

Let there be no misunderstanding. The railroads need new equipment at once—and need it badly. But the recently achieved economies will create widespread hesitation as to the amount of new resources which are actually necessary. And they will create reluctance to provide capital for roads to use for their individual needs as competing, profit-making units rather than for their needs as parts of one organically conceived national system. In the light of their war efficiency, the demands of the railroads for new capital must be subject to exceptional scrutiny. And it is in trying at the same time to make permanent the economies resulting from the present consolidation, to protect the public from a gigantic private monopoly and to make it possible for sufficient railroad equipment to be procured, that we are confronted by several seriously advanced proposals for the solution of the railroad problem. From among them we are bound to choose a policy either as soon as peace is declared and the question of the status of the railroads in relation to our anti-trust laws has to be settled, or in the nearer future in connection with demands for rate increases and higher wages. There are at hand four quite distinct alternatives.

First, we can restore pre-war competition and allow the railroads to operate as upwards of six hundred separate corporations. We can allow rate increases sufficient to create earnings which will strengthen the security market and make it possible to float new issues on a basis of these individual, competitive needs. This will be the most expensive procedure from every point of view.

Second, we can retain the economies of operating as a national unit; change our trust laws; create five or six huge sectional systems under federal incorporation; and give the Interstate Commerce Commission complete power over the issuance of securities and over rates. We can then guarantee governmentally a certain per cent return on a basis of past earnings and put a representative of the government with veto power upon each system's directorate. This suggestion emanates from a prominent railroad president. Should this plan be followed, the question of rate increase could be held in abeyance for the present, and the issue of new securities would be carried on under proper safeguards.

The third alternative differs from the second in that instead of having the government guarantee earnings it provides that the government finance all new outlays by its own bond issues. It would then preferably own and rent the new equipment to the railroads. This suggestion has merits from several points of view. It combines the advantages of private operation with the economy of securing funds on government credit. And it places the

government in a position of the closest possible working alliance and progressive control over renewals and extensions. It means also that no additional increments of private capital with its overt influences and its yearnings for profit are being added to the fixed charges of these public carriers. Moreover, the government would find itself in possession of more and more equipment, the cost of which was known, and on a basis of which payment for the whole could, when government ownership was broached, proceed with better satisfaction to all parties. Judged with an eye to its effect on the national income this plan has much to commend it, not only to those interested in saving money for the country, but to those who believe that public operation, although eventually desirable, should be preceded by a period of more rigorous education of public opinion.

The immediate adoption of government ownership and operation is the fourth alternative. It has the advantage of being simple to advocate, of being exceedingly popular, and of appearing to solve difficult questions. Yet a moment's thought upon the problems that it raises leads to the admission that nationalization creates almost as many problems as it solves. And, undertaken at this time with the war and post-war problems upon it, there is grave danger that this added enterprise would fail to receive the competent, undivided consideration it requires.

But the war may have brought a new zeal and new sense of the meaning of public service which would surmount all difficulties if we were to enter upon this most radical of the alternatives. It may be that we underestimate the intensity and the constancy of the high-minded and energetic devotion which could be summoned to this task. Speculation in these directions is, however, of little avail. The important consideration is that we deliberately frame for ourselves the implications of these alternatives and rescue the situation from the forces of drift. The specific course which the country then takes will be of less importance than the fact that it has been entered upon intentionally, affirmatively and with some conscious estimate of the risks incurred.

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Politics in South Africa

THE native problem dominates the South African scene. Whatever political issues and movements show in the foreground, it supplies the permanent background. However much the white population of South Africa may be absorbed in the racial and economic rivalries of the immediate present, it cannot but be profoundly

apprehensive about its future, so long as the native problem remains unsolved. This is, of course, no new insight. In the days when the Union was in the making, and memories of recent war between Briton and Boer were even bitterer than they are now, thoughtful men perceived the urgency of the problem, recognized in it both a danger and an opportunity. Some courageously hoped that it would act as the much needed nation-making factor, drawing English and Dutch together through the sense of a common peril and a common task. Others, like Jan Hofmeyr, the leader of the "Bond," feared rather that the task of controlling a native population, outnumbering the whites by nearly 5 to 1, would prove too heavy a strain in men and money, and that the Union, compelled to rely, as heretofore, on British garrisons, would enjoy self-government only in name. Neither the hopes of the former nor the fears of the latter have been realized. The creation of a Union Defense Force has permitted the withdrawal of British troops, but the two white races have not been drawn more closely together, and no proposal for the solution of the problem has so far proved acceptable. In one respect, indeed, the war has but made the urgency of a solution more patent. The excellence of the native troops employed by the Germans in East Africa has opened the eyes of all South Africa to the menace to white civilization, if ever the black races through military training should learn to appreciate their military power. Hence, South Africa is sure to insist at the peace conference on an international convention by which the arming and training of natives will be forbidden, as they have been and are forbidden in South Africa.

Meanwhile, the problem remains, and it is worth while to appreciate its fundamental factors. Though in name a democracy, South Africa is in fact a small white aristocracy superposed on a large native substratum. It is an aristocracy both politically and economically. With few exceptions, the natives do not enjoy and cannot acquire those active political rights of which the franchise is the symbol. It is not a question, mainly, of the natives' present unfitness for the vote, which everyone must readily grant. It is a question of future political development. No policy which would ultimately involve that the white should admit the mass of the blacks to political power has any chance of acceptance, in the face of the unalterable numerical superiority of the blacks. Moreover, the white man considers himself degraded by doing the same sort of manual labor as the kaffir. The part for which he casts himself is that of master, boss, overseer. The natives' part is that of hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are to serve as a vast

reservoir of unskilled labor for farm and mine. This economic motive profoundly influences all native policy, and often interferes with its equity. At the same time, work in towns, on farms, in mines, is steadily breaking down the traditional tribal organization of the natives; and their increasing education and industrial efficiency give them the right to demand more consideration. The experiment first made in the Glen Grey district of the Cape Colony, and subsequently extended to the Transkei, of substituting individual for communal tenure of land is, under proper safeguards, working well. The simultaneous experiment of giving the natives local self-government, on the other hand, has shown that the natives at present are not politically mature enough for executive and administrative functions. The best compromise has been to keep these functions in the hands of white magistrates, and make the native councils purely deliberative. But this, of course, is only a stage preparing the native, so it is hoped, for complete control over his own affairs.

Thus matters stood when the Union of South Africa was founded. In what direction have the thoughts of its statesmen been moving since then? To that question a speech which General Smuts delivered in London, in May of this year, furnishes an answer. He rightly characterizes the problem as one of maintaining "white racial unity in the midst of the black environment." This depends, in part, on avoiding two mistakes, viz., mere exploitation of the natives, and racial intermixture. The white races, Smuts insists, must strictly observe the *racial* axiom, "No intermixture of blood between the two colors," and the *moral* axiom, "Honesty, fair-play, justice, and the ordinary Christian virtues must be the basis of all our relations with the natives."

Both these axioms of General Smuts', clearly, aim even more at the protection of the black race against the white, than of the white race against the black. The chief source of racial impurity is not the "black peril," but the "white peril," which the white press never mentions. It is the white man, not the black, who is responsible for the existence of over 600,000 "colored" people in South Africa at the present day. Again, whilst native labor is absolutely necessary for the economic development of South Africa, it cannot be said that under present conditions (e. g., herding in mine-compounds apart from family and tribe) the best interests of the natives are safeguarded, as according to Smuts's moral axiom they ought to be. Moreover, the "backveld" Dutchman regards the land of South Africa as belonging to him and his people by a sort of divine right, and where he has his way (as in the Orange Free

State) no native is allowed to own land. It is to the interest of farmers and mine-owners alike to keep the bulk of the natives permanently at the level of a reservoir of unskilled labor. Such an atmosphere is obviously not favorable to a liberal native policy.

But the problem is not only racial, economic, and moral, it is also political. Any incorporation of the blacks in the structure of white society is bound to raise, in the long run, the problem of admitting them to citizenship, giving them the vote, and treating them as the white man's political equals. There is only one way of avoiding this result, and that way is segregation of the native—the creation of parallel institutions, the parceling out of the land in a chequered pattern of white and black areas. This is the policy to which General Smuts pins his hopes. It is an application of the Glen Grey experiment on a large scale. It recognizes the fact that "It is useless to try to govern black and white in the same system. . . . They are different not only in color but in minds and in political capacity, and their political institutions should be different, while always proceeding on the basis of self-government." It may be hailed as an admission that the native has rights of his own, above all the right to work out his own destiny and devise his own way of learning from, and adjusting himself to, the white man's civilization, contact with which he can no longer escape.

The idea is, wherever there are large bodies of natives, to assign to them definite areas within which no white man may own land. The native, on his side, is to be forbidden to own land in white areas, though he is to be free to go and work for the white man. The races having been thus territorially separated, each is to live under its own political institutions, those of the natives taking, to begin with, the form of self-governing village communities.

That the scheme is promising in principle, there can be little doubt. At least it is safe to say, that if this does not succeed, nothing else will. But the details of its working out will, none the less, be full of difficulty and require the highest qualities of constructive statesmanship, if there is to be justice to both races. A beginning has so far been made by The Natives' Land act of 1913, a purely temporary measure designed chiefly to prevent speculation in land in anticipation of later legislation. By this act, the existing native reserves have been scheduled and Europeans have been forbidden to acquire land inside, and the natives to acquire land outside. It is, however, illustrative of the extreme difficulty of the situation, that the application of the act to the Cape Colony had to be declared il-

legal by the Court of Appeal, as contrary to the constitution of the Union. For the Cape Colony, on entering the Union, had retained and safeguarded its native franchise, based on a property qualification. Hence the Court held that no native could be deprived of the right of purchasing the land necessary for enrollment as a voter. How this difficulty is to be overcome by future legislation does not at present appear, but a solution will probably be found.

Meanwhile, the existing native reserves are insufficient for the natural expansion of the population actually on the soil, though an improvement in the present primitive methods of agriculture would solve this difficulty for some time to come. But in any case large bodies of natives, at present living in urban centers and on white men's farms, have to be provided for. Hence the existing native areas have to be extended and considerable new areas have to be added. Several commissions have successively been appointed to deal with this problem, but their recommendations have not met with a favorable reception. The natives naturally want their areas to be large enough for future expansion, of suitable location and climate for their mode of life, and of sufficiently good quality for agriculture and stock-breeding to give them a chance of economic independence.

But as one would expect, on the other hand, the white farmers now holding land in proposed new native areas naturally object to giving up good land and seeking a new home elsewhere, even though the government does not propose expropriation but voluntary sale. But more formidable opposition will certainly come from a coalition of all those who need native labor. They will fight to the uttermost any proposal to make the native areas so large and so fertile that the economic pressure is reduced which now drives large numbers of natives into the white man's labor market. That native fears on this point are not wholly unfounded, is shown by the report of one commission which allocated a little over twelve per cent of the Union territory to its 5,000,000 black inhabitants (the new areas being mostly in the malarial region of northern Transvaal), and rather more than eighty-seven per cent to its 1,250,000 whites, of whom more than two-fifths reside in towns. The chairman of that commission, a retired Natal judge, was the only one who dissented from these recommendations.

Lastly, as if these difficulties were not sufficiently formidable in themselves, they are increased by the racial antagonism of Briton and Boer which plays into almost every political question. A large section of the Dutch population is undisguisedly hostile to South Africa's participation in the war,

and, therefore, to the recruiting of natives for labor-battalions in France. Even members of the legislative assembly do not disdain to play on the racial prejudices of the backveld Boer by arguments such as these: "The government, without consulting the people, sent 10,000 natives to Flanders. There they wear khaki and walk about the streets. What is the result? The native considers himself the equal of the European." Meanwhile, the war acts as a serious drain on the numbers of the small white population. Nothing but extensive immigration after the war will enable it to keep pace with the expansion of the native population and to make good its claim to large areas of land by effective occupation and use. But there is nothing that most Boers desire less than immigration, especially British immigration, for they know well enough that, sooner or later, they will be outnumbered and outvoted and their present political control lost forever. Yet it is equally clear that an illiberal policy alike towards the natives and towards white immigrants is bound to make the position of the white race in South Africa more precarious with every year that passes. At present, the eye that would pierce the future, sees the deepening shadow of the native problem creep slowly but surely over the sunny spaces of South Africa.

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(Another article on the problems of South Africa will follow in the near future.)

A Rookie's Reaction

SO a psychological commission is now engaged in measuring our mental aptitude and adaptability for various types of service in the national army. Who can guess what incredible revelations may be brought about by these vocational experts? We who have been paper-hangers it may be are better fitted by far for the signal corps, and we former professors of Greek perhaps have that unique intellectual equipment which makes one well nigh invaluable as a camp cook. All honor to this attempt at efficiency and fairness in military organization. Yet many of us have already been analyzing the reaction of our own minds to this extraordinary condition of living in our camp, and, being chiefly New England men, we are naturally and traditionally experts in introspection. So it may well appear that we strike unusual depth in our reflections. As for myself, I cannot say with certainty yet what branch of the service I am peculiarly fitted for, but I have a sneaking suspicion that it is for the Red Cross rather than the heavy field artillery.

The prevailing attitude among the men on the roll of honor of our new army I am very sure is stoicism, verging on fatalism. This war is a sorry business; it's no joke, being torn away from a home long enjoyed, or, infinitely worse, one just started; giving up a career in business lately assured after long uncertainty; leaving as memories only an æsthetic argosy, gay and poignant voyages in color and sound sensation, with a hundred luring seas right at hand. These are things not lightly relinquished for the simple relief of compulsion in even a worthy single cause. So one must candidly say that the characteristic spirit of the camp is not one of spontaneous enthusiasm or gay abandon. Yes, it is a sorry business; but it must apparently be done, so of course it is to be done. Whatever is due to come will be borne doubtless in the same patient way. Mr. Bourne calls this acquiescence. So it is, but there is no shame in that, to be sure; the attitude can be criticized only on grounds of inflexibility and lack of humor, never for any lack of high and worthy seriousness. The troubles are being packed away honestly and courageously in the old kit bag, however wan the smile may be. What light-heartedness appears is of that pathetic or brutal sort which justifies calling the men philosophers in the definition implied by the gentle-minded lady who said: "Be philosophical, my dear; resolve just not to think about it."

Uncertainty breeds humor, however, and the drabness is touched up with gayer flashes. "Where do we go from here, boys?" is a very significant song; it can be sung with real feeling when men make up their packs on a few hours' notice, hastily telegraph home and are entrained for parts darkly guessed at. — means, we surmise, that you will be taken right to the river bank and dropped on transports with steam up; but it may be Camp —, which means France sooner or later, but a little later; or it may be simply the prospect of a strange, drawling winter in Georgia. This is a great uncertainty, that keeps a spark of nervous humor thrilling in even the most calloused sensibility.

Many are the minor uncertainties. One is when the leggings will arrive, so you can meet your best girl with killing effect next Sunday. Speaking of next Sunday, the query arises whether an unkind providence in the person of the first sergeant will put you on kitchen police duty for that date, thus ruining the one welcomed day in seven. Being on kitchen police is no joke, in spite of O'Hara. O'Hara, it seems, was naughty, and so received as punishment kitchen police duty for a week. He wrote home of his appointment to this office of trust and responsibility, and was credited in the