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THE STRUCTURAL BASIS OF LABOUR MIGRANCY: INDUSTRY, WORKERS  
AND THE STATE IN KATANGA, 1906-1911.

BY

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No 3.

ROMA  
NOVENBER, 1976

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I

This paper seeks to identify the principle factors in labour migrancy in Africa through an analysis of its structural basis in a particular area and at a particular point in time. It accordingly offers a corrective to a sociology of the subject in which the fundamental aspects of the political economy giving context to migrancy are taken as given. In what is a very extensive literature on migrancy causality has all too often been explored only at the level of the individual. The result is a plethora of 'explanatory' models ranging from Wilson (after Mitchell)(1) to Todaro (2), with limited predictive powers as to probable patterns of migrancy under different sets of conditions, but which make no attempt to explain those conditions. The deficiency is in part a consequence of the 'deliberate naivete' of the scholars concerned, but this 'deliberate naivete' itself derives from a major confusion in the literature. In the late 1950s Soper wrote that:

The actual causes of the initial movement into wage employment are relatively well understood. What is interesting is why, instead of settling permanently in the areas in which they have found employment, have so many African workers subsequently continued as migrants moving periodically to and from their rural homes? (3)

And the same concerns on top of the same complacency have since recurred again and again. It is in fact highly questionable as to whether we do fully understand the range of socio-economic pressures making for African movement into wage employment. It is even more questionable as to whether we can profitably differentiate between the causes of African entry into the labour market, and their subsequent behaviour.

It is argued in this paper that labour migrancy derives from the structural dependence of the migrants on both wage labour and peasant or subsistence production, and that such dependence

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1. F. Wilson, Migrant Labour in South Africa, (Johannesburg, 1972); and Labour in the South African Gold Mines, (Cambridge, 1972). Wilson took as his point of departure J.C. Mitchell, 'The causes of labour migration', in Proceedings of the Sixth Inter-African Labour Conference, (CCTA, Abidjan, 1961).
2. M.P. Todaro, 'A model of labour migration and urban unemployment in less developed countries', American Economic Review, 59, 1969, 745-748.
3. T.P. Soper, 'Labour migration in Africa', Journal of African Administration, XI, 2, 1959, 95.

is a function of the manipulation of agricultural produce and labour markets in the interests of capital. It is further argued that the essence of such interests is to be sought in the specific requirements of the production regimes operated by the dominant fraction of capital - in this instance by the mining industry. It is thus of critical importance to appreciate the nature of such requirements, as well as the manner in which they were satisfied, if the terms on which Africans entered into wage employment - and consequently their behaviour in the labour market - are to be understood. The following sections of this paper accordingly seek to establish the specific connections between African dependence on both wage labour and peasant or subsistence production, and the requirements of the mining industry as they were satisfied through industry/state collaboration in the creation and manipulation of markets.

## II

The modern copper mining industry in Katanga was launched with the foundation of the Belgian Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) in 1906 (1). The preliminary prospecting had been handled by a British company, Robert Williams' Tanganyika Concessions Limited (TCL), and in 1906 this company secured a 40 per cent holding in the UMHK together with technical and labour management contracts that left it in control of company operations for at least the first few years (2) - a fact that was to be of some importance in determining the initial thrust of UMHK labour mobilization strategies. In practice 'prospecting' had entailed only the location of the one hundred odd deposits that had been worked by the autochthonous peoples since the fifth century (3). These deposits consisted entirely of high grade oxide (principally malachite) outcrops. But though they were rich, they were extremely remote - being located right in the middle of Africa and with no ready transport routes to the coast available. The cost of infrastructural

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1. On the establishment of the UMHK and early mining development in the Congo Free State see Union Minière du Haut Katanga, UMHK 1906-1956, (UMHK, Brussels, 1956); and H. Robert, Geologie et géographie du Katanga, (Brussels, 1956).
  2. TCL lost effective control of technical management of the UMHK in 1912, but retained control of the compounds until 1919.
  3. For pre-colonial mining along the Congo-Zambezi watershed see H. Bisson, 'Prehistoric copper mining in North Western Zambia', Archeology, 27,4,1974, 242-247.

development, and the landed price of the capital goods necessary to production were thus extremely high. So too was the hiring price of skilled labour in the South African, European and American markets. By contrast industrially unskilled local labour could be engaged in limited quantities at comparatively low prices (1).

Initial production techniques were accordingly designed to make maximum possible use of unskilled labour. Mining was highly selective - only the highest grade of ore being removed - and all operations were carried out manually. Explosive holes were hand drilled, extraction was by pick and shovel, and tramping was by wheelbarrow and Decauville tip truck (coco pans). Although a scheme for concentration of the ore had been mooted, it was rejected in favour of hand sorting, and without further enrichment the ore was then reduced thermically in waterjacket furnaces. All handling of ores, fuels, fluxes, slag and copper was manual. Requirements of unskilled labour on production work by output were accordingly high (2).

Moreover, between 1906 and 1912, these requirements were inflated by the needs of construction and development work, and this served further to boost demand for non-productive labour off the company's properties. Given the absence of an orthodox transport infrastructure, and where the presence of tsetse fly made the use of pack animals impracticable, the movement of goods other than between major centres necessarily involved the use of porters. All foodstuffs, for example, were brought in to the mines in this manner, and in 1908 it was estimated that in order to feed a work force of 400 a further 200 to 300 men were being used on portering (3). The farther foodstuffs had to be carried the greater the number of porters necessary to get a given quantity to the destination since porters had themselves to live off their burden. Over a distance of 150 miles,

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1. Gouverneur's index of the cost of capital relative to the cost of labour (1950 = 100) stood at 67 in 1911. J. Gouverneur, Productivity and factor proportions in less developed countries, (Oxford, 1971), Appendix IV, table 51, 151. Details of black wages before 1911 are unavailable, but in that year they averaged .57s per shift compared to between 25s and 30s for white labour.
  2. On early production techniques in the mines see Union Minière du Haut Katanga, UMHK 1906-1956: Evolution des techniques et des activités sociales, (UMHK, Brussels, 1957).
  3. Archives of Tanganyika Holdings Ltd.; TC/UM 108:  
A. Bertholet, Manager to H. Buttgenbach, Managing Director UMHK, 16 April 1908, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 10 June 1908. File references from this source generally commence with the notation TC, and hereafter such references will stand alone.

for example, it was reckoned that each porter would require 28lbs of a 60lb load to feed himself on the outward and return journeys (1). By 1908 two thirds of the company's food supplies originated from buying stations more than 100 miles from the mines, and at one buying station alone, Kapiri, there were employed more men on portorage than were recruited for construction, development and production work combined (2).

Labour recruitment and management was handled by a subsidiary of TCL, Robert Williams and Company, and in the period under examination they were responsible for supplying all the requirements of the three centres of operation - Ruwe, Kambove and the Star of the Congo (with Lubumbashi) - as well as a proportion of the company's portorage requirements (3). By 1908 they had four white recruiters in the field, as well as engagement officers at each of the three compounds, and during that year the total number of engagements was slightly over 4000 (4). Of these more than half were engaged directly at the mines (5) and this implies a total voluntary labour flow of considerable size, suggesting the effectiveness of the measures taken to mobilize labour for the industry.

### III

That the company could expect to operate a set of highly unskilled labour intensive production techniques with success derived from their comparative proximity to two dense population clusters. The first comprised the Lunda, Bemba, Ushi, Chishinga and Ngumbo peoples along the Luapula between lakes Iweru and Bangweulu, and the second comprised the Luba, Lomotwa and Zela along the Lualaba below the Lufira junction. The actual area of the mines was only sparsely populated by the Sanga and Lamba peoples, but of the three centres of the company's operations Ruwe was well

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1. TC/137: J.G. Watson, Manager Robert Williams and Company, to R. Williams, 14 February 1909.
  2. Ibid.; also J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 5 April 1909.
  3. Kapiri recruited its own labour force.
  4. The recruiters were D. MacDonald, J.E. Stephenson, J.H. Hayes and R. Gillespie. See TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 14 February 1909.
  5. Ibid. This is as opposed to being engaged by the recruiters in their home areas. The reasons for this lie within the politics of trypanosomiasis described in section III below.

placed to draw on the Lualaba supply areas, and the Star of the Congo was equally well placed to draw on the Luapula supply areas. In addition, TCL possession of the Kansanshi deposit in North-Western Rhodesia provided a minor collection and distribution point of Kaonde workers for all three properties.

From a very early stage, however, it was the Luapula which yielded most of the company's black labour, and proximity to this supply was a major consideration in the location of the smelter at Lubumbashi (near the Star of the Congo) rather than at the more central Kambove. There were in fact some very good reasons why the company should have looked to North-Eastern Rhodesia for its labour supplies rather than to Katanga. In the first place the British companies controlling the UMHK had closer links with the British South Africa Company (BSA Company) administration in the Rhodesias than with the Belgian Comité Spéciale du Katanga (CSK) administration in Katanga (1), and in the second the fact that the BSA Company had successfully enforced a money tax by 1905 meant that the human resources of both the northern territories were ripe for exploitation just at the time that the UMHK was moving into its construction and development phases (2). In the Congo Free State, by contrast, colonial occupation of the country was still far less of a reality than in the Rhodesias, money had hardly appeared on the scene, and industry/state collaboration in the creation and manipulation of markets was still very much in its infancy. Moreover, in North-Eastern Rhodesia the ecological limitations on the agricultural productivity of much of the territory together with its remoteness from the principal agricultural produce markets, meant that the enforcement of a money tax left Africans with no option but to enter into wage labour.

By the same token, however, the territory was attractive as a potential labour supply area to the mining interests of both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, and it was certainly not with the requirements of the Katanga mines in mind that the BSA Company had put in the preliminary work necessary to the creation of a labour reservoir. Indeed, although in 1906 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) was already established in the area, in that year

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1. Williams was himself a former employee of Rhodes, and, at the head of the Zambezia Exploring Company, had undertaken much prospecting work for the BSA Company. Also, through the Rhodesia Katanga Junction Railway and Mineral Company, he was already one of the largest employers in the territory.
  2. L.H. Gann, A History of Southern Rhodesia: early days to 1953, (London, 1954), 103. Taxation varied between 2s and 10s per annum.

it was ousted to make way for the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (NMLB) in an attempt by the BSA Company to satisfy the vastly increased unskilled labour requirements of a rapidly expanding industrial sector in Southern Rhodesia (1). The appearance of Robert Williams and Company recruiters was thus hardly welcome in the territory, and in fact over the next five years the BSA Company attempted to place an embargo on the shipment of all labour from North-Eastern Rhodesia to Katanga.

The context of this attempt was the international concern aroused over the discovery of glossina palpalis (the species of tsetse fly then held to be responsible for transmitting the trypanosomes to man) on the Luapula in 1905 (2). There is little doubt but that the appearance of sleeping sickness caused widespread alarm amongst medical men in both the Rhodesias and Katanga, but there is equally little doubt that the curative and preventive measures taken by the BSA Company administration were not actuated by that concern alone.

By March 1907 the borders of North-Western Rhodesia had been closed to all outward migration to Angola and Katanga (3). By November North-Eastern Rhodesia had been similarly closed to Katanga and German East Africa, and inward migration was permitted at selected medical control points only (4). An area lying to the east of the Luapula and Lake Mweru, and to the south of the North-Eastern Rhodesia/Katanga border and Lake Tanganyika was declared an 'infected area' from which no-one was permitted to emigrate. (See map appended).

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1. BSA Company, Directors' report for the year ending 31 March 1907, (Report of the Administrator, North-Eastern Rhodesia), 9 and 71.
  2. For details of the investigation of sleeping sickness in the area see TC/UM 77/357: A Pearson, Medical Officer UMHK, to Acting Administrator North-Western Rhodesia, 4 April 1910, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 25 May 1910.
  3. TC/UM 77/357: A.C. Anderson for the Acting Administrator North-Western Rhodesia, to the O.C. Kasempa District, 23 March 1907, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 4 March 1908. See also C. de vere Hunt for D.C. Kasempa District, to TCL, Kansanshi, 7 April 1907, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 4 March 1908.
  4. National Archives of Zambia (hereafter NAZ/); BS1/65: Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 28 November 1907; and the Draft Rules under the Epidemic Contagious Diseases Regulations, 1907. The control points were at Madona, Chienji and Sumbu.

Adjacent to this a far larger area was designated a 'guard area' in which there was to be no labour recruitment, and the movement of Africans was to be strictly controlled by passes (1). It was further made a punishable offence in fly free areas to employ men from infected areas, and all men recruited for Southern Rhodesia were to be medically examined (2).

In this lay the essence of BSA Company strategy. By sealing the border abutting Katanga together with a strip of land adjoining the border but inside North-Eastern Rhodesia, it was intended to prevent any movement of peoples from Rhodesia into Katanga. And although the guard area (from which the major part of Robert Williams and Company's labour had been drawn) was closed to all recruitment, such labour as was forced out of the area by conventional pressures such as taxation would be compelled to move south and not west. And beyond the guard area the RNLB stations were waiting.

In North-Western Rhodesia the results were dramatic. The number of men recruited by the RNLB jumped from 702 in the first half of 1906 to 4076 in the first half of 1907 (3). In North-Eastern Rhodesia the Bureau was far less successful despite the fact that the economic dislocation of the people affected by the preventive and control measures against trypanosomiasis was far more severe than elsewhere. In infected areas control meant the widespread destruction of villages, and access to the Luapula and Lake Mweru was prohibited (4). In 1908 the Acting Administrator reported on these measures in the following terms:

every village on the shores of Tanganyika, on the Lovu, and on the Luapula from Luera (Lwela) to Old Fort Rosebery is now abandoned, and to avoid any chance of return has been burnt down. Except for the collection of

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1. NAZ/BS1/65: Acting-Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 15 November 1907, dealing with the fourth report of the Medical Officer, J.C. Spillane, on whose recommendations the regulations were based. Also J.C. Spillane, ninth report on sleeping sickness, 6 October 1908.
  2. NAZ/BS1/65: Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 15 November 1907.
  3. Archives of the former Belgian Ministry of Colonies (hereafter BMC/); MOI/3551/45: RNIB, Report...for the six months ended 30 June 1910, Annexure A.
  4. NAZ/BS1/65: Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 5 November 1907.



growing crops there is little communication between the new villages and the river or the lake. Some of the villages may have to be moved again next year...(1)

Additional pressures were brought in the form of an increasing burden of taxation, and the further disruption of what were then conventional African agricultural practices arising out of an administrative attack on the citomene (slash and burn) system in 1907/1908 (2). But although these measures did have the effect of forcing increasing numbers of men into the labour market, the RNLB was not the main beneficiary (3). For even if the closure of the Luapula prevented the recruiters of Robert Williams and Company from crossing the river to search out either labour or food - at least after 1908 (4), it was far less effective a check on African mobility than the BSA Company would have liked. In April 1909 the Medical Officer at Fort Rosebery noted that there were still numerous canoes on the Luapula, and he urged that they be destroyed. He argued that all their attempts to combat trypanosomiasis were being nullified by the non-cooperation of the Belgian authorities:

the opposite bank of the Luapula is thick with villages and more are being built (unfortunately it must be admitted that some of these at least are peopled by refugees from this side), and as long as these villages are allowed to remain on the river bank affording every facility for fishing and the like, they will be a continual temptation and a continual menace to our own people (5).

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1. NAZ/BS1/65: Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 18 December 1908.
  2. In 1907 the Administrator report<sup>ed</sup> that 'in order to save the country from deforestation and to facilitate the control of natives and the collection of hut tax, orders were given that indiscriminate destruction of trees was to be discontinued...' BSA Company, Directors' report for the year ending 31 March 1907, (Report of the Administrator, North-Eastern Rhodesia), 71.
  3. Recruitment figures for the RNLB in North-Eastern Rhodesia remained well below those for North-Western Rhodesia. BMC/NOI 3551/43: RNLB, report...for the six months ending 30 June 1910, Annexure A.
  4. TC/UM 77/351: A. Bertholet to H. Buttgenbach, 18 April 1908, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 10 June 1908.
  5. NAZ/BS1/65: W.H.T. Storrs to P.M.O. Fort Jameson, 10 April 1909.

By December the Acting Administrator was describing the closure of the river as 'a dead letter' and arguing that the 'popularity' of the Katanga mines was such that no system of patrol could be effective. He went on 'so long as the natives have no other lawful sphere of labour, they will evade the restrictions on their movements' (1).

Proceeding from this assessment the BSA Company administration then prepared to abandon the notion of inviolable infected areas, and recommended that labour then evading the patrols should be channelled south (2). Opposition to this recommendation came from two directions. On the one hand the Director of the London Sleeping Sickness Bureau was not convinced of the medical advisability of the move, and felt that the BSA Company's main reason for suggesting it was 'an accession of from seven to ten thousand native labourers' (3). On the other, the UMMK argued that even if it were desirable it would not prove possible to divert the flow of labour from the Katanga mines, and that a far more realistic approach would be one that made safe the passage of labourers to the mines by permitting a programme of controlled recruitment (4). Nevertheless, the suggestion was eagerly accepted by the London Board of the BSA Company, and early in 1910 they authorized direct recruitment in the infected areas of Tanaganyika, Mweru and Luapula for the Southern Rhodesian mines (5).

#### IV

By this time the problem of maintaining adequate supplies

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1. NAZ/BS1/65: Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, to BSA Company, London, 18 December 1908.
  2. NAZ/BS2/109: A. May, PMO North-Eastern Rhodesia, report on sleeping sickness in North-Eastern Rhodesia, 15 December 1909.
  3. NAZ/BS2/109: A.C. Bagshawe, Director of Sleeping Sickness Bureau, to Secretary of State Colonial Office, 28 February 1910.
  4. NAZ/BS2/109: A. Pearson to Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, 4 April 1910.
  5. NAZ/BS2/109: BSA Company, London, to the Administrator Southern Rhodesia, 12 February 1910; Administrator Southern Rhodesia to BSA Company, London, 8 January 1910; and BSA Company, London, to Acting Administrator North-Eastern Rhodesia, 12 February 1910.

of cheap black labour for the construction and development programme on the Katanga mines was acute, and the pressure on the UMIK to find a longer term solution was intense. In 1907 Robert Williams and Company had proposed to open up Angola to recruitment (1) but the proposal was, at the time, rejected on grounds of expense (2). By 1910, however, the UMIK had turned about on the issue (3) as labour shortages were driving up wages. At the same time their recruitment activities inside Katanga were intensified. By 1909 Robert Williams and Company had recruiters operating in the Lualaba basin as far north as the Lufira junction (4), and the company Medical Officer was recommending the extension of recruitment into the infected areas further north. He argued that since it was going to be essential for the mines to draw most of their labour from the north, such a source should be cultivated rather than isolated regardless of the presence of glossina palpalis (5).

But within Katanga the potential labour supply areas were not the ecological traps of the Bemba plateau in North-Eastern Rhodesia, and labour recruiters had to contend not only with an ineffectual administration, but with the comparative profitability of peasant production. As elsewhere in Southern Africa the injection of large amounts of capital in support of industrial development had initially created considerable demand for foodstuffs which was met almost entirely by local African producers on the basis of existing agricultural methods (6). In order to satisfy their foodstuff requirements the company had established buying stations at ever increasing distances from the mines. By 1908 it was purchasing grain from African producers in an area extending

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1. TC/UM 77/357: A. Bertholet to H. Buttgenbach, 28 December 1907, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 22 February 1908.
  2. TC/UM 108: H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 1 February 1908.
  3. TC/UM 108: H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 11 May 1910.
  4. TC/137: J.G. Watson to J.H. Hayes, 29 June 1909, in J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 26 July 1909. Hayes was the company recruiter for the area of the Lualaba basin to its junction with the Lufira.
  5. TC/UM 77/357: A. Pearson to A. Bertholet, 20 April 1909.
  6. On the development of peasant production in similar circumstances elsewhere in Central and Southern Africa see C. Bundy, 'The emergence and decline of a South African peasantry', *African Affairs*, 71, 285, 1972, 369-388; and I.R. Phimister, 'Peasant production in Southern Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, 73, 291, 1974, 217-228.

over much of Katanga and well into North-Eastern and North-Western Rhodesia, and in that year total purchases amounted to just under 1000 tons (1). Prices were high (2) and there is little doubt but that many producers were making quite enough cash to satisfy their wants through the sale of agricultural produce without recourse to wage labour. In North-Western Rhodesia, for example, the Department of Mines and Lands complained that 'the system of paying cash for grain is conducive to idleness and by far the greater proportion of tax paid during the last year...is gained from the latter source' (3), and it is instructive that the desire of the UMHK and TCL to make wage payments in cash rather than kind (4) did not carry over to food purchases (5).

There was clearly concensus on the part of employers that the role of African agricultural production should be a purely supportive one lying outside of the cash nexus - and indeed their interpretation of the term 'idleness' to mean all economic activity other than wage labour suggests an interesting conceptual differentiation as to the place of capitalist and non-capitalist production modes in colonial Africa.

By 1908 the field manager of Robert Williams and Company, J.G. Watson, was arguing that the company should no longer rely on Africans for food, but should encourage the formation of a local white agricultural capitalist interest (6), and early in 1909 he reported that three white farmers had been induced to establish themselves in the vicinity of Kansanshi (7). But the process of extricating the company from a situation of dependence on African producers was necessarily a gradual one, and in 1910 there were still numerous areas in Katanga where Africans were involved solely (and profitably) in peasant production (8). In March 1911, however, Robert Williams and

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1. TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 14 February 1909.
  2. TC/UM 108: A Bertholet to H. Buttgenbach, 31 March 1908.
  3. NAZ/BS2/141: Department of Lands and Mines (North-Western Rhodesia), Report for the year ending 31 March 1908.
  4. TC/UM 75/358: H. Buttgenbach to A. Bertholet, 14 November 1907; and TC/UM 75/346: H. Buttgenbach to A. Bertholet, 6 March 1908.
  5. TC/UM 108: A. Bertholet to H. Buttgenbach, 10 June 1908.
  6. TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 26 November 1908.
  7. TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 23 January 1909.
  8. TC/UM 108: E. Halewijck, General Manager UMHK, to H. Buttgenbach, 24 February 1910, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 8 April 1910.

Company concluded a major agreement with the firm of King and Werner in North-Western Rhodesia, under which the latter contracted to supply the mines with the bulk of their requirements of both grain and beef (1), and by November the northern buying stations had all been closed down (2). The consequent loss of markets, overselling at depressed prices, and the failure of the 1910/1911 sorghum crop were altogether too much for the peasant producers. Watson reported on the results in the following terms:

The country has changed a good deal during the last two years and not for the better. This season's crop of kaffir corn, which is the staple food of the people, was a failure. The whole country is in a state of starvation, and we are a long way from next season's harvest. The village people are in a miserable state, and for the time being are subsisting on roots and anything edible they can find in the bush. In many of the villages all one sees are a few old women and children. The men have disappeared (3).

By this time, however, industry/state collaboration on the mobilization of labour in Katanga had moved a long way. In March 1910 the UMHK had made a direct appeal to the local representative of the CSK, E. Wangermée, for assistance in what was seen a situation of serious labour scarcity aggravated by numerous desertions to railway contractors, the continued closure of the Northern Rhodesian borders, and the profitability of peasant production in the territory. He was in particular requested (a) to appoint officials specifically to 'encourage' men to work (as wage labourers), and (b) to impose and enforce a money tax (4). The CSK agreed the latter recommendation (5), but it soon became evident that to stimulate the flow of labour was not, by itself, enough. The high prices paid to African producers for foodstuffs, together with the increasing competition for unskilled industrial workers as the railhead moved closer to Lubumbashi and the Star, had produced a wage spiral that threatened the very basis of the system of labour utilization in the territory (6).

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1. See TC/UM 108: Robert Williams and Company to King and Werner, Kalomo, North-Western Rhodesia, 21 March 1911.
  2. TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 8 November 1911.
  3. Ibid.
  4. TC/UM 108: E. Halewijek to H. Buttgenbach, 24 February 1910, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 8 April 1910.
  5. TC/UM 108: H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 11 May 1910.
  6. The Rhodesian rail link which it had been intended would go on up to the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, was diverted to service the Katanga mines.

As a result industry took the decision to launch a labour bureau on the lines of the RNLD and WENELA, and to equip it with the monopsonistic powers necessary to the enforcement of a standard wage structure at a level acceptable to the UMSK (1). By July the bureau, the Bourse du Travail du Katanga (BTK), had been formally constituted and charged with the organization of the recruitment and distribution of labour within Katanga, and the importation and repatriation of workers from other provinces or countries (2). Tariffs for members ranged from 12 francs per worker engaged for a term not exceeding three months, to 30 francs per worker engaged for a term not exceeding twelve months. Tariffs for non members were double those for members. In addition a sum of three francs per worker was levied on each engagement, and provision was made for penalties on members going outside the BTK for their labour to the extent of 100 francs per infringement (3). The Bourse was then intended to take over completely the recruiting operations of Robert Williams and Company.

Accordingly, when the Katanga administration reopened negotiations with the BSA Company to resolve the border closure issue at a conference held at Fort Rosebery in October 1910, Robert Williams and Company was not invited (4). But though the North-Eastern Rhodesian administration did agree to permit the controlled flow of labour through medical checkpoints on the Luapula (5), this was conditional upon Robert Williams and Company retaining control of recruiting operations inside North-Eastern Rhodesia (6). Nor was this

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1. TC/UM 108: H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 11 May 1910.
  2. TC/UM 75/346: BTK General Regulations adopted by the general meeting of 29 July 1910, in H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 3 August 1910.
  3. Ibid.
  4. NAZ/BS1/65: Conference of officials from North-Eastern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo at Fort Rosebery, 17 October 1910.
  5. Ibid. Gheur, the Chef de Zone Haut Luapula, agreed to apply for authority to prevent the employment of any North-Eastern Rhodesian African in Katanga, unless he was in possession of a pass and a medical certificate.
  6. BMC/MOI 3551/46: R. Williams to J. Cousin, BTK, 18 December 1910. Recruiting in North-Eastern Rhodesia commenced in March 1911, and in North-Western Rhodesia in August. See TC/138: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 12 March 1911; TC/137: J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 9 August 1911; and NAZ/BS2/29: BSA Company, London, to Administrator Southern Rhodesia, 15 April 1911.

the only disappointment for the BTK. Demand for labour in Southern Rhodesia was still growing. The BSA Company Directors' Report of 1911 noted that 'the continued expansion of the industries of Southern Rhodesia has again been handicapped by shortage and irregularity in the supply of native labour...It is essential therefore...that large numbers should be attracted from Northern Rhodesia and other neighbouring territories' (1). In Northern Rhodesia too Kansanshi mine was expanding its operations (2), and whereas in 1908 local supplies had been considered adequate to satisfy its unskilled labour requirements (3), by 1911 the mine was beginning to experience chronic 'shortage' (4). Moreover, a white agricultural capitalist interest was rapidly growing in response both to the favourable conditions created by the BSA Company and the new market opportunities in Katanga (5). As a result the recruiting concession to Robert Williams and Company was restricted to 1000 men per annum only (6), and was hedged about with numerous restrictions (7).

Consequently the BTK and the UMHK were compelled to look to Katanga for the bulk of the labour requirements of the mines, and in the two years after the formation of the Bourse the

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1. BSA Company, Directors' report for the year ending 31 March 1910.
  2. Production of copper at the mine began in 1908, three years before the UMHK, and in 1910 the capacity of the smelter increased by the installation of a new blast furnace. See J.A. Bancroft, Mining in Northern Rhodesia, (BSA Company, London, 1961), 67; and BSA Company, Directors' report for the year ending 31 March 1911, 57.
  3. NAZ/BS2/141: Department of Mines and Lands (North-Western Rhodesia), Report for the year ending 31 March 1908.
  4. See for example TC/138: J. Merrilees, Kansanshi, to J.G. Watson, 26 June 1912, in J.G. Watson to R. Williams, 10 July 1912.
  5. BSA Company, Director's report for the year ending 31 March 1911, 55.
  6. NAZ/BS2/29: BSA Company to R. Williams, 10 April 1911.
  7. BMC/MOI 3551/46: R. Williams to J. Cousin, 18 December 1910. In terms of the regulations governing the concession recruits had to be medically examined both before registration and at special centres at Hdola and Ewana Mkubwa (to be maintained at the expense of Robert Williams and Company), they had to follow prescribed routes, the period of engagement could not exceed six months, and one half of all wages had to be deferred and paid over at the end of each contract in the recruit's home district. Moreover, recruiting was allowed for one mine only, the Star.

UMHK maintained a constant pressure on the state to act to guarantee its effectiveness. A major problem was that its monopsony remained largely theoretical. In October 1910 Halewijck complained of the 'unfair' competition of small employers, and what he saw as the non-cooperation of officials. In the north, he argued, they were competing with the ivory and rubber trade which had been just as profitable for the people as the food trade in the south. The chefs de poste were themselves recruiting workers and porters for the government military occupation and so providing further competition, although he admitted that the imposition of a money tax had eased the situation. The solution, he insisted, lay in government support for the BTK (1). And although Wangermée rejected any accusations that the state had not cooperated with the Bourse (2) in January 1911 he did instruct the chefs de zone to do all in their power to assist the organization. They were to provide it with full information about people living in the zone, they were to send all tax defaulters to the recruiting stations, and they were to advise the people that it operated with the full approval of the government (3). From May a representative of the state actually sat with the BTK management committee (4). But even this was not enough. In January 1912 the BTK called on the Minister of Colonies for direct aid in the sum of 100,000 francs to assist in the expansion of their operations in Katanga in order to make the province independent of Northern Rhodesian labour (5). This was agreed, and in April the chefs de zone were issued with direct instructions to get recruitment off the ground - specific reference being made to recent state 'investment' in the Bourse (6). The kind of collaboration necessary to the effective mobilization of the human resources of the territory was thus finally a reality.

These measures were back<sup>ed</sup> up by the introduction of legislation

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1. BMC/MOI 3552/48: E. Halewijck, report, 31 October 1910, in H. Butt enbach to the CSK, 17 December 1910.
  2. BMC/MOI 3552/48: E. Wangermée to Minister of Colonies, 9 March 1911.
  3. BMC/MOI 3552/48: E. Wangermée to Chefs de Zone, 14 January 1911, in E. Wangermée to Minister of Colonies, 15 February 1911.
  4. BMC/MOI 3552/48: Minister of Colonies to BTK, 1 May 1911.
  5. BMC/MOI 3552/48: L. Cousin to Minister of Colonies, 20 January 1912.
  6. BMC/MOI 3552/48: Minister of Colonies to L. Cousin, 1 February 1912; and Vice-Governor General to Chefs de Zone, 9 April 1912.



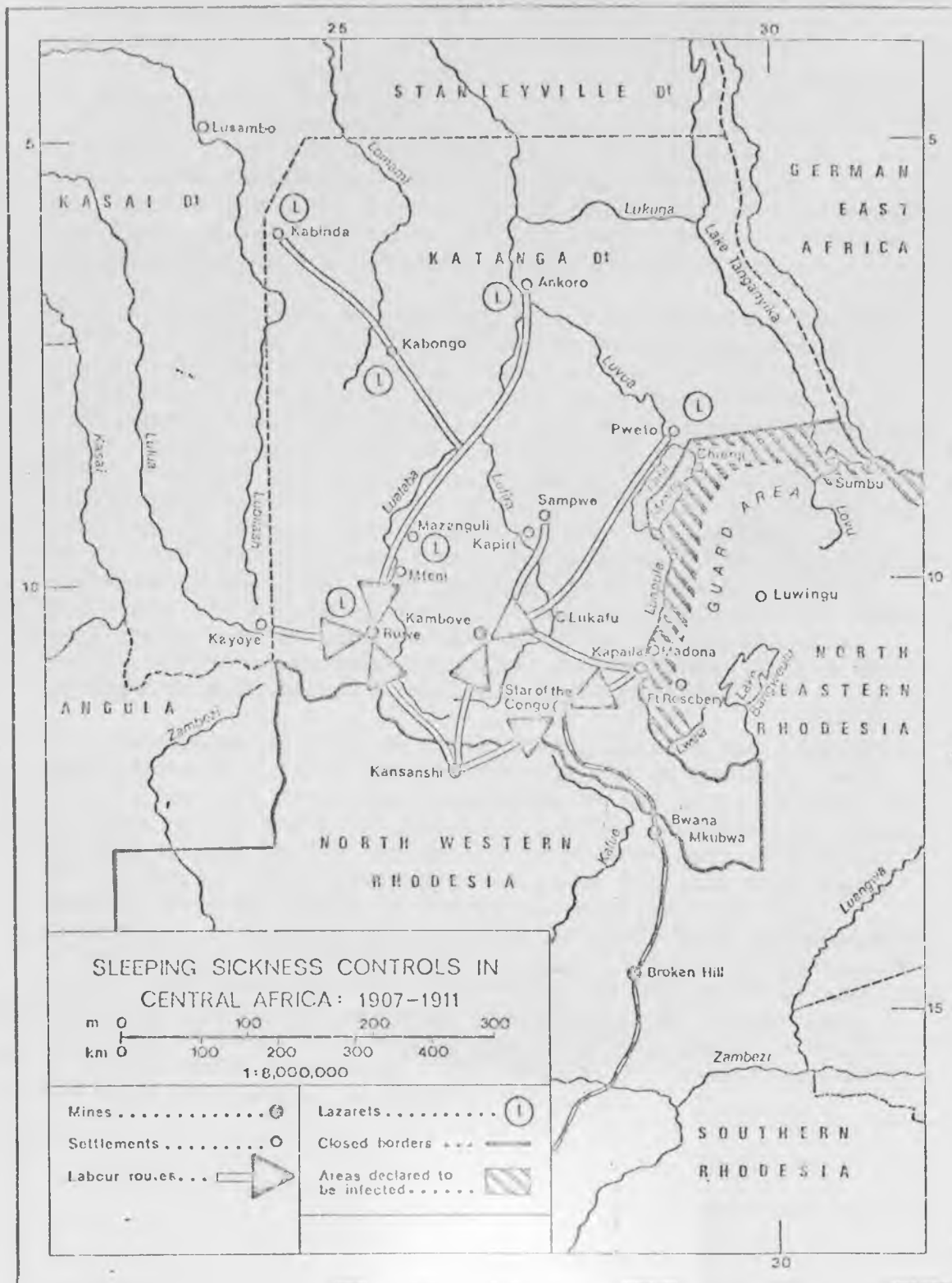
governing contracts for the hire of services and recruitment of labour (1). The decree, which applied to 'any native of the Congo or of neighbouring colonies, immatriculated or not, engaged by a European' (2), stipulated that all wages had to be paid in cash (3). In addition it provided penalties for breach of contract which included imprisonment with hard labour for a period not exceeding seven days, and fines of up to 200 francs (4) - the significance of this rather peculiar balance of options being the very limited value to the large corporations of the power to imprison recalcitrant workers compared to the value of the power to withhold wages.

## V

Thus by 1911 a fairly formidable organization had been created to realise the commercial potential of the mineral and human resources of the region. It was certainly at an early stage of its development, but its principal characteristics were already clearly defined. The most pronounced of these was the very close collaboration between the large international corporations and the Belgian state in the exploitation of the province. Through its holding in the CSK the state retained the right to two-thirds of all profits flowing from that company's involvement in the two main consortia operating in the area (5). To protect that interest the apparatus of administration was geared to the creation of conditions favourable to the profitable operation of those consortia, and in practical terms this meant the mobilization

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1. Decree of 17 August 1910. By this time the administration of the territory had passed out of the hands of the CSK. In 1908 the Congo Free State was formally annexed by Belgium, and by March 1910 it had taken over the Katanga administration leaving control of land and minerals in the hands of the CSK. In fact there were few real changes involved, and on the transfer of power Wangermée, the CSK representative, merely assumed the title of Vice Governor General.
  2. Decree of 17 August 1910 as amended by the decree of 25 January 1912, article 1.
  3. Ibid., article 10.
  4. Ibid., article 38.
  5. See B. Fetter, 'L'Union Minière du Haut Katanga 1920-1940: la naissance d'une sous-culture totalitaire', Cahiers du CEDAF, 6, 1973, for a description of the interests of the state in the UMHK.

APPENDIX



Sources: TC/UM 77/357; H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 3 April 1907 (with map); RAZ/BS 1/65; Acting Administrator, NEI, to W.A. Company, London, 5 Nov 1907; Draft rules, Epidemic and Contagious Diseases Regs 1907; and J.C. Spillane, 9<sup>th</sup> Sleeping Sickness Report, 6 Oct 1908.

of the human resources of the area to meet the requirements of both mines and railways (1). This had involved the introduction of a cash nexus under which the various administrative pressures could be directed to the production of either labour power (on the basis of conventional capitalist relations) or foodstuffs (on the basis of an adaptation of traditional agricultural practices). The principle of market manipulation had thus been firmly established, and the first steps taken to control by monopsonistic organization the terms on which Africans offered their labour or produce for sale to suit the developing requirements of capital.

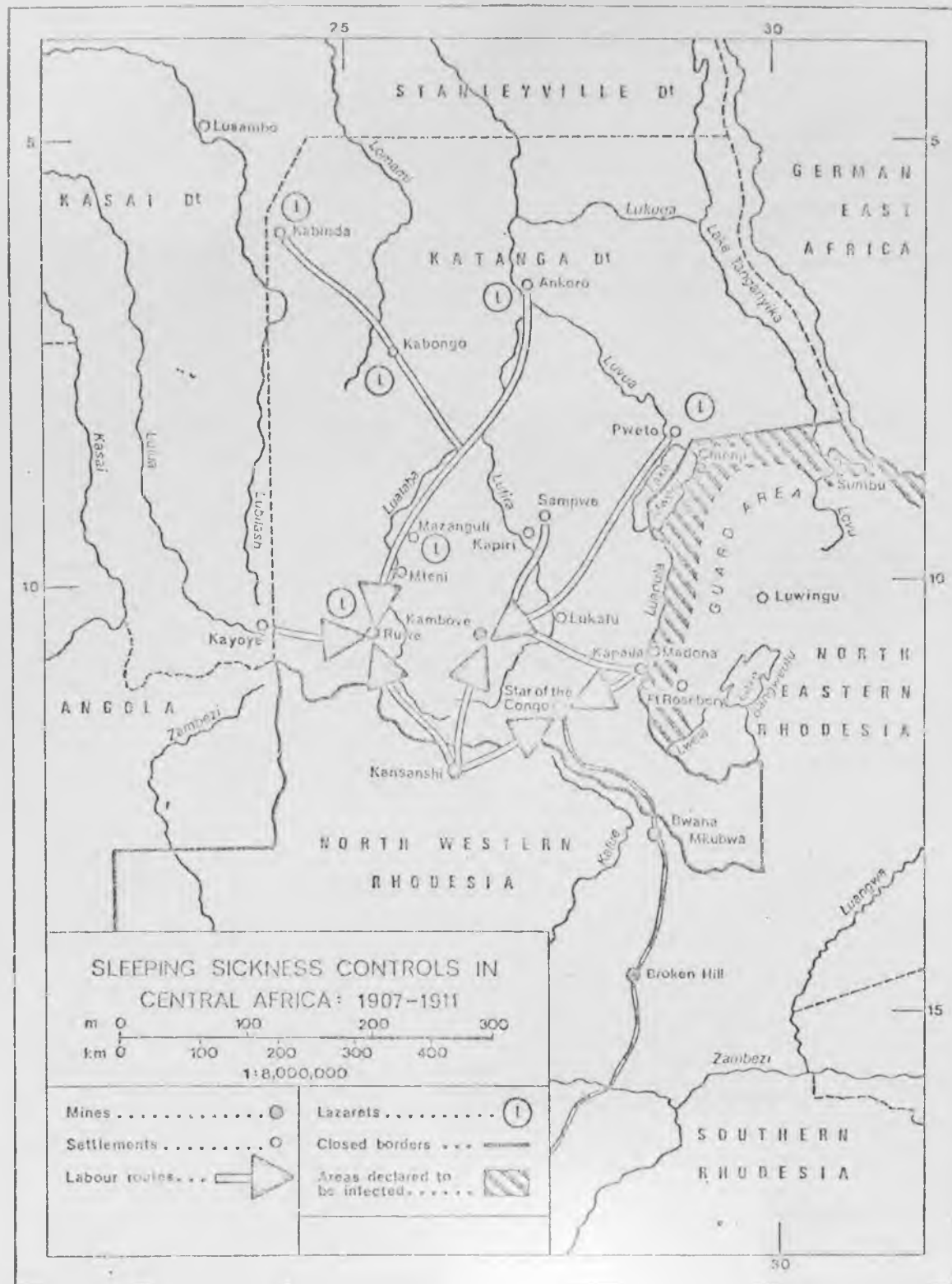
It has already been argued that such requirements under the unskilled labour intensive production techniques of the period were for a continuous supply of manual labour at minimal cost - and it is clear that such requirements presupposed a migrant system. It was only because industrial labour costs constituted no more than the price of the subsistence of the single worker during the period of his employment together with the price of transporting him to and from his rural home that such techniques were viable, and it was the sole purpose of the BTK to protect the wage régime adjudged by the UMMK to be appropriate to such techniques. Moreover, the low skill content and arduousness of most tasks performed, and the very limited survival capability of a highly parasitized, undernourished labour force, made a short average term of service intrinsically desirable.

For the worker so long as his earnings (direct and indirect) were fixed at a level below that required to maintain both himself and his immediate dependants in the urban milieu, and so long as the major agricultural produce markets were closed to him, he had little option but to persist with some form of peasant or subsistence production at the same time as he engaged in wage labour in industry. Moreover, if the dependence of workers on two modes of production necessitated a high degree of mobility between them in order to guarantee their short term survival (migrancy), it also ensured that they remained without the means of improving their longer term position in either. Such was the structural trap in which Africans found themselves - the essence of industrial labour strategy in colonial Africa.

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1. See J.P. Péemans, 'The role of the state in the capital accumulation process: the case of the Congo during the colonial period 1885-1960', Université de Louvain, Institut d'étude des pays en développement, Etudes et Documents, (Louvain, 1973).

APPENDIX



Sources: TC/UM 77/257; H. Buttgenbach to R. Williams, 3 April 1907 (with map); NAZ/BS 1/65; Acting Administrator, N.E.F., to BSA, 5 Nov 1907; Draft rules, Epidemic and Contagious Diseases Rules, 1907; and J.C. Spillane, 9<sup>th</sup> Sleeping Sickness Report, 6 Oct 1908.



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