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THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL LABOUR SUPPLY CRISIS, 1924-1928

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This seminar paper analyses a significant episode in the history of African labour in Rhodesia. It is based on a study of general labour policy which comprised a chapter of my doctoral thesis, The foundations of a "Native" policy: Southern Rhodesia, 1923-1933, considerably augmented by subsequent documentary research on the history of European agriculture and the statistics of African labour supply between the wars.

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Shortly after Southern Rhodesia attained self-government in September 1923, a growing deficiency was reported in the supply of African agricultural labour. Such complaints persisted over the next four years. The problem was most pronounced in the burgeoning cash-crop sector, centred principally along the high veld ridge of Mashonaland; in contrast, the mining sector was scarcely affected, a phenomenon attributable to its relatively high wage levels and stable manpower requirements.(1) Likewise, it made little impact upon the stagnant ranching industry of Matabeleland and the Mashonaland low veld districts. European cultivators, who comprised a substantial block of voters, however ensured that a problem which in reality affected only a minority of Rhodesian employers maintained a centre-stage position in the political arena. The period 1924-28 was accordingly characterised by a vociferous campaign for the augmentation of labour supplies, a move spearheaded by the Rhodesia Agricultural Union (R.A.U.), main spokesman for the farmer interest, which assumed leadership in the demand for remedial action by the new government.

The primary purpose of this paper is to ascertain and evaluate those factors immediately responsible for the crisis, and to demonstrate that it was caused by excessive demand rather than, as many settlers claimed, the inherent idleness of indigenous Africans. A certain amount of purely descriptive material has been incorporated to set the episode within its immediate historical, economic and political background, and the topic of African labour has been broadly defined to embrace such relevant matters as immigration, wage and employment policies, and the Government's response to agitation for the maximisation of labour supplies.

Neither the labour crisis nor settler demands for official intervention to improve supplies was without precedent.(2) During the 1890s, employers had complained about African reluctance to seek work, and Native Commissioners responded by recruiting labour on their behalf, often by force. A clash between Imperial authorities and Chartered Company resulted in the cessation of official recruiting or direct coercion, but the pioneer phase of Rhodesian employment history created the attitude of mind that in times of labour shortage it was incumbent upon the Government actively to induce, and if necessary oblige, Africans to find employment. Such opinions were still current in the 1920s.

The 1924-28 situation was anticipated by a pre-war agricultural boom which generated considerable pressure on labour supplies. At length, the Company bowed to white farmer demands and instructed Native Commissioners to address meetings of traditional leaders on the desirability of their followers seeking work. These instructions were withdrawn at Imperial request when certain grave abuses were reported;(3) thereafter, officials were ordered to restrict their activities to propagandising the doctrine of labour as a necessary civilising function,(4) a policy that henceforth became a guiding principle of the Native Department.

Depletion of white manpower during the Great War, ensuing economic dislocation and depression of world commodity prices, a series of bad seasons and the 1918 influenza epidemic all materially contributed to a slow growth-rate in the European crop sector between 1914 and 1923.(5) Labour supplies generally kept pace with demand, and few complaints of shortage were heard. The return of favourable economic conditions from early 1924 onwards inspired increased agricultural activity that at times bordered on the feverish, and, as many producers later discovered to their cost, was justified neither by the modest upswing in commodity prices overseas nor the undeveloped state

of marketing facilities for Rhodesian produce in Britain. As a result of agricultural speculation over the next four years, (6) pressure on available labour supplies gathered momentum until it reached a peak corresponding with the 1926-27 growing season. It is significant that the two crops directly responsible for this trend, cotton and tobacco (see Tables VIII and IX) required more labourers per acre (7) than the traditional staple of Rhodesian farmers, maize.

Agitation for augmented labour supplies corresponded closely with successive booms in these two crops. The first letter expressing anxiety about future supplies appeared in the Rhodesian press shortly after the harvesting of the first successful cotton crop (1923/24), and was succeeded by a lengthy correspondence extending up to the retrenchment of labour in the tobacco industry from April 1928 onwards. Taken as a whole, this protracted correspondence provides an illuminating insight into settler thinking on the so-called "Native Question", which, as the Chief Native Commissioner perceptively remarked, was seen largely in terms of the African's apparent disinclination to offer his services to white employers. (8) Many letters reflected the familiar stereotype: Africans were inherently idle; they had too much land; they were improvident; they had 'no ambition beyond the next beer drink'. (9)

African sloth was attributed to the breakdown of what was conceived to have been the former despotic powers of chiefs and headmen. The young men no longer listened when they were advised to seek work: imprisonment for failure to pay tax held no terrors as there was no stigma attached to a prison record. Echoing the Evolutionist thinking that characterised anthropological thought of the day, Ethel Tawse Jollie portrayed the apparent addiction of Africans to a life of beer-drinking and idleness as an inevitable result of the clash between a superior (European) and inferior (African) culture. (10) The solution propounded was one advocated by the vast majority of Europeans, including Native Department officials: the doctrine of labour. It had obvious attractions, combining the satisfaction of settler labour needs with the characteristically Victorian conviction that work had an ennobling effect upon the individual. Labour would thus be "good for the African", and above all, it would arrest the degeneration of tribal society into a state of fackless anarchy.

A second contrasting theme in the campaign was the hostility shown towards the fostering of cash-crop agriculture in the reserves which, it was felt, would reduce the supply of workers and inevitably lead to competition between black and white farmers. This latter contention was less frequently voiced than the former in the 1924-28 period, and did not receive widespread popular support until the onset of the Great Depression. (11) It was briefly anticipated by protests against Native Department distribution of cotton seed to Africans in 1924, voiced at a cotton growers' conference on 12 November 1924. A succession of speakers complained about the Government's apparent encouragement of African competition and expressed misgivings lest careless cultivation should lead to the spread of insect pests to European cotton crops. However, the main objection raised was in connection with the effect of African cotton-growing upon labour supplies. (12) Feelings ran so high during the ensuing season that a Bulawayo ginner refused to do business with African producers or any Europeans who helped them grow cotton. (13) They subsided after the failure of both European and African crops in 1924-25 and 1925-26, and, since no attempt was made to foster Virginia tobacco cultivation in the reserves, remained in suspense until the Depression.

A great deal of thought and ingenuity was devoted to the question of how labour supplies could be increased. Solutions ranging from outright compulsion to the improvement of working conditions were advanced in the press and on public platforms. Coercion of labour was advocated by a minority of extremists; one Rhodesia Herald correspondent recommended that each kraal should be required to provide a fixed percentage of able-bodied men for farm work, to be engaged on three to six month agreements made before a Government official. (14) The Sinioia farmer H. Beamish maintained that since the Government made use of compulsory labour to erect tse-tse fly fences, it was inconsistent for officials to oppose a call-out of workers for private employers. (15) Such bald demands were relatively uncommon. The broader spectrum of farmer opinion couched its requests more elliptically, calling upon the Government to extend its role in the labour field through the medium of official recruiting agencies. (16)

These proposals, put forward only a short time after the changeover from Chartered Company rule, placed the fledgling ministry of Sir Charles Coghlan in an invidious position. On the one hand, the Imperial government and overseas humanitarian pressure groups imposed obvious limitations (17) upon the Colony's freedom of action: any attempt to establish a Government labour bureau or coerce labour in response to settler demands would have evoked a storm of protest damaging to Rhodesia's reputation in Britain. On the other hand, farming interests comprised an absolute majority in eleven out of thirty parliamentary constituencies: insufficient to win control, but sufficient to displace an incumbent government in collaboration with an opposition party. (18)

Given the circumstances of the time, Coghlan's administration behaved with commendable probity in the face of severe pressure, although it committed one error of judgment that will be discussed later. Its response to the crisis was shaped by two basic principles: a spirit of Victorian laissez faire, and a belief that compulsion of labour for private purposes was morally indefensible. Coghlan denied it was the responsibility of any government to secure labour supplies and condemned the notion of official recruitment as anathema. (19) Like the fixing of wage levels, it was a function that belonged properly to the private sector. W.M. Leggate, successively Minister of Agriculture and Colonial Secretary, (20) warned the R.A.U. Congress that if the Government was forced to submit to its demands, employers would have to accept the reciprocal right of government to control wages. (21) Throughout the duration of the crisis, Ministers emphasised that the solution - namely, better rewards, rations and living conditions to attract labourers - lay with the farmers themselves.

The Government adopted a similar stance on such indirect forms of inducement as increased taxation of indigenous Africans, remission of tax in the case of those who worked for a given period annually, or a combination of both: one farmer recommended a basic tax of £5, to be remitted at the rate of 10% for each month worked during the year. (22) Coghlan condemned the R.A.U.'s proposal that Native Tax should be raised from £1 to £2 as 'a particularly odious form of compulsion because of its hypocrisy'. (23) Revenue considerations, as well as moral principle, impelled the Government to reject the tax remission proposal and a cognate request that non-indigenous Africans should be exempted from the payment of Native Tax, both of which if implemented would have contributed an indirect state subsidy to the European producer. The new government could ill afford to lose the £50 000 paid each year by non-Rhodesian Africans, plus an indeterminate but probably substantial proportion of the £½ million represented by indigenous Native Tax at a time when annual receipts were only about £2 millions. (24)

A number of other suggestions were likewise turned down or ignored by the Government. The 1925 R.A.U. Congress asked the Government to release non-indigenous workers employed on roads and call upon traditional leaders to provide replacements, following the Kenya precedent. (25) There were requests for a tightening-up on passes to seek work in urban areas, so that a person who remained unemployed after a given short period would be sent to a specific farmer; (26) a reintroduction of travelling passes for indigenous Africans, restricting the movement of their bearers to districts with acute labour shortages; (27) and the resumption of the 1910-11 practice of holding meetings in the reserves to persuade Africans to seek work. (28) Two further proposals - the recruitment of Indians from outside Rhodesia's borders and a curb on European immigration - aroused so much opposition that the Government for once avoided censure.

However, there were still many ways in which the Government could alleviate the problem without necessarily betraying its principles, and political realities ensured that it made a substantial, though on the whole inefficacious contribution to a possible solution. Despite its frequent disavowal of responsibility, the Government in fact devoted much effort to fostering the supply of indigenous labour, and facilitating the flow of migrant labour from the two northern territories.

In its endeavours to improve the purely local labour supply, the Government directed its attention to three potential sources: the reserves, urban areas, and clandestine flow of migrants over the Limpopo. Following the guidelines established after the 1910-11 forced labour scandals, Native Commissioners continued to exhort Africans to seek work; employers registered their needs and Africans who enquired about vacancies were suitably informed. (29) Few availed themselves of this service, as they felt that only employers with obviously bad records sought assistance from Native Commissioners. Several largely unfounded allegations about the quantity of "loafers" in urban areas moved the Government to repeal the earlier prohibition of recruitment by labour agents within townships. (30) Since urban wage-levels were generally higher than elsewhere and the number of genuine so-called "loafers" small, the new provision made no substantial contribution to labour supplies, and one suspects the Government was making what amounted to a token gesture merely to mollify its critics. Finally, it strove to check the illicit leakage of labour into South Africa condoned by the Transvaal authorities. An official approach was made to Pretoria, requesting the proper enforcement of the embargo against immigration of Africans from areas north of latitude 22° South, (31) but the Transvaal, which was likewise short of labour, took no action until the Depression. When these overtures failed, the Government asked the Railways to co-operate by not issuing tickets to South African-bound migrants. As the overwhelming majority entered the Transvaal on foot along more easterly routes, the interdict had little effect on the labour outflow.

The Government's most significant contribution lay in the provision of assistance to facilitate the passage of "independent" migrants from the north. Non-Rhodesian labourers were popular with farmers because there was little likelihood that, following the custom of local Africans, they would suddenly leave employment to plough or harvest their own crops; for this reason they were considered more reliable and efficient. Furthermore, government and settlers alike were at all times deeply conscious of the absolute necessity of sustaining the inflow of migrants, not only to stabilise local wage-levels but also to provide sufficient unskilled labour for the colony's expanding economic enterprises. Well over half of Rhodesia's black manpower
rhodesian

and Rhodesian Africans in employment steadily narrowed up to 1929 (see Table I).

Migrant labour fell into two categories: independent, so-called "voluntary" supplies and Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (R.N.L.B.) recruits. "Voluntary" labourers travelled on foot along well-established routes from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, entering Mashonaland at any one of a number of "ports of entry" such as Mrewa, Mtoko, Mount Darwin, Miami and Sipolilo; Mozambique migrants travelled by rail via Umtali. August and September were the peak months for immigration (see Table IV), while a net outflow occurred between April and June. The journey across the Zambesi was a rigorous one, especially in years of drought when food was short, and independent migrants were often obliged to accept the first work offered upon arrival. Farmers in the extreme northern districts capitalised on this by offering exceedingly low wages: in 1923, it was reported that some farm employees in Mrewa and Darwin received only 5/- per month. (32)

Remedial action in the form of food stations had been recommended in 1921, (33) but economic conditions delayed reforms until after the change of government. The revival of demand led to a fresh initiative, this time from the R.N.L.B., which opened food stations at Mrewa and Mount Darwin towards the end of 1924 and offered necessitous migrants three month contracts with local employers at prescribed rates of pay. Northern Mashonaland farmers vehemently protested, arguing that the Bureau was so unpopular with migrants that they would avoid Rhodesia altogether, leading to a consequent rise in wages in the farming industry. (34) The Government bowed to popular clamour in July 1925 and requested the R.N.L.B. to close down its stations. Three months later it stepped into the breach, re-opened the food stations as a government enterprise and appointed a European official to supervise facilities. The scheme was extended to other districts along the frontier over the next few years; in September 1927 the Government operated twelve free ferries, nineteen food stations and had made a start on rudimentary rest camps along labour routes. (35)

It is unlikely that these endeavours brought about any marked improvement in the labour supply: available figures indicate that the number of non-indigenous Africans employed in the colony was virtually stationary during the crisis (see Table I). Some employers complained, probably with justification, that the issue of rations merely enabled migrants to press on further to South Africa. (36) But economic development in the two northern territories was probably a weightier consideration. From 1925 onwards, the Copperbelt attracted large numbers of workers who had earlier looked to Southern Rhodesia for employment. Between 1924 and 1927, the African tobacco industry in Nyasaland underwent a surge of production ended only by the Imperial Tobacco Company's drastic reduction in prices offered to African growers in March 1927. (37) The sudden rise in the number of northern Africans registered towards the end of that year (Table IV), a factor which incidentally paved the way to the termination of Rhodesia's crisis in 1928, may be attributed with some certainty to this event.

Official policy as regards recruited migrant labour and the organisation responsible for its supply, introduction and distribution, the R.N.L.B., formed one of the main political issues of the period. The R.N.L.B.'s value to employers was widely acknowledged. Coghlan's Private Secretary described this as follows:

1. To supply unpopular and isolated employers.
2. To maintain an organisation ready to meet a possible sudden falling off of "voluntary" labour or increase of demand.
3. To keep down the wages of "voluntary" labour. (In this capacity it is made more use of than is generally supposed.)' (35)

The R.N.L.B.'s system of pay remission to the labourer's place of origin constituted a useful check upon desertion, and many employers took advantage of this, and the normal twelve month contract for recruits to give out the type of job which "voluntary" Africans would not accept.

This factor, together with a natural reluctance to be bound to an unknown employer for such long periods and a pre-war reputation for sharp practice earned by labour recruiters in general, made the R.N.L.B. very unpopular with migrants, despite the relatively high rate of wages it offered. Returning workers pinned up notices along labour routes, warning their compatriots against "Chibaro" ('forced labour' - an epithet applied to all recruiters, including the Bureau). The R.N.L.B. had its European critics also. One delegate at the 1925 R.A.U. Congress condemned it as 'a relic of the slave trade', (39) and a provincial Native Commissioners' conference described the Bureau's lack of interest in its recruits once they were distributed as 'nothing less than a public scandal'. (40)

However, the majority of farmers who opposed the Bureau did so because it represented in their view a relic of the detested Company administration: its Board of Directors was dominated by the "old establishment" which had supported Union in 1922. Furthermore, the Bureau continued to receive an official subsidy in addition to normal capitation fees. (41) The R.A.U. Congress of 1925 accordingly demanded that the Government should abolish it and take over recruiting, supplementing from revenue any shortfall that might arise after the levy of a reasonable capitation fee. As was noted above, the second half of this proposal did not find favour with the Coghlan ministry; however, the Government responded to popular sentiment and its own laissez-faire inclinations, and over the next few years gradually divested itself of financial responsibility to the Bureau. (42)

Long before its eventual demise in 1933, the R.N.L.B. had in fact supplied only a very small proportion of the Colony's labour requirements. During the peak year of its operations in the 20s (1925), the Bureau furnished only 9 329 recruits, mostly to new farmers unable to secure "voluntary" labour. (43) Apart from its bad reputation, there were other reasons for the Bureau's conspicuous lack of success. In 1926, the Northern Rhodesian authorities imposed an upper limit of 5 000 on the number the R.N.L.B. was permitted to recruit annually in the Protectorate, an action dictated by Copperbelt needs. The Bureau endeavoured to overcome Copperbelt and Congo competition by raising the basic wage prescribed for its recruits from 18/- to 22/6, (44) but the supply of labour from Northern Rhodesia steadily dwindled. The African tobacco boom mentioned above had a similar effect on Nyasaland labour resources.

To close this discussion of Government's response to farmer agitation, some reference should be made to one of its most controversial decisions, the introduction of the Native Juveniles Employment Act (1926). This Act was passed after the 1925 R.A.U. Congress adopted a resolution asking that 'native piccanins be indentured or in some way be brought under the provisions of the Masters and Servants Act. (45) At that time, African juveniles below the apparent age of 14 were not bound by legally enforceable contracts: a Miawi employer complained that remonstrance and even threats were useless as means of discipline:

'They merely laugh and say, "We are not afraid of the police or Native Commissioner" they cannot do anything to us as we have no 'sitopa' and are not signed on. We can just go when it suits us." (46)

Many farmers supported the R.A.U. resolution in the hope that suitable legislation would be introduced not only to provide the necessary control but also

to augment the supply of juvenile labour for harvesting tobacco.

The Government, which was also concerned by reported cases of juvenile indiscipline and felt some anxiety about the drift of unaccompanied juveniles to the towns, drafted a bill to regulate such employment. Enacted in 1926, the measure gave Native Commissioners a wide range of powers, some punitive and some protective. Juveniles could be punished for 'breach of duty' or disobedience of a Native Commissioner's order 'given in pursuance of the Act'. The latter official was permitted to register contracts, regulate conditions of employment with the power to cancel contracts, and secure the juvenile's release from work upon his parents' application. Section 6 of the Act gave the Native Commissioner authority to contract juveniles who were in towns without parents or guardians for a maximum period of six months, reporting such cases to the Chief Native Commissioner. (47) The Act, particularly Section 6, evoked a storm of protest in humanitarian circles overseas. But despite allegations of 'child slavery', (48) there is no evidence that the Act led to wholesale apprenticeship or indeed any augmentation of juvenile labour supplies. Section 6 was used only once in the period up to September 1928. (49) Nevertheless, the Government's motives in introducing the measure may be questioned both from the point of view of timing and the fact that two Ministers stated in public that it was passed as a result of the R.A.U. 1925 resolution, an action clearly calculated to allay criticism of official labour policy. (50)

Poor conditions of employment, maltreatment of labour by some individuals, a variety of practices that benefited the employer at the expense of his servant, and generally low wages were instrumental in making farms less popular with Africans than work in the mining and urban sectors. These factors, which were adversely commented upon by the official Native Labour Committee of 1927-28, (51) played a key role in the 1924-28 labour supply crisis.

Farmers usually worked their labourers from sunrise to sunset, with a one- to two-hour break for lunch at mid-day. Despite official encouragement, few adopted the piecework system used on some mines and there was accordingly little inducement to complete a task quickly. Housing was of the most rudimentary, and rations generally comprised only meal and a pinch of salt. Some improvement was noted during the labour crisis: the Native Commissioner Marandellas remarked that farmers were beginning to issue meat rations to attract labour. (52) A fair proportion of farmers maintained first-aid facilities, but the signing-off of sick Africans was not uncommon. (53) Minor assaults, often committed in the heat of the moment by exasperated farmers, were frequent and gave the industry as a whole a bad reputation; often too busy at harvest time to travel long distances to the nearest Assistant Magistrate, some employers took the law into their own hands and punished errant labourers themselves.

The contract and ticket systems were abused by a proportion of farmers. Labour contracts were generally made for periods of from three to twelve months, but payment was made on the basis of a completed ticket consisting of 30 working days. It was customary to mark the ticket when a day's labour was satisfactorily performed, although several employers in both the farming and mining industries docked tickets for the slightest offence. Another practice was to defer payment on one or more tickets or illegally retain the servant's Registration Certificate as a check against his desertion. A further abuse detrimental to the labour supply developed as a result of the 1924-28 crisis, the signing-on of Africans for future work. Labourers were given a cash advance and instructed to report for duty on a specific day when the farmer anticipated their services would be required. In one instance, an African engaged in this way on a four-month

contract was continually put off by his potential employer, who found that his services were not needed on the appointed day; eventually, after two years, the African managed to fulfil his obligation. The Assistant Native Commissioner Wedza reported that local farmers who followed this system had twice as many Africans signed on as a labour reserve than were actually working. (54)

The speculative character of agriculture during the cotton and tobacco booms resulted in several cases of non-payment of wages. Under the law, no action could be legally taken unless those affected lodged a complaint in person with the police, whereupon they were sent back to employers prior to an official investigation. Naturally, few Africans were prepared to risk possible reprisals arising from such complaints, and it is likely that as a result, the number of prosecutions bore little relation to the total incidence of offences. Penalties were usually light, and in any case an additional civil action, beyond the means of an average worker, was required to secure wages from an obstinate employer. In practice, the majority of labourers either waited in the hope that their wages would be paid after the harvest, or deserted. (55) The problem assumed grave proportions during the tobacco collapse, when many farmers lacked the means to pay their workers. Coghlan's successor, H.U. Moffat, adopted the dubious expedient of suspending prosecution in such instances, a moratorium that was apparently exploited by several growers. Subsequently, the Government earmarked a portion of the £½ m. loan voted to the tobacco industry in July 1928 to assist insolvent growers in the payment of due wages. (56)

Taken collectively, all these factors had a direct bearing on farm labour shortage. Major Wane, one of the leading Native Department critics of contemporary employment practices, trenchantly remarked:

'Complaints about labour shortage are of course received, these being in all cases from the type of employer who provides better accommodation for his pigs than for his native employees and whose general treatment of his natives is on the same plane, in fact it is surprising that this type is able to get any labour at all.' (57)

But it is only fair to add that a minority of bad employers were responsible. African workers were aware of the chief offenders and boycotted them; the unsuspecting who were snared into contract arrangements with this element usually seized the first opportunity to desert.

However, as an African correspondent from Chikore Mission remarked at the time, (58) the low wages offered by farmers was the primary factor. Available figures for 1924-28 are scarce. There had been a net decline in wages of about 25-33¹/₃ per cent during the decade preceding self-government, attributable to the annual influx of migrant labour and reduction of farming operations in the post-war slump. (59) Wages improved in response to rising demand after the 1923-24 season, and reached a peak in 1927: the Chief Native Commissioner estimated that the mean wage for unskilled labourers in March of that year was 15/- per month. (60) The following table gives a list of available monthly wage figures by district, but only in one case (Marandellas) is an annual comparison within one locality possible:-

Monthly farm wages (unskilled adult male African Labour), 1923-28

1923	Hartley	15/- to 18/-	Melsetter	10/-	Marandellas	10/- to 15/-
1924	Hartley	8/- to 30/-			Marandellas	11/- to 15/-
1925			Shamva	12/-	Marandellas	10/- to 20/-
1926	Hartley (Norton)	July, 12/7; Oct.	20/-	Mazoe	Sept. 16/- to 17/-	
1927		Mrewa	Aug. 17/6 to 25/-	Marandellas	20/- to 25/-	
1928		Mazoe	May 16/- to 17/-;	Dec.	15/-.	

Sources: N.Cs' and C.N.Cs' annual reports; N.Cs' monthly reports (month shown above); N.A.R. S.138/40.

Despite Native Department warnings about the long-term effect it might have on future labour supplies, a sharp cut in agricultural wages accompanied the tobacco collapse.

It is significant that, with few exceptions, most of which represented small-workers paying lower wages than the larger companies, the mining industry was rarely short of labour at that time. The Minister of Agriculture told one farmers' association in March 1927 that the Government had received only one complaint of this nature from mines during the present crisis.(61) The majority of migrants from the north headed for the principal centres of mining activity at Gatooma, Que Que and Shamva after registration; they passed through the northern farming districts of Mashonaland and accepted employment there only if compelled by necessity, or if word had spread that no work was available on the mines.

The Transvaal in any case offered keen competition to all Rhodesian employers in the form of higher wages. Farmers paid about 35/- per month, and Rand employers anything up to £4.(62) A group of Nyasa migrants intercepted near Beitbridge told a local official that they preferred to work in South Africa as wages in Rhodesia had declined to the point approximate to those in Nyasaland.(63) Not only Nyasas were attracted over the Limpopo. The Native Commissioner Ndanga estimated that 40% of able-bodied men in his district were working in the Transvaal at some stage during 1926.(64) An official return from the South African Department of Native Labour, dated October 1926, recorded the presence of 3069 Southern Rhodesian Africans in proclaimed labour districts of the Transvaal;(65) this was almost certainly an under-estimate, as many migrants reportedly evaded the South African embargo by passing themselves off as Mozambique Africans. The Chief Native Commissioner's minimum estimate of 6000 was probably more accurate.(66) Not only did this substantial offflux of local Africans give the lie to settler claims that all Africans were inherently idle, but it also indicated that high wages, even if these involved journeys of several hundred miles, were an important determinant in choice of employment.

How acute was the labour shortage of 1924-28, and what concrete evidence is there to support the farmers' contention that a crisis existed? Also, what evidence is there that, as many settlers claimed, Africans were only tardily entering the employment sector? An absence of statistical data(67) makes it impossible to answer the first question in quantitative terms. Native Commissioners were required to submit monthly reports on the labour situation in their districts, and tabulations of these have been appended (Tables II and III). The analysis, based as it is on remarks such as 'A few employers have found it difficult to secure labour' (Mazoe, September 1928), or statements that defy classification like 'Some employers have more labour than they need: in only a few cases is there a slight shortage' (Marandellas, March 1927), has obvious limitations, but the picture that emerges indicates a mounting deficit in supply from late 1924 to a peak during the 1926-27 growing season, falling away with the tobacco slump to recover slightly in late 1928, as a result of increased mining demand. From April 1930 onwards, there is a net surplus corresponding to the onset of the Great Depression.

Despite the qualitative and often impressionistic nature of these labour reports, some indirect evidence of a more quantitative nature may be adduced to prove the existence of a rapidly rising demand, with the probable corollary of mounting shortage in the farming sector. The number of European farmers increased rapidly from 2403 in the 1923/24 season to 2912 in

1927/28, and the acreage cultivated per farmer from 119 to 134 during the same period. (68) A switch to labour intensive crops like cotton, which required roughly 2, 3 times as much labour than an equivalent area of maize and to tobacco, where the corresponding factor was about 10,0, imposed further pressure on supplies. Maize acreages similarly increased, except for the 1924-25 season when many "maize belt" farmers planted cotton. The desire for higher financial returns was again instrumental, but declining maize yields per acre in districts such as Mazoe, (70) the result of continuous cropping, necessitated the augmentation of lands planted to the crop in order to maintain even the same level of production, contributing further to the labour demand. In consequence of all these factors, the number of Africans in agrarian employment increased faster than the number of white farmers on the land:

Year/Season	No. of Afrs. employed in Agr.	No. of farmers	No. of Afrs. per farmer
1921 [†]	58 542	2 366	24,8
1926/27 [‡]	74 750	2 798	26,7
1927/28 [‡]	83 985	2 912	28,8

[†] 1921 Census returns

[‡] Summer crop returns, 1926/27 and 1927/28 C.S.R.2 - 1929
and C.S.R.1 - 1930

Also, there is evidence to show that a fair proportion of farmers wasted or inefficiently managed African labour, thus adding to their difficulties. The practice of making cash advances against future service, discussed earlier, worsened the labour position in the long run as it immobilised supplies in several localities. Many employers persisted with old-fashioned, time-consuming agricultural practices. The existence of "cheap" labour supplies did not provide a really satisfactory basis for its efficient use: for example, the lay-out of farms was often ill-considered, involving labourers in long journeys from one job to the next. 'Right under his hat the farmer has one of the finest labour-saving devices ever invented,' commented an anonymous contributor to the Rhodesia Agricultural Journal: 'A little more use of this device would greatly assist to alleviate the labour shortage.' (71) Other farmers, especially those in tobacco who had planted out extensive acreages, signed on more workers than they could supervise properly, while Rhodesia did not lack its quota of "stoep farmers", who, as Clements and Harben have remarked, cultivated their lands from the Meikles Hotel verandah. Finally, it is interesting to note that the R.A.U. itself agreed with charges of inefficient and wasteful use of labour by some farmers. (72)

On the second question, an analysis of the number of indigenous Africans employed annually in work other than mining (Table I) (73) between 1924 and 1928 demonstrates that a rapid increase, amounting to 82%, took place over a four year period, although estimates prior to the 1926 Census may have been understated. The rise was well in excess of natural population increase, and if one includes those employed on mines and the substantial number at work in the Transvaal, the average total employed in the peak year (1927) probably approximated the 10% of population Native Department officials considered a desirable maximum if life in tribal areas was not to be permanently disrupted. (74) Since the average period of work per year was about four months, (75) this meant in effect that in a given year, practically all able-bodied men worked for a certain period. This conclusion is supported by a variety of district reports, indicating that between 30% and 80%, depending on the time of year and locality, were absent from their homes at a particular moment. The labour outflow was stimulated by a number of factors: bad harvests (e.g. in the low veld, 1926-27), continued depression of the cattle market, declining crop yields arising from continuous cropping in restricted localities, low prices offered for grain,

rising African needs and the annual tax demand. The gradual impoverishment of the subsistence sector demonstrated by Arrighi (76) thus furnished a growing number of labourers for white employers, as contemporary statistics indicate. Under normal circumstances, this number would have been more than adequate for farmers' requirements. The labour shortage was created by extravagant demands from employers, rather than the failure of Africans to offer their services.

Responsibility for the 1924-28 labour supply crisis thus rested with the farmers themselves. Low wages, poor conditions and abuses of the ticket system, accompanied by ill-treatment on the part of some employers made farm work in general less desirable than other types of industry. But these were essentially background factors which had always been characteristic of farm work. The single cause that threw them into sharp relief was the wave of speculation that beset the farming industry during the optimistic years of the mid-'twenties. An under-capitalised economic sector yielding only a modest return upon investment - in 1927 only about one out of twenty farmers earned sufficient from the soil to pay income tax (77) - hoped to "strike it rich" with new crops. In the process, it absorbed - often wastefully - large supplies of labour, and all but outstripped available labour resources inside and outside Rhodesia.

TABLE I : AFRICANS IN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT, 1923-1929

Year	Work other than mining			Mining			Total at work		
	Indigenous	Non-Indig.	Total	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Total	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Total
1923	39 000	62 000	101 000	10 300	27 800	38 100	49 300	89 800	139 100
1924	38 700	62 100	100 800	11 100	30 300	41 400	49 800	92 400	142 200
1925	44 561	63 000	107 561	10 572	29 072	39 644	55 133	92 072	147 205
1926	69 096	64 037	133 133	11 442	30 605	42 047	80 538	94 642	175 180
1927	70 688	67 200	137 888	12 062	29 984	42 046	82 750	97 184	179 934
1928	70 572	63 579	134 151	12 669	31 034	43 703	83 241	94 613	177 854
1929	59 612	56 576	116 188	11 741	33 744	45 485	71 353	90 320	161 673

Source: CNC's Annual Reports, 1923-1929.

- Notes:
1. The estimates for "Work other than mining" are very approximate, as only mines were required to submit returns for African employed.
 2. The 1926 census (May) indicated that 67 331 indigenous Africans were engaged in work other than mining, a figure which suggests that the earlier CNC's estimates were under-stated.
 3. Note the drop in the non-mining sector from 1928 onwards.

TABLE II: DISTRICT LABOUR SUPPLIES, 1924-8: TEN PRINCIPAL FARMING DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	Number of months when local N.C. reported shortage (all sectors)				
	1924 ^f	1925 ^f	1926	1927	1928
Mazoe	3	5	11	8	7
Salisbury	0	4	5	4	0
Lomagundi	5	6	9	-	-
Hartley	0	6	12	10	2
Gwelo	1	6	12	9	11
Bulawayo	0	0	1	-	0
Umtali	1	1	6	5	4
Marandellas	2	3	10	7	4
Victoria	3	4	12	12	12
Makoni	0	2	5	8	1

Sources: N.C.s' monthly reports in NAR S 138/1, S 138/40 and S 235/519-22.

^f only six sets of monthly reports extant

^f only eight sets of monthly reports extant.

No adjustment to make up for the missing months has been attempted.

- represents districts for which less than four reports on labour supplies have been made in a given year. These have been considered an unreliable guide and are omitted from the table.

- Notes:
1. Districts chosen are the ten highest employers of agricultural labour as reported in the 1931 Census; the preceding Census of 1926 lacks the requisite information.
 2. N.C.'s reports rarely make a distinction between agricultural and other labour supplies, and both are incorporated in the table.
 3. The table records net shortages after making allowance for the frequent juxtaposition of surpluses and shortages within the same district. Fortunately the majority of reports make a net assessment for a whole district.
 4. No distinction has been made in this or the next table between "slight" and "serious" shortages.

TABLE III : Number of districts reporting shortages in all employment sectors, by month, 1924-1930. (Total districts: 32)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>												<u>Monthly average</u>
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
1924	3	4	-	5	6	7	-	-	-	-	-	10	6
1925	7	-	-	5	7	7	8	9	-	13	-	13	9
1926	14	12	8	10	12	10	10	13	14	17	17	20	13
1927	17	15	10	9	10	10	11	13	12	14	14	12	12
1928	11	9	9	6	6	6	6	7	8	12	11	8	8
1929	9	10	8	6	9	10	8	9	10	10	11	12	9
1930	12	8	8	6	4	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4

Sources: As for Table II, plus NAR S 235/523-4.

- Notes:
1. Dashes indicate no returns available for that particular month.
 2. A certain number of districts, such as Mtoko, Mrewa and Darwin, where local labour requirements were small, rarely recorded shortages or surpluses. In other cases, N.C.s simply omitted to record the labour situation. No adjustment or extrapolation has been attempted in these instances. Over the period 1924-30, an average of about five districts failed to provide these monthly statistics.
 3. Seasonal shortages traditionally occurred towards the end of the year, when local Africans returned home to plough, and in March-April when they harvested crops.
 4. Mining areas reported shortages, due to increased production, from late 1928 to early 1930.
 5. From April 1930 onwards there was a consistent net surplus of labour.

TABLE IV: Monthly inflow of migrants, 1926-1928. numbers registered by Native Commissioners

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>												<u>Total</u>
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
1926	3118	2298	2076	2661	4303	5400	6118	5886	5041	4319	4448	3514	49 188
1927	2628	2175	2128	2738	3762	4352	5925	7100	6157	5775	5172	4549	52 461
1928	3831	2494	3618	4078	5855	5724	6151	6432	4429	4305	4307	3963	55 187
1929	3207	1738	1916	3422	4766	4993	7317	8303	5930	5298	5271	3969	56 130

Average for month

1926 3196 2176 2435 3225 4672 5119 6378 6930 5389 4924 4800 3999

-9

Sources: CNC's covering reviews to NC's monthly reports, NAR S235/520-3.

- Notes:
1. The CNC's covering reviews to available monthly reports for 1924 and 1925 are missing.
 2. Note the steep rise in August and September 1927, corresponding with the slump in African-grown tobacco earlier that year in Nyasaland.

TABLE V: Non-indigenous Africans registered at the main Mashonaland "ports of entry", 1923-29.

<u>Year</u>	<u>DARWIN</u>	<u>MREWA</u>	<u>MTOKO</u>	<u>UMFALI</u>
1923	12 176	9 855	1 605	4 972
1924	13 858	5 967	1 580	6 914
1925	10 358	3 538	1 089	2 428
1926	16 209	109	1 252	2 841
1927	24 308	71	1 379	2 946
1928	25 802	63	2 136	4 656
1929	28 766	60	2 337	5 582

Source: NC's annual reports, NAR S 235/501-7.

- Notes:
1. A sub-station was opened at Rusambo (Darwin district) in July 1925 to expedite labour flow: figures are included under Darwin. The new centre diverted migrants from Mrewa and Mtoko.
 2. The completion of the Tete-Blantyre road augmented the flow through Mtoko from 1926 onwards.

TABLE VI: Non-indigenous Africans registered, and passes issued to non-indigenous Africans to leave country, 1923-29

<u>Year</u>	<u>Registrations</u>	<u>Passes to leave Colony</u>
1923	33 534	17 055
1924	36 210	19 923
1925	38 103	22 384
1926	42 859	25 046
1927	43 050	28 565
1928	50 034	37 074
1929	50 161	30 064

Source: CNC's Annual Reports, 1923-29.

- Notes:
1. The difference between the two columns would seem to indicate a growing non-indigenous population in Rhodesia. This indubitably occurred, but many left the country after completing their contracts without obtaining the necessary pass.
 2. Discrepancies with the totals in Table IV will be apparent. The data in column one was furnished by the Registrar of Foreign Natives, whereas Table IV totals derive from district reports: thus the differences may be due to error between two offices. On the other hand, it is conceivable that they may represent those migrants who obtained alien Registration Certificates to facilitate their passage to South Africa and had no intention of seeking work in Rhodesia. If this is so, then about 5000-6500 trans-Zambesian

- migrants must have entered South Africa each year.
3. Note the increase in passes to leave the country during 1928, corresponding with retrenchments in the tobacco industry.

TABLE VII: Area under summer crops, 1913/14 to 1927/28
(European farmers only)

<u>Season</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Acres</u>
1913/14	161 268	1923/24	286 837
1917/18	276 108	1924/25	334 604
1919/20	211 094	1925/26	355 500
1921/22	228 000	1926/27	346 083
1922/23	266 607	1927/28	389 824

Source: Annual Reports, Director of Agric./Sec., Dept. of Agriculture, 1914-1928.

TABLE VIII: Cotton production, 1923/24 - 1926/27.

<u>Season</u>	<u>Yield (lbs)</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Yield per acre (lbs)</u>
1923/24	1 690 538	3 947	428
1924/25	5 888 462	62 858	93
1925/26	8 219 525	66 086	124
1926/27	734 786	8 134	90

Source: Statistical returns on summer crops, Rhodesia Agricultural Journal.

TABLE IX: Virginia tobacco production, 1923/24 - 1928/29.

<u>Season</u>	<u>Yield (lbs)</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Yield per acre (lbs)</u>	<u>No. of Growers</u>
1923/24	3 878 460	8003	485	166
1924/25	2 405 904	8441	285	176
1925/26	5 659 809	12915	438	336
1926/27	19 264 551	30164	639	763
1927/28	24 889 244	46622	534	987
1928/29	6 736 433	17127	393	N/A

Sources: Official Year Book for the Colony of Southern Rhodesia, 1930 (No.2); Report of the Sec., Dept. of Agr. for 1929; Statistics of summer crops in Rhodesia Agricultural Journal.

REFERENCES

Col.Sec. = Colonial Secretary
 CNC = Chief Native Commissioner
 NC = Native Commissioner
 ANC = Asst. Native Commissioner
 NAR = National Archives of Rhodesia
 RH = Rhodesia Herald

1. See Table I.
2. On the early history of African labour policy, see J.MacKenzie, African Labour in South Central Africa, 1890-1914 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of B.C., 1969).
3. See correspondence in NAR N3/28/2. The missionary A.S.Cripps' novel Bay Tree Country: a story of Mashonaland (Oxford, 1913) gives an interesting, though fictionalised, account of the episode.
4. As recommended by the 1910-11 Native Affairs Committee Enquiry Report /12-11/, paras 48(1) and 250.
5. The early history of European agriculture forms the subject of Dr. H. Weinmann's recent work, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1923 (Dept. of Agric.Occ.Paper No.4, U.R. Salisbury, 1972).
6. See Tables VIII and IX.
7. This point is discussed further in the penultimate section of this paper.
8. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the Year 1926... /C.S.R.6 - 1927/, Govt. Printer, Salisbury, 1927, p.4.
9. H.R. Cumming, Letter in R.H., 20/7/26.
10. Letter in R.H., 18/8/26. On the other hand, this phenomenon was reported by too many observers, including Native Commissioners, to be dismissed out of hand as mere prejudice. The series of catastrophes that visited the reserves after 1918 - the influenza epidemic, 1921-22 drought, collapse of grain and cattle markets, locusts, and the reduction of reserves following the 1920 Order in Council - may well have induced a sense of hopelessness amongst some Africans. It is thus not unreasonable to interpret excessive drinking as an escapist symptom of this feeling.
11. This topic is discussed on pp.379-88 of my doctoral thesis (Foundations of a "Native" Policy, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Simon Fraser Univ., 1972).
12. Report in R.H., 14/11/24.
13. Report in R.H., 23/1/25.
14. H. Montagu, Letter in R.H., 26/4/26.
15. Report in R.H., 10/12/26. The enabling statute, High Commissioner's Proclamation No.55 of 1910 (Sect.44), later replaced by the 1927 Native Affairs Act (Sect.50), permitted the call-out of labour for 'matters of public urgency'.
16. R.H., 1/10/25; also see below.
17. The 1923 Constitution Letters Patent laid down that any Law 'whereby natives may be subjected or made liable to any conditions, disabilities or restrictions to which persons of European descent are not also subjected or made liable', except legislation concerning the supply of arms, ammunition and liquor, should not come into operation until the Royal Assent had been received (Section 28(a)).
18. This alliance did not materialise. The farmers elected to set up their own party (the Country Party), but failed to win a seat in the 1928 Elections, principally because the labour crisis had petered out as a result of the tobacco crash.
19. Speech to R.A.U. Congress held 4 April 1927 (R.H., 8/4/27).
20. i.e. Minister of Internal Affairs. Leggate assumed this office in January 1925.
21. Report in R.H., 17/9/26.
22. Minutes, meeting of Enterprise Farmers' Association held 12 March 1927 (NAR BI 1/1/1).
23. Premier, memorandum dated 17 March 1927. This memorandum formed the basis of Coghlan's speech to the 1927 R.A.U. Congress (see fn.19 above).

24. Receipts for 1925/6 are given as £1 836 406 (S.R.Hansard, 3, appendix); Native Tax receipts in the year ending 31 December 1925 amounted to £302 738 (CNC's Report for the Year 1925, p.6: this includes non-indigenous tax receipts).
25. Report in R.H., 30/9/25 cf. Kenya Ord.26 of 1922. This Ordinance was rarely used, and the Secretary of State's permission was required prior to any labour call-up.
26. J.S. Parker, letter in R.H., 25/12/25.
27. Report on the Midland Farmers' Association meeting held 17 February 1926 (R.H., 4/3/26). These passes were abolished in 1915, but remained in force for migrants seeking work.
28. W.S.T/abener/, letter in R.H., 31/1/27. The author was a retired Superintendent of Natives, now operating as a labour recruiter. This suggestion was, strangely enough, backed by W.D. Chipeway, Secretary of the Rhodesia Native Association (letter in R.H., 4/2/27).
29. See N.C.Sebungwe, Monthly Report for April 1926, NAR S235/520.
30. Act 15, 1927, repealing Sect.25 of the 1911 Native Labour Regulations Ord.
31. CNC to Sec. Native Affairs, Pretoria, 26/11/25, NAR S235/203-203A.
32. Report in R.H., 9/3/26.
33. Report of the Native Labour Committee of Enquiry, 1921, [A6-1921], Sby., Govt. Printer, 1921, p.15.
34. Meeting, Enterprise Farmers' Association, held on 26 August 1924, NAR EN1/2/2.
35. Sec., Dept. of Colonial Sec. to Sec. to Premier, 13/9/27, NAR S235/431.
36. Report in R.H., 9/3/26. Coghlan did not deny the charge, emphasising that the only solution was higher wages.
37. The Department of Agriculture's Tobacco Export (D.D. Brown) gave the following production figures for African tobacco in Nyasaland:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Yield in lbs</u>
1923	2 973	224 000
1924	3 312	1 176 000
1925	11 026	2 636 480
1926	16 107	4 531 520
1927	18 601	7 804 160

(Table 5, Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, 26,8, Aug.1929, p.784).

Leggatte referred to the collapse in a letter to the Premier, 17 March 1927 (NAR S168).

38. Minute dated 19/2/25 in NAR S480/100.
39. Report in R.H., 2/10/25.
40. Minutes of conference held in Salisbury, 19-21 April 1926, topic D(5), NAR S138/37.
41. The capitation fee was £2/10/- farmers and £2 miners.
42. The subsidy, £12,000 in 1924, was reduced to £10,500 in 1925 and £7,500 in 1928.
43. Figures for R.N.L.B. annual labour supply may be found in the CNC's annual reports.
44. This evoked a hostile response from the R.A.U. - see R.H., 25/2/27.
45. Reported in R.H., 1/10/25. The Masters and Servants Act laid down penal sanctions for breach of contract, including such misdemeanours as neglect of duty, desertion, refusal to obey orders and being absent without leave (Section 47); these provisions did not apply to juveniles. The Act was rigorously enforced during the 20s.
46. "G.W.P.", letter in R.H., 5/6/25.
47. Act 10, 1926.
48. This epithet was first used by A.S. Cripps in a letter to the Governor of S.Rhodesia, dated 29/8/26, NAR S138/255.
49. Premier, minute dated 29/9/28 in NAR S138/255.
50. The Act is discussed at length in my doctoral thesis (op.cit., pp.244-9), with emphasis upon the Native Department's role; and by N.L.Chaduka, Britain and Southern Rhodesia, 1923 to 1939: British opinion and the politics of 'African Affairs' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Liverpool, 1970).

51. Appointed in 1927, this Committee commented harshly on many of the practices described below, but its recommendations were comparatively wild; they included a 15/- p.m. minimum wage. Its report was never published (typescript in NAR S235/426).
52. N.C. Marandellas, Annual Report for 1927, NAR S235/505.
53. N.C. Marandellas, Annual Report for 1928, NAR S235/506.
54. Annual Report for 1927, NAR S235/505.
55. The number of prosecutions for desertion under the Masters and Servants Act for the period 1924-28 are given as follows in Dept. of Law Annual Reports:
1924, 891; 1925, 1039; 1926, 1300; 1927, 1484; 1928, 1342.
It is likely that these figures represent only a fraction of actual desertions, as many employers were not prepared to spend time reporting offences and then giving evidence in court.
56. N.C. Mazoe to CNC, 6/9/28, NAR S138/40. £2 490 was advanced for the payment of wages (returns in NAR S235/406).
57. N.C. Selukwe, Monthly Report for March 1927, NAR S235/521. Ware, later N.C. Mazoe during the tobacco crash, was a member of the Native Labour Committee (see fn.51 above).
58. R.H., 25/3/27. The name of the author is not given.
59. Figures given in Col.Sec. to Premier, 28/2/25, NAR S235/368.
60. CNC to Sec. to Premier, 1/3/27, NAR S138/40.
61. Reported in R.H., 1/4/27.
62. Supt. of Natives, Fort Victoria, to CNC, 10/6/27: statement by Tschengetai and Tichaponda taken by the local ANC at Buhera, 11/6/26; both in NAR S138/40.
63. ANC Mtetengwe, Annual Report for 1925, NAR S235/303.
64. Annual Report for 1926, NAR S235/504.
65. In NAR S138/40.
66. CNC to Sec. to Premier, 2/1/27, NAR S138/40.
67. A census taken of the members by the Mazoe (Glendale) Farmers' Association disclosed a shortage of 985 Africans against 20 employers, five others having adequate supplies (R.H., 22/7/27). The motives underlying the census are suspect, as its results were used as ammunition against the Government, and the figure unreliable because (a) 11 employers did not reply; (b) the census was taken at harvest time, when labour was traditionally short. Also the raw figure of 985 is singularly uninformative, as no indication of total labour strength is given. Available district figures for Africans in employment are too fragmentary to enable any breakdown of national figures.
68. These figures are drawn from the Summer Crop Statistics published annually in the Rhodesia Agricultural J., and for 1926/27 and 1927/28, the Reports on Summer Crop Returns.../C.S.R.2-1929/ and /C.S.R.1-1930/, Govt. Printer, Sby., 1929 and 1930.
69. These factors are derived from V.M. Wadsworth, "Native Labour in Agriculture", Rh.Agric.J., 47, 3, May-June 1950, pp.234-53. They are of relative rather than absolute value. An attempt to apply them to the labour situation in Marandellas during 1926 - for which district figures are available for mines and farms, indicated a labour wastage (following Wadsworth's criteria for non-mechanised agriculture) of about 200%, even after allowing other employers for which figures are not available (e.g. commerce, domestic service) an arbitrary 10% share of Africans in employment. The absolute value of these factors should thus be discarded.
70. The Report of the Maize Enquiry Committee, /C.S.R.2-1931/ Govt. Printer, Sby., 1931, gives the following comparative yields in bags per acre (European production only):

Annual averages, seasons:	Mazoe	Salisbury	Hartley	Gwelo
1913-14 to 1916-17	7,6	5,5	2,8	2,0
1917-18 to 1920-21	7,9	5,1	3,4	2,4
1921-22 to 1924-25	6,9	4,8	3,6	2,2
1925-26 to 1928-29	7,1	6,0	4,5	3,7

71. "Labour Saver", "Labour-saving Machinery", R. Agr. J., Nov. 1927, 21, 11, pp. 1130-2.
72. F. Clements and E. Harbon, Leaf of Gold: the story of Rhodesian tobacco, London, 1962, p. 98; Report in R.H., 18/2/27.
73. Details of the number of Africans employed in agriculture are available for the 1926/27 and 1927/28 season, and the 1926 Census only.
74. CNC, minute dated 15/1/25, NAR S138/40. The 10% figure is wholly arbitrary: some districts like Inyanga easily exceeded it without any official action resulting.
75. Ag.CNC to Col.Sec., 27/8/26, NAR S138/40.
76. G. Arrighi: "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: a study of the proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia", J. of Development Studies, April 1970, pp. 197-234; see also fn. 10, above.
77. H. Noaks: statement to Bindura Farmers' Association, 27/7/27 (Minutes, NAR B11/1/1.
The standard rebate for a married man in 1924-8 was £1,000 plus £50 for each child, and £500 for a single man (Official Year Book for the Colony of Southern Rhodesia, No. 2 (1930), p. 560.



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