

The Glen Grey Speech

A transcription of Cecil John Rhodes' Speech on the Second Rereading of the Glen Grey Act to the Cape House Parliament on July 30 1894.

“ There is, I think, a general feeling that the natives are a distinct source of trouble and loss to the country. Now, I take a different view. When I see the labour troubles that are occurring in the United States, and when I see the troubles that are going to occur with the English people in their own country on the social question and the labour question, I feel rather glad that the labour question here is connected with the native question, for I see that at any rate we do not have here what has lately occurred in Chicago, where, on account of some question as to the management of the Pullman Car Company, the whole of these labour quarrels have broken out, and the city has been practically wrecked.

This is what is going on in the older countries on account of the masses as against the classes getting what they term their rights, or, to put it into plain English, those who have not, trying to take from those who have. If they cannot get it by what might be termed Irish legislation, they mean to get it by physical force. That is another aspect of government by the people. The proposition that I would wish to put to the House is this, that I do not feel that the fact of our having to live with the natives in this country is a reason for serious anxiety. In fact, I think the natives should be a source of great assistance to most of us. At any rate, if the whites maintain their position as the supreme race, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives with us in their proper position. We shall be thankful that we have escaped those difficulties which are going on amongst all the ; old nations of the world.

Now, it happens that in the rearrangement of the Cabinet I was given the charge of the natives, and, naturally, what faced me was the enormous extent of the native problem. In addition to the natives in the colony, I am responsible, on this side of the Zambesi, for half a million of natives, and on the other side of the Zambesi I am responsible for another ; half-million. By the instrumentality of responsible government, and also by that of another position which I occupy, I feel that I am responsible for about two millions of human beings. The question which has submitted itself to my mind with regard to the natives is this — What is their present state ? I find that they are increasing enormously. I find that there are certain locations for them where, without any right or title to the land, they are herded together. They are multiplying to an enormous extent, and these locations are becoming too small. The Transkei could support, perhaps, its present population of 600,000 people, but it is not able to support double that population. The natives there are increasing at an enormous rate. The old diminutions by war and pestilence do not occur. Our good government prevents them from fighting, and the result is an enormous increase in numbers. The natives devote their minds to a remarkable extent to the multiplication of children. The result is an increase in the population. The problem before us is this — What is to become of these people ? I am sure that the Transkei cannot support 1,200,000 people, whilst I know that there will be certainly that number of them in about twenty years. What then do we intend to do ? As I have stated once before in this House, the natives have had in the past an interesting employment for their minds in going to war and in consulting in their councils as to war. But by our wise government we have taken away all that employment from them. We have given them no share in the government — and I think rightly, too — and no interest in the local development of their country. What one feels is that there are questions like bridges, roads, education, plantations of trees, and various local questions, to which the natives might devote themselves with good results. At present we give them nothing to do, because we have taken away their power of making war — an excellent pursuit in its way — which once employed their minds.

Then there arises the question of their land, which cannot continue to provide enough for all of them. There is not room for them all. In the third place, in many parts of their country we have placed canteens. The man who has nothing to do turns to the canteen. We do not teach them the dignity of labour, and they simply loaf about in sloth and laziness. They never go out and work. This is what we have failed to consider with reference to our native population.

These are my premises. I wish to look at them, not from a philosophical point of view, but from a practical point of view. The natives know nothing about the politics of the country. They have told me time after time that they do not understand these politics. "Leave us alone, but let us try and deal with some of our little local questions." That is the common statement they have made to me. I do not know whether the member for Fort Beaufort would agree with me, though I am not trenching upon the question of no vote at present. I feel, too, that if the people desire it the canteens should be removed from their midst. Further, it is our duty as a Government to remove these poor children from this life of sloth and laziness, and to give them some gentle stimulus to come forth and find out the dignity of labour.

And then, if I may speak on a general question in the interest of the country, I would say that I have had to face the question of the extraordinary position of the labour problem of the colony. One day I am told that I ought to introduce an irrigation scheme ; then the Malmesbury farmers say I must go into the question of the growth of corn ; and I am told that my country contains in its natural soil the greatest possible capabilities. And yet I find that nothing is done. This, I am told, is owing to the sluggish conservatism of the people. I might say something about this question. So long as I talk about farming, so long as I talk about what we should do, it is all right. But as soon as any one of my own race commences to farm, I can almost prophesy that in three years he will collapse. Slow progress — extremely slow progress — is made, it is true ; but when I begin to inquire into the reasons for it, I find that

the country which grows the greatest quantity of corn is Egypt, at 2d. per diem as the basis of cost of labour.

In Nyasaland, where good coffee is produced, wages are 4s. a month, including food i|^d. per diem. It has been stated that it is the laziness of the Western farmer which prevents his producing corn and competing, when he has his labour on this basis — of at least 2s. 6d. to 3s. per diem as against 2d. per diem in these other parts of the world. I am speaking of those countries which are great grain-producing countries. I have seen what these people live on, and their food is not worse than that of the Kaffir. But the wage of the EngHsh agricultural labourer averages only about 12s. per week, and he lives certainly at a higher standard of civilisation than our raw Kaffir; and yet the Kaffir is paid almost 50 per cent, more than the Englishman.

So much for this aspect of the question. Now, as to the Bill itself, I wish to point out that the first clause deals with the question of area. The clause only states Glen Grey, but if the House approves of the Bill, I would propose to apply it to other native areas. If the House approves of the Bill, I will certainly apply that clause to Fingoland. Under the clause, individual title will not be given unless the Divisional Council recommends it. The other provisions I would apply to Fingoland, because I would consider that with the approval of the second reading I had received the approval of the House. Part i. is simply as to the creation of areas. Glen Grey is not suitable in many respects, and it is mixed up with white farmers, and so we have had to reserve in Glen Grey those parts of the country which are in the occupation of white farmers. Certain other reasons have had to be considered : the Indwe railway, for instance. What I would like in regard to a native area is that there should be no white men in its midst. I hold that the natives should be apart from white men, and not mixed up with them. There are about three hundred morgen of Glen Grey farms which have been already surveyed, which would give about seventy allotments.

The Bill proposes that to each of these allotments there should be a village management board of three men, which should be nominated by the Government. And the Government would select first the people whom they thought best to nominate. Perhaps the House is not aware that Glen Grey has been actually settled before. There are five of these farms, which are called mission farms ; but they are not mission farms at all, but Crown lands on which there happen to be missionaries. Successive Governments have already settled this question of Glen Grey. They have been giving the titles while the House has been discussing the matter, and I find that they have created these titles and managed them by a village council or board of natives. The Government would give these boards all the powers of the Village Management Act. Under these powers, the boards would limit the amount of stock on each agricultural lot, and therefore overcrowding would be prevented. It rests with the natives to apply for an extra title for building lots which would be pointed out on the commonage.

'As to the cost of surveying, I find on investigation in the district that they have given a title to the Mount Arthur people on what was termed a mission station. It has been said that we should charge them £2, los. for each agricultural lot of three to four morgen. But I find that the cost for each has been After discussing the matter with the magistrate, I think it would not be just to let the difference between the two amounts come out of the revenue, for we should have to issue eight thousand titles to Glen Grey, which would be a loss to the country of nearly 20,000. And this I do not think would be right. I find that they are all anxious to get these titles, and, so as not to lose the other 20,000, the Government has spread the additional cost over four years, to be paid in four instalments. I think that seems fair, as I do not think that the Government should be called upon to pay half the cost. It should be understood that the Government are not asking the natives suddenly to pay the ;^5, and I do not think that they would feel the other portion of the payment when spread over four years. The natives could always get the four morgen by paying 1 5s. per annum, and they pay los. at present in hut tax. For an extra morgen they would have to pay 3s. With regard to alienation and transfer, it has been thought advis-

able not to submit these people to the very heavy charges which we have in connection with our farms. The Government looks upon them as living in a native reserve, and desires to make the transfer and alienation of land as simple as possible. These clauses have been drawn after very careful consultation with those gentlemen who are in charge of this matter. In reference to administration and distribution of their estates, the Government have simply taken the Native Succession Law of 1864 adopted it, the object being to save expense. The next great question is that of primogeniture. These people are given a piece of land, and they are very domestic in their nature. Four morgen of land would not split up into much for each of the family, in case of the death of the native who was the head of the family. The only way to meet this is by the native law of primogeniture. The only way to deal with it is by the law of entail — leave it to the eldest son. We fail utterly when we put natives on an equality with ourselves. If we deal with them differently and say, " Yes, these people have their own ideas," and so on, then we are all right ; but when once we depart from that position and put them on an equality with ourselves, we may give the matter up. What we may expect after a hundred years of civilisation I do not know. If I may venture a comparison, I would compare the natives generally, with regard to European civilisation, to fellow-tribesmen of the Druids, and just suppose that they were come to life after the two thousand years which have elapsed since their existence. That is the position. The honourable member for Fort Beaufort simply wants to get rid of the two thousand years that lie between us and the natives.

To return to the clause under consideration, I consider that the procedure to be adopted with regard to the second wife of the native is a matter for the House to decide. I was in the Transkei the other day, when a native told me that the Government taxed him for each wife. I believe he said he had six, but I am not sure. Now (went on the native), you say you can only recognise the first wife. The missionary tells me that it is very wicked to have more than one wife. But I find in the Old Testament people had from one to one hundred wives. And I do not find any instructions in the Old or New Testaments as to whether I may have a hundred wives or only one. This was just a simple native.

I told him, " I had not considered the question." To proceed : of course, the House will have to deal with the matter of entail. As to the question of voting, we say that the natives are in a sense citizens, but not altogether citizens — they are still children. And though we place them in individual positions with regard to certain pieces of agricultural land, we protect them by all sorts of laws. In so far as that land is concerned, the native has no right to claim a vote for it. And so it will be said you are going to take away the vote from the poor native. But if those gentlemen who say that they wish really to consider the welfare of these poor people, would think less about their votes, and more about their future, they would effect more. I know that these gentlemen talk much at missionary meetings about the poor natives, but I say to them. Try to do the natives some real good. Some honourable members may say that I have broken my pledges in interfering with the country by revising the voters' lists in the territories I have referred to. But this is not the case. It may, perhaps, be said that the list of voters clause will rob these poor people of their votes. Nothing of the kind. I have found that nine-tenths of them were not entitled to vote at all at present. I do not propose to interfere with the Franchise Law as it was passed last year, but I say that it has been carried out improperly, and therefore, in dealing with these native areas, if the House approves of it, I propose to extend the law as it at present exists, so that it shall be properly carried out. I think there would be an alteration effected in Aliwal if this were to be carried out. I think that a very large number of voters registered in the district would, on a careful examination, not continue on the roll under the present Franchise Law.

With reference to the labour tax, some newspapers in the colony take it that all of the natives will have to pay the labour tax whether they work or not. Now, that is not the case. What I have found is this, that we must give some gentle stimulus to these people to make them go on working. There are a large number of young men in these locations who are like younger sons at home, or if you will have it so, like young men about town. These young natives live in the native areas and locations with their fathers and mothers, and never do one stroke of work. But if a labour tax of 10 S. were imposed, they would have to

work.

Their present life is very similar to that of the young man about town who lounges about the club during the day and dresses himself for a tea-party in the afternoon, and in the evening drinks too much, and probably finishes up with immorality. These native young men are not in a position to marry and settle down, because they have not got cows. They are a nuisance to every district in the Transkei, to every magistrate in the Transkei, and to every location. We want to get hold of these young men and make them go out to work, and the only way to do this is to compel them to pay a certain labour tax. But we must prepare these people for the change. Every black man cannot have three acres and a cow, or four morgen and a commonage right. We have to face the question, and it must be brought home to them that in the future nine-tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour, in physical work, in manual labour. This must be brought home to them sooner or later. There is nothing new in this.

Now is the moment to deal with the question of taxation. I would do away with locations on private farms, the defect of which is that we do not know where the natives are. I propose to use the labour tax for industrial schools and training. I propose that the neglect of labour should provide a fund for instruction in labour. I have called them industrial schools, but I mean that they should be carried on under regulations to be framed by the Government. Why? I have travelled through the Transkei, and have found some excellent establishments where the natives are taught Latin and Greek. They are turning out Kaffir parsons, most excellent individuals, but the thing is overdone. I find that these people cannot find congregations for them. There are Kaffir parsons everywhere — these institutions are turning them out by the dozen. They are turning out a dangerous class. They are excellent so long as the supply is limited, but the country is overstocked with them. These people will not go back and work, and that is why I say that the regulations of these industrial schools should be framed by the Government ; otherwise these Kaffir parsons would develop into agitators against the Government. Let me go on and point out the way in which the minds of the natives should be occupied.

I find that many of the friends of the natives would hear of their minds being employed in no other pursuit than that of electing members for Parliament. That was the question of the vote. "You must get them to vote for me," was the general position of the friend of the native.

Now, I say the natives are children. They are just emerging from barbarism. They have human minds, and I would like them to devote themselves wholly to the local matters that surround them and appeal to them. I would let them tax themselves, and give them the funds to spend on these matters — the building of roads and bridges, the making of plantations, and other such works. I propose that the House shall allow these people to tax themselves, and that the proceeds of their taxation shall be spent by them on the development of themselves and of their districts. The honourable member for Cape Town (Mr. Wiener) smiled the other day when I spoke of the natives building bridges, and asked how they could build them with the proceeds of their taxation? If in Fingoland an extra tax of los. per agricultural lot, or per head, were put on, and a district council were formed, that would give them ;^9000 per annum to spend. The Local Loans Act could be applied, the repayments to extend over eight years. By that means I propose that the country shall gradually be relieved of local expenditure in the Transkei. These people have the best portion of South Africa. I think that any one in charge of the Transkei is doing his duty to these people and to the country when he works with this object, that the Transkei should not be a charge upon our funds for local purposes. So far as roads, bridges, etc., and even so far as education and the appointment of scab inspectors, and indeed all those which I may call local questions, are concerned, I want to ask that these people shall have, through district councils, this kind of representation. Mr. Veldtman, whose name is a household word, has begged me to do something of the kind.

Now as to the liquor question, I have read carefully the proposals of the Labour Commission, and the proposition is that the majority in divisional councils shall have power to make any law for the disposal

of liquor licences. I can say that I have been instrumental in removing the liquor from tens of thousands of these poor children. I refer to the compounds and locations in which they are shut up, and in which the liquor is kept from them. The liquor question is a difficult one, and I know the difficulties of it. When it is said that we should take the licences away from all the hotel and canteen-keepers, I think there is some unfairness in it. We have gone on year after year encouraging these people to improve their dwellings, and have then suddenly turned round and proposed that all these people should shut up shop and have their business taken away from them. This is manifestly unfair. If the majority of the voters decide that a canteen should be closed, we should give compensation. The advantages of the system are plain. No one can then say that the closing of a canteen or hotel is the fad of a teetotal party. The people must put their hands in their own pockets and be willing to pay compensation. If in Fingoland we could raise a fund of £9000 per annum, as I have before pointed out, we shall be able in Glen Grey to have a fund for this compensation. These are the reasons why, in dealing with this liquor question, I have adopted the recommendation of the Labour Commission, but I have also laid down the principle that if the people wish the canteens to be closed they should also pay compensation. Half the people could forward a request through their council and say that they were willing to pay for the closing, and who could say anything against that? If no compensation were paid, we should be open to the charge that it was a temperance move, and that without compensation we were taking the trade away from the people.

Then there might be another charge, that the council nominee members would stop this. One half of the council are elected, and the other half nominated. These natives are mixed up with white farmers. I have asked the farmers whether they would object to sitting on the council with people of another colour. They said No. I have made the number of nominees six, for the following reasons: that if it were left to election, there would not be a white on the council. This would not apply to purely native districts, but Glen Grey, unfortunately, is entirely mixed up, and that is the only way out of the difficulty. But for any one to say that the whole of the six white men would vote for no compensation is perfectly ridiculous. I think better of my own countrymen.

Before I finish dealing with the Bill, I will refer to the question of title. There is the payment of quit-rents, and there is that of alienation with consent of the Government. Some newspapers have said that the whole object of the Bill is to get land into the hands of the white men, and I simply refer to the title to refute this. Again, we hear the argument that after five years these people will sell out to the white men. My idea is that the natives should be kept in these native reserves and not be mixed with the white men at all. Are you going to sanction the idea, with all the difficulties of the poor whites before us, that these people should be mixed up with white men, and white children grow up in the middle of native locations ? In the interest of the white people themselves we must never let this happen. White labour cannot compete with black labour in this country — physical labour, I mean. As to the argument that some men by assiduous detail could buy out seventy native holders with their three thousand morgen in one bargain, I have dealt with the Diamond Fields and with Charterland, but I would rather do either or both over again than undertake such a job as that. The title means that the holdings cannot be sold without the consent of the Government. There are clauses which lay down that in case of theft the land shall be forfeited ; there is a clause that in case of non-cultivation the land shall be taken away and reallocated ; there is a clause providing that it shall not be sublet ; and another clause that there shall not be subdivision.

I would now deal with a few of the literary criticisms of the Bill. The Bill has puzzled many because it has appealed to the different classes of this country. In one paper I read that the Bill is too sudden. Well, I am sorry. I have not been a year in the Native Affairs Office, but I see terrible crowding of locations going on, and that is my reason for hurrying on the Bill. Another paper remarks that no voting powers would be given. I have explained that before. I have not interfered with the native voting powers at all. If the honourable member for Fort Beaufort raises an objection on that score, then we must come to the conclusion that some persons have voted for him who had no right to do so. I have already dealt with the criticisms in reference to title. There is another criticism, that I am not taking any notice

of the recommendations of the Labour Commission. But I would point out that there are no less than ten of these recommendations embodied in the Bill. There are the recommendations in reference to liquor, a labour bureau (for the natives would come and ask to be provided with masters, because otherwise they had to pay a tax of los.), forfeiture in case of conviction for theft, subletting, cheap transfer, additional taxation for educational purposes, the agricultural and industrial clause, and vagrancy — in all, ten of the Labour Commission's recommendations embodied in the Bill.

I submit to this House that there are four propositions that come before us in regard to this question. We have to find land for these people ; we have to find them some employment ; we have to remove the liquor from them ; and we have to stimulate them to work. I submit to this House these propositions, and I hope the House will accept them. Do you admit that the native question is most dangerous ? Do you admit that you have done nothing for these people? Do you admit that in many parts of the colony these people have been ruining themselves ? Do you admit that century after century these large numbers could not be provided with land ? Do you admit that these people are increasing at a great rate ? This Bill puts forward various proposals to meet this state of things. I submit to the House that the idea that we could drive them out must be dismissed as regards those parts of the colony which these people have occupied. They are our future labourers, and we cannot permit them in these areas to be ever increasing, and the places to be overstocked. I propose to apply these principles to Fingoland at once. It would be wise not to deal with the whole native question at once. The natives are children, and we ought to do something for the minds and the brains that the Almighty has given them. I do not believe that they are different from ourselves. 'The Bill says to them that we will put them on the land ; we will put them under their local magistrate ; and we will let them conduct their own local affairs. As to liquor, you will, no doubt, hear that the wine farmers of the West will object. Still, when the wine- farmers hear that these people are willing to pay compensation for the removal of this pest, I do not think they will continue to object. The

last proposition is that we must give the people some stimulus to work. It is impossible to provide them all with land ; at the present time their homes are crowded. The question has been met by many countries before, and it is admitted that there has always been a period when the country could not be supported by agriculture alone. Hence the provisions of the Bill to meet this difficulty. I will say one thing in this House — that there was never a greater mistake made than by people who think that the native editor of Invo, the native paper, has the confidence of the native people. And so the criticism and abuse which have been poured upon this Bill by this barbarian, who has just partly emerged from barbarism, are not to be taken any notice of. What does this Bill mean? It is an earnest effort to deal with the position of these people. We cannot stand by and do nothing : it is easy to do that. It is an effort to deal with these four propositions I have submitted. Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill with a wide scope. I may say the whole of the north will some time or another come under this Bill if passed by this House. If the Bill gets through, he will be a brave man who will attempt to alter it. I would not be surprised to see Natal — I should say the Transkei — come under this Bill. I will not prophesy that it will be applied to Natal, because the Natal people have too much independence to accept Cape legislation. Indeed, you may say this is a native Bill for Africa. You are sitting in judgment on Africa at the present moment. I have merely submitted to the House my ideas on the question. It is a proposition submitted to provide them with district councils ; it is a proposition submitted to employ their minds on simple questions in connection with local affairs ; it is a proposition to remove the liquor pest ; and last, but not least, by the gentle stimulant of the labour tax to remove them from a life of sloth and laziness ; you will thus teach them the dignity of labour, and make them contribute to the prosperity of the state, and give some return for our wise and good government.'

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