

1921

E. AFRICA

43

23713

LEYS JR., NORMAN

DATE
3rd May

REC'D
MAY 13 21

CIRCULATION

SUBJECT

NATIVE LABOUR IN E.A.

Submits obsons on policy of

Grindle.

H. Lambert.

H. Wood. 17/5/21

G. Fisher.

Wood

Churchill.

Previous Paper

23554

MINUTES

W.D. Attorney

To read
H. Wood

D. Leys is a m.o., who always gave us a good deal of trouble one way or another. He has served in a good many parts of E. Africa, & for that reason, in spite of his pro-native fanaticism (which I think is a fair description) is with me convinced that most of the anti-slavery people.

I suggest that we send him a copy of the confidentially to Mr. Morrison, the Native Comm. Kenya, who is now on leave (I have knowledge of...)

W.D.
20/5/21

Subsequent Paper

23733

MINUTES.

MINUTES NOT TO BE WRITTEN
ON THIS SIDE.

this is far greater
 than (St. Louis) - work
 has to be good enough
 to proceed as with
 his account. It is in
 still on full pay pending
 settlement - & so there
 can be no objⁿ to this
 procedure, as if he
 was no longer a Part
 official to advise
 the Gov^t] all

11. 5. 21

I agree he should
 make free use of the
 Government's advice in
 this matter. He will
 willingly give it.

11. 5. 21

A. J. D.
 17/2/21

As proposed. I have this letter
 to the Director's Office which they
 must have.

11. 5. 21

matters is far greater
 than (P. Keys) - work
 has to be good enough
 to furnish as with
 his income. It is in
 itself on full pay pending
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 can be no objⁿ to this
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 was no longer a Part
 official to advise
 the [at] and

11. 1. 21

I agree - he should
 make full use of the
 Government's advice in
 this matter - & he will
 willingly give us

(C. S. 21)

H. J. H.
 17/12/21

As before - I would like to
 see his work - as we can try
 to help.

23. 1. 21

on Dr. Norman Leys.

Brailsford,

Nr. Derby.

3rd May, 1921.

Dear Berice Turner,

There are some questions impossible to investigate properly in a Committee with members of very different types. I believe the thing to do is to circulate memoranda on them.

One of these questions is forced labour in Africa. I would like to explain why I think the facts are incapable of more than one interpretation.

There is no such problem, I believe in British West Africa. That in itself is significant. Indeed the dilemma, what are you to do when necessary work (scavenging or transport for instance) would be left undone if compulsion were forbid den, is no real dilemma. The important question to be answered first is, how are these men employed ^{and} in other countries do the necessary work?

There are two kinds of ways in which the natives of West Africa employ themselves. Most of them for the whole or part of each year earn wages from Europeans. There are figures for the whole area. But the differential tax in Nyasaland proves that over nine tenths in that Protectorate qualify for the lower rate by engaging in some occupation specially approved by the Government, most of them in wage earning. If I said that three quarters of the able bodied males in Eastern Africa worked for wages for the whole or part of each year I would more likely be under than over the mark.

Second, of course, natives grow their own food.

In

In every tribe some part of the annual round of duties is done by men. Where, as is usual, 25 per cent to 75 per cent of them at a time are away from home wage earning, the rest have to work harder or food runs short. It runs short even now. Only in rarely perfect seasons does the average village in Eastern Africa get enough to eat in their spring season. Incidentally nothing is ever done to improve seed or introduce simple machinery in the so called reserves.

Now most natives do some of both kinds of work. Not one in a hundred does neither. There are no unemployed. And there are no idle rich except among the elderly. The statement may excite surprise. That is because Europeans in the tropics use the word work as synonymous with wage earning. The unstated middle term of the syllogism is that food growing is so easy and pleasant as to be amusing or exhilarating rather than exhausting. No body who has tried it thinks so. The planters of course in Africa are not tillers of the soil, with very few exceptions. I don't mean they are idle, though many are, just as many large farmers in England are. Their real work is a manager's work. Not even the few who do use a plough are independent of hired Africans. The average European "on the land" in Eastern Africa runs an agricultural factory with from ten to two thousand or more hands upon it.

It is the policy of the various governments to induce the natives to leave home to work for Europeans. Various means are used. In one Protectorate the stay at home pays double tax. Even that device now no longer induces natives to offer themselves in

flax means young children, some day to be weaking
shiftless pilfering labourers. It also means that many
will leave home for wage earning because food is short
at home.

... is not compulsory
is the great Congress ... both European and
native, refusal to follow ... instructions is
sedition, that is with ... consequences ...
factors, the other ... of the natives ...
influence ... and the adoption by
... political ... as well as political
... the hundred. But
... and pass law
... a plantation
... a day for a prison
... a day.

... background of the
... cited, necessary
... must be used.
... to be considered. During
... description all over
... almost everywhere)
... (at a guess) of able
... one time from home in
the average village ... 70-75 cent 50 per cent and
90 per cent. The whole machinery of industry at the
village ran down. Houses, no ally rebuilt about every
6 or 8 years had to last some. Though alive with
vermin - these the great carrier of infective diseases.
Food was so short that ... Large areas
were literally devastated by war. ... life was

Public
Leprosy
1901

1901



enormous - there are no figures but the Kenya Government admitted 23,000 deaths among its unarmed porters. When peace came every man was needed in the villages to build and to hoe. Just then however homes for several thousand heroes were offered by Government in Eastern Africa. A grateful country gave them, or sold them at under market price, land that neither by treaty nor by occasion of conquest was theirs to give. There were supposed to be 2,000 soldier settlers (ex-officers) in Kenya Colony; actually many never settled on their 320 or 640 area "homesteads". Not a penny do one of these men earn except by means of African's muscles.

Now compulsion (by process of law) for "essential public works or services" always exempts those who have already earned wages during the year. (Proof of two months "work" is necessary for exemption in Kenya Colony. In an answer to a question in Parliament it was stated that proof of having worked at home would also be ground for exemption. Nobody of African experience would have given so preposterous an answer. How is such work to be proved? And anyhow these idlers in native villages are as fictitious ostriches with heads in sand, lions retreating before the human gaze and other fabulous monsters. We may be quite certain that the promise to exempt the peasant cultivator will not be kept. He is the very man who is wanted for plantation and railway). What kind of men are public servants likely to get for "essential works and services" by gleaning among the leavings of voluntary and semi voluntary labour? Obviously either the

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the former. No power on earth has been discovered that will produce work of any value out of a certain type of African against his will. Most of these forced men will work after a fashion of course, but average efficiency will be very low. Hence the unpromising opposition to compulsion by law of the Director of Public Works in Kenya Colony, who is alone in that opposition in Council and among higher officials. The planters are for that reason determined to be rid of him and he is sure to be served as the late Colonial Secretary was, who was forced to resign in spite of his quieter and more moderate attitude.

When therefore I say that forced labour is always and everywhere unwise and injurious in Africa it is because in reality it is no more than a bye product of a system founded on prostitution of political power to serve the profit of aliens. Regarded in vacuo it is logically justifiable. Casuistry has no rightful place in African politics. In real African life resort to legal compulsion proves the prevalence of unjust and unwise abuse of Government influence over what should be a free labour market.

Someone on our Committee suggested that my remedy of compelling the payment of extra wages to forced labourers would eventually raise the general wage rate. I admit that in existing circumstances it would. The reason of course is that the factor of compulsion operates throughout the whole system. Where land in England is bought under compulsion, the fact that the seller is given a higher than market rate for his land does not raise the value of neighbouring land. It might of course if there was no free market in land. And that is the true situation of labour in Eastern Africa. Rates

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50

Rates of wages, for example, scarcely vary with variations either in demand for labour or in prices of commodities. Three quarters of the wage earners in Africa from Zambesi to Nile are paid three to five pence a day - Why? Why not two pence? Why not a shilling? It is some answer to say that the local rate has some relation to the amount of poll tax. Prices of everything from Europe are over twice what they were, wages have risen about 25 per cent, solely because the tax has risen by about as much - Wages in fact are fixed by Governments in concert with planters. That is the last rivet in the iron band of compulsion. I have no business to inflict on you an analysis of production costs on plantations. But none can doubt that men at fourpence a day are wastefully used. The rate in fact makes it cheaper than slave labour since costs of replacement are saved.

One great source of loss in efficiency is of course disease. The two chief diseases are malaria and ankylostomiasis, infection by a blood sucking intestinal worm. The first is air carried and so the means of protection is mosquito netting. The other is picked up by walking with bare feet over infected ground. If everybody slept under nets, malaria in most places would die out, and if everybody was well shod, ankylostomiasis would die out completely everywhere. How can labourers buy nets and boots for themselves and their families on four pence a day? These it may be said are sentimental considerations, irrelevant to economic fact. If industry cannot support a higher standard of health, then no humanitarian effort can ensure

ensure

ensure it. Let us then examine the purely economic problem as a whole. Some thousands of square miles in Eastern Africa have been alienated to Europeans. There was plenty of room for them. But they do not fill it. All they do is to divert labour from Village to plantation. They add nothing to the sum except by an all too scanty than that I assert that if every native in Eastern Africa was or machinery. More good mine months in every year in labour for Europeans the land already alienated would still be insufficiently developed. From the streets of Nairobi you can see mile upon mile of fertile land with adequate rainfall without a hut or an upturned sod. "Scandalous", say the big game hunter and the globe trotter. "Turn out the idle scamps from the villages? For ten years at least Governments have done all they can to turn them out, short of the power given by owning their persons. What has the result been?

The Belgian Commission that reported last year estimates that since slavery was abolished the population of tropical Africa has halved. Where in Belgian Congo, exploitation was most rapid it has halved in thirty years. In Kenya Colony official estimates show a fall from about four and a half millions to just over three millions in thirty years. The more exact figures of recent years prove that the rate is accelerating. True, the fall, as the Belgian Commission says, has a variety of causes, many of them interrelated. Polygamy is one. Disease is a greater but never an independent cause. With rare honesty the Commission laid its finger on what is everywhere the predominant cause, exploitation for profit by alien landowners.

A society has been founded with a Bureau in Paris, to win Africa for the Africans. At its head is

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M. Burghart du Bois

territory most of the people who matter both in official and in industrial life, are English. All the higher officials in Tanganyika territory were trained in neighbouring protectorates, and took part in the fatal beginnings of the new policy though I am sure they would disapprove of the new policy, though I am sure they would disapprove of its latest odious developments as indeed in private do many of the administrative rank and file. But one of the facts that make the situation of East Africa politics unique is that there is nothing to stop the gathering momentum of a bad policy except disaster. In a free country public opinion would be at the least a brake at the most a new corrective force. In Africa private wealth is inalienable. As one form of pressure fails another is demanded. And Governments find no ground of principle on which to refuse, while each year the power of wealth is more strongly entrenched in law, and on legislatures,

The only remedy is to deal with forced labour as with slavery, of which indeed it is one of the endless varieties in form it can assume to sweep it away, to make it plain to every African that whether he lives and works at home or away from home whether he persuades an employer to pay him five shillings a day or is persuaded to work for a penny a day are matters with which no public servant has any concern. I freely admit that two thirds of the labourers will promptly go home when they hear that news. But it is just as certain that labourers would be forthcoming for "essential works and services". True, they would ask for thus fourpence a day. But then they would earn, when really free, several times as much.

P.S.

Public announcements was made in the Malindi papers in

31

In February that the Government would do all it could
to co-operate with planters in reducing standard
wages.

From Dr. Norman Leys.

copy

to Curry file

RSS
Latham in F.H.

Brailsford,

Mr. Derby.

3rd May, 1921.

Dear Gordon Turner,

There are some questions impossible to investigate properly in a Committee with members of very different types. I believe the thing to do is to circulate memoranda on them.

One of these questions is forced labour in Africa. I would like to explain why I think the facts are incapable of more than one interpretation.

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There are two kinds of ways in which the natives of West Africa employ themselves. Most of them for the whole or part of each year earn wages from Europeans. There are figures for the whole area. But the differential tax in Nyasaland proves that over nine tenths in that Protectorate qualify for the lower rate of engaging in some occupation specially approved by the Government, most of them in wage earning. If I said that three quarters of the able bodied males in Eastern Africa worked for wages for the whole or part of each year I would more likely be under than over the mark.

Second, of course, natives grow their own food. In every tribe some part of the annual round of duties is done by men. Where, as is usual, 25 per cent to 75 per cent of them at a time are away from home at wages, the rest have to work harder or food runs short. It runs short even now. Only in rarely perfect seasons does the average village in Eastern Africa get enough to eat in their spring season. Incidentally nothing is ever done to improve seed or introduce simple machinery in the so called reserves.

Now most natives do some of both kinds of work. Not one in a hundred does neither. There are no unemployed. And there are no idle rich except among the elderly. The statement may excite surprise. That is because Europeans in the tropics use the word work as synonymous with wage earning. The unstated middle term of the syllogism is that food growing is so easy and pleasant as to be amusing or exhilarating rather than exhausting. No body who has tried it thinks so. The planters of course in Africa are not tillers of the soil, with very few exceptions. I don't mean they are idle, though many are, just as many large farmers in England are. Their real work is a manager's work. Not even

6 - 8 years, had to last somehow, though alive with vermin - less the great carriers of infective diseases. Food was so short that seed corn was eaten. Large areas were literally devastated by war. Loss of life was enormous - there are no figures but the Kenya Government admitted 23,000 deaths among its unarmed porters. When peace came every man was needed in the villages to build and to hoe. Just then however homes for several thousand heroes were offered by Government in Eastern Africa. A grateful country gave them, or sold them at under market price, land that neither by treaty nor by session nor by conquest was theirs to give. There were supposed to be 2,000 jobs for settlers (ex-officers) in Kenya Colony; actually never settled on their 320 or 310 acre "homesteads". Not a penny do one of these men earn except by means of African's muscles.

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Someone on our Committee suggested that the remedy of compelling the payment of extra wages to forced labourers would eventually raise the general wage rate. I admit

is one. Disfranchisement is a greater, but never an independent cause. With rare honesty the Commission has put its finger on what is everywhere the same cause: the spoliation for profit by alien landowners.

A socialist bureau in Paris, to win Africa for the continent, is H. Burghart du Bois, a man of character, and of a higher educational degree. He has advocated negroes who are attached to the continent. Negroes are being laid for a new liberation campaign, but not to Africans, not to Europeans and to every African. The twentieth century will find the African no longer the patient doer of drudgery he has been. As things are, the field is ripe for some of these devastating uprisings that have before them a mass suddenly become conscious of injustice. There is only one safeguard, the simpler kind of liberty. The only sound criticism of the programme for the Africans is that there are not enough of them to use all the continent. Suppose that centuries of spoliation have half emptied the continent of human creatures? - then it may be right to give such land as is equitable to take to men from overflowing countries like India, but why not leave Africans not only land but also their own but leave them also free to use it, free to refuse to be helots for the profit of conquerors.

The alleged necessity of forced labour in Eastern Africa springs from the fundamental wrong and folly of imagining that Africa can be turned into passive instruments for the production of wealth for aliens. In no circumstances is forced labour either politically wise or economically valuable.

I have written with no special reference to Tanganyika territory. Eastern Africa is by every test except those of our introducing a single country, inhabited by a single race. And it is governed from a single source in Downing Street. Even in Portuguese territory most of the people and latter both in official and in industrial life, are English. All the higher officials in Tanganyika territory were trained in neighbouring protectorates, and took part in the fatal beginnings of the new policy though I am sure they would disapprove of its latest odious developments, as indeed in private do most of the administrative rank and file. But one of the facts that make the situation of East Africa politics unique is that there is nothing to stop the gathering momentum of a bad policy except disaster. In a free country public opinion would be at the least a brake, at the most a new corrective force. In Africa private wealth is insatiable. As one form of pressure fails another is demanded. And Governments find no ground of principle on which to refuse, while, each year the power of wealth is more strongly entrenched in law, and on legislation.

The only remedy is to deal with forced labour as with slavery, of which indeed it is one of the endless varieties in form it can assume, to sweep it away, to make it plain to every African that whether he lives and works at home or away from home, whether he persuades an employer to pay him five shillings

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R.S. Public announcement was made in the Nairobi papers in February that the Government would do all it could to co-operate with planters in reducing standard wages.

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E. C. Public announcement was made in the Nairobi papers in February that the Government would do all it could to co-operate with planters in re-fixing standard wages.

23713/21 E.A.

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Confidential

27 May 1921

Sir,

DRAFT.

So

I am to transmit to you ^{written} the enclosed copy of a memorandum

by Dr Norman Leys ~~on the~~ ^{Chair}

~~has been brought to the notice of this~~

Dept., on the subject of the policy as

regards Native Labour in E.A., which

^{recently} has been brought to the notice of this

Dept.,

(2) Mr Churchill will be glad if

you will be good enough to furnish

him with your observations ^{on}

on Dr Leys' statements.

(Signed) H. J. READ

~~Confidential~~
J. Ainsworth Esq. C.M.G.,
C.B.I., D.S.O., ~~C.B.E.~~
Bangalore Avenue
MINUTE.

Mr. Clark 24/5/21

Mr. Robinson

Mr.

Mr. Grindle.

Sir H. Lambert.

Sir H. Read.

Sir G. Fiddes.

Col. Amery.

Mr. Churchill.

5 days 5 days
23713/21

Dr. Dreyfus

I am sorry that it has proved impossible to find any record of a letter from Dr. Dreyfus of 3 years ago or any other about that time. If we could state that fairly justice I am very sorry that Dr. Dreyfus should not 5 days to give the exact date of a letter & whether it was written from Africa and returned through a Governor.

Note on Dr. Dreyfus's Memorandum of



I have no serious quarrel with his views... Some passages - e.g. in the introduction (p. 7) - seem to show the bias of the author's point of view. He gives his facts in the light of his conclusions, but there is no serious misrepresentation. It would always be better to avoid, or regard as a mistake, that the natives have been found for them (quite as usual - probably for some - suitable land than they used when we came on the scene).

As regards para. 5, I should very much like to know how much of the 30% fall in native population is due to non-carrying activities or administration...
 While Dr. Dreyfus's conclusion is the usual one...

Let Dr. Dreyfus
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at its Court.

The passage on p. 10 which I have
 marked is extraordinary & more
 striking rhetoric. It says he was
 perfectly well that the 4th of a day
 he got free food, and any one who
 gets out even so little ^{more} than he had
 is surely worth something to the world.

G.A. 287/1

10th July 1921

Major Wood, I hope this will suit your
 purpose. If you wish to see it, you will, of
 course. Cut out whatever is unsuitable.
 If it interests you I would urge you to
 read the letter I wrote to the Secretary of
 State three years ago, as a attempt to
 interpret native opinion and desire in the
 whole field of contact between the two
 countries. I know that a copy of the letter
 was sent to East Africa.

Yours sincerely
Norman Myers

Before wise policy can be formulated, it is always necessary to see the relevant facts, clearly, exactly, and in their true proportions. They are these:-

1. Nearly twenty years ago, in a part of Africa then twice as thickly peopled as Ontario, five times more thickly than Quebec and sixteen times more thickly than Queensland, and containing a larger proportion of desert than any of these other countries, the authorities decided to give or sell a large area of land to Europeans.
2. The area so alienated is 8,000 square miles, includes a proportion of the total area of first class arable land in the country variously estimated at from 20 per cent to 40 per cent, and contains over two thirds of the arable land with a railway mileage.
3. Of the arable land in European ownership not one fiftieth is under cultivation. Cultivation is carried out by the labour of those whose homes are in the unalienated area, under the direction of Europeans. There are official estimates of the number of labourers for whose work there is demand under the existing system. That number would suffice for the development of no more than a fraction of the alienated area. For any adequate development an immensely larger number would be needed. That number bears no necessary relation to the number of natives in the country. If instead of there being three millions of them/

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them, there were thirty millions, or none at all, the number of labourers necessary for the adequate development of the alienated area would remain unaffected. The proportion of adult male Africans now employed by Europeans is not known exactly.

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4. The present market price of the land alienated to Europeans during the past twenty years is at least £4,600,000 of which the Government has received or is receiving a trivial proportion. The high value of land is due to the expectation that by some means or other the natives of the country will be induced to leave their homes to develop the alienated land in preference to the land still in native occupation, and that the standard wage will be kept at or near its present figure of threepence or fourpence a day.
5. In most recent years there has been a shortage of native food stuffs for several months before harvest. A cause of that shortage is the large proportion of able bodied males now working for Europeans instead of, as formerly, in their own villages. Further, there has been a large and rapid fall of the native population, officially estimated at 30 per cent in twenty years, but/

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but probably less. War and influenza do not explain it wholly. These have always happened; though of course the late war destroyed more native life than a generation of tribal warfare. Food shortage and the fact that the immense majority of wage earners either for the time are celibate or contract short temporary unions with women mostly infected with venereal disease are at least large contributory causes of the fall in the native population.

- 6. The economic results of land alienation and of its development by means of African wage earners have hitherto been greatly inferior to those obtained where, as in West Africa and to some extent in Uganda, Africans grow produce for sale and export on land which is either their own, or, being Crown land, which they are allowed to cultivate undisturbed.

That is an outline merely of the chief relevant historical and economic facts.

When the demand for labourers for private employers first became considerable in Kenya Colony the Government undertook a partial and temporary obligation to satisfy it. In these days the idea prevailed that if natives could once be got to work for wages they would learn to wish to, and the necessity to influence them would disappear. Also at that time, it was not/

not anticipated that so much land would be alienated, nor so rapidly as has happened. The belief that a little initial pressure would suffice proved mistaken. Nearly every year has seen it extend. Registration was carried out avowedly to bring the pressure to bear on every man. The facts that European employers increasingly depended upon the influence of Government with the natives, and that Government conceded its influence to persuade natives to leave home to work for wages as a rule grudgingly and with misgiving made it inevitable that employers should demand more and more vigorous action. An obligation originally intended to be partial and temporary became apparently a part of the Government's regular and fixed political scheme, not mainly by the deliberate wish of those in authority, though certain of them did so desire, but, the first step once taken, by the logic of its inevitable results.

The influence of Government with the natives of Kenya Colony, is, or at least was, nearly absolute. If an ordinary native ever distinguishes between the force of statute law and the force of such directions as he receives from an authorised agent of the Government, it is to give the greater authority to the latter. Breach of a law *hukm* brings a known measurable penalty. To refuse to follow directions transmitted from the head of the State by the person who thus represents a higher power than any law, is essentially sedition. That fact/

fact springs of necessity from the nature of African society. Education and civilisation will in time destroy its basis. And to attempt to overcome increasing unwillingness by the use of that personal and unlimited authority only hastens its dissolution, while at the same time the growth of loyalty to limited and impersonal law is prevented.

It is now some ten years since practically every native engaged in agriculture in Kenya Colony became aware that it is the wish of the Government that he should leave home to work for Europeans. Those who issued the direction, to satisfy the demands of European employers, no doubt intended it as mere advice. Those who receive it, receive it as a command, ^{A command} that it would be not wrong, indeed, to evade, by falsehood or by desertion, but impossible to refuse or reject. The method of transmission was, and is, through magistrates, who in turn give it out to chiefs and headmen, who in turn send their retainers to the people. Every year sees the injunctions repeated, the directions made more emphatic, the numbers requisitioned by the chiefs increased.

To say that compulsion is used is not rendered untrue by the fact that compulsion was not intended. What makes the denial of its existence possible is the fact that it is exercised out of sight, by men with no law to guide them, chiefs no longer as formerly representative of and responsible to their people/

people but the salaried agents of the Government, responsible to the Government for getting the people to carry out unpopular orders.

When the system was first introduced one never heard the argument that Africans are so idle that compulsion is necessary to make them industrious. The allegation, now common, is ludicrously untrue. Their industry and docility have made them the slaves of the rest of the world. To work as hard as a nigger is a proverb that has always been true, whenever and wherever Africans have either been slaves or freemen. But it is not true when they are half slave and half free. That wage earners in East Africa are often shirkers, that they often desert, that paid fourpence a day their work is often not worth twopence a day, these are unfortunately true allegations. They prove merely that Africans are human, and work badly when they work unwillingly, and for wages less than they would get if they were wholly free to bargain.

There is indeed in some tribes a class of young men who have certain traditional privileges that have survived the reasons for their existence. The standing army in the tribe, they yet had, and have many civil duties, all the breaking up of soil for planting, most of the house building, much of the crop protecting. (See p. 207 of the Native Labour Commission Report, 1912-1913). In diminished numbers, in certain tribes they/

they still form retinues for chiefs. Unfortunately the very system that is held to be justified by their vices has perpetuated their existence as a class. It is they who are the instruments of chiefs and elders for rounding up those who do not wish to leave home. They often enrich themselves, both by bribes from those whom they spare, and by theft from those whose property, when absent earning wages, is guarded only by women and old men. If the chiefs were not expected to supply labour, the opportunities for such spoil would not exist, and, deprived of that illicit source of income, these former warriors would be compelled to find honest means of support. Under the existing system it is the weakest and poorest who are constantly being harried by chiefs and their men. There is some plausibility in the suggestion that the remains of the warrior class should by some means be forced to be more industrious. There is a larger number of young men, who do less work than these Kikuyu warriors, in Europe. Yet no one demands that Piccadilly and the Riviera should be scoured in winter and the Thames and golf-links in summer to draft off the idlers to work in coal pits and factories for the profit of others.

At the moment there is a surplus of wage-earners in Kenya Colony, due partly to increased taxation, but mainly to the world wide depression in trade. Employers are taking the opportunity to reduce/

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reduce wages, to a figure that leaves their purchasing power greatly less than in 1914. The existence of the surplus offers Government also a unique opportunity. There will never again be so favourable a moment for Government to discard for ever the policy of using its influence to divert industry from the homes of the people to the alienated land. In other years the change ^{most} would with far more opposition and would cause much undeserved injury to innocent people. But it would be easy now for the Government to announce, both to Africans and to Europeans, that the help formerly given to private employers in persuading natives to work for them was avowedly provisional, to claim, with some justification, that by this time every native has been taught the advantages that wage earning affords, and to lay down, as a fixed principle subject to no modification, that henceforward no agent of the Government would be permitted to use his position to influence the choice of natives between supporting themselves by labour in their own homes and earning their living by work for Europeans.

Three subsidiary matters demand notice. It would be most unfair to leave it an open question whether magistrates and other government servants may continue to influence the choice of livelihood by natives. To do so would be to expose them most unjustly to pressure from interested persons, many of them, it must be remembered, in positions, official and other, which make/

make their demands very hard to refuse. When a few words from a junior magistrate, often uttered in former years, would provide a Legislative Councillor with the labourers he wishes, it would not be human for the one to refrain from asking her for the other to refrain from granting the request unless both Europeans and Africans knew it was forbidden to comply. And, apart from such an instance, it is plain, that to allow some requests to be complied with while others were rejected would make favouritism inevitable. There would of course be no such objection to magistrates addressing natives and chiefs on the subject of industry and other virtues. All that is necessary is to make it clear that no influence is sought over the power of choice between work at home and away from home.

No reference has been made to the question whether compulsory labour for public works and services is a necessity, for the reason that if all pressure to make natives work for private employers were abandoned, Government departments would have no difficulty in getting voluntary workers. It is a fact that compulsion is at present occasionally needed for work like street scavenging. In a perfectly free labour market these occasions would never arise.

The fact, however, must be faced that in a really free labour market wages would fluctuate in accordance with variations of/

of many kinds, prices, rainfall, season, etc. At present wages are fixed by Government departments and private employers in conjunction. Many employers are hesitating to reduce wages now, though such a step is obviously legitimate, because natives will argue when labour becomes short again, that wages ought to rise. There are some, indeed, who argue that superior inducements would not increase the supply of labour. In so far as that is true it proves that compulsion is the dominant factor in supplying the labour market. How far it counts no one can tell. It certainly is the main cause of desertion, and drags down the average level of efficiency. One hears it said that the world cannot afford to let the native of East Africa produce no more than seven shillings worth a head. The examples of West Africa and the Southern States of America show the superior results of liberty. And surely the point is rather that the world cannot afford to feed people who only produce fourpence worth of produce in a day. Doubled wages, in a wholly free wage market, might easily produce treble work. Greater earnings would ease the country's finances, increase its trade, make possible a cessation of the rapid fall in population that can only be checked by better and healthier conditions of living. The wage earner of the future will have

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his home, his family, his garden. But he will never get them unless he is free to refuse employment without them. Now a tenth of the wage earners in East Africa are given the minimum conditions of healthy existence. But it must be admitted that for some time, perhaps even a year or two, after the change of policy is introduced, things will be difficult. Postponement would only make them far more difficult. It will take time for natives to unlearn the habits taught by the existing system. The sooner he begins the better.

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