

paying business proposition. Once they understand this it will not be long before they urge Government to get it done; for it is the capitalists and the big farmers that have influence over government, and at the same time it is they who need the labour of the Native and who would benefit by his increased productivity. As to the ways and means of compassing this end we may all legitimately differ; but face the problem squarely we must, if the white races of this land are not to be kept in the gutter, as Washington would say, by themselves keeping the Bantu there.

Let us begin with the Natives at their rural homes, their agriculture, and the degree of their industriousness. What do we find? We find that they have no system. They live on the absolute minimum that mother earth can yield, and they invariably follow the path of least resistance. They are satisfied to live from hand to mouth. If the crops are sufficient to carry them to the following season, then they reckon all is well. They need to be taught that it would be for their own good to learn the necessity of work, not the "dignity of labour" for that is a hackneyed phrase empty of content and never acted upon by any sane and sober person; for, when I doff my coat and dig my garden to cultivate vegetables, I do not do that out of the love of the abstract idea of the dignity of labour but because gardening pays me economically and physically: there is money in it; it is a necessity; it is a sound business proposition. This is the attitude we need to instil into the black man of South Africa; and from what I have seen in the case of Negroes elsewhere I think it is possible and practicable.

In the greatest agricultural producing country, the United States of America, I discovered that progress there was due to the fact that the entire population,

black and white, was inured to the habit of work. Nobody there shirked work as so many people here, both black and white, seek to do.

At Tuskegee, Alabama, I found that Booker T. Washington owed his phenomenal success as an educator and social reformer to the practical methods he applied in his school whereby he taught the American Negro the commercial value of manual work—methods which are being copied, though to a very imperfect degree, everywhere in the educational world. For instance he divided his students into two groups: one group attended the normal classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; while the other went to work at one or other of the forty available vocational industries; then on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the first group went to the industries where the theories learnt in class were, by correlation among the staff, carried out in practice, and the second group went into academic classes. While they were engaged at the industries and ordinary manual work, they were paid at so much per hour—however nominal the sum—for all work of commercial value, the various instructors assessing the money according to recognised standards. Two things resulted from this original and wonderful system: firstly, this system produced men and women of economic value to the State, secondly, students became hardened and inured to hard work and loved it on account of the gain and profit to be got from it. Both these results are conspicuous by their absence in the South African system of education. Booker Washington has proved that a sound system of agricultural training in secondary schools can pay for all the boarding expenses of a school. This has been done on a small scale by Rev. J. East, at Qanda, Middledrift.

Whilst waiting for public opinion to mature and for

Government to take action, some Natives in the Eastern Cape Province have organised a Native Farmers' Association and Government has been good enough to grant them an American Negro farm demonstrator of considerable abilities in this kind of work, the Rev. J. East of Middledrift, C.P. This demonstrator who had mastered the dry farming system at his home has within an incredibly short time been highly successful, being a source of inspiration to many Native husbandmen. The Association in its work and discussions has revealed many facts that go to prove the urgent need for Government to assist Natives in their agricultural endeavours if they are to be rendered a productive asset to the Union. Here are a few:—

i. Commonages in all country villages are overstocked and hundreds of cattle die each year because the inhabitants have by a natural increase of population outgrown their old areas, while the labourers from the Rand keep adding stock that the pasture lands available cannot possibly carry;

ii. The land ploughed by location individuals is far too small to provide a living. It averages from four to six acres per family in the Ncwazi location of four hundred inhabitants, a location whose entire size is less than the single farm of a European neighbour. It would be interesting to know what sort of a living the average white farmer could make out of five acres with his family and all. Yet that is what the black man is trying to do.

iii. The implements used in Native farming are old-fashioned, inadequate and often unfit;

iv. The ox-traction that they depend upon is a handicap, because very few possess the requisite number of oxen to enable them to prepare their lands. Single-ox and single-horse traction is wanted;

v. Fencing is required, if modern agriculture is to be

attempted, otherwise with the location cattle roaming loose in winter it is impossible to develop winter crops;

vi. There are no dams nor other means of water supply in locations;

vii. Sanitary arrangements are nil and the present condition of promiscuous veldt defecation favours disease and plague;

viii. Poverty is appallingly on the increase, and with the present high prices of foodstuffs it is a crying shame on Government that nothing has been done to arrest profiteering, or speculation in mealies, or the fixing of the price as has been done in the case of rice and sugar. Starvation itself is facing many of our people at the Cape and no one has raised a voice of protest in any organised manner against this atrocious condition of things;

ix. The stock owned by Natives, their cattle, sheep and horses are of the lowest pedigree and there is need for foreign bulls and stallions to raise its standard and money value;

x. Astounding ignorance prevails with regard to the simplest rudiments of agricultural knowledge (e.g. soil preparation, crop rotation, manure uses, poultry raising, bacon curing, disposal of produce, fruit cultivation, dry farming methods, irrigation, weeds, insects, tree planting and timber growing, etc.). All this shows the need for a training in agriculture parallel to that given to whites in the Government colleges of Elsenburg, Grootfontein, Cedara, Potchefstroom, Glen, with a Land Bank, scholarships, etc., for which government to-day expends yearly about £100,000 in the case of whites and only £500 for blacks whose taxation revenue is by no means proportionally negligible.

In conclusion one would venture to offer the following suggestions as likely to assist materially in the solution of the problem of Native Agriculture:—

(a) A systematic attempt should be made to rouse the enormous inert mass of red-blanketed Natives, who are outside the reach of the educational machinery, into action. This can be done by the extension of the system of black agricultural demonstrators trained at the Tsolo School of Agriculture, or at the Native College, Fort Hare, or better still, trained in the United States through government scholarships. All these three sources could be usefully exploited.

(b) Elementary Education from the very beginning should include the rudiments of agricultural knowledge. The Natal Native Education Department has already shown the way and has been highly successful in this line.

(c) In Native Secondary Schools and Normal Training Institutions agricultural training could be immediately introduced to take the place of Woodwork and Carpentry, as being the more useful for the purposes of Natives. This was the evidence given by the Native Farmers' Association before the Government Native Education Commission at the Cape last July. Example here could be taken from the Tuskegee system.

(d) In Higher Examinations the Science of Agriculture should have a Professorial Chair appropriately at the Native College where Native experts and graduates could be produced to train other Native teachers. In this connection see the South African Native Affairs Commission report of 1903—1905 of which Sir Godfrey Ladgen was chairman and Mr. Taberer, Secretary (page 82, paragraph 382) which *inter alia* recommends, firstly that a higher standard of education should be instituted among Natives to increase their efficiency and wants, and secondly, the encouragement of industrial and manual training in schools.

All authorities and employers of Native labour can and should take a share in having this problem solved

even if for their own selfish ends. Municipalities could set aside portions of revenue derived from the Native locations and put up their own establishments, or vote money towards the present institutions that are struggling under difficulties to carry this into effect. Mine-owners could do likewise and use their influence on the Rand municipality and on government to get something done. European Agricultural associations could do a great deal, especially as it is they who suffer greatest from the inefficiency of Native farm labour. They must rid themselves of prejudice against the black. A small attempt was recently made in the case of the East London Farmers and Fruit Growers Association, when a member of that body submitted a well-meaning paper to the Annual Cape Agricultural Congress at Queenstown, in which he made practical proposals for the purpose of training Natives to become more efficient labourers for white farmers. Harmless as the scheme seemed it was unanimously rejected by that Congress, while the very chairman of the proposer's own Association was among those who voted against the scheme.

The Government through its Department of Agriculture is in a position to do a great deal to develop Native Agriculture for which it does nothing to-day except for a single item in the Native College farm. Public money spent upon machinery to convert the huge population of black people in the Union into a productive and work-loving people would be money wisely invested.

## NATIVE FARMERS' UNIONS.

The occupation of tilling the soil is a very old one with us. We knew about it long before white men invaded this dear land of ours. To this day we know much about stock diseases, and for many of the older diseases of cattle we remain independent of Europeans. With the copious and regular rainfalls of the times of our grandfathers it was a simple and sure thing to cultivate very lightly, plant and reap with certainty. So fertile was this dear land. Whenever one part was played out we had abundant land to select from and we went thus from place to place. Gradually this freedom became limited and to-day our holdings, specially in locations, are so small that the old methods cannot supply our needs. We must learn the white man's methods. We should therefore study how to make agriculture a paying proposition and a profitable business, and we must study the ways and means of getting hold of advanced information:

(a) It is a good and inspiring thing to learn from experts, especially from successful black farmers. For instance, I had the privilege of living in close contact with Prof. Geo. Carver, a negro blacker than ourselves, who carried on experiments in the research department of Tuskegee Institute. He had made several discoveries, among which was a method of increasing the yield of sweet potatoes until he had managed to obtain over 500 bushels from a single acre, a phenomenon that attracted the attention of scores of white farmers in the centre of negrophobist Alabama. To live with such men is an education.

(b) There are cheap books that would repay investment, as for example the "Farmers' Annual" that costs only 4/-, but is a gold mine in the way of information.

(c) There are many inexpensive agricultural journals

like the "Farmer's Advocate," "Poultry," "Gardening," "The Farmer's Weekly." You could make clubs and combine to subscribe to one or more of these and they would be a home university to you. Or special arrangements could be made with our Native press to have certain columns reserved for agricultural news.

(d) Associations of Native Farmers with periodical conferences where questions affecting the life of farmers could be taken up, would be a boon. For example you might debate the policy of education and how your sons should be given agricultural training in present educational centres; and how you should get Native farm demonstrators to go round among you such as those do who are trained in the Tsolo School of Agriculture, Transkei. Printed matter goes a long way and we should read much literature that deals with the problems of cultivation. A recent article in the "Farmers' Annual" dealt with topics such as these: France spending millions of money upon re-afforestation; The "Farmers' Weekly" as a valuable medium of instruction; Waste of Land by Natives; The Future of Natives—their rapid increase above the amount of land available (e.g. Basutoland now maintains half a million Basuto; but in time to come their land will not be able to feed and hold their number.)

Therefore the acquisition of land is of paramount importance just now for without it you will soon be economic slaves. England, according to recent reports, is realising this, for the Department of Agriculture in that country is arranging for three millions of acres to be put under cultivation for the first time. White people in this country realise this, hence they pass laws like the Lands Act 1913 to make hay while the sun shines.

Organisation is needed as a start. White men have agricultural associations everywhere and they receive a Government grant. There is no progressive European

farmer but belongs to some association or other. In the Cape Province alone a Congress of these meets yearly and it comprises about fifty branches! In the "Dispatch" one constantly sees report of the proceedings of some of these and it is wonderful to note the comprehensive variety of the subjects handled in their meetings. Take for instance the agenda of the "Lower Cathcart Farmers' Association" that met at Thomas River on 31st December last:

1. Kubusi Bridge; 2. Dangerous Roads; 3. Scab;
4. Kafir Beer; 5. Wool; 6. East Coast Fever; 7. Native Affairs; 8. Natives Trespass at Railway Cottages;
9. Erosion; 10. New Divisional Council Ordinance;
11. Bi-Annual Conference; 12. Voters' Roll; 13. Typhus;
14. Attendance of members at meetings, etc., etc.

In fact quite a number of laws affecting Natives may be traced to these European agricultural associations, and it is time we established our own associations even in self-defence if for nothing nobler. Therefore I conclude by proposing that we found a Native Farmers' Association, with Rev. J. E. East as President, for he is a great expert in dry farming and can teach us a great deal in the right methods of cultivation.

The above was an address given to the Natives of Zanyokwe, Rabula, near Middledrift, C.P., April, 1918, on the need for the formation of a Native Agricultural Association.

The meeting eventually agreed to found a "Native Farmer's Association," and its objects are the following:—(1) To stimulate its members to a greater interest in farming; (2) To urge its members to become more productive farmers; (3) To exercise a mutual helpfulness in methods of farming; (4) To secure for its members the highest prices for their produce; (5) To obtain for its members the cheapest prices in buying seed, etc.; (6) To encourage its members to grow a

variety of crops; (7) To be united in approaching the Government on matters affecting the interests of Native farmers; (8) To urge its members to form companies for buying such machinery as forage presses, thrashing machines, etc.; (9) To publish or circulate agricultural literature in order to enlighten its members and to further its objects.

And the following address given eighteen months later (7th Oct., 1919) and published in "Imvo," by one of its members, is a testimony of the value of this organisation to African peasants.

#### HOW I SUCCEEDED AS A FARMER.

The following is the gist of a lecture given by Mr. Stephen F. Sonjica, of Qanda, Middledrift, Treasurer to the Native Farmers' Association and a man of substance, before a recent gathering of the said Association at Ncwazi, at the special request of the meeting. The story was thrilling in its recital for it was embellished with piquant humour by the narrator. It should serve to stir up many other Native farmers to action.

The speaker said that he grew up under typical mid-Victorian conditions of Xosa life, when a Native boy's life was notoriously no bed of roses, and under an extremely austere father. His parents loved stock-raising to a fault and on the contrary had a *laissez-faire* attitude towards soil-tillage. His father severely reprimanded him as a boy whenever he ploughed deeply and told him not to "kill" his cattle. Despite these adverse circumstances he clearly foresaw the benefits of the proper cultivation of the soil and expressed to his father a desire to buy land. "Buy land!" exclaimed his father in horror, "How can you want to buy land? Don't you know that all land is God's and He gave it to

the chiefs only?" With this short shrift, continued the speaker, I planned to buy myself land of my own to plough elsewhere. When I announced to my wife my intention of leaving my father's home to work on my own account to secure land, she stood aghast at this, and endeavoured to restrain me from such an unnatural and disloyal idea. This proved futile for I was adamant and determined to go to seek work. Thus I left home for King Williamstown and served as a mounted policeman during the War of 1877 alongside three comrades. Whilst ostensibly sending home my monthly earnings to my father in the usual Native custom, I cunningly opened a private bank account into which I diverted a portion of my wages without the knowledge of my father. This went on until I had saved £80. At this juncture I visited home and besought my father to lend me cattle to enable me to till some land I had hired. The request was rejected with scorn: "You plough that hired land of yours with your *own* cattle, not mine!" Just what he inwardly wanted, for he straightway went back to town and bought a span of oxen with yokes, gear, plough, strops and the rest of agricultural paraphernalia, returning triumphantly to his father who was flabbergasted with amazement and asked where he had gotten all these things from. "These are the cattle you told me to get myself," was the brief and unanswerable reply. His father knowingly bit his lips for he realised that his son must have been keeping back much money all the time. For fear of treachery he did not leave his cattle with his father but deposited them with a friend near town. Now he resigned his position in town although his three comrades tried to dissuade him from this, and staked his life on farming. The start was trying and hard beyond description—to save the expense of hiring labour he put his wife to the plough and drove the oxen himself, turning a deaf ear to the insistent

murmurs and loud protests of neighbours. The harvest was not encouraging either, for it totalled only seven bags! His three comrades laughed at him "We told you so." The second year yielded only nine bags and his opponents were now justifiably confirmed that "Fani" was truly mistaken in his venture. Not he. *Nil desperandum*. The third year brought him thirty-nine bags. Now he told his wife to stop ploughing and return to the house and he hired helpers. The fourth year placed ninety bags into his barns. His three comrades and other critics were now silenced once and for all. The fifth year produced one hundred and twenty-five bags, and all his friends began to refer to his wife as "Mrs. Sonjica," and automatically ceased to call him "Fani," but styled him "Mr. Stephen Sonjica." *Labor omnia vincit*. He had made good. He bought a wagon against the advice of his father and within a short time he had accumulated £1,000 in the bank by means of farming. (Loud cheers). "I now purchased a small farm," continued Mr. Sonjica, "and plots of land at various places at what was considered high prices in those days. Agriculture has continued to raise me higher and higher since those days, and I cannot too strongly recommend it as a profession to my fellowmen and encourage those in it. They should, however, adopt modern methods of profit making. For example the way Natives at present dispose of their produce in local shops is a glaring scandal. No Native farmer is worth calling a farmer who has no agent in a big town through whom he may dispose of his produce at market prices. "A farmer without an agent in town is not a farmer but a boy!" I reckoned to know all about the art of ploughing and preparation of the soil. Indeed I do it as well as Mr. East himself. But there is one point where Mr. East beats me: that is in scuffling. His system of one

horse scuffling is the most profitable proposition that I have learnt of late years. It took me a long time to appreciate its value and to learn how to manage a horse with plough and reins alone in Mr. East's style. At first Mr. East visited my farm and scuffled several acres with his one horse within a short time, and I became convinced of the value of the new system, and bought one specimen made at his black-smith's shop. It played ducks and drakes with me in the using for the horse would not keep straight and I abandoned it in sheer disgust for twelve months. Next year Mr. East tried again to teach me and I succeeded. His method saved me the enormous expense I had used to incur in hiring scufflers. It gave me joy for it showed me to what good use one should put horses in one's fields. Unto all of you therefore I say, go and do likewise, casting aside indolence, developing industry and stability.

## NATIVE PEASANTS AND THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

An address by the Native Farmers' Association to M. C. Vos, Esq., B.A., the Secretary for Native Affairs, July, 1919.

By special arrangement for which Rev. J. Henderson, M.A., Principal of Lovedale, was responsible, the Secretary for Native Affairs, Mr. M. C. Vos, B.A., held a meeting at Burnshill with the Native Farmers' Association on Saturday, July 12th, 1919, when there assembled a representative gathering of Native farmers drawn from all the districts extending as far as Peulton and Healdtown in one line, and from Keiskama Hoek to Perksdale in another. On the platform there were: Mr. M. C. Vos, B.A., Rev. J. Henderson, M.A., Mr. A. B. Payn, M.P.C. of

Tsolo, Lieut.-Col. E. H. W. Muller, Treasurer of the Transkei Council, Mr. G. Whitaker, M.L.A., of King William's Town, Prof. Alexander Kerr, M.A., Principal of the Native College, and Rev. W. Stuart, M.A., of Burnshill.

Mr. Stuart in choice words welcomed the distinguished visitors, and Mr. J. E. East, the Government Farm Demonstrator, briefly outlined the objects of the Association, emphasising that the great aim was to solve the food problem as expeditiously as possible.

Then the Association's address to Mr. Vos was read in Xosa vernacular and interpreted in English.

It ran thus:—

We, the Native Farmers' Association (of the Eastern Province) express our sincere gratitude to you, Sir, for having granted an audience with you thus early after your appointment to an important department which we Natives regard as a trustee of our welfare. To-day thousands of eyes are fixed upon you, and thousands of black hands are outstretched suppliant to your bureau for succour and relief in these perilous times. Sir, you have visited us at a time when the Natives represented by this association are in a grave plight. We are suffering severely from an unusually protracted dry season. Many of our homes are absolutely destitute of provisions, on account of the failure of the recent crops, and our prospects of a wheat harvest grow dimmer and dimmer as the drought continues. Our cattle are dying daily for want of pasture. And the cost of living has risen excessively, whilst the wages Native farmers command at the mining centres and elsewhere have not risen proportionately—in fact at the mines they stand at pre-war figures. Again the dreadful typhus fever is exacting an alarming toll of our people, whole districts being almost entirely without medical attendance. Notwithstanding these gloomy circumstances you have come

to us at a time when we are feeling jubilant over the victorious peace that has been concluded in France; a peace which we hope and trust is destined to spell progress and justice to all mankind.

As a society of Native Farmers we desire to place before you, Sir, some of the great difficulties that confront us in our struggle to ascend in the scale of civilisation.

1. The first cause of difficulty that we would point out is the inadequate size of ploughing ground that is at our disposal individually. The average of our allotments is six acres each ("isikonkwane"), and the rainfall allows of only one crop. Therefore if we grow wheat there remains no place for maize, the staple crop. The maximum crop of mealies these small plots are capable of giving in the best of seasons is thirty bags (value fifteen pounds), an amount which cannot possibly feed nor clothe a man's family, pay his taxes, school fees, and so forth. One has only to visit a typical location like Rabula (near Keiskama Hoek), where they have an average of from thirty to forty acres each, to realise the advance that Natives can achieve in civilisation, when given adequate ground. Under this head we would recommend an inquiry as to the amount of land necessary for a Native to support himself under present-day conditions.

2. Our next difficulty is that of limited commonages. This very day immense numbers of our stock are dying from this evil.

3. The need is being felt for the establishment of a system that will secure us the following desiderata: (a) The construction of water dams in the various locations for the service of people and stock; to-day both man and beast have to travel unconscionable distances to reach water in many a community. (b) Methods for

getting a better breed of stock, with farms for same. (c) Fencing material for enclosing our commonages; the lack of this is a very serious set back to Native agriculture as, during the winter months, cattle roam at random, and no aspiring farmer dare attempt a "catch" crop such as peas. Moreover commonage fencing would release thousands of boys for school and other purposes, whose time is now wholly and deplorably consumed in herding stock. (d) The development of local afforestation so as to obviate the primitive method to which our women folk are compelled to resort in order to gain firewood; such forests would incidentally provide building material, as they do in the Transkei, and pave the way for improved Native housing. (e) The training of a number of Natives for the medical profession, (say, on the lines suggested by Dr. J. B. McCord and Dr. C. T. Loram in the African Journal of Science, January, 1919 number) to deal and cope with the multifarious diseases that are responsible for an appalling death rate among Native landdwellers.

From your department we have learnt that some system is in operation among the Transvaal Natives whereby advantages similar to the above are obtained through voluntary taxation without the formation of a Native Council such as that of the Transkei.

4. Another obstacle is the lack of a good market for Native produce. The local trader generally acts as an emporium where the Native sells his crop, and where he is compelled to take value in kind and receive no cash. As these shops have a monopoly, and as the law protects them against competition from additional shops, we feel, Sir, that the law ought also equitably to insist upon their giving cash and that according to market prices less carriage. We would request Government to fix the price of the sale of mealies on the same lines as that of sugar and paraffin.

5. The present system of dipping gives the Native farmer no little heart-burning on account of its glaring injustice. In the first instance we are told that the Government was making a loan for building our dipping tanks, to be refunded in instalments by means of a five-shilling additional tax on each taxpayer. Now, after the completion of the refund, expensive European supervisors were placed over the dips and the five-shilling tax continued. Moreover by this system the man with no cattle has to pay as heavily as the one with many cattle; the man with two cows the same as the man with fifty.

This we hold to be unfair and unjust. The tax is proving to be an excessive burden on the backs of a starving people, and is more and more becoming a source of unrest. Also there is no uniformity in its application, hence its partiality. We understand that the South African Native College is prepared to train Natives in testing and supervising dips, and therefore to lighten the burden we suggest that such Native supervisors, if trained, be appointed to this work, and that an explanation be made periodically as to the amount of money raised and how spent in dipping.

6. Mine Labour.—In view of the fact that Native farmers who sign on here for labour at the mines possess no means for having their wages increased at the other end on account of the nature of their contracts, we should respectfully suggest that the question of an increase in wages be given speedy attention, as at present they remain at pre-war rates, while that of the European in the same work has been advanced greatly in keeping with the cost of living. The granting of this request would greatly help Native farmers at this time.

7. We would suggest the encouragement of village industries to alleviate the distress due to congestion of Natives on the land.

8. Agricultural Exhibition.—We would suggest that the Government encourage and aid the holding of an Agricultural Exhibition at Lovedale in order to stimulate greater interest in Native agriculture.

9. It is highly desirable that suitable agricultural literature in the Xosa vernacular be made available for Native farmers in the same way as it is for European farmers in Dutch and English by the Department of Agriculture.

We feel, Sir, it would be a grave omission if we failed to inform you of the destructive in-roads poverty has made in our locations during recent years. The number of our cattle has steadily decreased till many of our kraals are empty. Only a few years back each man had his own span for ploughing and some to spare. To-day, in most cases, it takes the cattle of several families to make up a team. This is a great draw-back to Native agriculture. This shortage in our cattle is due to our selling them for food, as we are not able to grow enough on our small plots during the repeated droughts, and also, to inadequate grazing lands. Many, indeed many, are insolvent, and this evil is increasing yearly. As the traders see our stock diminishing, they are fast becoming reluctant to give us credit. There is also a large number of indigent widows in our locations facing starvation, who need immediate help.

In conclusion, Sir, having informed you of our grave condition and many hindrances, we pray that they may receive your beneficent consideration, and that your coming to us to-day may result in a redress of the many evils that we have to combat as Native farmers.

Done by order of the Native Farmers' Association.

## NATIVE VIEW ON FARM LABOUR.

A defence addressed to various newspaper editors in South Africa by the Native Farmers' Association, February, 1920.

Sir,—With your kind permission we desire, through the medium of your valuable organ, to make a defence in behalf of the Native so much belaboured of late by press correspondents and others.

Wilfully misleading statements constantly occur in the press under headlines such as "Spoilt Kaffir," "Starving Natives," "Native labour," and so forth, from the pens of Europeans, calculated greatly to shake the confidence of aborigines in the ruling races of this country. We are informed in and out of season that the white man is the guardian and trustee of the black man, and that the interest of the black man is safest in the hands of the white man. But if we are to judge the whole white race by the opinions expressed in the daily papers from time to time, then we must conclude that our future and destiny must be awfully doomed.

(1) Much is being said against education and Christianising of the Native people—that the schools and Church are spoiling them—these expressions emanating not only from individuals but also from reports of associations. The opinion seems to be gaining ground, specially among white farmers, that the raw Native is of far more service than the one from the school and mission. The truth is that the spoilt party is not the black man, but the class of white people who have been getting, and wish to continue getting, the labour of the Native for a mere song. Who has forgotten how the Native labour battalions in France performed within twelve hours what was reckoned a fortnight's normal work for European labourers? For generations the raw Native has done service for his

white master for a bare pittance—some for one beast a year (according to some venerated old Dutch custom) and his ignorance was such that he hardly knew when his year began or ended. In the Colony a common custom among European farmers is to give 10/- a month (i.e. £6 a year) with a dish of mealies a week plus some sour milk, the wife and children of such a servant giving their service *gratis* to the employer. The class of people who render such service are raw or "red," in the blanket stage, having no school fees nor church dues to pay, no clothes to buy for their children who move indecently clad about their master's estate, and, not infrequently, the adults being insufficiently apparelled to be presentable at any civilised home. Sometimes a mealie-sack with a hole cut out at the bottom for the neck and with the corners cut open for the arms constitute the sole garment of a male adult servant (!) inasmuch as his wages could permit nothing better. Now these servants rest contented while they plough their master's land, milk his cows and tend his stock. The master through this cheap labour soon becomes opulent and flourishes about in a motor-car.

The position is quite different with the school Native. He wants clothes for his whole family, money to pay school-fees, better food, sugar, coffee, tea, bread sometimes and some modicum of furniture. His needs cannot be compassed by £6 per annum and therefore he cannot compete in labour with his raw brother who has few needs. Further he wishes to be in a locality where his children can attend school. It is the school and Church that have made him like this, and therefore he is termed the "spoilt Kaffir"—not because he is a thief, robber, or a murderer, but simply because the conditions offered by his master will not enable him to lead a civilised and Christian existence.

That Europeans ever did get this cheap labour is to

be deplored for they have been spoilt by it, as was evinced last year by the wail that came from an ex-South African settled in Australia who from the antipodes sighed for this cheap 'Kaffir labour!' Our white friends need to adjust themselves to the new status of the Native rather than to seek to drag the Native back to the primitive life they have outgrown once and forever.

(2) Some of the articles on starving Natives have been largely erroneous and misrepresentative of the facts. Certain writers would have us believe that Government is feeding, free of charge, robust and able-bodied men who are too lazy to go and offer themselves for work. This is not the case. Only indigent widows were supplied with poor rations in these parts, and that only after the most careful and searching investigation. It is true that numbers of able-bodied men are also to be seen about Native locations, but it is the "Join" Labour system that is largely responsible for this phenomenon, for these men are signed on for contracts, of from nine to twelve months at a time, to the Rand, and are then brought back home in huge numbers, at the end of their agreement, to spend two or three months at home, and then join up again. It would be patently absurd for them to come down all the way from Johannesburg, working their own fare as they do, to spend just one day at home and go back again! This is the logical conclusion of the hare-brained statements that find their way to the press. The obliquity of the Rand Join system can be realised when one compares it with the period of time Natives labour in Cape Town and Kimberley, whither they proceed without contract and spend anything from one to five years on end. Very often it is the labour agent and others interested in such occupation who are most brazen-lunged in urging that these people be compelled to join up, for they receive about £2 on each

"boy" registered for the mines, while they sit at home, grow fat and do nothing; for some of these agents earn £100 a month through these poor Natives who can hardly save £10 a year; and yet they have anything but a good word to say about the creatures that bring them such wealth. The farmers too are crying out against the Government supplying grain to Natives, because they wish economic pressure to force the Natives to go to their farms as cheap labour where conditions degrade them. In some cases Government is not giving away grain but supplies it to be paid for by a certain time. We regard this as a very gracious act on the part of Government, seeing that Native crops have failed; but our callous critics call this "giving food free" because it suits them, as they want Natives to be forced as cheap labour to their farms.

(3) Native labour. There is a persistent cry over the lack of Native labour, specially by the farmers, as they feel that they are not getting their proper share of the labour supply. The root of the trouble seems to be in the price paid for labour. The Native to-day has developed intelligence enough to know which side of his bread is buttered and to know where his labour commands the best pay. In the mines and towns two to five shillings per day are given for unskilled labour, but the farmers offer a very much lower figure. It is for them to raise their price of labour and treat their servants humanly and humanely and then they will obtain abundant labour. The farming community doubtless must assume a different attitude towards Natives if they wish to secure a reasonable share of the available labour. In the Cape Provincial Farmers' Congress of last November, representing some fifty agricultural associations, a novel proposal, original whatever its limitations be, was made to the effect that a scheme be launched to train Natives with Government

help in ploughing, clean cultivation, reaping, trenching, hoeing, milking, etc., with the express purpose that farmers might be able to get more proficient servants. This proposal, be it noted, was not to the end that Natives should be trained to help themselves in their own land, but to the selfish end of supplying white farmers with more efficient labourers; no books were to be taught as in ordinary agricultural institutions, no experimentations or analysis of the soil as in Elsenburg, but just the dry bones of the thing, simply how to use the hands more skilfully in tilling the white master's ground! The scheme, this tiny crumb of training, was holus-bolus rejected by an almost unanimous vote. The cause of the opposition is revealed in an animadversion by the president of the East London Farmers' Association who reported thus in the "Daily Dispatch":—

"The President referred to Mr. Goulden's motion re Native labour which was submitted at the recent Agricultural Congress at Queenstown, and apologised to Mr. Goulden for having voted against the proposal. He was forced to do so, because he was strongly averse to the education of Natives. He maintained they should be kept in their proper place, and should not be placed on an equal footing with white men. He considered there was a tendency to degeneration among the Natives, and his opinion was that they would die out like the Hottentots."

According to this hackneyed order of thinking the proper place of Natives is evidently to remain in illiteracy and heathenism. On the other hand if the training outlined above could really put Natives on an equal footing with white men then this president has betrayed himself by showing that his ideal of a white man's agricultural education is a very simple one indeed. The attitude of his Association, as press reports disclose,

is that of enslaving the Natives. Their desire to have their servants legally contracted and to have Natives carry passes; their objections to Natives buying land, owning land, hiring land, squatting on European farms, being educated and evangelised, being advanced food on credit or even having their indigents fed by Government lest that hinder Natives from being unconditionally forced on their farms as servants—all this connotes absolute slavery and serfdom for the Native people of South Africa. And after noting the attitude of the Queenstown European Farmers' Congress we wonder how far this negrophobism and mania for seeking to reduce the Native to servitude has affected the rest of the white farming community of the Cape. We are, etc.,

Native Farmers' Association, Eastern Cape Province.

## WHY NATIVE FARM LABOUR IS SCARCE.

(REASONS AND SOLUTIONS.)

As a consequence of the daily press reports of the Johannesburg address on Native Agriculture the present writer was summoned to East London to meet a committee of the East London Farmers and Fruit Growers' Association at the National Hotel, 13th February, 1920, for the purpose of the mutual exchange of views and frank discussion upon the causes of the scarcity of labour, as well as its poor quality when at all available. There were present Messrs. Freer, Goulden, Adkins and the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. R. Goulden, whose report in the "Daily Dispatch" in part runs thus: "The chairman introduced the Professor, expressing the

pleasure they felt that the natives had amongst themselves a gentleman who so willingly gave both time and money to further the interests of his people. They heartily welcomed him and his co-operation in the ultimate achievement of securing a reliable and efficient class of native on the farms, in which trust and confidence could be placed, for they were prepared to pay anything for this class of labourer; but not for the useless type.

"Prof. Jabavu thanked the committee and expressed himself as agreeably surprised to find, having heard their opinion, that they were working in the same direction as himself. Where he had anticipated unreasonableness, as evinced in the reports published of statements made by some of their members, he was glad to see that they were out for a fair and square deal with the native. On the lines indicated he would be very pleased to give all possible assistance. At Fort Hare there had been introduced with very great success the encouraging of a love for gardening amongst the scholars, and it had taken root: now there was a spirit of emulation, one competing with another to see what they could produce. When these students went out to work they would, at all events, know something about the soil and how to use it."

During the discussion it was found that the causes that accounted for the scarcity of Native farm labour were numerous. They may be divided into three sections, under (1) Treatment, (2) Wages, (3) and the attitude of Natives toward farm work generally, whether for themselves or for employers.

(1) From information gathered by enquiry when at Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and in various places in the Eastern Province which may be reckoned as reliable, the consensus of opinion is that there is a noticeable change in the present generation of white

farmers as compared with those of former times, the tendency now being towards hardness and lack of consideration towards their workers.

A certain well known Native in Bloemfontein told me that he had not very long ago undertaken to recruit labourers for farmers in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, and that he was forced to abandon the venture on account of the unfavourable reports brought back by the workers from the centres of employment. These men said:

(a) When ill-treated they found that they were absolutely in the power of the "baas" and had no umpire to appeal to who could guarantee them humane treatment. (b) There was no security for them to be conducted safely home, such as they enjoyed under the Rand recruiting agencies; hence some had been known to disappear completely either by death or by becoming lost in the broad country, when endeavouring to get back home, in consequence of illness or physical incapacitation. (c) The rule of the "baas" is so arbitrary and merciless that he imprisons them even for minor and trivial misunderstandings. (d) They were liable to sudden evictions at the caprice of the Dutch farmer, and under the Native Lands' Act of 1913. (e) There were many cruel and hard taskmasters who indulged in whipping and other forms of physical chastisement.

Near the Alice district one middle aged farm-hand informed me that in his time Natives really loved farm labour for it was rendered congenial by the kind of masters they used to have. But that to-day (a) there had come into being a new generation of white farmers keenly bent upon money making and proving ruthless; and their unfriendly spirit towards their servants had led to their forfeiting their confidence as a class. (b) Farm labour to a black servant to-day offers no prospects for chances to rise economically and socially,

because most of his old sources of profit and savings have now to be diverted to the master's. For example his stock is limited to a very small margin; all his surplus stock must be sold to the "baas" and at the baas's price which in cattle is £7 for a £15 beast; the cream from his stock has to go to the master as payment for the privilege of running his stock on his lands. (c) Living quarters are miserable, especially in the rainy season, as compared with those in town locations. (d) The food is only "inkobe" (boiled hard maize) with no meat except for a chance dead cow—this comparing unfavourably with the varied food enjoyed by the town labourer. (e) Dismissal is instant and unconditional as compared with the month's notice in towns.

(2) *Wages.* i. The pay offered by farmers is far lower than that obtainable say at East London or Cape Town, where unskilled labour commands anything between 3/- to 8/- a day, and even 10/- at Port Elizabeth on occasions.

ii. No option is given for cash payment.

iii. It does not cover the expenses of clothing, school fees and church contributions.

(3) The attitude of Native youths towards farm labour.

i. They have grown to regard it as a sort of low, mean and disgraceful occupation, in contrast with being a teacher, a clerk, a minister or interpreter. At Thaba Nchu I found quite a number of young men who owned about two thousand morgen each of land in the Native reserve who, instead of farming, had gone into towns to live as teachers and pass-office clerks, earning only from £50 to £80 a year, where their lands could yield them a minimum of £1000.

ii. They have grown up in their homes under conditions where agriculture is a failure, offering no financial returns to meet their modern needs and ambitions.

iii. They are discouraged by the frequent droughts, as they have no method of fighting them through their ignorance of dry farming principles.

iv. They have no taste for agriculture, for, apart from the crude and fragmentary ideas they pick up at home, they are taught nothing about it at schools, either elementary or secondary.

v. In seeking occupation they, rather than take up farm labour, prefer Cape Town, where they find three obvious advantages: (a) The attitude of fairplay from employers, the Peninsular Europeans being proverbially good and kind. (b) Proper notice in cases of dismissal, as against summary treatment at Johannesburg. (c) They find Cape Town conditions morally helpful to one who is a trier.

(4) *Suggestions.* To undertake to write out a complete prescription for what would produce farm labour is as hopeless a task as that of defining what electricity is. But we need not despair, as this is a matter of life or death to the earnest farmer. So let us look at some possible ways of tackling the problem:

i. The social relations between the farmer and his servant have much to do with the supply of labour, says our Lecturer in Agriculture at the Native College, Fort Hare, Mr. P. Germond. He holds that the white farmer should discard the "stand-off" attitude that is so common and do more friendly talking with his farm hands, study their individuality and encourage them in the habits of thinking, inventiveness, originality and resourcefulness in solving the innumerable troubles and difficulties that constantly arise in connection with farm stock and implements. His experience is that by adopting a teaching attitude, for example, by asking the labourers the why and wherefore of things, as in fence-making, one can do much to quicken the otherwise dormant intelligence found in every servant. And

servants trained in this way usually glory in being useful and become reliable enough to be left to do their work alone.

ii. Wages. Whilst some cash is necessary, the farmer should seek to prove to his servant and succeed in satisfying him that the acreage given him to plough for himself, and the free pasturage plus the cash he gets and free housing, are quite equal to the 3/- per diem obtained in towns without these advantages. Natives with families prize the facilities of education for their children and church going for themselves.

iii. Elementary Education in Native schools should be so framed that it habituates Natives to farm work from the lowest standards. The Natal Native Education Department, under Dr. C. T. Loram its head, is doing this with great success in the form of garden plots attached to Native Day Schools. Farmers could advocate that this method be made universal in all Native schools in the Union, even from their own selfish point of view.

iv. In Secondary Schools for Natives Tuskegee ideas of giving prominence to Agriculture in the training of all boys could be easily applied in this country, if farmers would undertake to educate public opinion on the point. For example in Tuskegee the Negro boys are taught agriculture in all its branches, being trained to develop a taste for varieties of vegetables, to turn their produce into cash, to attend agricultural shows, and to use the most up-to-date traction methods, with the result that the motto for success among the Negroes is "forty acres and a mule" for these produce wealth and an automobile. The system of horses and mules is far quicker, more convenient and time saving than the oxen traction of South Africa, with its long process of the collection of bullocks from the distant veldt, the laborious inspanning and

the multiplicity of servants (the driver, the plowman and the leader boy) instead of a single man for all those jobs. In fact Mr. East, the black demonstrator around Middledrift district, has trained a number of Xosa boys who are now quite experts in managing, single-handed, a couple of horses, and tilling with them huge tracts of land in far less time than cattle would take, and who are equally adept in manipulating the American single horse-cultivator that is patented and manufactured by Mr. East himself at Qanda, Middledrift. Mr. East has also achieved considerable success at the Native College at Fort Hare, where he twice a week trains the male students in individual garden plots, teaching them how to raise from seed, develop and market a great variety of vegetables, while at the same time inculcating in them a taste for this kind of food and work.

v. On the basis of the preceding information it would be a paying proposition for European farmers to lay aside racial prejudice and persuade the Department of Agriculture to systematise the teaching of agriculture to Natives.

vi. For the purpose of centralising farm labour European farmers could establish labour agencies parallel to those of Taberer and Mostert in the case of the Rand recruitment, or that of the Natal sugar plantations. In this way their labour would be regularised. Preference should be given to men with families to be taken on long and definite contracts, as these men having a stake in their farm settlement would be most likely to prove reliable as compared with irresponsible youths.

vii. Conferences with leading Native people, where frank round-table discussion was encouraged, would do a great deal of good, not only towards the actual supply of labour but in building up good will and understanding.