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JOHN X. MERRIMAN, THE "POOR WHITE" AND THE PROBLEM OF THE "CLEAN-LIVING NATIVE" IN THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, 1892-1910

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ABSTRACT

JOHN X. MERRIMAN, THE "POOR WHITE" AND THE PROBLEM OF THE "CLEAN-LIVING NATIVE" IN THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, 1892-1910

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Historians have long known that John X. Merriman was among the first to call attention to the problem of rural white impoverishment in the Cape Colony. Few, however, have understood the degree to which his 1892 encounter with poor whiteism weakened his own longstanding commitment to African political and economic advancement. While Merriman was to remain publicly committed to both a "liberal Native policy" and the Cape's non-racial franchise throughout his long and distinguished parliamentary career, his private correspondence after 1892 demonstrates that he viewed "the degradation of the white population" and "the rising of the Native" as interrelated phenomena; movements that, taken together, threatened to undermine the white position in South Africa. Indeed, rehabilitating the poor white became for him one of the "things upon which our existence as a white race on this land depends." Thus, Merriman's response to poor whiteism is clearly of relevance when assessing the strength of his political commitment to "native" advancement in the period under review.

TO ELIZABETH ANN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The essay which follows owes its genesis to my advisor Dr. Gordon T. Stewart. It was he who initially suggested that I explore Phyllis Lewsen's four volume *Selections from the Correspondence of John X. Merriman, 1870-1924* in order to see what I could make of the Cape politician's letters. What I have since discovered and attempted to summarize in the pages that follow is the product of my own rather incomplete search for historical knowledge, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge at the onset the immense intellectual debt I owe Professor Stewart. I must also thank my parents, who, though they both wished that I had acquired a trade rather than a masters degree in history, nevertheless provided me with the funds to purchase the computer system that this essay was written on.

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INTRODUCTION

I do not know anything that gives me greater concern as a public man than the two movements that go on together--the degradation of a large and increasing class of our white population . . . and, at the same time, the rising of the Native, which, inevitable and creditable and even, from the point of view of civilization, admirable as it may be, is at the same time when coupled with the other movement a grave national menace. For, my dear Smuts, when we discuss our politics and the large question of federation, commercial union, development and so forth, we are working from the top downwards. It is the large, silent movement of the foundation of society that really matters, and it is in that quarter that the danger lies.

J. X. Merriman to J. C. Smuts, December 1906

Historians have long known that John X. Merriman was among the first to call attention to the problem of rural white impoverishment in the Cape Colony.[1] His tour of the midlands and eastern agricultural districts as Rhodes's treasurer and newly-appointed head of the Agriculture Department in November-December 1892 brought home to him as never before the plight of the rural poor and the extent of what was later dubbed the "poor white problem." What is less well known, however, is the degree to which Merriman's encounter with poor whiteism weakened his own long-standing commitment to the cause of African political and economic advancement. Phyllis Lewsen, the editor of Merriman's private correspondence and the

[1]J. F. W. Grosskopf, *Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, Part 1 of *The Poor White Problem in South Africa. Report of the Carnegie Commission* (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932), p. 20; C. W. De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa: Social & Economic* (1941; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 181. The epigraph is taken from W. K. Hancock and J. Van der Poel, ed., *Selections from the Smuts Papers, 1886-1919*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 311.

author of a number of articles and a recent biography detailing the life of the Cape liberal statesman, has all but ignored the consequences of this episode in her published writings on Merriman.[2] Indeed, in her biography *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* (1982) one finds a mere four references to poor whiteism; none of which, it must be added, explore the phenomenon or Merriman's reaction to it in any detail.[3] Such an oversight (if indeed it is an oversight) is unpardonable. For Merriman's response to the problem of rural white poverty is clearly of relevance when assessing the strength of his more general commitment to "native" advancement in the seventeen years preceding the Union of 1910.[4]

[2]*Selections from the Correspondence of J. X. Merriman, 1870-1924*, 4 vols. (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1960-1969), hereinafter referred to as *SCM* 1-4; "The Cape Liberal Tradition--Myth or Reality," *Race*, XII, 1 (July 1971), 66-80; "Merriman as Last Cape Prime Minister," *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 7 (November 1975), 62-87; and *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

[3]This book is a shortened version of a much longer monograph, copies of which are deposited in the London Library, the South African Library, and the Library of the University of Witwatersrand. Unfortunately, I was not able to examine this work nor interview Professor Lewsen about it during the course of my research. I am thus open to the charge that my criticisms are premature and unfair. My only defence, and I think a valid one, is that if the biography produced for public consumption differs substantially in its argument from that produced for the so-called experts in the field, then responsibility for any stones slung in the wrong direction lies not with this author but with Professor Lewsen and her publisher. I am confident, however, that *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* is a careful restatement of the argument proposed in Professor Lewsen's original text. As to references on the poor white problem in her book, one is limited to pp. 156-157, 281-282, 334, 349. Lewsen's index places the poor white on p. 324 as well but I could find nothing pertaining to poor whiteism on that page or on surrounding pages.

[4]Throughout this paper terms familiar to Merriman and his English-speaking contemporaries have been retained as against their more modern equivalents. While this risks offending the sensibilities of many a present-day reader, the use of such admittedly crude expressions as "Native," "Dutch" and "Cape Colored" does serve to eliminate the confusion likely to arise from a mixture of current and past terminology. Such usage also negates the sanitizing effect often associated with the employment of categories unrelated to the period under study.

Publicly, Merriman remained committed to a "liberal native policy" and the Cape's nonracial franchise throughout his long and distinguished political career. His statements of policy and principle in speeches before the Cape Legislative Assembly and in testimony given before such bodies as the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903-05 clearly established him as the most eloquent, if not the most sarcastic, of the "friends of the natives." However, that all this translates as support for African political and economic advancement is less clear. Indeed, a close reading of his private correspondence suggests otherwise. For while Merriman was vociferous in his *public* defense of African political and economic rights, his letters make clear that not only was he unwilling to accept parity between the races, but that *privately* such a prospect frightened him.

This fear of "native" advancement is most evident in letters written after 1892, the year in which the Cape liberal first encountered poor whiteism. To Merriman the poor white "was a mournful blot on the face of South Africa." That a class of depressed whites existed alongside what he believed was a prospering African peasantry left him depressed and worried. African prosperity in an economy managed by white men Merriman thought inevitable, even laudable given its civilizing potential, but the prospect of a segment of the European population sinking below the level of what he termed the "clean-living Native" clearly alarmed the Cape politician, who saw in such a movement the end of European moral and cultural superiority in South Africa. Nor was this all. The situation was made worse by both the recent incorporation of the last of the Transkeian territories, which swelled the Cape's already large African population, and by the ongoing rift in Anglo-Dutch relations which presented to Merriman a picture of white disunity. Complicating the picture still further was the

rise of the "money power" and the decline in Cape parliamentary standards. For Merriman the future looked bleak indeed.

Such developments indicated to him that a fundamental shift had occurred in the nature of black-white relations. It was not an insight that cheered the Cape liberal. He came away convinced that the white position on the sub-continent was in jeopardy. Privately, he began to urge a policy of "elevating the white." Neither the Jameson Raid nor the South African War was to alter his conviction that the central question before South Africa was black-white, and in numerous letters to such distinguished liberals as Goldwin Smith and James Bryce he made his racial fears known. Indeed, his pro-Boer stance both during and after the war was as much a plea for white unity as it was a protest against "Imperial militarism and stock-jobbing capitalism."

The dangers posed by the "degradation of the white population" and the "rapid influx of the Kafir" [sic] continue as basic themes in Merriman's post-war and pre-Union correspondence. By then, however, the aging Cape liberal had made the question of civilizing the African hostage to both the poor white problem and Anglo-Dutch reconciliation. Except in the case of Natal's brutal suppression of the Bambatha rebellion in 1906, his letters had little to say in favor of so self-approving a goal as "uplifting the native." Moreover, the intensity of his racial feelings continued unabated. In fact, never is Merriman's racism more pronounced than in his exchanges with J. C. Smuts between 1904 and 1908 on the Transvaal franchise and closer union. Indeed, his willingness to compromise on the issue of African political rights during the Union debates of 1908-09 was in part due to his fear of the consequences of white disunity in an era of poor whiteism and native advancement. Public posturing aside, the Cape liberal was deeply

committed to the maintenance of white supremacy in South Africa.

Nevertheless, one should not assume from the foregoing that Merriman's commitment to liberal principles was specious. The ambiguities in his liberalism notwithstanding, he displayed a genuine concern for the interests of the weak and oppressed. That his humanitarianism and idealism sprang from a liberal tradition that was itself ambiguous and (by the 1890s) largely a political anachronism, renders an examination of his views no less important. For the fact remains that Merriman responded to the "Native Question" in a manner quite unlike that of the typical Free State farmer or Rand Capitalist. To suggest otherwise is to obscure historical realities.

What follows, then, is in the nature of an exploration rather than an indictment. Chapter I provides a brief sketch of Merriman, his ideas and beliefs together with a more general analysis of the social relations underlying liberalism in the Cape. Chapter II surveys his involvement in Cape native affairs in the years before 1892. Chapter III examines the Cape liberal's reassessment of black-white relations in the wake of his encounter with poor whiteism in November-December, 1892; discusses the nature and extent of rural white poverty in the Cape; and traces Merriman's growing racial fears in the seven years prior to the South African War.[5] Chapter IV explores his wartime, post-war and pre-Union correspondence and examines how his racial concerns influenced his actions during the closer union debates of 1908-09. The postscript commences with an overview of the Cape liberal's response to poor whiteism and ends with a critique of the Lewsen biography.

[5]In fact a most disquieting and overt racism is clearly evident in his letters from this time onwards. Unfortunately, Professor Lewsen has, for reasons unknown, seen fit to downplay Merriman's racial fears in the construction of her biography. This paper is offered as a corrective.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS BEFORE US: MERRIMAN'S LETTERS, HIS POLITICAL CREED, AND THE LIBERAL IDEOLOGY OF THE CAPE COLONY

Merriman's letters are unusually candid, forthright, even amusing.[6] Sir James Rose Innes, twice Attorney-General of the Cape and later Chief-Justice of the Union Court of Appeal, thought Merriman "a great correspondent" whose letters "though carefully phrased . . . retain the sparkle and freshness of the spoken word."[7] James Bryce, the noted jurist, historian, and liberal politician preferred them to all others.[8] The modern reader comes away with much the same view. Indeed, few letter-writers are as engaging as Merriman. As Phyllis Lewsen has noted, he possessed "that gift which only the best letter-writers possess, of being able to transmit, without blur or impediment, the immediacy of his experience, the stretch and movement of his thought, almost the sound of his voice, as he both recorded and communicated."[9] His letters, she writes, served as "an extension of his public life: a field of action through discussion, and a

[6]The following section derives much of its strength from Professor Lewsen's work. See in particular *SCM* 1: v-xv; "Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister," pp. 62-69; and related sections in *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman.*

[7]James Rose Innes, *Autobiography* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 297. Innes was a liberal member of the Cape Legislative Assembly (1884-1902), Attorney-General under both Rhodes (1890-93) and Sprigg (1900-02), Chief Justice of the Transvaal Supreme Court (1902-1910) and Chief Justice of the Union Court of Appeal (1914-1927).

[8]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 149.

[9]*SCM* 1: xiii.

continuing response to the historical process, as he was engaged in it."[10] The historical value of his correspondence is thus considerable and if there has been a tendency on Professor Lewsen's part to treat his letters with a certain reverence, even awe, she can easily be forgiven. For Merriman was an acute observer of men and society who infused his letters with an intellectual virtuosity that remains challenging to this day.

His political career was long and varied. The son of a missionary who later became the Anglican bishop of Grahamstown, Merriman was a member of the Cape Legislative Assembly and Union Parliament nearly all his adult life, serving with distinction in four ministries between 1875 and 1900 before at last succeeding to the premiership of the Cape Colony on the eve of Union.[11] Few could match his oratorical abilities and, as Professor Lewsen has written, he was the outstanding South African parliamentarian of his generation.[12] He was a staunch believer in the beneficial effects of parliamentary debate and the need for a spirited opposition. Asked in 1903 to outline the program of the new South African Party (SAP) he refused,

[10]*SCM* 1: xiii.

[11]Merriman was a member of the Cape Legislative Assembly from 1869-1910 and a member of the Union Parliament from 1910 until 1923 when a stroke forced his retirement from the House. He served as Commissioner for Crown Lands and Public Works under both J. C. Molteno (1875-78) and T. C. Scanlen (1881-84), was Treasurer under C. J. Rhodes (1890-93) and W. P. Schreiner (1898-1900), and was Prime Minister and Treasurer of the Cape Colony from February 3, 1908 until May 31, 1910. He was put out of office only once in his 53 years of public service; in February 1904 he lost his Wodehouse seat in the general election to a Progressive Party candidate. However, a seat was quickly found for him in the Bond constituency of Victoria West and Merriman, following a one-sided victory in the by-election, was returned to Parliament three months later.

[12]"Merriman as Last Cape Prime Minister," p. 63. According to Innes, "He was not only an orator, but a slashing debater, so trenchant that his opponents, smarting under his lash, were wont to console themselves by describing him as a destructive critic without constructive ability." *Autobiography,* p. 296.

stating: "I am not a great believer in programmes. . . . I prefer the old English tradition of laying down principles in speeches."[13] In 1910 he declined to join his rival Louis Botha in a "best man" Union government because he believed such a coalition ministry would undermine the principle of a "temperate well-ordered Opposition."[14]

He hated Cabinet government and disapproved of party politics. Of the latter, he wrote, "I dislike and always have disliked the fantastic notion of forming parties outside of Parliament--a plan that ends by government by caucus, which always seemed to me the most detestable of tyrannies."[15] His occasional alliances with the Afrikaner Bond and later membership in the SAP were not calculated to excite party stalwarts: he was indifferent to party discipline and took no part in party manoeuvre--which he called "the seamy side of politics."[16] Rather his interest in party was for the most

[13]JXM to E. Sheppard, 9 Dec. 1903, *SCM* 3: 414.

[14]The phrase appears in a letter written to Smuts in 1916. JXM to J. C. Smuts, 7 June 1916, *Smuts Papers*, III, pp. 372-373. Amidst calls for the formation of a Union coalition government in early 1910 Merriman made his position on the matter clear to Botha: "I consider [that] a good strong opposition is as necessary as a good government." He reiterated his position in a letter written to ex-President M. T. Steyn a month later: "It does seem to me absurd to suppose that any sort of policy can originate in a coalition of men whose views on South African questions have been so diverse in the past. It would only carry the dissension and intrigue from Parliament, where such things are in their proper place and can be settled by open discussion, to the Cabinet which would be weakened by internal dissensions and compromises, or perhaps convulsed by resignations and retirements." See JXM to L. Botha, 5 Jan. 1910 and JXM to M. T. Steyn, 12 Feb. 1910, *SCM* 4: 160, 166.

[15]JXM to F. H. Rose, *Natal Witness* [later rewritten and modified], *SCM* 4: 214-216.

[16]JXM to J. Rose Innes, 13 June 1909 (Innes Private Papers), cited in "Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister," p. 62. For Merriman's relations with J. H. Hofmeyer and the Bond, see T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966), especially pp. 76-78, 181, 257-258, 293-299.

part tactical. Yet, as an intellectual endeavour he ranked

> politics first, for in no direction has the human intellect gained more victories, perhaps in none . . . experienced more disheartening reverses than in that special sphere . . . which includes . . . the government and ordering of society under the reign of freedom and of law . . . the highest and best side of politics.[17]

When the younger J. C. Smuts expressed disbelief in politics "as a means for the attainment of the highest ends," Merriman was quick to respond:

> Surely to all men 'politics' are not the means, they are themselves the highest end; not politics which center themselves on the dreary wrangles of the 'ins' and 'outs' but the politics which aim at making a city great, and at raising the whole life and character of every class in the community. There can be no higher ambition or any more worthy object. Otherwise let materialism have full swing.[18]

Such principles as these were largely mid-Victorian in inspiration. So too was his commitment to the Gladstonian principles of limited taxation, limited government and a balanced budget: his only object, he once wrote, was "to see economical government and sound parliamentary tradition."[19] Innes thought him "a Whig of the Harcourt type, never moved so far along the democratic road as Harcourt" but "in intellect, in impulsiveness, in love

[17]*Intellectual Life in the Colonies* [Pamphlet] (Cape Town, 1887), as cited in *SCM* 1: vi.

[18]J. C. Smuts to JXM, 13 March 1906 and JXM to J. C. Smuts, 16 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 242-243, 264-268.

[19]JXM to F. H. Rose, *Natal Witness* [later rewritten and modified], [?] Dec. 1911, *SCM* 4: 214-216. Merriman was regarded a genius when it came to government finance. Although he was often assailed for his pessimism his various finance bills and budget estimates were nonetheless admired for their comprehensiveness and completeness. Inheriting a large deficit when he became Prime Minister in 1909 he was yet able to bring the Cape into the Union on a sound financial footing and with a modest surplus of £28,000. His austerity measures, which included the infamous "10 bob tax" on personal income, cost him political support, however. See "Merriman as Last Cape Prime Minister," pp. 72-77.

of liberty, and devotion to parliament," a mirror of the English statesman.[20] Whether Merriman would have approved of the comparison drawn between himself and Sir William Harcourt is not known. He would have relished the Whig label, however, for the Cape liberal was clearly a man of whiggish sensibilities.[21]

Professor Lewsen has written that Merriman "belonged in background and feeling to the old Anglican England of the landed classes, not the newer England of traders, industrialists, and dissenters."[22] His was a world in which only those with a stake in the land were fit to rule. That it was nonetheless a world which was rapidly slipping away only made Merriman believe in its virtues all the more.[23] "South Africa is and I hope will

[20]*Autobiography*, p. 72. Sir William Harcourt, liberal member of Parliament (1868-1904) who served under Gladstone and Lord Rosebery in a variety of capacities: first as solicitor-general in Gladstone's first administration (1873-74); then as home secretary in Gladstone's second cabinet (1880-85); and later as chancellor of the exchequer in Gladstone's third and fourth cabinets and in Lord Rosebery's caretaker cabinet (1886, 1892-94, 1894-95). Despite his overbearing manner he emerged as liberal leader in the House in 1896 only to resign two years later.

[21]"I am a Whig, you are a radical, as far as regards white men at any rate" he once told Smuts. See JXM to J. C. Smuts, 30 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II, pp. 251-253.

[22]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 13.

[23]On a visit to Germany in 1901 he commented: "If wealth accumulates, certainly men do not decay and it is refreshing to find a country where the peasant is still a great factor. What a strength to the nation is the small proprietor!" JXM to G. Smith, 25 May 1901, *SCM* 3: 298. Merriman's belief in the superior political virtues of the independent farmer begs comparison with that of the republican ideals of Jeffersonian America. It was axiomatic to men like Franklin, Madison and Jefferson that political virtue was a measure of the "agrarian" character of the nation and that the independent farmer served as a source of moral strength for the greater community. However, unlike Merriman, who rarely supported the extension of the Cape frontier, Madison, Franklin and Jefferson each stressed the need for "development across space" (i.e., western expansionism), to ensure the essentially agrarian, that is, virtuous character of the young Republic. This was in contrast to Hamilton who supported an alternative vision of "development through time" and who "came to accept the commercialization of society as not only inevitable but fundamentally salutary as well." For a

remain a society on an aristocratic basis," he informed J. C. Smuts as late as 1906.[24] As befits his whiggism the Cape liberal was no democrat: he dismissed both universal manhood suffrage and proportional representation as "democratic shibboleths utterly unsuited to this country" and argued that "behind all this pretended love for democratic principles . . . [is] really a wish to the see the Capitalist from overseas the master, instead of the man on the land."[25] He held instead that a "high franchise with the truly liberal addition that you should shut no man out from the privilege if he can attain it" was the proper course for South Africa.[26] As Professor Lewsen has shown, "nothing . . . could alter his conviction that the landed classes had a monopoly of political virtue and were the only safe repository of power;" a belief which "he even managed to link . . . with a liberal Native policy."[27] Thus to Professor Goldwin Smith he explained: "Our struggle is to retain a virile European population on the soil that can form an aristocracy, under whose care the Natives may advance in civilization."[28]

discussion of the views of Franklin, Madison, Hamilton and Jefferson see Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1980), pp. 49-66, 121-136, 146-152, 185-195.

[24]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 24 April 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 289-292.

[25]JXM to L. Botha, 17 Aug. 1908, *SCM* 4: 86-87. Merriman also raised the specter of capitalist manipulation in a letter to Smuts on the dangers of manhood suffrage in the reconstructed Transvaal: "you wish to pretend that it is a democracy which in your case will inevitably turn into a plutocracy of the most odious kind dominated by strangers and run by interests." JXM to Smuts, 26 June 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 289-292.

[26]JXM to L. Botha, 17 Aug. 1908, *SCM* 4: 87.

[27]"Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister," p. 64.

[28]JXM to G. Smith, 24 April 1904, *SCM* 3: 441-442.

And he later told Louis Botha:

> If we are to keep this country in a sane and sober state we must see to it that the balance of political power is in the hands of the landed interest, and, with the 'one man one vote' principle, this is impossible. Believe me, in the settlement of this lies the whole future destiny of South Africa. You can see in our present state of financial ruin the effect of putting the government in the hands of the floating population of the towns, who are at once cruelly extravagant and absolutely unfitted to be entrusted with the control of the Native population, with whom they never come in contact, and from the results of the mismanagement of whom they never suffer.[29]

The Cape liberal's distrust of Uitlander "democracy," with its clear demand for an industrial and political color bar, is understandable, but his landed exclusiveness was hardly realistic. The democratic "shibboleths" of both the Uitlanders and men like Smuts and Botha clearly held center stage in the period under review. Still, he persisted in his old beliefs. As he confided to one admirer after the industrial disturbances on the Witwatersrand in 1913-14: "Democracy is the most evil of all tyrannies."[30]

Certain of his other views were old-fashioned. He was suspicious of industrialization, disliked the "moneyed interest," and found the social conditions that attended the opening up of the diamond and gold fields

[29]JXM to L. Botha, 17 Aug. 1908, *SCM* 4: p. 87. As the Constitutional Convention drew near Merriman made a concerted effort to convince Botha of the perils of universal manhood suffrage and proportional representation. Regarding the latter, he wrote: "As regards the automatic redistribution of members, this should be in respect of the population--not the voters' roll--of each province, or whatever we call the areas of local government, always bearing in mind the enormous danger of throwing the balance of power into the hands of the large urban communities. Just see how Australia is ridden by its large cities, and be warned. . . . I can conceive no greater misfortune for South Africa, with its overwhelming Native population, than a reproduction of Australian conditions, in which a white democracy without any of the responsibilities that landholding confers, should dominate our policy." JXM to L. Botha, 17 Aug. 1908, *SCM* 4: p. 87.

[30]JXM to Lady Courtney, 4 March 1914, *SCM* 4: 254. His sympathies at the time lay with the strikers, however.

abhorrent. For many years he believed that the mine owners were "doomed to pass and disappear."[31] An ardent free-trader (he was however, mildly protectionist as regards the products of the soil), he scoffed at Joseph Chamberlain's tariff reform proposals. He likewise opposed the artificial protection of infant industries. He refused to believe that South Africa was destined to be anything other than an exporter of primary products. "Our greatest hope," he once proclaimed, "lies in fruit."[32]

The reins of power eluded him almost all his life. It was not for want of intelligence or ideas. Indeed, Merriman's fellow liberal Innes thought him "one of the very few men in this country who has not only got original ideas but is choke [sic] full of them."[33] Rather, his days in opposition were the result of his truculent and uncompromising manner and his refusal to adhere to "the detestable doctrine that a man's political

[31]JXM to G. Smith, 24 April 1904, *SCM* 3: 442.

[32]JXM to Sir C. Mills, 18 Oct. 1892, *SCM* 2: 110-111. In an earlier letter to Sir Charles, the Cape's elderly Agent-General in London, Merriman wrote, "I am afraid that you and I are not on the same plane on the matter of [promoting] woollen manufactures. I personally regard them with horror, as if introduced here on any scale they mean a clamour for protection to fill the pockets of a few capitalists at the expense of the unfortunates who have to pay for their coats and breeches. Natural causes--chiefly climatic--will always make England the head of the woollen and cotton manufacturing industry, and it always seems to me hopeless to raise our poor little hothouse plants at vast expense to compete. All the time we neglect the resources which nature endows us with--our sun and soil which will produce corn, olives, *Fruit* to perfection. I am a fervent believer in letting nature take its own course and I am sure she never cut out South Africa for a manufacturing country." JXM to Mills, 9 Sept. 1891, *SCM* 2: 66. For a reiteration of this view see JXM to G. Smith, 24 April 1904, *SCM* 3: 441-442.

[33]Harrison M. Wright, ed., *Sir James Rose Innes: Selected Correspondence (1884-1902)* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1972), Innes to E. H. Walton, 21 Aug. 1893, p. 116. Innes later eulogized Merriman as "A great Englishmen, a great South African, and without doubt the most brilliant intellect in our political life in my time." *Autobiography,* p. 296.

views and his party allegiance are to follow his race and language."[34] That he was guided by principle and an acute moral sense paid few political dividends; most thought him erratic and untrustworthy. "He is the slave always," the *Cape Argus* wrote in 1904, "of some one dominant idea or obsession."[35] The 1907 edition of *Anglo-African Who's Who* agreed:

> Mr. Merriman is a good debater and an exceedingly able man, but he is a mass of prejudices, which have inclined him to every extreme--Bond-friend and Anti-Bond. No party, consequently, has felt that it could absolutely depend upon, or trust, him politically. His natural asperity of manner and innate disagreeableness are disadvantages which he appears to cultivate for the express purpose of alienating support and making enemies. In fact, he has been described as an excellent type of a gentleman who has deliberately cast off the manners of one.[36]

Even his friends and political allies thought him erratic. Though he insisted that "no one admires Merriman more than I do," Innes considered the veteran politician too unsteady in his views to support him as leader of the Opposition in 1888.[37] When he later discovered, as a member with Merriman in Rhodes's "all the talents" coalition ministry, that his cabinet colleague was "erratic out of mere exuberance of intellectual vitality" and that "place him in a position of responsibility or . . . load him with the cares of Government, and he becomes a different being," Innes was nonetheless hard pressed to convince those around him that such a Merriman

[34]JXM letter to the *Cape Argus*, 22 July 1886. Cited in "Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister," p. 63.

[35]Cited in "Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister," p. 63.

[36]W.H Wills, ed., *The Anglo-African Who's Who and Biographical Sketch-Book* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1907), p. 210.

[37]J. Rose Innes to J. T. Jabavu, 25 June 1888, *Innes Correspondence*, p. 71.

existed.[38]

Merriman's liberal spirit was well recognized, however. He won the respect of Bondsmen on account of his anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist stances; his attitude towards martial law and amnesty for Cape rebels during the South African War; and his change of heart on the question of Dutch language rights.[39] The African journalist J. Tengo Jabavu commended him for his "long and honourable record respecting the Natives."[40] His opinions on South African affairs were sought after by leading liberals in England. Such was the stature of this leading South African liberal that his one time political rival General Louis Botha, after dictating surrender

[38]Innes's new view of Merriman came in a letter which followed the liberal trio's (Merriman, Innes and J. W. Sauer) break with Rhodes and departure from the ministry in protest over the Logan contract scandal. Innes was keen on forming an opposition party with Merriman as leader but was encountering resistance from otherwise sympathetic backbenchers on the issue of Merriman as party head. He complained to his friend E. H. Walton that many who might otherwise join in the fight against Rhodes were simply "afraid to follow Merriman." Backbenchers in particular cited his prejudices and the fact that "no Border man could go to his constituents as an avowed follower of Merriman." Innes remained hopeful: "I am doing what I can to show that they misjudge Merriman and that he really is the man who should be at the head of any united party at present." The issue, however, was rendered moot when Merriman refused to join the coalition. *Innes Correspondence*, J. Rose Innes to E. H. Walton, 29 July and 21 Aug. 1893, pp. 113-114, 115-116.

[39]On Imperial matters Merriman endorsed Professor Goldwin Smith's *laissez-faire* view of Empire as the "true one" which "must prevail." To Sir Charles Mills he once wrote, "My own opinion is that separation and cordial alliance is the true policy with an ultimate ideal of a league of the English race." Nevertheless, he retained a sentimental regard for Empire. When Rhodes identified himself with the Irish Home Rulers in 1887, Merriman complained: "What is Rhodes about! What is his object in identifying himself with a set of miscreants who are trying to ruin England and break up the Empire? Does he want a seat from Parnell, or is some leading shareholder of the French Company a Fenian?" Though he eventually modified his views on the Irish question, his faith in a loose Imperial tie was never extinguished. On Smith's (and Merriman's) view of Empire see JXM to C. Mills, 15 April and 20 May 1891 *SCM* 2: 47, 51. On Merriman's opinion of Rhodes and the Irish see JXM to J. B. Currey, 28 Sept. 1887, *SCM* 1: 268.

[40]J. T. Jabavu to JXM, 23 May, 1910, *SCM* 4: 189.

terms to the remaining German troops at the end of the German South West Africa campaign, is alleged to have quipped: "They are very liberal I know, but I don't forget the position I was in once too, and I am sure of one thing, it will please Mr. Merriman."[41]

Although public opinion prevented Merriman from ever receiving the native affairs portfolio he nevertheless exerted considerable influence on the formulation of Cape native policy. His ability as a government minister to influence the actions of his fellow cabinet members came largely as a result of his dominant and forceful personality, his superior administrative abilities, and the rather vague departmental boundaries that were a hallmark of the Cape governmental structure. Indeed, after government finance native administration was Merriman's favorite sphere of action. He brought to it what Robinson and Gallagher have called the mid-Victorian spirit.[42] He firmly believed that Providence had placed the European in southern Africa in order to uplift its native peoples.

As such his views on native policy reflected those held by such mid-Victorians as William Porter, long time Attorney-General for the Cape in the years before responsible government, and Sir George Grey, Cape Governor and High Commissioner between 1854 and 1861. It was the liberal Porter who lobbied hardest for the extension of the franchise to propertied Khoisans during the responsible government debates of 1848-53. He believed it "just and expedient to place the suffrage within the reach of the more intelligent and industrious of the men of colour, because it is a privilege they deserve, and because by showing to all classes, those above

[41]A. Bailey to JXM, 31 July 1915, *SCM* 4: 274.

[42]R. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher with A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, 2nd. ed. (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), chap. 1.

and below them, that no man's station is, in this free country, determined by the accident of his colour, all ranks of men are stimulated to improve or maintain their relative positions."[43] And it was Grey who sought to implement a policy of integration that would have linked white and black settlements along the frontier with an infrastructure of roads, schools, hospitals and government farms--a plan that Merriman always admired.[44]

Yet, for the Cape liberal the real challenge "was keeping a European population in a position of superiority" over an ever increasing and, in Merriman's view, ever prospering African population. His white supremacist notions were not as vulgar as some however. While he believed that European race superiority rested upon certain moral, cultural and physical attributes that were largely absent in the African, he remained convinced that the dominant position held by the "European race" in South Africa could never be taken for granted and that only by ensuring an absolute moral and cultural superiority could whites hope to keep South Africa "a white man's country." Thus the importance that Merriman placed on education, the maintenance of liberal institutions, land settlement and (as will be shown) the rehabilitation of the poor white.

His faith in the franchise tradition of the Cape Colony is a particularly good example of his approach to race relations. To refuse a man the right to vote on any basis other than education and property Merriman regarded as a sign of moral weakness. Pride of place in the hierarchy of races (a

[43]Cited in J. L. McCracken, *The Cape Parliament 1854-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 65. Following the Kat River Rebellion of 1851 Porter made what has since become (for better or worse) the signature statement of the mid-Victorian approach to native affairs: "I would rather meet the Hottentot at the hustings voting for his representative than meet the Hottentot in the wilds with his gun upon his shoulder."

[44]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, pp. 17-18.

position he accorded the "Anglo-Saxon race" in particular and the "European race" in general) carried with it responsibilities as well as privileges, chief of which was the responsibility to instruct the "backward" races in the rudiments of civilization. To impede or obstruct this process of acculturation (which included the gradual extension of political rights and responsibilities to native peoples) was to demonstrate a singular lack of faith in one's own moral and cultural superiority, and hence fitness to rule. For Merriman the retention of the Cape's nonracial franchise was thus an indication of white vitality and self-confidence.[45] Such a concern helps explain why he later found Hertzog's segregation proposals so troubling. To a local magistrate he remarked: "It seems unjust, and I can scarcely think it wise, to forbid a Native who has shown himself able to adopt our civilization to purchase land outside his tribal area. Few will be able to do so and fewer still will be able to retain it, but to deny them the chance is a sign of weakness on our part. . . ."[46]

Such sentiments, however, were not incompatible with strong racial feelings. In Merriman's case his prejudices though marked were rather

[45]This is not to ignore the fact that Merriman also characterized the franchise as a "safety-valve." See Chapter IV below.

[46]JXM to F. Brownlee, 27 March 1918, *SCM* 4: 299-300. In opposition to many, Merriman refused to believe that coercion and violence were sufficient to ensure white hegemony. To ex-president M. T. Steyn he wrote: "I have been seriously alarmed by Hertzog's utterances on the Native Question. What he means by 'segregation' is not quite clear. If it means trying to bottle the Natives up body and soul then we may as well pack up our portmanteaux, for the European race will perish. Those who live by the sword perish by the sword--that is the universal teaching of history. I wonder that people cannot see that the more we develop the Native the better it is in every way, *provided we see to it that we hold by our education and moral force the dominant position.* To think that we can stop every avenue of progress to those on whose work we live, and allow our own people to sink into parasitic sloth, is to willfully shut our eyes to what has taken place . . . before, and will take place again . . . if we do not mend our ways. JXM to M. T. Steyn, 30 Sept. 1912, *SCM* 4: 224-225.

uneven. He admired the "clean living" or civilized native; although his demeanor when in the company of such Africans, while always paternal, could at times be condescending and standoffish. Still, he campaigned frequently (and sincerely) before native audiences; sought the political advice of the leading African journalist J. Tengo Jabavu; and read with interest the works of such American black authors as Booker T. Washington, E. B. DuBois, and Dr. Edward W. Blyden.[47] Towards the mass of "barbarian" or uncivilized natives he was rather ambivalent; on the one hand, he exhibited a paternal concern for the welfare of these Africans (if for no other reason than that they represented future grist for the civilizing mill); on the other hand, he feared their numbers. Yet he refused to adopt the Afrikaner view that such Africans were little more than *schepsels* or creatures. "He is a human being though an undeveloped one," he contended.[48] He disliked the Cape Coloreds, however, and positively abhorred the "Asiatic" whether Indian, Chinese or Malagasy.[49] Regarding

[47]Merriman greatly admired Washington for his *Working with the Hands'* (1904), a book outlining Tuskegee methods. He thought DuBois' *Souls of Black Folk* (1905) "very pathetic and instructive"--though in a letter to Jabavu in 1911 he criticized DuBois' penchant for adopting the "hysterical view" on political matters. Of Blyden's *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1886) he commented: "Extremely well written from the Negro point of view which is indeed seldom presented. The writer feels the contumely and indignities that are the lot of his race because they are black, and tries to persuade himself and us that the Negro has a future of equality. . . . If one thought that the cultivated writer represented any aspirations or ideas of a considerable section of black people it would give one an uncomfortable feeling, but he is as much a *rara avis* in his way as Toussaint l'Ouverture was in his. . . . The book is a clever *tour de force* but it is questionable whether it gets at the bottom of the true black view of the white." JXM Diary, 5 Feb. 1891, *SCM* 2: 30. For Merriman on Washington and Dubois see JXM Diary, 15 Oct. 1904, *SCM* 3: 423; JXM Diary, 3 Jan. 1906 and JXM to T. Jabavu, 9 July 1910, *SCM* 4: 11, 211-212.

[48]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 30 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 251-253.

[49]Through his contact with Ghandi and Gokhale Merriman did eventually learn to respect the educated Indian. However, the Cape liberal's "Asian" racism, particularly his hatred of the Chinese, needs to be understood in

the former he declared:

> They are deficient in moral and political stamina. As voters they have never shown any grasp of political questions, like the best Kaffirs and Fingoes, and you will seldom indeed find any Coloured people that have acquired property . . . like the aborigines, many of whom have under our rule acquired by honest toil really substantial property. The Coloured people are far more venal and I look upon them with some dread. If I was to choose I would rather disfranchise the Coloured man than the Kaffir but of course there are good Coloured men that are perfectly fitted to enjoy political rights.[50]

Yet his humanitarianism and idealism often proved stronger than his race prejudices. It is what separated him from many men. As such his various efforts in defense of the civil and economic status of nonwhites deserve praise. He resisted the exactions of the "land and loot party" and held firm against Tembuland "trekkers," Stellaland "freebooters" and Pondoland interlopers.[51] He defended the Cape's colorblind franchise principle

the context of his well-founded fear that the importation of Chinese mine labor after the South African War would not only strengthen the hand of the capitalist--a development, that in Merriman's view, would wreck parliamentary or "free government"--but also exacerbate the poor white problem and threaten the civil and economic status of the natives. These latter two worries stemmed from the all too familiar fear of "Asian industriousness." As he declared to Smuts: "you will learn that the virtues of the Chinaman are far more to be dreaded than his crimes, and an industrious population of coolies and their wives and families settled on the ground will eat our European population out, and will, as they have done in North Java, prove far more expert and successful in dealing with the Native population than the European. . . . The only clean and distinct course for those who wish to save South Africa for the white man is 'Back to China.'" JXM to J. C. Smuts, 5 Sept. 1905, *Smuts Papers*, II: 198-200.

[50]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 5 Sept. 1905, *Smuts Papers*, II: 198-200.

[51]See in particular Merriman's skeptical regard for the land claims of certain Pondoland "concessionaires" while a member of a 1906 House select committee examining the authenticity of concessions granted by Pondo chiefs before the Cape annexation of Pondoland in 1894. In response to the activities of the White brothers, who claimed 1500 acres, but were found to have rights to only 500, Merriman exclaimed (one hopes with a certain irony): "With all the talk about the benefit the Whites conferred on Pondoland, it strikes me that Pondoland has conferred more benefits on the Whites." [A.29-'06] *Report of the Select Committee on Pondoland Land*

and opposed the industrial color bar. He sought educational opportunities for nonwhites. In spite of his general dislike for the "Indian element" he still pleaded their cause with Smuts when the latter attempted to reintroduce in January 1908 the oppressive Transvaal Registration Act. "Rightly or wrongly," Merriman wrote, "these people have been allowed to settle down, acquire property, and carry on their avocations. Is it worth while to harry them by imposing what may be considered vexatious regulations, provided that you can obtain a registration that will secure you against any further influx by other means? Does it not savour of the yellow cap of the Jew, or the harrying of the Moriscoes by Spain?" "*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*" he reminded the Transvaal State Attorney.[52]

The nature of Merriman's liberalism and that of liberalism in general in the Cape Colony in the second half of the nineteenth century requires some explanation. Both Merriman's political creed and the so-called "Cape Liberal Tradition" have been variously described by apologists and critics alike as inconsistent and contradictory. Despite this, Professor Lewsen has argued that though an "alien import" and the professed ideology of but a tiny, though articulate, section of the Cape governing class, "the conservative liberalism of the Cape" had by 1910 gained "a hold in both parties and language groups, and was linked with institutions which gave it [a] growing tenacity."[53] Can such a view be accepted?

The answer is clearly no. The evidence for such a claim is simply non-

Grants (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906), p. 38.

[52]"To spare the humble and subdue the proud." Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 851. JXM to J. C. Smuts, 13 Jan. 1908, *Smuts Papers*, II: 394-396. It would not be unfair to point out, however, that Merriman's appeal for toleration was partly motivated by a worry that liberal protest at "Home" (i.e., Britain) would furnish a pretext for Imperial intervention.

[53]"Cape Liberal Tradition--Myth or Reality," pp. 70, 78.

existent. Liberalism in the Cape had largely shot its bolt by 1910; it commanded little real support among the political classes and practically no support among the rest of the settler population, English as well as Dutch. Even among its adherents (and this included Merriman) enthusiasm for liberal principles rested upon a cynical regard for the politics of control; the Cape franchise, for instance, was regularly accorded the properties of a "safety valve." This said, understanding the shifting social relationships that gave liberalism in the Cape its specific character is clearly of more importance than the mere cataloguing of liberal and illiberal rhetoric.[54]

The liberal tradition of the Cape Colony, embodied in its nonracial franchise and colorblind system of justice, is usually ascribed to the philanthropic and humanitarian impulses of missionaries, Imperial administrators and forward thinking colonial politicians.[55] In the first three decades of formal British rule this was indeed the case. It was the British Government who imposed the principle of racial equality on a reluctant Cape in the guise of Ordinance 50 of 1828, a measure which repealed the Cape's onerous pass and apprenticeship laws and made nonwhites equal before the law with Europeans. In the 1830s and 1840s Imperial officials and the missionary interest combined to promulgate a further series of ordinances that opened the way for limited nonwhite voter participation in

[54]This is Stanley Trapido's injunction in "'The Friends of the Natives': Merchants, Peasants and the Political and Ideological Structure of Liberalism in the Cape, 1854-1910," in *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa,* ed. S. Marks and A. Atmore (London: Longmans, 1980), pp. 247-274. An earlier version of this essay appeared under the title "Liberalism in the Cape in the 19th and 20th Centuries," in *Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries,* vol. 4 (London: Univ. of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1974), pp. 53-66.

[55]"The Cape Liberal Tradition--Myth or Reality?," pp. 70-72. See also R. F. A. Hoernlé *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1939), pp. 60-67.

the election of road and municipal boards. However, Stanley Trapido has shown that humanitarian influences played but a small role in determining the franchise qualifications that attended the establishment of representative government in the Cape in 1853. Rather the Cape's distinctive franchise owed its existence to a "series of interweaving class, national, colour and imperial considerations" that were themselves the product of both a modified relationship between the colony and mother country and structural changes in the economy occasioned by the advent of British rule.[56]

The introduction of free trade in the 1840s coupled with colonial agitation for constitutional reform altered the traditional ties between Britain and the Cape. With the abandonment of trading preferences the colony was soon regarded as a financial burden. For that reason alone British statesmen were willing to consider responsible government. But in the Cape there emerged a more compelling reason. For there had occurred by the late 1840s a "breakdown of consent"--particularly among the Dutch but also among important segments of the English settler community--that threatened the continuation of Imperial rule. This crisis in colonial authority was spurred by the extension of the frontier and the growth in wine and wool production; both developments taxed the resources of the Cape's antiquated colonial administration to the breaking point. In addition, the work of missionaries and the activities of merchants and traders had gone far to create a market-oriented African peasantry whose importance as an economic factor grew as the level of commercial contact between whites and nonwhites increased. The establishment of representative government

[56]S. Trapido, "The Origins of the Cape Franchise Qualifications of 1853," *Journal of African History,* V, I (1964), pp. 37, 39.

and the enfranchisement of the Dutch and a segment of the African population following years of settler agitation and frontier tensions simply acknowledged the new economic and social relationships that defined life in the Cape. It was a liberal "solution" that sought order above all else.

What the liberal "solution" did create, according to Trapido, was "a great and small tradition." The great tradition attracted many of the Cape's leading merchants and financiers, government administrators, opposition politicians, missionaries, lawyers and newspapermen. While emulating British liberal conventions the great tradition sought alliances from "politically satisfied groups" and "assumed for themselves a mediating role between the colonial and imperial governments." The small tradition--"a microcosm of the great tradition"--was more stable in its economic and political alliances than the great tradition but depended on the latter for its orientation and forms of political discourse. It existed for the most part in those two member constituencies where English merchants and traders had extensive commercial ties with Africans and where an alliance between peasants and merchants was usually sufficient to return at least one liberal member to the House.[57]

As liberals constituted a distinct minority among the governing class members of both traditions came to rely heavily on the black peasantry of the eastern Cape. Since the early 1870s large numbers of African cultivators in the Ciskei and southernmost areas of the Transkei had successfully adapted to the demands of the commercial economy and were actively producing for the local market.[58] By the late 1880s and early

[57]"'Friends of the Natives,'" pp. 251-253, 259.

[58]C. Bundy, "The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry," *African Affairs*, LXXI (October 1972), pp. 369-388.

1890s, however, the search for new sources of mine and agricultural labor brought these peasants into direct conflict with white mine owners and farmers. The result was a series of legislative enactments designed to dislodge the peasantry from the land. Anti-squatting legislation was introduced, traditional forms of African land tenure were assailed, and labor taxes were exacted at higher rates. The nonracial franchise was also attacked. In 1887 and again in 1892 the qualifications were altered and nonwhites were removed from the voting rolls. Afrikaner nationalist sentiment was partly to blame for this reversal but so too was the more general fear of an eventual "swamping" of the white vote stirred by the annexation of the heavily populated Transkeian territories. Indeed, the Cape franchise may well have gone the way of Natal's (where a near absolute color bar existed in all but name) had not the Dutch-English split over the Jameson Raid and South African War encouraged greater African voter participation as considerations of electoral arithmetic sent Bondsmen, Progressives and liberals scrambling for African votes over the next decade.[59]

Liberalism might have profited from such a split if its adherents had not themselves been committed to preserving South Africa as a "white man's country." But liberals, with few exceptions, were not immune to the racial fears that gripped the rest of white society. Nor did they question the superiority of their own race and culture. However, they did recognize as never before the sheer complexity of attempting to incorporate large numbers of blacks within white society, and the enormity of the problem grated against their lingering mid-Victorian sensibilities and sapped their

[59]S. Trapido, "African Divisional Politics in the Cape Colony, 1884 to 1910," *Journal of African History*, IX, I (1968), pp. 79-98.

optimism. For liberals had always assumed that the enfranchisement of the peasantry would proceed at a leisurely pace and when confronted with a growing African wage labor force they quite naturally balked at the prospect of extending the franchise beyond what they thought reasonable and proper. Yet, because they were unwilling to enfranchise the propertyless and uneducated liberals played into the hands of those who wished to create an African proletariat devoid of political and economic rights. Then again, liberals of this period were less inclined to oppose the politics of segregation than previously, supporting in the main, for example, Rhodes's Glen Grey legislation; though it should be noted that liberals encouraged segregationist policies not because they adhered to a racially exclusive ideology but because they wished to protect at least some Africans from the ravages of proletarianization, or as Merriman put it, from the depredations of the "land and loot party."[60]

Nevertheless, by 1910, liberalism in the Cape was a spent force. The war and resulting Anglo-Dutch rapprochement made it difficult for liberals, particularly those of the great tradition, to champion African interests now that Afrikaner sensibilities had to be considered. Besides white unity was a major concern. At the same time liberals were not prepared to support the political aspirations of African wage laborers. Instead they continued to expend their energies in the defense of an African peasantry that was clearly in decline. And, in the mind of at least one leading Cape liberal, there was the phenomenon of the poor white to consider.

[60]P. Rich, "Segregation and the Cape Liberal Tradition," *Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 10 (London: Univ. of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1981), pp. 31-41.

CHAPTER II

WHEN "CLEAN-LIVING" WAS A VIRTUE: MERRIMAN AND AFRICAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT, 1869-1891

Merriman's involvement in native affairs began in earnest following his election to the Cape Legislative Assembly in 1869. His entry into politics at the age of twenty-eight coincided with both the early diamond discoveries in Griqualand West and with the debate over responsible government for the Cape. According to Lewsen, the young Merriman demonstrated few signs of an early commitment to liberalism; for instance, on his second day in the Assembly he actually proposed a flogging amendment to the 1856 Masters and Servants Act.[61] Two years later he voiced his fear that responsible government and colorblind justice might provoke a frontier war.[62]

By 1872, however, Merriman was voting with and speaking on the behalf of liberals in the House. In an editorial published in the *Cape Argus* in June he voiced his opposition to the annexation of Griqualand West because "it would not be just for the House to lend itself to be the tool of land-jobbers."[63] The following year he publicly condemned Natal's handling of the Langalibalele uprising. In 1875, he opposed a tough new vagrancy bill in alliance with Saul Solomon, the Cape's most respected liberal, with the

[61]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 26.

[62]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 27.

[63]Cited in *SCM* 1: 13n.

result that the measure was withdrawn.[64] However, Merriman's shift to the liberal camp was not confirmed until his public rebuke of the noted historian and confederation propagandist J. A. Froude in September 1875.

Froude was touring the Cape as Lord Carnarvon's confederation representative, preaching empire, hinting at eastern separation and advocating, on several occasions, the advisability of a more stringent native policy. Merriman, newly a member of the Molteno ministry, was deeply offended by such pronouncements. He took the opportunity in a speech at Uitenhage to condemn "the Imperial agitation promoted by a political emissary from Home" as Froude sat behind him on the podium.[65] Later he wrote to his friend J. B. Currey, who was in London to lecture on the impact of federation on the natives, and asked him to denounce the "eminent historian." The list of Froude's indiscretions was a long one:

> At Worcester, Froude said: 'We'--meaning Lord Carnarvon and himself--'want you to manage your natives as they do in Canada and Australia,' i.e. improve them off the face of the earth!! At Natal . . . he expressed his admiration of the Dutch Republican mode of dealing with natives, which I need not tell you means absolute subjection, and results in driving them out of the country, and no labour, thus defeating its own ends. At Port Elizabeth, he sneered at our native policy and the efforts of missionaries, and expressed his admiration of the simple barbarian. At Grahamstown, he openly advocated a system of apprenticeship or forced labour. I need not tell you that these vigourous utterances found hosts of admirers, and today the *Volksblad* congratulates Lord Carnarvon on being ready to 'settle native difficulties in a manner agreeable to Africander colonists,' which in plain English means to take their land and divide it among the white farmers. Froude over and over again hinted at Basutoland, with its 150,000 progressive natives, being handed over to the Free State as a balance for the Diamond fields--an idea which is loudly trumpeted by the *Standard and Mail*, his own organ; and with all this wild talk you wonder that we do not quite like a Conference to talk

[64] *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 27.

[65] *Uitenhage Times*, 24 Sept. 1875; *Grahamstown Journal*, 27 Sept. 1875. Cited in *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 56.

> over native matters, or a Federation in which we should be swamped by the professors of such a policy.
>
> The Cape Ministry are not, as you know, Solomons; but they do heartily oppose and detest Mr. Froude's and Lord Carnarvon's native policy. We are gradually educating the natives. We are introducing individual tenure of land--and European implements. We have four thousand natives at work on our Railways. Gradually the power of the chiefs is being broken up, and our laws introduced. . . . Lovedale has three hundred native boys and seventy girls, very many of whom pay their own education. They learn trades, and to give you an idea of whether they can do so or not, one of our best carpenters in the locomotive shops at East London is a native. [Natives] may earn forty shillings a week as printers. Yet we are asked to undo all this at the dictum of a mountebank like Froude, who scampers through the country and can make a glib after-dinner speech. No! You know that I am not an Exeter Hall man, but I do think our Parliament deserves credit for being the *only colony* where native administration has really advanced the natives.[66]

Merriman's obvious pride in the Cape way of handling native affairs was maintained throughout his life. "I doubt whether the natives have on the whole met with fairer treatment than in the Cape of Good Hope," he wrote in December 1886. When forced as Prime Minister to defend his ministry against charges of a "retrogression" in native administration, Merriman retorted: "We boast, and I think not without reason, that no part of the whole British Dominion can show more just and sympathetic treatment of a subject race than that which for the past twenty-five years has been adopted by the Cape Parliament, as a result of free discussion and non-interference from outside."[67]

Testing such a claim is difficult. Merriman certainly thought the Cape approach more evenhanded than Australian or New Zealand methods. In any case, he believed the Cape's "liberal Native policy" was uplifting the

[66]JXM to J. B. Currey, 25 Feb. 1876, *SCM* 1: 23-25. *Exeter Hall* was the meeting place of the Aborigines Protection Society.

[67]"Memorandum on Native Policy" (Draft), 17 Aug. 1909, *SCM* 4: 142-143. The charge was brought by the British Labor Party leader Keir Hardie.

African. In a letter to Lionel Phillips in 1908 Merriman insisted on its civilizing effects. "I think you underestimate the power of the Native as an industrial factor," he wrote. "To give one instance," he continued,

> the discharge of cargo on our steamers is now entirely in their hands, from working the steam-winches downwards, and by the universal testimony of those concerned they are the equal to the best dock-labourer in the world--far more cheaper and docile. This is the work of a generation, for I can recollect fourty years ago the progenitors of these decent, orderly, efficient men as a band of naked savages carrying packages through the surf. It is the inefficiency of the white to which we must direct attention.[68]

Imperial interference in Cape native affairs was a continual bugbear for Merriman right down to the Union. His opposition to Froude's meddling was soon redirected to Sir Bartle Frere, the new Cape Governor and High Commissioner, and the architect of a new "vigorous" native policy. Frere's policy, aimed at securing confederation by conciliating the Transvaal Boers through the destruction of the Zulu nation, angered Merriman considerably. The barely concealed war preparations and subsequent disaster at Isandhlwana in January 1879 troubled him all the more because of the harm done to black-white relations. To his father he wrote:

> I suppose that neither you nor anyone else, in the present state of native affairs . . . can take a very cheerful view of the outcome of British rule in South Africa. We shall have to take a new departure before we can get back to the standpoint of two years ago. I may paraphrase Cromwell with regard to Sir Harry Vane and say--'Sir Bartle Frere, the Lord defend me from Sir Bartle Frere:' who under the garb of an unctuous Aborigines-Protectionist is destined to inflict more permanent misery on the native races of South Africa than all the Generals who have ever hectored in Government House. It is hard to believe that anyone would have so thoroughly succeeded in breaking down the barrier between loyal and unloyal natives, destroying the confidence and affection of the former;

[68]JXM to L. Phillips, 5 April 1908, *SCM* 4: 74-75. Phillips was then a leading spokesman for the mining industry.

> and in bringing about the ideal of Lord Carnarvon . . . of a black race banded together and in secret or open hostility to a white race, who regard themselves as masters and nothing else. So much has been done in the past year to this end that one must almost despair of returning to the old groove, which had its faults, but which certainly did not err on the side of policy but of administration.[69]

Returning to the "old groove" proved difficult. While the Zulu war killed federation and ruined Frere's career, it nevertheless encouraged belief in Carnarvon's and Frere's native conspiracy theory. This fear, which first surfaced in the Langalibalele affair and later gained momentum during the Gaika-Gcaleka uprising of 1877-78, was now widespread and led to renewed calls for native disarmament.[70] Merriman had labeled the theory as "balderdash" in a speech before the Legislative Assembly in 1875 but the threat of rebellion along the frontier was real enough.[71] The immediate cause of African unrest was the Government's enforcement of the Peace Preservation Act of 1878, otherwise known as the Disarmament Act. Disarmament had already provoked a series of minor uprisings in the Ciskei, but when the Government attempted to force disarmament on the Basutos in 1880, the Cape soon found itself embroiled in a major conflict that soon spread to the Transkei.[72]

The Basutoland and Transkeian gun wars, coupled with the Transvaal

[69]JXM to Bishop N. J. Merriman, 26 Feb. 1879, *SCM* 1: 70-71.

[70]Such a fear gripped the white psyche for years. As late as 1897, during the Rinderpest epidemic, African unrest in East Griqualand had so disturbed the farmers that the Chief Magistrate for the districts could comment: "the prevailing opinion is that a general rising . . . is not far distant." C. Van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa, 1896-97," *Journal of African History,* XIII, 3 (1972), p. 479.

[71]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesmen*, p. 53.

[72]E. Bradlow, "The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland, 1871-1883," *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 31, II (1968), pp. 144-153.

War for Independence which broke out soon after, caused great alarm. Excepting the Transvaal, Merriman recognized that only in Basutoland was the rebellion a serious military threat--though he was wrong to view the Basuto as a fragmented people, "a bundle of clans."[73] In a sharp analysis written to the *Graaff Reinet Advertiser* and republished in the *Cape Argus* in December, Merriman once again discounted the "conspiracy thesis" and blamed the revolts on government duplicity and mismanagement. "For nearly three year," he complained,

> the Government has acted on the theory . . . that the natives of this country are our natural enemies. Bad and good, loyal and disloyal, have been treated with uniform severity and subjected to laws which however suited . . . to the evil-doers, are harassing in the extreme to those who have given proof of their orderly behavior. . . . The outcome is that we find ourselves landed in the midst of a most costly and bloody war, with unmistakable indications that we have hardly a friend left among the native races. In fact, the long-talked of combination among the natives seems to have been nearly brought about by the very measures which were intended to strike a blow at the scheme, and the power of the evil-disposed chiefs has been incalculably strengthened in the same way. . . . This power is incompatible with civilization and good government, but it must be weakened and overthrown by a firm and just administration and by the creation of some force among the natives themselves, antagonistic to such tyranny, not by mere empty denunciations or by putting the whole population into a moral strait-waistcoat.[74]

With the collapse of the Sprigg Ministry in May 1881 over its handling of the gun wars Merriman returned to office as Commissioner for Crown Lands and Public Works in the new Scanlen Ministry. He would have liked

[73]JXM to T. C. Scanlen, 30 July 1882, *SCM* 1: 107-109. Merriman thought the only way to end the rebellion was to foster jealousies between the various chiefs and between the chiefs and the "people." "*Divide et impera*" was his prescription. Unfortunately, it was a total misreading of the situation. The Basutoland revolt was in fact a national uprising aimed against white rule.

[74]JXM to Editor, *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* [Published in *Cape Argus* 2 Dec. 1880] *SCM* 1: 86.

the native affairs portfolio but eastern province opinion was so much against him that the younger and politically inexperienced J. W. Sauer was chosen for the post instead. Indeed, such was Merriman now identified with the liberal approach to "Native Question" that an effigy of he and his father was burned in Grahamstown in "open and perpetual hostility to all lovers of black skins and so-called philanthropists."[75]

In spite of such opposition (and the strain of his own official duties) Merriman remained heavily involved in the formulation of native policy while a member of Scanlen's ministry. He served as the chief government spokesman on all matters pertaining to the Basutoland question--a tribute no doubt to his unparalleled debating skills. In 1882-83 he sided with the Thembu chiefs against J. H. Hofmeyer and the Afrikaner Bond over the so-called Tembuland Trek, forcing the majority of the white squatters to eventually withdraw from the Thembu locations. In May 1883 he was sent to London to negotiate with the colonial secretary Lord Derby on the question of Cape disannexation of Basutoland. During these talks, he attempted to persuade the British Government to take over all the Transkeian territories administered by the Cape, joining them to Basutoland so as to "form a tolerably homogeneous and self-supporting territory with a seaboard, independent of the Colony proper. . . ."[76] Merriman's interest in abandoning the Transkei was primarily a fiscal one. Not only was the Cape in the midst of a commercial recession but war with the Basutos had nearly bankrupted the Government.[77] Unfortunately, his hope of freeing the

[75]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 92.

[76]JXM to the Earl of Derby, 29 May 1883, *SCM* 1: 126.

[77]M. A. S. Grundlingh, "The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, With Special Reference to Party Politics, 1872-1910," *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 32, II (1969), p. 203.

Cape of what he called its "white elephant" was never realized, as the issue was not discussed. Lord Derby did agree, however, to allow Basutoland to revert to the Crown provided the Cape Parliament agree to disannexation.

The Basutoland disannexation and Transkeian retrocession debates were trying sessions for Merriman and the Government. Opposition on both occasions was fierce, particularly from Hofmeyer and the opposition leaders Gordon Sprigg and Thomas Upington. To his mother Merriman commented bitterly:

> The coalition of the Hofmeyer faction and the Upington-Sprigg lot was indeed a wonderful example of our blessed form of government, under which the welfare of the country is the last thing sought for. Now the determination to cling to the Transkei, which we cannot govern and which is always on the verge of an outbreak is truly marvelous. The moving motive is a fixed desire to turn the natives out and to enter on the heritage of the heathen, which are the avowed tenets of the 'land and loot' party. I need not tell you what untold misery and commercial distress this presages for the future unless we are strong enough to check it.[78]

The debates raged for a week. In the end, only the Disannexation Act was passed; the Transkei was to be retained. Merriman was incensed that the Legislative Assembly would only agree to a transfer of a maximum of £20,000 a year in customs to the Basutos, a decision that was to leave them economically dependent on the Cape.

Despite this defeat he continued to push for the retrocession of the Transkei. Unfortunately, the Cape-Transvaal struggle over the Bechuanaland border areas of Goshen and Stellaland made it impossible for the Government to defend the retrocession plan. Cecil Rhodes demanded outright annexation of the disputed territories and feelings ran so high, wrote Merriman, that "the opposition to the proposal of transference . . .

[78]JXM to Mrs. J. Merriman, 8 Aug. 1883, *SCM* 1: 135.

preaches something like a 'jehad' against all black skins in the *Zuid-Africaan*, which has invented a new name for the sort of work which has been going on in Stellaland by calling it 'de Afrikaner traditie'--and of course if you can get people to believe that plunder and robbery are a tradition, a great step is gained. . . ."[79]

Merriman continued to oppose the extension of the frontier. As we have seen, part of his interest in resisting the absorption of native lands involved his Gladstonian desire to limit public expenditure but humanitarian reasons rated as well. He fought Rhodes and the Stellaland "freebooters" on the grounds that not only was the Cape in no position to administer the disputed area, but the Thlaping people, whom the freebooters had displaced, were British clients and the rightful possessors of the land.[80] Nor was the Cape liberal fooled by the veiled meaning of "trusteeship." When it was suggested by the British Government in late 1883 that a joint British-Cape-Transvaal protectorate be established over the Tswana lands in Bechuanaland, Merriman fumed: "it will be perfectly futile and a complete sham--'keeping the word of promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope'--the sort of protection that the wolf and the butcher give the lamb."[81] His solution was either outright Imperial protection or Cape annexation, where, in the latter case, "our own selfish interests would be bound up in seeing that the country was settled after Colonial and not after Transvaal ideas."[82]

In May 1884 Scanlen abruptly resigned, ostensibly on the Phylloxera

[79]JXM to Sir H. Robinson, 30 Jan. 1884, *SCM* 1: 162-163.

[80]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 107.

[81]JXM to Capt. C. Mills, 26 Dec. 1883, *SCM* 1: 150-151.

[82]JXM to Sir H. Robinson, 26 Dec. 1883, *SCM* 1: 151.

question, but in reality because of Bond opposition to the Ministry's Transkeian and Bechuanaland policies.[83] With Bond support Thomas Upington assumed the premiership with Sprigg as Treasurer and Merriman went into opposition. The ascendancy of the "land and loot party" and with it the politics of expansion were renewed. Attacks on the franchise soon followed.

The first came in 1886 when the Transkei Territories Representation Bill was introduced. The Upington-Bond legislation sought to ensure the supremacy of the white settler vote in the Transkei by creating two systems of representation. Two members were to be sent to the House: the first was to be elected by white voters who met the standard Cape qualifications and by native voters who owned land on individual title worth at least £100; and the second was to be chosen by a native council elected by Africans who paid the hut-tax. Because he did not think it wrong to treat the Transkei with its separate system of government and large "barbarian" population as an entity distinct from the Cape, Merriman was slow to recognize the implications of such a measure. It required some work on the part of Innes and Sauer to make him see that the bill would result in the disenfranchisement of large numbers of African voters. By the time of the bill's third reading, however, Merriman was aware of its true intent and opposed it vigorously. Although it passed this reading, the opposition, led by Innes, was able to attach a qualifying rider to a prior amendment that reaffirmed section 8 of the Constitution which denied the vote to any person who held land under tribal or communal tenure arrange-

[83]Cecil Rhodes, who had become Scanlen's Treasurer only six weeks before the latter's resignation, understood as well as anyone the real reason for the Government's defeat: "I retired on a 'bug' whose nasty legs entirely covered the Transkeian map, which question really put us out." Cited in "The Parliament of the Cape with Special Reference to Party Politics," p. 205.

ments. This tactic effectively wrecked the Government plan and the bill was allowed to die in the Legislative Council.[84]

However, the success of the opposition amendment was not lost on the Government. In the 1887 session Sprigg as Prime Minister (having traded posts with Upington in November 1886 allegedly on account of the latter's ill health) pushed through the Voters Registration Bill, a measure which disenfranchised all Africans occupying land under tribal or communal tenure. Sprigg protested that the bill simply reinforced the Constitution by addressing the illegal but widespread practice of enrolling unqualified African voters. In truth, however, Sprigg's bill was a direct attack on the nonracial principle.

Merriman was not opposed to such a "reform" movement--indeed he thought the canvassing of illegal votes deplorable--but he recognized immediately that the bill directly threatened the colorblind principle. He decried the measure which when passed resulted in the removal of some 20,000 Africans from the voting rolls. As he told the House:

> I shall oppose the Bill on the ground of truth, because it is a miserable sham; on the ground of liberty, for I believe that we have no right to take away the rights that have been conferred upon the Natives; on the ground of justice, for I should like to see equal justice meted out to all; and above all I shall oppose it on the ground of expediency, for if there is any one thing likely to damage the country it is the stirring up of a bitter feeling amongst the Natives. . . .
>
> The Opposition may be in a minority on this measure, but I feel perfectly certain it will not be a contemptible minority. We have time on our side, and education, and the sound, sober common sense of the people of the country.[85]

[84]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, pp. 128-129. See also JXM to J. B. Currey, 14 June 1886, *SCM* 1: pp. 213-214; J. Rose Innes to J. T. Jabavu, [?] May [1886] and J. Rose Innes to R. W. Rose Innes, 21 March 1887, *Innes Correspondence*, pp. 39-40, 53.

[85]Cited in *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 132.

These attacks, which mark the beginning of the legislative assault on the colorblind principle, are usually ascribed to the Afrikaner Bond's fear that the native voter would always side with the English and to the more general fear that the black vote would soon swamp the white vote in border constituencies. But the assault was also engineered by expansionists such as Cecil Rhodes who sought to free up black labor by weakening the peasant economies of the Transkei and Ciskei.[86] That the Bond was nevertheless in the vanguard of this assault led English-speaking liberals to conclude (mistakenly) that the attack on the franchise involved a Dutch-English split; a view which gave the defense of the franchise a certain impetus, and in the instances above the liberals were able to retain the nonracial principle.

In spite of such pressures Merriman remained committed to the civilizing mission. His humanitarianism and idealism were shared by few men, however. Nevertheless, his faith in progress was such that he was confident that the incorporation of Africans within the cultural bounds of white society would eventually be achieved. Time, education and common sense were to be the great levelers. Thus, when the veteran politician agreed to serve as Treasurer for Rhodes when the latter formed his "all the talents" coalition ministry in July 1890, he had reason to believe that the future bode well for the white and black races of South Africa.

Yet, within a year of his joining Rhodes's cabinet the Cape liberal's optimism regarding the future began to wane. A letter written to Sir Charles Mills in April 1891 regarding the Cape census provides the first bit of evidence. "The census," Merriman wrote, "promises to be a great success. . . . We expect the gross result to be about 1,500,000 including

[86]"'The Friends of the Natives,'" p. 255.

[the] Transkei." But with whites comprising little more than a fifth of this number "the tale of [the] European will be a sorry one, and will go far to convince even the most careless of the fact which I never lose an opportunity of impressing, that the question before the country in the future is the colour one--'Is South Africa to be black or white?'" He then went on to detail some examples of the wildly uneven increases in the white and black populations of certain electoral divisions before concluding: "When the whole case is known, perhaps some of the irrational prejudice against European immigration may be removed. It is a matter of life and death for the future of this country to obtain recruits to the Europeans--somewhere and somehow."[87]

[87]JXM to Sir C. Mills, 22 April 1891, *SCM* 2: 47-48. Merriman's interest in white immigration first surfaces at this time. Later in 1891, for instance, his concern for "getting an increase to our white population" led him to induce his cabinet companion Joseph Sivewright to import "Scotch platelayers and gangers" for railroad construction rather than the usual Chinese indentured labor. The Rev. W. B. Rubusana reported that Merriman urged the House in 1897 to consider "the experiment of importing a shipment of Continental peasants, say Italian or Portuguese . . . as the country required cheap white labour." By 1906, however, he appears to have given up on immigration as a way to reinforce the "European garrison." Nevertheless, in 1914 he suggested that the Government accept Belgian refugees for settlement. In this instance, humanitarian concerns certainly predominated, but I suspect that lurking in the background was his fear of the growing imbalance between the white and black segments of the population. However, even in the area of white immigration Merriman had his prejudices: he had no use for a Salvation Army scheme proposed by General William Booth (whom he disliked) to settle a colony of "reclaimed Salvationists" at the Cape. Regarding the importation of Scottish railroad workers see JXM to Sir C. Mills, 10 June 1891, *SCM* 2: 54; On Rubusana's comments see The South African Native Races Committee, *The Natives of South Africa: Their Economic and Social Condition* (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 257; on Merriman's immigration views in 1906 see JXM to Smuts, 30 Dec. 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 311-314; on the "Belgian" proposal see JXM Diary, 11 Sept. and 26 Oct. 1914, *SCM* 4: 256, 259. For opinions on Booth and the Salvation Army colony scheme, see JXM Diary, 18-26 Jan. 1891; JXM to C. Mills, 9 Sept. 1891; and JXM to C. J. Rhodes, 19 Feb. 1892, *SCM* 2: 28-29, 66-67, 93.

CHAPTER III

"A MOURNFUL BLOT ON THE FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA": MERRIMAN AND THE "POOR WHITE," 1892-1899

Merriman was not the only one to have his eyes opened by the census figures. In June the Bond, supported by Joseph Sivewright in the cabinet, moved to impose strict property and educational qualifications on the franchise. The move was stoutly opposed by Merriman's fellow liberals in the cabinet, Innes and Sauer. Merriman was rather more ambivalent. He thought it a "singularly unfortunate time for stirring up strife, and for doing anything which may give an idea at home that the Cape Parliament is bent on repressing the Native." Still, he reckoned, "stripped of all external and collateral questions, the mere intention to strengthen the intelligent European vote has much to commend it."[88]

The franchise crisis dragged on into the following year as Innes would not agree to any alteration. Lewsen argues that Merriman also believed that the existing franchise was adequate but the tone of his correspondence suggests otherwise.[89] Indeed, he thought that Hofmeyer's proposed "dual vote" plan, which envisioned an extra vote for the propertied and educated classes, was a good idea. "The new franchise would not be differential," he wrote, "nor would it be so high as to exclude the decent European or the superior class of Native, but it would minimize the Coolie and the bar-

[88]JXM to Sir C. Mills, 17 June 1891, *SCM* 2: 55.

[89]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, pp. 148-149.

barian."[90] That there existed a "superior class of Native" who possessed either a house valued at £100 or the equivalent in salary or wages was, of course, utter nonsense.

Nevertheless, while in London negotiating a Cape loan, Merriman was sufficiently concerned about the efficacy of educational tests to seek the advice of the eminent liberal politician James Bryce. Bryce had recently written an article for the *North American Review* in which he sketched out the problem of race relations in the American South, an article that Merriman had read with great interest.[91] In his letter to Bryce, Merriman asked the English liberal if he thought an education test like the kind adopted by certain southern states was a workable proposition in South

[90]JXM to Sir C. Mills, 6 Aug. 1891, *SCM* 2: 62. In the end, this plan was abandoned as too complicated. Hofmeyer then demanded higher property and educational qualifications. Innes finally agreed to a compromise (worked out by Rhodes) by which the property requirement was raised from £25 to £75 a year and a rudimentary education test instituted (the voter being required to write his name, address and occupation) while the wage test remained as previous at £50 a year. In addition, neither the education test nor the higher property requirement were to apply to voters already on the rolls (the non-racial principle thus being retained); a compulsory Ballot Act was to be introduced; and Innes was to be allowed to explain the reasons for his compromise before the Legislative Assembly. See J. Rose Innes to C. J. Rhodes, 3 Feb. 1892 and 15 Feb. 1892, *Innes Correspondence*, 95-98.

[91]"Thoughts on the Negro Problem," *North American Review*, CCCXXI (December 1891), 641-660. Merriman appears to have remembered this article for many years afterwards. Bryce's opening paragraph, for instance, appears to have provided the inspiration for his insightful comment to Smuts in 1906 which serves as the essay's epigraph. Bryce wrote: "Among the problems which the people and government of the United States have to deal with, there are three which observers . . . are apt to think grave beyond all others. These three are the attitude and demands of the labor party, the power which the suffrage vests in recent immigrants from the least civilized parts of Europe, and the position of the colored population of the South. And of these three, the last, if not the most urgent, is the most serious, the one whose roots lie deepest, and which is most likely to stand a source of anxiety, perhaps of danger, for generations to come. Compared with it, those tariff questions and currency questions and railway questions with which politicians busy themselves sink almost to insignificance."

Africa where "the danger arising from a competition between the white and black elements of the population is far more acute . . . than in any other country where the two races can subsist on equal terms." He informed Bryce that in the Cape Colony whites were outnumbered by blacks by more than three to one; in neighboring Natal by a margin of ten to one. "And while in America," he wrote, "there is a reservoir of pure Whites, 50 million in number alongside of the Coloured States, in South Africa the conditions are reversed and the Coloured folk have their millions which slop over into the British Colonies and the Dutch Republics."[92]

Merriman then outlined the Bond attempt at raising the existing franchise qualifications in the Cape, a movement its proponents saw as preventing "the white race being swamped by the Coloured voter." He thought the proposal "reasonable enough," but explained that its passage "is resisted by many who affect to believe that the Coloured man will vote English and that any restriction on the franchise will increase the power of the Dutch." "For we have a Dutch and English question as well as a black and white," Merriman declared.[93]

Bryce in his reply informed Merriman that only Mississippi had implemented an educational test and that its system was still too new to draw any firm conclusions about its effectiveness. However, he did not expect Mississippi's test to operate to the advantage of blacks, "for of course the authorities, being Whites, will let in all the Whites they can, and keep out the Negroes whose educational qualifications can in any way be impeached." Bryce guessed that the "South African problem" was probably analogous to what existed in the American South and asked Merriman "how far the

[92]JXM to J. Bryce, 22 Feb. 1892, *SCM* 2: 93-94.

[93]JXM to J. Bryce, 22 Feb. 1892, *SCM* 2: 94.

Colour question [in South Africa] is one of race aversions, [and] how far it is possible for a Coloured man to obtain, by ability and education, anything approaching social equality."[94] When the two men later met at Bryce's invitation, Merriman responded (in Lewsen's words) that "the former existed and the latter was impossible."[95] It was a sad commentary on the realities of race relations in the Cape.[96]

While Merriman was undoubtedly alarmed by the census figures of the previous year--enough so to privately support Bond attempts to raise the franchise qualifications--there is no evidence to suggest that he had altered his position with respect to the virtues of African political and economic advancement. To Merriman "civilizing the native" was still to be encouraged. This belief was to undergo important modifications after 1892, however. For it was while on an tour of the midlands and eastern agricultural districts as Rhode's Treasurer and newly appointed head of the Agricultural Department in November-December 1892 that Merriman first encountered the spectacle of the "poor white." He was shocked. To J. B.

[94]J. Bryce to JXM, 24 Feb. 1892, *SCM* 2: 95-96.

[95]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 149.

[96]Merriman's *RSVP* to Bryce's invitation is particularly revealing as regards his growing anxieties. "I should be very glad," he wrote, "if I could impress on you the importance and interest on the South African problem, which does not consist--as those who have devoted a superficial attention to it seem to think--in a sort of faction-fight between the English and the Dutch or in the development of more mines, but in the silent struggle that is going on between the black and white along the whole line. Important, because South Africa is the only *point d'appui* from which the European race can hope to have any lasting effect on the dark continent, and interesting from the variety of conditions, as regards race and treatment, under which the struggle is going on. It is this which makes any information about the Southern States so valuable, as that is about the only place where at all similar conditions obtain." JXM to J. Bryce, 25 Feb. 1892, *SCM* 2: 96.

Currey he wrote:

> The impression left on my mind was that the two great questions in South Africa are the degradation of the white population, as exemplified by the *bywoner* class [i.e., landless squatters] and the English analogues whom you know only too well, and the location question--the rapid influx of the kafir [sic] who crowds out the white man. It is very difficult to see what the remedy is to be. Actually I found white men, the sons of well-to-do farmers, taking service as herds at ten shillings a month, despised by the Natives and pariahs among their own folk. Yet the sons and daughters of these people will not go into service, which they count as a degradation! One can imagine all the rest with its hideous concomitants. What a curious seamy side to our progress and development, which you and I used to notice in Kimberley in days gone by.[97]

The perception that a significant number of rural whites were beginning to sink below the level of the more "civilized" native suggested to Merriman that there existed a terrible imbalance in the social structure. On his return to Cape Town he shared his observations with the Reverend Andrew Murray of the Dutch Reformed Church. Murray was sufficiently alarmed to issue, in concert with a group of like-minded ministers, an open letter on "Our Poor Whites" in January 1893. The letter led to the convening of a special church conference which met at Stellenbosch in early February to discuss the matter of rural white poverty.[98] Merriman met with the conference moderator and later made the first of several public pronouncements on the issue when he opened the Port Elizabeth Agricultural Show in

[97]JXM to J. B. Curry, 2 Dec. 1892, *SCM* 2: 115-116.

[98]The Conference concentrated primarily on the problem of rural illiteracy. At its conclusion, Reverend Murray and his cohorts prepared a second "open letter" which appeared in several newspapers on February 23, 1893. In it the resolutions of the Conference were published, the most important of which called for improved educational facilities and the establishment of "industrial colonies." The latter suggestion resulted in the founding of a Dutch Reformed Church labor colony at Kakamas in 1898. Carnegie Commission Report, *Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, pp. 20-21, 56.

April.[99]

Despite such activities, he remained deeply troubled. A marked pessimism began to manifest itself in his letters. Only a fortnight after the close of the Stellenbosch Conference he was writing of "the sinking of the land-holding class, the influx of the Natives and of Asiatics, [and] the barbarous state of nearly all [native] locations this side [of] the Kei." "What is the future of S. Africa?" he asked his mother, "and of Africa indeed, for this is the only point from which the dominant influence of civilization can make itself felt? Certainly salvation will not come from Johannesburg, nor I question from Mashonaland either."[100]

What Merriman had seen on his tour had been extant for some time. Yet, most historians writing on the "poor white problem" have come to accept (as Merriman did) the view that poor whiteism was a phenomenon peculiar to the 1890s and beyond. Indeed, the orthodox view is rather firm in its belief that poor whiteism was entirely the byproduct of the economic transformations initiated by the mineral revolution. W. A. Macmillan in his *The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development* (1919) believed that "the rise to any serious proportions of . . . the poor white problem is quite recent. . . . It is not until the 'nineties that there is any evidence of the growth of feeling that all is not well. . . ."[101] The economic historian M. H. De Kock, writing in the 1920s, argued that poor whiteism originated only after the mineral discoveries of the 1870s and 1880s. "Prior to that notable event," he wrote, "South Africa had indeed

[99]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 157.

[100]JXM to Mrs. J. Merriman, 28 Feb. 1893, *SCM* 2: 131-132.

[101]W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development* (1919; rpt. Pretoria: The State Library, 1974), p. 8.

been a comparatively poor community, with a low standard of living in the interior, but it was one of independent farmers. There was virtually no absolute poverty in the country, except perhaps as the result of idleness, sickness, accident or vice, but not unemployment or unemployableness." "It was only after the banking crisis of 1890," he insisted, "that the creation of poor whites by economic forces . . . began to make headway, and even then in small numbers only."[102]

The influential Carnegie Commission also located the genesis of the poor white problem in this period. Rural impoverishment and rural exodus, the Commission held, were the results of "a sudden change in the economic structure" occasioned by the mineral revolution and consequent capitalization of agriculture.[103] C. G. W. Schumann ascribed poor whiteism entirely to the economic transformation initiated by the mineral discoveries and C. W. De Kiewiet eloquently wrote that

> it was at the turn of the century that it became evident that white society had developed within itself disturbing inequalities. At the base of white society had gathered, like a sediment, a race of men so abject in their poverty, so wanting in resourcefulness, that they stood dangerously close to the natives themselves. Racial equality amongst the whites had not prevented the development in their midst of economic inequality.[104]

That this chronology continues to exert a restraining influence on the study

[102]M. H. de Kock, *Selected Subjects in the Economic History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta & Co., 1924), pp. 454-455.

[103]As J. F. W. Grosskopf put it: "a needy rural class was formed, of farmers on smaller or inferior holdings, and even of landless men"; and "not long after 1890 a drift to the towns began to be noticed in South Africa." Carnegie Commission Report, *Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, pp. 5-7.

[104]C. G. W. Schumann, *Structural Changes and Business Cycles in South Africa, 1806-1936* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1938), p. 35; *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*, p. 181.

of rural white poverty in South Africa is seen in one recent study of Cape and Union government rural rehabilitation policies where the author contends that through at least the 1870s "most South Africans lived in nearly self-sufficient agricultural communities" and that rural white poverty first emerged as a visible problem in the 1880s and 1890s.[105]

In reality the process of rural white impoverishment in the Cape and elsewhere had begun much earlier. Colin Bundy, in a masterful essay, has traced its beginnings in the Cape to the 1840s and 1850s.[106] It was in these decades he writes that the expansion of capitalized farming, more particularly sheep farming, in the midlands and eastern districts first reached a level of production sufficient to expose large numbers of smallholders and tenant farmers to the vagaries of the market economy.[107] Capital accumulation and agricultural improvements sharply affected small cultivators--black and white--in this period with the result that many rural whites were forced off the land or compelled to subsist on unworkable plots in a manner not dissimilar to that experienced by African cultivators.

In the 1860s and 1870s the rise in land values brought on by speculation, the extension of rail lines, and the success of the wool and later ostrich feather trade, swelled the ranks of the landless and dire poor still further. "This double edged process--whereby the accumulation by some contributed

[105]D. Berger, *White Poverty and Government Policy in South Africa: 1892-1934*, Diss. Temple Univ. 1983 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983), pp. 2, 7-13.

[106]C. Bundy, "Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape Before Poor Whiteism," in *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930*, ed. W. Beinhart, P. Delius and S. Trapido (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), pp. 101-128.

[107]For an overview of economic growth and structural change in the pre-Union period see *Structural Changes and Business Cycles in South Africa, 1806-1906*, pp. 97-130.

directly to the proletarianization of others--is plain to see in the 1870s," writes Bundy. Increasing numbers of these hapless whites drifted to the towns where they resisted absorption into the wage labor market as best they could, but forming nonetheless (along with ex-artisans and petty tradesman) a "clearly visible" underclass that was not lost on a society traditionally divided along ethnic rather than class lines. Thus even before the economic transformations of the mineral era, capital accumulation in the countryside had spurred (in Bundy's words) "considerable differentiation and class formation."[108]

The emergence of class attitudes in the Cape prior to the mineral discoveries of the 1870s and 1880s is for Bundy an "important indicator of the significance of the 1890s." The ruling elite's indifference, even hostility, towards the very poor was gradually replaced in this decade by a new appreciation for the material and social conditions contributing to rural poverty and unemployment. Poverty was now acknowledged as a social rather than individual problem. And it was a problem that required the attention of the state as well as charitable institutions. Such thinking amounted to "a major shift in ruling class perceptions of the nature of poverty that was analogous to ideological developments in metropolitan Britain, and partly derived from them. . . ."[109]

In the Cape, however, this "rediscovery of poverty" was accompanied by a "more strident and explicit rhetoric of racism: a complex ideological phenomenon derived partly from local circumstances and partly from 'imported' or metropolitan thinking."[110] This resulted in a belief that the

[108]"Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," pp. 104, 108, 116-117.

[109]"Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," p. 119.

[110]"Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," p. 121.

poor of both racial groups ought to be separated since, as Bundy notes, "one of the aspects of underclass poverty was the tendency of some of the poor of different race groups to live together, relax together, and sometimes to work together," a situation which could lead "to a very real blurring of ethnic identity among the poor."[111] Social Darwinism, a resurgent Afrikaner nationalism, and settler imperialism all contributed to this hardening of racial attitudes. The significance of the 1890s is therefore the appearance of a new discourse on poverty in the Cape, a discourse that redefined and magnified an existent social problem.

Bundy's article is necessarily impressionistic, as the intermittent and unreliable Cape censuses provide little in the way of quantifiable data from which to estimate the extent of rural poverty and landlessness. Nevertheless, while the numbers are as difficult to ascertain for this period as for the "classical" era of poor whiteism (i.e., 1890-1939), it seems clear that the process of rural proletarianization was well under way before the mineral discoveries of the 1870s and 1880s.[112] However, Bundy's suggestion

[111]"Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," p. 117.

[112]Early estimates of the number of poor whites remain tentative since no standard definition of poor whiteism appears to have been adopted by government census-takers and other interested bodies examining the problem. In 1916 the Minister of Agriculture put the number of poor whites at 106,000 in a speech before the Dutch Reformed Church's Cradock Conference, but the figure was later disputed by the Superintendent of White Labor. In 1920 the Union Government's Unemployment Commission put the number at 120,000, although by the mid-1920s an unsubstantiated figure of 150,000 appears to have caught the fancy of the official mind. In 1929-30 the Carnegie Commission arrived at a figure of over 300,000 on the basis of questionnaires sent to approximately one-half of the Union's white schools. The returns indicated that 17.5% of the 49,434 families with school-age children surveyed could be classified as "very poor." The Commission noted, however, that their estimate (arrived at by applying the percentage cited to the total white population) included many who could not be considered "poor whites" given the definition adopted in the study (i.e., "a class consisting principally of poor "bywoners," hired men on farms, owners of dwarf holdings or of small undivided shares of land, poor settlers, and the growing group of unskilled or poorly trained labourers and

that Merriman's discovery of poor whiteism resulted from his reading of William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) ignores the Cape liberal's concerns about the dangers posed by the increase in the Cape native population following the last of the Transkeian annexations.[113] At this point, Merriman's humanitarian sentiments played only a small role. He was far more concerned about the threat to white supremacy posed by the "sinking of the landholding class" than with the social evils of rural poverty. Moreover, such a concern was distinctly old fashioned--his "back to the land" philosophy was hardly in keeping with the times--and Bundy is simply wrong to conclude that Merriman's concern for the "degradation of the white population" is "a transcription into the colonial key of themes common to the New liberalism and Social Imperialism of the 1890s."[114] Nevertheless, Merriman's "discovery" of poor whiteism did coincide with a more general shift in ruling-class attitudes regarding the nature of poverty that had begun in the 1880s; a shift that in the Cape Colony stirred racial fears and prompted government intervention in the areas of rural education

workers outside of farming"). As for the pre-Union period no estimates (with the exception of Bundy's rather loose calculations) appear to exist. See *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission*, Joint Findings and Recommendations, no. 9, p. vii; also *White Poverty and Government Policy in South Africa*, pp. 21-22. For Bundy's estimate of the extent of rural white poverty in the Cape in the 1870s see "Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," p. 114.

[113]Bundy cites (p. 120) Merriman's reading of Booth as one example in which reform ideology was directly transmitted to the Cape from metropolitan Britain in the 1890s. However, Bundy's short rendering of Merriman's review of Booth's book does not do justice to the Cape liberal's actual opinion of the Salvation Army General and his solutions to the poverty question. Merriman actually thought the book possibly the work of a "misguided fanatic" and considered its facts "more striking than [its] remedies which would be, if tried, unsuccessful palliatives." JXM Diary, 18-26 Jan. 1891, *SCM* 2: 28-29.

[114]"Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen," p. 120.

and employment.[115]

The political fallout surrounding the Logan contract scandal provides yet another indication of Merriman's growing ambivalence towards native advancement. The scandal divided Cape opinion and split the ministry, eventually forcing Rhodes to resign and announce a new cabinet on May 3, 1893 *sans* Merriman, Innes, and Sauer. It was a nice piece of political maneuvering by Rhodes who, by preempting the planned resignation of the liberal trio with his own, escaped the scandal with his public reputation unscathed. Though in opposition and fighting Rhodes on a number of issues pertaining to native affairs between 1893-95 (in particular, his war against the Ndbele, major elements of his Glen Grey legislation, and his attempt to have the Bechuanaland protectorate transferred to the Chartered Company), Merriman's private stance was nevertheless ambiguous.[116] A letter written to Innes in October 1895 in which he refused the latter's entreaties to join in the formation of an opposition party clearly bears this out. The present situation, Merriman wrote, was hardly a time for constituting a party based on "extreme views."[117] He then asked:

> And what good will you do? I can barely get you to listen with ill-conceived patience to any remarks on the condition of this country. The great question of the Coloured race, and the difficult problem of how to maintain our domination and at the same time treat the inferior race with justice--which does not always *in the long run* mean the same as political rights; the

[115]On the Cape Government's attempts to alleviate poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the countryside see *White Poverty and Government Policy in South Africa*, chaps., 1 and 2.

[116]Though he was not personally acquainted with the Cape liberal at this time the usually deferential Jabavu thought Merriman's "utterances on the Native Question are not calculated to inspire confidence." J. T. Jabavu to J. Rose Innes, 19 June 1893, *Innes Correspondence*, p. 108.

[117]The 1893-94 elections had given Rhodes an increased majority in the Assembly, and with Bond support, his position was unassailable.

> whole vast question, hitherto neglected, of the state of the European race. I wonder how many of the 'stalwarts' have ever read the Labour Commission evidence, which might appall any lover of his country. Education, internal development, the proper administration of railways and finance, all these things we absolutely neglect and cannot create a languid interest in them.[118]

Before the issue could be taken up again the Jameson Raid had transformed events. The story is well known and needs no retelling here.[119] All that need be said is that Merriman's denunciation of Rhodes and his attempt to get the charter of the British South Africa Company revoked alienated him from many of his English-speaking compatriots.[120] Such

[118]JXM to J. Rose Innes, 11 Oct. 1895, *SCM* 2: 178. The "stalwarts" was the nickname given to the men who agreed to serve under Rhodes in his second ministry; men such as Sprigg who, only the day before Rhodes's resignation, had formed the "official" parliamentary opposition. The Labor Commission, which sat from February 1893 to May 1894, while examining the state of the labor market in the Cape also investigated the nature and extent of poor whiteism. The Commission (not unlike Bundy) ascribed rural poverty to "the constant sub-division of land . . . the falling off of transport by bullock wagon since the extension of railways . . . the shifting of trade centres . . . the introduction of ostrich farming . . . and the fluctuation in demand for timber and to other such causes." As a remedy it called on the Government to provide public works projects for the unemployed and educational facilities for the children of the rural poor. [G.3-'94] *Report of the Labour Commission, 1893-1894. Volume III. Minutes of Proceeding and Minutes of Evidence, for March-April, 1894, with Appendices* (Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1894), pp. xxxi-xxxiii. For extracts of Merriman's testimony before the Commission see Appendix A below.

[119]Merriman's own view of the causes and consequences of the Raid, written soon after the debacle, stands up to the best of critical accounts. See his "A Critical Account of the Jameson Raid" (incomplete), 8 Jan. 1896; "Notes on South Africa," 22 Jan. 1896; and his letter to J. Bryce, 29 March 1896, *SCM* 2: 191-198, 200-205, 214-216.

[120]The adulation that Rhodes was receiving in England infuriated Merriman. To Goldwin Smith he fumed: "the longer I live, the more I feel convinced that all this shoddy Imperialism and the oratorical froth of wealthy gasbags who are hunting for popularity means very little, while it profoundly degrades all those principles which we have been led to look up to as national characteristics. '*Imperium et libertas*'!! The latter has a very poor chance alongside the stockjobbing Imperialism of the present day." And to W. P. Schreiner he wrote: "The misfortune of South Africa is that these d-d imperialists whether officials, newspaper writers or globe trotters of sorts,

actions, however, did earn him the respect of Afrikaners, both in the Cape and in the two Republics. Nevertheless, the Cape liberal recognized (unlike others) that the Raid and all its pettifoggery was of secondary importance when compared to the race question. As he remarked to Innes: "Here in South Africa, this miserable business may profoundly alter the European race but it will do little to change the drift of the black and white problem, except for the worse."[121]

When Innes and Merriman did return to the subject of forming an opposition party--this time at the latter's insistence--it was Merriman who took the lead. The liberals, he wrote, were as a group demoralized and "hopelessly split up by all kind of jealousy and divergency on minor matters, while honesty and purity of politics and administration, and the future of the country, are thrust into the background." Nevertheless, the "rascality and apathy" gripping the country made it imperative that liberals (and especially Innes who was estranged politically from both Sauer and W. P. Schreiner, a recent liberal convert) put aside their differences and show a united front. The question was how to regain the initiative. Free trade and the brandy excise--the chief concerns of Innes's newly formed S. A. Political Association--though important issues were not ones upon which to build a popular political party explained Merriman. "You want something more," he contended, something "to rouse people all through the country and to get them to feel some real enthusiasm." He had an issue in mind:

> Now the great question in South Africa is Black and White. A large party go in for the depression of the Black man, therein thinking they will find salvation. We ought to make our cry

always want to manage our affairs for us." JXM to G. Smith, 18 Aug. 1896 and JXM to W. P. Schreiner, 9 Jan. 1897, *SCM* 2: 236, 243.

[121]JXM to J. Rose Innes, 20 April 1896, *SCM* 2: 221.

> the elevation of the White. In my opinion, looking to the future of South Africa, this question of the development of our European population is one of the very highest moment, and while we wrangle about ephemeral trivialities it is almost lost sight of. The Poor White, Education, Land Settlement and the increase of our agricultural production are things upon which our existence as a white race on this land depends, and they are of far more real importance than whether the O.F.S. charges 2d. more or less [on its railways] or even than the vagaries of Paul Kruger and his Outlander friends. At present [in] every session there is some vague cackle about education, land laws, irrigation and what not. A few vague promises are made. In the recess the money is squandered, nearly all foolishly, but the mind of the people is never really raised to the fact that we are as a race perhaps slipping back all over South Africa in our real hold on the country. We flourish as miners or as traders but the Poor Whites increase, and with all facilities land goes out of cultivation. Some day *Witte Waters Rand* [sic] may be the Zimbabwe of the future, and all our wealth and our railways will do nothing unless the white race can keep hold of the soil.
>
> I return to the Poor White for I see that his numbers are going to be fearfully increased this year, and he is a product that at any rate does not diminish, and of which I think the future possibilities *vis-à-vis* the Coloured races is but dimly foreseen. I wish I could rouse your mind to a sense of the importance of this great question. If I could you would soon see that on this and on its kindred subjects a strong party could be formed. For if it were brought home to them, this hits Englishmen, Dutchmen, Transvaaler, and Outlander alike. Is the European race going to be a thing of a few years, miners and traders and so forth, or is it going to strike its roots down in the soil?[122]

Without question the phenomenon of the poor white frightened the Cape liberal. Revealed at a time when the African population of the Cape was perceived to be advancing in civilization and material wealth; with the British and Dutch divided over the Uitlander question in the Transvaal; and with the Cape Government mired in corruption and graft, Merriman saw the poor white as the clearest sign of an impending social disaster. Given his belief in the general tendency of the "colored races" to rise under European rule, the existence of a static or declining class of impoverished whites

[122]JXM to J. Rose Innes, 23 Oct. 1896, *SCM* 2: 239-241.

posed a direct threat to the continuation of European moral and cultural superiority in South Africa.[123]

That the condition of the poor white inevitably demanded comparison with the prospering African was not lost on Merriman. Indeed, he would soon regard native advancement as the obverse of poor whiteism. However, Merriman did not as yet explicitly link the two developments. But his suggestion, as outlined in the letter above, that the existence of the poor white ought to be used to encourage white unity was suggestive of things to come. In its broad outlines it reminds one of what he was later to accuse Sir Alfred Milner of attempting at the conclusion of the South African War; that is, of "reconciling the two European races at the cost of the Black."[124]

That Merriman was beginning to view native advancement as a threat to the European position in South Africa is reinforced by the confidential advice he gave to the manager of the South African Newspaper Company on the editorial policy of what was soon to become the opposition newspaper the *South African News* in 1899. The paper, he advised, should seek an independent stance, free from the influence of capitalists and corporations. It should stand for liberal and parliamentary principles and should oppose,

[123]Passing through Griqualand West on his way to the Barberton and Johannesburg mining camps in 1887--his first visit to the Transvaal--Merriman marveled at the traffic of African migratory labor on the roads. "Far and away the most interesting sight on the road," he recounted to his wife, "are the droves of natives going to and coming from the Diamond fields--literally hundreds both ways--the former limping along in all sorts of nondescript rags, sometimes perfect skeletons--the latter fat and jolly with their packs of goods and umbrellas and actually one party making the journey on horseback." JXM to Mrs. A. Merriman, 18 Jan. 1887, *SCM* 1: 231-232. The belief that Africans could, and did, gain materially as a direct result of the opening of the mines remained with Merriman for some time.

[124]JXM to F. C. Mackarness, 22 Nov. 1903, *SCM* 3: 409.

on every occasion, corruption and the suppression of free institutions. While acknowledging the need for reforms in the Transvaal, he reminded the manager that "due weight should be given to the fact that reforms are needed elsewhere than across the Vaal River." But then he added:

> To the policy of disruption of South Africa . . . by uniting the colonies under the British flag in avowed hostility to the Dutch-Speaking Republics, a determined opposition should be shown. That way danger lies. Unless the European race in South Africa shows a united front we shall hardly escape the fate of other countries where the Coloured races have crowded the Whites off the ground.[125]

Such a view was unduly alarmist. It also belies Merriman's usually clear historical thinking since at no time previous had the "Coloured races" ever "crowded the Whites off the ground." That Merriman could write as if such an event had occurred indicates the extent to which his racial fears were now starting to get the best of him.

[125]JXM to F. J. Centlivres, 4 April 1898, *SCM* 2: 303-306.

CHAPTER IV

EQUIVOCATION IN AN ERA OF WAR, RECONSTRUCTION AND UNION: MERRIMAN AND THE IMPERATIVES OF WHITE SUPREMACY, 1899-1910

The outbreak of war in October 1899, "that disgraceful and ruinous enterprise," came as no surprise to Merriman.[126] He believed the war was the result of the machinations of "Imperial militarism and stock-jobbing capitalism" aided and abetted by a jingo press, both at home and in Britain.[127] As for Milner's role, he was "only the man at the end of a string."[128] Merriman's pro-Boer views earned him the enmity of many of his fellow Englishmen but he persevered nonetheless. He and Sauer were unsuccessful in their "quixotic" attempt in 1901 to have a peace petition read at the bar of the House of Commons. However, Merriman was able to secure a limited amnesty for captured Cape rebels. At war's end he sought to moderate the peace proposals in an effort to retain the autonomy of the

[126]JXM to J. Bryce, 18 Oct. 1899, *SCM* 3: 97-98. For Merriman's view of the war see especially his letters to Goldwin Smith dated 9 Aug. and 10 Oct. 1899; his letters to J. Bryce dated 13 Dec. 1899 and 17 March 1900; and his letter to L. Courtney dated 17 Oct. 1901, *SCM* 3: 80-85, 92-95, 116-120, 160-167, 310-320.

[127]JXM to Sir D. Tennant, 26 April 1899; JXM Diary, 1 Jan. 1900, *SCM* 3: 44, 134.

[128]JXM to Sir D. Tennant, 7 June 1899, *SCM* 3: 56. Nevertheless, Merriman urged Goldwin Smith to always remember "that the evil wrought by Milner in the interests of those mine-owners, who in a generation or two are doomed to pass and disappear, was all the greater because it divided the Europeans, and because he has left behind the evil legacy of a policy of union in opposition to the Coloured races, as well as the introduction of the Mongolian factor." JXM to G. Smith, 24 April 1904, *SCM* 3: 442.

two Dutch Republics and fought against martial law and the attempt to suspend the Cape Constitution. An English admirer wrote: "Yours is almost a solitary voice crying out for what is right, not unlike the splendid attitude of John Milton in his defence of the English people just before the Restoration."[129]

Yet, Merriman's pro-Boer stance during and after the war was as much a plea for white unity as it was a Hobsonian protest against "imperialists" and "magnates." Indeed, from the standpoint of the "Native Question" the war and its aftermath proved a terrible distraction. Like the American Civil War before it the war drew attention away from what was already the more fundamental problem facing South Africa--the future of black-white relations. For Merriman, however, it remained "the great question."[130]

Consequently, he kept a watchful eye on the African reaction to the "white man's war." The early British reverses during "Black week" left him nervous. "There can be little doubt that the recent British defeats are being discussed in every kraal in South Africa, where the black man is waiting to take sides with the strongest," he informed Bryce.[131] His famous Amnesty minute, in which he urged a policy of leniency and conciliation towards captured Cape rebels on the basis of the "Canadian precedent" set by Lord Durham in his handling of the rebellion in Lower Canada in 1837-38, partly reflected his fear that Anglo-Dutch disunity would undermine the white position in South Africa. Anglo-Dutch recon-

[129]F. C. Mackarness to JXM, 21 Sept. 1900, *SCM* 3: 235.

[130]JXM to Mrs. J. Merriman, 25 Jan. 1901, *SCM* 3: 251-252.

[131]JXM to J. Bryce, 18 Dec. 1899, *SCM* 3: 121. Merriman also voiced this fear to Goldwin Smith: "If one white race, I do not care which it is, obtains the complete mastery over the other, in a short while the subject race will make common cause with the black and there will be a cataclysm." JXM to G. Smith, 12 July 1900, *SCM* 3: 225.

ciliation was crucial as regards the future, he wrote, for "the European race has to face a large and increasing barbarian population"; a situation made more complicated (and dangerous) as "one or another Coloured race advances in material prosperity and in the arts of civilization."[132]

Peace did not soothe his fears. To Bryce he wrote:

> Of course you know that there is, beneath all the squabbles of the Europeans, the great native question which cannot fail to have been most deeply affected by the war. These people have been armed and set on to fight and harry the white men. It will be difficult to get the arms from them and teach them to unlearn the lesson. They have seen the British beaten and in retreat. . . . They have been employed as drivers and so forth at very high wages, while white soldiers have loaded and emptied the wagons. This is quite contrary to our customs and has had the effect of making them insolent and difficult to manage.[133]

And he concluded: "It is the increasing gravity of the Native question that would in the minds of all sensible folk make the reconciliation of the two branches of the European race an absolute necessity."[134] The Cape liberal remained convinced that the white position in South Africa was in danger. His was no longer a minority view. Indeed, opinion throughout the four colonies was slowly coming round to the fact that "race relations" now meant black-white rather than Anglo-Dutch--a view that Merriman had been privately championing since before 1892.[135]

[132]"Amnesty Draft," 28 April 1900, *SCM* 3: 192-194. The issue was also raised in the grievance petition Merriman and Sauer presented to the House of Commons in March 1901. See *The Petition to Parliament of the Delegates from the Cape Colony* (1901), *SCM* 3: 282-285.

[133]JXM to J. Bryce, 21 July 1902, *SCM* 3: 354.

[134]JXM to J. Bryce, 21 July 1902, *SCM* 3: 355.

[135]G. Stewart, "The formation of opinion on race relations in the four colonies 1902-09 as an explanation of the franchise provisions of the South Africa Act," Unpublished paper, Queens Univ., 1968.

Yet, for a brief period in 1903 Merriman was able to retrieve some of his former mind regarding the "Native Question." In September he complained to his wife that General Louis Botha had made a "pretty jackass of himself" before the Transvaal Labor Commission by advocating compulsory labor and the strict enforcement of squatters laws.[136] Afraid that it would be taken as the official position of the Bond-SAP alliance Merriman felt compelled to rebuke Botha publicly for his statements. For as he told F. C. Mackarness: "no sympathy for the Boer cause will ever excuse any sort of departure from a liberal Native policy."[137]

In October he appeared before the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC). The intercolonial commission had been set up by Milner under the chairmanship of Sir Godfrey Lagden to gather information and offer recommendations on the establishment of a common native policy for the whole of British South Africa. Merriman was questioned first about the merits of the two systems of land tenure available to the natives, individual and communal. In his reply he urged that the communal system be discontinued and that individual tenure be introduced. The Commission then embarked on a series of questions that sought Merriman's views on how the Government should deal with the growing "surplus population" of landless Africans. His responses were not always appreciated.

Chairman: . . . I wish to ask you what, in your opinion, should be done with those people for whom no land can be provided?

Merriman: What is done with any European for whom no land is provided? He has to go out and work. And the more you appeal to the native by saying, 'You are on the same basis

[136]JXM to Mrs. A. Merriman, 22 Sept. 1903, *SCM* 3: 392.

[137]JXM to F. C. Mackarness, 22 Nov. 1903, *SCM 3: 409.*

as a European,' the better you get on with him. When a native asks me for land, I tell him that no one gives me land, but that I must buy land if I want it, and that he too has a right to go and buy land. Under communal tenure you cannot do that; you have not that argument. . . .

Chairman: To put his house down; is that not a necessary thing for him? The native is not like the white man: he cannot go and live in locations all over the country; he cannot go and live where the white man can?

Merriman: The whole object of our raising and elevating the natives is to give them the same rights and to teach them that they have the same obligations as we have.

. . . . .

Chairman: Would not there be a fear of the towns becoming congested if you allowed that?

Merriman: I do not think so. Take Cape Town. We have 12,000 natives down here, and they do not seem to congest Cape Town. And there is an unlimited demand for agricultural labour.

Chairman: But supposing three or four times as many dumped themselves down here?

Merriman: Many people want to have three or four times as many here.

. . . . .

Chairman: Is it not necessary for a native to have a place where he can pitch his tent? As you know, he is a pure gipsy; he must have a place to camp in?

Merriman: If you want to keep a native always as a pure gipsy--and there is no doubt that there is always that in the minds of some people. But our policy is to take him out of the pure gipsy stage and make him a useful member of society.

Chairman: Can you take him out of that stage in a hurry?

Merriman: No, gradually; we are doing it gradually.

Chairman: Yet the population is vastly increasing, and some provision has to be made in those places where there are these large numbers?

Merriman: And we are making it.

. . . . .

Chairman: . . . what [do] you think should be done with the surplus population of natives; what should they be able to do if they cannot get land to plough. . . ?

Merriman: What are the surplus population of Europeans doing? There is a general demand for agricultural labour.

Chairman: They are generally brought up to some kind of business.

Merriman: And why should not the natives be brought up to some kind of business? There business is agriculture. Well, let them elevate themselves in agriculture and handicrafts. . . .

Chairman: Would you drive them out to the farms. . . ?

Merriman: I would not drive them, but they will drive themselves when they get congested in lands held under individual tenure. And that is just the point. I do not want to drive the natives at all. It is the gradual progress of civilization that will force them to work, and is forcing them every day.

Merriman was then asked if he thought the Glen Grey system of individual tenure should be applied to rest of the Transkeian territories. He replied that the system should be introduced (though he believed the Act itself required modification) whenever "the natives evince and wish a desire for it." The Commission then turned to the issue of self-government.

Chairman: Then along with [individual tenure] . . . would go, necessarily, a change in the administrative system For instance, in the Native Territories they have the remains of that very useful system called the tribal system; but where they have individual tenure they have a certain amount of self-government?

Merriman: Yes.

Chairman: One change involves the other?

Merriman: Yes.

Chairman: . . . Are you [of] the opinion that they are fit for self government?

Merriman: I think they are as fit for self-government as any people who have or ever had it before. You cannot swim until you jump into the water. You cannot manage self government till you have got self-government.

Chairman: . . . is the measure of self-government given to the Glen Gray people a success?

Merriman: Yes, certainly.

Chairman: From your point of view and from the point of view of the native?

Merriman: From my point of view, I think it has certainly been a success, and I think an increasing success. It is open to a great deal of improvement in its administration, but, undoubtedly, it is a success.

Chairman: Certain natives in their evidence said that it was self-government in name only and not in fact?

Merriman: That is perhaps owing to the want of administration, and I think the more you can improve the principle of self-government the better.

. . . . .

Chairman: Have you any personal objections in your mind to what is known as the tribal system of government?

Merriman: I think it is a very imperfect system. . . .

Chairman: Has it not for a great number of years served a very useful purpose?

Merriman: I do not know that it has. We have had constant wars arising out of the tribal system.

. . . . .

Chairman: . . . Do you think that the Natal system is wrong?

Merriman: Certainly.

Chairman: . . . why [do] you think it is wrong, and why do think it has disadvantages?

Merriman: Because you have not elevated the natives in Natal; you have not raised them; you have not educated them; they are barbarians, and you have designedly kept them in a state of barbarism. We contend that our natives have advanced, that they have advanced in civilization very much indeed. The natives in Natal have not advanced, so far as I am aware of it.

The Commission turned next to the question of native education. Merriman explained that the present system was misdirected in its aims.

Chairman: Where do you think it is faulty?

Merriman: I do not think that there is enough industrial education and agricultural education. The education of the natives at present goes too much upon the lines of shoving something into their heads instead of bringing out what is good in them and developing that. Of course it is a difficult question.

Chairman: It is because it is difficult that I should like you to speak about it.

Merriman: And it is for that very reason that I should not like to dogmatize about it. I think there is too much head education and too little hand education.

Chairman: . . . how would you give them agricultural education. . . ? Take the 1,716 schools in this territory of the Cape Colony. Can you have a farm or an agricultural plot of ground attached to each school to teach them agriculture?

Merriman: No, I do not think you can, but I think you can have agricultural schools and I think such a matter as stock-breeding could be taken up. . . .

Clarification was then sought in response to his statement on the need to provide industrial education for the natives. It brought on a heated exchange.

Chairman: When you say industrial, do you mean [the native] should be taught to be of an industrious nature or taught a technical trade?

Merriman: Taught a separate technical trade.

Chairman: Would you have everyone so taught?

Merriman: I would not say everyone. In the same way, you do not teach every white child.

Chairman: Would you make it a part of your curriculum to train them in a technical trade?

Merriman: I should have a greater number of industrial schools where they can learn such useful things as wagon-making, carpentry, smith work, and so on.

. . . . .

Chairman: Do you think if you educated a great number like that, that they would find work?

Merriman: I am sure of it. You know at the present time you want the Kafirs [sic] to build better houses, but you have to employ white men to build those houses.

Chairman: Do you want to educate them to a higher state of taste, better furniture, etc.?

Merriman: Yes.

Chairman: Supposing it was the system to teach industrialism as commonly understood, that is technical trades, and you taught a great many, do you think it would be possible for them to exist, to get a living?

Merriman: Certainly I do.

Chairman: Would they not immediately compete with the white man?

Merriman: What is the converse of that? Are you going to keep them back for the purpose of giving a monopoly to white men?

Chairman: I am not suggesting that.

Merriman: That is the converse. I know the problem is a difficult one, but you have to face it.

Chairman: I was asking you your views.

Merriman: My view is that you should face it by elevating the native as far as possible in useful trades.

Chairman: If you elevate the native, as I understand the word, you elevate him possibly to a standard which makes him useless as a manual labourer?

Merriman: I do not see it; I will not allow that for a moment.

. . . . .

Chairman: But supposing you do elevate them and give them a certain amount of education and teach them to be skil[l]ful, will those men ever do common work on a farm or on a mine?

Merriman: Why not?

Chairman: It is the converse again with the natural order of things?

Merriman: Why not? You will have a certain number, of course, not educated. The whole of the men will not be educated, any more than they are in any country. But you educate a certain number; the best ones you improve, and you give

> them a career. The great drawback is, as the native[s] say themselves, that they have got no opening. You cannot have every native kept down on a farm. You must raise them, make them more intelligent, and a certain number will become useful.

Merriman was then asked to state his views on what he considered a proper level of education for Africans. He refused except to say that he would not discourage any native child from pursuing whatever standard of education he desired. He then defended the general character of the educated native and dismissed the notion that no white man would hire one if he could help it. He spoke out against unauthorized native locations. He opposed raising the hut tax (which in any case he viewed as rent) and argued that the natives paid their fair share in taxes. On the "drink question" he voiced his opposition to prohibition if aimed solely at non-whites and suggested that a general excise be imposed instead.

Merriman then fielded questions from the other members of the Commission. Asked whether he thought the natives, as a result of their "higher and more important place" in the Cape Colony, would soon come to dominate South Africa, he responded: "The only remedy is to elevate the white race and keep at the top, but give the other man a chance of getting as high as he can." Regarding the Cape franchise, it was suggested that the New Zealand system of separate representation might provide a better way of ensuring that the native vote remained outside the pale of party politics. Merriman thought the situations in New Zealand and the Cape too dissimilar for comparison: in New Zealand the whites outnumbered the Maoris; in the Cape the blacks outnumbered the whites. In any case he surmised, a separate voters roll with native representation, however limited, would no more insulate the natives from the evils of party politics than the present Cape system; quite the contrary as they would most likely

"form a sort of Irish party on a small scale." He told the Commission that in granting individual tenure to natives he would not allow them the right to alienate their property. "You would treat him differently from the white man; you would not allow the native to sell, but you would allow the European to sell?" "If the native sold his land," he responded, "he would not get any other; he would be dispossessed." "That is practically class legislation?" "Yes," he replied, "it is class legislation."[138]

Merriman was not at all pleased by the illiberal attitude adopted by the Commission. His testimony given he sent a follow-up letter to W. G. Stanford, chief magistrate of the Transkei and a sympathetic member of the SANAC. He was convinced, he told Stanford, that the true purpose behind the SANAC was to "level down our Natives and to disturb our Native policy." He reiterated his position respecting African political participation and then reminded Stanford:

> If these people are either morally or physically fit they will not remain a subordinate race, and history tells us how fruitless it is to attempt to keep one race in permanent subserviency, and how much misery has been caused by such attempts.

Besides, he argued, "The danger ahead . . . lies not so much in the elevation of the Natives as in the degradation of certain classes of Europeans both in town and country. If we look after this, it will not be necessary to devise artificial means for holding that position that Prov-

[138] *South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903-1905. Vol. II. Minutes of Evidence taken in the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904), pp. 393-407. Lewsen's rendition of Merriman's testimony, by omitting certain remarks, does not always reflect the true feelings of the Cape liberal. See *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, pp. 272-275.

idence has given us."[139]

This was Merriman at his finest. Unfortunately, his views were not heeded. The SANAC later recommended legislative segregation, a separate voters roll for nonwhites, and the raising of the land tax. However, the SANAC report's impact was considerably diminished by Milner's recall in March 1905 and it did not become the blueprint for a uniform South African native policy as was originally envisioned.[140] Yet, as a barometer of post-war racial feeling it remains an incomparable document.

1903 was also the year in which Merriman renewed his correspondence with J. C. Smuts. Their correspondence had begun rather inauspiciously back in early 1899 when Merriman had written to Smuts asking him to intervene on behalf of the inhabitants of Mafeking to ensure the continued flow of the Molopo River (the town's water supply) against its diversion up river by Transvaal proprietors. It then continued intermittently until interrupted by the war. Now Merriman sought the Transvaal lawyer and former commando leader's support in his fight against the importation of Chinese labor.

[139]Stanford in a previous letter dated November 7 asked Merriman how he would respond if a native was returned to the House from a constituency where the native vote was soon expected to overtake the combined English-Dutch vote. Stanford himself thought a separate voters roll the only recourse. To that Merriman responded: "I suppose you mean if they all vote together and return a Native. Well my reply would be another question. What will happen if you give the Native separate representation? Just the same thing, and depend upon it our Natives are shrewd enough to see through the sham of giving them a mock representation. I have had a great deal of experience--unpleasant experience--of electioneering among the Natives, and I must honestly say that I think their political sense is quite equal to that of Europeans of the same class and that they often surprise one by their grasp of the questions of the day. . . . Personally, I do not say this because these people support me--for at the last election the solid Native vote was cast against me." W. G. Stanford to JXM, 7 Nov. 1903; JXM to W. G. Stanford, 10 Nov. 1903, *SCM* 3: 406-408.

[140]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 275.

Merriman regarded Asiatic labor as a "fatal resource"; a pariah destined to inflict further misery on South Africa. It would signal the end of "the European artisan and tradesman" and depress the white population in the Transvaal and elsewhere. Moreover, he believed the importation of cheap Chinese labor would undermine the civil and economic status of the natives, which in turn, would ruin the Cape's liberal native policy.[141] He thought a European riot or a native uprising under such circumstances a distinct possibility.[142]

Merriman wrote to Smuts expounding on the above dangers. Smuts was for a time noncommittal (as were many other Transvaal leaders, including Botha) and when he and Botha finally did issue a protest on February 3, 1904, the mine-owners had secured enough support to have a Chinese work ordinance passed and ratified by the British Parliament. The Chinese began to arrive soon after. By 1905 nearly 54,000 Chinese were at work in the mines. Merriman was dismayed but not deterred; he continued his public campaign against Chinese labor. However, his anger got the better of him on more than one occasion. In early 1906 he suggested to Smuts that if the Chinese were removed from the mines, the natives ought to be removed as well, leaving the pits to be worked solely by white labor. "Think what a community of 100,000 white workers would mean to South Africa," Merriman wrote. "If I had my way I would keep the Natives out of the mines as they keep the Chinese out in California and they keep the negroes out of the mills in the Southern States. Let the blacks till the soil, hew wood, and draw water and let white men do work that is done by white men all

[141]JXM to J. Bryce, 21 July 1902, *SCM* 3: 355; but more especially JXM to R. Solomon, 3 Jan. 1904, *SCM* 3: 423-425.

[142]JXM to J. Bryce, 13 March 1904 and JXM to W. G. Stanford (undated), *SCM* 3: 436-438, 440-441.

over the world." "If you were to advocate this, or half this," he added, "you will enlist an enormous amount of sympathy both outside and inside South Africa. Recollect our poor whites, of all races, who are being shouldered out of their heritage of labour that can afford to pay well."[143]

Such sentiments, if taken seriously, hardly measure up to Merriman's public condemnation of the industrial color bar and his assertion before SANAC that blacks could not be kept back for the purpose of giving a monopoly to white men. Africans could hardly be expected to "advance" if they were to remain as casual farm laborers. Yet such inconsistencies were not uncommon with Merriman. For by now his concern for the poor white and interest in promoting a white laboring population had eclipsed his previous commitment to African political and economic advancement.

Merriman and Smuts also discussed responsible government for the Transvaal and closer union. On the matter of responsible government for the Transvaal, Smuts had prepared, in January, a memorandum on the proposed Transvaal Constitution, a copy of which he supplied to Merriman.[144] Merriman responded in early March. The franchise was the crucial issue. He pointed out to Smuts that his otherwise "admirable" disquisition on liberal principles was open to objection since it ignored "three quarters of the population because they are coloured." More to the point, the debate on the franchise (and Smuts's insistence on universal manhood suffrage for whites while excluding Africans) was causing a stir in Britain and provoking, in Merriman's view, a spate of "injudicious speeches" by certain members of Parliament. What was required, Merriman

[143]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 11 April 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 256-257. The Chinese were eventually withdrawn between 1907 and 1908.

[144]"Memorandum on Points in Reference to the Transvaal Constitution" (Jan. 1906), *Smuts Papers*, II: 215-227.

urged, was a politically safe policy drawn along Cape lines. And he reminded Smuts that one need not be a "negrophilist" to accept the Cape way of doing things:

> I do not like the Natives at all and I wish we had no black man in South Africa. But there they are, our lot is cast with them by an overwhelming Providence and the only question is how to shape our course so as to maintain the supremacy of our race and at the same time to do our duty. Two courses are open. One is the Cape policy of recognizing the right to the franchise irrespective of colour of all who qualify. This right may be safeguarded as much as you like, and I think we do not safeguard it enough, as the educational test has been deliberately set at naught by Progressive agents for their ends. . . .
>
> [T]he second method . . . is that adopted by the two Republics and Natal, viz. the total disfranchisement of the Native. What promise of permanence does this plan give? What hope for the future does it hold out? These people are numerous and increasing both in wealth and numbers. Education they will get, if not through us then by some much more objectionable means. They are the workers and history tells us that the future is to the workers. And above all we have the saddest of all spectacles the 'poor white,' that appalling problem which must cause the deepest anxiety to anyone who loves South Africa, or who wishes to see it flourish; people who in many cases sink below the level of the clean-living Native. Does such a state of affairs offer any prospect of permanence? Is it not rather building on a volcano the suppressed force of which must some day burst forth in a destroying flood, as history warns us it has always done?
>
> Our policy you may say is unpleasant, it is derogatory to the pride of the European--but so is the poor white. But it is a safety-valve and though it makes some noise and a nasty smell, it is a reasonable guarantee against an explosion. . . .[145]

Evidently, Smuts was not cowed by this prophecy of impending social catastrophe. He wrote back saying that while he sympathized with Merriman's position on the Native Question, he refused to see the utility of extending political rights to Africans--rights, which in any case, he

[145]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 4 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 238-241. As early as 1904 Merriman asked Smuts to consider a much higher franchise as a way to surmount the "Native difficulty." Smuts ignored this earlier suggestion as well. See JXM to Smuts, 4 June 1904, *Smuts Papers*, II: 171-173.

believed, would only have an "unsettling influence" on them. "When I consider the political future of the Natives in South Africa," wrote Smuts,

> I must say I look into the shadows and darkness and then I feel inclined to shift the intolerable burden of solving the sphinx problem to the ampler shoulders and stronger brains of the future. Sufficient unto the day etc. My feeling is that strong forces are at work which will transform the Africander attitude to the Natives. As against the somewhat crude missionary policy Africander views were bound to be somewhat anti-Native; but the mine-owner and exploiter has taken the place of the missionary and as against him we are rapidly all becoming negrophilists.

This said, he could not agree to a limitation of the franchise as far as whites were concerned. "On manhood suffrage I frankly disagree with your old-world Toryism. The poor white is corruptible, but my experience is that the rich white is even more so. And the way to raise up the poor white is not to ostracize him politically. So let us agree to disagree."[146]

Notwithstanding their differences, Merriman was encouraged by Smuts's response but thought that the younger man had misread his views on the question of a nonracial franchise. He hastened to clarify his position in his next letter:

> God forbid I should advocate a general political enfranchisement of the Native barbarian. All I think is required for *our* safety is that we shall not deny him the franchise on account of colour. We can then snap our fingers at Exeter Hall and Downing Street and experience teaches me that there is no surer bulwark for all the legitimate rights of any class or colour than representation in Parliament. The only alternative is physical force and the volcano. . . .
>
> What I write to you on this subject is mainly academic . . . but I should not be the candid friend if I did not point out how infinitely to your advantage as a party it would be if you could in some way recognize that there were four millions of South Africans with black skins for whom we who live here are in some measure trustees. . . . Do not flatter yourself that you can push this question off. The very existence of our race

[146]Smuts to JXM, 13 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 242-243.

> in this country depends on our Native policy; if for no other reason than that the natural tendency of one such section of our population is to sink and the natural tendency of one section of theirs, which we cannot prevent, is to rise.[147]

Smuts refused to budge. Merriman's vision of the future was not his. Neither the poor white problem nor the nonracial franchise troubled him as they did the Cape liberal. Democracy for white men was the Transvaal politician's panacea; as for social control, he would assure white supremacy by other means.

Merriman also consulted M. T. Steyn, the former president of the Orange Free State, on the question of native political rights in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Steyn responded that in principle he had no objections to the establishment of a nonracial franchise in either colony, but declared that he would

> object most strongly to any provision of that kind being put in the Bill for Responsible Government, because if the Natives have to get the franchise they must get it from our Parliament, so that the Natives be not brought under the delusion that only the Englishman is their friend. . . . Moreover, I cannot consent that any of the Articles of the Treaty of Vereeniging be altered or annulled without the permission of the people.[148]

Before Merriman had a chance to reply to Steyn's letter news reached

[147]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 18 March 1906, *Smuts Papers*, II: 244-246.

[148]M. T. Steyn to JXM, 7 March 1906, *SCM* 4: 18-19. The constitutional issue raised by Steyn involved Article Nine of the Treaty of Vereeniging which postponed consideration of a nonracial franchise until after the extension of responsible government. Merriman acknowledged Steyn's objection but reminded him: "At the same time, one cannot conceal the fear that the absence of any provision for any Native franchise may be made the pretext for an interference [by Britain] hereafter, that will be all the more mischievous because it seems to those who have the power to be plausible." JXM to M. T. Steyn, 10 March 1906, *SCM* 4: 20-21.

him that a major native revolt had broken out in Natal.[149] For Merriman, the rebellion (and its suppression) provided yet another reason to push for a liberal resolution of the franchise question. His response on March 10 was tempered by such considerations:

> I suppose that there is no subject on which at present there is greater unanimity than upon the determination to exclude Coloured people from any chance of the franchise. Few reflect on what the logical outcome must be. Yet at our very doors we have an example in the present flurry and excitement in Natal--which is no merely transient ebullition, but the outward and visible sign of that constant state of suppressed panic that must always be the lot of a small white community in the midst of a vast mass of barbarians, who are designedly kept in barbarism. It is easier to say all this than to dogmatize on any remedy. What you say about the treatment of Natives being made the ground for the promotion of race prejudice [i.e. Dutch-English antagonisms] is quite just--and the people who now profess to be most shocked at the 'playing up to the Native' in political matters are just those who, down to the last election in this Colony, used in every way to try to inflame the Native mind against the 'Dutch' and the 'Bond.' Personally I think that the safest course . . . is a high franchise with a real educational test and a free right to all, irrespective of colour, to such [a] franchise *if they can get it.* In this way we shall create a small but influential class of Natives who as voters will feel their allegiance to the State, and not to the tribe or class. *Divide et impera* is the best we can hope to do."[150]

Merriman's appeals to Smuts and Steyn were reiterated in a letter to Goldwin Smith the following year as the movement in favor of closer union gained momentum. Of the many obstacles to union, wrote Merriman, the "Native Question" was probably the worst. "Here in the Cape," he reminded Smith, "we make no distinction of colour." As a result, "Our Natives have increased both in wealth and habits of industry and civilization. They give

[149]This was the Bambatha rebellion, which broke out in March and continued until June 1906. Merriman condemned the Natalian response for its excessive cruelty.

[150]JXM to M. T. Steyn, 10 March 1906, *SCM* 4: 20-21.

little or no trouble, though of course they require careful, and above all, just management. So--though having like most white men a great distaste of colour--I must confess that viewed merely as a safety valve I regard the franchise as having answered its purpose."[151]

Merriman then contrasted the success of native administration in the Cape with the experiences of the other three colonies where in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony the natives were refused civil rights, while in Natal the natives were purposely kept "in a state of barbarism." Given this, he did not expect that any of the three could be made to see the wisdom of the Cape's liberal policy. "In any negotiations for Union, he wrote, "they will attempt to get us to abandon our franchise--for in granting the new [Transvaal] Constitution, under a mistaken view of liberalism they have adopted [a] manhood franchise, which in the case of Natives would be unthinkable." Once again he argued for a high franchise in place of a color bar. "It would shut out all but the Native who was fit to exercise the rights of citizenship," he reasoned, "while not denying to any man the privileges of citizenship on the ground of the accident of colour--in fact the old-fashioned liberalism of the days of R. Lowe and yourself." But "I fear this is impracticable," he wrote, "first[ly], because of the tendency of the democratic age which reacts on our little community; secondly because of existing franchises here, and the colour prejudice."[152]

Two alternatives presented themselves he wrote. One was to adopt a differential franchise that would allow the Cape to keep its nonracial

[151]JXM to G. Smith, 26 Oct. 1907, *SCM* 4: 52-53.

[152]JXM to G. Smith, 26 Oct. 1907, *SCM* 4: 53. Robert Lowe, later Viscount Sherbrooke, leader of the "Adullamites" against the Whig Reform Bill; later chancellor of the exchequer (1868-73) and home secretary (1873-74) in Gladstone's first ministry.

franchise in any union scheme while respecting the franchise traditions of each of the other three colonies. The other was to have separate representation for nonwhites as was done in New Zealand. As he had done before the SANAC he rejected the latter option: the Maoris were both a minority and an "idle class"; while in the Cape quite the opposite prevailed as the natives constituted both the majority and the working class, a class "growing in riches as [a] result of their industry."[153] But Merriman was intrigued by the possibilities of a differential franchise--though he professed ignorance as to its workings. "Is it possible? Are there any precedents in England or elsewhere?" he asked Smith.[154]

Merriman hoped for Smith's advice, but the latter, seriously ill at the time, did not respond. Nonetheless, the Cape liberal began to regard a

[153]"They are rising," he told Smith, "while a large class of Europeans are sinking and cause a fearful anxiety for the future. Fortunately, perhaps, the situation is not complicated by miscegenation, but it is grave enough, even more from its political than its social side." The possibility of miscegenation did worry Merriman, however. It was one of the reasons why he later thought it "a highly dangerous experiment" to send a native contingent to Europe during the First World War. In fact, he thought any African contact with Europe dangerous: "Anything that tends to lessen or break down the almost superstitious regard that the Native races have--perhaps I should say, had--for the Europeans makes for evil. I can imagine nothing more likely to do this than the curiosity and familiarity of white women. I think the porter of Henry VIII has some very apposite remarks on the effect of the gifted Indian coming to Court. We have had infinite harm done in this country by Native visits to London--never any good I can remember." JXM to Lord Buxton (Draft), 5 Dec. 1916, *SCM* 4: 285-287. That part of the porter's lines to which Merriman refers are as follows:

> Is this Moorefields to
> muster in? Or have we some strange Indian
> with the great tool come to court, the women
> so besiege us? Bless me, what a fry of fornication is at the door.
>
> *Henry VIII.* V. iii. 33-37.

[154]JXM to G. Smith, 26 Oct. 1907, *SCM* 4: 53.

differential franchise as an attractive possibility. He was confident that the ways of the Cape would win in the long run against the kind of retrograde thinking that prevailed in the other three colonies. Despite the skepticism that marks his letter to Goldwin Smith, he continued to believe that Afrikaners like Steyn, Smuts and Botha would eventually "be brought to see that there are four million South Africans in South Africa whom we ought to look not to as a servile race but as possible friends and allies against the moneyed power."[155] Indeed, Merriman appears to have convinced himself that these "professional men and progressive farmers" of the high veld shared his moderate views. It was rather from the newly arrived white workingman that blacks had most to fear; men "who regard the Native, not unjustly, as their most dangerous rivals, and having been regarded, however unjustly, as 'the lower classes' in Europe are delighted on arrival here to find themselves in a position of an aristocracy of colour."[156]

Merriman succeeded to the Cape premiership on February 3, 1908. He immediately involved himself in the financial affairs of the Cape and with the question of closer union.[157] As regards the latter issue, one is struck by Merriman's departure from reality; his misguided faith in the "educative effect" of the Cape franchise and in the progressiveness of men like Smuts and Botha. It seems inexplicable that a man of such intelligence and vision, who had recognized as far back as 1886 that the economic and political center of gravity had swung irretrievably away from the Cape

[155]JXM to Mrs. J. Merriman, 18 March 1906, *SCM* 4: 19.

[156]JXM to J. C. Smuts, 19 July 1908, *Smuts Papers*, II: 446-448.

[157]For an overview of Merriman's legislative and financial initiatives during his twenty-seven months in power see "Merriman as Last Cape Prime Minister," pp. 69-87.

towards the Transvaal, could continue to believe that the liberal ideology of the Cape would, in the long run, triumph over Afrikaner nationalism and the demands of the labor market.[158] But he desperately wanted a permanent reconciliation between Boer and Briton and, in the interests of union, he was willing to overlook the obvious. Indeed, he was full of the spirit of compromise. A full three months before the opening of the Constitutional Convention at Durban on October 12, 1908 he told Smuts outright: "I have always looked to effecting a compromise on the basis of a separate franchise for the provinces with material safeguards in the Constitution as regards alteration."[159]

It would be an exaggeration to say that Merriman was happy with such a formula. Nevertheless, that he was willing to accede to what was politically expedient indicates the strength of his desire for South African union; a desire derived partly from his anti-imperialism and colonial patriotism, but also, as we have seen, from his fear that continued Anglo-

[158]The gold discoveries on the Rand made a tremendous impression on Merriman. His trip to the Barberton and Johannesburg mining camps in January-February 1887 convinced him that the future now lay with the Transvaal. To J. G. Fraser he wrote: "Unless some gross mismanagement takes place the Transvaal is bound to become a populous, highly prosperous republic in which the Dutch South African and British South African races will fuse into some new compound. . . . Such a republic will be the leading state in South Africa. It will set the policy for the rest. . . . The idea of a British Empire in South Africa is at an end, and that of the United States of South Africa, under the friendly protection and possibly in some undefined connection with Great Britain, takes its place." Merriman's recognition of the economic eclipse of the Cape convinced him of the need for some kind of South African *zollverein* and prompted the following plea to a prominent Eastern Province businessman: "Call your Chamber of Commerce together, let them petition for the assembling of Parliament to consider the customs question, and send out the Fiery Cross through the Eastern Province. *We must have a Customs Union.* A year hence the Transvaal won't look at it, and if we wait with our Parliament till after their *Volksraad* we are done." JXM to J. G. Fraser, 25 Feb. 1887; JXM to H. B. Christian, 21 Feb. 1887; see also JXM to J. B. Currey, 24 Feb. 1887, *SCM* 1: 243-245.

[159]JXM to Smuts, 19 July 1908, *Smuts Papers*, II: 446-448.

Dutch disunity would undermine the white position in South Africa. Thus, when the Convention began its deliberations on the franchise on October 20 he made no effort in defense of a uniform colorblind principle but urged instead that the existing franchise laws of the colonies remain in force and be made incapable of alteration except by the consent of at least three-quarters of the members of both Houses of Parliament sitting jointly. And he had his way. Despite opposition from those northern and Natalian delegates who sought an absolute color bar and from those in his own delegation who desired a union-wide nonracial franchise, Merriman's formula was the one eventually adopted by the Convention, though Botha was able to reduce the entrenchment provision from a three-quarters majority to a two-thirds majority of both Houses.[160] Such a compromise rendered moot the question of African political participation across the new Union. Only in the Cape would Africans, Coloreds and Asians be allowed to vote and even then, by an amendment moved by the Natalian delegation, nonwhites were to be excluded from membership in the Union Parliament. And the number of eligible voters was depressingly small. In 1907 the number of African voters in the Cape amounted to 8,418, some 33% of the nonwhite electorate and a bare 6% of the total electorate.[161] And there was little prospect that this number would grow.

[160]Merriman's rather passive stance on the franchise question contrasts sharply with the position initially taken by many in the Cape delegation. W. E. Stanford, F. S. Malan, T. W. Smartt, J. W. Jagger and E. H. Walton all spoke in favor of a uniform union-wide nonracial franchise. See L. M. Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa, 1902-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 212-226.

[161]There were also 11,806 Colored voters in 1907, roughly 52% of the total non-European electorate as well as 831 Malays, 879 Hottentots, 819 Indians and 31 Chinese who possessed the vote. Prior to the Franchise and Ballot Act of 1892 the total non-European electorate numbered 21,960, representing some 24% of the total electorate. *The Cape Parliament 1854-1910*, pp. 80-81.

Merriman's real energies, however, were devoted to ensuring that a unitary rather than a federal constitution was adopted by the Convention.[162] Federalism, he contended, fostered provincial jealousies, was costly, and resulted in "over-government." Moreover, the Natalian response to the Bambatha rebellion had demonstrated that the responsibility for native affairs should rest with a strong central government. As Merriman told Bryce in the week prior to the start of the Convention:

> To us a mere Federation would be a source of trouble. . . . Arrange it how you may in a Federation, the States will have the power to pass laws that may irritate the Natives, and in the event of trouble arising out of ill-judged legislation the Central Government would have to send force to repress it, while they might well believe that the rights of the quarrel were not with the Europeans. . . .
>
> I am not ignorant of the fact that under a Legislative Union the Native policy will also present the gravest difficulties, but as long as we maintain our franchise for the Cape Colony I do not think that these need prove insuperable, any more than those which beset the union of England and Scotland, and we might hope that our influence in one large Parliament would induce the other States to modify their illiberal arrangements. But the difficulty remains and it will need most careful handling.[163]

As the work of the Convention drew to a close, Merriman moved to quell any opposition to the Draft Act. When W. P. Schreiner, the former Cape Prime Minister, condemned the franchise compromise and decided to lead a deputation to England in an effort to get the Draft Act amended, Merriman sent Cape Chief Justice Henry de Villiers to London to counter Schreiner's moves.[164] He then fired off a terse letter to Sir Walter Hely-

[162] *The Unification of South Africa*, pp. 186-192. Merriman's anti-federalism is traced by Ged Martin in "The Canadian Analogy in South African Union, 1870-1910," *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 8 (November 1976), pp. 40-59.

[163] JXM to J. Bryce, 6 Oct. 1908, *SCM* 4: 92.

[164] *The Unification of South Africa*, p. 402.

Hutchinson, the Cape Governor, defending the compromise and condemning Schreiner's attempt to scuttle the "Convention spirit." If the Schreiner deputation was allowed to succeed, Merriman wrote,

> it will most undoubtedly set on foot a campaign in this country for a reconsideration of our Native policy and for the abolition of those rights, the logical enforcement of which will have lead to the failure of an object upon which the whole European race have set their hearts. As your Excellency is aware, these political rights are strongly supported by a minority only, and are rather acquiesced in than warmly approved of by the majority, who hitherto have allowed themselves to be convinced by leaders that on the whole the grant of political privileges to Natives and Coloured is a safety valve. Habit has even made those who are not of the Cape Colony in these respects, and Mr. Schreiner's own conversion is the best testimony of its educational force. I have no hesitation in saying that the success of the deputation would change this feeling which is I hope a growing one, at a stroke, and would put the vast bulk of the European population of this Colony on the same plane of intolerance that obtains in the relations of White and Coloured in the greater part of His Majesty's Dominions.[165]

Merriman's remarks were a frank admission of the shallowness of Cape liberalism. Professor Lewsen has argued that "all of Merriman's deeper intuitions were the same as Schreiner's," but there is nothing in his letters to support such a claim.[166] Indeed the Asquith Government accepted what Merriman recommended to them. After seeing the Cape liberal's letter to Hely-Hutchinson, Lord Crewe, the colonial secretary, commented: "Mr. Merriman's *apologia* is able and conclusive." Colonel J. E. B. Seely, parliamentary under-secretary for the colonies thought it "extraordinarily well put, and coming from him, the foremost negrophile amongst Cape

[165]JXM to Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson, [?] June 1909, *SCM* 4: 134-137. Schreiner's petition to the House of Commons, co-signed by A. Abduraham, J. T. Jabavu *et al*, is reproduced in full in S. Johns, *Protest and Hope, 1882-1934*, Vol. I of *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, ed. T. Karis and G. M. Carter (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), pp. 55-56.

[166]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 326.

statesmen, is well nigh unanswerable." The Liberal government, which was in no mood to wreck Union in defense of the nonracial principle, turned a deaf ear to Shreiner's protests.[167]

The Draft Act, after some minor adjustments, was ratified by the four colonies and enacted by the British Parliament in the fall of 1909. On May 31, 1910 the Union of South Africa was officially proclaimed. In the interim Louis Botha was chosen over Merriman to head the first Union government.[168] Nevertheless, Merriman's 27 months as the Cape's last prime minister was not without its share of personal achievements: a small surplus, a Bank Act, and the entrenchment of the Cape franchise in the Draft Act. But as he prepared to leave office in May Merriman's enthusiasm for union waned. He confided to Sir Somerset French, "As you know, there are only two points of policy that really matter in South Africa. All else are merely ephemeral, that time will cure. One is the dominance of the money power, which may introduce into our public life the graft and boodle that have so fatally corrupted Canada; and the other is the future policy with regard to the Native races. Upon both of these one cannot help feeling anxious whether Cape of Transvaal methods are to be followed."[169]

[167]R. Hyam, "African Interests and the South Africa, 1908-1910," *The Historical Journal*, XIII, I (1970), p. 90.

[168]Regarding the choice of Botha over Merriman as the Union's first premier, it is of some interest to note that, as early as 1907, Merriman was himself saying that he half-expected to "play the part of Moses rather than Joshua" in any Union government headed by an SAP member. See JXM to M. T. Steyn, 14 June 1907, *SCM* 4: 43. For a full treatment of the Botha-Merriman contest see N. G. Garson, *Louis Botha or John X. Merriman: The Choice of South Africa's First Prime Minister* (London: University of London Institute for Commonwealth Studies, 1969).

[169]JXM to Sir S. Somerset, 18 May 1910, *SCM* 4: 183.

POSTSCRIPT: MERRIMAN AND LEWSEN

Thirty-two months after Union Merriman confessed to Steyn: "You, like myself, have the pain of seeing many illusions destroyed."[170] Transvaal methods were indeed on the ascendent. Hertzog was leading a drive for segregation and Merriman was now a voice crying in the wilderness. Were such developments entirely unexpected? Let us reflect on Merriman's own experience.

Prior to the 1890s Merriman found the "Native Question" relatively uncomplicated. At its most mundane level it involved problems of frontier security and native management; at its most idealistic level it involved the gradual extension of European civilization so as to "elevate" the various subject races. Yet even as Merriman involved himself at these levels, structural changes in the South African economy occasioned by the acceleration of the mineral revolution were already altering the social, political and economic relations between the various European settler communities, but more especially between blacks and whites.

Merriman, unlike many of his contemporaries, recognized early on that the fundamental question in South Africa involved the future of black-white relations. His liberalism was bound to suffer as a result of the implications of such an insight. In 1891 after seeing the Cape census returns, he was sufficiently alarmed at the enormous increase in the black

[170]JXM to M. T. Steyn, 29 Dec. 1912, *SCM* 4: 228-229.

segment of the Cape population to privately support Bond attempts to raise the franchise qualifications. However, it was not until the end of 1892 that Merriman, when confronted for the first time with the phenomenon of the "poor white," felt compelled to alter his position on native advancement; a shift that was to guide his thinking straight through to the Durban Convention of 1908.

As we have seen, the existence of the poor white came as a shock to him. His faith in the future was deeply shaken and the tone of his private correspondence grew increasingly pessimistic, even alarmist. From a position of active encouragement, Merriman's interest in native advancement was transformed into one of sullen resignation for a social process deemed inevitable. Not surprisingly, neither the Jameson Raid nor the South African War was to alter his conviction that the real question before South Africa was black-white. His pro-Boer stance during and after the war, though largely a protest against imperialists and capitalists, was also spurred by his belief in the need for white unity--a theme much repeated in his post-war and pre-union correspondence. Indeed, his willingness to compromise on the franchise question as union drew near cannot be ascribed simply to political expediency; securing an Anglo-Dutch rapprochement--and the franchise was the major sticking point--was, in Merriman's view, crucial to the process of slowing and eventually reversing the "degradation of the white population." For he was convinced (and remained convinced) that a divided white population with only a tenuous hold on the land would quickly succumb to the inevitable advance of the "coloured races."[171]

[171]In 1913 Merriman chaired a parliamentary select committee charged with making specific recommendations regarding solutions to the poor white problem. The danger accorded to poor whiteism in the committee's report

Professor Lewsen has acknowledged, without going much further, that between 1891 and 1893 the Cape liberal's views "were very unsteady." But if my view is correct the period 1891-1893 is more a watershed in Merriman's attitudes towards race relations than an anomaly.[172] While the Cape politician was to remain publicly committed to liberal principles throughout his long and distinguished parliamentary career, his private correspondence after 1892 makes clear that he viewed the "rising of the Native" and the "sinking of the landholding class" as interrelated phenomena; movements that, taken together, threatened to undermine the white position in South Africa. Indeed, his racial fears were such that he soon came to believe that the rehabilitation of the poor white was one of the "things upon which our existence as a white race on this land depends."

Thus, Merriman's response to poor whiteism is clearly of relevance when assessing the strength of his more general commitment to "native" advancement in the seventeen years preceding the Union of 1910. Indeed, one need only survey his correspondence with Smuts and Steyn between 1904 and 1908 to be convinced of his deep concern for the maintenance of white supremacy in South Africa. Of course, one might legitimately ask if Merriman was writing for the benefit of his Transvaal and O.R.C. audiences (an assertion, it must be added, that Professor Lewsen does not make), but

has a familiar sounding ring to it: "The importance of the question in South Africa arises from the fact that the European minority occupying, as it does, in relation to the non-European majority, the position of a dominant race, cannot allow a considerable number of its members to sink into apathetic indigency, and to fall below the level of the non-European worker. If they do, and if they manifest an indifference founded on the comfortable doctrine of letting things find their economical level, sooner or later, notwithstanding all our material and intellectual advantages, our race is bound to perish in South Africa." Cited in *White Poverty and Government Policy in South Africa*, p. 50.

[172] *Merriman: Paradoxical Statesman*, p. 146.

the argument is checked by the Cape liberal's own belief in the progressiveness of his high veld allies. That he was in fact deluded is immaterial to the argument. Yet, the tenor, as well as the substance, of his racial fears are rarely captured in the pages of Professor Lewsen's biography.

In fact, Merriman's racial fears are largely ignored in her book. Little attention is paid to poor whiteism and no attempt is made to understand its relation to the problem of African political and economic advancement as the Cape liberal envisioned it. Merriman's crucial letter to J. B. Currey, written after his 1892 agricultural tour, in which he first links the problem of "the degradation of the white population" to the "location question--the rapid influx of the kafir [sic] who crowds out the white man" is reproduced only in part and minus its chief subject.[173] His letters to Innes on the political impact of poor whiteism are not included, his testimony before the Labor Commission is ignored, and his warning to Smuts in which he makes explicit the danger inherent in "the large, silent movement of the foundation of society" is also noticeably absent from the text.[174] Such evidence is crucial to a proper understanding of Merriman's conception of South African social relations in the period. It is not easy to understand how the editor of the Merriman Papers could have failed to grasp the importance of this line of Merriman's thought.

Why does the story I have traced not emerge in Professor Lewsen's 1982 study of Merriman? The answer, I believe, is that Lewsen errs on the side of reverence. Her professional life has been devoted to the rehabilitation of the great liberal statesman. She has brought him out of obscurity and reestablished his reputation. We are the richer for it.

[173]*Merriman: Paradoxical Statesmen*, pp. 156-157.

[174]See the epigraph which introduces this essay on page 1 above.

However, amidst the Merriman renaissance she has sometimes sought to downplay, explain away or discard that which she has no business doing.

I have resisted the temptation to draw up a moral balance sheet on Merriman. To do so would be to impose judgment; a cardinal sin for any retrospective enquirer. Rather, I have sought understanding. The forces that worked to alter John X. Merriman's view of African political and economic advancement were inextricably tied to the shifting social relationships that defined South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. That he nevertheless possessed the strength now and again to admit to the essential equality of man is an aspect of his character that continues to elude many in our own day.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EXTRACTS OF MERRIMAN'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CAPE LABOR COMMISSION, MARCH 7, 1893

Following complaints from farmers and others regarding the unsatisfactory state of the Cape labor supply, a labor commission was set up by the Legislative Assembly in August 1892 to investigate the conditions of the labor market in the towns and agricultural districts of the colony. Merriman appeared before the Commission and gave evidence on March 7, 1893. As a member of Rhodes's ministry (i.e., treasurer and head of the Agriculture Department) he was asked to give the Government's official position regarding the insufficiency of labor and whether European immigration should be encouraged as a partial remedy; as a wine farmer from Stellenbosch his private views were sought with respect to the availability of labor in the western district of the Cape. Merriman was not convinced that a genuine labor supply problem existed. Rather, the shortfall was due to the inefficient use of African and Colored labor; the refusal to extend individual tenure to the locations (which encouraged squatting and kept a sizable black population out of the labor market); the colonial prejudice against white immigration; the refusal of the rural poor to work; and the general decline in labor productivity due to drink. Address these problems, he told the Commission, and the labor supply would increase "enormously." Nevertheless, of the several causes outlined by Merriman the dangers arising from the appearance of the poor white attained special significance. "It is a question of the most vital importance connected with the future of this country," he informed the Commission. The testimony which follows (in which Merriman, at one point, advocates the substitution of white labor for black on the railways) is an early indication of the link between the Cape liberal's racial anxieties and his fear of poor whiteism.[175]

[*After a series of preliminary questions the Commission turned to the subject of the availability of labor in the agricultural districts.*]

Molteno: Are you aware in your official capacity, that there is a great deficiency in the labour market?

[175] *Labour Commission. Minutes of Evidence and Minutes of Proceedings, February-April, 1893* (Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1893), pp. 141-148. Merriman was questioned by J. C. Fraure (chairman) civil commissioner and resident magistrate for the District of Graaff Reinet; M. L. Neethling, member of the Legislative Council; and J. T. Molteno, I. J. van der Walt, and J. M. Orpen, members of the Legislative Assembly. I have excluded testimony of a repetitive nature.

Merriman: I see a great many complaints in the press about the deficiency of labour, but when I have spoken to farmers on the subject I have generally been told that they have themselves no particular difficulty about labourers: they generally say, 'I have got good servants.'

Molteno: The general tendency of the evidence given before us is to the effect that here--in Cape Town--there is no difficulty in obtaining labour on account of wages being high, but also that labour is being drawn away from the country to meet the great demand of the towns?

Merriman: That, of course, may be so; but, at the same time, I should not like to say that it was the case. As far as I can see there is no great deficiency of labour about Stellenbosch.

Molteno: You reside at Stellenbosch?

Merriman: I have been living there, and should say--by experience--that if you want any work done you had better get it done by contract.

Molteno: You do not engage your men to work by day?

Merriman: Some I do, but I an only in a small way. If any heavy work were required one could always get contractors to carry it out; they go about in gangs.

Neethling: If all the farmers were to do the same as you do, are you of [the] opinion that there would be sufficient labour obtainable from say [the mission station at] Pniel, for instance?

Merriman: Generally speaking, I think work required to be done offhand could be performed by contract.

Neethling: Do you think the labour obtainable in the Stellenbosch district is of a satisfactory nature?

Merriman: I cannot say, but I should think it was very unsatisfactory, and the reason is that pretty nearly every labourer gets drunk, women as well, on Saturday night, and a more disgraceful state of things in that neighborhood on Saturday night I have never seen.

. . . . .

Neethling: But has not drunkenness been going on there for the past 200 years?

Merriman: I cannot say, I have not lived 200 years. I suppose when people had slaves they did not allow them to get periodically

drunk. My experience is that not so many labourers of the Stellenbosch district come to town but that they drink out their wages on the Saturday and Sunday. Drunkenness is really the root of the unsatisfactory state of the labour market, and I was shocked when I went there to see not only the men drunk but the women too. A more disgraceful state of things I never saw in my life.

Neethling: As far as you know there is no difficulty in farmers obtaining labour?

Merriman: My experience is that agriculturalists will always complain. Almost everybody does complain. But, as a rule, I think that the labourers when sober are efficient. The one thing which militates against them is liquor and they are corrupted and spoilt by drink.

Neethling: Do you think it is a fact that the works at the docks, the building trade, and railway maintenance have taken away a great deal of labour from the agricultural districts?

Merriman: It has to a certain extent. I think it has prejudiced them, but at the same time you must consider that if these people had not an outlet there would often be great distress.

Neethling: If this Commission were to come to the conclusion that there was a considerable deficiency of labour in the agricultural districts, what would you suggest as a remedy, so that the farmers could get labour at a fair rate of pay?

Merriman: You cannot take the districts down here and apply the same remedy as to a Karroo district or to the districts of the Eastern Province.

Neethling: Take the case of the corn farmer or the wine farmer?

Merriman: Well, take the case of the corn farmer: he is a man who wants agricultural labour at one season of the year and he gets it, but he cannot support a large number of labourers at present, at any rate, he cannot keep them all along. He must have a class of labour which work in gangs and at a certain season of the year. When that work is finished the men are dismissed.

Neethling: We have had it in evidence that certain farmers could give steady employment to twice as many men as they have all the year round, but that there are not so many labourers now on account of their being employed on public works?

Merriman: They may be well qualified to give an opinion.

Neethling: They are all agreed in regard to the effect of drinking liquor, especially the roadside canteens.

Merriman: Yes, these labourers, when they do unfortunately get a taste for drink, are of no use to the farmers.

Neethling: They also think that the labourer's homes should be made more attractive.

Merriman: Take their homes about Stellenbosch, for instance, they are quite as good as many English farm labourers', or might be made so if they chose. I think the labourers here are extraordinarily well treated, and I do not believe there is a peasantry in any part of the world better treated than that about the wine districts. They get food, a cottage to live in, and as much garden ground as they can till free.

Neethling: You do not think there are any complaints then?

Merriman: Yes, I think there are a good many complaints, but if you wanted to localize those complaints, and took one man after another, they would all tell you that personally they had no difficulty in getting servants. I have never been able to localize the complaint to the man who says, 'I cannot get labour.'

. . . . .

Neethling: Don't you think that at the docks and on the railways where the men are paid 3s. 6d. a day that the labour market is being spoiled?

Merriman: But they do not get cottages to live in, or wine or garden ground. The hours of labour were shorter, but no man could continue working fourteen hours a day in such a climate as this.

Neethling: You, as the official head of the agricultural department, have not had any complaints in regard to the supply of labour?

Merriman: Not to me, but there are complaints, and there is a general feeling that the market is unsatisfactory.

Neethling: From what point of view?

Merriman: People say that they cannot get there work done so cheaply as they used to.

Neethling: You are not prepared to suggest any remedy because you do not consider there are any remedies?

Merriman: Yes, I do; but it is difficult to suggest any. Of course there is a strong prejudice against immigration.

Neethling: Do you think it would be possible to employ white agricultural labour?

Merriman: I think so.

Neethling: You do not think that they would at once become employers of labour themselves?

Merriman: No, on the contrary, there is a tendency on the part of a certain portion of the population to sink down.

Chairman: Do you refer to what are known as the 'poor whites'?

Merriman: Yes.

Molteno: And in regard to other white people?

Merriman: Well, there are millions of people who would look upon 2s. a day as affluence. How do you suppose Buenos Ayres [sic] get on? They have white labour.

Molteno: Have you ever thought it possible to get native or Kaffir labour from say Delagoa Bay and the Transkei to supply the Western Province?

Merriman: I doubt whether the Western Province will be satisfied with the Kaffir. He is a savage and is just about as inferior to these Cape boys [i.e., Cape Coloreds] as we are superior to Cape boys.

Molteno: Do you know that these Fingoes are being employed down here on public works?

Merriman: They are very well suited for that work. Two of them are, I should say, about as good as a Cape boy. If a contractor has his opportunity he would rather pay fifty per cent more for Cape boys than Fingoes if he can get them. But at the same time these Fingoes are suitable for working in gangs.

Molteno: Have you had any experience of the Delagoa Bay boy?

Merriman: No.

Molteno: Or of the Gaika war prisoners?

Merriman: No, I have had no experience.

Molteno: Have you any remedies to suggest to the Commission?

Merriman: If I were autocratic I should employ a large number of the cheapest white labour which could be obtained, and if you imported enough they would be bound to work. They cannot get away, but in this country there is a great prejudice against importing white labour, but only blacks, of which, I think, we have too many. I am certain that this country will never get on until we have more white people.

Molteno: Then, as in this country the supply of labour is rather restricted, would you be in favour of Polish Jews coming into the country?

Merriman: No; but how are you going to prevent them?

Molteno: Do you know that in America and New Zealand they are prevented?

Merriman: Perhaps that is a good thing.

Molteno: Do you know, in your official capacity, that they are coming into the country?

Merriman: I do not know that in my official capacity, but I do know it, and as a citizen regret it.

Molteno: You do not agree with it?

Merriman: No.

Molteno: It will not help the labour market?

Merriman: No.

Molteno: You are not in favour of bringing down more blacks from up country?

Merriman: I do not think you can help that as we have them here.

Molteno: Do you know as a matter of fact, that sixty men have just come down from Worcester to work on the Table Mountain Water Works?

Merriman: I know it is a great misfortune when we have white people starving all over the country.

Molteno: Do you think it would be possible to substitute the poor white men on the railways for the others?

Merriman: Yes, I would try and get white men--those in the country--if not import them. I should like to see not a black man employed on our railways in any capacity.

Neethling: But you have black men now?

Merriman: Yes, they are cheaper.

Neethling: How would you get over that difficulty?

Merriman: It is a matter of sentiment. If people were in favour of white people being employed then black labour would not be used to the extent [that] it is.

Neethling: It would cost more?

Merriman: To a certain extent it might.

Neethling: What is your opinion of coolie immigration?

Merriman: I consider it a curse to South Africa.

Neethling: You would import coolie labour to assist the farmer?

Merriman: No, I should oppose it. The Indian coolie is very pleasant, very industrious and so on, but he debases the population of the country.

Neethling: You would not think much of the Indian, the Chinaman or the Polish Jew?

Merriman: I would not have one of them although I should be going too far to say that of every one of them. Some of the most enterprising people I have known are Polish Jews and we cannot condemn them all. They believe in God and I should not like to class them all in one sweeping category, but still I think we have had enough.

Neethling: We had it from Mr. Maclean, that the amount placed on the [immigration] estimates is not sufficient?

Merriman: I do not think any difficulty has been found in regard to immigration, excepting that people are prejudiced against it, not only in this Colony but elsewhere. There is a desire to keep the Colony for the people in it.

Neethling: Is there a prejudice against juvenile immigration?

Merriman: I think so. If you imported a large number of people there would be opposition to it. This Colony has had juvenile immigration in past years, Germans, Hollanders, and English, and I think on the whole it has been favourable.

Neethling: You are aware that the Kaffir will not go to work with the farmers?

Merriman: I know.

Neethling: That being so, he is useless to the farmer, but I think we have in Cape Town and [its] neighborhood employed on Public Works about 2,000 people--Cape boys--who have been taken away from the agricultural employer by the attraction of higher wages; don't you think that if the Government established a bureau through which large bodies of native labour could be obtained to work on big public undertakings, that these Kaffirs could supply the Cape Town demand and so leave our Cape boys to the farmer and be not likely to be enticed away?

Merriman: I should certainly like to see the natives employed. I think it would be a good thing for them.

Neethling: You do not see any objection to that?

Merriman: I think it would be a very good thing indeed.

Chairman: From the Chief Veldtman's son [a Fingo headman] we heard that it is no use expecting any of those people to undertake work for the farmers?

Merriman: They will be obliged to do so by and bye. As long as you allow Kaffirs to squat about location and have no individual tenure they will crowd up in masses.

Chairman: He was asked whether he had room enough for his people and he stated that he had?

Merriman: Well, that may last for a generation say, and when the land gets crowded up people will be obliged to go to work.

Molteno: Is there a tendency to take up small holdings now, within thirty miles of Cape Town?

Merriman: I think there will be a tendency that way, and within a radius of a hundred miles. You will find there are many instances of white people taking labourers' pay and working as labourers. I know one farmer who has it in contemplation to work his farm entirely with white labour, and the question is whether you cannot work them as well as with black people.

Molteno: As to the Locations Act, do you think that it has had a good effect on the people?

Merriman: It has hardly had time to be tested. It will have the effect of driving black people out of the country which ought to be a white man's country.

Chairman: Do you think we should be able to utilise the 'poor whites' about the Knysna, for instance, on railway works and so on?

Merriman: They will have to be utilised somehow or other unless a better state of things is brought about.

Chairman: It appears that there is a great unwillingness on these people's part to talk about their affairs?

Merriman: As long as you have people who talk about work being a degradation you will have this growing evil. Some of them work as herds at 10s. a month but into service they will not go. On many farms it is almost impossible to get domestic servants and yet these girls are being brought up in a state which is difficult to describe. The whole question is a mere matter of sentiment, and unless the Dutch Reformed Church preaches to these people that they should work, and teaches them to understand that domestic service is no disgrace things will go from bad to worse.

Molteno: It was said that the old people were very unwilling to go away from that part of the country, but that the minds of the younger people could be influenced and they could be taught, by compulsory education, to see that they must go into service?

Merriman: Of course I think it would be a good thing to get them to work. The corn farmers might put more land under cultivation, and there are plenty of opportunities on our railways. I believe that twenty-three of these people were supplied with places on the line but only five remained. As I have just said, it is a matter of sentiment, and if that sentiment were in favour of compelling them to earn their own living, you would not hear so much about the lack of labour, for these people would supply a great deal. It is a question of the most vital importance connected with the future of this country. Here are people saying they are in want of labour and yet there are hundreds of people almost starving because they will not work.

Chairman: Do you refer to those people living about the Knysna forest?

Merriman: Yes, about the forests and in Jansenville and Humansdorp districts. Almost in every district you come across these people.

Molteno: Do you think that a great deal of this evil is brought about by the system of sub-dividing land?

Merriman: It arises no doubt from our unfortunate condition as a mixed community, white people think it bad to work beside a black man.

Neethling: But they need not work side by side with the Kaffir?

Merriman: No, there are plenty of other things for them to do. [It is] why we are obliged to get our policemen from England.

Van der Walt: Do you think any method can be adopted for making them work?

Merriman: You . . . know what a feeling there is in this country against compulsion. You have seen reports of a discussion which took place in Queenstown, where people said 'they are free and cannot be compelled to be degraded,' and they pride themselves on that state of the case. What you have to do is to strive against that sentiment, and sentiment is a matter which cannot be dealt with by law and it is only to be done by the influence and teaching of the Dutch Reformed Church and the better class of this community who can make these people understand that it is a disgrace for them to be idle, and compel them to work. The Government can assist and tried already to help, but immediately they try it raises this false pride, and every year it gets worse. It is one of the great questions of the day for us.

Van der Walt: If a man cannot produce a proof of his being able to support himself, should he not be compelled to work?

Merriman: Of course there is a vagrancy law, but it cannot be put into force on account of sentiment. There are hundreds of people in the country who have perhaps three or four scabby goats, and live amongst the prickly pear, and have no visible means of subsistence, but if you put the law in force against them, you would have an outcry raised from end to end of the country that you are tyrannizing against the people, and unless you can first effect a change in sentiment I refer to, you cannot do anything.

Chairman: Would there be any possibility of getting Fingoes to do the work upon which Cape boys are now employed on our [rail] lines?

Merriman: There are no construction works now going on. Those have been done by the natives. What Cape boys are now employed upon is maintenance work, and it would be difficult to get Fingoes to do that kind of labour, unless they were trained. They do employ them on the eastern line I believe, but down here I think it would be difficult to get them. But I think you might employ white labour.

Molteno: Some few witnesses have advocated the abolition of mission stations. I want to ask you whether you think, if that were done, that the farmer would find his reservoir of labour cut off?

Merriman: What would our farmers do if such places as Genadendal and Pniel were taken away? Those are simply reservoirs of labour, and when the corn farmer cannot employ them they go and live there.

Chairman: You think they are more of a boon to the district than anything else?

Merriman: They are an absolute necessity.

. . . . .

Molteno: You think, on the whole, that there is really enough labour about?

Merriman: If you could use it there is more than enough, but when you have hundreds of white men squatting in idleness, and a lot of black fellows drinking and loafing about and natives squatting in locations, of course you have a scarcity of labour.

Molteno: Have you any suggestions to make as to how to induce them to work?

Merriman: Break up your locations, that is one thing; try and make your poor white people work, that is another thing; stop drinking and the facilities for getting drink, and you will increase the labour enormously.

. . . . .

Molteno: You do not think much can be done by Act of Parliament in these matters?

Merriman: There was a certain Act of Parliament called the Statute of Labourers, which I recommend to the attention of the Commission.

Orpen: From what country in Europe do you think a continual and good supply of labour could be obtained?

Merriman: From the North of Italy for one, Germany for another.

Orpen: Those from the North of Italy would be accustomed to work vines?

Merriman: Yes, I think so. They get about five pence a day in their own country.

Orpen: And in Germany also?

Merriman: Yes, in some parts; and I should think Norwegians and Swedes would be a godsend to the country.

Orpen: Are they overcrowded?

Merriman: In some parts, I believe, between thirty and forty thousand go to America every year.

Orpen: There is some prejudice, I believe, against Italians?

Merriman: What is that?

Orpen: They are addicted at times to stabbing.

Merriman: My experience leads me to believe that you would get a very steady, industrious class of people from the North of Italy. People here have drawn their experience of the Italians from the working on the railways and they do take the knife occasionally.

Chairman: A good many witnesses have been advocating German immigration from Silesia as peculiarly fitted for the work here?

Merriman: The German is a man who works most for himself. As a servant he is not first class. As a citizen in a country he is a first rate man but as a servant you will be a little disappointed. He is not the sort of man to remain working for a master at three shillings a day.

Chairman: If they do stay, although it may be a matter of some years, they ultimately set up for themselves?

Merriman: Yes, from what I know of those about Wynberg they are rather employers of labour than anything else. Of course everybody who brings people to the country who produce anything, gives a boon to the nation, no matter what they are.

Molteno: Have you thought of the effect which the Colonial industries have had on the Colonial labour market?

Merriman: On the domestic labour market it may be a little rough, but I do not know that it exists to any greater extent.

APPENDIX B

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLECTION OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE COLONY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Michigan State University maintains a small but varied collection of Cape Colony official publications. These documents include, for the most part, select committee reports and departmental reports. Of particular interest is the substantially complete run of *Blue-Books* issued by the Ministerial Department for Native Affairs covering the years 1873-1903 and 1905-1909. Also of interest are the various annexures dealing with the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry in 1878, those annexures and select committee reports dealing with affairs in Basutoland, Pondoland, Tembuland and Damaraland and Great Namaqualand, as well as the two select committee reports on the Masters and Servants Act and the Labour Commission Report of 1893-1894. Scholars interested in surveying the full range of annexures and select committee reports published during the period of representative and responsible government at the Cape should consult Reuben and Naomi Musiker's *Guide to Cape of Good Hope Official Publications: 1854-1910* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1976).

Select Committee Reports

[A.4-'59] *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to take into Consideration the Subject of the Introduction of Kafirs into the Colony.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1859. 20 pp.

[C.3-'69] *Report of the Select Committee Appointed by the Legislative Council to Consider and Report Upon Motion of the Hon. Mr. Godlonton, Relative to the Native Question.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1869. xvi, 53 pp.

[A.5-'72] *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on Masters and Servants Act.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1872. 24 pp., viii.

[A.6-'79] *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on Hostilities in Basutoland.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1879. xiv, 94 pp., xci.

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[A.14-'81] *Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1881. viii, 132 pp.

[A.15-'82] *Report of the Select Committee on Settlement of Tembuland.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1882. xiii, 96 pp., viii.

[A.15-'83] *Report of the Select Committee on the Pass Laws of the Colony.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883. x, 61 pp., xi.

[A.31-'83] *Report of the Select Committee on Tembuland.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883. xi, 233 pp., iii.

[A.3-'89] *Report of the Select Committee on Master & Servants Acts.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards and Sons, 1889. xiii, 54 pp.

[A.29-'06] *Report of the Select Committee on Pondoland Land Grants.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. xvi, 118 pp., x, iv.

[A.1-'08] *Report of the Select Committee on Native Education.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1908. 632 pp., xxxvii.

[A.1-'09] *Report of the Select Committee on Agricultural College.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1909. xvii, 169 pp., xxxiii.

Annexures

Ministerial Department for Native Affairs

Note: *Blue-Books* published before 1904 were designated as of the year of publication. Those published from 1904 onwards were designated as of the year for which the particular volume's contents pertain.

[G.27-'74] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1874.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1874. 158 pp.

[G.21-'75] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1875.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1875. 133 pp.

[G.16-'76] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1876.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1876. 105 pp.

[G.12-'77] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1877.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1877. 180 pp.

[G.50-'77] *Report of W. Coates Palgrave, Esq., Special Commissioner to the Tribes North of the Orange River, of his Mission to Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in 1876.* 1877; rpt. Pretoria: The State Library, 1969. iv, 117 pp., xli.

[G.17-'78] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1878.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 218 pp.

[G.33-'79] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1879.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1879. 200 pp.

[G.13-'80] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1880.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1880. 195 pp.

[G.20-'81] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1881.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1881. 142 pp.

[G.33-'82] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1882.* Vol. 1, pt. 1. Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1882. 233 pp.

[G.90-'82] *Further Reports, Correspondence, and Statistical Returns, Concerning Native Inspectors in the Division of King William's Town.* [In Continuation of A.25-'82] Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1882. 66 pp. (missing pp. 19-26, 66).

[G.8-'83] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1883.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883. iii, 300 pp.

[G.8-'83] *Appendix to the Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1883.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883. iii, 143 pp.

[G.3-'84] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1884.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1884. xiii, 196 pp.

[G.2-'85] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1885.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1885. xiii, 210 pp.

[G.5-'86] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1886.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1886. vii, 124 pp.

[G.30-'86] *Minutes, Reports, and Correspondence Respecting the Affairs in Pondoland, and the Baca-Pondo Disturbances.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1886. 40 pp.

[G.12-'87] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1887.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1887. 104 pp.

[G.6-'88] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1888.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1888. 87 pp.

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[G.52-'88] *Resumé of Correspondence, Including Minutes and Memoranda, Respecting the Affairs of Pondoland, From the Date of the Conclusion of the Agreement of December, 1886, to the end of May, 1888. Part 1.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1888. 43 pp.

[G.3-'89] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1889.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1889. 59 pp.

[G.4-'90] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1890.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1890. 58 pp.

[G.4-'91] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1891.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1891. 59 pp.

[G.7-'92] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1892.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1892. 56 pp.

[G.4-'93] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1893.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1893. 123 pp.

[G.9-'94] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1894.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1894. 106 pp.

[G.8-'95] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1895.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1895. 135 pp.

[G.5-'96] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1896.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1896. 160 pp.

[G.19-'97] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1897.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1897. 164 pp.

[G.42-'98] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1898.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1898. 155 pp.

[G.31-'99] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1899.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1899. 136 pp.

[G.50-1900] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1900.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1900. 76 pp.

[G.52-1901] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1901.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1901. 83 pp.

[G.25-1902] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1902.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1902. 104 pp.

[G.29-1903] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1903.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1903. 107 pp.

[G.4-1904] *Reports of Delegates . . . Relating to Visit of Native Representatives . . . to Johannesburg to Enquire into the Conditions of Labour and the Treatment Accorded to Native Labourers Employed on the Rand Mines.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. 41 pp.

[G.12-1904] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1903.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. 214 pp.

[G.46-1906] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1905.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. 148 pp.

[G.36-1907] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1906.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1907. 89 pp.

[G.24-1908] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1907.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1908. 55 pp.

[G.19-1909] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1908.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1909. 80 pp.

[G.28-1910] *Blue-Book on Native Affairs, 1909.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1910. 99 pp.

Miscellaneous Annexures

[G.20-'66] *Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. 1865.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1866. xvi, 239 pp.

[A.2-'78] *Correspondence, Memoranda, and Minutes Connected with the Dismissal of the Late Ministry.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 34 pp.

[A.4-'78] *Further Correspondence, Memoranda, and Minutes Connected with the Late Change of Ministry.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 30 pp.

[A.16-'78] *Copy of Despatches Which Have Passed Between . . . the Secretary of State for the Colonies and . . . the Governor since January Last.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 41 pp.

[A.17-'78] *Copy of Further Despatches Which Have Passed Between the . . . Governor and . . . the Secretary of State for the Colonies, since January Last, Relative to Affairs on the Frontier.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 76 pp.

[C.5-'78] *First Installment of Papers Called for by the Legislative Council . . . in re Land Questions in East Griqualand.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1878. 17 pp.

[C.16-'79] *Papers Respecting the Rebellion in Basutoland.* King Williams Town, 1879. 6 pp.

[A.49-'80] *Proceedings & Report of the Commission, Appointed by the Late Government, to Examine into the Losses of Certain Traders in the Idutywa Reserve.* Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1880. 59 pp.

[A.71-'82] *Reports and Correspondence on the State of Affairs in Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in Connection with the Mission of Rev. Dr. C. H. Hahn.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1882. 101 pp.

[G.4-'83] *Report of the Commission on Native Laws and Customs.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883.

[G.5-'83] *Correspondence Between the Government and the Commandant-General of Colonial Forces . . . on the Subject of the . . . Affairs in Basutoland and Other Native Territories and the Re-organization of the Colonial Forces.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1883. 70 pp.

[G.1-'90] *Report of the Liquor Laws Commission, 1889-1890, with Minutes of Proceedings, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1890. 1077 pp.

[G.5-'92] *Agreements Between the Government . . . and the Netherlands South African Railway Company, Regarding the Completion and Working of the Line From Vaal River to Johannesburg and Pretoria.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1892. 39 pp.

[G.39-'93] *Labour Commission. Minutes of Evidence and Minutes of Proceedings, February-April, 1893.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1893. 528 pp.

[G.3-'94] *Labour Commission. Volume II. Minutes of Evidence and Minutes of Proceedings, September-December, 1893.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1894. 699 pp.

[G.3-'94] *Report of the Labour Commission, 1893-1894. Volume III. Minutes of Proceedings and Minutes of Evidence, for March-April, 1894, With Appendices.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1894. lxxvi, 328 pp.

[G.10-'95] *Report of the Civil Service Commission for 1894.* 7 pp.

(Bound behind *Blue-Book* [G.8-'95])

[G.43-'95] *Reports on Colonial Forces for the Year 1894.* 13 pp.

(Bound behind *Blue-Book* [G.8-'95])

[G.1-'96] *Report of the Controller and Auditor-General With Statements of the Revenues and Expenses . . . of the Colony . . . for the Financial Year 1894-95.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1896. cxiv, 339 pp.

[G.46-'96] *Statement of Loans Raised to the 31st December, 1895 on the Guarantee of the General Revenue of the Colony, Under the Several Loan Acts, and Other Returns Connected with the Public Debt of the Colony.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1896. 42 pp.

[G.59-1901] *Restrictions Under Martial Law on the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor to Natives.* Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1901. 11 pp.

[G.21-1902] *Report of a Commission Appointed to Enquire into and Report Upon Certain Matters Affecting Cape Peninsula Municipalities and the Cape Divisional Council; Together with Proceedings, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices.* Vol 1. Cape Town: W. A. Richards & Sons, 1903. xxxvii, 73 pp. (missing Vols. II and III).

[A.1-1904] *Return Giving the Names of all Persons who have Submitted Claims for Land Grants in Eastern and Western Pondoland, the Extent of the Land Claimed by Each Claimant, and the Extent Recommended by the . . . Commissions Appointed by the Government to Inquire.* March 1904? 7 pp.

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[G.91-1904] *Commission of Enquiry into the Public Service of the Colony, 1904-5.* Minutes of Evidence. Vol. I. Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. 426 pp.

[G.92-1904] *First Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. 35 pp.

[G.93-1904] *Second Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service of this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. 39 pp.

[G.95-1904] *Commission of Enquiry into the Public Service of the Colony, 1904-5.* Vol. II. Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. pp. 427-634.

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[G.98-1904] *Commission of Enquiry into the Public Service of the Colony, 1904-5.* Vol. III. Cape Town: Cape Times, 1904. pp. 635-919.

[G.13-1905] *Third Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service of this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. 32 pp.

[G.19-1905] *Results of a Census of the Colony . . . as on the Night of Sunday, the 17th April, 1904.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. ccxvii (General Report only).

[G.22-1905] *Report on Trade with Native Territories.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. 10 pp.

[G.36-1905] *Fourth Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. 46 pp.

[G.42-1905] *Commission of Enquiry into the Public Service of the Colony, 1904-5.* Vol. IV. Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. pp. 921-1423.

[G.43-1905] *Fifth Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1905. 19 pp.

[G.3-1906] *Seventh Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. 73 pp.

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[G.27-1906] *Ninth Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. 26 pp.

[G.45-1906] *Tenth Report of a Commission . . . to Enquire into and Report Upon the Public Service in this Colony.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. 54 pp.

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[G.60-1906] *Cape Government Railways. Statements and Returns in Connection with the Running of Test Trains. . . .* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906. 100 pp.

[G.31-1909] *Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Year 1908.* Cape Town: Cape Times, 1909. 158 pp.

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