

any friction or limitation of the activities of the Boards but it was found to be impracticable. Two members of the coloured Board were sitting with the white Board and two members of the white Board were sitting on the coloured Board. But the lion's share of the openings went to the white youths and it was felt to be nothing but a waste of time to attempt to cooperate with those with whom you are in direct competition.

In dealing with the question of natives and coloured persons in the towns I want to lay stress on one aspect of this, an aspect with which I am very well acquainted, and I speak with full certainty of my data. There is no such feeling of antagonism between coloured and native in the towns as is commonly believed to exist. I refer to it here in my notes as "a myth" this antagonism between native and coloured. I go further and say that a feeling of common solidarity is gradually permeating them. I will give an illustration which came as an eye-opener to many shrewd observers of public affairs in this country.

Some twelve months ago or less there was a Provincial Council election in a constituency where there a large number of natives and coloured voters. An independent coloured man was nominated in addition to the Nationalist and South African Party men. The ~~white~~ coloured man had no Party behind him; he had no Press behind him and he had no organisation behind him, but he came to the top of the Poll. It was found despite promises made to the two political parties the coloured voter had voted "race"; he had voted "colour"; he voted for the coloured man.

It was always naturally believed that the coloured and native were antagonistic and it was not thought that the one would vote for the other. This man was not known in



the district well but there was evidently a common feeling between native and coloured and the result was a staggering surprise to even the shrewdest observers of public affairs. Nobody had thought that this man would get more than a few hundred votes. He did not even get the support of some of the coloured leaders of the community who happened to have South African Party leanings. But the voters did not follow the advice of their official leaders but voted "colour" instead. That is a very significant fact and it knocks the theory of antagonism between native and coloured sky high.

The longer the natives live in the town and the longer he works side by side with the coloured man, the less difference will there be between him and the coloured man. Of course there would have been greater cooperation in the past had it not been for lack of means of communication. The native without any education finds it difficult to acquire either of the two languages spoken by the coloured people. His occupation is such that he does not get opportunities of learning either Afrikaans or English, but if the language barrier were removed you would find a greater cooperation and friendliness in existence between the coloured man and the native. And that in spite of the definite attempts that have been made to drive a wedge between the two.

We know that there are a number of statutes that place the coloured man in a different category to the native but in spite of that the coloured man sticks to the natives in the town and vice versa. I will endeavour to demonstrate that there is no definite native problem as distinct from a coloured problem. There is not one definite political  
party



party convened for the native or for the coloured man. The African National Congress caters for both and that is avowedly non-European. The Independent National Congress again caters for both and the African Political Organisation caters for both as also does the African National Bond. Whilst there are a large number of political organisations which cater for the non-European exclusively, there is not one which caters for the native to the exclusion of the coloured or for the coloured to the exclusion of the native. And it is very significant. There is not yet a movement designed to place the native as distinct from the other non-Europeans.

Of course it must not be assumed for a moment that there is no movement amongst the Europeans in the Cape to create bitter feeling amongst Europeans and non-Europeans. We witnesses recently in Cape Town the establishment of the Independent Labour Party which is the first political party which is avowedly out to deny any difference between race and race, between European and non-European, and that in itself is significant. Really what I wanted to say was that it is a party free from colour prejudice. There is a growing European opinion which is becoming intolerant of this bias in regard to "only coloured" or "only native". As I have pointed out the Independent Labour Party openly advocates that it is out for equality, political, economic and industrial, between European and non-European, whilst other political parties shirk the issue or pretend to be both, to run with the hare and run with the hounds in the Transvaal. The Independent Labour Party is avowedly free from any racial bias.

The Labour Party without going into the rights and

wrongs



wrongs of its activities, is supposed to cater for the for the poorer classes, the working class; in all countries of the world where Labour Parities operate the recruits come from the lower status individuals and it showed that the coloured community of this country is sufficiently intelligent when they almost boycotted the South African Labour Party.

MR. MOSTERT: Are you not now entering upon the realm of politics?-- No, I am sorry if my remarks are construed in that way, but I am not. What I mean to convey is that there <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ so much hostility, so much suspicion amongst them in regard to their fellow workers, that they allied themselves with their opponents, and the Independent Labour Party was brought into the sphere to create an atmosphere of cooperation. And I maintain that such cooperation is doing a lot of good because at the moment some of the native and coloured organisations have as their slogan a black South Africa. Well, if a political party catering for the working man, and embracing the various racial groups in the country gets into its stride, the need for separate coloured political parties will automatically disappear, and in that sense I think the Independent Labour Party, of which I am ~~am~~ a Member, is doing a useful service.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you are now definitely on the political question?-- I am sorry you hold that view. I have to make an explanation and a sort of apology for introducing what have been called political allusions. I am not quite guilty of that, but if I were, it was due to my misinterpretation of the meaning of Item No. 30 - The good feeling between Europeans and Natives - and the question whether



whether during the past 25 years there has been any change in the attitude of the natives and Europeans in the Cape areas, and as to what steps should be taken or are being taken to promote good feeling. If one discusses these questions one is necessarily bordering on politics. But I do not want to say anything which is considered to be outside the terms of reference.

I was watching carefully when you were dealing with the question of political organisation, even before Mr. Mostert spoke; but the effect of political conditions ~~and~~ on the economic and social conditions of the natives falls within our purview; when however it comes to the question of political organisations which they should go in for in the country, you will realise that I must stop you?— I knew that you were keeping a careful watch.

There are a few intellectual movements. I use that in the accepted sense of the term. so-called intellectual movements which work in the direction of promoting good feeling between European and non-European, and it is necessary for the Commission to know that. We find cases which would have been impossible, or considered Utopian, some years ago; for instance you find students of the Cape Town University visiting Ndabeni for the purpose of collecting information.

SENATOR ROBERTS: That is of course in the run of their studies?— No, as a social group.

Not those who are studying the Bantu languages and so on?— No. We find these groups under different names and differently organised, visiting Ndabeni for instance getting acquainted with native opinion and native conditions. And we get natives coming to the meetings of these people and taking part in the discussions. They are treated

conspicuously



Discussions frequently take place in the course of which the native problem is exhaustively dealt with. The natives attending these meetings showed a note of suspicion which the native always has when he enters a European meeting place. He is always reserved and wonders what people want of him. I have seen natives come into these meetings and express themselves on various questions in a very liberal spirit; it is very encouraging and very significant. What the Cape does to-day the rest of South Africa does in the near future. Cape Town has always been the intellectual fountain for South Africa. It has always been the model of culture in South Africa.

STANDARD WAVELENGTHS.  $\lambda$  in  $\mu$ .  $\nu$  in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .



SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: Don't you think perhaps that on the other hand the position is that what the Cape has done years ago the North is undoing to-day?-- Well, that would take us into the history of politics again and I must keep away from that.

The native problem cannot be divorced from the general economic problem, but the racial aspect is unfortunately emphasised and the economic aspect obscured. The absence of native trade union organisations is due to ~~the~~ economic reasons and not to racial, and the various acts of hostility towards native organisation is also economic and not racial. The present form of native labour does not lend itself to make use of orthodox trade union organisation and the State has to step in to ameliorate the conditions of the natives as he is unable to help himself.

The present labour Acts in force do not cater for the native but the future of the European races in the country depends upon the saving of the native from total degradation, and you must deal with him not as an unorganised native, but as a non-European, as part and parcel of the non-European people of the town.

If the Commission could get intelligent coloured evidence to come forward they would get the assurance that the fact of a man being a native is considered of less importance than of a man being a Mohammedan, that is to say, the relationship between native and coloured is closer and more amiable than say between a coloured man and a Malay; and even that must not be over-emphasised. The racial aspect plays very little part in the economic forces affecting the people. They are not divided into coloured and Malay or into coloured and native.



That is all I want to say unless Members of the Commission desire to ask me anything in which case I shall be glad to answer.

MR. LUCAS: I was not sure when you were dealing with unions, whether you meant that the unions in Cape Town were getting stronger?-- No, but they are getting better organised, more along, what the Chairman called mechanised lines.

To take these native unions that you mentioned, with one or two exceptions they are not functioning as part of the Industrial Councils are they?-- With the exception of three unions, the Stevedores Union, which has a Council of its own, the Laundry Workers - I don't know whether that is functioning under the <sup>Industrial</sup> ~~Sanitation~~ Councils Act - and the Quarry Workers. The rest are so changeable that you can hardly call them suitable forms of organisation.

But allowing all that you say, and taking these three are they becoming stronger?-- No, stationary. Their membership is small because the number of people employed in these industries is small and do not take in a high volume of native labour. They cannot grow stronger if the possible membership is only, say, one hundred.

SENATOR ROBERTS: Will you carefully differentiate as you go along between natives and coloured because I am somewhat confused?--- I was dealing with natives. Personally I am glad that I managed to create confusion in that regard because my main point is that there is very little difference. I am very glad I have given that impression. I was anxious to convince the Commission that the organised native is in the same position as the coloured man, identically.



MR. LUCAS: You drew a distinction between organisation of the general workers and organisation of the skilled men?— Yes.

In view of the knowledge you have got of both, do you think there should be one union for a trade?— Yes.

Including all the general workers?— Yes.

Can you visualise such a union working satisfactorily under the existing Industrial Conciliation Act?— Yes, except that different rates of wages will be laid down. We have agreements which stipulate different rates of pay for the different classes of work in the same industry.

But none as far as I know that lay it down for the unskilled worker at present?— Unfortunately, no.

The point which I wanted to get at was that you will have some industries in which the unskilled workers predominate?— Yes.

If there is one union, do you anticipate any difficulty from the unskilled labourers votes swamping the skilled?— No. We have an illustration in the Typographical Union. Originally only the highly skilled and highly paid men were in the Union, but eventually they got even the semi-skilled into it and they are in various grades. Grade I gets a higher rate of pay and pays a higher rate of subscription than Grades 2 and 3. Grade 3 gets about 25 per cent of the wages that Grade I is getting and they outnumber them by ~~xxx~~ 4 to 1, but it has never been found necessary to guard against being swamped.

MR. MOSTERT: There has never been a hitch?— No, never.

THE CHAIRMAN: They believe in one man one vote?— Yes.

MR. LUCAS: Take it from the practical point of view, are you not afraid of the skilled man in the union using

his



his position to bargain away the rights of the general workers?-- No, there has always been a feeling of the greatest gratification in my mind to find how unselfish a man is when bargaining for others, particularly amongst trades unionists, and there have been cases where men have organised a strike who have done so reluctantly.

Have you come across cases where skilled workers have actually worked against the interests of the general workers in the same industry?-- No, not to my personal knowledge.

Take the Industrial Conciliation Act, you said that you need not at the moment suggest what amendments should be made; will you make a note of it and when you have thought over it, send in <sup>any</sup> ~~some~~ suggestions that have occurred to you?-- I shall be only pleased to do so. I may say this, that the <sup>Industrial</sup> same/Conciliation Act which has undoubtedly benefitted certain classes of the workers, when applied by an unsympathetic administration, could prove a thorn in the flesh of every trades union. Its value depends upon the administration of it. It puts so much power in the hands of the Administration that the same Act could become very unpopular with the people with whom it is very popular to-day.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the worst of putting power in the hands of civil servants?-- Yes, I agree with that.

MR. LUCAS: There is one feature of the Industrial Conciliation Act in regard to which you have not expressed any opinion although it affects the natives closely, and that is the provision which allows the Minister to extend an agreement made by white people, employers and employees, to native workers?-- No, I did not deal specifically with that but you will recall that I emphasised this fact that



unless you protect and define the native's wages the European will suffer. Now, if an agreement is gazetted and it is not made applicable to the natives it will defeat the object of the agreement because the native will work for lower rates of pay.

Yes, that has happened. But there is this factor; bearing in mind the comparative wages for similar work in other occupations which the European employees have managed to secure for themselves, these are relatively higher wages?-- Yes.

And will they get the same wages laid down ~~xxxxx~~ in respect of the natives? In that event would it not make it impossible for the natives to get any work in these occupations? Is not that a danger which you think is one of any prominence?--- No, not until the natives become sufficiently proficient to compare favourable with the white man at the same rate of wages. Say that the wage laid down is £7 a week for a skilled man. There is a native who has only half the capacity of the skilled man willing to work for £1-10-0 a week. As such it will be an economic advantage to employ him. If you rigidly enforce the £7 wage for both native and white man it will mean that the native will be driven out of employment, but if the native's standard of efficiency is equal to that of the European, experience has shown that it is not race that wins in the scramble for jobs, but efficiency, skill. There is no danger at all in occupations where the native workers have already acquired the necessary skill. There are occupations where you will find that Europeans, coloured and natives perform the same work, independent of race and dependent upon ability.

Take the printing trade or building, what facility



is there for a native to acquire skill?-- Theoretically, none. Actually, he has not got a chance in a million.

So in fact the Act excludes natives from these occupations?-- Yes.

And that is still further supported by the Apprenticeship Act?-- Yes.

Now in Cape Town we have been told that in several trades natives have almost completely ousted the coloured people. The first instance mentioned was the dairying trade; do you know anything about the reason for that?-- Yes, their wages are not lower to-day than would apply to coloured people, but there are a large number of native applicants and they are more docile. The wages are lower than those paid to the coloured people before the natives came into that occupation. The natives are more amenable to discipline and more reliable than similar coloured labour. I do not say that they are more reliable than the coloured people but more reliable than the coloured of a similar grade. There is another reason. Work in a dairy involves constant residence, so to speak, on the job. A man must be always there. He must be up at all hours and the coloured man who has a family and has social ties, will want to finish his work and go home.

MR. MOSTERT: Are the natives largely unmarried boys who work on that job?-- Yes, that is why they have ousted the coloured.

MR. LUCAS: One of the reasons that has been suggested for the ousting is that the coloured man will insist upon having certain specific holidays like the 2nd January, which the native does not insist upon?-- I do not think that one day in the year would make any difference but the fact is that the work under present conditions entails such hardships



hardship and sacrifice of personal comfort that a married man or a man with family ties would not be willing to do the work even at a higher rate of pay. Of course the native being willing to take it at a lower rate of pay has ousted the coloured man.

The next trade mentioned in Stone Crushing; does the same reason apply there?-- No. It is from the point of view of the native labourer steady and continuous employment. I would not like to say there is security of tenure, coloured people have very little of that, but the coloured man can shift for himself longer and risk a change of employment better than the native who therefore is more willing to take a job as stone crusher with its low wage but at the same time <sup>with a</sup> relative security of tenure.

MR. MOSTERT: Do you find that the physique of the native is better?-- I would not like to express an opinion on that. I have observed them working and very probably it is so. They are not products of the slums, but the next generation will be.

THE CHAIRMAN: In reply to my last question you said that the native was less able to maintain himself than the coloured man if he was out of employment?-- Yes, he has less of a reserve.

Are you speaking of money saved by him?-- He has less in the way of friends to fall back upon. There is a good deal of freemasonry among the coloured people. They are exceedingly helpful to one another.

More so than amongst the natives?-- I do not know the natives sufficiently.

That is why I wanted to know more about this question; it is one of the big factors in the country, that the natives always share?-- As far as the coloured man is con



concerned that has been one of the surprises to me when I came to South Africa years ago. To a certain extent that applies to the poorer classes everywhere but more so here. The native can fall back upon his friends to some extent but the coloured man can rely also on his closer relations and they will maintain him for a longer period than ordinary friends. The native has not got his close family ties here.

MR. LUCAS: In the reserves in the country districts the native will do anything for another native, and in many of the towns. I was wondering whether Cape Town was different according to what you said?-- In Cape Town the same thing obtains. It cannot obtain to the same extent as among people of the same family. The coloured/<sup>man</sup> can be be sure of a place to sleep.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will not the native be sure when he knows other natives who have rooms in the vicinity?-- I do not know that.

Is it only an assumption?-- The average standard of the coloured man is higher than that of the native. From a financial point of view he has more saved up than a native.

But think of the reserve in another sense; the native would not be employed regularly all the year round?-- No unemployment amongst them is usually very rife, not as a matter of seasons as among the coloured men. The coloured man is more steadily employed than the native. You do not get the coloured man going about the streets asking people for a job.

Why is the native less continuously employed?-- Belongs to a lower strata of work/<sup>or</sup>that the coloured man.

But is there not generally more work for that type?-- But  
the



the supply is so big in the first instance, and also because of the lower standard of work/<sup>and</sup>less skill ~~is~~ required the labour is less dependable. After all you do not want to change a man whom you employ if a little skill is required, but if there is no skill at all required you dismiss a man if you are slack even for one day.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Has not the native always got to some extent his native reserve to fall back upon? A certain number of Cape Town natives do go back?--- It is a matter of opinion. I know as a matter of fact that they don't go, but I do not want to give evidence on a matter I do not know sufficient about.

MR. LUCAS: The next trade which has been mentioned where there has been displacement is in the Hotel and Boarding House work. I have been told that in many of these places coloureds who have been <sup>waitresses</sup> ~~waiters~~ have been replaced by native men?-- Yes.

Do you know anything about the cause of that?-- Yes, there are two reasons for that. Until the standard of the coloured worker was lowered to the present level a man would think twice before accepting a position as a domestic servant; he considered it undignified;--woman's work. The coloured man did not perform the work that is performed today by these natives, but economic pressure and downright starvation has compelled the natives to offer themselves <sup>the</sup> for domestic work at/low rates which were paid to the coloured women before.

Do you know anything about the growth of the native population in the <sup>immediately</sup> areas/surrounding Cape Town, say as far as Wellington?-- Not from personal observation but from things we all hear, but I would not care to give evidence on that question.



Do you know where to get that information most reliably and satisfactorily?-- I wanted myself to get a good deal more information on native questions but I have been unable to do so.

Then one of the points that is frequently made, particularly in Natal, is that most of the natives in a town are tribal natives who come in for a few months for a wage to supplement what they can get from the piece of land which they plough, and that these natives make it impossible to lay down a living wage for detribalised natives, those who are more permanently resident in the town?-- Yes I know about that.

Would you like to express an opinion?-- Yes, this only emphasises the need for the fixing of a minimum living wage in occupations. That would help to secure for the detribalised native work, as against being under-cut by occasional labourers from the countryside.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would not the minimum wage apply to the occasional labourer too?-- Yes, but it would not pay the employer to take one from the country. The inducement to-day is the lower wage which those who are out to supplement what they earn otherwise, are willing to work for.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK : Have you had any opportunity of finding out the comparative efficiency of native, coloured and European labour?-- It is difficult to get a scientific determination on this question. You hear all sorts of things. I have heard employers say, with a certain amount of feeling of guilt, that for some work that would sooner employ a coloured man. I do not mean negrophilists but common sense men who seemed as though they were confessing a weakness. There are certain occupations where a coloured man is superior to a white man; there <sup>may be</sup> ~~is~~ scientific data for that, but I have failed to get it.



~~think~~ I have looked into the matter as far as I could and have consulted people who know the position better than I do, but it is almost impossible to say who is more efficient generally.

Is the status of a coloured man so far as living is concerned higher than that of a native?-- At the moment, yes. There are still sections of the coloured people who are working in skilled occupations and get the same wages as Europeans who are decidedly above the native and lower paid coloured men. It is more a matter of difference in class than in race. There are skilled men who are superior and then you have another class who are just as the native, no difference whatever.

Do they live on the same status?-- Yes, the lower paid coloured man lives in the identical state of the native.

Do you say that the lower paid coloured man has come down a lot?-- Yes.

Is it not a hardship to-day?-- Yes, the gulf between the skilled and the unskilled man among the coloured men has become so wide as between white and coloured. There are lots of men I know whose standard of life is higher than probably one-third of the European population of the country, I mean men getting £7 a week and living in their little homes and sending their children to school, and in fact generally looking very prosperous. Against that there are the dregs of society who hunt about for their food like so much vermin.

MR. MOSTERT: Their social condition is entirely different from that of that ordinary Cape Boy?-- Of these coloured men, yes. In fact they raised themselves while the others came down. I well remember when the difference



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between skilled and unskilled labour was very negligible, a matter of 8/- a day for a skilled carpenter and 6/6 for an unskilled. To-day it is 22/- and 3/6.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK. I can understand the value of the Conciliation Act from the labour point of view but what about the general welfare of the community?-- The primary condition of the Industrial Conciliation Act is to get an organisation and rely upon them to do the best they can for themselves with an occasional bit of assistance, but when the workers are unorganised there is no provision for them under the Industrial Conciliation Act.

The employer may say "My employees want £1 a day" and there is nothing to prevent him paying that?-- There is a good deal in what you say and a study of economic development all over the world shows that in the race between higher wages and the higher cost of living, higher wages will always win. It is true that the cost of living would increase if the wages were increased all round but the competition which exists among manufacturers will always force them to find their economic level. As the worker asks for more pay and as the employer keeps adding to his prices of the goods, the race is always won by the worker who asks for more wages. The employer tries to keep the same ratio but in the race the worker always wins.

MAJOR ANDERSON: By getting higher wages?-- In the course of a generation the working class have managed to double their wages and the cost of living will probably have gone up 20 per cent.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: But that is bearing out what I urged; the employers and employees may come under the Industrial Conciliation Act and the result may be to the detriment of the public in general?-- Yes. But the



community is composed of workers to the tune of 75 per cent and perhaps more. Take the community and divide them into two, workers and employers. You will find that owing to pressure and constant striving for higher wages the total workers' wage bill <sup>has</sup> ~~is~~ doubled whereas the cost of the articles they produce has only gone up 25 per cent.

Supposing you protect the clothing industry by import tariffs, and supposing the employees had to make unreasonable demands and the employer conceded them. The clothes would be sold to the rest of the people and they would have to pay. There is nobody to control that sort of thing. Even the Minister cannot step in and say that the agreement is too high?— But there are two things which will counteract that. It is known as a matter of fact that increased prices do not automatically follow increased wages. They follow sometimes, and sometimes for a short period only and then the prices fall again. If the increase in wages is granted to only one section of the community and that is followed by an increase in the cost of the article then there would be a great deal in what you say. But if the increase in wages was general, what the men lose on the swings they more than gain on the roundabouts.

You get two sets of people, one calls in the Wage Board and they say "We think that is a fair wage" and it is accepted. They must accept it. On the other hand you have another set who fix their own wages and nobody can say that they are too low or too high?— They should not. The Wage Board comes in arbitrarily. They take into consideration the wages that are paid under the industrial agreement under the Board and they take into consideration the capacity ~~taxpay~~ of that industry to pay the wages.



I am not complaining of the Wage Board but about the Conciliation Board? The Wage Board which is controlled by the Minister acts through the Minister.

But is not that the more efficient?-- The Wage Board?

Yes?-- I should say in the long run it would be more efficient but to enable workers to get by themselves a reasonable standard of life from a social point of view it is better for them to get an improvement in their conditions than to have it given by the State.

MR. LUCAS: Throughout nearly all the big towns the building trades unions have been strong enough to force the Councils to build houses in native locations with white labour paid for at a rate which you showed this morning is six to ten times what the native gets but he has to pay the rent, how does that strike you?-- Well, you will find the trades unions on the whole very firm on conditions of labour and wages being adhered to regardless of anything. Otherwise they would look upon it as the thin end of the wedge.

I know the position very well. There was a controversy in Cape Town and a certain section of the public even to this day maintain that housing would be considerably improved if the cost of building were reduced, which could be done if the building workers were to allow the conditions to be abated. But you will never get the trades unions to <sup>accede</sup> ~~assent~~ to this because they look with a great deal of suspicion on the thin end of the wedge. Consequently they will not budge from trades union principles.

MR. MOSTERT: They do not want any encroachment on their preserves?-- Yes, they say that to-day it is a question of building houses for natives and tomorrow it will be stretched to something else.



MAJOR ANDERSON: They do not admit that any industries are open to the natives?-- No. It is the duty of the community which employs labour to pay directly or indirectly a maintenance wage, and if the wage is <sup>in-</sup>sufficient to provide for housing the general community should provide and not a section of the workers such as the building workers. They say it is not the duty of the building workers to deal with the position but the duty of the community. It is like asking a shopkeeper to sell his material for the buildings at cost or under cost. He says "I will bear a share of the cost through taxation, the same same as any other person." If you ask the worker to relax his standard of price it is tantamount to asking the timber merchant to sell without a profit.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: If you concede that the native should be able to build his own house at a lower wage you must also concede that in other work the native must be prepared to take a lower wage?-- No, decidedly not.

But if you concede the one you must concede the other?-- Yes, but I don't concede for a moment that the native should be allowed. But if as you say, you concede the one you must concede the other.

THE CHAIRMAN: With regard to trades unions here, I think you stated this morning that the proportion of Europeans, coloured and natives who were inside the trades unions were roughly the proportions throughout the whole in the trades?-- Yes. The native makes a good trades unionist, and the coloured man also.

In the furniture trade the majority are non-European?-- Yes.

Has this been a recent change?-- Yes.



Since when has there been a majority of <sup>non-</sup>Europeans ?-  
 At the time of the last furniture strike in 1921 the members were about even but in 1917 when the Union became affiliated with the Cape Federation, the majority were whites and I was told that the coloured man had not been in the trade for many years.

You say that since 1921 the non-European gradually gained the ascendancy in numbers?-- Yes.

Has a ~~relative~~ relative increase in the number of non-European employees come about in the other unions?-- No. A very striking instance is the biscuit trade which has always been the same. It is difficult to analyse it separately from the baking industry. There have always been a large number of <sup>coloured</sup> men in the baking industry and the reason why the biscuit industry ~~did~~ had not more non-Europeans is the large number of females working in it.

SENATOR VAN NIEKERK: To what do you ascribe the ascendancy of the coloured man in the furniture trade?-- To the introduction of machinery and the requirement on a larger scale.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is keen competition in the matter of price?-- Keen competition was in existence long before the new wages were determined, and the wages that are laid down, represent in the smaller factories, a very considerable increase. These were the factories which competed most so the competition was not brought about by the introduction of coloured labour.

There has for some considerable time been very keen competition?-- Yes.

And that would tend to make them go towards cheap

labour?--



labour?-- They would all be in the same position when they had to pay higher prices for their work.

But while there was an advantage to be gained it would be taken and the result would be in the end a larger number of coloured employees?-- Yes, that is also a reason, <sup>not</sup> but/in every trade labour saving machinery has been introduced to the same extent as in the furniture trade and it has had a remarkable effect on the apprentices which belong to the furniture trade. White boys would not go and the standard has been reduced to IV, but even Standard IV is not always adhered to. The committee has the right to make exemptions.

There is just one other question I would like to ask you with regard to your point this morning that industries which cannot pay what you at one time called a living wage, and at another time a subsistence wage, should close down. Have you considered that in the case of marginal industries, or marginal firms?-- Yes, when I made the statement I bore in mind industries which on the face of it could not exist and pay subsistence wages. In the marginal cases the government of the country should step in and by a bounty provide the necessary margin for the running of these industries.

In these cases do you think they should be subsidised? Yes. Such a far-reaching principle as this can only be applied in cases where the position is obvious.

two of  
Let us take ~~the~~ the marginal industries of the country namely gold mining and agriculture, would you advocate a subsidy to the gold mining and agricultural industries to enable them to pay a living wage?-- As far as gold mining is concerned, I know it is considered heresy, but I have al-

ways



always held this view and have always expressed it, that the sooner the Government makes up its mind for the gradual closing down of their low grade mines the better it will be for the country as a whole.

So in that case you would not advocate a subsidy?— You may have a subsidy in order to enable them to close down gradually and to enable the workers to be absorbed in other industries.

But subject to that reservation you would not advocate subsidies in those cases?— No.

And with the agricultural industry again, do you advocate subsidising them in order to enable them to maintain a living wage level?— Is that a marginal industry?

I thought that was the marginal industry of the world?— Well, fortunately the world is gradually becoming less and less dependent upon agriculture and more and more upon industry. There was a time when agriculture represented 95 per cent of the world's requirements, but fortunately for mankind that is not the case now and the world is becoming less dependent upon agriculture.

You surely do not visualise a state of affairs when the world will not be dependent upon agriculture at all?— Except to a small extent.

The world cannot carry on without some raw materials?— When I say "agriculture" I do not mean in the narrow sense. Although the rural population in all parts of the world is diminishing the productivity of the soil is increasing. We have to-day a superabundance of agricultural products that we cannot get rid of.

Yes, I know that, but you must admit that the world will always be dependent on the soil for a certain quantity



of its raw materials?-- Yes that is so.

So whether the proportion of labour in agriculture goes down to 50 per cent or even to 10 per cent, you must still have these people?-- Yes.

Even when you have come down to the irreducible minimum?-- Yes.

Would you subsidise these people who are by the nature of things in a marginal industry, in order to keep up a living wage?-- No, it is only marginal to-day because it is afraid. If the world's supply of gold was not required to the extent which we can produce and the well-paying, rich mines, could satisfy all requirements then the whole problem would be entirely different.

We have eliminated the gold mines; stick to agriculture?-- I used that merely as an illustration. There is some soil which is better than other soil; there is some soil which requires only half the labour to produce well as compared with other soil, and there is soil which is non-paying. We in South Africa are already producing more than we require, and when more is being produced than the world wants you reduce your agricultural activities to the paying section.

What then becomes of the marginal soil?-- It becomes profitable. The price of products has dropped because there is a surplus but it does not drop when it only meets the requirements of the community.

So when it just meets the requirements of the community, whether you produce it from the richest soil in the world or not, you are still producing <sup>from</sup> the marginal soil?-- But the wages will be less if the soil is better. If you can produce a bag of wheat for ten shillings and can get for it ten shillings, you can afford to pay a



But the price would come down to 5/- even if you could supply all your needs from the rich soil?-- No, that is a fallacy. The price of commodities drop when there is a surplus. Low prices to-day have their origin in the world surplus.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Do you then contemplate higher prices for agricultural products?-- Food prices, yes, when over-production is eliminated.

And of these higher prices you are prepared to devote a proportion for higher wages?-- Yes.

MR. MOSTERT: Are you well acquainted with the trades unions in this town?-- Yes.

Are there many artisans out of employment?-- Yes, but the position is not as acute as amongst the unskilled. There is a good deal of unemployment amongst journeymen but that would not be a problem by itself. Owing to the depression many artisans are out of work, may be at the outside 25 per cent.

THE CHAIRMAN: We thank you very much for coming here to give your evidence. Your statements have been very frank and we should be pleased if some of the problems were as simple as you have made them, but you stated frankly that you do not know the conditions of the big native population behind and that you have only seen the small/<sup>town</sup>section, but we have to bear in mind also the great population behind?-- I must thank the Commission for the indulgence shown me and for the very patient hearing they have given me. I have given the whole problem a good deal of thought and have looked upon it as a question affecting South Africa and typical of South Africa.



MR. GUSTAV CHARLES FECHERYR, examined, states:

THE CHAIRMAN: You are at present with the Shell Co.?-  
I am managing in the Congo for the Shell Co. I am their representative in that territory.

MR. LUCAS: Have you been in the Belgian Congo long?--  
I have been in the different parts of the Belgian Congo now for about fourteen months. I came over in February 1930.

I wanted to know if you could tell us about the policy in the Belgian Congo with regard to native employees in villages or on the mines. Do the natives who are brought from a distance come alone or do they bring their wives with them?-- They bring their wives with them. We have in the Belgian Congo a Government Committee to provide the mines and other big businesses with native labour. There is not much native labour available in Katanga, but in the mandated territory of Ruanda there is plenty of labour, but the conditions of living and the climate are somewhat different and it is necessary that natives before they go to Katanga should undergo some training. The office at Ruanda asked the natives who would like to go to Katanga and then they are trained. A few are selected at first - they train a few weeks or months in Ruanda - and they go to Katanga, 100 to 300 together, and very often they stay. As soon as one is ill he is sent back to his country. I think generally they are six months on the way between Ruanda and Katanga. There is now plenty of native labour in Katanga because of the depression, but in ordinary times they want more native labour than is available. You can ask in this office for the number of native labourers you want and I think you pay them <sup>1500</sup> ~~12~~ francs, about £8, when the Committee have to bring the natives from Ruanda to Elizabethville.



THE CHAIRMAN: Is that the B.T.K.?-- Yes, There is another one, a different organisation, they do the same as the official organisation. They bring people from Tanganyika under the same conditions.

Are the B.T.K. and the other organisation Government agents?-- Yes.

MR. MOSTERT: What are the wages there?-- It depends of course upon capacity. Those who have not special capacity get from 80 to 100 francs a month, about 12/- a month. ~~Others~~ They receive their food or 35 to 40 francs and buy their own food. Big businesses like the daimond house and others give the food. There are rules stating exactly what you must give to the natives weekly.

And does not the Government employ natives too?-- Yes, they pay the same rate, about 12/- a month. Some natives of course have greater capacity than others and receive from 200 to 250 francs a month. A motor driver for instance would get anything from 250 to 300 francs a month. I had a native driver in Elizabethville who had 300 francs and 45 francs for food, but he was a man who knew something more than the generality of natives.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are these natives brought from Ruanda accompanied by their wives and children?-- Some of them.

But the bulk of them?-- I cannot tell you what is the proportion.

MR. LUCAS: Is it a common thing for them to bring their wives with them?-- I think so. If they had not to you could not get enough of them.

MAJOR ANDERSON: Do they get quarters for their wives?-- Yes, the diamond house for example provide quarters. They have special quarters in concrete and have one or two



small places about four yards square. They have electric light and water supply, and there is a hospital. It is well organised and is a model example.

Are only a certain number allowed to bring their wives?-- I think most of them have their wives with them. If you ~~see~~ pass a native village you see the wives and children.

Do they bring their wives and families long distances?-- Yes, when a native in the Belgian Congo is leaving he takes all with him. There is a special train which carries a lot of natives; they have their children with them generally. I should say that one-third certainly have their children with them.

Do they get rations for their families as well?-- Yes.

MR. LUCAS: Including the children; wives and children?-- I think that they have special rations for them on rather a different scale, that is if they have wives and children.

THE CHAIRMAN: With regard to the fee that the diamond house or any other employer pays to the B.T.K. is that refunded afterwards by the native?-- No, the fee of 1500 francs is only to pay the B.T.K the cost of bringing the native there.

The native does not refund the money to his employer?-- No. The employer pays but I think that every month they do not get a complete salary, so that when the contract of the native is finished he can go back home.

MR. MOSTERT: How long is the contract?-- Two or three years, but generally when they have had a contract they come back. They are satisfied with the salary these natives from Ruanda. Very often they have not food enough there. Last  
year



or the year before there was a great famine in Ruanda. Generally they are satisfied when they have been a few years. They go back for six months or so and then return under a new contract.

Do they come back by themselves?— They tell the agent of the Government that they want to go back a second time under the same conditions as the first time.

MR. LUCAS: Does he get a higher wage the second time?— Generally, yes. If a man has greater capacity he gets more wages of course. In the diamond house there are some natives who do very good work, engineers and so on, and those who drive lorries and locomotives. It is all natives who drive locomotives in the Belgian Congo; there are no Europeans doing that kind of work.

DR. ROBERTS: And do they do other work on the railways?— Yes, they are even station-masters sometimes.

MR. MOSTERT: Is there a great difference between the natives from one part as compared with those from another; I understand that the Katanga natives are not very intelligent nor are they big?— The Ruanda natives are stronger than those of Katanga.

Do the natives eat mealie meal?— Yes, and rice. In their weekly rations they have some rice and some mealie meal. They have also some meat and dried fish.

But is not their national food mealies?— Yes, but in some parts where fish is available in the rivers they eat more fish. But it is mainly mealies where they have no fish.

Are they educated at all?— In the lower part of the Congo you have some clerks but we have not in Katanga. Lower down there are good educational clerks who write very well. It will be better in Katanga in a few years because there



there is now some education for the young natives.

MR. LUCAS: Are there schools at the mines?-- There are different mines in Katanga. Elizabethville has its native school but there are no official schools of the Government yet.

MR. MOSTERT: What do these native clerks earn?-- They get higher wages of course. They get 1200 francs a month, in some cases, £7 or £8.

Is not that an extremely high wage?-- Yes, it is a good wage but it is for men who can do all the business in the office including typewriting and that sort of thing.

MR. LUCAS: Are there any restrictions in any of the areas against recruiting; restrictions against taking natives from one district to another?-- Yes.

Do you know what the provisions are?-- The Government in the last few months sent a Commission out to the Belgian Congo to study in the different parts what should be the restrictions in regard to native labour. I do not think that the Report is issued yet and it will not be for some weeks or perhaps a few months. The Commission went back to Europe last month. I think there will be a very interesting Report on this question in a few months. If you would like to have it I can tell the Government in Katanga that you would like to have it.

Yes, we should very much like to have that?-- Yes, there is a State Director of Native Labour in Elizabethville and when I get back I will ask him to give you all information.

We should be glad to have that?-- I think he can let you have more exact and more complete information about the different



different parts of the Belgian Congo.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you for the evidence you have given and we shall be glad to get the information you have referred to.

(The Commission adjourned at 4-55 p.m.  
until tomorrow, the 25th April, at 9-30 a.m.)