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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY  
FROM

A STUDY OF SOME ASPECTS OF  
THE POOR WHITE PROBLEM IN  
SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

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Research Essay presented in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in the  
Department of History, Rhodes University

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MAY, 1973.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Davenport, for his valuable advice and criticism in connection with this essay. I would also like to thank Mr. J.A. Steenkamp, formerly of Free State Archives for helping me locate information bearing on the subject of this essay.

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THE GENESIS OF THE POOR WHITE PROBLEM.CHAPTER 1.

The first instance of the poor white problem being dramatically brought to the attention of white South Africa was in 1893 when Rev. Andrew Murray issued an open letter on the subject which resulted in the convening of the first of many Dutch Reformed Church conferences on the problem. During the Colonial period following the South African War the poor white problem was the subject of no less than two commissions and three select committees, and in 1932 the Carnegie Commission published its five volume report on the problem. Indeed, the concern of white South Africa over the poor white problem was similar to the concern of the British over the unemployment problem in the 'twenties and 'thirties.

When it comes to defining the term 'poor white' one is strongly tempted to fall back on a 'definition' given in 1921 by Broadus Mitchell in a study of the cotton mills in the Deep South: "The term 'poor white' is not easily defined, although every Southerner knows pretty accurately what it means". 1) Indeed the photographs in Volumes II and III of the Carnegie Report of unshaven men with sunken eyes standing outside the type of dwellings not usually inhabited by White South Africans today tell more than any definition can. Some attempt at defining the term will, however, be made - largely by extrapolating from other definitions.

In 1906 a Cape select committee on labour settlements for indigent Whites reported:

"By the term 'Poor Whites' your Committee understands..... British subjects of European origin who are domiciled in this colony and who have been reduced to a condition of great indigence from which they are unable to raise themselves and their families without outside assistance". 2)

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1) Grosskopf, J.F.W. Rural Impoverishment and Rural

Exodus p. 19.

2) C.3 - '06 p.v.

In 1908 the Transvaal Indigency Commission reported:

"Most of the poor whites in South Africa are country men who have been forced off the land and live in wretched shanties on the outskirts of towns. The poor whites, therefore, though in the main they hail from the country districts, must be treated as part of the town population." 3)

In the same year an Orange River Colony Commission on the poor white question gave the following definition:

"..... persons of European descent being permanent residents of the O.R.C. for a period of not less than five years, and without trade or other specific means of earning a living and who are destitute or practically destitute and who require assistance to enable them to be self-supporting." 4)

The most comprehensive formal definition was given by the Carnegie Commission in 1932: "The term [Poor White Problem] is used to denote principally the economic and social retrogression of a considerable part of the white rural (or originally rural) population of our country." 5) The Commissioners went on to enumerate the more important types of poor whites. Firstly there were those living under more or less rural conditions, including persons

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3) T.G. 13-'08 p.116.

4) Poor Whites in the O.R.C. p.13.

5) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission p.v.

of nomadic type like the poor 'trekboere' of the North Western Cape, who still retained some pioneer forms of life; 'bywoners', agricultural labourers and shepherds in pastoral areas subject to droughts who moved about considerably; the 'bushveld' type in the Transvaal who lived largely under pioneer conditions, for whom hunting was still of economic importance and who were often weakened by malaria; the poor woodcutters in the George/Knysna/Tzitzikama regions; and small groups of indigents who lived in isolated, well-watered valleys "and whose mode of life is strongly influenced by group isolation." 6) Secondly, there were those who had left the farms including those who had moved to the 'dorpe' and become Village paupers; those who had moved to the more industrialised areas and were earning a living as unskilled or insufficiently trained workers; most of the people who were trying their luck on the alluvial diamond diggings; and those for whom employment had been found on settlements, relief works or the railways as manual labourers. 7) From all the above we can deduce that the poor whites were not only poor but had also lost their independence or ability to better their station without outside help. Thus a qualified carpenter who had fallen on hard times could not be classified as a poor white. It is important to note the obvious fact that the poor whites were white because, as the Carnegie Commission pointed out, the term 'poor white' could only have come into common usage in a country inhabited by an 'inferior' non-European population as well as by Europeans; the very term implied that whites should enjoy a higher standard of living than non-whites. 8) We should

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6) *ibid.* p.vi.

7) *ibid.* p.p.vi and vii.

8) *ibid.* p.p. xviii and xix.

note also that the 'residential requirement' for classification as a poor white as imposed by the Cape Select committee and the Orange River Colony Commission would exclude nomads and migrants to the diggings, types who were clearly poor whites on the basis of the 'occupational' definition given by the Carnegie Commission. To all this we should add the opinion of Prof. R.W. Wilcocks that "By far the greater majority of the poor whites are Afrikaans speaking." 9) There were, of course, English-speaking poor whites. In the Eastern Cape there were instances of descendants of the 1820 settlers being reduced to indigency by the same factors which reduced Dutch-speaking persons to indigency. This took place despite the fact that their circumstances were more favourable; they had the influence of towns like Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown in their immediate vicinity and their language and family ties kept them in close contact with economic activities outside agriculture. 10) Even in the late 1920's W.M. Macmillan found in the South Western Cape "a surprising number" of poor whites with English surnames who were descendants of runaway sailors and the likes who had drifted into these remote districts and had been absorbed into the Dutch-speaking population. 11) How many poor whites were there? In 1906 J.A.C. Graaff M.L.C. told a Cape Select Committee on the poor white problem that he would not be surprised if, including bywoners, there were 10,000 poor whites in the Cape Colony. 12) The white population of the Cape was 579,741 in 1906. 13)

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- 9) Wilcocks, R.W. The poor White. p.1.  
10) Grosskopf, J.F.W. p.p. 4 and 5.  
11) Macmillan, W.M. Complex South Africa. p.88.  
12) A. 10-'06, Minutes of Evidence, p.3.  
13) Statistical Register of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. p.3.

The Transvaal Indigency Commission (1906 - 08) gave no comprehensive poor white statistics and found it difficult to form any accurate estimate even of the number of urban poor whites. It was pointed out that the urban poor whites were found mainly in Johannesburg and Pretoria "though there were a few on the outskirts of any other town of any size." 14) The Deputy Commissioner of Police put the pretoria number at 1,000 and Rev. Theron, D.R.C. Minister at Fordsburg, put the number in Vrededorp and neighbouring areas at 2,000. 15) In 1908 an O.R.C. Commission the poor white problem estimated that there were 860 adult male poor whites in the O.R.C. 16) In 1904 there were 41,014 adult males in the O.R.C. 17) Official central government poor white statistics were given by H.C. van Heerden, Minister of Agriculture, at a conference on the poor white problem convened by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1916 at Cradock:-

FAMILIES		PERSONS		18)
10,409	"doodarm"	39,021	"doodarm"	
16,605	"Minder arm"	67,497	"minder arm"	
<u>27,014</u>	Total	<u>106,518</u>	Total	

The total white population in 1911 was 1,276,242. 19) This would mean that Van Heerden placed the poor whites at about 1/12 of the total white population. These figures gained acceptance in official circles and we read in the Union Year Book for 1933/34 that

14) T.G. 13 - '08. p.117.

15) ibid. p.117.

16) Poor Whites in the O.R.C. p.1.

17) Thompson, I.N. The Unification of South Africa 1902-1910. p.235.

18) Botha, L.I.N. Die Maatskaplike Sorg van die N.G. Kerk in Suid-Afrika, 1928-53. p.159.

19) U.G. 32-12 p.8.

"for all practical purposes this still remains the basis of current estimates." 20) Van Heerden claimed that his statistics were accurate: " These figures are very reliable because they were obtained with the assistance of officials and church vestries." 21) Grosskopf has pointed out, however, that if anything this lessened the value of his statistics because it meant the diverse people had used their own different standards for classifying 'very poor' and 'poor'. 22) Indeed the difficulty with estimates of poor white statistics was that, because opinions varied as to what constituted a reasonable standard of living for a white, the subjective element always entered into such estimates.

What was probably the most scientific attempt to calculate the number of poor whites was made by the Carnegie Commission. Questionnaires were sent to almost half the Schools in the country and principals were asked to indicate how many children came from "very poor" families, i.e. families in urban areas who were supported largely by charity or families who subsisted in dire poverty on farms. Returns indicated that 17.5% of 49,434 families were "very poor". 23) Applying this percentage to the total white population as given in the 1931 Census, the Commissioners concluded that 300,000 out of 1,800,000 whites were "very poor". 24) The Commissioners were aware that this total included many who were not poor whites as such but they pointed out, on the other hand, that the

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20) Union Year Book No. 16 (1933/34) p.199.

21) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op. cit. p.22.

22) ibid. p.22.

23) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission p.vii.

24) ibid. p.vii.

statistics from the Schools were obtained before the effects of the depression were really noticeable. 25) The Carnegie Commissioners also went to work on the basis of the 1926 Census Report which indicated that there were nearly 58,000 white males over 15 falling into the following occupational categories: shepherds, foresters and woodmen, bywoners, labourers on the railways, labourers in general, unskilled industrial workers, transport riders and diggers. 26) Assuming that the ratio of these classes to the number of males over 15 gainfully occupied was the same in 1931 as in 1926 (12%) these groups numbered 63,000 in 1931 and this meant that they represented a population group of 220,000 plus - calculated on the basis of the ratio of males over 15 to the total white population. 27) The Commissioners admitted that there were no doubt some males in the above occupational categories who were not poor whites, but that there were undoubtedly poor whites who did not fall into the above categories - especially among the 100,000 plus males classified as 'farmers' in 1926. 28) It was not possible for the Carnegie Commissioners to follow up their suggestion about farmers as it was only in 1941 that the money incomes of white farming families were enumerated for census purposes. These figures as given in the fourth report of the Social and Economic Planning Council, while they do not include income in kind which was important to the lower income groups, are nevertheless significant as

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25) *ibid.* p.vii.

26) *ibid.* p.vii.

27) *ibid.* p.vii.

28) *ibid.* p.vii.

the economy was much healthier in 1941 than it had been in 1931.

Money Incomes per year : white farmers						29)
	-£50	£50-99	£100-149	£150-199	£200+	
Owners	6,705	9,434	7,264	5,666	25,929	
Tenants	6,161	6,316	3,651	2,102	4,954	
Bywoners	8,744	5,184	1,669	668	781	
Employees	1,684	2,214	1,071	459	794	
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Total	23,294	23,148	13,655	8,895	37,458	

It is difficult to deduce from these figures exactly how many farmers were poor whites in 1941 or 1931. Nevertheless it seems that if poor white farmers and their families were added to the  $\pm$  220,000 poor whites calculated on the basis of occupations the total would at least approach 300,000 - the number of poor whites calculated on the basis of questionnaires sent to School Principals. Thus two different statistical approaches indicated that roughly 1/6 of the white population in 1931 was 'very poor'.

On the surface, the figures above suggest that the number of poor whites increased greatly between 1906 and 1931. This, however, was probably not the case and the figures above are probably more indicative of improved methods of counting poor whites than any great increase in the number of poor whites.

Many white South African tended to look for scapegoats when considering the poor white problem and in this connection the capitalists, the Jews, the locusts and the droughts were often cited.

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29) U.G. 10 - '45 p.7.

Was it the fault of capitalism and the Hoggenheimers? Are we to blame progress rather than white South Africa for the failure of many of it's members to adapt to the changed conditions brought about by the opening up of the mines and the railways? The Carnegie Commissioners came dangerously close to answering both these questions in the affirmative when they wrote:

"The discovery of diamonds and gold, the capitalistic exploitation of the mines, the influx of immigrants with the modern business outlook, the rapid penetration of the railways into the interior - all this quickly forced the development of the country into new channels from about 1880, with a greatly increased pace after 1890. The older settled white population was faced with entirely changed conditions, under the direction mainly of English-speaking persons." 30)

These changed conditions, however, brought great advantages to white South Africa. The commencement of mining on a large scale created employment for transport riders; bywoners and failures of agriculture flocked into this field of employment. In 1886 when the Witwatersrand was opened up there were no railways to and in the Transvaal and explosives and mechanical equipment for the mines had to be brought to the Transvaal by Ox Wagon. Furthermore, the advent of

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30) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission. p.viii.

a mining population created a market such as had not existed before for agricultural produce. There was also a sudden influx of money into areas where minerals were discovered as farmers were paid large sums in option money (a consideration paid to a landowner for the sole right to buy his land or mining rights at a fixed price). The Transvaal Indigency Commission pointed out that the opening up of the Cape line in 1892 and the Natal and Delagoa Bay lines in 1894 threw most of the transport riders out of work. 31)

On the other hand, the railways, like the mines, represented a large field of employment. As it happened, however, the failures of agriculture and redundant transport riders did not always take advantage of these employment opportunities for reasons which will be examined at the end of this chapter.

To what extent was the poor white problem a result of droughts? In 1923 the Drought Investigation Commission noted a widespread tendency among farmers to believe, not only that the annual rainfall had diminished, but also that the 'good old fashioned' gentle soaking rains were less common than had previously been the case. 32) The Commissioners, however, were unable to trace "any upward or downward tendency in the mean annual rainfall" during "recent times". 33)

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31) T.G. 13 - '08 p.10.

32) U.G. 49 - '23 p.5.

33) *ibid.* p.5.

They went on to report that drought losses could be fully explained without presuming a decrease in the mean annual rainfall, for while the value of a rainfall depended on it's volume and intensity, it also depended on the nature and the gradient of the area on which it fell. 34) Much evidence had been laid before the Commission to suggest that drought losses, especially those following the 1919 drought, were due to the diminished capacity of the soil to hold rainfall, and this, in turn, was due to bad veld management and kraaling, which had destroyed the soil's protecting vegetal cover. 35) Thus Malherbe wrote that drought losses had been "greatly aggravated by careless methods of farming during the last seventy-five years. Areas which were formerly verdant are now denuded of the topsoil, and rain when it does fall, goes hurtling down into thirty feet dongas which were formerly merely the tracks of sheep to and fro from the kraal". 36)

Turning now from factors which can be largely discounted as causes of the poor white problem to the actual causes, we can begin with one factor which was emphasised by all the poor white commissions and select committees in the colonial period as well as by the Carnegie Commission, namely want of proper education. Protestantism was the parent of education in South Africa from the time that it was transplanted

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34) *ibid.* p.5.

35) *ibid.* p.5.

36) Malherbe, E.G. Education and the Poor White p. 22

by white settlement in 1652 as the Protestant doctrine of Salvation by Faith meant that the individual was obliged to learn to read so that he could find his faith in the Bible. 37) Thus, even among the trekboere of the 18th Century and early 19th Century and among the Voortrekkers there was a high rate of basic literacy. The education of the trekboer and Voortrekker child was, however, usually in the hands of itinerant pedagogues of whom Malherbe has written: "More often than not there were sailors, soldiers and other individuals of doubtful character who by virtue of a slight acquaintance with reading and writing managed to make a scanty livelihood by moving from place to place as teachers. They varied the tedium of the schoolroom..... by occasionally lending a hand at the plough under the supervision of the more experienced Hottentot." 38) Furthermore, because this education was religious it was conservative and static; and its conservatism was reinforced by the conservatism of the people themselves. One farmer when engaging a teacher for his children stipulated that he did not wish them to be taught "aardrykskunde, en die wêreld se draai en die soort goed". 39) In the more isolated areas this sort of education persisted even into the early 20th Century. 40) State education was started in the Cape in 1839

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37) Malherbe, E.G. Education and the Poor White. p.22.

38) *ibid.* p.15.

39) *ibid.* p.16

40) *ibid.* p.16

and by 1877 it had been started in the other colonies and states. 41) In the Cape the tendency towards Anglicised education was an obstacle to the attempts at promoting state education in the rural areas. 42) It was not, however only in the Cape that problems of this sort were encountered. In the Transvaal before the South African War education was largely in the hands of Hollanders and in the O.F.S. the educational system had Scottish tendencies from the very beginning. The fact that in the Republics education was conducted in Dutch did not help us. Dutch was almost as foreign to the Afrikaner as English. When one considers that it was only in 1925, when it became an official language, that Afrikaans officially supplanted Dutch as a medium of instruction in Schools, one realised why so many Afrikaners saw education as something exotic with no bearing on their daily life or needs. In addition to the above State Education tended to be bookish. Although the Cape Government established industrial schools for Natives and Coloureds as early as 1854, it was only in the 1890's that such Schools were established for whites. 43) There was, however, a certain stigma attached to these schools which made parents reluctant to send their children to them; the application of the Childrens' Protection Act associated these schools with criminal tendencies and mental deficiency. 44)

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41) *ibid.* p. 42.

42) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission p.viii.

43) *ibid.* p.ix.

44) *ibid.* p. ix.

Not only in the case of industrial schools was the purpose of education mistaken by many parents, but also in the case of education for girls. Parents often saw education of girls as nothing more than piano playing and fancy sewing, and in such circumstances, the benefits of education were often destroyed by bad home influence. 45) There were also cases of parents failing to appreciate the value of education at all. Rev. Andrew Murray of Rustenburg told the Transvaal Indigency Commission:-

"Very many parents wish to be paid for sending their children to school. This seems strange but it is a fact. Not long ago I heard from an Inspector of a man who was getting so much for transport of children to school and the parents said to him "You must give me half of what you get for transport because I give you my child for transport to school". 46)

The Carnegie Commissioners interviewed a digger at Lichtenburg who was bemoaning his bitter lot and the destitution of his family. They suggested to him that he should have his son, who was eleven, educated so that he could pass matric and enter the

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45) T.G. 13-'08 p.55.

46) *ibid.* p.55.

civil service. On being told that his son's starting salary in the service would be about £9 per month, he laughed and said it was pointless to study for five years to earn such a sum when in a single day one might find a diamond worth £400. 47)

The effects of the above attitudes towards education are reflected in School attendance figures. In 1877 the following percentages of white children between the ages of 7 and 14 were at school - Natal 60%, Cape 49%, O.F.S. 12%, Transvaal 8% and round about 1891 the average school life of a white Transvaal child actually at school was about 2 years. 48) Indeed in 1896 J.W. Sauer pointed out in the Cape House of Assembly that there were more non-white children than white children at School in the Cape. 49)

What were the effects of this education, or rather lack of education? The bad farming methods which we have already noted in connection with the effects of drought were undoubtedly one effect. Closely bound up with this was widespread ignorance among farmers. For instance when the Rinderpest struck the Transvaal in 1896 a certain Mr. du Preez upheld as a cure a solution of tobacco, paraffin oil, resin and podaphyllin (wild mandrake root). When President Kruger endorsed this remedy the chemists sold out of podaphyllin but the cattle still died of Rinderpest. 50)

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47) Albertyn, J.R., Rothmann, M.E. et al. The Poor White and Society p.p. 41 and 42.

48) Malherbe, E.G. op. cit. p.42.

49) Debates in the House of Assembly, 1896 p.400.

50) Burman, J. Disaster Struck South Africa p.70.

A man from Belfast (Transvaal) claimed that snake venom was the cure, but unfortunately the cattle he treated died before the cure could take effect. 51) Many farmers tabooed skilled veterinary assistance and regarded the Rinderpest as a visitation from Providence, not to be interfered with. 52) (Two further examples of farmers' ignorance - the ideas of two Cape farmers on the origin of scab - are given in an appendix to this essay.)

Another effect of want of education was the inability of men who had failed as farmers to find incrative employment outside agriculture, or employment at all. Lack of acquaintance with English, the language of commerce, was one of the hindrances. Malherbe must have had considerations such as these in mind when he wrote ".....education proved insufficient as a prophylaxis against economic deterioration during a period of difficult adaptation". 53)

At the time of the Carnegie Commission's investigations there were 2,760 school children at Lichtenburg, a town populated mainly by alluvial diamond diggers. Only 9 of these children were in high school and only 17 in trade schools. 54) A vicious circle was operative : poor whitism was both a result and a cause of lack of education.

The second important factor making for poor whitism was the operation of the Roman Dutch law of inheritance.

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51) *ibid.* p.70.

52) Beak, G.B. The Aftermath of War. p.95.

53) Malherbe, E.G. *op.cit.* p.13.

54) Albertyn, J.R. Rothmann, M.E. et al. *op.cit.* p.42.

This was reinforced by ideas among the family population, especially the Dutch/Afrikaans speaking sector, on the ownership and transmission of land. The Roman Dutch law of inheritance applied in Natal till 1863, in the Cape till 1874, in the Free State till 1901 and in the Transvaal till 1902. 55) It provided that every child was entitled to a legitimate portion of his father's estate. The legitimate portion varied with the number of children, but no matter how many children there were, each was entitled to a portion of the estate. Thus a farmer who had little or no movable property with which to endow his heirs, usually had no choice but to divide up his farm amongst them, whether the portions were sufficient to support a family or not.

Reinforcing the operation of the Roman Dutch law of inheritance, were attitudes towards the ownership of land. The Great Trek, caused partly by British attempts to abolish the 'leeningsplaas' system, resulted in the setting up of Republics where the Government saw it as it's duty to provide every burger with a farm. Indeed, up to 1879 every Transvaal burger was entitled to two farms, 56) one in the highveld and one in the Lowveld, and the average size of these farms was about 7,770 acres. 57) After the great trek there was, in the Cape, a similar tendency towards possession of large tracts of land as the Great Trek depopulated large areas of the Cape, leaving room for expansion for those who remained behind. Land gradually became to be seen as an end

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55) de Kiewiet, C.W. A History of South Africa, Social and Economic. p.191.

56) T.G. 13-'08 p.65.

57) ibid. p.8.

in itself and even after the law was changed to allow freedom of bequest, subdivision still persisted.

Because land was limited, subdivision began to have bad effects round about the 1880's. The Transvaal Indigency Commission heard of a case in the Cape where a single heir was entitled to  $\frac{296,887,007}{4,705,511,284,760}$  of a farm of 2,572 morgen and another heir was entitled to  $\frac{1}{48,141}$  of the same farm. 58) Such an inheritance was, for many, a sure road to poor whitism. The Master of the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony told the Transvaal Indigency Commission of a case where a property "was bequeathed so that each child was to get so much land, so many orange trees, and a corner of this and a corner of that..... Well, to this day there is simply a colony of poor whites there. They increase and cannot exist on the property." 59) (An example of this type of subdivision is given in an appendix to this essay.) Grosskopf cites a case which illustrates not only the possible effects of subdivision but also the mentality which was often behind it. At Marico the Carnegie Commission interviewed an old man who owned 26 morgen of land, portions of which were arable in good seasons. He had ten children and over fifty grandchildren and he intended to divide his farm equally among his children. Already four married children and their families were living on the property with him. On being asked what ten heirs and their families were going to do on such a small piece of land he answered "..... at any rate each of them will have his own spot to settle on". This man had been

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58) *ibid.* p.66.

59) *ibid.* p.66.

a bywoner till 1895 when he had suffered the traumatic experience of being evicted. This induced him to buy his own property and accounted for his desire to ensure that each of his children had a "sitplekkie". Grosskopf pointed out that the expression "sitplekkie" was often heard. 60)

The alternative to subdivision, within the framework of the Roman Dutch Law of inheritance, was collective or undivided ownership of land. This form of ownership was encouraged when a testator left shares insted of portions, especially if the cost of division and transfer was out of proportion to the value of the shares. The effects of this sort of ownership were summed up by the Transvaal Indigency Commission:

"The characteristic sight of a large number of persons, each living on a tiny patch of badly cultivated ground along the banks of a spruit, incapable of common effort, debarred by the terms of their title from raising capital, and unable to relieve congestion owing to their unfitness for employment in any capacity elsewhere, is one of the worst and most hopeless features of the Indigency Problem." 61)

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60) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op. cit. p.121.  
61) T.G. 13-'08 p.71.

Thus, by the 1890's the economic footing of a large section of the farming population was so precarious that it only needed some catastrophe like an outbreak of cattle disease or a war to force many farmers off the land or into the bywoner class, or to force bywoners off the land altogether.

In 1896/97 South Africa was struck by the Rinderpest. Of the 1,639,435 cattle in the Cape, 575,864 died. 62) Estimates put the Free State losses at between 45,000 and 60,000. 63) In the South African Republic, in the Zeerust area alone 35,000 cattle died. 64) It is from 1897 onwards that one encounters in Government documents statements such as the following, made by C.J. Keyser before the Resident J.P. at Bothaville in an effort to obtain State aid for C.P. du Plessis who was a bywoner on his farm: "Zijn vader is een behoeftige man. Hij (vader van C.P. du Plessis) heeft maar een os overgehouden van die Runderpest en is bijwoner by mij". 65) In 1897 there were, in the Free State about 2,400 male burgers over 18 who could not afford their own rifles and had to be supplied with them by the state. 66) From about this time dates the rapid growth of Vrededorp, Donkieskamp and other congregations of poor whites on the outskirts of Transvaal towns. It is significant that of the  $\pm$  2,400 "behoeftige burgers" of the Free State who could not afford their own guns, more than half came from the towns. 67)

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62) Burman, J. op.cit. p.79.

63) ibid. p.79.

64) ibid. p.79.

65) Goewerment Sekretaris archive group, R.1620/1897. (Free State Archives Depot)

66) Goewerment Sekretaris archive group, R518/1897. (Free State Archives Depot).

67) Goewerment Sekretaris archive group, R518/1897. (Free State Archives Depot).

Two years after the Rinderpest came the South African War. Farm-burning and impoverishment caused by the war forced more farmers off the land and placed others in a situation where they could not take their former bywoners back. The situation was aggravated by East Coast fever, droughts and locusts which followed closely on the war. In both the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony the Colonial Governments started Relief Works and Burger Land Settlements in an effort to alleviate the situation, but in most cases these were abandoned as unsuccessful after about two years.

The Transvaal Indigency Commission referred to the 10,000 people who were left in the Refugee Camps at the end of the war with

"little education and no training which could fit them for the struggle for employment in the ordinary competitive conditions of industrial life. They had been accustomed from their earliest days to an easy life on a pastoral farm, and they were quite unsuited in most cases for anything else. Yet they could not return to the land." 68)

We have already considered the inadequate education of such people and we have also examined the factors preventing them from returning to the land. We can now turn to an examination of an important factor which disqualified many such people from employment outside farming - widespread prejudice against manual labour.

Before the emancipation of the slaves in 1834 much of the manual labour which had to be done in South Africa was done by slaves and the white men were, as J.H. Hofmeyr told the Transvaal Indigency Commission, "in the position of a more or less non-labouring aristocracy." 69) Even after 1834 the actual social and economic relationship between black and white remained much the same as during the days when slavery existed as the system of slavery was simply replaced by a system of caste. Gradually a belief arose that manual work, work which the natives usually did, was work for natives alone, work which it was beneath the dignity of white men to do. Thus Grosskopf writes: "The misfortune for South Africa was this, that to the usual social gulf between master and servant was added the difference between a civilised and uncivilised race. Certain kinds of work regularly came to be looked upon, not only as more unpleasant or less dignified, but as work for Kaffirs or coloured persons, that is to say, those of an inferior race." 70) We must, however, be on our guard against exaggeration. Generally these prejudices did not apply to farm work such as shearing sheep and reaping wheat. The Carnegie Commission interviewed several old men who recalled having performed such tasks side by side with Natives. 71) In this connection education was a civilizing force. J.H. Hofmeyr told the Transvaal Indigency Commission that "a farmer's son is sent to Stellenbosch, and he may come home as a matriculated student or even a B.A. but he will work on the farm, and if he is a good worker the farmer will make the coloured labourers

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69) T.G. 13-'08. Minutes of Evidence p.196.

70) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. p.171.

71) *ibid.* p.171.

work up to him. They do not consider labour for themselves or their fathers derogatory, even with a black man." 72) Nevertheless, there was widespread prejudice against non-agricultural manual labour. Rev. Theron of Fordsburg told the Transvaal Indigency Commission "There are many white people who have thought it a disgrace to go into a carpenter's shop and work". 73) In 1897 the O.F.S Railway Management offered employment as railway porters to many poor whites; most declined, stating that they were not kaffirs, although a few went into the Loco Works to learn cleaning. 74)

Not only did such attitudes often create a psychological barrier against the acceptance of manual work, but they also created a situation where if a prejudiced man was forced to do manual work he did not regard it as an ordinary field of employment and did it grudgingly as being kaffir's work. Thus the standard of manual work was much lower in South Africa than in countries where there was no coloured labour. 75) Indeed, many of the poor whites who worked on the O.R.C. relief works had to be taught, ab initio, how to use pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. 76) If, on the other hand, an employer was prejudiced against manual labour it followed that when he did employ a white man for manual labour he would generally employ a relative. This, as J.H. Hofmeyr pointed out to the Transvaal Indigency Commission, hindered the development of a proper master-servant relationship. 77) Finally the

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72) T.G. 13-'08 Minutes of Evidence p.197.

73) T.H. 13-'08 p.24

74) Hassard, C. O.R.C. Relief Works p.2.

75) T.G. 13-'08 p.25.

76) Hassard, C. op.cit. p.2.

77) T.G. 13-'08 Minutes of Evidence p.196.

prejudice of many whites against manual labour and their consequent inefficiency, combined with the fact that they demanded higher wages, led many employers to prefer black or coloured labour to white labour for manual work. Thus from about 1897 till about 1907, when one finds the first instances of the State evaluating white labour on sentimental grounds, the poor white problem was largely a problem of white unemployment.

The widespread prejudice against manual labour among poor whites was re-enforced by the doctrine of racial superiority held by many white South Africans. This doctrine is epitomized in Anna Steenkamp's celebrated statement that the Voortrekkers, as fastidious Christians could not tolerate a situation where former slaves were placed on an equal footing with (white) Christians. The unemployed poor white whose circumstances were due in part to his prejudice against manual labour paid dearly for White South Africa's concern for racial purity. Indeed his plight brings to mind what Lord Bryce wrote of the American 'mean whites':

"Shiftless, ignorant, improvident, with no aims in the present nor hopes for the future, citizens in nothing but the possession of votes, they were a standing reproach to the system that produced them and the most convincing proof of it's economic as well as moral failure." 78)

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78) Quoted from American Commonwealth in T.G. 13-'08 p.48.

THE RURAL EXODUS.CHAPTER 2.

In 1916 Dr. Malan spoke of the rural exodus of poor whites:

"Alas, this trek does not lead from the narrows to the open spaces. This is a trek from a condition of freedom and abundance to one of poverty and want. This is the journey from Canaan to Egypt". 1)

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the causes and the extent of this second Great Trek. We will also consider briefly the urban environment into which the migrant poor whites moved, for although Dr. Malan over-idealized rural conditions, he was correct in describing the urban areas as the 'Egypt' of the poor whites.

The Table below illustrates the extent to which the white South African population became urbanised between 1891 and 1926, 'urban' in this context being any area falling under the jurisdiction of a local authority. 2)

Census	Urban Population	Rural Population	Total	% Urban	% Rural
1891	217,322	403,297	620,619	35.02	64.98
1904	590,926	525,880	1,116,806	52.91	47.09
1911	695,796	616,446	1,276,242	51.70	48.30
1918	766,894	654,932	1,421,781	53.94	46.06
1921	847,508	671,980	1,519,488	55.78	44.22
1926	975,235	701,425	1,676,660	58.17	41.83

The above table shows that between 1891 and 1904 a change took place whereby the majority of White South Africans

1) Quoted by Welsh, D. in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. ed. Oxford History of South Africa. Vol 11. p.204.

2) U.G. 4-'31. p.16.

were living in the towns by the end of the period. This change, however, was not due entirely to the rural exodus of poor whites. The period 1890 to 1905 was the period of greatest immigration in the history of South Africa. This was due to industrial development which attracted immigrants, the discovery in the early 1890's that the deep level gold mines were workable, and Milner's anglicisation policy after the South African War. Moreover, South Africa was by this time approaching the end phase of Rostow's second stage of economic growth: the country was preparing for the take-off into self-sustained growth as evidenced by the growth of mines, railways and urban centres. In most countries this phase brings with it a rural exodus not only of those displaced by the growth of a more specialised and restricted agriculture, but also of the more enterprising rural elements who move to the urban areas to seek their fortunes. Nevertheless, the period 1891 to 1904 did see a rural exodus of poor whites which helped swell the urban white population to the 1904 figure. We have already seen that by the early 1890's, owing to factors such as subdivision of land and bad farming methods, the holding of many white farmers on the land was precarious. Moreover, many farmers had already been reduced to the status of bywoner which, while not necessarily an uneconomic position, was not usually a secure position. In these circumstances it only needed some calamity to provoke a rural exodus. In 1896-97 South Africa was struck by the Rinderpest, which was followed by the South African War (which brought farm-burning in the final stages), East Coast Fever, droughts and locusts. We have already seen

that the growth of Vrededorp, Donkieskamp and other poor white congregations on the outskirts of the towns dates from just after the Rinderpest. Locusts continued to plague South Africa till the early 1930's, and 1919 saw a nation-wide drought which was followed in 1926 by a drought in the Cape hinterland lasting four years. The Carnegie Commission was told by well-informed officials that most of the rural poor whites who migrated to Port Elizabeth between 1926 and 1929 came from drought stricken areas such as Jansenville, Steytler-ville, Graaff-Reinet, Pearston and Aberdeen. Droughts and other calamities during the 1920's, like their predecessors after the South African War, forced many farmers off the land, especially because of the persistence of bad farming methods and subdivision, which made their holding on their land precarious. As late as 1926 Census Supervisors reported that subdivision of farms was contributing towards a rural exodus. 3) Thus the familiar process whereby farmers with a precarious grip on the land were forced off the land by calamities continued well into the 1920's.

From about 1907 certain new factors began to emerge which made for a stronger rural exodus. The extent of this exodus is illustrated by the following figures. Between 1904 and 1911 important Cape sheep farming districts underwent a loss of white population: Tarka 16.8%, Queenstown 16.1%, Steynsburg 16%, Molteno 14.1% and Victoria East 8.6%. 4) Between 1911 and 1921 forty two districts in the Cape, several districts in

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3) *ibid.* p.19.

4) Quoted by Grosskopf, J.F.W. in v.d. Walt et al.ed. Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. Vol. II. p.303.

the Free State, as well as one district in the Transvaal, suffered an absolute decrease in the white rural population. 5) The Free State as a whole suffered a 2% decrease in the white rural population between 1911 and 1921 and, had it not been for the establishment of new Municipalities and Village Boards, the decrease would have been 5.32%. 6) Most of the Cape districts concerned, some of the Free State districts, and the particular Transvaal district, Wakkerstroom, were sheep farming districts. Finally, with regard to the period 1921 to 1926, it was estimated by the Director of the 1926 Census that during this period the countryside absorbed "not quite two-thirds of it's natural increase; probably the actual figure is nearer to one-half". 7)

One of the most important reasons for this rural exodus has already been implied in the statistics above, namely, changes in sheep farming. Shortly before Union sheep farming began to prosper even more than previously and this resulted in a movement of engrossment. Small farms were bought up and large farms were fenced. This tended to displace shepherds, bywoners and small farmers, that is those elements of the population who had been making only a marginal living out of farming, Small stock districts, were, moreover, usually relatively arid districts. Thus the engrossment movement in those districts meant a reduction in reserve grazing and this in turn meant droughts were more damaging to the few small farmers who remained. Thus it is not surprising that most of the districts which suffered an absolute decrease in white rural population between 1911 and 1921 were sheep farming districts. In this connection we should be on our guard against the

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5) Grosskopf, J.F.W. Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus. p.6.

6) U.G. 37-'24. p.41.

7) U.G. 4-'31. p.19.

implication contained in the title Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus, for the root cause of the exodus of the shepherds and bywoners from the small stock districts was not an agricultural depression but the prosperity of sheep farming. Thus the Director of the 1926 Census was correct when he wrote of these unfortunate people: "These are the victims which progress ever tramples underfoot in it's irresistable onward march". 8) The rural exodus from Cape and Free State sheep farming districts between 1911 and 1921 was not confined to displaced shepherds and bywoners. Many of these districts were also ostrich farming districts and the collapse of the feather industry round about 1915 also contributed towards the rural exodus.

With a diminishing white rural population in many districts, especially in the Free State, a simultaneous increase in the number of rural natives was noticeable. Between 1890 and 1921 the white population of the Free State, greatly strengthened by immigration, increased by 143% but the non-white population, also strengthened by immigration, increased by 239% during the same period. 9) The 1921 Census indicated that only 73% of the natives in the Free State were born there: 14% came from Basutoland and 9% from the Cape. 10) Many of these natives had developed new wants and needed money to satisfy them. This, added to prevailing congestion in Thaba'Nchu and Witsieshoek meant that many natives were willing to work on white owned farms for relatively small wages. 11) This tended to push white bywoners and farm labourers off the land, the bywoner being replaced by the native

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8) U.G. 4-'31. p.20.

9) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. p.157.

10) ibid. p.157.

11) ibid. p.8.

share-cropper. The native labourer was cheaper than the white labourer; and the native share-cropper was often preferred to the bywoner because social pressures forced the farmer to see to the comfort and well-being of the bywoner - an obligation he was not burdened with in the case of a native share-cropper. The unpopularity of the practices of taking on black rather than white labourers and taking on black share-croppers rather than white bywoners was due not only to the fact that these practices tended to displace poor whites, but also because they offended the segregationist conscience. There was an even more fundamental objection to the system of share-cropping: that it provided a much greater reward for a native share-cropper on a white owned farm than other white farmers, who did not have large tracts of land, were prepared to pay a native labourer. All this is illustrated in the evidence of Mr. J.J. Bruwer, a Bethlehem farmer, before the Native Lands Commission in 1913.

"I am not farming on shares. I do not believe in it, because it is detrimental to the country. We are getting into partnership with the natives if you allow that..... There are many natives who own a lot of stock, and it will be difficult to know what to do with them; they have become rich through the indulgence of the farmer, and on account of their method of working - they always seek out the best land.

If there is no ground in the Free State where such natives could be placed then I would let them go. There are many poor white people in the district who would be only too glad to get the opportunity of taking the place of natives as far as farming is concerned..." 12)

Thus it is not surprising that a Free State farmer wrote to the Farmer's Weekly in 1911 that "The sooner a gallows is erected to hang those who work on shares with Kaffirs the better". 13)

The Natives' Land Act of 1913 was, in part, an attempt to put an end to native share-cropping and the large scale employment of native farm labour. The Act, by reaffirming Chapter XXXIV of the Free State Law Book and Law No. 4 of 1895 made share-cropping illegal and limited the number of native families on a white owned farm. It seems to have been the intention of the legislators that the Act should improve the position of the poor whites because, prior to the passing of the Act, Generals Botha and Hertzog had toured the country telling farmers to replace the natives on their farms with poor whites. 14)

There was, however, little economic incentive to induce diligent compliance with the provisions of the Act and it seems that many Free State farmers managed to circumvent its provisions. Indeed, after the First World War there was a strong economic incentive for

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12) U.G. 22-'16. pp. 55 and 56.

13) Quoted by Welsh, D. in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. ed. op.cit. p.128.

14) *ibid.* p.128.

farmers to decrease the number of whites on their farms and to increase the number of natives. During the post-war boom many farms in the Free State and other Provinces changed hands at prices above their normal value. This rendered it beyond the capacity of the land, even in times of normal prices, to produce a reasonable return on the money invested. In these circumstances it was imperative to utilize the whole of the ground at the lowest possible cost, and in these circumstances the white bywoner tended to be displaced by the native labourer. One Free State Magistrate reported in 1921:

"A large number of landowners, prospering from the boom in wool and produce, increased their holdings, and, acquiring other properties in the vicinity of their original farms, reduced the number of whites living thereon.

The rise in the value of land and stock, no doubt, in many cases, had the further effect of driving landowners to the conclusion that it was not to their economic advantage to allow bywoners to remain on their properties....." 15)

Another Free State Magistrate concluded that the decrease in the white rural population of the Free State between

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15) U.G. 37-'24. p.40.

1911 and 1921 was due almost entirely to white bywoners and farm labourers being displaced by natives. In this district the bywoner was almost extinct.

"My theory accounts simultaneously for the diminishing European and increasing native population, and is, I am convinced, the correct one. For it is clear that the farmer either cannot or will not pay a decent living wage to a White man, and the latter is forced to seek an employer who will assess the value of his labour from a sentimental standpoint, and the only employer who can do this is the Government. The farmer naturally must regulate the wage he pays by the returns given, and there is no doubt that he prefers to employ the Native, and this for the following reasons (among others), viz.:

- "1. The Native is cheaper.
- "2. The Native is probably more efficient, wage for wage.
- "3. The employer of whites has to have a greater regard for the comfort of the employee, especially in regard to housing and food, than he would if employing Natives." 16)

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16) *ibid.* p.41.

The displacement of whites by natives in agriculture continued in later years, and by 1960 the beswarming of the platteland had become as much a bogey to segregation-  
alists as the beswarming of the cities. 17)

Various sample surveys undertaken between 1916 and 1930 confirmed that the strongest rural exodus was from sheep and ostrich districts, and areas with an expanding native population.

In his book Complex South Africa Macmillan interpreted three sample surveys of newcomers to Johannesburg. Firstly he took a sample of 100 men of less than three months' standing taken without selection in their order of application to the Johannesburg Public Relief Board between August 1916 and January 1917. Secondly he took a sample of 200 men of less than three months' standing who applied to the Johannesburg Public Relief Board between March 1915 and February 1916. Thirdly he took a sample of 240 underground workers on a central Reef Gold Mine and disregarded those who came from Johannesburg, Kimberley or overseas, thus reducing the total to 154. He then tabulated these samples on the basis of the district of origin of the men concerned. 18)

	Relief Board Samples		Mine Sample	District of Origin	Population in 1911
	(a)	(b)	(c)		
I	5	4	10	Western Province	
II	3	5	3	S. and S.W. Coast Belt up to Avontuur Railway	326,000
III	5	9	7	N.W. of Main Line (including Kimberley)	78,000
IV	5	17	18	Midlands (Oudtshoorn-P.E. Norval's Pont Line)	97,294
V	21	49	32	N.E. Cape (East London-Bethulie Line)	66,730
VI	21	42	19	South and West O.F.S.	110,000
VII	9	18	6	North and N.E.O.F.S.	65,000
VIII	16	28	19	Western Transvaal and Bechuanaland (Cape)	97,422
IX	6	10	14	Eastern Transvaal	322,000
X	I	3	10	Natal	98,000
	2	4 (Unclassified)			
	100	200	154		

17) Cf. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into European Occupancy of the Rural Areas (1960) especially the Maps facing p.18.

18) Macmillan, W.M. Complex South Africa p.60.

The areas marked III to IV and VIII on the table above accounted for only one third of the total white South African population in 1911, but they accounted for the men in the samples above as follows: Sample (a) 68%; Sample (b) 72.5% and sample (c) 61.7%. Thus Macmillan wrote:-

"Though it is unsafe to generalize from statistics it was tempting to do so here, for it appeared that areas of the Union with little more than one third of the population account for two thirds of the men who reach the Rand in search of work". 19)

Subsequently Macmillan took a smaller sample - a group of 21 unskilled Johannesburg municipal employees working in the same gang. One of these came from the Transvaal but the rest came from the Southern Free State or the North Eastern Cape. 20)

Investigations by Grosskopf (circa.1930) into the composition of the Dutch Reformed congregations of Melville and Boksburg produced results similar to those obtained by Macmillan. Between 1921 and 1930 the Dutch Reformed congregation in the poor Johannesburg suburb of Melville gained 366 new members from other congregations: 189 from other parts of the Rand; 89 from other parts of the Transvaal, especially the Western districts; 40 from Karoo districts; 21 from other Cape Districts; and 25 from the Free State. 21) Similarly, the Dutch Reformed Minister at Boksburg, whose congregation consisted mainly of miners,

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19) *ibid.* pp. 60-61.

20) *ibid.* p.61.

21) Grosskopf, J.F.W. *op.cit.* p.185.

stated that most of his flock came from the N.E. Cape followed closely by the Free State. 22)

Thus the findings of Macmillan and Grosskopf suggest that the bulk of the poor whites who migrated to the Reef after about 1914 till about 1930 came from sheep or ostrich farming areas or rural areas in which there had been a large increase in the native population. This ties up with the preceding material in this chapter which indicates that the strongest rural exodus after about 1907 was from these areas. Macmillan's findings also suggest that the Western Transvaal and Cape Bechuanaland also accounted for a fair proportion of the men migrating to Johannesburg in search of work. The Western Transvaal was not a sheep farming area and Cape Bechuanaland, while sheep country, was not affected by the enclosure movement. The reasons for these areas producing an exodus of poor whites will be dealt with later.

The rural exodus of poor whites was due to pull factors as well as push factors. At about the same time as changes in sheep farming and expansion of the rural native population in certain areas began to push poor whites off the land new pull factors arose. In 1907 the Witwatersrand Gold Mines began to give definite preference to South African born mine workers and seven years later the outbreak of the Great War created new openings for Afrikaners on the mines when many English speaking miners joined the forces. With regard to the public sector, especially the Railways, the Afrikaner found, after Union, that he was more kindly received than previously. It was with this in mind that a Free State Magistrate (whose analysis of the displacement of whites by natives in the rural areas we have seen above), reported in 1921:

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22) *ibid.* p.185.

"Within the last decade the government has granted considerable facilities for illiterate and unskilled whites to earn wages which are highly remunerative when compared with the very inadequate doles paid to the same class when performing farm labour. I refer particularly to the employment of White labour on the railways, where, in addition to good wages, the privileges are considerable and the comfort of the employees more sympathetically catered for than is the case with any other considerable employer of Europeans". 23)

A vital link between the push and the pull factors was the growth of railway mileage after Union. In the first decade of Union the railway mileage was increased by 37% mainly through the construction of branch lines to rural districts and this enabled many rural poor to respond to the pull factors and leave their birthplaces for the cities and towns. 24) Evidence given to the Cape Select Committee on the Poor White Question (1906) by F. Oates, a mining magnate from Kimberley, and J.M. Thornton, locomotive superintendent at Uitenhage, indicated that most of the unskilled white labourers on the Kimberley mines and in the Uitenhage railway workshops came from nearby these towns. 25) With the subsequent growth of railway mileage, however, the urban areas drew their rural poor from wider afield. In 1931 when George and Oudtshoorn were connected by

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23) U.G. 37-'24. p.41.

24) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. p.8.

25) A.10-'06. Minutes of Evidence. pp. 73 and 36.

rail it became possible to travel from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth without going via De Aar. This development drew a large portion of the Southern Cape, containing many poor whites, out of its isolation and soon a strong exodus of rural poor began. Grosskopf noted that a large proportion of the unskilled whites in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town came from the districts served by the new line. 26)

Poor whites who left the land as a result of one or more of the factors described above, usually moved to the urban areas, the alluvial diamond diggings, irrigation settlements or to virgin land. Initially the small towns attracted poor whites as much as did the cities but by 1920 the exodus was mainly in the direction of the cities, especially the Witwatersrand which was described by a Department of Labour official as "the Mecca of all the unemployed in South Africa". 27) This change was due simply to the fact that the cities offered more employment opportunities than the small towns.

In a sense the term 'rural exodus' is misleading as poor whites often moved to other rural areas such as the virgin country of Cape Bechuanaland, irrigation settlements and alluvial diamond diggings. During the period 1904 to 1911 when important sheep farming districts suffered a decrease in white rural population certain significant districts showed an increase in white rural population. The district of Kenhardt in which the Kakamas Settlement was situated showed a 78% increase; Cape Bechuanaland which was mostly virgin soil showed a 59% increase; and Hoopstad and Lichtenburg where there

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26) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. p.187.

27) *ibid.* p.185.

were alluvial diamond diggings showed increases of 82% and 66% respectively. 28)

In an effort to find out from poor whites themselves why they were leaving the rural areas the Carnegie Commissioners interviewed 78 poor whites. Among the 180 reasons given, 173 were to the effect that the possibilities of making a living where they had been at first became too poor (because of droughts, stock diseases, dismissal by employer, etc.) or that they hoped to improve their economic position by going elsewhere (to the diggings, the towns or the cities). 29) Indeed the reasons given by poor whites themselves were not as complex as the analysis above. For instance 72 men who had previously been on the land who applied for labouring positions with the Port Elizabeth Tram Company in early 1930 stated simply that they had moved because of "drought", "failure" or "not paying". 30) In 1906 a poor white friend of a certain writer in De Goede Hoop who used the nom de plume "F. de M." left his parents' farm to become a transport rider for the following reasons:

"Mijn arme ouers het die net swaar tuis.  
D'is mar net houtkap van di morre tot di  
aand, en daar is amper niks meer te verdien  
ni. Ek wou graag 'n konsertina vir mij  
gekoop het, daarom het ek my gehuur om  
die geld daarvoor te kry." 31)

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28) Quoted by Grosskopf, J.F.W. in v.d. Walt et al. ed. op.cit. p.303.

29) Wilcocks, R.W. The Poor White. p.11.

30) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. p.187.

31) De Goede Hoop 1/8/06. p.38. art by "F. de M."

What emerges from the above is that most poor whites who left the rural areas hoped to improve their position by doing so. Such hopes were not, however, always fulfilled, and often, as Dr. Malan stated, the migrant poor white found they had trekked from "Canaan" into "Egypt". Usually the migrant poor white was unsuited to non-agricultural employment owing to lack of training and this meant that he had to start at the bottom of the industrial ladder. The position was further complicated by the widespread prejudice among poor whites against manual labour and the fact that the rural exodus of poor whites coincided with a rural exodus of poor natives who were willing to work for lower wages. The Civilized Labour Policy did much to ease the entry of poor whites into urban life but this did not alter the fact that the migrant poor whites found the predominantly English-speaking urban areas uncongenial. Indeed many poor whites cherished the inner hope of one day returning to the land. Some even kept sheep or goats in preparation for their return to the land. As late as 1947 a Dutch Reformed Church Commission reported that a large percentage of unskilled Afrikaner labourers continued to delude themselves that their employment in urban industry was only temporary. 32)

Dr. Murray, author of Health Factors in the Poor White Problem inspected several homes of poor whites in the towns of Willowmore, Jansenville, Steytlerville and Aberdeen. A typical home was built of raw brick or stones and mud with a flat galvanized iron or 'brak' roof. Usually there were three rooms about ten by twelve foot and it was not unusual for such a house to

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32) Quoted by Welsh, D. in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. ed. op.cit. p.205.

be inhabited by thirteen or more people for large families were typical of the poor white class. Many such houses had no sanitary convenience at all and had to draw on water supplies polluted by human and animal faeces. 33) Judging by photographs in Volumes II and III of the Carnegie Report, Dr. Murray's description held good for poor white dwellings on the outskirts of most towns. The rural dwellings from which the poor whites had migrated were often similar to the urban dwellings yet the essential difference lay in the proximity of the urban dwellings to each other. This made the inhabitants vulnerable to infection. Dr. Murray pointed out that only immunity acquired during childhood prevented the death rate from faecal bacterial infection from being even more serious. 34) Those poor whites who migrated to the diggings or the virgin veld were often as disappointed in their expectations as those who migrated to the urban areas. The lure of the diggings was such that the arrival of newcomers continued even after the actual prospects no longer seemed promising. This factor made for the accumulation of distressed people far beyond the resources of the diggings to support. Inevitably digging activities on a large scale exhausted the supply of diamonds and, added to this, the wholesale price of diamonds started to fall in the late 'twenties. The plight of the impoverished digger was intensified by the fact that their living conditions were primitive and unsatisfactory as the mushroom-like growth of the diggings made the establishment of decent housing, social and sanitary facilities impossible. The poor

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33) Murray, W.A. Health Factors in the Poor White Problem, pp. 69-70.

34) ibid. p.71.

whites who migrated to the virgin soil were also often disappointed in their expectations. This was because they were more vulnerable to droughts and stock diseases in areas like Cape Bechuanaland than they had been in areas of closer settlement. Thus the diggings and the virgin soil accounted simultaneously for a large number of migrants from other rural areas as well as a large migration of unsuccessful diggers and trekboere to the urban areas. As late as 1926 the Director of Census estimated that many displaced poor whites from sheep farming districts were migrating to the diggings and the virgin soil. 35) In contrast to this we have Macmillan's figures which suggest that these areas accounted for a fair amount of the unemployed men who sought work in Johannesburg. 36)

While the migrant poor whites found many problems in their new environment the rural exodus also posed problems for well off whites, especially those concerned about segregation and 'the maintenance of the traditional South African way of life'. The Carnegie Commissioners expressed all the fears of the segregationists when they reported:

"Long continued economic equality of poor whites and the great mass of non-Europeans and the propinquity of their dwellings, tend to bring them to social equality. This impairs the tradition which counteracts segregation, and the social line of colour division is noticeably weakening". 37)

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35) U.G. 4-'31. p.19.

36) Vide. supra. p.9.

37) Joint report of the Carnegie Commission. p.XX.

Yet it was not only the rural exodus bringing poor whites into close contact with non-europeans in areas like Vrededorp which gave cause for alarm. The rural exodus, by reducing the white population of the platteland threatened the traditional social structure of white South Africa.

Many feared the social implications of large numbers of Afrikaner farmers being forced to become urban industrial workers. Traditionally the words 'boer' and 'Afrikaner' had long been synonomous. The rural exodus threatened this identity.

SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS TO THE POOR WHITE  
PROBLEM SUGGESTED BY COMMISSIONS AND BY  
INDIVIDUALS

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CHAPTER 3.

The solutions to the poor white problem proposed by commissions and by individuals ranged from the proposal of the Transvaal Indigency Commission (1906-08) that the problem be resolved by the poor whites themselves, in the towns and without aid from the state, to the proposal of A.S. du Plessis (a member of the Afrikaner Bond) that the state should make cheap capital available to impoverished farmers. 1) In most cases, however, the solutions suggested depended on what the particular commission or individual saw as the root causes of the problem as well as which solutions they had seen in operation. Moreover, the suggestions were often a reflection of the attitudes or affiliations of the commissioners or the individual concerned.

These points are illustrated by the evidence given by Advocate J.G. Wolmarans, secretary of the Pretoria branch of Het Volk, to the Transvaal Indigency Commission. Wolmarans submitted a statement outlining what he felt were the causes of indigency in Pretoria:

"The causes of indigency here are -:

- 1) The destruction of buildings, stock etc.  
during the war.
- 2) Prevalence of stock diseases, locusts,  
etc.
- 3) Long continued shortage of rainfall.

These are the three main causes that forced farmers to take refuge in the town where they rely on odd jobs". 2) His statement continued to the effect that most of the

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1) Article by du Plessis, A.S. in De Goede Hoop 1/9/06 p.52.  
2) T.G. 13-'08. Minutes of Evidence. p.27.

poor whites in Pretoria were farmers or bywoners before the South African War; and he emphasised that a bywoner was not necessarily a poor man. As remedial measures he suggested the establishment of settlements along the lines of Kakamas, assistance from the Land Bank and the employment of white rather than non-white labour on public works. In conclusion he stated that 90 percent of the poor whites in Pretoria wished to return to the land. 3)

The chairman of the commission pointed out to Wolmarans that poor whitism was widespread even before the South African War; Commissioner Lionel Curtis pointed out that even to resettle the most deserving poor whites would cost at least a million pounds; and Commissioner Smith pointed out the folly of resettling men who had failed as farmers. 4) Wolmarans nevertheless maintained that resettlement on the land was the solution, as the poor whites themselves desired it.

It can be seen from his analysis of the causes of indigency that Wolmarans belonged to the school of thought which traced the poor white problem to circumstances beyond the control of the poor whites. He blamed the locusts and the droughts rather than the poor whites themselves. Thus he could not imagine a policy of resettling poor whites on the land failing. Moreover, his membership of Het Volk and the fact that he had spent most of his life in Pretoria made him more sympathetic to the poor whites than say Commissioner Curtis who was an expert from outside South Africa.

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3) *ibid.* p.27.

4) *ibid.* pp.28 and 29.

In 1906, the year in which the Transvaal Indigency Commission began its investigations, two select committee reports on the poor white problem were tabled in the Cape Parliament. The first report dealt with the problem in general and the second dealt with labour settlements for indigent whites. Both select committees recommended resettlement of poor whites on labour settlements. They envisaged the extension of the Dutch Reformed settlement at Kakamas and the establishment of others like it.

The first select committee pointed out that a labour colony was only a means to an end - the rehabilitation of the colonists and the education of their children. Settlers who had improved their condition and had their children educated should be encouraged to leave the colony so as to make way for new settlers. The state should then do everything in its power to enable rehabilitated settlers to become "absolute owners" of unoccupied Crown Land. 5) The committee felt that the labour colony should be established by a church because the type of person coming to a labour colony would need moral and religious supervision and because the success of such an undertaking depended on enthusiasm foreign to government enterprise. The recommendations of the second committee were substantially the same. 6) Both the above committees cited want of education as the main cause of the poor white problem. By this they meant lack of adequate educational facilities and not the failure of the poor whites to take advantage of educational facilities. 7) The first committee also pointed out that many poor whites were victims of circumstances like periodical droughts. Thus, like Wolmarans, they traced the poor white problem to circumstances outside the control of the poor whites

5) A. 10-'06. p.viii.

6) C. 3-'06. p.vii.

7) A. 10-'06. p.iv and C.3-'06. p.vi.

and saw no reason against resettling on the land men who had failed as farmers. Neither committee conducted investigations outside the Cape. Had they done so they might have seen the unsuccessful Burger Land Settlements in the Transvaal - undertakings which induced the Transvaal Indigency Commission to express grave reservations about resettling poor whites on the land.

Both committees recommended the employment of poor whites on public works and the railways. They said nothing about poor whites being given employment in preference to natives but in years to come other people investigating the poor white problem were to recommend just this. In 1908 an Orange River Colony Commission recommended the employment of poor whites rather than natives as messengers, road workers and railway workers. 8) In 1916 a Dutch Reformed Church Congress on the poor white problem upheld segregation in the provision of employment, ex-President Reitz defending this on the grounds "dat selfbehoud die wet van die natuur is." 9)

The Transvaal Indigency Commission (1906-1908) differed from the two Cape select committees on the poor white problem in three important respects. Firstly none of its members were farmers. 10) Secondly the commission investigated not only Kakamas but also the unsuccessful Burger Land Settlements. Finally the commission included three of 'Milner's Young Men', Lionel Curtis, Richard Feetham and Philip Kerr, as secretary. The fact that the report of the commission reads like an Oxford Fellowship Dissertation is proof of their influence in its compilation. The three Milnerites were indeed

8) Poor Whites in the O.R.C. p.7.

9) Botha, L.L.N. Die Maatskaplike Sorg van die N.G. Kerk in Suid-Afrika 1928-1953. p.164.

10) Macmillan, W.M. Complex South Africa. p.47.

experts but they were experts from outside South Africa. The Commissioners saw clearly the futility of the 'back to the land' solution to the poor white problem. They pointed out that to resettle on the land men lacking in enterprise, capital, and practical farming skills was to court disaster. 11) In this connection they pointed to the failure of the Burger Land Settlements in the Transvaal. These settlements were established in 1902 at Potchefstroom, Heidelberg, Standerton, Middelburg and Pretoria but in 1908 only the first two remained. 12) No less than 1,411 families passed through these settlements but in 1908 there were only 100 left in Potchefstroom and 80 in Heidelberg; the rest failed to make a living out of their holdings. 13) The commissioners admitted that this was due in part to locusts and drought but they pointed to the evidence of the Managers of the Potchefstroom and Heidelberg settlements, both of whom admitted that most of the settlers had neither the knowledge nor the energy to succeed. 14)

The only type of 'back to the land' solution which the commissioners were prepared to support was the "farm colony" 15) solution. They upheld as examples the farm colonies at Kakamas, which was started in 1897 and supported 130 families in 1906, and Lagersdrift which was started in 1907 and was to cater for 82 families. 16) The commissioners emphasized that three things were essential if farm colonies were to succeed. Firstly, there should be careful scrutiny of the

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- 11) T.G. 13-'08. p.167.  
 12) *ibid.* p.167.  
 13) *ibid.* p.167.  
 14) *ibid.* p.168.  
 15) *ibid.* p.169.  
 16) *ibid.* pp.170 and 171.

prospective settlers. Captain Baker, Director of Burger Land Settlements had written to the commission to the effect that the thriftless and the lazy would not succeed on farm colonies and that it would be better to find work for them on the roads or railways. 17) Similarly Rev. Theron, Dutch Reformed Church Minister at Fordsburg, told the commission that men who had been in the towns for seven or so years and had got into lazy habits would also fail. 18) The commissioners commended the procedure followed at Kakamas and Lagersdrift where prospective settlers had to produce testimonials from their ministers. Likewise they commended the practice at Kakamas whereby settlers had to work for about two or three months digging the communal furrow for 3/- per day before receiving a holding. 19) Secondly the indigent settlers should be subject to strict discipline and close supervision so that they could be cured of their "habits of indolence" 20) For this reason the commissioners felt that farm colonies should be maintained by charitable or religious bodies rather than by the state. Only in this way would the inmates be subject to the influence of persons concerned with their moral as well as material welfare. 21) Here the commissioners were probably influenced by the evidence of F.S. Malan :

"....I go so far as to say that unless you have that moral influence at work in a labour colony of that kind, it is better not to have a labour colony at all. To bring a number of people who have sunk in the social scale together without super-

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17) *ibid.* p.173.

18) *ibid.* p.173.

19) *ibid.* p.173.

20) *ibid.* p.173.

21) *ibid.* p.171.

vision is to create difficulties rather than solve them". 22)

Thirdly settlers should be given enough land so as to enable them to make a reasonable living. 23)

The commissioners believed, however, that the state should not sponsor farm colonies in any way. Such colonies could only turn a limited number of indigents into self-supporting citizens and could do nothing to remove the root causes of indigency. Here they must have been influenced by the evidence of J.H. Hofmeyr:

"The Kakamas colony can only deal with a relatively small number and for a limited period of years. If left to itself it will breed poor whites itself in turn. It has special advantages today; a fine market, very productive soil, and distance from disturbing influences.. ....It is obviously impossible to have many Kakamas". 24)

The commissioners blamed the poor white problem largely on the poor whites themselves. They believed that the two root causes of indigency were aversion to manual labour and traditions associated with the ownership and transmission of land. 25) Except in special circumstances they were not prepared to support the 'back to the land solution' and they pointed out that the best hope for the majority of the poor whites was that they should become manual labourers. 26) Thus they believed the

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22) T.G. 13-'08. Minutes of Evidence. p.141.  
23) T.G. 13-'08. p.174.  
24) T.G. 13-'08. Minutes of Evidence. p.196.  
25) T.G. 13-'08. p.197.  
26) *ibid.* p.117.

problem should be resolved in the towns. Moreover they believed that it should be resolved the hard way, with the state playing a very limited role, as the real solution depended on fundamental changes in attitude among the people whose aversion to manual labour had reduced them to indigency. 27)

The rôle of the state in the process whereby the commissioners hoped the poor whites in the towns would become manual labourers was to be a limited one. Apart from setting an example to other employers by employing white labour itself, taking measures to reduce the cost of living so that even an unskilled worker could earn a living wage, the state should do nothing to interfere with economic laws. 28) Only pressure of want would "drive" the poor white to manual labour and the state would only lessen this pressure by providing the poor white with food, doles, or gifts of land. 29) Thus the commissioners were opposed to any state action designed to protect the white man from reasonable competition from the coloured races. Any attempt to determine the respective positions of the races would fail if it ignored economic laws. Their respective positions would be determined by their respective capabilities and protection would do nothing to qualify the white man "for the ultimate but inevitable struggle for economic superiority". 30) Moreover, on moral grounds, it would be unjust for the race which had encouraged the native to leave his tribal lands to work in industry to take any action which would displace a large number of natives simply to ease the position of

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27) *ibid.* p.171.

28) *ibid.* pp. 46 and 47.

29) *ibid.* p.118.

30) *ibid.* p.46.

the white man. 31) The commissioners pointed out that the desire of the native for education was everywhere the subject of comment and that he would soon wish to move into the sphere of skilled work. 32) Similarly there was every possibility of the poor white using unskilled work as a stepping stone to skilled work if he would apply himself. 33) The commissioners had every confidence that the poor white would be able to do this because they believed that :

"The white man has developed qualities which the native does not possess in anything like the same degree, qualities like perseverance, a sense of duty and the power of initiative and enterprise, which have placed and will keep him for many years on a plane higher than the bulk of the native population can reach". 34)

When it came to the question of dealing with rural impoverishment, the commissioners once again assigned the state a very limited rôle. The real solution lay in an alteration of the outlook of the people with regard to the ownership and transmission of land. 35) The state could do little more than provide facilities for higher agricultural education and give elementary education in the rural areas a definite agricultural bias, 36) and impose a graduated tax on unimproved land values. 37) It was hoped that such a tax would cure the evils stemming from joint ownership of land and the bywoner system. In

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31) *ibid.* p.46.  
 32) *ibid.* p.27.  
 33) *ibid.* p.46.  
 34) *ibid.* p.34.  
 35) *ibid.* p.171.  
 36) *ibid.* p.199.  
 37) *ibid.* p.98.

the case of co-owners such a tax would "awaken them to the necessity of making more than a bare living out of their land". It would free them to adopt modern farming methods. The commissioners pointed out that the persistence of the bywoner system was due largely to the fact that some farmers did not know what to do with all their land and hence had no objection to their friends and relations squatting on it and seldom put much pressure on them to work. A land tax would, however, either force the farmer to employ the bywoner as an agricultural labourer or demand a reasonably high rent from him. In either case the bywoner would not be able to be idle and those who were unwilling to work would be displaced by more energetic ones.

Thus the Transvaal Indigency Commission recommended that the poor white problem be resolved, largely in the towns, largely by the poor whites themselves, and the hard way.

The members of the Carnegie Commission who began investigating the poor white problem in 1930 were, like the three Milnerites on the Transvaal Indigency Commission, experts. They were, however, experts from inside South Africa and some of them held traditional South African attitudes towards the natives. In addition to this their background and affiliations made them more sympathetic to the aspirations of the poor whites than the Milnerites on the Transvaal Indigency Commission. Yet it was precisely this attachment which made them do less than justice to the aspirations of native migrants to the towns. Nowhere in the commission's five volume report does one encounter the argument (put forward by the Transvaal Indigency Commission) that on moral grounds the white man, who had

put pressures on the native to leave his tribal lands and enter urban industry, was not justified in restricting the employment opportunities of the native.

J.F.W. Grosskopf, author of the first part of the report, Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus, was Professor of Economics at Stellenbosch and in 1935 he became Professor of Agricultural Economics. He was also an expert in the field of Afrikaans literature and was awarded the Hertzog Prize in 1926. He had taken part in the 1914 Rebellion and had spent nine months in prison as a result of this.

R.W. Wilcocks, author of the second part of the report, The Poor White, was a member of the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch and was also a member of the Akademie vir Taal Lettere en Kuns.

E.G. Malherbe, author of Education and the Poor White, was Director of the National Bureau of Education. In his report he wrote :

"....we have definite reason to suspect that a very appreciable portion of our white population is fast sinking below the economic standard of living which we consider that a white man should maintain in virtue of his white skin over the native...." 38)

Rev. J.R. Albertyn, one of the authors of the fifth part of the report, The Poor White and Society, also displayed traditional South African attitudes towards the natives when he wrote :

"Immodest, obscene, and awkward ways of expression are often learned from the

native. Especially there is the danger that the white child will learn the Kaffir habit of untruth or prevarication. The Kaffir does not always come out with the straightforward truth; he often chooses a devious path. It would appear that the untruthful habits of the Poor White can be attributed partly to this influence". 39)

Thus, while the Carnegie Commissioners were well qualified to write on their subject, their affiliations and attitudes often led them to consider the problem from an exclusively 'white' standpoint.

The Carnegie Commissioners, like the Transvaal Indigency Commissioners, were not prepared to support any unqualified 'back to the land' solution to the poor white problem. They pointed out that the expedients of granting crown lands and establishing settlements had been resorted to too often in the past and had usually failed because land had been allocated to people without ability, capital, or the desire to better themselves. 40) Grosskopf raised a further objection to the 'back to the land' solution :

"Almost universally we hear the cry 'Back to the land : keep the rural poor on the farms and out of the towns!' Undoubtedly, if this were feasible, the conscience of the nation would be less perturbed, because the so called 'Poor White Problem' would remain almost imperceptible if the poor were distributed over hundreds of

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39) Albertyn, J.R. The Poor White and Society. p.39.

40) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission. p.xxxii.

thousands of square miles of the rural interior. But the average wealth and welfare of the white population would be no better; neither would rural poverty itself disappear in this way". 41)

Like the Transvaal Indigency Commissioners, the Carnegie Commissioners were only prepared to support one type of 'back to the land' solution, namely, the establishment of labour colonies. They believed that if a labour colony were to succeed in rehabilitating poor whites, two principles, whose value had been proved at Kakamas, would have to be observed. Firstly there should be a strict initial selection of settlers, and secondly the degree of material assistance given to settlers should be adequate but should be given in such a way as to imbue the settlers with the conviction that their success or failure depended on themselves alone.

Apart from supporting the establishment of labour colonies along the lines of Kakamas; recommending that legislation be passed to give the better type of bywoner security in his position; and recommending the establishment of local poor relief committees in rural areas, the commissioners believed that the poor white problem should be resolved in the towns. They recommended several expedients to facilitate this process. They felt that rapid social changes made it necessary to extend the scope of social legislation and that a state Bureau of Social Welfare should be established. This bureau would co-ordinate the Welfare activities of the various government departments; co-operate with private charitable organizations

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41) Grosskopf, J.F.W. Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus, p.79.

so as to ensure uniformity and avoid duplication of functions and disseminate information on social work. 42) They also felt that education should be brought into line with the needs of the times. There should be a greater emphasis on technical and agricultural education and systematic vocational guidance should be provided. 43) As far as adult poor white migrants to the towns were concerned, the commissioners believed that industry itself could play an important rôle in helping them adapt to urban life. Provided industry discarded restrictive apprenticeship regulations, which were inappropriate to South African conditions, the poor white migrant could be given valuable practical training in the factory itself. 44) While the commissioners laid great stress on the need for self help and the need for many poor whites to conquer their aversion to manual labour, they believed that this alone would not be enough and that it was necessary for the state to give the unskilled white worker temporary protection against competition from the native in order to ease his transition into urban industry. Here we have the most important difference between the recommendations of the Carnegie Commission and those of the Transvaal Indigency Commission.

Grosskopf believed that the white without any special qualifications was exposed to unfair competition from the native on the unskilled labour market. He felt that the white and the native were on different social levels and he pointed out that while a white who earned £2 a week on the Witwatersrand was at the bottom of the social scale

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42) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission, p. xxxiii.

43) ibid. p.xii.

44) ibid. p.xxiii.

among his own people, a native earning that amount was a man of importance among his people. Most natives, however, were not entirely dependant on their wages as labourers and many worked for short periods only for purposes such as raising lobola. Therefore, just as women teachers were paid less than men teachers because few of them remained permanently in the profession, so the white worker should be protected from the native who was prepared to sell his labour at a lower price as he was not wholly dependant on his wages. 45) In the Joint Report it was pointed out that the type of competition outlined above was having a demoralising effect on poor whites in urban industry, and that the state should take measures to restrict such competition. 46) The commissioners believed that the ideal method of protection would be to allow competition to take place, but on the basis of a minimum wage fixed according to a reasonable 'white' wage. The commissioners were confident that the poor white would survive in this type of competitive situation and they felt this method would raise the standard of living of all racial groups. Nevertheless they realized that this method would prove unacceptable to the poor whites concerned. 47)

The tragedy of the Carnegie Commission was that while the expertise of the members led them to reject any unqualified 'back to the land' solution, their affiliations and attitudes led them to consider the poor white problem from an exclusively 'white' point of view. It is true that they recommended protection against competition from

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45) Grosskopf, J.F.W. op.cit. pp.165 and 166.

46) Joint Report of the Carnegie Commission. p.xix.

47) ibid. pp. xx and xxi.

natives in industry only as a temporary measure. Yet here they could have been more emphatic for in the early 'thirties, as we shall see in the next chapter, neither the Government nor the Department of Labour saw this type of protection as a temporary measure.

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THE VARIOUS MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE  
STATE AND BY PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS  
IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE POOR  
WHITE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 4.

Almost all of the solutions to the poor white problem proposed by commissions and individuals were adopted, at some time or another, either by the State or by private organizations.

'Back to the Land' was first adopted as a solution in 1897 when the Cape Dutch Reformed Church opened an irrigation settlement at Kakamas. After the South African War the Transvaal Government also attempted a 'back to the land' solution when it established Burger Land Settlements. As we have seen in the previous Chapter these were, for the most part, unsuccessful. In the Orange River Colony, also, a 'back to the land' solution along the lines of Kakamas was adopted when the Dutch Reformed Church established an irrigation settlement at Koppies. As we have seen, the two Cape Select Committees on the poor white question (as well as the Orange River Colony commission) endorsed the 'back to the land' expedient. The Transvaal Indigency Commission, however, felt that settlements would rehabilitate only a limited number of poor whites and that strict selection would have to be applied when choosing settlers. This argument stemmed from the fact that the Commissioners had taken note, not only of Kakamas, but also of the unsuccessful Burger Land Settlements.

After Union the State as well as the Dutch Reformed Church continued to establish irrigation settlements

with a view to rehabilitating poor whites. A novel development, however, was the establishment, from 1917 onwards, of State forestry settlements for "Relief of Distress". 1) A comparison of Kakamas (th largest Church irrigation settlement) the Vaalharts scheme (the largest State irrigation scheme) and the forestry settlements will give some picture of how the 'back to the land' solutions worked in practice. Long before the founding of Kakamas the Cape Dutch Reformed Church had become disturbed by increasing rural impoverishment and as early as 1894 it was considering means of helping impoverished farmers and farmers on the verge of poverty. In this connection the most active person was Rev. B.P.J. Marchand. His philosophy on the poor white problem was that while few adult poor whites could be rehabilitated, their children could be educated and thus be assured of a better future. During the 1880's he was Minister at Knysna and there he founded many small Schools to educate the children of poor woodsmen. One night while travelling between Prince Albert and Willowmore, he was forced to seek shelter from a storm in the house of a poor bywoner. The miserable dwelling was crawling with children who had never attended School and would probably never do so. As he pondered on their bleak future the thought struck him that if poor parents could only be brought together in a central place, there would be chance to educate the children and so save them from poor whitism. In 1910 Marchand wrote that it was in this remote bywoner's dwelling that the idea of Kakamas took shape.

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1) U.G. 15-'40. p.125.

In 1895 Marchand visited Europe and investigated labour colonies there. When he returned to the Cape matters had been brought to a head by a drought in the North West Cape and the Rinderpest. As a result of these developments the Synod appointed a Commission in 1897 to consider means of providing work and a reasonable existence for poor whites with families dependant on them as well as means of educating their children so as to prevent them going the same way as their parents. The Commission recommended land re-settlement based on the principle that the ground and implements should remain the property of the founders. The Synod accepted these recommendations but did not agree that the implements should remain the property of the founders. Marchand and a number of other Dutch Reformed Church Ministers then conferred with representatives of the Government and they were supplied with a list of farms stretching westwards from Prieska along the Orange River. Following investigations by Rev. Schröder, a missionary at Upington, they decided to apply for the farms Kakamas and Soetop.

In mid-1897, following a recommendation to this effect by the Waste Lands Committee, Parliament set aside the farms Kakamas and Soetop in the Kenhardt district "in favour of the Dutch Reformed Church for the purposes of a labour colony for poor whites". 2) With this went the right to convey a water furrow over the farm Neus. It was laid down that if the project succeeded the Church could apply for title to the land. Between 1906 and 1908 titles were granted in respect of the

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2) U.G. 14-'45, p.3.

farms mentioned above as well as the farms Neus and Hartebeest Riviersmond, and two Islands in the Orange River. The most important conditions laid down were that all profits should be used for the improvement of the colony and that the land could not be disposed of without the consent of Parliament. Subsequently further land was added by State grants and by purchase so that in 1938 when the last purchase took place the area of the colony exceeded 100,000 Morgen. 3)

The original settlers at Kakamas were almost all impoverished sheep farmers or bywoners from the North Western Cape. Hardly any had had experience of intensive farming under irrigation. The farms which they were to develop were not worth £5 a year as grazing. 4) Owing to lack of funds in both the case of the Church and the Settlers the means at the disposal of the settlers and the accommodation for both settlers and Church officials were primitive. Despite all these disadvantages the settlers showed great tenacity in digging the irrigation furrows and levelling the lands. By 1906 Kakamas supported 130 white families, 5) and by the end of the Great War it was clear that most of the settlers had become successful small farmers.

In 1910 a constitution was drawn up for Kakamas and promulgated in a Government Proclamation. The settlers were obliged to develop their holdings personally and could not hire labour without the Superintendent's permissions, though this provision

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3) *ibid.* p.5.

4) A.10-'06. p.14.

5) *ibid.* p.11.

subsequently fell into abeyance. The sale of intoxicating beverages was prohibited. Any religious obligation imposed by the founders was to be obeyed by the colonists; and in practice this meant compulsory observance of the Sabbath. Education was compulsory for children between the ages of seven and fourteen; and subsequently this was extended to seventeen. The Constitution also embodied the oproep system whereby the Superintendent could call on settlers to perform compulsory labour if he felt the general well-being of the colony demanded this. An amending proclamation provided that if a settler refused the Superintendent could hire labour to do the work and debit the settler. The penalties laid down in the Constitution for failure to obey the regulations were as follows : a reprimand; a fine not exceeding £5; and expulsion from the Colony. In 1913 the offices of Superintendent and Minister of Religion were deparated.

In 1903 the first School was established in Kakamas, in a reed hut. There were eighty three pupils.

In 1904 an adequate School building was erected and in 1920, just before the Department of Education

took over from the Church, there were nine Schools with thirty one teachers and nine hundred pupils. 6)

By 1945 261 pupils had advanced into professional positions, 222 had gone into clerical work, 114 had joined the forces, 114 had become farmers and 231 had become skilled tradesmen. 7) Indeed it was the opinion of the 1945 Commission of Enquiry into Kakamas "that the type of boy and girl reared at

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6) U.G. 14-'45. p.7.

7) *ibid.* p.7.

Kakamas compares very well with other parts of the Union. 8)

The plots at Kakamas were limited to six morgen. 9) This was sufficient to ensure freedom from want but was insufficient to provide the settlers with a margin against droughts or floods. Moreover, the holdings were not large enough to yield enough profit to enable the settlers to build decent houses. There are photographs in Volume II of the Carnegie Report of houses of prosperous settlers at Kakamas; and even these houses were small, flat-roofed, unpainted structures.

Soon the settlers developed a desire for freehold tenure. They felt this would enable them to raise capital on their land and perhaps augment their holdings by purchase of neighbouring holdings. There were also psychological factors operative. The desire for freehold tenure is a desire inherent in any farmer. Moreover, there was the fear lurking in the heart of every settler that the wide powers vested in the authorities, especially the power of expulsion, could at any moment be exercised.

In 1919 the Church authorities made some concession to these desires by giving the settlers the right to transmit their holdings to the heirs or sell their rights to another person, subject to the approval of the relevant Church authorities. Despite this concession 1919 saw the first of many petitions from the settlers asking for freehold tenure. The Church opposed this and subsequent petitions on the

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8) *ibid.* p.7.

9) *ibid.* p.65.

grounds that the granting of titles would soon lead to alienation of the holdings and the settlers relapsing into poverty.

In 1945 when the white population of Kakamas stood at 3,563, 10) and there was no room for new entrants, the Government appointed a Commission to investigate, inter alia, the management and finances of Kakamas as well as the question of land tenure. The most important recommendations made by the commission were that Church representation on the Board of Control be decreased; that the power of the Church authorities to expel colonists be abolished; and that settlers be given the right to purchase freehold title to their land. The Commission did not envisage unrestricted title, but title with restrictions regarding alienation and mortgage. The Church agreed with most of the above recommendations but could not accept the idea of freehold tenure. It was feared that Kakamas would become a hunting ground for speculators and that a subsequent commission might recommend the removal of all restrictions on alienation and mortgage of land. Freehold tenure was nevertheless granted in 1948 and by 1953 135 erven had changed hands. 11) In 1953 the Church accepted freehold tenure in principle.

In 1906 Marchand stated that the main idea behind Kakamas was "to bring the people together and educate their children. It is incidental that we must provide for the families meanwhile." 12) Judged on a basis of this aim Kakamas was a success. Yet

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10) ibid. p.5.

11) L.L.N. Botha Die Maatskaplike Sorg van die N.G. Kerk in Suid-Afrika. p.327.

12) A.10-'06. p.7.

Kakamas succeeded in another important respect by rehabilitating a group of poor whites and turning them into reasonably well off small farmers. This was due in part to the stringent screening of prospective settlers (they had to be married men with certificates of good character from clergymen, and had to dig the communal furrow for some time before being allocated a holding) but also to the moral influence of the Church. There was, however, a negative side to the moral influence of the Church. One of the outstanding characteristics of the Church authorities at Kakamas was a paternalistic attitude towards the settlers. This manifested itself, for instance, in enforced observance of the Sabbath. It has been suggested by A. Collins of Rhodes University, whose father was a Schoolmaster at Kakamas, that the limiting of the size of the settler's plots to six morgen was a deliberate device aimed at preventing them from rising above their station. 13) Nevertheless it could be argued that paternalism was an unfortunate necessity in the process of rehabilitating failed farmers and bywoners and educating their children.

From Kakamas we turn to the Vaal-Hartz irrigation scheme, the largest state irrigation settlement.

In 1873 it was discovered that the Vaal River at Fourteen Streams was about 450 feet higher than the nearby Hartz River Valley and this opened up possibilities for an irrigation scheme. 14) Eight years later Rhodes ordered a survey of the area with

13) Collins, A. personal communication.

14) Du Toit, J.S.J. and Gutsche, A.D.E. Die Vaalharts Besproeiingskema. Unpublished M.S. in O.F.S. Archives, Accession No. 291. p.1.

a view to establishing such a scheme but owing to lack of funds the scheme was abandoned. Several other false starts were made and it was only in 1933 after soil scientists had pronounced on the suitability of the soil that Parliament voted funds for the development of the area. The Scheme was intended not only to rehabilitate poor whites but also to develop the area for agricultural purposes. In 1934 the Department of Lands began constructing tunnels and canals as well as houses for the settlers. By 1938 42,000 morgen could be irrigated. 15) Of this land 6,000 morgen fell within the Taungs Native Reserve, leaving 36,000 morgen for white settlement, in addition to which 90,000 morgen was set aside for grazing. 16)

The first settlers arrived in 1938. The houses into which they moved were built of concrete blocks and consisted of three bedrooms, living room, kitchen, pantry and bathroom. Settlers were selected by a Committee consisting of the Superintendent, the Resident Engineer and three farmers. According to a historian of the social work of the Dutch Reformed Church, most of the settlers were poor whites who had been forced off the land. 17) Generally landowners or men with a source of income were not accepted as settlers and preference was given to hard working married men with a knowledge of farming. There was a probationary period of one to five years.

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15) *ibid.* p.1.

16) *ibid.* p.1.

17) Botha, L.L.N. Die Maatskaplike Sorg van die N.G. Kerk in Suid-Afrika 1928-1953. p.351.

For their first six months settlers were given a non-repayable allowance of £5 per month plus 15/- for each child; and this allowance was halved at the end of the period and again after a further six months. 18)

Settlers were also supplied with a span of mules, two cows, a trolley, a plough, seed and fertilizer. All these had to be paid for over a period of five years. After completing his probationary period the settler could buy his holding, usually about 30 morgen, for about £900. 19) Payment could be extended over a period of 65 years and freehold title would be granted upon completion of payments.

The numbers of settlers on the Vaal-Hartz Scheme from its foundation to 1955 are given below:-

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>No. SETTLED</u>	<u>No. LEAVING 20)</u>
1938	80	1
1939	186	4
1940	108	15
1941	10	13
1942	-	10
1943	-	5
1944	-	2
1945	4	1
1946	273	17
1947	69	6
1948	46	4
1949	80	-
1950	113	-
1951	142	1
1952	30	2
1953	33	-
1954/55	56	-

18) Du Toit, J.S.J. and Gutsche, A.D.E. op.cit. p.2.

19) ibid. p.3.

20) ibid. p.2.

When one compares the Vaal-Hartz Scheme with Kakamas one is struck by the many advantages the original Vaal-Hartz settlers had compared with larger plots on which houses were already erected; they had a good chance of becoming freeholders; and they enjoyed initial financial aid from the State. Today the farmers of the Vaal-Hartz area are, for the most part, rich. The Kakamas farmers, on the other hand, while free from want, are generally not rich. Yet one should remember the greater initial advantages which the State, with much greater resources than the Church, was able to confer on the Vaal-Hartz settlers. Moreover many of the most successful Vaal-Hartz settlers were men of ambition and initiative who had left Kakamas for the Vaal-Hartz Scheme to better themselves.

From the Vaal-Hartz scheme we turn to the State Forestry Settlements, another important application of the 'back to the land' solution.

In July, 1914, J. Leisk, the Secretary for Finance, suggested to C.E. Logat, the Chief Conservator of Forests, that a scheme be devised to make better provision for "the class of people known as poor whites" and at the same time provide work of a less sporadic nature for these people. 21) Leisk proposed that the Department of Forestry should employ poor whites on its stations even though this would be more expensive than employing non-European labour. He argued that the higher expenditure "might be regarded as the cost involved in the reclamation

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21) U.G. 15-'40. p.125.

of destitute people, and in work of a permanent value to the State." 22) In 1915 Legat submitted proposals along the above lines to the Treasury but owing to the War the matter had to be shelved for a year. In 1916, however, Legat gave evidence before a select Committee on drought relief. Among the Committee's recommendations were that poor whites be employed on Forest Stations. From 1916 onwards the employment of poor whites on forest stations was a definite Government policy.

In 1917 settlements were established at La Motte and Jonkersberg in the Cape and during the post-war slump temporary settlements were established at Magoebas-kloof and Entabeni in the Transvaal and at Cedara and Xumeni in Natal. By March 1925 eight settlements existed. 23) A table showing the position with regard to forestry settlements in 1917 and 1933 is given below: 24)

	<u>1917</u>	<u>1933</u>
Settlements	2	17
Houses	66	1421
Labourers	37	1367
Women	37	1364
Children	111	3892 (incl. 33 children over 18)
People	185	6623 (plus 13 dependants living with their married sons or daughters)

By 1937 it was clear that the settlements had proved their value to the State, not only from the angle of

22) *ibid.* p.125.

23) *ibid.* p.126.

24) *ibid.* p.126.

forest development, but also from the point of view of absorbing large numbers of indigent unemployed whites from drought stricken areas and industrial centres. 25) Moreover, the centralization of these poor whites facilitated their social rehabilitation and the education of their children.

For the settlers, however, life on the settlements was tough. Most of the settlements were situated in mountainous areas so the settlers had to negotiate the most difficult type of terrain in getting to and from work. Because of this it was often necessary for settlers to leave their homes before sunrise in order to arrive on time at work. Similarly they would usually only return home after sunset. During the rainy season they often had to work all day long in the rain without a dry shred of clothing. It was estimated that the average useful working life of a settler who arrived at the settlement in good health and in the prime of life was only eight years. 26) At the end of this period he usually suffered from one or more of the following complaints - chronic varicose veins, rheumatism, hernia, ulcerated stomach or muscular heart disease. 27) At this stage the settler was no longer capable of sustained hard work and was labelled as and "economically unproductive unit" and "repatriated" to the district he had originally come from. 28) The plight of such a man was well described by the Secretary for Social

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25) *ibid.* p.130.

26) *ibid.* p.128.

27) *ibid.* p.128.

28) *ibid.* p.128.

Welfare:

"Then, much of a stranger in his former home town, poor in friends, poorer in friendship, broken in health and unable to make a living, he became a pauper, i.e. a candidate for an invalidity grant." 29)

In 1938 the Department of Social Welfare began to improve conditions on the settlements so as to prevent this kind of tragedy. This will be dealt with later in the chapter.

The most important and far reaching measures adopted by the State in it's efforts to solve the poor white problem were the Civilized Labour Policy and it's predecessor the White Labour Policy.

Such a policy was, as we have seen, implicit in the recommendations of the 1906 Cape Select Committee on the poor white problem and explicitly recommended by the 1908 Orange River Colony Commission on the poor white problem. The Transvaal Indigency Commission (1906-08), however, warned against such a policy as did several other Commissions after Union. In 1916 the Dutch Reformed Church organized a congress on the problem at Cradock where the white labour policy was once again recommended as a solution. The most important commission to support the Civilized Labour Policy was the Carnegie Commission, though they saw it only as a temporary expedient.

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29) *ibid.* p.129.

Broadly, the white labour policy entailed reserving certain skilled and semi-skilled positions in industry for whites (and sometimes coloureds) as well as reserving certain unskilled positions for whites who were paid at higher rates than natives in similar positions would be paid. In some instances custom could be relied upon to produce an economic colour bar but where custom was insufficient legislative and administrative expedients were resorted to.

The economic colour bar first arose on the Griqualand West diamond fields, South Africa's first industrial society. Here, by the late 1870's natives had been excluded from all occupations except that of labourers. "It was at the diamond fields", says de Kiewiet, "that the gate to all but low paid and unskilled labour was slammed against the native in industry." 30) English speaking diggers carried the economic colour bar to the mines in the South African Republic where it was readily accepted by the Boers as conforming to the pre-ordained scheme of human relationships. Moreover, the colour bar was re-enforced by the tradition of servile native employment in Transvaal farming and by the fact that most natives were target workers who did not hold down positions long enough to acquire skills.

The year 1907 was a crucial one in the growth of the economic colour bar. In that year English speaking miners on the Rand mines staged a strike which had two important results. Firstly, it led to the importation to the Rand mines of a large number of

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30) De Kiewiet, C.W. The Imperial Factor in South Africa, p.102.

platteland Afrikaners as scabs. These men constituted a powerful pressure group in favour of a more stringent application of the white labour policy in mining. Secondly, the Government was forced to pass Ordinance 17 of 1907 in an effort to appease the miners. This Ordinance protected white miners from competition from skilled Chinese and created a precedent for subsequent colour bar legislation. In 1907 also, the railways began to take on unskilled white labour in preference to unskilled native labour. By 1908 some 300 unskilled white labourers were employed on work formerly done by natives; by the time of Union this number had risen to 3,254 and by 1921 to 4,705. 31)

In 1911 the Mines and Works Act was passed. Section 4 empowered the Governor General to make regulations concerning the issue of certificates with a view to ensuring the safety of those employed in the mining industry. In the Transvaal and the Free State regulations were promulgated which reserved certain positions for competent whites. Among these were cage operating, inspecting for gas and dust, and engine driving. In 1920 the Low Grade Mines Commission estimated that the Mines and Works Regulations in the Transvaal and the Free State prescribed 32 occupations, embracing 7,057 persons, which could only be filled by whites. 32) In addition there had been a de facto extension of this situation, through trade union influence, to 19 further occupations embracing 4,020 persons. 33)

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31) Wilcocks, R.W. The Poor White. p.77.

32) U.G. 34-'20. p.p. 48-51.

33) *ibid.* pp.48-51.

Thus even before the Pact Government came to power a start had been made with employing poor whites rather than natives on the railways. Moreover much had been done by way of protecting skilled whites on the mines from competition from natives. This policy was a precedent for the subsequent Civilized Labour Policy. Following the 1922 strike the Nationalists and the Labourites formed a pact for the 1924 election. After winning the election they formed the Pact Government, the main aim of which was to protect white labour. On 31st October, 1924 General Hertzog issued a circular outlining his Government's Civilized Labour Policy:

"Civilized Labour is to be considered as the labour rendered by persons, whose standard of living conforms to the standard generally recognized as tolerable from the usual European standpoint. Uncivilized labour is to be regarded as the labour rendered by persons whose aim is restricted to the bare requirements of the necessities of life as understood among barbarous and underdeveloped peoples". 34)

The circular urged the substitution, wherever possible, of civilized labour for uncivilized labour in Government departments. The labour exchanges attached to the newly created Department of Labour would be the

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34) U.G. 54-'37. p.36.

chief instruments in this process. In conclusion it was stated that in upholding the Civilized Labour Policy, the Government was attempting to set an example to employers throughout the land.

Subsequently a more detailed apologia for the Civilized Labour Policy was printed in Union Year Books, which made it clear that the policy was aimed at solving the poor white problem. Part of the apologia in Union Year Book No. 16 (1933-34) is quoted below:

"....In the competition for work between unskilled European workers on the one hand, and non-European labourers on the other, the European is seriously handicapped, owing to the fact that non-European labourers are satisfied with a lower standard of living and are, therefore, content with and prepared to work for a much lower wage.

The conditions thus brought into being have affected in the most marked degree every question concerning labour in the Union and have introduced social and economic difficulties of a serious kind, and of a type not found in countries possessing a less complex racial structure. There is for example in the Union a portion of the population known under the somewhat unsatisfactory name of poor whites....

The existence of conditions described in the preceding paragraph, and in

particular the steady growth of the poor white class as a result of recurrent agricultural crises and other factors stimulating migration from the country to the town areas, have led to the development of a sentiment favourable to the employment of European labour in spheres hitherto regarded as adopted primarily for native labour....." 35)

In the field of mining the Pact Government had to amend the Mines and Works Act in order to facilitate the operation of their policy. This was because the Transvaal Supreme Court had ruled in 1923 that the 'colour bar' regulations promulgated in terms of the Act in the Transvaal and Free State were ultra vires. The Judges ruled that the Act did not contain any clear language authorizing such regulations. Thus amending legislation was passed in 1926 which stated explicitly that regulations issued in terms of the Act could restrict the issue of certificates of competency to Whites, Cape Coloureds, Cape Malays, Mauritau Creoles and people from St. Helena.

It was on the Railways and Harbours that the Civilized Labour Policy had the most far reaching effects. Indeed, Wilcocks wrote in the Carnegie Report that: "No other measure specially designed to cope practically with the poor white problem is comparable in extent with that carried out on the railways." 36) After 1924 the

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35) Union Year Book No. 16. p.189.

36) Wilcocks, R.W. The Poor White. p.79.

State provided increased openings for unskilled white labourers on the railways as the table below indicates:

WHITE LABOURERS ON THE RAILWAYS			
YEAR	NO. ON COMPLETED LINES	NO. ON CONSTRUCTION	TOTAL
1924	3,083	1,667	4,760
1925	7,557	3,193	10,750
1926	10,161	3,126	13,287
1927	11,228	3,624	14,870
1928	11,997	3,901	15,878
1929	12,906	2,912	15,818
1930	12,501	1,862	14,363
1931	12,247	2,304	14,551

37)

While the total number of unskilled white labourers decreased slightly after 1928, more were taken on during the depression as we shall see later.

In 1925 a system of wages on an age basis was introduced for unskilled white labourers and by 1931 they were receiving between three and five shillings per day. 38) Labourers over 21 received either free housing or a subsistence allowance ranging from sixpence to one ninepence per day. 39) In addition to the above labourers received free medical treatment for themselves and their families and free railway transport for purposes such as children travelling to School. If a labourer passed Standard Six the way to any post in the railways was open to him. Between 1925 and 1931 no less than 11,332 men were thus promoted. 40) There was a fairly strict screening before a labourer was given permanent employment so few had to be

dismissed. Labourers on construction work, i.e.

37) Wilcocks, R.W. The Poor White. p.79.

38) *ibid.* p.77.

39) *ibid.* p.78.

40) *ibid.* p.78

temporary labourers, were paid on a piece work scale and their earnings varied from five to fifteen shillings per day. 41)

The effects of the application of the Civilized Labour Policy on the S.A.R. and it's whites, as well as on other racial groups, is illustrated in the table below:

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LABOURING STAFF ON THE S.A.R. AND H. IN SELECTED YEARS.

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YEAR	% WHITES	% NATIVES	% INDIANS	% COLOURED
1924	9.5	75.0	4.2	11.3
1925	19.7	66.4	3.7	10.2
1929	28.7	55.9	1.8	13.6
1933	39.3	48.9	1.5	10.3
1936	28.9	57.8	0.8	11.3

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42)

Thus opportunities for white labourers were increased at the expense of non-whites whose opportunities were correspondingly decreased. This was particularly true during the depression. The figures for 1933 above show that the S.A.R. and H. practised a bizarre combination of Keynesian economics and racialism by greatly increasing the number of whites during the depression at the expense of other racial groups.

By 1936 the S.A.R. and H. employed 17,300 white labourers plus another 1,689 whose wages were subsidised by the Department of Labour. 43) Wilcocks points out that

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41) *ibid.* p.78.

42) Hancock, W.K. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs. Vol. II. p. 52.

The full table on which the above is based is to be found in U.G. 54-'37. p.44.

43) *ibid.* p.52.

most of these had belonged to the poor white class. 44)

The Civilized Labour Policy also involved increasing the opportunities for poor whites in the Civil and Municipal services. The Department of Labour encouraged the Public Works Department and the Provincial Administrations to employ unskilled white labour rather than native labour, sometimes using subsidies as an incentive. In 1931 the Minister of Labour convened a conference of representatives of Municipalities to discuss methods of combating unemployment. At this conference it was decided that Municipalities should aim at making one-fifth of the unskilled labour force white labourers and that the minimum wage for such labourers should be six shillings per day. 45) The difference between the cost of such labour and the cost of native labour would be partially met by the State. Relief work such as paving and the erection of lavatories was considered to be of a temporary nature and was not to be subsidized. In 1934, however, it was decided to subsidize the employment of white unskilled labour on temporary Municipal work and on construction schemes undertaken by private contractors on behalf of Municipalities.

The Civilized Labour policy was also extended into private enterprise through pressure from the Department of Labour and the operation of wage determinations. In imposing the Civilized Labour Policy on private enterprise the Department of Labour used moral persuasion as a first expedient. When economic conditions were bad the Department urged firms to take

44) Wilcocks, R.W. The Poor White. p.76.

45) Union Year Book No. 14. (1931-32). p.171.

on more 'civilized labourers' and when economic conditions were good it emphasised the fortunate opportunity for doing just the same. Thus the Department's policy remained constant. When moral persuasion failed threats could be resorted to. An uncoöperative firm could be threatened with exclusion from the Union Tender Board or the list of approved tenderers for the Railways and Harbours. After 1925, when the Government adopted a policy of tariff protection, an industry could be refused protection against imported goods if it failed to maintain a satisfactory ratio between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' workers. In 1933 a government proclamation stated that manufacturers enjoying special permission to import certain goods or to import certain goods duty free, could have these concessions withdrawn if Department of Labour Inspectors discovered that they were maintaining "unsatisfactory labour conditions". 46)

In 1926, in terms of the Wage Act of 1925, the first Wage Board was constituted with a view to determining hours, conditions of labour, and wages. The Wage Board was not intended to be a spearhead of the Civilized Labour Policy. In practice, however, Wage Board determinations actually re-enforced the Civilized Labour Policy up to about 1938 by increasing the white share of industrial employment at the expense of natives and sometimes coloureds; and where wage determinations did benefit coloureds this was often at the expense of natives. All this was because the Wage Board tended

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46) U.G. 54-'37. p.38.

to fix minimum wages so high that most non-Europeans were excluded from trades for which determinations had been made. Hutt points out that high minimum wage rates "have rendered much more formidable those restraints imposed by custom and prejudice that have debarred non-whites from avenues of economic advancement". 47)

The effects of the operation of the Civilized Labour Policy in Industry are shown in the table below:

RATIO OF WHITE TO NON-WHITE EMPLOYEES IN FACTORIES 1917/18 to 1934/35		
YEAR	% WHITE	% NON-WHITE
1917/18	38.6	63.2
1921/22	35	65
1927/28	40.9	59.1
1932/33	45.29	54.71
1934/35	43.62	56.38

48)

Thus in private enterprise, just as with the railways, the advent of the Pact Government brought expanded opportunities for whites, at the expense of non-whites. As with the railways, this was especially the case during the depression when the state, inspired by Kegresian economics as well as traditional prejudice, pressurized private manufacturers into altering their labour ratio in favour of whites.

In much of the literature on the poor white problem one detects sentimental attitudes towards the 'back to the land' solution. For instance, P.J. Rossouw concludes his thesis on Kakamas with these words:

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47) Hutt, W.H. The Economics of the Colour Bar. pp.72-73.

48) Hancock, W.K. op.cit. p.52.

"As Kakamas nie daar was nie! . . . . .  
Nie alleen het Kakamas sy drieduisend  
blankes van agteruitgang gered nie,  
maar dit het uitgestyg as een van  
die maniere, wat aangewend kan word  
tot oplossing van die groot Armblanke-  
vraagstuk in Suid- Afrika." 49)

When one considers, however, that by 1931 there were, thanks to the Civilized Labour Policy, 14,551 unskilled white male labourers on the railways alone, it becomes clear that the Civilized Labour Policy rehabilitated by far the greater number of poor whites. This is not the place to consider the justice of this policy nor the price white South Africa may yet have to pay for it : we will confine ourselves to an evaluation of its effectiveness as a solution to the poor white problem.

It could be argued that the Civilized Labour Policy was a psychological necessity, without which many poor whites would not have taken to manual labour. We have seen that the fact that manual labour was usually performed by natives lay at the root of the poor white prejudice against manual labour. The Civilized Labour Policy, by excluding many natives from manual labour, helped poor whites to overcome their prejudices.

Despite the above it seems possible that the Civilized Labour Policy actually retarded the solution of the poor white problem. The main flaw in the reasoning behind the policy was a tendency to see non-whites only as competitors in the labour market, and not as consumers.

49) Rossouw, P.J. Die Arbeidskolonie Kakamas Thesis published in Archives Year Book 1951, Vol.II, p.447.

In 1925 Commissioners Clay, Martin and Mills of the Economic and Wage Commission warned against the use of the wage rate as a colour bar. This would indeed extend white employment but at the expense of the consumer and later the white worker. Employers faced with rising labour costs would have to raise the prices of their goods. This would in turn lead to diminished consumption and employers, faced with a contracting demand for their goods, would have to reduce production and lay off white as well as non-white employees. Restriction of employment opportunities either by the wage rate or by job reservation, would also restrict their ability to buy the goods of industry thus causing a contracting demand for the goods of industry. In 1935, after the Civilized Labour Policy had been operating for a decade, the Industrial Legislation Commission gave the same warnings:

"Restrictions of the opportunities of the non-Europeans must inevitably have a depressing effect upon their remuneration in the spheres in which they predominate. Unfortunately for the European, however, the remuneration of non-Europeans sets the standard for the reward of European labour, particularly in non-skilled occupations. Disabilities suffered by the non-Europeans will, therefore, ultimately affect the European as well." 50)

Poverty, as Hancock has pointed out, is no respecter of

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50) U.G. 37-'35. p. 52.

colour. The perpetrators of the Civilized Labour Policy failed to realise that the choice was not between white prosperity and black poverty; rather it was a simple choice between prosperity and poverty. 51)

In the field of social welfare work both the state and private organizations helped to alleviate the poor white problem.

From the time of its establishment in 1924 two of the most important functions of the Department of Labour were the management of work colonies and the provision of social services. The Department was also to cooperate with private welfare organizations.

In 1932 the Carnegie Commission on the Poor White Problem recommended the establishment of a separate Department of Social Welfare as well as local poor relief committees as more effective means of dealing with the poor white problem.

The theme of a separate Department of Social Welfare was taken up in 1934 at the Kimberley Congress on the poor white problem. Here Dr. Verwoerd pointed out that the question of whether the problem was to be solved in the towns or be solved by a 'back to the land' policy was not the main point at issue.

Similarly mere provision of employment for poor whites was not enough. What was needed was measures which went to the root of the problem, particularly measures aimed at preventing the social and economic retrogression of those living just above the poverty line and those vulnerable to cyclical depressions. 52) Some of the

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51) Hancock, W.K. op.cit. p.66.

52) Theron, E. H.F. Verwoerd as Welsynbeplanner. pp.85-87.

measures Dr. Verwoerd proposed in this connection were social work on the settlements, measures aimed at helping young white migrants from the country to adjust to city life, and even measures to force the lazy to work. Such services, he felt, could best be provided by a separate Department of Social Welfare. Previously social work was the task of a few philanthropists; now it was the obligation of democracy. The Congress therefore proposed the establishment of a separate Department of Social Welfare and appointed a Continuation Committee with a national charter to do everything in its power to realise the resolutions passed at the Congress. The Committee immediately began to agitate for the establishment of a separate Department of Social Welfare and met with success in 1937.

Local Poor Relief Committees, as recommended by the Carnegie Commission were established in 1934 by the Federal Poor Relief Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church. These were based in areas where the poor white problem was fairly serious - George, Calvinia, Springbok, Oudtshoorn, Kimberley, Pietersburg, Lydeburg, Wolmaransstad, Lichtenburg, Kopjes, Kroonstad, Ficksburg and Trompsburg. 53) The Committees were to combat rural unemployment and alleviate social distress in general. A committee could appoint a trained social worker as secretary, subject to the approval of the Minister of Labour. The state would pay half of the Secretary's salary. Later the functions of the Committees were extended to include collection of

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53) U.G. 15-'40. p.40.

poor white statistics, investigation of the health and housing conditions of the rural poor, and liaison with the Department of Labour and local authorities with a view to finding work for the unemployed rural poor.

A separate Department of Social Welfare was established in 1937 and two of its most important tasks during the late 1930's were improving conditions on the State Forestry Settlements and resettling indigent alluvial diamond diggers.

We have seen how, by 1937, unsatisfactory labour conditions were reducing the working lives of settlers on the State Forestry Settlements, necessitating their 'repatriation' to their districts of origin. The Department of Social Welfare tackled the problem by making the following provisions on estimates for the financial year 1938/39:

	£
Motor transport, purchase of	500
Motor transport, Maintenance of	3,000
General transport	250
Preparation and transport of firewood	3,500
Sanitary and cleaning services	2,300
General expenses	1,000
Improvement, maintenance and extension of settler's dwellings	30,000
Improvement of water supply	4,000
Erection of recreation halls	3,000
Contribution to Central Welfare Fund	4,000
	£51,550
	===== 54)

The most important provision in the above estimates was for purchase of lorries to transport the settlers to and

from their work. It was no longer necessary for them to rise before sunrise in order to be on time for work. Moreover motorised transport from work enabled them to return home early enough to devote time to their gardens and rest properly before the next day's work. All this led to an increase in both the quantity and the quality of the work done. The improvement of the living conditions of the settlers had the effect of improving their morale. The most beneficial result of the above improvements, however, was the virtual elimination of the wastage of human potential caused by distances and unsatisfactory living conditions. We have already seen how many poor whites who migrated to the alluvial diamond diggings in search of better things were disappointed in their expectations. In 1936 the white population of the diggings was as shown below:

DISTRICT	MEN	WOMEN	CHILDREN	TOTAL
Lichtenburg	1,526	1,255	2,862	5,643
Klerksdorp	575	378	999	1,952
Barkly West	1,012	721	1,228	2,961
Pretoria	157	123	220	500
	3,270	2,477	5,309	11,056

55)

The population of the diggings was beyond the resources of the localities to bear. As a result only 13 percent of the diggers enjoyed incomes above their needs; 31 percent were in a position to provide for themselves;

and 56 percent were verging on destitution. 56) In 1936 it was estimated that over half of the total white population of the diggings required aid from the state; and during the financial year 1937/38 the state contributed £5,600 towards their maintenance. 57)

In 1937 the Suid Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie established blanket factories at Lichtenburg, Wolmaransstad and Bynestpoort. These factories were subsidised by the Department of Labour and provided women on the diggings with remunerative employment as well as opportunities to buy blankets cheaply. Nevertheless these factories had an adverse effect on the mobility of the digger population and tended to keep surplus diggers on the diggings in that this artificial provision of employment tended to discourage migration.

The Department of Social Welfare adopted the policy, as recommended by an Inter-Departmental Committee in 1936, of encouraging the migration of destitute diggers to other areas. Much of this was done in coöperation with other departments.

The Department of Labour agreed to keep registers of destitute diggers and bring any opportunities for employment to their notice. In the meantime the Department of Social Welfare supplied the destitute diggers with rations. A digger who refused an opportunity of employment, however, would have his rations discontinued.

The Transvaal Education Department was persuaded by

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56) *ibid.* p.133.

57) *ibid.* p.133.

the Department of Social Welfare to close most of the small schools on the diggings and provide educational facilities for diggers children at centres away from the diggings. This was meant to induce surplus diggers to move elsewhere.

In coöperation with the Departments of Lands, Agriculture and Forestry, the Department of Social Welfare managed to resettle many indigent diggers on state settlements. Aged diggers or diggers in poor health were often given sheltered employment at special settlements under the control of the Department of Social Welfare.

In order to facilitate all the above the Department of Social Welfare attempted to persuade the Department of Labour to limit employment at the blanket factories, at Lichtenburg, Byvestpoort and Wolmaransstad to women who were physically unfit for normal work. The Department of Labour was not in agreement, but did agree to request the Vroue Federasie to bring about a 50 percent reduction in staff at the factories.

The Department's policy of encouraging the migration of the poorer elements on the diggings had the beneficial effects of placing indigent diggers and the families in better circumstances, as well as protecting well established diggers from competition from newcomers.

By the mid 1930's the idea had arisen that the poor white problem could be solved by the promotion of Afrikaner capitalism. This seemed a feasible method because by this stage many of the better known Afrikaner businesses were already flourishing. A.V.B.O.B. was founded in 1916 and by 1925 it was showing good profits

and even had a reserve fund for free burials, despite the fact that van Rooijen, the Director, was said to be too good a Christian to be a good businessman. 58) The beautiful free funeral A.V.B.O.B. laid on for General de Wet in 1922 seems to have done much to establish its reputation. By 1934 A.V.B.O.B. had 80 branches. 59) Volkskas was founded as a Savings bank in 1934 and between 1936 and 1940 its paid up capital had increased from £2,300 to £30,000. 60) This enabled it to transform itself into a commercial bank in 1940. Another example of the growth of Afrikaner enterprise was the Boshoff mining group. In 1931 Willem Boshoff, a shift boss, raised a loan of £4,000 and bought the Aurora West mine at Krugersdorp. 61) Soon the mine was running at a profit so he sold it for £50,000 and bought the Primrose mine at Germiston for £12,500. 62) In 1934 he added to his growing empire by buying the Juniper mine for £17,500. 63)

While the above developments were taking place Rev. J.D. ('Vader') Kestell was busy, in 1932, with a series of articles in Die Volksblad in which he argued that the solution to the poor white problem lay in a process of mutual aid "Saamwerk, Helpmekaar, Redmekaar". 64)

In October 1938, during the Trek Centenary Celebrations, he again expounded this theme and called for a great "reddingsdaad" to solve the poor white problem. 65)

Three months before this, however, the Afrikaanse Nasionale Kultuurraad had already begun making plans

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- 58) Du Plessis, E.P. in Volk Staans Op. p.67  
 59) ibid. p.67.  
 60) ibid. p.90.  
 61) ibid. p.90.  
 62) ibid. p.91.  
 63) ibid. p.91.  
 64) ibid. p.92.  
 65) ibid. p.94.

for such a reddingsdaad. At its meeting in July, 1938 this body had charged the Ekonomiese Instituut of the F.A.K. with the organization of a Volkskongres on Christian National Education, the racial question, and economic matters, especially the position of the Afrikaner in the commercial life of the nation. The Congress was expected to be "n Kongres wat sal uitloop op 'n (sic) grootste reddingsdaad in die belang van die Afrikanervolk". 66)

The Ekonomiese Volkskongres took place in October 1939. Kestell opened the proceedings with prayer but from then on the tone of the Congress was secular. Several prominent Afrikaners delivered speeches and these were followed by resolutions.

Dr. Verwoerd pointed out that the buying power of the Afrikaner was reckoned at £80M per year but only a small portion of this was used in support of Afrikaner enterprises. 67) He argued that while it was possible for Afrikaners to save by taking advantage of discounts offered by non-Afrikaner firms, this would only be a short term saving. If the Afrikaner did not win the economic struggle, or at any rate get a good grip on commerce and industry, the progress made by the Afrikaner in other fields would soon come to an end. He therefore proposed the establishment of a nationwide organization aimed at establishing new Afrikaner businesses and encouraging existing Afrikaner businesses to expand.

Prof. Dr. C.G.W. Schumann said that the fact that of the 1,120,000 white Afrikaners in South Africa, more

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66) ibid. p.94.

67) Die Volksblad 5/10/39. p.10.

than 300,000 were poor, was a serious blemish on the society. Nevertheless, he asked if perhaps too much attention had not been given in the past to these "ongesonde" (unhealthy?) elements in the society. 68) He felt it would be better if more attention was paid to the "gesonde" elements in the society, with a view to elevating the less healthy elements. 69) By this Schumann meant that the promotion of Afrikaner capitalism would, incidentally, solve the poor white problem. He went on to say that among the 300,000 or more poor whites there were many unskilled labourers. This was not necessarily a bad situation as part of the white population would always have to perform unskilled manual labour, in spite of the presence of so many non-whites. 70)

Prof. L.J. du Plessis said that Afrikaner national consciousness was extending into the economic field and the Afrikaner was beginning to realize that the resources of the land should be exploited in the service of the volk and to the glory of God. Afrikaner capitalism would, however, be Christian National in character and not British-Jewish. 71)

Dr. Albert Hertzog devoted much of his speech to an attack on Solly Sachs, Secretary of the Garmet Workers' Union, and the recently murdered Charlie Harris, former Secretary of the Mine Workers' Union. He described Sachs as "n Russiese Jood.....n Kommunis" 72) and

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68) Referate, Besluite en Presensielys - Ekonomiese Volkongres. p.41.

69) ibid. p.41.

70) ibid. p.42.

71) Die Volksblad 4/10/39. p.12.

72) Naude, L. Dr. A. Hertzog, Die Nasionale Party en die Mynwerkers. p. 266.

accused him of conspiring with Jewish Capitalists to oppress female Afrikaner workers in the garment industry. The late Harris was also accused of conspiring with "uitlander" 73) mine owners towards a similar end. Dr. Hertzog felt that the time was ripe for Afrikaners to start taking over the trade unions. He said that during the depression Afrikaners had left the rural areas in large numbers to become urban industrial workers. These men, unlike those who had been in the cities for a long time, were untainted with the spiritual poisoning present in most trade unions. The men would be able to conquer the trade unions on behalf of the volk. Dr. Hertzog concluded his speech with the following significant words:

"Ons betreur die vernietiging van die platteland se Afrikaner gedurende die laaste depressie maar uit daardie vernietiging sal waarskynlik die wederopstanding van die Afrikanervolk gebore word." 74)

The above extracts, which are typical of all the speeches delivered at the Congress, give very little indication that the main purpose of the Congress was to discuss methods of solving the poor white problem. Even more surprising were the attitudes of Professor Schumann and Dr. Hertzog towards the poor whites. The former, by arguing that there would always be unskilled white labourers was, in effect, taking refuge in the cliché that 'the poor are always with us'. The latter, by

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73) *ibid.* p.267.

74) *ibid.* p.271.

suggesting that poor white migrants to the towns could be usefully deployed in eradicating the influence of Solly Sachs and others, was, in effect, taking up the attitude that 'elke donker wolk het 'n silwer streel'. Nevertheless, Dr. Hertzog was deeply concerned about the Afrikaner urban worker losing his national and cultural identity through the influence of Sachs and other volksvreemde elements.

The accomplishments of the Congress seemed to have as little connection with the poor white problem as the speeches. The Congress established an organization known as the Reddingsdaadbond to administer a fund known as the Reddingsdaadfonds. The fund was to be sustained by monies raised at fêtes and by subscriptions from Afrikaner Church congregations, 75) school children, students and railway workers. 76) In 1940 Federale Volksbeleggings Beperk was founded for the investment of the Reddingsdaadfonds. 77) During the 1940's the main accomplishments of the Reddingsdaadbond were the expansion of VOBI (Volksbioskope Maatskappy Beperk) and the foundation of BONUSKOR (Bonusbeleggingskorporasie). Neither of these enterprises seemed to have any direct connection with the poor white problem. Indeed one only has to peruse Die Volksblad for October 1939 to see how much Afrikaner capitalists were cashing in on the Ekonomiese Volkskongres. A typical advertisement, inserted by Opkoms Meubels, Bloemfontein, reads as follows:

"Afgevaardigdes na die Ekonomiese

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75) Referate, Besluite en Presensielys - Ekonomiese Volkskongres, p.211.

76) ibid. p.212.

77) du Plessis, E.P. op.cit. p.138.

Volkskongres en alle belangstellendes  
word hartlik uitgenooi om hierdie  
Afrikanermeubelsaak 'n besoek te bring.  
Hier word die Afrikaner die geleent-  
heid gegee om alle meubelbenodighede  
by 'n suiwer Afrikanersaak te verkry." 78)

Volksblad-Boekhandel took the opportunity to advertise  
"'n Skryfblok vir die Afrikaner" 79) while Hollandia  
advertised itself as a "Afrikaanse Haarsnyer." 80)

All the above was a far cry from the process of mutual aid which Rev. Kestell had called for to solve the poor white problem. The key to the paradox, however, lies in Professor Dr. Schumann's argument that the promotion of Afrikaner capitalism would, incidentally, solve the poor white problem. Nevertheless it is significant that by 1939 prominent Afrikaners were thinking along the lines of an indirect rather than a direct attack on poor whitism. In this sense the Ekonomiese Volkskongres can be seen as an indication of declining Afrikaner concern over the poor white problem. (A comparison of the Ekonomiese Volkskongres and the erection of cotton mills in the Deep South appears in an appendix to this essay).

Another index of the same declining concern is to be found in the changing rôle of the Continuation Committee established by the Kimberley Conference on the poor white problem in 1934. In 1939 this Committee converted itself into an "Instituut vir Volkswelstand".81)

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78) Die Volksblad 5/10/39. p.10.

79) Die Volksblad 13/10/39. p.4.

80) Die Volksblad 11/10/39 p.3.

81) U.G. 15-'40. p.37.

It was felt that while the Committee's original task was not yet completed, it should nevertheless function on a broader basis. From 1939 onwards the Committee therefore aimed at performing social welfare work and undertaking socio-economic research, but on a specifically Christian-National basis. The Instituut was henceforth to study not only poor whtism, but social and economic problems in general. Thus by 1939 prominent Afrikaners were demoting the poor white problem in their scale of priorities.

By 1939, however, there was much less reason for concern over poor whtism than in the early 'thirties as economic developments were making for increased prosperity and employment.

Devaluation in 1933, coming as it did a little later than in England and many other countries, led to an influx of foreign capital and a rise in the price of gold. In 1933, too, ISCOR began production and this provided increased employment opportunities. Entrepreneurial ingenuity, faced with a need for more labour devised means of circumventing the restrictive Civilized Labour Policy. This enabled more natives to move from subsistence agriculture into industry and accelerated the transition to a more diversified economy. The Second World War forced a further diversification of industry and made for greater economic self-subsistence. During the period 1933 to 1945 the number of privately owned factories increased from 6,543 to 9,316, 82) greatly increasing employment opportunities. The opening

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82) Hobart Houghton, D. The South African Economy. p.16.

of the Free State Gold Fields in the late 'forties provided employment opportunities for most of the remaining poor whites.

Today the number of indigent whites is insufficient to constitute a problem yet the legacy of the poor white problem is still with us. As late as 1958 an experiment in self-help conducted at Stellenbosch University failed because many students refused to make their own beds, on the grounds that this was work for non-whites. 83) This is a striking case of survival of prejudices against manual labour, but it can be matched by many other minor instances even today. The most tragic legacy of the poor white problem, however, is the fear that lurks in the hearts of many White South Africans that they too may be reduced to poor whiteness. The photographs of poor whites and their dwellings in Volume II of the Carnegie Report seems to strike some white South Africans in the same way as photographs of Belsen strike Jews. When a politician promises to protect white labour against non-white competition he can usually be sure of striking a receptive chord in the hearts of his audience. The fear of a return to poor whiteness is perhaps the strongest factor making for the continuance of the economic colour bar.

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83) Doxey, G.V. The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa. p.107.

APPENDIX I

THE IDEAS OF TWO KAROO FARMERS ON THE ORIGIN OF SCAB

1) Mr. Johannes Bernadus Nigrini, farmer at Fraserburg, gives evidence before the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-94.

Q. Have you a dipping tank on your farm?

A. No, I have a cask. I have no suitable stone on my farm to build a tank with, but I can do it better in a cask than by throwing the sheep into a dipping tank.

Q. When you dip your sheep in the way you do, do you clean them of scab?

A. Yes.

Q. Then if your sheep are properly dipped, you think they can be cleaned?

A. Yes but not for ever.

Q. They remain clean until they become reinfected?

A. No, not by infection, but by bad seasons and drought.

Q. Then you think scab is spontaneous and comes from nothing?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you aware that scab is an insect?

A. I know of an insect but it is caused by scab.

Q. Then you think the insect comes from nothing?

A. It is caused by the scab.

Q. Do you know of any other insect that breeds from nothing?

A. Yes.

Q. What insect?

A. I have seen fleas. A house after being cleaned for two days, when you return the second day is quite full of fleas.

Q. Don't you think they hatch out form eggs?

A. No I don't think so.

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Q. Do you wish to add anything?

A. Since so much has been said and the scab act, I have made an experiment with the aid of the Veterinary Surgeon. I could not believe that scab could get from one sheep on to another, and I exposed the acarus for an hour in the warm sun, and it was killed. I then tried putting it out in a frost at midnight, and the next morning it was dead. I also tied up a healthy sheep and put the acari on the ground, for the whole night and it had no effect .... That insect is altogether helpless to move itself.

Q. If scab insects which are put on the wool of the sheep would go down to the skin, don't you think that if the sheep lay down on those scab insects which are scratched off in the veld, the insect would get onto the wool and onto the sheep in the same way?

A. He cannot do it; he cannot climb.

Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-94 (G.1-'94)  
Minutes of Evidence pp. 583 to 585.

2) Mr. J.A. van Zyl M.L.A. gives evidence before the Select Committee on the Scab Bill 1884.

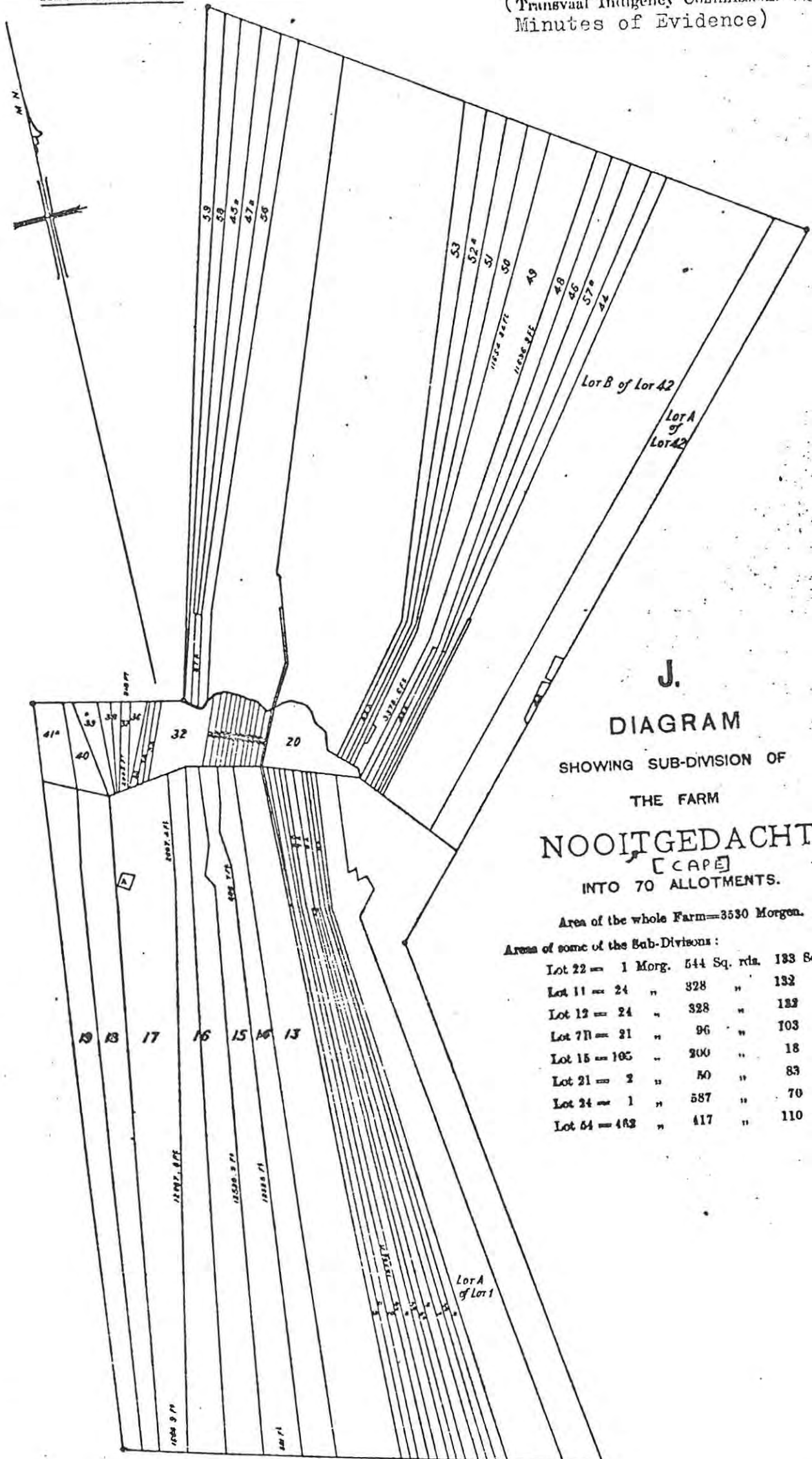
Q. Have you ever dipped your sheep?

A. No; I have only hand-dressed, and kept them clean in that way.

Q. Do you think that scab is infectious?

A. I cannot say.

Report of the Select Committee on the Scab Bill (A.5-'84)  
Minutes of Evidence p. 38.



**J.**  
**DIAGRAM**  
SHOWING SUB-DIVISION OF  
THE FARM  
**NOOITGEDACHT**  
[CAPE]  
INTO 70 ALLOTMENTS.

Area of the whole Farm=3530 Morgen.

Area of some of the Sub-Divisions:

Lot 22 =	1	Morg.	544	Sq. rds.	133	Sq. ft.
Lot 11 =	24	"	328	"	132	"
Lot 12 =	24	"	328	"	129	"
Lot 7B =	21	"	96	"	103	"
Lot 15 =	105	"	200	"	18	"
Lot 21 =	2	"	50	"	83	"
Lot 24 =	1	"	587	"	70	"
Lot 64 =	482	"	417	"	110	"

*These lots are nearly 3 miles in length and about 50 yards wide.*

APPENDIX III

During the 1880's in the Southern States of America cotton mills were erected to provide employment for poor whites. The men who erected these mills had other purposes in mind however. These are outlined by W.J. Cash in his book The Mind of the South:

"With the factory we shall make the South rich. And winning riches we shall be able fully to develop the school. And with the school, we shall not only set up a potent guarantee that white men will not sink into equality with the black, we shall also train our sons, and those of commoners as well, to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by industrial growth and its commercial consequences, and so to make the land richer still."

"With the factory and the school, in fine, we shall finally conquer the frontier left us by the Yankee....."

Cash, W.J. The Mind of the South,  
p. 176.

It is interesting to compare the above with the Ekonomiese Volkskongres (1939) which aimed not only at solving the poor white problem but also at building up the power of the Afrikaner in the social, political, educational and economic fields. Indeed, if one substitutes 'Afrikaner' for 'the South' in the above passage, and 'Engelsman' for 'Yankee', one will get a good picture of the Ekonomiese Volkskongres.

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