

Mr. McNamee

MAJOR ANDERSON: Is there much production of fresh Coloured blood here? Are there many new Coloured children being born, half caste children ?- No, not a great many. We have just a small Coloured section at New Brighton. Some of them have been living there since the location was established and, under our cleansing department provisions, we have to provide accommodation for Coloured persons. The cleansing work is done by the Coloured persons, the sanitary work. Natives do not do that kind of work. These are all Coloured people who do that work, but there is a very small section of the Coloured community out there.

MR. LUCAS: Notwithstanding the new law, do you get many cases of Europeans co-habiting or mixing with Native women ?- No, we do not get much of that in New Brighton.

But outside New Bright and Port Elizabeth generally ?- I have no knowledge of it. You see, I live at New Brighton and my time there is fully taken up.

Is there any accommodation provided for Native girls coming in from the towns ?- No.

Well, what have they got there today, where do they live ?- Coloured girls, or do you mean Native girls?

Native girls ?- They either reside on the premises of the employers, or they are allowed to reside with friends or relatives in the location.

Yes, but what happens to those who have no relatives or friends before they get employment ?- I do not know of any such cases, they do not come there. They always come with a resident of the location and permission is asked then for such a girl to reside with such a resident.

Do I understand that you get no girls coming into Port Elizabeth who are not connected with local residents ?- Very few. I have only two cases in mind and those were cases

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were the girls had run away from their homes and they were immediately followed by their parents and taken home again.

Do you think there is enough accommodation in Port Elizabeth for Native girls in the way you have suggested ?- I think do/that if provision could be made for a hostel, for a girls' hostel, say, somewhere close to the town, from which they could easily get to their employers premises, it would be a great advantage not only to the girls, but to the employers as well.

Now, is there any provision made for addmmmodation made for visiting Natives ?- We have a boarding house there, but I am afraid it is not very well patronised and visitors usually prefer to stay with friends.

Would the cost have anything to do with the boarding house not being patronised ?- Yes, I suppose it would have something to do with it. In any case, they prefer to stay with friends.

Now, I understand that you have a Native Affairs Committee on your Town Council ?- Yes, that is so.

And does that Committee meet the Advisory Board ?- Whenever the Advisory Board, as far as my memory goes, have requested the Native Affairs Committee to meet them, they have done so, but I must say that these occasions have been rather rare.

When was the last occassionz that the Committee met your Board ?- I should think about two years ago.

Do you not think it would be wise to have fairly freque. meetings between the Committee and the Native Advisory Board ?- Yes, I certainly think so, and at any time when the Native Advisory Board wish to meet the Committee, such a wish should certainly be acceded to.

Mr. McNamee

But do you not think it would be a sound policy to provide that such meetings should definitely take place at regular intervals, at stated intervals? - Yes, I do feel that the members of the Board and the Native Affairs Committee would get a better grasp of things they would better learn to understand the Native aspirations and ideas. It would certainly be a very good thing if they could get more into touch with them.

Now, does your Native Affairs Committee visit the location frequently? - I cannot say that they do so frequently.

Could you tell us about how often? - Well, the members come out occasionally, just as they feel inclined to do so. They come out on their own, but it is not very often that the Committee as a whole comes out to visit the locations.

CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much Mr. McNamee, for your evidence which has been most valuable to us and most interesting. Are there any other points that you wish to raise? - I may say that my Council has asked to be brought in under the Native Urban Areas Act, and we shall shortly be brought under that Act. Regulations have been framed to provide for that. I think the Urban Areas Act was based largely on the old Location Act.

Yes, you mentioned the Urban Areas Act among the subjects to which you wished to refer? - I thought I explained that. You asked a question from one of the witnesses, and he could not reply to it. I have now dealt with that. It was about Korsten. Korsten does come under the Urban Areas Act, but not as a Native location. I think I have dealt with all the subjects now to which I referred earlier on.

MR. HORATIO MBELLE, Attorney's Clerk and member of the Advisory Board, New Brighton, called and examined.

CHAIRMAN: You have put in a statement about taxation which I have read, but I am afraid it does not contain anything that we do not know and we have to know a great deal more about the subject, before we can say anything about it ourselves. Now, if you will confine yourself to this other subject which you raise, we shall be glad. I mean the subject of good feeling between Europeans and Natives? - Yes, sir. It is a subject, to my mind, of very great importance, because one often hears it said today that the relations between White and Black are becoming more and more strained. According to your questionnaire, you wish to know whether there has been, in the past 25 years, any change in the attitude of the Natives towards Europeans.

I want to confine myself more especially to Port Elizabeth, but in my remarks I am afraid I shall have to deal with conditions elsewhere as well.

I have had experience in Johannesburg, the Transkei, Herschel and also here. To my mind, the root cause of the strained relationship existing today is primarily attributable to the attitude taken up by the European section towards the Native. The attitude to which I am referring is the feeling by a great section of the European community to regard the Native people not as members of the body politic of the Union. They regard the Native as something outside the scope of the citizenship of the Union. You find that illustrated in various acts passed by the legislature. In act after act you find that the Natives are kept out of the record of citizenship.

Mr. Mbelle

Take the Land Act, for instance; Take the Miners Phthisis Act - the Natives are not dealt with in the same way as other members of the community. Take the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911. Then again, the present regulations under the Act of 1911. Look at the pass laws and the way the Natives are affected by them, and again the Native Land Act of 1913.

And then again there is the disregard of the human feelings of the Native people. I would like to emphasize this by pointing out that, in the first place, this land was inhabited by Natives with their chiefs as rulers and so on, and, consequently, there is a tradition, there is an attachment to the Government of the country by the Native people, and whether you will it or not, that attachment will remain. Now, the attitude of the European people today is weaning away the Native people from the interest in the Government of the country. That has a lot to do with the attitude of the Natives towards the Europeans under present-day circumstances.

DR. ROBERTS: I should like you to enlarge upon that? - I shall be pleased to do so. First of all, we hear so much of this expression, "We are out to make this a White man's country", and everything today is being done to make the country a White man's country; everything is being done by legislation, by the conduct of the European people towards the Native people.

If the Native people were being carried together with the European people, if they were made to feel that they were part and parcel of the country, if they were made to share in the producing power of the country, I think this feeling would dwindle away.

Mr. Mbelle

And there is also another point. It may be unnoticeable to many people and yet it is responsible for a great deal of this feeling. The European people refer unwittingly to the Native people as kaffers, as boys. Now that, to my mind, seems to instil in the European mind the idea that the kaffer is something below human being, not worthy of consideration as a human being. You often hear a European saying, "I was treated worse than a kaffer", or "I was treated as a kaffer". What does it mean - he was treated as a kaffer - it means that he did not get a fare share, did not get a fair deal.

I shall give you an instance of what I mean. Not long ago, a Native was sent from here to deliver a parcel at a certain hotel. He went up, as he was told to, he knocked at the door, and he heard a lady inside say "Sonny, who is at the door". The youngster looked and answered, "Mammy, it is noone, it is only a boy". He does not know today, but he is growing up with that attitude to regard the Black man as something inferior.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: He might just as well say to his Mother, "Mammy, it is noone, it is just the butcher? - Yes, just so. But my complaint is that that is his attitude to the Native.

No, I do not agree with you. He might say "It is just the butcher"? - It is not only with regard to the particular class of people, but with regard to the whole race of Black people. Now, I mentioned the Miners Phthisis Act and I mentioned the Native/Regulations Act of 1911. There again we find the way in which the Native people are regarded. The Native people are not looked upon in the same way as other sections of the community. Their lives are regarded as

Mr. Mbelle

something inferior, something worth less than of other members of the community. Under the Miners Pnthisis Act, the compensation that is awarded them is very much lower than what a farmer would get as compensation for his stock, if it were damaged by some accident. A Native's life in Johannesburg, Mr. Chairman, is valued to the maximum of £50.

CHAIRMAN: There are quite a lot of racehorses valued at a lot more than I am valued at ?- Yes, quite so, but compensation to European people is much higher than it is to Natives, and yet that Native has dependants to see to, people with lives, people who can do a great deal for the advancement of the country, people who could have done a great deal for the country if only their minds and their lives had been developed and looked after. And then, with regard to the prison regulations, I want to mention this, that there is a great deal of differentiation in the gaols. First of all, in regard to food and there I want to say that the Native people are not given the same class of food as the other people in the gaols are given.

DR. ROBERTS: Are you sure of that ?- Yes, I am certain of it.

CHAIRMAN: But do the Natives eat the same class of food in their own Territories? Take the Native chief, who is the master of his own homes. Does he eat the same food as the Europeans eat ?- The Native chief of today eats quite good food.

That is not my question. Does he eat the same food as the European does ?- No, not up to the same standard.

MR. LUCAS: You are comparing with the Coloured man ?- No, I am referring to the class of food which is given in

Messrs. Schultz and Lallo

policeman going in to a house during the daytime. The people who lived in that house were just going out to town. That policeman did not even wait for the door to be opened, he simply went inside by breaking open the doors, he smashed up everything, he tore the mattrasses to pieces, but nothing was found.

In a case like that you must lodge a complaint. There is a law to deal with that sort of thing and if it is not carried out, the Commission cannot help you ?- Yes, that is so, but I did lodge complaints and the sub-Inspector of Police went to the places I mentioned. The regulations say that, if the police are sure that there is kaffer beer inside, they can break into the place and destroy the kaffer beer.

Do you think that the power that has been given to the police has been abused ?- Yes, in this particular case it has been abused.

MR. LUCAS: What is the usual rate of wages paid in a store in Grahamstown ?- From 10/- to 15/- per week.

And 10/- a week, is that accompanied by food ?- No, sir.

What sort of work are they doing for 10/- a week ?- The ordinary sort of work. The Town Council pay a little more than that. They pay from 15/- a week upwards.

Now, take what I call garden boys, what are they paid ?- They are paid from 10/- and 12/6 per week.

Do they live on their employer's premises, or do they live in the location ?- They live in the location.

So the pay is 10/-, 12/6 and 15/- a week and nothing found ?- No, nothing found.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 1.15 UNTIL 2.30 P.M.

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On the Commission resuming at 2.30 p.m.

MR. HARRY JAMES HARRAWAY)
MR. REGINALD WILLIAM FREGER)) Representing the Chamber of
Commerce,

were called and examined:

CHAIRMAN: You gentlemen represent the Chamber of Commerce at Port Elizabeth ?- (Mr. Harraway): I am a past Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. (Mr. Freger): I have been asked to represent the Chamber, together with my friend, Mr. Harraway.

There are certain points, I understand, you wish to bring before the Commission on behalf of your Chamber ?- (Mr. Harraway): No, I have no particular points to bring before you. I am not an authority on Native questions, but I am prepared to answer any questions that you may care to put to me associated with commerce. ~~The question~~

The question of the desirability of extending the laws dealing with wage determination to the Natives has been referred to us and, in that connection also, the question whether it would be necessary to make any amendments to the law to make it applicable to the Natives is required. That is a matter on which your Chamber might care to make a statement, as I take it it is very much interested in it? - Yes. Our Chamber would oppose that. We are not in favour of a wage act and we strongly oppose its application to Natives. I may say that we are opposed to Government interference with business and we like as little of it as possible, but, with regard to Natives, we fear very much that it would lead to complications. It would establish the principle of laying down a wage which later on would undoubtedly be increased to an uneconomic level. We have had experience of it in our factories and we find that the Wage Act bears very heavily

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upon us and that it has handicapped us and we would resent any extension of it, particularly to the Natives. It would create all sorts of difficulties.

You say that it would create difficulties. Would you be more specific on that point as to what sort of difficulties it might create ?- Numerous returns, for one thing, a great deal of clerical work. I think the main difficulty would be the wage which would be applied - it would tend to go up all the time. In the first instance, it would be moderate, but I have no doubt that it would increase, I am certain it would increase and it would reach a level which would handicap us as much as it does in our factory.

In stating that it would probably increase beyond an uneconomic level, you are not really opposing the thing in principle ?- Yes, I am opposing it in principle, because I feel that if we were to adopt that principle it would extend and it would become more and more burdensome.

DR. ROBERTS: What is the principle ?- The principle of applying the Wage Act to Natives. That is what you are referring to.

CHAIRMAN: But what reason have you for thinking that the application of the Wage Act would lead to the fixing of an uneconomic wage ?- I take it that the object of the application of the Act would be to pay more than is paid at present and while in certain quarters the wages may be too low, I think that generally they are reasonable. There are people who have experience of the Wage Act. I must confess I am not an authority on the Wage Act, but I understand that it advances every six months, it rather discounts individual enterprise and fixes everything to the same level. Undoubtedly, as regards the wage paid, it is progressive, it keeps on progressing until it becomes uneconomic in our opinion.

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It depends on what wage is fixed. It may be ~~so~~ it
~~may not~~ ^{or} must be progressive ?- Well, hitherto it has been progressive
has it not?

MR. LUCAS: I think you are confusing the shops deter-
mination and the unskilled wage determination, which are
different. In the unskilled wage, there has not been any
advancing. There has been a temporary suspension. In the
shops, the shop assistants' determination for learners ---? -
In factories you have a progressive wage.

For learners but not for unskilled labour? - Has it
never been applied to unskilled labour?

Yes; here in factories. It has been applied to all
unskilled workers in a large number of occupations in Bloemfon-
tein, where it has been in operation for 1½ years now ?- You
are referring to Natives, are you not?

They are not classified as Natives. The Wage Act does
not deal with any race specifically, but in Bloemfontein the
determination refers to unskilled workers, irrespective of
colour or race. It was fixed at 3/6d per day? - Yes, and
it primarily affects the Natives.

Yes, that is so? - I would not regard 3/6 as an
uneconomic wage for a Native, but I am convinced that it would
not remain there but that it would be progressive. I want
you to understand that the merchants in this town have no
objection to paying more when a higher wage is earned; only,
we are afraid that it would be taken beyond our control and,
when the money is not earned, we might have to pay more. But
I do not regard 3/6d per day as an uneconomic wage.

Your Chamber was a party to the agreement of 4/- which
was made here ? - Yes.

But that agreement had no powers of enforcement behind

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it and it collapsed ?- That is correct.

So the point about Port Elizabeth is this. If, has happened, various public bodies here agreed that 4/- should be the wage, it is then necessary to have some legislative authority to enforce whatever is agreed upon ?- It was not a matter of the public bodies agreeing to it. They agreed to it as a tentative measure in the hope, in the anticipation that, in six months' time, they would all fall into line and realise its value, but the mere fact of so many dropping away, suggested to me that it was not the view of the public bodies generally. The merchants, yes, and as a matter of fact the merchants still maintain that rate of 4/- per day. But so many dropped away that, obviously, it was no longer the wish of the public bodies.

Does not the absence of any power to give binding effect to such an arrangement almost automatically mean its lapsing? One man falling away here and the next man saying, "Because he has fallen away, I do not think that I can afford it any longer, because it will mean that he will be in competition with me on a better basis" and, in the end, the whole thing lapses ?- Well, it suggested to me that so many people found that they could not pay it -- it would be regrettable to have legislation passed to enforce that wage.

Do you mean that they cannot afford to pay it ?- Yes, that was the explanation given to us. I have no means of ascertaining what the real position was and whether people could really not afford to pay this, but the people who dropped away were people who originally seemed to be quite prepared to enter upon this agreement. And there were others

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who also found that they could not pay it. I do not know whether the merchants can pay it in existing circumstances but that was the position which they were faced with and that was the reason why the tentative agreement lapsed.

To come back to your objections, do you realise the difference which I put between settling a wage for unskilled workers, because one of our terms of reference deals with this question of settling wages for skilled occupations implying a learner's period? - Yes, I understand the position.

Is that not sufficient to take away your objection to applying the Wage Act as far as unskilled workers are concerned? - No; because, if today you are satisfied that 4/- is an economic wage as a minimum, there is nothing to prevent you, once that principle is adopted, from making it 5/- next year, or 6/- the year after.

There is the machinery of the Act to make it very difficult to do that, but that is rather a different matter. The point at the moment is whether the Act should be used at all. Now, I am not expressing an opinion, but assuming that 4/- is a reasonable figure, is there any reason why the Native as a class should be required to live on a smaller figure when it was agreed that 4/- should be the minimum they should be asked to live on? - It is a matter of ways and means. If the people, the employers, find that it is impossible for them to pay 4/-, I for one would not support a measure to enforce 4/-.

The Wage Act provides that the possibility of their being able to pay must be taken into consideration? - I do not know that due importance has been given to that in other industries. My experience is that we have to pay t

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the wage whether we can afford it or not. At the end of the year, whether we shew a profit or a loss, we have to pay that nonetheless less.

Which industries are you dealing with ?- Well, I hope this will not be reported. I have personal knowledge only of our own factory, which manufactures clothing and shirts and I am not anxious to publish facts in connection with our factory and in connection with our general position.

The Wage Board, as you know, is engaged on a fresh investigation of that industry ?- I am glad to hear it.

Is that the only industry which you have in mind ?- That is the only one that I have experience of.

You spoke of industries ?- I understood that it applied to others, but I have no personal knowledge. I may say this, confidentially, I understood that Linders, in Durban, were about to close down. In the absence of personal knowledge, I prefer not to discuss them and I can only associate my remarks with our own factory. Q/ A point which I want to put to you is this. We know that the Wage Act exists and its object is to try and get a living wage for people where it is possible in any class of industry. Is there any industry where it should not be applied to unskilled workers when it is applied to other industries in which Whites and Natives are engaged ?- I should prefer that it would not be applied to any industry.

Yes, one realises that that attitude exists, but the Act exists and it is applied from time to time in various industries and there it is applied to Natives as well as to Europeans. Now, is there any reason why it should not be applied to Natives as a class in unskilled occupations ?-

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Well, you will pardon me when I say that I cannot conceive that two wrongs will ever make a right. I do not want you to imagine that I am opposed to a living wage. That is not the attitude of Port Elizabeth merchants, but I am opposed to the Wage Act being applied to a Native.

Can you suggest any way in which a Native can be protected, because it is perfectly plain that in parts of the country the Natives are not getting a wage upon which they can exists ?- Are you referring to the country as a whole, or to the towns?

At the moment, I am referring to the towns ?- That would only be a minor factor in comparison to the Native population of the country.

No, it is a very large number ?- There are so many millions of Natives in the country; the number employed in the towns must be very small in comparison to the total.

Possibly 20% of the total are employed in the towns ?- I am astounded to hear it. But I want to emphasize this - the merchants of this town are extremely sympathetic to the Native and we are keen to give them a fair show, we are keen that they should earn a living wage and we do appreciate the difficulties under which they labour today, but there are economic facts which we cannot ignore. I have a statement here shewing the wages which we pay in our own firm. There are 90 Natives employed there and we maintain a minimum of 24/- per week and we go up to 60/- for a Native. There is only one Native in our employ getting 60/- a week but there are quite a number getting substantially more than 24/-. There is a rule by which Natives were paid 3/6 by the merchants. If you have a boy for a day or two, he is paid 3/6 a day. He knows nothing about the work,

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but he still gets 3/6 a day. There were seven in our business getting that. Now, if we were to pay all our people an extra 1/- per day, it would mean an extra £4.10.- per day for Natives in our business and that would mean an extra £1700 per year.

That is on the basis of 5/- per day. No one suggests any figure at all today. The only question is that of using or not using the existing law. The existing law can be applied. The only point put to us to consider is whether any change should be made in that law ?- Does the law at present provide for a minimum wage to Natives if it is enforced?

It could be applied. It has been applied to unskilled Natives in various specific industries, but not generally. The point put to you is, is there any reason why the Wage Act in regard should not be used/to unskilled Natives generally, as is done in Bloemfontein ?- We should regret it, because we consider that economic facts cannot be ignored. The merchants and others here have a difficult time at present and any increased expenditure would influence us more than anything else. Once established, that rate would be increased, if you said it was to be 3/- or 4/- or whatever it is. If you were to start with 3/-, I am convinced that in a short time it would be increased. That is the tendency of the times. Once you establish a principle and a wage, the tendency is to increase it all the time.

DR. ROBERTS: Do you think that that has been the tendency of the past ?- Yes, I think so, all wages have increased.

Forty years ago the wages were 3/- ?- Well, they are more than 3/- today.

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MR. LUCAS: Is it worth your worrying whether it might be 5/- in 50 years time ?- I am not worrying about it, I have not spoken of 50 years.

DR. ROBERTS: I say that they have not increased to any extent in the last 40 years ?- I have no statistics here, but I am perfectly certain that they have increased in the last four years and that is the experience of every Native merchant.

MR. LUCAS: I take it that you increased your wages last year when the agreement was made ?- No, I do not think so. I think we paid it before that.

I can assure you that that was the experience of the Wage Board, that the merchants were not paying that on the whole. I know that considerably more than half of the Natives employed in commerce, in roughly one third of the jobs, were getting under 4/- a day -- considerably under 4/-. Not only in Port Elizabeth ?- I understand quite a number in the retail shops are paid less than 4/- today.

Is there any reason why they should not be brought up to your level ?- In the bigger businesses, the percentage of Native labour in relation to total labour is less than in other jobs. Merchants handling large sums may find it less difficult than the small shopkeepers. This question of Native wages is a very serious one and had I known that you were going to put these questions to me, I would have analysed the position. I went over our wages the other day and I found that the percentage of wages had considerably increased since 1913.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Have railway wages increased ?- That is the responsibility of the Government. I agree that a sovereign today will purchase much less than it did in 1913.

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But your real wages have not increased ?- Well, I agree that, in terms of buying capacity, wages have not increased. I took out some quotations from 1913, comparing them with 1930, reflecting on the question of real wages, and I find here that many of the commodities used by the Natives have increased tremendously and, of course, Government taxation and Customs tariffs have been concentrated on the Native and have penalised him. I have a number of items down here which shew what I mean. Take candles; they have gone up from 8/11 to 11/3d. Then matches; 4/- to 6/5d; and other things such as soap, from 12/4 to 17/-. Sugar, 19/- to 25/9d and so it goes on in a number of those commodities. So it really comes to this, that if the Native is paid more today, the nett result is no more.

MR. LUCAS: Is it not necessary for a large number of employers to give some protection to their employees to meet that situation ?- Well, I claim that we have done so.

You personally may have done so, but what about the others ?- I say that the merchants have done so.

Some have not done so ?- That may be, the smaller people may not have done so.

A considerable number have not done so. Now, is there any reason why the employees of these people should not be protected ?- Only that my experience, which covers some thousands of accounts, shews that the merchants find it extremely difficult to make ends meet and if you do raise the wages, it may make all the difference between profit and loss.

Could the difference between the wage paid now and which would have to be paid if 4/- were decided upon, be so great as to make any appreciable difference, even under the conditions which you refer to in these firms ?- Well, sir, it all depends on the number of boys they have in their employ.

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Would 6/- per week make all that difference ?- Well, you know, to some of these small retailers, 6/- per week makes a big difference. There are a number of them who have only one boy.

Yes, it may be hard for the employer, but is it not very hard for the employee as well to have to live on what he gets now in many cases ?- Yes, I think the Native is having a hard time generally. I do not dispute that, but once again I cannot ignore economic issues. If these people cannot pay it, I should regret it very much if the Government were to step in to force them to pay it. ~~The~~ mere fact of paying a Native more will not add to your profit. You see, you cannot pass it on to the public. You have to have a certain figure regardless of Native labour. The storekeeper cannot protect himself.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Do we not get into the habit of thinking, "We can pay so much and no more" ?- Well, last year we endeavoured to pay more and we arranged for the scale of 4/-, but we had to break away from it because so many of those people could not afford it.

How do our wages for rough and unskilled workers compare with the wages paid to the same class of workers in England ?- Of course, there is not the same intelligence for one thing. The White labour there brings a more intelligent mind to bear on the subject. True, the Native is very industrious and works well, he works hard, but in terms of wages, the lowest class of wages there and here ---- well, I do not know. I should imagine that they would earn certainly 50% more there than here, and then, of course, you must remember that the scale of living is different. On the Continent, I doubt whether the unskilled labourers earn much

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more than 24/- a week. Take Belgium, for instance. My own son was in the biggest steel mill in Europe, and he was learning the business and working alongside a highly trained ironworker, a man who was earning £2.8.- per-week and employed for nine months out of twelve. That may give you an indication of the difference.

DR. ROBERTS: There again the living is cheaper ?- Yes, that is so. That is beyond our control. The Government have increased the cost of living and the cost of production and they are responsible for most of the troubles we are considering today. A protective policy ----

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: We, as a country, have agreed to a protective policy and we must take over the burden of protecting our labourers, too ?- The Government have increased the cost of living and now they enquire why the cost of living has advanced and apparently they look to us to make good the deficiency.

There are many things other than paraffin and candles which are affected by the tariff ?- Yes, paraffin and candles have gone up.

Yes, but is that due to the tariff ?- Of course, the tariff has advanced the cost. The wages have increased, that is so. Commodities have increased, the cost of commodities, but our tariff has also increased the cost. You can look it up and find that the duty on paraffin and candles was increased. Take flour, it can be imported at 7/9 per bag, c.i.f., but you are not allowed to land it at less than 18/6d, and then we ask why the Native is having such a bad time.

CHAIRMAN: I am querying the c.i.f. Is it c.i.f. or f.o.b. ?- It is c.i.f., but I can get that confirmed for you. We cannot import flour. That was quoted to me last week.

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I heard the same figure, but it was f.o.b. ?- I shall try to get it confirmed for you. But would not the exchange account for the freight? If the exchange rate is 30% and you can buy in Australia for 7/9d, the exchange rate would account for it. I think you will find 7/9d is correct and we are not allowed to land under 18/6d. You will appreciate what effect that will have on the Native. Then look at your kaffer sheeting, look at your blankets and your rugs and the prices.

I take it that you would support a policy that if another country can undersell you, it should be allowed to do so owing to conditions there ?- I say that if another country can sell at a loss, then we should be allowed to take advantage of it. Only once we have established vested interests here I can see the danger, but we are increasing those vested interests here. People here are always increasing their growing of wheat under artificial conditions and the public are getting tired of these things. I admit that once you have built up an industry in this country, it is very difficult to scrap it, but the fact remains that we are always building up industries under artificial conditions.

SENATOR VAN NIEKE HK: The wheat industry has always been here ?- Yes, but only in a small way.

Well, you have only a small area where you can grow it ?- Quite. But why, then, sacrifice all the people for it?

CHAIRMAN: Am I to take it that you would regard it as a good thing if we made a new start by scrapping vested interests ?- I should say so, if it were possible. At any rate, we would then live under natural conditions.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Would there be the same population and the same amount of employment then ?- Well, I fail to see

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any advantage in employing a certain number at the expense of the majority. You can take any industry you like, you may have two or three thousand Europeans employed, but you are sacrificing the interests of thousands of the general public. To me it seems uneconomic. Of course, we cannot scrap industries now that they are established. Perhaps I am the only free trader left in the country.

CHAIRMAN: I am glad to hear you speak about vested interests, but I hardly expected you to say it ?- Let us be frank. I have never favoured our own vested interests, but when you placed us in ^{the} position of putting a duty on clothing and shirts which excludes us from a trade which has been ours for hundreds of years, it means that we have either to drop out or take advantage of the conditions which you have created. We have to do so or otherwise we must drop out and close down our business.

You advance as one of your reasons why you oppose the extension of the Wage Act, that commerce is opposed to Government interference ?- Exactly.

That is a view which is very strongly held by the commercial community all over, is it not ?- Yes.

Do you not think, though, that Government interference is inevitable and that it is very much on the increase ?- It is on the increase, but I would not use the term inevitable.

It is inevitably on the increase. Do you not think, for example, that in industry there is actually a great deal more Government interference now than there was 25 years ago? - Yes, undoubtedly.

And in agriculture? - There is Government interference in every sphere.

And your belief is that commerce should be excused from that ?- No, I say this, that I object to Government interference

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in any sphere of activity. This country was built up by private enterprise and, where that is so, you will find that the country is generally more prosperous than it otherwise would be.

Government interference has gone far in most branches of activity ?- Yes.

But in regard to commerce, you plead for exemption ?- No, I do not plead for commerce particularly. I object to Government interference with any sphere of activity and I say that natural conditions are far preferable and that, without Government interference we should be much happier and much more prosperous.

But in view of the fact that everyone else is limited, do you not think it is anomalous for one set of people not to be limited similarly ?- Again I say that two wrongs do not make one right.

That is not the position. Does one remain/wrong make the rest wrong? I may just as well assume that Government interference is good and you assume that it is bad. In every other country they have gone in for it ?- Yes, in some countries they have gone in for it more than others, and I think that we have more of it in this country than they have in other countries.

Do you say that we have more of it than they have in Great Britain ?- Undoubtedly, that is my experience.

You might overhaul your history of legislation in England ?- I am referring to the restriction of commerce or agriculture or industry as the case may be.

I am referring to the whole social system ?- You have to divide the two - economic and social. There is more social legislation in Britain than here, but there is less economic

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restriction.

The effect of their social legislation is to give you a 4/- in the £ income tax. Is not that much more drastic interference than anything we have in South Africa ?- Well, our income tax is not particularly low.

Well, it is only the lowest in the world ?- Ours is?

Yes, the lowest of any civilised community. Most White communities would be pleased to exchange theirs for ours ?- That may be, but in other countries like Britain, where you have a high income tax, you have less indirect taxation. We pay tremendously for our sugar, our flour and necessities of life, for instance.

If you could exchange the British system of taxation for the South African system, which would you choose ?- I am not a great admirer of the British system.

Well, if you purely take the amount, which would you take ?- Obviously, Britain after a war and after the experience of the last 20 years, has incurred enormous liabilities which mean an enormous burden on her people and her industries have suffered. This country has been fortunate and has not had to fight a war. Our taxation here must be less, but there is no reason why I should applaud the income tax in this country as compared with Britain. Of course it must be less. Britain's income tax is one of the highest in the world.

Let us come to another subject. Can you give the Commission the views of your Chamber, if it has expressed any views, on the question of whether general dealers' licenses should be extended to Natives inside urban Native locations ?- Yes, it is a question which we have considered and on which we have had some personal experience and we think not. Not on account of colour, but for one thing on account of the

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fact that the Native has not got the capital, nor has he got the experience, nor has he the commercial judgment, and our experience of such Native traders is that they have not been a success. They do struggle along for a time and then they collapse and the few Native traders in this neighbourhood are always in difficulties and I am convinced that, to grant Natives such licenses will not be an advantage to anyone.

Will it not be an advantage to their fellow Natives ?- No. I fail to see how they have assisted the economic conditions at all, although I do appreciate the position that a Native should be allowed to trade with his fellows. Still, one has to bear in mind that you cannot make a trader in a few years.

If you never make a start, you will never make a trader ?- He may be trained in some other place and he may improve, but the start is difficult because he has not got the capital and as a rule he is not worthy of giving credit to. In this way. I am not reflecting upon his moral character, but I do say that he has not got the commercial judgment or experience.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: If they are all going to be a failure, then what is your difficulty? It is his funeral if he does not succeed ?- He may develop the necessary judgment and knowledge in time.

Yes, but why prevent him from going on ?- If he wants to be a trader, he must start as a trader. But surely, if he has not got the necessary capital, what can he do? Where credit has been granted to him in the past, it has caused many regrets.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Do you think that he should be definitely excluded from trading and from holding a license ?-

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No, I do not think that, but he should not be granted the facilities. I say, let him go on as at present, but do not encourage him.

In most locations he cannot get a license ?- In our location he can, and there are three or four of them already.

Do they have general dealer's licenses? - Yes. Would you care to see the advertisement of one of these men? (Advertisement shewn to Members of the Commission.) I am under the impression that, at New Brighton, there are three general dealer's licenses held by Natives. Then there are large numbers who are hawkers, butchers and eating house keepers, the licenses are held by Native, but I understand that their financial position leaves a good deal to be desired.

DR. ROBERTS: Would you not naturally expect that from emerging a people just ~~emerging~~ from absolute ignorance? - I do expect if

Then when are we to give them a start ?- You may give them a license, I have no objection to that, but you will appreciate the point I am making, that they are inexperienced, they are amateurs and only courting disaster. In time they may get the necessary knowledge.

Do you think they will acquire that without the necessary disaster ?- I do not think they will, but how are we to avoid it.

MR. LUCAS: In many areas, the policy is definitely to prohibit Natives from trading. Do you appreciate that ?- That has not been the policy in Port Elizabeth.

What is your policy - I understood you to say that your Chamber was against granting them licenses ?- No, I do not favour it on account of the surrounding conditions. Natives have not the judgment or the capital and I fail to see how they can make a success of it.

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Do you believe in laying it down that they cannot get licenses ?- No, I do not believe in prohibiting them from trading.

DR. ROBERTS: Do you believe that capital is necessary to success - I can mention some very outstanding men who began without any ?- Well, they must have sufficient capital to buy their stock.

They get it on credit ?- That is the trouble. You see, the trouble is this, that no trader can get 100% credit.

CHAIRMAN: Granted he has sufficient capital, do you see any reason why he should not make a start ?- No, I do not see any reason why he should not be allowed to start risking his capital in a Native quarter.

MR. LUCAS: Would you limit it to a Native quarter ?- Yes, I would.

MAJOR ANDERSON: I want to come back to the question of wages. Do you think the Natives need no protection at all. Is that definitely the opinion of your Chamber ?- That is my personal opinion and I think that they will receive justice from the majority of the members of the commercial community and from the industrialists, anyhow of this town. I cannot speak of others.

We have had evidence all over the country shewing a rather serious state of affairs as regards wages paid to the Natives in relation to the cost of living. Now, the question is, whether that should be allowed to go on indefinitely. There is a surplus of labour available now and it may possibly come to the sweating question again? - I think it must reach its economic level.

With great distress ?- Well, there is unemployment in every quarter and especially among the Europeans.

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There is a good deal of wage legislation in most countries ?- Yes, but wage legislation does not help the man who is out of a job and I think a great number of Natives have been thrown out of employment probably through the policy of the Government in regard to wages and such things. I can only state the facts and they seem to receive no consideration at all. There are no funds that I know of for the assistance of the Natives. The Native has to fend for himself and the Government does not seem to do anything for him. I have every sympathy for the Native. There are a great number of them here unemployed and it is only through their natural charity and the assistance which they give one another, that we do not have more serious trouble in this country.

MR. LUCAS: Why, if you say that things should be left to settle themselves, did the various bodies concerned try to make that agreement 18 months ago. Your Chamber was a party to that; why then, if things should be left to find their own level, were you a party to that agreement ?- It was represented to us that the Natives were in a very bad way and we are always quite prepared to be associated with anything that tends to be to their advantage, but I do not want you to regard that as definitely reflecting the desire of the Chamber of Commerce for legislation. If you were to come to us with anything tomorrow, with any suggestion to help the Natives, we would receive it in a most sympathetic manner.

The Agreement laid it down and people considered that a certain wage was necessary - is that not so ?- No, it was a tentative measure.

People realised that there was a certain figure which should be paid to the Native as a minimum ?- No. They regarded

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4/- as a wage which they hoped would be payable and they decided to pay it for six months.

Not 4/-, only 3/6d ?- Yes, they decided 3/6 for six months and then certain sections found that they could not pay this 3/6d.

Was there anything in the arrangements which said that it was tentative? If you will look at the agreement, you will see that it was definitely agreed ?- I have the resolution here "that this meeting of representatives ---- agrees that the necessary steps be taken to recommend to all employers of Native labour ---- that a minimum wage of 3/6 per day be paid to all unskilled non-European labourers of 18 years and over throughout the Magisterial District from and after the 1st December 1929, with a minimum wage of 4/- from the 1st June 1930, irrespective of whether or not the labourer has changed his employment during that period, and that the South African Railways and Harbours Administration be excluded from the operation of this resolution. That the above scale of wages be paid to all labourers apart from perquisites, concessions or privileges." You see, the resolution says that it was recommended, and it was not a definite undertaking.

The point really is that there was no power to enforce it ?- That is so.

Was not the desire, as far as it could be given effect to, that that should be the position ?- The desire was that we should pay 4/- per day if practicable, but, in the meantime, so many sections found it impracticable and that is why it lapsed.

But you do not say anything about impracticable in the resolution ?- That is so.

If you had had the power at that meeting to lay it down definitely, apart from the Wage Act, would you not have

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laid that down as a basis ?- We would not. What we did was this. We strongly recommended that 3/6 should be paid from that date and, at the end of six months, 4/-. In the meantime they had experience of the 3/6d.

There is nothing in the resolution saying that. It was suspending the 4/- for six months ?- It was only a recommendation throughout.

It was only a recommendation because you had no other power ?- We can have no executive power but it does not follow that if we had had the power we would have enforced it.

Does it not shew that ?- Well, I cannot read that in it.

MR. MOSTERT: Did all employers agree to it ?- They were not all represented, but they all accepted it in the first instance.

DR. ROBERTS: Do you not think that in the abnormal circumstances in which the Native is, his great numbers and his great needs, that you cannot bring the economic laws to bear upon him. Numbers of them are coming into the towns and you can get men to work for you at 1/6d per day, but I do not think that that would justify you and I am sure that you would not offer him that wage ?- No, that is so, and we would be very sorry indeed if anyone tried to enforce a wage of 1/6d per day.

Quite so, but the point is this, that the numbers are so very great and some of these people say, "We are willing to accept anything" ?- Of course, the economic factors would fall upon the man who has to pay the wage and I can assure you that, under existing conditions, it is impossible to face any increase in the wages of Native labour. You may say it is not an increase to 5/- but -----

DR. ROBERTS: Take my figures. Here you have a

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great mass of people, poverty stricken, men wanting work. Can you bring economic laws to bear upon them ?- Well, my best answer to that question is that the merchants of this town and the industrialists , who are now paying 4/- a day to their Natives, could hire their boys at 3/- per day and less, but they have refrained from taking advantage of that. Our people are anxious to treat their Native employees in a reasonable way. I think that is my best answer.

It would not be moral to reduce their wages ?- Of course, one has to face facts. It would not be desirable, but I would not condemn it as immoral. A man under pressure has to economise and to reduce his wages.

You are taking your case on people's needs. That is never moral ?- Circumstances sometimes justify cases. In times of depression, people have to reduce their overhead expenses and all wages, European and Native, may have to suffer. We want to avoid that as long as we can. We have had the opportunity for months, but none of us have availed ourselves of it.

MR. LUGAS: You said that it was not desirable. Will you tell us why not ?- Well, we do not want to bring down these wages if it is at all possible.

Some have brought the wages down ?- Yes, some have, under pressure.

It is not desirable in their case either ?- Not, it is not desirable but it is unavoidable.

That is begging the question. I have many instances stated to me that it was unavoidable, but, on investigation, it was found not to be so, - it was simply taking advantage of the needs of the people. Do you think that everyone should be allowed to take advantage of the needs of the people, if