

Finalement ils cédèrent à la poussée des Somalis. On ne peut guère croire que ce petit peuple ait vraiment vaincu les puissants Gallas, à moins de dissensions internes parmi eux, point faible chez eux comme chez les Tutsi; le phénomène s'expliquerait plutôt du fait que les Somalis auraient occupé les lieux vidés par les Gallas. Toujours est-il que désormais les Gallas occupent surtout le sud. (*Communication du RÉV. PÈRE PIERRE SCHUMACHER, M.A.*)

African Labour Questions.

It is a long time since the 'labour problem' in Africa was conceived simply in terms of the difficulty experienced by European concerns in obtaining a sufficient labour force. The Belgian Government was the first officially to take cognizance of the consequences for native life of the constant drain from their villages of the able-bodied men. They conceived it in terms of population decrease, and sought to remedy it by controlling the development of European enterprise and by limiting the numbers who might be recruited so that the proportion of males considered sufficient for the maintenance of the population should be left in the villages. Similar limitations have been imposed in some of the French colonies. The Tanganyika administration actively encouraged the cultivation of cash crops by natives in order that as far as possible no native should be obliged to seek employment for lack of any alternative way of meeting his obligations; but this policy did not put an end to the migration of labourers, who were inevitably drawn principally from the remoter districts where the development of native agriculture was more difficult. A notable step in this territory was the creation of a labour department consisting of officers who gave their whole time to labour problems. During the brief period before it was abolished in the interests of economy, this department did valuable work, notably in reducing the time and hardships of the journey to and from centres of employment by organizing transport and establishing rest camps on the principal labour routes.

Farther south the provision of alternative cash resources for the native has frequently been impossible owing either to the remoteness of certain districts from markets or the lack of available land; and the report on emigrant labour published by the Nyasaland Government in 1935 created a considerable sensation by showing the high proportion of natives who left the territory in search of work and never returned, and the deplorable results on village life. The results of the first sociological analysis of this situation, at present being carried out by Dr. Margaret Read, one of the Research Fellows of the Institute, will be of very great interest. As interim remedies the Nyasaland Government proposed the graduation of tax rates in closer accordance with capacity to pay, a stricter control of emigration and the development of local resources wherever this was possible.

The appointment of Major G. St. J. Orde Browne as labour adviser

to the Colonial Office is a sign of the interest taken by the British Government in these questions, and the first result of his appointment is a report on the labour situation in Northern Rhodesia, where conditions in many areas are very similar to those in Nyasaland, and where the recent rioting in the Copper Belt drew attention to a number of problems connected with native labour. In a short but stimulating report he deals with the principal problems, both in the technical aspect of conditions of housing, sanitation, health, the nature of the labour contract, organization of recruiting, and the like, and from the sociological point of view. The special problems of urban areas, and the conditions in each of the principal centres of employment for natives of Northern Rhodesia, are described. Major Orde Browne points out that taxation is no longer the sole or even perhaps the principal inducement to the native to leave his home; at the standard of living now generally prevalent a considerable range of imported goods are regarded as necessities. The labourer does not look on his employment merely as a disagreeable necessity to be got over as quickly as possible, and the offer of employment near his home at a rate which would just enable him to pay his taxes would not necessarily divert large numbers from the Rand, where the rate of wages is much higher than any that can be paid by employers nearer home. Hence, whatever may be done to develop new sources of employment, long-distance migration must be regarded as a permanent feature of the situation. The fixing of quotas, Major Orde Browne points out, is 'a departure from actuality', as is the distinction commonly made in regulating recruitment between 'local' and 'foreign' employment, the former meaning employment within the territory of which the native is a subject, the latter employment outside its boundaries, regardless of the fact that in the case of a native living near a frontier, a 'foreign' engagement may involve a much shorter journey than a 'local' one. 'In the absence of a fence and turnstile system,' he adds, 'it is quite impossible to restrain the African if he wishes to travel'; and, as is pointed out in the Bledisloe Report, the increased demand for labour on the Rand, expected to be met from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, is likely to outweigh any steps that may be taken by the Governments to discourage the exodus. It is necessary therefore to secure for the traveller the most satisfactory conditions possible. The measures which Major Orde Browne regards as most essential are a means of identification of the migrant, a limitation of the period of engagement, provision of transport, with food and accommodation on the journey, and a deferred pay system. He recommends the creation of a labour department staffed by officers with intimate knowledge of the problems discussed; the latter suggestion is endorsed by the Bledisloe Report, which also recommends the institution of a combined labour department as one of the directions in which co-operation between Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland could be immediately undertaken. (*Communicated by DR. LUCY P. MAIR.*)