. ROBERTS: If teachers are paid so little, how is it that there is such a rush of students wanting to be teachers?—Oh, thank you for that. The first reason is that there is no other way of getting our education, except by passing through the teacher's examination. Consequently, it is the only opening that attracts more of the Native people in this country.

MR. LUCAS: You said that a lot of young men get married and now have not got land; do they live with their parents until they get married in this district?—Yes, they do.

So that the shortage, as far as they are concerned, does not occur until they want to get married?—Well, as far as their persons are concerned, yes.

What do you mean by that?—I mean, when he was living with his father he was working for his father and was not independent of his father, and now that he is married he has to begin his own home.
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SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Are you a farmer now? Yes.
And you make your living solely by farming? Yes,
and a small pension.

What is your pension, may I ask? Well, it is
so small, I am ashamed to speak about it; at anyrate, I
have £36.

How much land have you got - just one allotment? -
Well, I have got nine morgen to use and at present I am using
about 15 morgen.

How did you get hold of the extra? - How do you
mean - to fill up the gap of my living.

MR. LUCAS: No; how did you get so much more
land? - Mine is 4 morgen exactly and I have the use of the
land of one of my brothers, and in that way it has increased
to fifteen.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: And can you make a decent
living on it? - Well, if the depression was not there, I
could not complain very much.

Are you a stock farmer too? - Yes.
How many sheep do you own? - Say about 200.
And cattle? - About thirty.

wealth

Now, is the holdings of the Natives very unevenly
distributed in the reserves? - Yes, it is.

There are some well-to-do and some very poor? -
Yes; there are some well-to-do and some very poor indeed.

The Commission adjourned at 11.15 a.m. to
hear evidence at Butterworth on Monday, 24th November 1930.

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