SOUTH AFRICA IN MY TIME

PLATE 1. His Excellency the High Commissioner

SOUTH AFRICA IN MY TIME

The Rt Hon G. Heaton Nicholls, PC

Assisted by Penelope M. Slevin

With a Foreword by
the Rt Hon The Marquess of Salisbury, KG, PC

Ruskin House
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
MUSEUM STREET LONDON

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1961

This book is copyright under the Berne Convention. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act 1956, no portion may be reproduced without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publishers.

© George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1961

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
in 12 on 13 pt. Bembo type
BY SIMSON SHAND LTD
LONDON, HERTFORD AND HARLOW

For Joyce, Ioma and Derek

FOREWORD

The Marquess of Salisbury
KG, PC

This is a book to which anyone might feel very proud to have been asked to write a Foreword. It is one which I hope many people will read. It was my good fortune to be associated with Mr Heaton Nicholls at what must, I suppose, have been about the most important time in both our lives, when he was High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa and I was Secretary of State for the Dominions during one of the most crucial periods of the Second World War: and I came to have for him a deep affection and respect. During those anxious days, we were confronted with many untoward events; but I never, to my knowledge, saw him ruffled. He always faced whatever might come with an untroubled courage. And that is just the impression that one gets from the book, the impression of a man, modest—he is always modest—but equally a man who has always tried to do his duty without worrying too much about the consequences and without any concern at all for his own personal interests. He did not have an easy life. During his long career, misfortunes befell him which might well have broken the spirit of anyone of less fine quality: but they merely spurred him on to further efforts. Such men are as rare as they are valuable at any period of the world's history.

At the time when I first had to do with him, I had no knowledge of his earlier life. He was not one of those who talked freely about himself, and, for that part of his story, I have had to wait until I could read this book: but it has certainly been well worth waiting for.

From the very start, it is an enthralling story. The far off days of his childhood, in an England so much rougher than that which we know today and yet with a kindliness which we have perhaps to some extent lost: his early years in the Army: his experiences in Australia and the Pacific: all these are absorbing to us, who live in so different a world today. But it is of course that large slice of

his life which was spent in Africa that is both so valuable and so thought-provoking. For he was a shrewd and clear-sighted observer, and he spanned, in his long life, practically the whole period between the arrival in Central Africa of the White man—except for a few missionaries and doctors—and the present day. He knew the African of sixty years ago with his good and his bad qualities; and he could say, from personal observation, how far the African has benefited and how far he has been deteriorated by contact with the European. And, in later years, he played a full part in the politics of the Union, during the years between the two World Wars. He was not an uncontroversial character—he could never be that—but he was a man who was always respected, even by those who did not share his views, and it was no doubt for that reason that General Smuts, with whom he had had many tussles, chose him, in 1943, to represent his country as High Commissioner in London. From that post he returned, after the War, to South Africa, at an age when he might well have chosen well earned rest. But he was not one of those who retires easily from the fight, and for four years more he went on, as an elder statesman, battling for those things that he believed to be right. These things he has summed up in the epilogue of his book. It is a confession of faith to which all of us, whether we live in the Union or outside its boundaries, should do well to give heed without delay. For, as he says, in moving and, I believe, prophetic words, 'Africa is awakening from the sleep of ages and our sands are running out'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with thanks the assistance given to me by Miss Marie Leary who typed the manuscript of this book. I wish also to thank the Rev. J. B. Chutter, MA, who has given a considerable part of his very limited spare time to reading the manuscript of this book, not once, but several times, and who has suggested improvements. He has given me much needed encouragement. My thanks are also due to Maj.-Gen. Arthur Selby, CB, CBE, leader of the Union Federal Party in South Africa, for having read the chapters which deal with the War Veterans Torch Commando and the formation of the Union Federal Party.

Acknowledgements are made to the *Natal Mercury* and the *Argus* Group newspapers from which extracts of speeches and comments have been quoted; to Howard Timmins of Cape Town for permission to include extracts from Oswald Pirow's *James Barrie Munnik Hertzog*; to the Oxford University Press for a quotation from B. K. Long's *In Smuts' Camp*.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD *by the Marquess of Salisbury* 11

INTRODUCTION 19

PART ONE: *A Private Man (1876–1920)*
I Small Beginnings (1876–1891) 23
II A Soldier of the Queen (1891–1902) 32
III On the Road to the North (1902) 43
IV District Officer, Northern Rhodesia (1907) 53
V To the Antipodes (1908–1912) 68
VI Marriage in Papua (1912) 82
VII Zululand Settler (1912–1913) 92
VIII Sugar and Public Life (1913–1920) 97

PART TWO: *A Member of Parliament (1920–1940)*
IX The First Decade of Union (1910–1920) 115
X Member for Zululand (1920) 139
XI The Beginnings of Pan-Afrikanerdom (1924) 160
XII The Inside Story of the Flag Act (1926–1928) 171
XIII Bid for a Unitary State (1929–1932) 192
XIV Natal for a Federal System (1932) 205
XV A Disastrous Interview (1932) 228
XVI The Ottawa Economic Conference (1932) 237
XVII 'The Stumbling Gladiator' of Empangeni (1932) 247
XVIII The Misadventure of Tielman Roos (1933) 262
XIX Fusion Days (1934) 270
XX Native Affairs and Policy (1928–1936) 277
XXI South African Indians (1856–1959) 294
XXII Basutoland Interlude and a Fight over 'God Save the King' (1935) 325
XXIII War or Neutrality? (1939) 335
XXIV Smuts at the Helm Again (1941) 347

PART THREE: *A Servant of the State (1941–1948)*
XXV Administrator of Natal (1941–1943) 361

XXVI War-time High Commissioner in London (1943–1945) 368
XXVII In London after the War (1943–1945) 386
XXVIII Representing South Africa in UNO (1945–1946) 394
XXIX End of the High Commissionership (1946–1947) 406
XXX Ceylon celebrates her Independence (1948) 417

PART FOUR: *Last Battles (1948–1957)*
XXXI Death of 'the General' (1941) 429
XXXII We fight for Union under the Crown (1951) 443
XXXIII Twenty Years After: Federalism in Natal again (1952) 455
XXXIV Close of a Career (1953–1957) 472

EPILOGUE: *A Road to the Future?* 478

INDEX 482

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. His Excellency the High Commissioner — frontispiece
2. The District Commissioner on Tour, Rhodesia — facing page 90
At Lakekamu Goldfields
3. Mrs Heaton Nicholls — 91
The Wedding Group at Samarai
The Church at Samarai
4. Ioma, Derek and Joyce Nicholls — 192
5. Mrs Heaton Nicholls with General Smuts — 193
The Member for Zululand
6. Second Round Table Conference, Cape Town, 1932 — 304
A Group in London
7. The Imperial Conference, 1945 — 305
8. Joyce Nicholls (Mrs Stanley) and Christopher — 356
Derek Nicholls (as cadet at Cranwell)
9. Mr Nicholls from a Portrait by Mrs Stanley — 357
Bronze head of Mr Heaton Nicholls
10. House of the High Commissioner, Campden Hill — 386
At Buckingham Palace Garden Party
11. At Work in South Africa House — 387

B

INTRODUCTION

The idea of writing the story of his life had long been present in the mind of Mr Heaton Nicholls but it took concrete form only when he was already past the allotted span. As he himself wrote:

On relinquishing the office of High Commissioner for South Africa in London, I pledged myself to write the story of my life. This, I know, will prove a tremendous undertaking. It will require not only assiduity and leisure—a leisure hitherto denied to me—but some considerable egotism which, at seventy years of age, has lost something of its pristine quality. Most of what I write will be drawn from memory. A good deal of it can be supported by documentary evidence. In the nature of things it cannot be a full story, if only for the reason of space; but, I imagine no one necessarily sets down all the sins of omission and commission over a long life, and mine has had a fair share of them. As the story proceeds, there will doubtless be a temptation to put the best construction upon matters; but, I hope, not consciously. The reader will be able to fill in the darker shades for himself. Since my life has been more than ordinarily unusual, even amongst my generation, it may be worth telling, if only for my children. . . .

Perhaps, with only the past to think of, and just a bare sufficiency to live on, with my thoughts for company and the deep understanding of my wife, I may maintain health enough and quiet enough to set aside a few hours of each day for the telling of this story, which is intimately bound up with the political history of South Africa for a quarter of a century.

He began to write while on board the *Llandovery Castle* in 1948 on his return journey to South Africa. He hoped to continue writing in a small cottage on the south coast of Natal but it was not to be, and eleven years later and eleven years older, years spent in arduous political battle, he wrote after Mrs Nicholls's death:

This attempt at an autobiography failed. Instead of settling down on the south coast of Natal to pursue my latter day aims, I was immediately drawn back into another decade of political life in a

period of difficulty, and the writing of these memoirs became impossible. I have, therefore, relied on Mrs Penelope Slevin to prepare this book for the Press. Much of it had already been written by me: much is taken from my dairies and letters, but without her enthusiastic aid it would never have been completed.

As he had ruefully surmised, his autobiography which is capital for the modern history of South Africa had to suffer the cutting of an *ad hoc* editor to bring it into publishable compass. The curtailing of what is a compact yet evolving story has been done mainly in the earlier chapters which, despite their human interest, have not the same significance as the bulk of the book, which begins with his entry into Parliament as member for Zululand. This is done with his approval, believing as he did that today South Africa—indeed all Africa—is in crisis and hoping that his frank narration of the years whose events combined to produce crisis would help towards solution; it is the work of a man of great independence of thought and consequent great independence of action which, though it cost him a seat in the Cabinet, made him the most prominent defender of what is almost a lost cause, the British tradition in South Africa. His death is an immeasurable loss to that cause and to South Africa, where his noble but inconvenient characteristic of never-failing courage in putting principle before expedience gave him a unique standing.

Natal, 1960. P.M.S.

PART ONE

A PRIVATE MAN

(1876-1920)

CHAPTER I

SMALL BEGINNINGS

(1876–1891)

ENGLISH and Irish blood went to the making of George Heaton Nicholls for my father was the son of a Birmingham gunsmith with a good, if not very lucrative, business; he did not go into it but joined the 14th Hussars at an early age. He was well educated and widely read and soon earned promotion, ultimately rising to be sergeant-major. At the time of the Fenian troubles in the 'seventies the 14th Hussars were stationed in Dublin and were constantly in collision with rioters. Called out on one occasion to deal with a riot the young sergeant-major saw a girl knocked down by the mob and in danger of her life. He leaped from his horse, picked her up and saw her safely home.

She was Elizabeth Hoye, the daughter of an Irish doctor, a well-known Fenian, who promptly forbade her to see her rescuer again. But the rescuer was not to be denied. He and Elizabeth met secretly; their meetings were discovered and both their lives were threatened by her fanatical relatives. Their courtship was difficult and dangerous, but finally they eloped and were married in Dublin. There was no safety there against the wrath of her family; Sergeant-Major Nicholls feared to let her stay in Ireland and, accompanied only by her Irish nurse who stuck by her through thick and thin, she was sent to stay with his spinster sister in Birmingham.

I imagine my mother was not happy in the English environment. She was an ardent Roman Catholic while my father in his devotional moments was a staunch member of the Church of England. Years later I was privileged to see letters written by my mother when she had a home of her own to my aunt who had carefully preserved them. It wrung my heart to read them. Her

life in England at that time during the disturbances in Ireland was most unpleasant, particularly as she was known to be a Catholic and the daughter of a Fenian. Her feelings were not spared by the local community. But hardest of all for her to bear was her enforced separation from her husband. Eventually, at his solicitations, his family purchased his discharge from the army and he returned joyfully to his wife in England.

But civilian life soon palled on my father and he rejoined the Army with the 20th Hussars. His past service was commuted and he regained his old rank. His wife was taken on the strength and settled down to the hard routine of a soldier's wife in the married quarters of a cavalry barracks. It was in the Hounslow barracks that I was born to them on February 2, 1876.

Soon after that Sergeant-Major Nicholls accepted secondment to Rotherham in Yorkshire as instructor to a troop of the 1st West Yorkshire Yeomanry, of which Earl Fitzwilliam was captain.

The Yorkshire Yeomanry on parade at its Headquarters made a brave show in its bright dragoon uniforms and plumed helmets and all the gay trappings of horse apparel. Old cavalrymen, like my father, reared in the hard school of those days could be trusted to instil discipline into the new force and give it the essentials of an army training. The great landowners of England were induced to officer these corps and draw from their private purses the funds necessary to maintain a military band and provide amenities essential to good fellowship during the annual camps of exercise. In addition to the annual camp at Doncaster, there were frequent drills in Rotherham or at Sheffield, and my earliest joys lay in watching the evolutions consequent upon the sing-song cavalry commands of my father.

There was another joy. My father's mounts were provided from the great Fitzwilliam stables at Wentworth Woodhouse. There were always a couple of horses in the stables in Rotherham at my father's disposal for training and use, and, as a consequence, I was at home on an horse at an early age, a fact which was to stand me in good stead later on.

It was at Rotherham that my mother died of consumption when

her eldest son was five. She had had a hard life. Three children had been born and died before my birth and three came later—Albert eighteen months my junior, Mabel, and Jack who was then just a baby.

Of my mother I had only faint recollections and these macabre enough. After the birth of her youngest child she lay worn out and suffering. I recalled being taken up to her bedroom by the old Irish nurse and, in one of these clear flashes of memory which most of us hold of childhood days, I remembered how I was held up to her and how she said wonderingly: 'But the boy has a paper collar on. Why is he dressed like that?' The shutter clicked then and I cannot remember anyone's answer or whether I really did have a paper collar round my neck. Very likely my young mother's mind was wandering in delirium, for my next memory of her is of an unusually hushed house and of the old nanny taking me up the stairs to my mother's room once again. But this time she lay still and would not respond to my call. The nurse, in an attempt to convey to me the meaning of death, picked up her thin white arm and let it fall unresisting and lifeless to the bed. In that instant I gathered something of the finality that is death.

With his wife's death the bottom dropped out of my father's world. He resigned from the Army and, not unnatural in a cavalryman with a love of horses, took up the profession of 'bookie', a precarious life which took him to every important race meeting and left his motherless children enjoying alternately relative affluence and real poverty. Sometimes our home would reek of new varnish, and glistening wonderful furniture stood in every room with carpets on which they stood with bated breath; a few weeks later there would only be ragged strips on which we had to sleep.

Unfortunately our old Irish nurse who had brought us up refused to stay. Heartbroken, hating heathen England, blaming the Sergeant-Major for ever having set foot in Ireland, she hurried back leaving the family to fend for itself. A succession of housekeepers came and went leaving little impression on us

children. But we were not unhappy; we were conscious by now that our father had chosen a very uncertain vocation, but he was always a great man in our eyes and though his voice did not lose its military sternness, he was both understanding and kind.

We were, however, properly disciplined in his presence. In the evenings, while he read the paper, he would cut out all whispering between his three sons, by a stern glance and a martial command: 'Get a book and read; don't talk!' This very wholesome admonition turned me into an omnivorous reader; we always had a good bookshelf; free libraries were available; and by the age of twelve I had read many of the classical stories then available and much else besides.

The alternation in our circumstances was due to my father's general devil-may-care attitude to life. He was always about to make a fortune; he always knew the winner of each race; his study of stables and form and weight was profound. My recollections of those early days have been sufficiently impressive to destroy any gambling instinct I may have inherited. During this period of racing obsession, which lasted several years, we three boys—my sister Mabel had long since been sent to live with Aunt Keziah in Birmingham—were left very much to ourselves.

By day I was apt to play truant from school. I roamed all over Rotherham and its neighbourhood, the seat of the iron and steel industry. I loved the sound of turning wheels, the disciplined movements of the ironworkers, the rush of steam, and I spent my time visiting the various foundries, looking, questioning, absorbing. Nobody took much notice of a thin, ginger-haired little boy coming in and out of the great works, peering round dark corners, watching the puddlers puddling the ore in the furnaces, following the semi-molten metal on its journey to the huge steamhammers. The men came to know me and to be my friends; they frequently shared their billycans of tea and their food with me. But the nights were the times I loved best. The glow of red light from the furnaces, seen from our home, lit up the skies and conveyed to my imagination something of the conquest of man over nature. As soon as darkness fell I would steal away to one of the iron works, and, choosing a secluded spot, would sit for

hours entranced at the scene before me. While I prowled round the foundries at night most small boys of my age were safely in bed, but no one missed me and I felt no self-pity at this lack of attention, but rather a great elation, as I absorbed, thought and became aware of the might behind the extraction of ore from the ground and the making of it into powerful machinery necessary to the progress of mankind. Not that I was consciously thinking in these terms, but the nocturnal excusions formed a large part of my education, and I became familiar with all the complicated processes in the factories. I sensed the give and take necessary among men for the efficient working of a huge factory. Unconsciously I suppose I absorbed much of human nature and developed a love for the rhythm of industry which remained with me throughout my life. I was intensely happy and mostly alone.

But these idyllic days soon came to an end. The Sergeant-Major, no doubt feeling that his children ought to be better cared for, married again.

Father suddenly introduced us to a new mother. She was much younger than he was and none of us took to her or she to us. She simply did not fit into our lives. Being the eldest, I naturally took the lead in rebelling against her authority. I ran away from home on four occasions between the ages of seven and ten, each time making for Birmingham, a hundred miles distant, where lived our maiden aunt, Keziah. My procedure was to get on to the main road to Sheffield, then walk on through Chesterfield and Derby. On the first occasion, I was resting on a grass bank some miles out of Chesterfield, feeling very miserable and hungry, when a good-humoured farmer came along driving a one-horse farm cart. He offered me a lift and I clambered up and sat beside him. He asked where I was going and when I said I was going to Birmingham he exclaimed: 'But you can't walk to Birmingham, a little chap like you. What are you going to Birmingham for?' I have no doubt that the story I told him which was quite sincere, that they didn't want me at home and that I I was going to my aunt who did, affected him for he made the surprising proposition that I could either have a shilling and go

on from his farm or I could go home with him, sleep the night and resume my travels next day. I stayed the weekend and I don't know that I have ever enjoyed myself more.

On the Monday morning the farmer called me early and drove me to a wayside station where a number of other farmers were gathered; they all subscribed towards my fare and my host put me on the Birmingham train. I stayed with my dear old Aunt Keziah for three months.

Then one grey morning I was returned to Rotherham and my stepmother. I was received like the prodigal son, but my father explained that I was not to run away again or—. None the less I did run away thrice again, once to Liverpool to go to sea, but I was always returned to a stern father who dealt with me faithfully.

Rotherham had amusements of its own. The Middle Ages were not so far away then and traditional habits were still strong. There was the annual show known as the 'Statutes' which had been held for centuries.

In my childhood, the show was still flourishing on the fair grounds and overflowed into the main streets of Rotherham.

The whole way from the Fairground to the High Street, a distance of several miles, would be threaded with gaily coloured stalls, displaying sweets and Fair goods of every variety. The Fairground was crammed with swings and roundabouts. Wombwell's Menagerie; Pepper's Ghost Show; dwarfs and fat women were there; Shakesperian shows—*Hamlet* and *Macbeth*—the barnstormers mouthing their lines amidst the excitement and enjoyment of the populace, all bathed in the lights of the showground flares, their flames leaping in the open air. A small boy could obtain a ringside seat for 1d or 2d; and Shakespeare's plays were better known to the children of Britain seventy years ago than to most adults today.

I was now at the Doncaster Road Board School and in spite of irregular attendance managed to keep abreast of my class. But the truth was that from five to ten years of age I was a little vagabond. The chief impression left upon my mind from those early days is, that notwithstanding the lower living standards and the absence

of any social security the workers of my generation did not lead unhappy lives, as modern sociologists would have the world believe. It is only by comparison with the sheltered lives of the writers of today that the past is presented in such an ugly light. The proletariat of my generation in Britain, were, as I was, often hungry: they were not unhappy. Indeed they were proud to be Englishmen and thought they lived in the best country in the world. Unconsciously, they understood that they were heirs to great traditions: they responded to the historical continuity of all around them with an almost tribal acceptance of things as they were. The remarkable advances in science and results of the pioneering spirit of enterprise and initiative which was opening up the world to the products of their labour had little place in the thoughts of Rotherham's workers. They belonged to the older England which had not altogether lost its local patriotism for the chromium-plated internationalism of today.

One of the striking characteristics of those days was the freedom for anybody to do anything or go anywhere. Governments merely kept the ring. For the rest, the free trade principle applied to freedom in everything else. There were few controls. If one wanted to establish a shop or a stall, one asked nobody's permission. If one wanted to take a ship to the ends of the earth, no passports or permits were required. Everybody was conditioned by his ability to earn a living, and provided it was an honest living, nobody asked any questions. Britain had not begun to regulate anybody for the sake of a better world. The bitterness created by the preaching of the class war had not penetrated very deeply to the workers. Mutual respect and tolerance and a common acceptance of existing conditions sweetened human intercourse. There was unemployment, severe at times; but England was then on the ascending spiral of her overseas trade which came from the development of production in the East and the Americas, rendered possible by the investments of British savings in British capital goods—in short, in the Imperialism which succeeding generations of Englishmen have been so vehemently condemning and destroying to their own detriment.

In 1886 the family moved to Birmingham, my father's birth-

place. The itch to vagabondage was now severely curbed. I went to a Church of England school, passed the seventh standard when I was thirteen, the school-leaving age then, and started to look for a job.

I passed quickly through a succession of them—all at five shillings a week. Beginning in a brassworks, sorting brass fittings, I successively went through a box-making factory, a wireworks, a coffee machinery factory and an outside job doing plumbing and zinc work. This last was interesting and I graduated far enough to 'wipe a joint', as it was called. Finally I found work at the Royal Small Arms Gun Factory, run by the Government, then making 700 new Enfield rifles a week and where I was introduced to and worked two milling machines—a man's job. The pay was good there, about 15s a week, which left a couple of shillings pocket money, while the rest went to the family exchequer.

The Royal Small Arms had about it the nostalgia of the Army, which remained my first love. From my earliest days I had resolved to follow the flag. My father had done his best to dissuade me. Whenever I mentioned my ambition to him he would take out a copy of *Queen's Regulations* and read them aloud to me—as a deterrent. The punishment for most misdeeds seemed to be death; but I do remember that the threat of this penalty had the slightest effect upon my dreams. I wanted only the opportunity. I joined a Cadet Corps in Birmingham after leaving school. My tremendous enthusiasm soon made me proficient and later on, after a week under canvas at an annual training camp, I learned of a way to get into the Army.

The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry was being recruited in Birmingham. I had a friend who had joined this regiment and he told me that a bugler was required. I could blow the bugle. Immediately I wrote to the colonel of the regiment:

'Dear Sir,

I have been a member of the Royal Warwickshire Cadet Corps in Birmingham. I can blow a bugle. I was born in the 14th Hussars. I thought I might be of service to your regiment.'

I received an immediate reply asking me to attend at the

recruiting office for medical examination and found myself, almost the next day, an accepted soldier. I was just fifteen years of age and I had not obtained my father's consent. Nevertheless, I was given a ticket to Milford Haven and told to report there. So once again, I secretly left my father's house. This time it was for ever, and the few short years of my childhood were over.

The first intimation my father had of what I had done was when a brown paper parcel containing my civilian clothes arrived from Milford Haven, together with a short letter of explanation, telling him that I had become a soldier. The letter I received back cut me to the quick. It read: 'I can do nothing about you having joined the Army. I have told you often enough what you will have to face. I would have preferred that if you had to go into the army, you, at any rate, would have gone as a credit to me, not as a disgrace, as you are today. You have made your bed. You must lie on it.'

Only once did I return to my family, and that was shortly after my entry into the Army when I was given three weeks' furlough before I sailed for India.

CHAPTER II

A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN

(1891–1902)

LIFE with the Light Infantry was full of interest in an environment with which I was very familiar. Also I had now attained my young life's ambition. My one desire now was to go on active service. The 2nd Battalion of the DCLI was composed of young soldiers serving, so to speak, an apprenticeship for service with the 1st Battalion then in Burma. But before I got there I had to endure the sufferings of a voyage in a small troopship across the Irish Sea in a storm. The battalion was sick to a man and, when we landed to march to our barracks in Dublin where we were to be stationed, we were sadly ashamed of our appearance before our comrades in the barracks, the Grenadier Guards, but, within a few weeks, we felt we could hold our own in smartness at drill and on or off parade. At last we received our orders to go overseas.

The Burma draft fell in when the snow lay deep on the ground of Wellington Barracks. It was a small draft, but a happy one. We were bound for Devonport by a small coaster from Dublin. At Devonport we were to join the troopship *Seraphis*; the voyage to it was so rough that it cured me effectively of seasickness. Though I prayed then that I might die, I have never since felt a qualm of sickness on any of my voyages.

The *Seraphis* was an old-time troopship, barque-rigged and steam-driven. As there were well over a thousand troops on board, made up of drafts to various regiments, the accommodation was very limited. At night hammocks filled up the entire space between the decks and progress was only possible by crawling underneath them. In the daytime the hammocks were all stowed away, leaving room for the mess tables to be slung

where we had slept. The main meal was usually salt pork and beans. There was little bread. The ship's biscuits had to be soaked in black tea. Nevertheless it was a happy ship. Everybody was young and fit and looking forward eagerly to a spell of foreign service. In the Bay of Biscay the ship rolled as only a high-sparred vessel can; and we enjoyed the roll. In the Mediterranean we discovered a new climate and a blue sea of delight. Malta appeared like enchanted battlements in a bright haze, with the ghosts of the old Knights of St John defending them.

We touched at Aden and then the *Seraphis* steamed majestically into crowded Bombay. To our unaccustomed eyes the white-clad figures of the people looked all alike. I realized we were observing the characteristics of a race before the impression fades to give way to the recognition of the individual. The whole complement of drafts was entrained for Poonah, where we spent our first week, while the staff sorted us out and made arrangements for our further progress, to Madras first, and then to Burma.

The journey to Madras occupied several days as all troop trains were pulled into a siding for the night; but, at last, we marched into Fort William and here we awaited a troopship to take the DCLI draft to Rangoon. Our ship was much smaller than the *Seraphis* and carried, as well as ourselves, an Indian regiment for the Andaman Islands, which we duly landed at Fort Blair and so to Rangoon, where the heat came down like a hammer. Two days later we were in Mandalay.

We marched from the railway station through the crowded town in the middle of the day, still wearing our thick European uniforms. Our first impression of Mandalay was the heat; not the blazing scorching heat of the Red Sea or the Bay of Bengal, which was tempered by standing around in our shirt sleeves under a gathering breeze, nor the dry heat which we had experienced on our journey across India, but the leaden, moist, unventilated heat like that of a deep mining-shaft when it is being sunk on the gold mines of the South African Rand.

On this day in February, the heat was palpable. Yet, notwithstanding our unacclimatized state, we were deeply interested in

the mixture of races which thronged the bazaar. Chiefly, it was the Burmese who impressed us, the flat-faced pleasant-looking people who lined the roadway. They looked pleased to see us. Our youthful faces and red coats probably surprised them, for the British soldiers already stationed in Mandalay wore khaki or white in their walks abroad and they were older and more seasoned men. The Burmese were more fascinating than any people we had yet seen. They were so obviously happy. They had been reared in a tradition where laziness was not considered a sin. They were emotionally and mentally geared to sit in the sun and enjoy themselves. Their women, petite and charming, looked wonderfully pretty with their jet black hair and powdered faces. All wore white muslin jackets and skirts of coloured silks, with coloured neck scarves, the ends thrown jauntily over their shoulders. They all looked so very clean and dainty and we learned later that they bathed two or three times a day. When at last we left Burma there could have been few in the regiment who had not developed some affection for the kindly laughing Burmese notwithstanding their unpredictability.

The battalion was to live in Fort Dufferin, which bore no resemblance to a fort; it was a walled city, a Royal city within a city, within Mandalay itself, surrounded by a deep and wide moat spanned at intervals by arched bridges. Regimental quarters were a series of long teak bungalows each standing in echelon far apart from its neighbour to allow air to circulate around it. A whole brigade and its auxiliaries, together with the Commissioner and his secretariat, lived in different parts of the fort so far from each other that even the sound of the regiment's bugles came faintly on the ear to its neighbour. Two regiments of Indians and a newly formed battalion of Kachins, reputed to be wild and still in need of training and discipline, together with the DCLI formed the brigade.

Mandalay was a sickly place. Mosquitoes abounded and there were no mosquito nets; nobody then attributed malaria to the mosquito. There was a funeral every week. Later on, all ranks fell in to receive a tot of quinine twice a week which had to be swallowed on the spot. Many retained the liquid in the mouth to

spit it out later; notwithstanding their soldierly obedience, there was universal resentment at being made to swallow this stuff. Nobody attempted to explain the new theory of the malarial parasite against which quinine was a prophylactic, and quinine parades were most unpopular. It may be doubted whether a dose of quinine twice a week was of much value where there was not the slightest protection against the mosquito.

The daily ration consisted of one pound of bread and one pound of meat, bone included. The meat had to be cooked and the cook had to be paid by the soldiers. The usual deduction from their pay, which was 1s a day for privates, amounted to 4½d per day for groceries. Thereafter the soldier fended for himself.

Usually what was left over from his loaf of bread, as often as not full of small ants which were got rid of by throwing the bread on the floor several times, went with a little black tea at 4 p.m. In the evening 2d spent in the canteen would provide a meal. Beer was cheap and one could get reasonably drunk on twopence. When I joined, an increasing number were frequenting a tearoom in the evening known as Gregson's, a kind of YMCA, where for a penny, one could get a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits, or perhaps a slice of bread and butter. To the Army, this new institution was of great value as a social and educational centre.

By all modern standards, the Army of my day was very badly fed and yet nobody grumbled. Occasionally there was a wild suspicion that the quartermaster was in league with the contractors in the supply of meat: but when the orderly officer visited the dining room and asked if there were any complaints, it was seldom that any were made. Actually the men thrived on this diet. They liked the life and normally they were physically fit and happy. The utmost good fellowship prevailed amongst all ranks, for a regiment is something more than a body of men: it is a sentient entity, all its members psychologically responsive to the same stimuli of tradition and patriotism. A regiment dissolves all its individual expressions and assorted acerbities into a communal regard for the well-being of all.

That is not to say that the individual is lost in a regiment. Ours consisted of men drawn from all walks of life, though mostly from the lower orders, each affecting the other, and many and varied were the opportunities which the individual found for self-expression. The regiment ran a journal which offered opportunities for neophytes in authorship; I remember that I spent many agreeable hours in setting type for it. The regiment had its own photographic shop. A good assortment of newspapers purchased out of the canteen funds were kept in the library, which boasted a wide range of books. The band cultivated a taste for music among many. The repertoire included selections from every known opera and though, of course, the music like the beer, was light, symphony concerts were not unknown. Theatricals were constantly on the go, and variety shows offered opportunity for music hall talent.

There was a regimental school conducted by the regimental schoolmaster. The curriculum was not a very extensive one, but it took in all the subjects current in the board schools of the day. The first class army certificate, which I duly obtained and which was necessary for promotion to warrant rank, was a five-course study of arithmetic, geography, history, grammar and, I think, English literature. I owe much to the regimental school. It was under the schoolmaster's guidance that I passed from Macaulay's *History* and *Essays* and *Lays of Ancient Rome* to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. It was he who encouraged my already acquired taste for reading. Later on in Lucknow, after much bargaining with a trader in the bazaar, I acquired a second-hand pocket edition of the *Waverley Novels*, printed on rice paper, which fitted into a neat little case that took up little room. These books I could read only at night by candle light, under blankets which I drew over my head, and, while my companions were sound asleep, I revelled in the romances which had thrilled a couple of generations of Englishmen. Thackeray and Dickens too were obtained in similar circumstances, together with many others, which included Dumas in French. The habit of clandestine reading continued throughout most of my military life.

After my bugling days, I was posted to the band and became

a proficient instrumentalist, playing most instruments for a period as well as a 'cello in the string band. Unfortunately no opportunity came—or I did not make one—for learning the piano, which I much regretted when trying my hand at musical composition. I passed the examination into Kneller Hall, the Royal Military College of Music, where the bandmasters of the Army are trained; later, for a season, I conducted a military band at an Indian hill station. But I always felt that the soldier was stronger in me than the musician, and on the Tirah campaign in India, I joined my company as a combatant.

At the time I arrived in Mandalay, a small expedition was restoring law and order in the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy. A recalcitrant chief of the Chin tribes had defied the British authority and a general clean-up of his area was going on.

Perhaps it was because it was known that I had been born in a cavalry regiment and had some pretensions of being able to ride that I was initially posted to the mounted infantry company as a bugler. In due course, when a small draft was being sent to the front and a bugler was needed to accompany it, I was chosen.

The Wunthu country lay between the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin, with bare, open, rolling hills interspersed with patches of jungle along the banks of the numerous streams in which the Burmese had their stockaded villages. By the time we arrived the villages had mostly submitted and had a wholesome respect for our men. But the particular section to which I was sent was still having trouble with a so-called Burmese prince who was terrorising those who had made peace. He and his men had to be hunted down by sudden raids upon their jungle hideouts.

The action was very like the jungle fighting with which the world recently became familiar; but in those days the border people had nothing better than their knives, arrows, swords and muzzle-loading muskets, which were charged with any old piece of iron which could be shot out of a barrel. These muskets were almost as dangerous to their owners as to their enemies; the Martini Henry rifles of the British troops were deadly weapons beside them.

Most of the fighting was ambuscade. Along any path through the forest which had a straight passage of fifty yards, a gun might be fastened to a tree which would shoot a number of slugs along the line of advance. Now and then somebody was hit. The campaign continued on this hit-and-miss basis, with mounted infantry where the ponies could be used, rounding up small bands who had escaped from the protection of their village stockade and which always surrendered. The campaign did not last long—it was known as 'the corporal's war'—and before the rainy season opened, we were all back in Mandalay to resume the ordinary rounds of the garrison and spent the remaining months in Burma in peaceful activities.

The regiment stayed for two years in Burma and was then sent to India, first to Meerut, the great training ground of Upper India for cavalry and infantry. Here we could recover in cooler air from Burma's enervating heat; we lived in tents.

A number of regiments both Indian and British with batteries of artillery lay side by side. Near to us, in cantonments, was the 6th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards which achieved fame under a most original colonel, named Baden Powell. He was always up to some new trick, when not charging madly across the plain; and became the talk of the Army. One story was that he took out the regiment at sundown and, when it had thoroughly lost itself, he dismissed the men and told them to find their own way home again in the dark. This evolution of the Scout mind was not much appreciated by those concerned.

After some five or six months in Meerut we marched to Chakarata in the Himalayas, 6,000 feet up. The barracks occupied several hills. The parade ground lay on a neck between. We learnt to know it very well, since there was little where else for the men to go. An occasional route march was a test of mountaineering. There was a place some eight miles distant where a magnificent view of the snowy ranges of the Himalayas could be obtained, but it entailed a stiff climb. Our colonel, hearing some grousing at being taken there, told the regiment that people paid thousands of pounds to go there to see the view; that we were seeing it for nothing and should be duly grateful for seeing

something so magnificent; so it was—when seen for pleasure!

The following winter we returned to Meerut and on the journey the regiment developed cholera. There were a number of cases of which I was one. The cases were carried from camp to camp on *doolies*, stretchers through which two poles were slung. Those who died were buried along the side of the road. The authorities would not allow the regiment to enter Meerut. A cholera camp was formed on the outskirts and eight orderlies were left to care for the four patients who remained alive, of which I was one.

Three died and, as the third man lived his last hours the canvas of the tent flies was put around him to screen him and his bed from my view. I was sufficiently conscious to hear the orderly say: 'Don't let this fellow know what has happened or he will go too'. A fighting spirit was roused in me and I thought, 'Will I? We'll just see'. The Colonel came in each day, always smoking a cigar and never speaking. He would stand looking down at me as if to say—'I wonder how long this poor devil will keep the regiment in quarantine?' Then one day I wakened to hear the regimental band playing a familiar tune and I thought: 'What the devil am I doing lying here, I ought to be out there, playing.' From that day I began to get better. The music was the best tonic I ever had. When we arrived at Meerut the medical authorities said that I should go back to England, but I pleaded to remain. I liked India and my plea was acceded to.

In 1897 the regiment was ordered to Peshawar for the Tirah campaign. The Mullahs of the Afridis and the Orakzai tribes of Pathans inhabiting the frontier were thirsting for war. The tribes had assaulted the forts of Jamrud, Ali Musjed and Landi Kotal, had treacherously slain their own kinsmen who were engaged as Khyber Levies, and paid for as such on a sixteen-year agreement; these were the forts guarding the Khyber Pass, the centuries-old highway from India to Afghanistan and Central Asia. A jehad or religious war had been proclaimed. So began the campaign, the largest war in which India had been engaged since the Mutiny. Two divisions with auxiliary troops under Sir

William Lockhart were sent to the frontier: the 1st DCLI among them.

There were two notable feats accomplished during the campaign: the taking of Dargai and the capture of Arhanga Pass. Dargai was really a mild affair. There was a narrow neck of level ground to be crossed, which was under devastating fire for hours during the day. The operation was limited to sectional rushes; many were shot in this operation. Those who managed to get across were huddled together below the mountains out of direct fire from Dargai and unable to move. Then towards the end of the day, the Gordons, who had been held in reserve, were brought up and ordered to charge the hill. Colonel Mathias formed his men up and addressed them with the burning words: 'The General says the position must be taken at all costs. The Gordon Highlanders will take it. Forward!' There was at once a wild rush of Indians, British and Gurkhas, all mixed together, straight across the narrow neck. It swept everything before it. Those who had crouched for refuge from the fire of Dargai on the other side of the neck joined in, and the rush took them up the height. The first British officer on the height was a lieutenant of the Gurhkas named Tillard, but it was Piper Findlater of the Gordons who led the rush playing *The Cock o' the North* on his pipes. He was wounded in the legs, propped himself up against a boulder, and continued to play until the height was taken; he received the VC. Later on, while the DCLI was lying alongside the Gordons, I saw Mathias's tent was decorated with white stones by his men, giving his name and the letter 'VC'. But he did not get the Victoria Cross. Instead he had our universal admiration. He had put the Gordons in the limelight but the world was led to believe that the Gordons had done it alone.

For the rest the campaign was a continuous nerve-testing fight —and climb—of rearguards and road making in freezing weather; of living under continual sniping. Nothing is more trying than this. There were 1,150 casualties. My principal recollection of the campaign is a throbbing windpipe as we climbed the hills, the difficulty of finding a target amongst the drab-coloured rocks, the freezing cold of the nights spent in a

river bed, the certainty of sniping at night, without much damage being done it is true, but very annoying, and the danger of being wounded and left behind in the retreats. But, altogether, we would not have been left out of it for all the tea in China.

It was not long after our return to Lucknow before the battalion got its next move, first to the Maidan at Calcutta, where we remained for a while under canvas, and then to barracks at Dum Dum about eighteen miles distant. Dum Dum is low lying, and the heat was stifling, even for a seasoned regiment. A large detachment was sent to Darjeeling in summer, of which I was one; probably my having had cholera was the cause of this privilege. The war clouds in South Africa were appearing on the horizon as the regiment's term of foreign service was nearing the usual allotted span, and it looked as if we should be ordered there at any time. If that happened I wanted to be in the ranks and not in the band. I was then a sergeant, supernumerary to the establishment of my company. I had made application for my transfer from the band to the company and awaited the result for which I had by length of service and examination qualified. It came through on my return from Dum Dum. But South Africa was not for us. Instead we were ordered to Ceylon.

Our station in Ceylon was Diatalawaya, meaning 'happy valley'. At the bottom of Happy Valley lay a prisoner of war camp and our task was to guard this camp of 6,000 Boers. Most of them spoke English like Englishmen; it appeared strange to us that they were prisoners for fighting against Englishmen. Their habits and general behaviour were like our own. We had nothing against them. There were two Boer generals on the camp who lived separately in detached hutments. The rest lived in wooden hutments of about fifty men each, as well, or better furnished than our own. Indeed every effort was made to ensure that they were rendered comfortable. Every morning the whole prison camp indulged in a religious service; and during the day, the long drawn-out singing of psalms continued intermittently until it was said they were developing religious mania. Enteric was bad and affected both prisoners and their guards alike, and the little

cemetery ultimately contained Boer and British graves lying opposite each other. While we were there, Ceylon had a Royal visit: the Duke of York (afterwards King George V) was on his way to inaugurate the Commonwealth Constitution in Australia and to call in on South Africa on his way back. Meanwhile he was paying a courtesy visit to Ceylon and was spending a few days at Kandy. A guard of honour was sent to Government House to welcome him. I was one of the guard from Diatalawaya. The great event was the Elephant Procession which took place at night brilliantly lit by torches. The procession, which I was to see again many years later,[1] took two hours to pass.

A year passed at the camp. Then I was ordered to accompany a number of Boer prisoners who had been released on parole back to South Africa. They were mostly well-educated men who had agreed to take the oath of allegiance. This was the time when the National Scouts were being recruited in South Africa and I suppose they had volunteered for that service. In Durban the prisoners were all taken in hand by the military authorities and the fittest amongst them, I suppose, joined up with the National Scouts. I was detailed to join our 2nd Battalion, encamped at Green Point, Cape Town; it had done very well in the war and had been one of the regiments to surround and capture Cronje's forces at Paardeberg.

[1] *v.* p. 423.

CHAPTER III

ON THE ROAD TO THE NORTH

(1902)

ONE of the guests invited to the Coronation of Edward VII was Lewanika, the Paramount Chief of the Barotses, whose country had recently come under the jurisdiction of the Chartered Company. I had been reading South African history and by some chance became interested in Lewanika and in Colin Harding who had accompanied him to England. I made it my business to get in touch with Harding while he was in Cape Town. I found he was looking for a British non-commissioned officer to instruct his newly recruited regiment of Barotse Native Constabulary and after an interview with him he applied for my discharge from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and got it.

I was instructed to proceed to Bulawayo to join the British South African Police with the rank of sergeant-major and there await the arrival of Lewanika and his entourage, whom I was to accompany to Barotseland. I was twenty-six when I arrived in Bulawayo; the air was crisp after the rains and the dry season lay ahead; the world was young and full of adventure.

Bulawayo, which was the railhead, was buzzing with both. The whole place was alive with schemes for the future. Private enterprise had turned to Rhodesia, and my one idea was to be in the forefront of the pioneers; not in the ten-year-old, settled Southern Rhodesia, but in the far north. I reported to the British South African Police, drew my uniform as sergeant-major, and awaited the arrival of Harding and Lewanika.

There was some trouble over the latter's status. He had been greeted in London by King Edward as 'Your Majesty,' a greeting which carried tremendous weight with the Chartered Company, and Harding told me it was a fact that I should not forget.

Therefore, I was surprised when the Bulawayo Club rejected Lewanika's application to use the club as an honorary member during his stay in Bulawayo. This all-pervading colour prejudice was something new in my experience. In India there was close contact and friendship amongst the upper classes, whatever their colour. But here was a great African potentate, the biggest indeed, in Southern Africa, who was denied the use of the Bulawayo Club, notwithstanding that he had attended the British Court and been treated as an honoured guest. Eventually he and Harding were housed in one of the four hotels.

I left Bulawayo by construction train for the Gwaii River which was as far as the formation had then reached. Here in the thick bush I pitched my tent to await Lewanika who was coming up later by train and for his wagons which were trekking from Bulawayo. A few days after I arrived, a party of four officers, new recruits like myself, and who were going to take charge of outlying police stations, joined me. We spent our time in shooting along the Gwaii River until Lewanika and his wagons arrived. Then began our trek north.

It was a drought year, consequently it took us the better part of two months to reach the Zambezi. We remained sometimes for days in one spot near water, while the oxen grazed. The track we were following was the one taken by Livingstone on his trek to Pundamatenga, but it was very indistinct, and in places we wandered far off, as others had done before us, to wherever we thought we could find water.

For the first two weeks or so, we travelled alone and then began the stream of visitors from Barotseland who had come to greet their king on his return. He used to receive his subjects in the mornings after the oxen had all been outspanned and were grazing far in the veld. Under the shade of a tree, he would seat himself beside Harding in a deckchair, the *Gambella*, his Prime Minister, standing beside him. The crowd of visitors knelt perhaps fifty or so yards away. As Lewanika appeared they all rose to give him a mighty shout of the royal salute, throwing their arms aloft and shouting '*Shoalela, Shoalela*'. Then kneeling they gave the *kukampa*, that is, they clapped their hands three times

and waited. The *Gambella* would wait for a nod from Lewanika, then motion forward the half-naked crowd kneeling in the distance. Rising they threw their arms above their heads, again giving the royal salute and a continuous *kukampa* as they walked forward. Thus they would advance with bowed backs until they knelt some fifteen yards from their king, when the leader, or headman, would crawl forward and deposit a skin purse containing gold at the feet of the *Gambella*, clapping and bowing meanwhile. During this performance, which occurred at each outspan as we approached the Zambezi, Lewanika would be looking far into the veld and apparently taking no notice of what was happening. Finally he would sign to the *Gambella*, who would call out '*Puma noku*', to intimate that the king was satisfied. Thereupon the natives would withdraw, again giving the royal salute and clapping as they moved backwards from 'the presence'. No other words were spoken.

The meeting with the principal chiefs took place later, when Lewanika would tell them of his experiences while he had been away. The interpreter told me that so much was beyond their imagination that he could not deal with it. Lewanika could not very well bring to their minds the scene at Westminster Abbey at the Coronation; the pageantry of the procession; the massing of the fleets and armies; the great concourse of people in the streets, nor the solemn presentation of himself and his suite in the throne-room. It is doubtful if he gained a very clear vision of it himself. He would regale them with simple stories, of seeing a trooper cross the barrack-square at Bulawayo, carry a bucket to a small pipe protruding from the grounds, out of which water would flow by a simple turn of the wrist. This, is a dry area, was a miracle, until its source was explained. Then there was that other simple miracle when, in England, he saw red hot iron running like water. He had been a famous blacksmith of the Barotse race, but he had not seen anything like that before. So it was with many simple things which became plain when they were explained. Why had the black man not thought of these things?

There were some things, however, which his Barotse chiefs

did understand and about which they debated far into the night. They had for years objected to Barotseland becoming a British Protectorate and when, twelve years before, they found they were handing over their country to a commercial company, they were very much alarmed. Now they wished to know from Lewanika, whether the Queen who had just died, had made proper provision for them. Were they being handed over to the Queen's successors or to a lot of traders? Lewanika was able to reassure them on this point. The new king would see to it that their interests were protected. His protection would shelter them in the government of their tribes. His people would be in Barotseland. They would no longer have to live on ivory and slaves as their sole source of income. There would be revenue coming to the Barotse people from the sale of the minerals in the ground which the Europeans would be able to extract. These talks satisfied the chiefs.

As we approached Lewanika's country, Harding, with his officers, left us. I remained to act as quartermaster of the caravan.

After my appointment to the Armed Constabulary, I naturally obtained any book I could get in Cape Town and Bulawayo on the African interior, and from them I got a very rough and imperfect history of the Barotse which I was to improve by conversation through Lewanika's interpreter. It began before 1820 when Chaka, king of the Zulus, set in motion that wave of inter-tribal warfare which killed a million people and devastated Southern Africa, while the Whites, in ignorance of what was happening, were trying to hold back a few fugitive tribes on the Eastern frontiers in the Cape. The real hero from 1820 onwards, was a Tswana chief named Sebetuana who had been driven into a combination to resist Chaka's impis from the east with other Tswana tribes under a chieftainess named Mantatisi. Fearsome stories are told about this woman who was supposed to have one eye in the centre of her forehead. She managed to coalesce all Bechuana clans, disintegrated by the fear of Chaka. Ultimately her combination was destroyed by the mounted Griquas whose aid had been sought by Moffat, the first missionary at Kuruman. The

Griquas were a band of half-caste runaway slaves, Hottentots and Bushmen mixed with white outlaws who had formed themselves into a Republic north of the boundaries of the Cape Colony. They had a republican constitution; they had surveyed their land and issued the titledeeds to their burgers, and they had guns and horses. They were a small but powerful armed force when called upon by Moffat and they simply massacred with their muskets their enemies who had only assegais. Finally the Mantatisi hordes broke and fled. Some went east and became foundation members of the Basuto nations, others scattered west among their fellow-tribesmen in Bechuanaland; but one body, perhaps ten thousand men, looking for peace, went north under Sebetuana and began one of the most romantic conquests in African history. In years of fighting, Sebetuana crossed the Zambezi and established himself as king over the whole area of the middle Zambezi. Subsequently he extended his authority on both sides of the river to within a few hundred miles of the Portuguese coast of Angola and to the Shire River in Nyasaland in the east. In the far north his remote control bordered on that of the Arab slave raiders in the Southern Congo which in later years, formed the western border of Tippo Tip's Arab kingdom, finally destroyed by the Belgians.

Sebetuana did all this, not by bloody extermination of the tribes, as Chaka and Mzilgazi had done, but by a diplomacy rare amongst Bantu chiefs. He established military districts in each conquered area and placed a small chief of his Makalolo, as his own people were called, in every district, to support the authority of the existing chief, whom he then called upon to collect tribute. His greatest feat of all was to give the Barotse people the Sechuana language, now being spoken throughout Barotseland. Of Sebetuana, Livingstone said that he was 'the best specimen of a native chief I have ever met'. He died in 1851, and was succeeded by his son Sekeletu, who had none of his father's qualities. After a savage slaughter of the Barotse by Sekeletu, the Sebetuana empire fell to pieces. The Barotse rose in revolt and called back one of their own people, Sepopa and re-established the Barotse dynasty. The Makalolo were all murdered wherever they were;

their women were distributed as slaves. The anarchy lasted for ten years.

Sepopa was murdered in 1877 for throwing some children to the crocodiles. To succeed him the Barotse appointed a weakling, Ngana-wina, whom they deposed after eight months. They then called upon Robosi who was in hiding; he became Lewanika and their king by wading through a bath of blood. Nobody would have thought as they looked at him now, spick and span in European costume, riding with his entourage, that twenty years before he had killed all his enemies without compunction. His visit to King Edward's coronation completed a long path to civilization and turned him into the statesman he appeared to be on that journey home. At Pundamatenga he and his party left us for Kasungulu while we continued on to the Victoria Falls.

I saw the spray of the Falls while some miles away and leaving the wagons walked towards it. The thunder grew as I advanced. Scrambling through the forest I at length reached a spot where the Falls were disclosed in all their awesome majesty. Livingstone had not exaggerated. The crash of the waters stunned the imagination. A mile of river was falling into a gorge only a few yards wide; the resultant spray rose blindingly into the air like great balls of cotton wool. I spent some hours feasting on this sight and picturing the discovery by Livingstone.

I had acquired a constabulary vocabulary as a basis to build on. I took stock of the men, who were armed with Martinis. They were all Barotses of a very fine type and evidently enjoyed their station as uniformed soldiers. Harding had told me that he was engaging me to introduce infantry drill. The officers of the Force were all drawn from the British South African Police and knew only dismounted cavalry drill. I found the Barotse apt recruits and willing to learn. We put in many good days' work. The carriers had been sent for and I had not long to wait before I set out on the seven days' march along with my detachment of eighty constabulary to the headquarters at Kalomo.

The news of our impending arrival had been conveyed to Kalomo, and the Adjutant, Captain Hart Barry, was on the

barracks square to meet us. As we approached the open square, I gave the order to 'front form', and with great precision—for I had practised every day on the road—we advanced in a column of sections into which I had formed them. The adjutant, taken by surprise, shouted 'What's this? We practise only cavalry drill here. What right have you to change this drill?' I was a bit nonplussed. My well-meant efforts had landed me in trouble. 'I was instructed to do so by Colonel Harding,' I replied, which answer rather shook him. Thereafter we discussed the question of our accommodation, without any further references to cavalry drill, until the following morning. Then with Major Carden, the officer in command and Hart Barry, we had a full discussion and I was instructed to train the police in infantry drill since my detachment had been some weeks at it.

The addition of the eighty or a hundred Barotse recruits I had brought from the Victoria Falls increased the strength of the regiment to about 400 men and for the next six months I was busy with their training. I was able to train a set of buglers who changed the whole outlook of the Constabulary, who like any other infantry battalion were now awakened by the sound of 'Reveille' and went to bed to the strains of the 'Last Post'. They responded in a remarkable way and loved it.

There were not many white people settled north of the Zambezi; and nearly all were concentrated at the new administrative headquarters at Kalomo. The barracks stood three miles away from the Secretariat. With the exception of one or two stores all the Europeans were employed by the administration. When I arrived some first steps were being taken to establish civil government. The year before a detachment of the British South Africa Police—all mounted white men—had patrolled the country to the south of the Kafue, under the command of Harding and Carden. They had been commissioned to raise the Barotse Native Police or the Armed Constabulary as it was often called. Now Harding, after seeing Lewanika safely reinstated at Lealui, was for a time engaged as acting for Coryndon the Administrator, leaving Carden in command of the police.

A patrol amongst the Batokas and the Mashukulumbwe,

vassal tribes of the Barotse, was arranged with Worthington (newly appointed Commissioner of the Central Districts), and nearly all the police at Kalomo set out on a first tour of inspection. We stayed two weeks at Monze, the kraal of the Batoka head chief. Here we waited the result of a message sent to invite Minenga, the wild Mashukulumbwe chief, to visit us. He was the man who had driven Selous and his men from the Kafue, whence he fled naked into the night.

We took the opportunity of putting the police through their first course of musketry at Monze and I distinguished myself by getting six consecutive bulls on the target at 200 yards. At length Minenga, who first stuck a blooded assegai in the path as a warning against our further advance, said he would welcome us. No doubt the sound of musketry had reached his ears through the Batoka tribesmen.

The welcome given to us by the Mashukulumbwe, under Minenga, was somewhat startling. As we approached we found the whole adult population were drawn up in the path. They were all completely naked, sitting on the ground, clapping their hands as the Barotse had taught them to do, with Minenga bowing low and pouring dust over his head; a large concourse of women were seated behind. After *kuluishaing*, that is trilling with their hands over their mouths, suddenly all fell on their backs in token of submission! The police were halted behind us and commanded to 'Order Arms' which they did like guardsmen and stood at attention—a spectacle affrighting to the tribesmen who all knew of the defeat of the powerful Matabele twelve years before.

Not far from Minenga's kraal, at Ngaiyila, we selected a permanent camp. Consideration of policy, which was not without its calculating side, impelled the Government to look elsewhere for its recruits than to the Barotse, who were all directly subject to Lewanika. Hart Barry was sent on a recruiting expedition to Nyasaland, then under the Foreign Office. In due course he came back with 150 Angonis and Yaos, all Moslems and reputed to be great fighters. They were, many of them, the descendants of a Zulu migration in the days of Chaka. I was sent

to construct a camp on the Kafue at a place called Mala near Ngaiyila, where the recruits were to be trained. The newcomers were easy to train, ravenous to learn, sedulous in their duty, proud to be soldiers. Their presence undoubtedly made an impact on the wild Mashukulumbwe. From far and wide along the Kafue the tribesmen came to see these new Angoni recruits drilling on the square.

The civil administration of north western Rhodesia was getting under way. The territory was being divided into districts, according to their tribes, as they became known. One of the first officials to be appointed was Worringham, an old South African, who had been with me at Kalomo. He was appointed to the Mashukulumbwe District at Nkala, and I was sent with a detachment of the police I had trained to keep him company. His task was to bring under effective Government control the whole area of the Baila people (i.e. the Mashukulumbwe). To do this effectively it was necessary to move the camp to a more central position and Worringham chose a site further west along the Kafue, near Shaloba's kraal. Before leaving Nkala a new arrival who was to be Worringham's assistant, reported himself. He was Dr Blair Watson, who had come to us from Nyasaland.

He was a man of immense growth, too heavy to be carried in a *machila* and unable to travel far on foot. A couple of oxen were obtained to carry him about by cart, when the going was favourable. He was nicknamed the 'White Antbear'.

In a short time Blair Watson was sent out to complete the census among the Mashukulumbwe in the eastern part of the district. While he was away, Worringham and I moved camp from Nkala to Shaloba, and engaged some hundreds of Shaloba's people to build two camps, a civil camp and a police camp; they lay opposite each other in the bush across a vlei. We had few tools and no nails. For nails we used wooden pegs. Everything had to be created by our few adzes and axes, the Mashukulumbwe using their own small home-made axes for all purposes. Meanwhile Worringham and I lived in our tents pitched side by side and dined under the trees. It was very pleasant; game was shot every day to feed everybody—for the Kafue Flats nearby teemed

with animals of all kinds. Worringham and I tried our hands at cooking with the aid of Mrs Beeton's cookery book—and by substituting for her ingredients anything available.

CHAPTER IV

DISTRICT OFFICER, NORTHERN RHODESIA (1907)

THE following year I was asked to transfer from the police to the civil administration, which was then beginning. My district was to be the Baluba District in the hook of the Kafue. I was to build a camp in a central spot and bring all the natives under Government control. There were a number of known tribes—the Mashukulumbwe in the south, the Bankoya in the west, the Baluba in the central area, the Balamba in the north, all speaking different languages and, as I chose a place for my camp some fifty miles north of the Kafue amongst the Baluba it was known as the Baluba district, falling under Anderson, newly appointed Commissioner of the Kafue district, with headquarters at Mumbwa.

With immense pride in the trust placed in me I spent two months in constructing the camp, which I called Chinenga, on a hill overlooking the surrounding bush. At the same time I began my exploration of the district.

Few of the tribesmen had ever seen a white man. Mumbwa was far away, and in very much the same initial position of opening-up as I was. At Nkala, days away to the south of the Kafue, there was a mission station of a few years' standing. At Nanzela, further to the south, another mission was being built by the Rev E. W. Smith, subsequently to become executive secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London and one of the editors of *Africa*; he had begun the work of writing an Ila grammar and dictionary and was busy translating the New Testament into Chila.

We were soon in communication. I exchanged vocabularies with him and began to learn Chila from the manuscript of his

grammar—a language in which I became fluent and efficient. I had made the acquaintance of *The Explorer's Guide* of the Royal Geographical Society, which taught simple mathematics and mensuration, and, armed with a prismatic compass, a box sextant, a plane table and astronomical telescope, and a cyclometer—to fix on a bicycle wheel pushed by a native before me—I was ready to map the whole region. It was with great pride that I plotted all the newly found villages, hills and streams, on the empty outline map on which certain known spots had been guessed at, and which was hanging on the wall of my office. I was alone—no other white man was within seven days' journey.

It was an education to know Anderson. He was an excellent administrator, wise in his judgments and tolerant in all his dealings with the native people. He was handicapped in talking to the natives by speaking only Sentebele, the language spoken by the Matabele and had to talk through an interpreter. He was much upset once when I told him that the story he was getting from his interpreter did not correspond with the facts as given in Chila; but I was able to interpret for him. This question of correct interpretation when dealing with a number of native tribes, speaking different languages, was always difficult. Fortunately Smith had saved me any embarrassment, and my subsequent studies on my own had helped me.

My chief duty besides building my camp, making the acquaintance of the tribes and listening to their court cases, was the census of the population. The Chartered Company had declared its intention of taxing the population whenever a proper census was prepared. The carrying out of the census was a strikingly effective method of bringing all the people under control. To their minds there was something mysterious and uncanny in writing down all their names in a book and reading them out again. A census tour was looked forward to eagerly by the natives as soon as it was understood, and any whose names were missing owing to temporary absence from the kraal would walk for days to ensure that their names were on the roll.

The prestige of the white man was then something beyond belief. Not a shot had been fired in the peaceful occupation of

north-western Rhodesia. Whether that had been due to a knowledge that the Barotse had willingly accepted British rule, which was doubtful, or to the knowledge that the whites had overthrown the dreaded Matabele and now ruled in his place, which was more likely, white prestige could not have stood higher. It was always a source of wonder to me as a District Officer, without any soldiers, with a handful of unarmed uniformed messengers (distinct from the Barotse Armed Constabulary trained as soldiers) going among people who met the white man for the first time, that I was able to establish a court, try cases involving quarrels between chiefs, summon all the people to be present at their kraals during the taking of a census, call out their tribes to make roads or build a camp or to provide carriers, and generally carry on the work of administration, with the co-operation of all and without any signs of power.

So great indeed, was the prestige, that I found it dangerously easy to use that which would be termed 'witchcraft in Government'; for instance, on finding that my carriers had stolen an axe belonging to a native at a village where I had pitched my camp, I summoned all the carriers and told them that, if the person who had taken the axe did not return it at once, all who knew about it would soon be dead. The immediate response was so startling that I did not use this power again. Within a few minutes, a native with the missing axe was dragged into my presence by the whole crowd, wildly talking and gesticulating. It was probably a supernatural fear or the very remarkable state of honesty which existed, that accounts for the fact that I could leave at my camp, during a month's absence, all the six months' supply of stores and trade goods, without a single thing ever being touched.

The first thing that had to be done was to determine the status of the various chiefs and headmen and the estimation in which they were held by the people.

The hook of the Kafue had a mixture of tribes, many of whom had fled from the southern Congo during the upheavals which began with Tippo Tip, the great slave-hunter, in his fight with the Belgians to establish his authority on the Congo River. The different customs of the Baluba, who lived in the tsetse fly area

and had no cattle, and the Mashukulumbwe, who lived outside the fly-belt along the Kafue, and whose lives were anchored to their cattle, provided a never-ceasing interest. The Mashukulumbwe were armed with a number of long assegais, but, unlike the Matabele, did not use shields. The Baluba and all the northern natives were armed with old Tower muskets, which had been obtained from the slave raiders.

For my first Christmas I arranged to hold a great gathering at my camp. A couple of months before, I had purchased a herd of cattle from the Mashukulumbwe, to be used at the Christmas feast, and I had sent messages to all the kraals, with long knotted pieces of string, each knot representing a day, so that they could all be present before the last knot was cut off. Meanwhile I had obtained a large number of local women to scuffle the land at the base of the hill on which my camp was built, so that a fair sized parade ground for them to perform on was ready a fortnight ahead. These women then made a large quantity of kaffir beer in their own pots; an amount sufficient for some two or three thousand people. I asked Anderson to come down from Mumbwa and called upon a police officer from Kalomo; and then erected in a suitable place a platform, suitably decorated with coloured limbo, on which we would sit to address all the assembled chiefs on Boxing Day. This was all at my own expense. Having no family I made all my savings available for my work. I knew it was a bit risky to mix up all the tribes who had not met each other before, but I thought the demonstration of goodwill with beef and beer would probably produce a similar feeling on their part.

I was astonished at the result. Making no further arrangements, I left whatever entertaining they were going to provide to themselves. About five days before Christmas, the first tribe arrived, men, women and children, and I was informed that they were camping in the bush. They were waiting for orders. I sent out to tell them that they were before their time. It was impossible for me to feed them—I had collected grain for only two days—and if they had insufficient, they would have to send somebody back to their kraals to get food. But I saw that in the

next few days, I would have to do some intensive shooting. Fortunately there was plenty of game about.

Before the day arrived there were camp fires for miles around. Hundreds of natives from far distant had come along. Anderson and the police officer, Dalton, had already arrived. Promptly at 9 a.m. on Christmas morning, we three marched down to take our seats in deck chairs at the camp end of the scuffled ground. The dozen constabulary, who had come with the police officer, fired a volley of shots into the air as a signal to begin.

Soon we saw at the end of the square, 400 or so yards distant, the lining up of an impi with their spears, each formed up in companies under their own headmen. Each company sent out a scout towards us, a dozen or so in all, spread out over the whole scuffled area. These came stealthily forward and retreated, to be replaced by larger bodies. Finally the whole line advanced, dashed up in a most alarming way and dug their spears into the ground a few feet away from where we were sitting. Behind us were standing the small detachment of the armed police, and, on either side, our unarmed messengers.

I fervently prayed that this was not going to end in a smash-up; but with an exultant cry, the whole mass retreated. These were the Mashukulumbwe. Then began a dance under the great chief Kaiengu, whom I had recognized as the paramount western chief. While this went on, the Baluba, under their chief, had been crawling up with their muskets—their drill was not nearly so spectacular as that which had gone before, but no doubt had it been in earnest, the Baluba would have given a good account of themselves.

But now came a strange act. Chief Kaiengu, a very big man, suddenly strode out from behind where his men were sitting and caught hold of the Baluba chief by the hair of his head, cocked up his leg and forced the chief to go under it. Kaiengu was angry; something that the Baluba chief had chanted had stirred him. His public action in forcing the chief to go under his leg was intended as a humiliation. Immediately the Baluba chief was surrounded by people who lifted him up as evidence that they supported him. Looking for an explanation, I learnt that while

the Baluba chief had authority over the Baluba, he yet, through his mother, owed allegiance to Kaiengu. Finally I saw all the Mashukulumbwe go off to one side of the huge field, while the Baluba went off to the other. I was told they were going to charge each other. I didn't like it: anything might happen if all the separate tribes got amongst each other—but they had arranged it, so I let it go, hoping for the best. The two lines charged and passed through each other. Right in front of us were left some men who were writhing on the ground with assegais apparently clean through them. 'Now the fat is in the fire,' I thought. I expected someone to rush to their assistance in the general mêlée. I looked round at our column of police who appeared to be taking it as a joke. Gradually the men rose and staggered, pulling the assegais from under their arms!

It had been very realistic. Where had they learnt all this? There had been no rehearsal and they had not before been to such a gathering as this; the Mashukulumbwe and the Baluba were strangers to each other. It was clear that they must have been in conference while waiting for the fun to begin and arranged what they were to do. It was a well-managed and successful show and I did not begrudge the money I had spent on the cattle for their later entertainment.

Dancing went on practically all night. The beer and the meat made them all merry. We went to watch them. Kaiengu, who signified his authority by always being preceded by drums and a native dulcimer, angered Anderson by his demeanour while he was at the dance. When he asked me to punish Kaiengu for his contumely, I was at a loss. 'You must not treat him as a senior chief,' he said. Believing in the power of spectacle on simple minds, I arranged for the *indaba* on Boxing Day to be full of ceremony. The armed police were marched down as a guard of honour to fall in before the decorated platform. The blue uniformed messengers preceded us down the path from which all the pebbles had been removed and we three Europeans walked in single file to our chairs on the dais, with the messengers grouped behind. All the chiefs were already seated in front and *kukampered* as we appeared. I noticed Kaiengu was seated on his stool in

front of all the chiefs, now of course, quite sober. He had to be demoted. I ordered Kaiengu to get off his stool and sit on the ground like the other chiefs, carefully explaining why I did this. He had been insolent to my chief last night. It was impossible for the Government to overlook this. With much humility Kaiengu complied. He handed his stool to one of the headmen, who took it to the rear and the lesson was observed by all. Kaiengu had become an equal amongst equals.

From the decorated dais, Anderson talked down to the chief explaining the occupation of the country at Lewanika's wish, that it was expected that all the chiefs would co-operate in establishing the good government of the whole, that all raiding must cease, witchcraft be abandoned, and slavery must come to an end. The white Government had the welfare of the whole people at heart. It would not interfere in any way with the government of the tribes by the chiefs. The old customs would continue, but no chief could sentence anyone to death. White courts were being established for this purpose. Chiefs must report everything of importance to 'Monakalapugila'—my native name which meant 'he who becomes angry if there is just cause for anger'. The *indaba* was in every way successful. In a private interview. Kaiengu was restored to favour, and his band played him back to his camping site. The following day, the hosts began to depart with Anderson and the police. Once more the silence of the veld fell over Chinenga.

I think that the gathering paid dividends. It brought me the friendship of the chiefs and afforded evidence of my good intentions. Thereafter I was freely approached by them in their troubles. Perhaps eight months of the year I spent in visiting every kraal in the district, and assuring my welcome at each by shooting for them, either before I arrived or afterwards. The *machila* in which I travelled—a hammock slung on poles, which was the official 'horse' of a District Officer in the tsetse fly area—was seldom occupied by me. The twelve *machila* carriers were always carrying meat which I had shot. I had to walk; the meat was my goodwill offering.

Four months in the office was sufficient to record the work I

had done in the field. There were, in the first place, the census sheets to be compiled. The *modus operandi* was to send a messenger beforehand to a chief to inform him that I was coming and instruct him to tell his headmen to have every man, child and woman standing before his hut when I arrived. Accompanied by the headman to call out names, I travelled from hut to hut writing down all the names phonetically according to geographical usage. No man or woman cared to utter his own name, but the headman could always do this, and the headman's name would be ascertained by the head messenger. After a few short months there was a record in triplicate, typed by me, of every person in the district, for few then had gone out to work for the European.

The second purpose of my calls on the kraals was to listen to any cases which would be brought before me for trial, and, as time went on, these cases occupied a large part of my time. At first, in order that I should gain a full understanding as well as a knowledge of the language, I had my head messenger repeat very slowly the words in every sentence, which I wrote down phonetically—and, when completed, I adjourned the case to study it more thoroughly.

It was not very long, however, before I was able to dispense with this method and could follow the evidence without any difficulty. My judgments are always given according to the native law, for the interpretation of which all district officers had attached to them a Barotse *induna*. This person performed the double function of representing Lewanika—for north-western Rhodesia was a Protectorate and his presence was a reminder that sovereignty still rested with the Barotse king—and teaching us the native law.

Some of the judgments were queer, according to our standards, but they were normally adhered to. Much of the law related to the general condition of slavery. Certain offences were *kuditaya*—enslaving offences, that is, the persons committing them enslaved themselves to the person against whom the crime was committed. Strangely enough, native law had a philosophy. Society was of a feudal character. The Barotses all ranked as chiefs, the others as

slaves. *Muzhiki wami*, 'my slave', was the common expression, so that domestic slavery existed in a big way; though there was no outward sign to denote it, not any apparent stigma attached to it, except that a slave could not own property. A wife could enslave herself to her husband by committing a *kuditaya* offence, touching his gun for instance, allowing her husband to enter her hut when she was in her menses, without informing him of the fact, upon which she lost all her privileges. A free person could challenge his allegiance from one chief to another by committing a *kuditaya* offence against a new chief. He would appear before him and pour ashes over his own head declaring that he wanted to *kuditaya*, whereupon he both enslaved himself and relieved himself of his former allegiances at the same time. The knowledge of native law possessed by each chief maintained the law without difficulty.

My own census having been completed, I was asked to undertake the census of the people in the Balamba district to the north, to which area a district officer had not been appointed. This meant that, in addition to compiling the census, conducting the administrative work and the mapping of the district, I had much to do alone. The most notable thing about the Balamba people was their promiscuity, which became apparent when compiling the census. At one of the villages or kraals, I found that practically all the wives went round in rotation; every woman slept with every man. There was no doubt about this. It was confirmed on all sides. This kraal did not differ from the other Balamba kraals.

One curious factor, which was also strong amongst all our Mashukulumbwe, was totemism. For a long time we did not understand its significance. We thought that *makua* meant brother. Then we found it had a much stronger force than brother. Those who belonged to the 'buffalo' or 'crocodile' or 'mealie', or any other totem clan were spread widely and intertribally throughout the whole of Northern Rhodesia. The primitive significance had been lost amongst the more advanced natives in the south of Africa, but along the Kafue it was very strong. The people from different tribes, complete strangers to each other, would meet on

a native path and a set of salutations would be exchanged. If they both had the same *makua*, say an eagle, they dropped their suspicious attitude, they were brothers, wherever they came from, whatever language they spoke. If one was a slave, the other would go to great lengths to get him released. If his kraal was near, the stranger would be taken there and feasted. This relationship carried with it a social meaning; people of the same totem could not marry each other. If there was any cohabitation between people of the same totem in ignorance of the totem relationship misfortune would overtake them. People belonging to different totem clans lived in every village and the prohibited relationship between the sexes was always observed. The totems were not eaten by the clan, though it was difficult to apply this strictly to those whose clan name was an article of daily food. No doubt their form of African totemism was a primitive survival; but it was one we had to take notice of in our administration of native law. In the Balamba kraal referred to, it is probable that all the people belonged to different *makua* and consequently their promiscuity was quite allowable.

I was now called upon to take over from Anderson and became the Acting District Commissioner of the Kafue district with headquarters at Mumbwa. I had been preparing for this post by taking a correspondence course in Cape Roman Dutch Law and by reading English Law textbooks, ever since I had transferred from the Police to the Civil side. Hitherto I had dealt only with native law, now I had to deal with Europeans, as well as natives.

Already two payments of tax had been collected from the natives who were called upon to pay 10s for a man and one wife, and 10s for every other wife. The tax was willingly paid. In the Chinenga district, I had very few defaulters. The Secretary for Native Affairs, Worthington, used to say that he judged his district officers by two things: if they had few tax defaulters, it was proof that they had authority in the district: if they tried a large number of court cases, it was proof that they had the natives' confidence. On both these counts, I scored heavily. But the collection of tax, so happily accepted in the first instance by

the natives, began to affect very noticeable changes. The tax meant a complete change from the old primitive economy to a money economy. To get money the natives had to go out to work, which they had not done before.

The first tax payment was from money which had been accumulated over the years by the chiefs and headmen. Most of the second payments had to be new money and they had to compel their young men to go out to work and get it. There were no other sources of income. They had willingly assumed responsibility for a large number of inherited wives, which each old man possessed, the relics of their fathers and brothers, for each of whom they paid an extra 10s. Now the tendency was to get rid of these extra women, to avoid payment for them; so the old tribal custom of caring for all their people was undermined. To go out to work, the recruits had to pass through many kraals on the way, where they spent the night. The owners of these kraals, faced with a stream of strange arrivals who did not belong to their *makua* and with whom they had been more or less at war in the past, began to demand money for their hospitality; so that, by the time a native arrived back at his kraal on the western Kafue, after working for six months, he had little left for taxes. Then too, the treatment they received from some of the European sub-contractors on the railway which was being built, disgraced the white man. It sometimes happened that a native would come to pay his tax with a farthing, which had been given to him, shining and new when it was paid, instead of a gold sovereign. Their first conception of the white man, obtained through their contact with Government officials, most of whom regarded their jobs with idealism, was a high one; but they were quickly disillusioned.

The country began to swarm with prospectors, who demanded carriers and were none too scrupulous in their dealings with the natives. Consequently the prestige of the white man which had been so astonishingly high when I arrived and which was being carefully fostered by the Administration, was becoming sadly tarnished. The new mines, when they opened, offered the local natives employment nearer at hand; but the native who had

lived his free life of hunting and leisure, with his women folk doing most of the work, found himself in trouble with his European boss. As most of the natives ranked as slaves amongst themselves, they accepted the treatment as slaves had always done. It was the chiefs and elders of the tribes who began to grumble. They had understood that, when Lewanika sold them to the white man, and they had accepted this change of condition for the greater good, they would remain unmolested. The white man could extract the minerals; but they did not anticipate that they would all have to go out to work in order to pay a tax to him. They were willing to pay tribute to Lewanika, as they had done before, and as they had paid it to the Makololo; that was easy, for an elephant tusk or hippo teeth were not difficult to come by. But Lewanika had commuted his tribute for cash, and the Europeans were shooting all the elephants. Undoubtedly they gave consideration to the fact that they could now sleep in peace; they were no longer in fear of being attacked while they slept; their lands were their own and there was much to be thankful for.

I arranged a tour through the Basala district and on the first day's trek one of my messengers reached me from Mumbwa carrying a startling message—that the company there of the Armed Native Constabulary had mutinied; they were all Angonis and Yaos from Nyasaland. They refused to go on parade and had chased their officer, Captain Fowler, into his house and told him to stay in it. I decided to proceed straight to Mumbwa.

At Mumbwa I found the mutiny still on. Fowler dared not appear before the police and no parades had been held for some days. The police did what they liked, though they seemed to respect the young white sergeant in charge of them. I talked with him and agreed that they might come on parade if he could tell them that I would address them. Everything would depend on my winning them over. Most of them knew me, for I had trained them as recruits. I told them that the Angonis and Yaos were all soldiers, and that they had always served the King loyally: the country they were serving in was not their own country: they

had come here to maintain law and order, and today, their service might be needed; if the police did not now obey orders everything might be lost, even themselves. At the end of my address they agreed to carry on; but they would not serve under the present commanding officer. They would serve under the sergeant. That was all we wanted. Somehow, Fowler had blotted his copy-book with them. I left it to the sergeant.

The news that something was threatening began to get around amongst the Europeans. I took no steps, except those of a precautionary character. I told the sergeant to strengthen his guards. The Basala chief, Managa, and his redoubtable tribe lived only a few days away. The nearest chief to Mumbwa was Shibuluma, a Baluba, and an old friend. I sent for him and asked him what he knew. He was very frank. 'It is true,' he said, 'there is a meeting being held at Lealui and some Baluba and all the Mashukulumbwe chiefs have gone to it. I have been told that we are not to pay tax. I did not go because I have never recognized the Barotse. None of my people are concerned with what is happening and you can depend on us if anything goes wrong.' If there was a conspiracy of Barotse chiefs to depose Lewanika, backed by subject tribes, on the grounds that the Chartered Company had exceeded its mandate in establishing and collecting taxes from the people instead of confining itself to the exploitation of minerals as they then contended, anything might happen. I felt it my duty to put the few Europeans in the Kafue district on guard. The greatest number were employed on a mine some fifty miles north-west of Mumbwa. I therefore set out alone by bicycle one Sunday morning to drop a hint.

I arrived at the mine some time in the afternoon, and after a few remarks to the manager I said 'It's about the Mashukulumbwe that I came here, just to give you a friendly warning to be careful. There may be some trouble with these people.' He was very quick on the uptake: 'You mean,' he said, 'that women and children should clear out?' 'No, I don't say that. No trouble has occurred and none may occur. I thought it my duty to warn you that there is a possibility. Nothing more than that. There is positively nothing to go on—just a warning note.'

With that and without another word, he jumped on to his bicycle, rode down the road to the mine and returned in half an hour to be followed by a deputation of the white miners. I had not counted on this. I did not know what he had told them. My job was then to quieten their fears. 'There is not the slightest reason to feel alarmed. I have just come from the Mashukulumbwe, and they are all happy and peaceful, but certain information has reached me that there are some agitators in the country who may stir up trouble. I have come just to give you warning that you should be on your guard when strange natives come along.'

'We think,' said a spokesman, 'that we ought to concentrate at Broken Hill and not stay isolated here.' 'That would be dangerous,' I replied, 'the mere fact of all the Europeans clearing out from a strong position like this mine, might set off trouble where none is thought of. I hope you will not do that.' They left, somewhat dissatisfied.

I returned to Mumbwa with a feeling that I had bungled the matter. Instead of dropping a hint to the manager, which he would treat confidentially, he had thoroughly alarmed the whole mine. I was therefore not surprised when I learnt a week or so later that all the white men at the mine had left for Broken Hill. The missionary in the Mumbwa district had gone also. His flight led to a general exodus.

The effect of all this at the London office of the Chartered Company can only be guessed at. While the police force at Mumbwa was getting back into its stride under its young sergeant, its commanding officer was taking no part in its daily routine. Carden was on his way from Kalomo with a strong force of police and we heard he was putting in a little musketry practice on the Kafue, as he had done a few years before when Minenga had presented us with a blooded assegai. Perhaps it would have the same effect.

Altogether the rumours which gained currency outside of the Mumbwa district bore no real relation to the facts. I could not, however, help but feel that I had been to blame. That there had been a meeting of Batoka, Mashukulumbwe and other tribal

chiefs at Lealui, was beyond doubt, and that some attempt on Lewanika's life might be made afterwards, was in accordance with Barotse tradition, for they were a people who had murdered so many of their kings. So, while I felt the evidence was strong that trouble was brewing, I felt I was unwise to have expressed this opinion. I remembered the old Administration adage, 'Never shoot first: if you are attacked you can defend yourself, but you must not fire the first shot.'

CHAPTER V

TO THE ANTIPODES

(1908–1912)

After Carden arrived with his police and matters began to simmer down, I went on some overdue leave; I had been in Northern Rhodesia for five years. I arranged to travel to the coast with Courtney, the son of the editor of the London *Fortnightly Review*, who was District Commissioner in the adjoining Bankoya district. He was compiling a grammar of the Nkoya language and I was doing the same for Luba. We met at Kalomo and travelled down to Bulawayo together. As we wanted to see East Africa, we decided to book our passages on the *Koenig*, a German vessel which sailed from Beira. A day or two later Courtney was asked to go out and inspect a gold mine—probably an old working—which had been discovered. What he knew about gold mining I never discovered, but I suspected that it was his name to a report that they were after, and as he was being given a good fee, he accepted. He came back to our Bulawayo hotel late on Saturday night; and when I went to see him on Sunday morning, I found him ill. He told me he had blackwater. I had him removed to hospital. On Monday I saw there was little chance of our catching the train for Beira unless I left him; and I could not do that. I therefore had to cancel our booking and wait events. Courtney died on the Thursday. After the funeral I decided that I would not go on a German ship alone but secured a passage on the *Walmer Castle* leaving Cape Town the following week.

Courtney's unfortunate death changed my whole life. For a while, I did not mix much with the passengers on board the *Walmer Castle*. They were a gay throng and outside my sphere of social habits. I had lived too long alone to let myself go and I spent most of the time sitting in my deckchair reading. One day

I spoke to a young lady sitting next to me. She was full of life and humour. She asked me what I did in life and seriously and sententiously I replied: 'I am an Empire Builder.' Her eyes opened wider, and she looked at me with her lips twitching, and said: 'An Empire Builder! What is that?' I could see that she did not take me seriously, so I said: 'One who civilizes the waste places of the earth to add another jewel to the British Crown!' That remark knocked her out completely and she collapsed in peals of laughter. I was very innocent and had cherished my vocation sincerely. Imperialism and colonialism had not then become discredited words and bore a high significance in my mind. I then told her that I was a District Officer from Northern Rhodesia, going home on leave. She was the daughter of Captain Francis Hitchins of Durban, who was on board with his wife.

The friendship between Ruby Hitchins and myself ripened. I felt I had found a kindred spirit and I had no eyes for anybody else on board; she was my ideal woman. I found she had a lovely trained voice, extraordinarily expressive in its mezzo-soprano compass and her low laugh and humorous sallies did something to my heart. I danced with her and tingled with delight. I met her father and mother who did not seem to disapprove. He was a kindly old sea-captain and she a severe chaperone. In London I took her out to dinner, then to *Tannhäuser* at Covent Garden, to *Attila* played by Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton; to *As you Like It*; and, meeting her for lunch one day I asked where she would like to go and she astonished me by saying: 'To the Hippodrome.' A music hall! I had been regarding her as a goddess to be entertained by Wagner and Shakespeare—and here she was picking out the comics! I began to adjust myself. I had become a prig. Too much reading and highbrow thinking was making me forget the simpler amusements of life. So we went to the Hippodrome, which, forgetting that it was originally a Roman circus, I chose to consider as the place of hippos, one of which I had been in the habit of killing once a month in Rhodesia to boil down the fat in which to roast my venison!

Then she disappeared from London to Bournemouth where her family had a house, and I went on a visit to my sister Mabel, in

the Midlands. There was for me nowhere else to go. My father had died some years before; my brother Albert had been killed in the South African war; Jack, my one-armed brother, was married and struggling to make a living. Later he died leaving a son who is now a clergyman in Port Elizabeth. Mabel had married a Mr Powles, a small manufacturer, and lived at Acocks Green, Birmingham. There were four children of the marriage, and her husband's relatives were living with them. I fitted myself most happily into their crowded happy household for a month and then joined my brother Jack and his wife. Thereafter I travelled round England until I was suddenly called to my sister's deathbed. She had contracted meningitis, leaving her four young children to be cared for by her bereaved husband. The eldest daughter, Mary, later married Sir Leslie Ford, General Manager of the London Port Authority, at whose home I spent some very happy times on my visits to Britain.

Then another blow fell. Soon after Mabel's death, I received a letter from the London office of the Rhodesian Chartered Company. It stated regretfully that I was being retrenched, with a number of others. For my past services they offered their thanks and a gratuity! The only consolation I had at the time was from my old chief, Anderson, who wrote as follows:

> I can only say that I think no more unfair and unjust act has ever been done in North-western Rhodesia. I have simply been told that you, together with many others have been 'retrenched'. No reason or explanation given. I have written to Worthington about it with the utmost candour and he tells me he is frightfully annoyed about it, but nothing he has said or can say will change it.
>
> I wish you could hear the expressions of indignation and of sympathy with you which are on everybody's mouth. I miss you in the district. Write and tell me what you propose doing and if I can help you in any way. I enclose a feeble kind of testimonial which I hope may be of some use. . . .
>
> Once more I want to thank you very sincerely for your loyalty and help and consideration while you were in the district.

I did not feel in a mood for testimonials. My particular kind

of talents, if I had any at all, were not of much use in England. I had no qualifications for civil life there. I could probably get a job in an orchestra, but what was the use of that to one who had governed a district in Africa? And there was Ruby. All hope of ever being more closely related to her must be abandoned. I had harboured the thought that she might become the wife of a district commissioner. She belonged to Africa, and the wilds of Northern Rhodesia might not have been strange to her. Now I must make another home.

There was Canada which seemed to offer some opportunity to fellow of spirit, willing to do anything and go anywhere; I remembered that Ruby had said she would not like to live there because of the cold. I could not go back to South Africa. The end of my career in Northern Rhodesia would haunt me. There was Australia. I remembered once standing in front of a map of the world, throwing a dart at it and exclaiming that I would go where the dart went. It landed somewhere in the South Seas. This now came back to me: 'That's where I'll go.' So I left Liverpool on a ship bound for Australia in the third class. I wrote to Ruby to say that I was not returning to Africa but hoped to see her again some day, but I did not give her any address.

I landed in Sydney and tried to find a job. But the same inability to fit into the civil life in England pursued me in Sydney; I must get away into the bush where a man is a man, and is not asked for his credentials. I went to Brisbane and took a train as far west as I could go—to Cunnamulla. There were huge sheep farms in that area. I applied and was accepted as a jackeroo—a kind of meteorite which hovered between the boss and the men.

I suppose I was different; they all noticed that. The boss was quite affable—inviting me to dinner occasionally. The station I was on had some forty thousand sheep. My job was to assist in its management. The paddocks which housed the sheep were many miles in area and I had to do some boundary riding to see that the rabbits were not getting through the fences. This was achieved by plugging up the holes they had made. The number of rabbits was unbelievable. One feared to trample on them. One could knock them over with a stick. A poison cart continually

at work seemed to make no impression on them. Yet the sheep thrived. They were watered from artesian wells from which the water shot up boiling hot to be led away by drains stretching for miles through the paddocks. At these drains the sheep drank and the water turned their livers black and spongy. I looked at the white deposit along the banks of the drains and cogitated on the fact that our livers must be becoming black and spongy too.

I remained on the station for the sheep season, but I was not long in realizing, when the first novelty had worn off, that it was useless burying oneself at Cunnamulla. I could see no prospects of any kind, so I moved east to Toowoomba, where there was a settlement of smallholdings, where I might find a lodgement. To begin with, I accepted a job as a book-keeper on a cattle station called Canning Creek. The work was not arduous, but the opportunity I sought did not arise. I heard about the sugar industry in northern Queensland and made for Cairns. Here surely was a place where I could dig myself in. The labour in the fields, was, of course, all white; it was easy to get a chipping job, that is, weeding and hoeing between the cane roots. I was not particular; if one wanted to learn anything about sugar culture, one had to work in the cane. A couple of weeks satisfied me with that, and I went on to Musgrave Mill. Here were all kinds of jobs to be had for the asking and I set myself to learn something about sugar manufacturing and its economics.

It was here that I began to hear about New Guinea. I was attracted. That was the kind of life for which I was trained. New Guinea had recently come under the control of the Australian Government; most of it was unexplored and most of its people were cannibals, but it was said, and very erroneously, that they were gradually yielding to an intelligent administration. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea; so one fine morning, I set out for Port Moresby, the capital of Papua, where I presented myself to the secretary of the Administration and applied for an appointment to the civil service. I related my acquaintance with English law and told something of my work in Northern Rhodesia. After consideration I found myself at work in a Government office at Port Moresby.

The work was very simple. I found indeed, that I was the most experienced amongst the few officials in the office; even the one trained legal man the Administration employed began to ask my advice. We became great friends. He had the use of a Government schooner and at weekends we would go for a cruise up the coast and I learned a little about sailing. It was idyllic; I know nothing more soothing and satisfying as a holiday, than the deck of a schooner in the calm waters of the tropics.

It was not long before I was detailed to accompany the Governor on an expedition to a newly discovered goldfield in the west of Papua. Anxious to include gold as a source of revenue, he had given permission to three famous miners, Mat Crowe and the brothers Pike, to prospect in the west. They had just returned, after incredible exertions and an escape from being eaten by the dreaded Kukukukus. After being in the unknown for some nine months, they had found gold in a mountain stream which was a tributary of the Lakekamu, on the British side of the main range where it joined German territory.

We left Port Moresby in Whitten's launch—a shallow draught vessel used by this trader on the Papuan rivers. Close contact with the Governor, Judge Plunket Murray, revealed the dedicated man without any frills. He lived for his job—'Papua for the Papuans'. He was an Australian, trained to law, who had served with the Australian forces in South Africa and was decorated for valour. He had been appointed to New Guinea as a judge, five years before. There had been a succession of governors before he succeeded and introduced a pacific system which, while it had stood the test of time, had kept Papua in the stone age. Tall, six foot three in height, strongly built, softly spoken and reserved, he gave the impression of quiet strength that could surmount any situation. His brother was Gilbert Murray, Professor of Greek at Oxford who subsequently represented South Africa on the League of Nations. The Governor was an Oxford scholar and a champion boxer and swordsman; but he was a true Australian, without any trace of British class bias.

We soon reached the Lakekamu beyond the mouth of which

little was known. We passed through miles of sago swamps and for the next few days we chugged up the river through country which seemed uninhabited.

At length we arrived at a spot where we could go no further by launch at the junction of the Tiveri river with the Arabi. The only place to walk was up or down the mountain streams. There were no paths whether of man or game, and the tropical forest was too dense and too mountainous for travel. We plunged our way up a stream which led in the direction of the new gold find, dodging the boulders and avoiding the deeper pools, to rest exhausted under the dripping trees. We climbed over the watersheds, using the dangling liana vines to pull ourselves up to the top and at length, descending, arrived at the mountain stream, where the gold had been discovered, and made our camp on its banks. We did not catch sight of any cannibals, but we did see the gold. It was to be found in small nuggets under every bit of moss lying under the pebbles. I picked up a small amount with my pocket knife. The whole countryside was impregnated with gold; my inexperience did not permit me to guess its value, but there seemed to be enough for a good-sized digging. The Governor decided that it should be proclaimed a goldfield, open to anybody who paid for a miner's right under the Queensland Law.

First, however, we had to lay hold of one of these wild Kukukukus in order to make friends with them. It was the customary way with the Papuan Administration to catch a few of these wild savages, take them back to Port Moresby, forgive them all their past crimes, which were not crimes to them, and then send them back to their own regions to spread the news that the strange white men were harmless and good friends. We had to find a village in the forest. Ultimately we found several villages, but not a soul in them, and we returned without our Kukukuku.

The hunt disclosed the iron nature of the Governor. He was getting on in years, but he would plunge on to the extremity of his endurance, climbing through the dense tropical jungle without pause; and when it was decided to halt he would sink down

sodden to the skin in a pool of water and go to sleep without any attempt at finding a dry spot.

The decision having been taken to proclaim Lakekamu a new goldfield, Crowe and the Pike brothers were allowed to peg out their claims in the river bed; then they returned to recruit their native labour in Samarai—twelve natives for each miner. Another officer, Bowden, and I were deputed to establish a Government office on the new field; later, an experienced magistrate, Lyons, was sent up to take charge.

Within two months of the proclamation, miners from Australia began to assemble in great numbers. Most of them were seasoned diggers who followed gold wherever it was found. The older ones who knew the New Guinea conditions came with their recruited gangs of natives, and Whitten's boat was filled with labourers. Whitten, seeing an opportunity, grasped at it and established a store on the field, and his launch was kept busy supplying it with goods. Others, without labour, who thought they had only come to the gold fields to pick up the gold with a spoon, became practically destitute and found their way back to civilization with Government assistance.

We, at court, were kept busy settling miners' disputes, usually about the boundaries of their claims or their water rights; only occasionally were the proceedings of a criminal character, when there had been a rough house at the store and somebody had smashed up things with an axe. Each miner lived on his claim under a calico fly spread over poles, open at either end to the wind and weather. At one end was his bed and at the other end was stored all his rice which formed the rations of his labourers, and his own tins of food supplies. Life was really down to earth. In the daily hunt for gold, there was no room in the mind for any other subject. It was almost impossible for civilized men to get lower in the human scale. To obtain a thousand ounces of gold and get out was the sole desire of every man; but, in most cases, after the native labour had been paid off in Samarai, a few weeks were given up to riotous living and the miners were back again, beginning afresh with a new set of labourers.

At Lakekamu this routine was upset by an outbreak of

dysentery which nearly ended all work on the goldfields. Warned by previous experience, the Government endeavoured to isolate it by ordering all sick natives to be brought to a makeshift hospital so as not to contaminate the camps and intimidate the workers. It was a struggle between the miners and the Government to get this order carried out. When the natives came, they came to die. When at last the dysentery passed away it left beri-beri in its train. Seemingly healthy men suddenly dropped dead as they walked along and were buried on a mountain ridge; there was only the hard-worked police to dig the graves.

The Church of England which was appealed to, had sent up two Mission nurses, one of whom, Sister Combly, was beloved by all for her great work on the Yodda Goldfield. She was strikingly beautiful, a fair-haired, blue-eyed heroine, about thirty years of age and highly cultured, who had had some medical training in London but left it for the Mission field. She had been known to perform operations on the Yodda when there was no doctor about. To see her striding over the dumps and wading through the water in her long boots, wet to the skin, on some mission of mercy, smiling and confident and beautiful, raised a lump in one's throat that our race should breed such women. She died of dysentery after her return from Lakekamu.

After the epidemic passed, I was moved from Lakekamu and transferred as magistrate to the Mambare district with Ioma as its headquarters—a post which had become suddenly vacant. There were no other white men in the whole area of the Mambare, a huge district, the northern boundary being contiguous with German New Guinea. The Australian administration had always run Papua on a shoe string; the whole territory was run with a handful of magistrates and assistant-magistrates. My list of titles when I was first appointed to Ioma were as follows:

1. Acting Magistrate, Mambare Division.
2. Acting Warden for Goldfields, Mambare Division.
3. An Officer of Armed Constabulary.
4. A Distributor under 'The Regulations dealing with Native Matters'.
5. A Labour Inspector under the Native Labour Ordinance.

6. An Officer authorized to grant and revoke permits under 'The Arms, Liquor, and Opium Prohibition Ordinance of 1899'.
7. An Agent for the Curator of Intestate Estates, Mambare Division.
8. An Inspector under the 'Timber Ordinance' (Consolidated) 1909.
9. An Inspector under the 'Diseased Animals Act'.
10. Acting Postmaster at Ioma.
11. A Receiver of Public Moneys, Mambare Division.
12. Magistrate for Native Affairs.
13. Justice of the Peace empowered to consent under the 'Marriage Act of 1864 (Queensland Division)' to the marriage of minors.

To enter upon all these duties in the Mambare division entailed a long walk across Papua from Port Moresby on the south coast to the north, a journey customarily made by ship. There was no road. I obtained sufficient carriers to take me a few miles out of Port Moresby, after which it was expected I would be able to recruit others. It rained incessantly. Frequent halts had to be made while the few police I had hunted up a new set of carriers from a different tribe.

We waded up streams in the general direction of our march ascending higher and higher. We climbed up on to razor-backed spurs in the thick forest, walking over the springing, matted roots of trees. If one's foot slipped from the basket of roots, one's legs suddenly disappeared to the thigh. It was a botanist's heaven; orchids grew on every tree. In one region we reached a bamboo forest and obtained water by cutting the bamboo poles in half, when water poured out. At a higher level, all vegetation except the cycads, which grew thickly, disappeared. We walked in the mists, following faint tracks, soon obliterated in the overpowering growth of vegetation. We came across few villages, but at one we were smothered with fleas, as though a swarm of bees had enveloped us; but the leeches which awaited our passage and clung to our legs could not be pulled off without injury. I pulled down the tops of my puttees and removed them by inserting the blade of a knife between their heads and my skin; if they were pulled off, the head, left behind, developed into a New Guinea

sore. Fortunately there were few snakes in Papua; I never saw one. But the worst kind of punishment lay in the scrub-itch. A red microscopic insect bored its way under the skin, set up an irritation, and after a few days broke out in white pustules. The prevention was to wash carefully in paraffin each day.

Over the watershed of the main ranges, under the lee of Mount Victoria, we began to descend, finding our way along the beds of mountain streams, and in splashing down a stream one day, we came without warning upon a broad avenue of crotons and palm trees running at right angles, which led from the river to the Government camp at Kokoda. This had served, years before, the Yodda Goldfields. It was a surprise to come so suddenly on this beautiful spot. Here I found a young patrol officer, Chinnery (subsequently to become famous as an anthropologist), in a veritable tropical arcadia of colour and fruitfulness. He was the only white man in the whole interior of the Mkuzi district. The miners had all departed for Lakekamu; his chief, Oelrichs, the magistrate, was at Buna Bay on the coast. His obvious love of his job was most refreshing and after my own heart.

After leaving Kokoda, the way down the Mambare river to my new station at Ioma was comparatively easy, though there was no sign of a road at first, and when at last I reached it and settled down in that empty station, the prospect was pleasing on all sides, though, compared with Africa, the riverine population appeared broodingly hostile.

The Mambare division was a huge area—much of it unexplored and not yet under government control. Over most of it progress was only possible by the liberal use of a scrub knife and axe. The only roads were by river. As these rivers emptied themselves into the sea at frequent intervals, the isolation of the forest regions which edged the river banks was not as serious as it sounds. Ioma was built on Tamata Creek, a tributary of the Mambare. It had an eventful history. Several magistrates lay buried at Tamata, the first station, where a number of miners had been murdered, but the goldfields were now worked out and deserted and the native population was being brought under

control. Each magistrate had thirty members of the Papuan Armed Constabulary at his station under his command. They had been recruited from all over the territory and trained as recruits at Port Moresby, but they did not display the soldierly aptitude of the Africans for their work; they had none of the alertness of the Barotse native police on parade, but they had great qualities of loyalty and bravery and endurance.

I spent the first few weeks at Ioma putting the police through their paces on the parade ground. There might be need for well-disciplined men, for the Agadir crisis was at its height and it looked as though Britain might be at war with Germany. In such an event should I wait for the German magistrate, with his fifty South Sea Island police at Morobe, to come and attack me, or should I go and attack him? He had a machine-gun. I had only the ordinary police Martini. Fortunately the crisis dissolved and the contemplated action was unnecessary. In 1914 I believe the Australians did attack Morobe and the magistrate became a prisoner of war in Australia.

The Papuans were on very much the same plane as the Pygmies of the Congo, or our own Bushmen of Southern Africa. They are the anthropological puzzle of the world, Melanesians, Polynesians, Negritos, mixed together speaking many languages; there was a different language every sixty miles of coast. In my time, few of the tribes were on speaking terms with the others. Tribe did not communicate with tribe or village with village; which was the reason why there were no roads between them. An eternal vendetta was being waged, which rarely worked itself out. Some, of course, were head-hunters, killing for trophies. Some killed just to eat, like the Kukukuku. However one looked at it, life was cheap: death always just round the corner.

The first thing the Government had to do when a new village was taken under its wing was to make the people understand that any more killing was against the law. The effect of the armed constabulary, seen only on rare occasions, was potent; that was one of the reasons why the village constable, dressed in police uniform, was so effective. I had learned in Africa that the best

way to bring people under control was to compile a census. I therefore made it my first business to get a census of such as I could. The natives did not show that eagerness to co-operate as the Africans had done, but I persevered. I visited every hut or collection of huts on the banks of the Mambare River along the coast, following the tributaries as we came to them, until I had a fairly complete census of the areas. I have no doubt it had some effect; though, in the absence of the chiefs, it was difficult to find anybody in authority.

The whaleboat I used was a joy. It enabled me to visit the coastal villages and Klink, the German magistrate at Morobe, with its lovely harbour sheltered by a peninsula of five gradually rising hills. On the first hill was the shipping office with the wharf at its base: on the second, the stores: on the third were the police quarters: on the fourth was the magisterial office and on the fifth, the magistrate's house, all served by a graded road. The Germans had money to spare and employed Chinese carpenters and bricklayers brought in from the Solomons. In Papua, all Government stations were built by the police of bush material: at Ioma of Nipa palm.

Klink spoke English perfectly. He entertained me right royally at his house and we arranged to make a tour up the boundary. It had not been visited since the Boundary Commission departed and nobody knew to whom the natives living along it belonged. We arranged to meet at the Waria river, which emptied itself into the sea in German territory. Klink seemed to have all his police with him as well as a German police officer, who did not speak English. The two police forces camped side by side. My police spoke pidgin Motuan, the lingua-franca of the Papuan police, acquired at Port Moresby, which all officials learned. The German police were not Papuans, but came from the islands and spoke pidgin English. I could not understand all that the German police said, but their German officer could understand neither language. The boundary was not the Waria River, but a degree of latitude—so that the river, in its windings, was first on one side of the boundary then on the other. We would decide whether it was a British or a German village before we reached it, and

whoever it belonged to would enter the village first, salute the other as he arrived and then shake hands. This act was supposed to show the natives which administration to obey.

I adopted a dangerous procedure in returning to Ioma. It was easy to look down to the sea along the plunging path of the Waria River from the height we had attained; and over the dark green forest-clad slopes to the Mambare River. I asked the police whether we could take a short cut, through the forests. They decided we could. We appeared to have sufficient rice to last us for ten days, so we started off. It was not long before we were in grave trouble. Our progress was very slow; the bush-knife was needed every inch of the way. The rice which was our only food was disappearing very fast. No other food was obtainable; we had to travel on short rations. When we got to a stream, the way would become clearer and we advanced more quickly. Finally we made it and arrived back at Ioma having done what I considered was a very good job of work.

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE IN PAPUA

(1912)

SOON after I was admitted to the Papuan Civil Service I wrote to my friend Ruby Hitchins in Durban. I did not disclose to her the months I had spent in trying to find a place to build a home and my wandering in Australia. But now I felt I had got my feet on the ladder again and was in a job I could understand, and I wrote hopefully, as a friend, describing the coral reefs of Port Moresby and its neighbourhood, with a desire to arouse her interest. Months passed without a reply. Then one day, on the Lakekamu goldfields I had a letter from her. In explanation of the long delay she told me that she had been very interested in my letter, but before she could reply, the letter had been lost. She had hunted high and low for it, without success, but during a recent spring-cleaning, the letter had been found wedged into the loose cover of a large armchair. She now hastened to write.

I was overjoyed. I sat down at once and painted a graphic picture of the goldfield in its true colours, hiding nothing of its close-to-earthness, its primitive character, its savagery. She replied at once, telling me that she had handed my letter to a well-known novelist who had used it as copy in a book she was writing. Over the months, our correspondence began to assume a journal form. It grew warmer in tone. When I reached Ioma and learnt that Oelrichs, my next-door magistrate, was married and his wife was living with him at Buna Bay, I resolved on a visit to them by whaleboat to see how the one white woman on the northern coast of Papua managed to live.

At Buna Bay the charming Mrs Oelrichs had made what I thought was a beautiful home of the magistracy. Venturing to tell her that I was contemplating matrimony, she encouraged

me. We planned that if Ruby would consent to be my bride she should come by the *Mindoro*, the coastal steamer, which came round once a month. I would board the ship at Mambare Beach and go to Buna Bay with my bride, and Oelrichs, the magistrate, would marry us. We would then return by whaleboat along the coast, sleeping at selected spots each night, where the natives would have built rest houses for us; and then have three days up the Mambare River, sleeping on the banks each night, until we got to Ioma, It sounded a fascinating programme to me.

I wrote to Ruby and proposed to her and patiently waited for an answer. A couple of letters passed between us; she, uncertain whether she was reading my letter aright, and I, afraid of being too blunt, lest I put her off. But with doubts finally all cleared, we began to make plans. Letters in those days took about two months to get from New Guinea to South Africa, so our arrangements took some time to complete. Ruby had a friend in Durban who was a niece of Lady Cowley, who lived in Brisbane; she was contemplating making a visit to Lady Cowley and Ruby would accompany her. That was easily arranged. Ruby fell in with my plan that she should catch the *Matunga* at Brisbane, come on to Port Moresby, then by the *Mindoro* to the Mambare beach where we would meet and go down to Buna Bay to be married.

Meanwhile I was decorating the Nipa palm house we were to live in at Ioma, which occupied one side of the croton-surrounded parade ground, draping the walls with coloured limbo, ordering furniture from Sydney and having rest shelters built along the coast and up the Mambare River—six of them—for our honeymoon. I began eagerly to count the days to her arrival.

At last the time came. The day before the *Mindoro* was due at the Mambare beach, I set off in the whaleboat on the swift-flowing current, knowing that I should reach the beach at sunrise. I did. All day I sat in the rest shelter I had made on the beach, looking out on the empty sea for a sign of smoke. There was no smoke.

The *Mindoro* at last arrived eight days after she was due. The sight of her smoke filled me with exultation. I shouted to the police to put out the whaleboat, and by the time we reached the ship she was at anchor. Seeing me coming, the captain looked

over the side and shouted: 'There is nobody for you on board, Mr Nicholls.' My heart sank. Of course it was known all up and down the coast that I was expecting a bride. We exchanged mailbags and a few Government stores. There was nothing else. Before the *Mindoro* left, I cut open the mailbag to find out what had happened. There was a letter in Ruby's familiar handwriting. It appeared that some time before, Alfred Cowley had visited Port Moresby as the chairman of the British New Guinea Development Company. He had seen the Governor who had told him that I would shortly be due for leave, and he thought it better that we should be married in Brisbane. Sir Alfred, therefore, advised Ruby to stay with them until I arrived and be married from their home. She could do no other than accept their advice.

While the ship was off-loading its stores, I wrote a passionate letter asking her to come to me at once. I had made all arrangements. My leave was an indefinite event. She should not be put off; and having given vent to my feelings, I set out for an inspection of the Gira River, where I had some census work to do and where I could fill in time until the *Mindoro* arrived the next month.

When she did arrive the procedure of its last visit was repeated. There was nobody for me. My letter to Ruby imploring her to come had no reply: she had obviously not received it; there was just a chatty letter from her which hoped that I should not be long in reaching Brisbane. The third month came along and I was again down on the beach, looking out to sea for the *Mindoro* which was delayed as usual. I had to be there on time; I dared not run the risk of it arriving on the due date in my absence, for that would have meant Ruby going on to Buna Bay, leaving me stranded on the Mambare.

On this occasion, while waiting for a sign of smoke, I saw a sail appear on the horizon and watched it idly as it tacked slowly towards the beach. It was a schooner. I saw it lower its sails and put down a dinghy. A white man wearing a topee was being rowed ashore by a native rower. I walked down to the beach to meet him as he stepped ashore. He stretched out his hand and said: 'Mr Nicholls, I'm the Bishop of New Guinea and I've come

to marry you.' 'Delighted to meet you,' I said, 'but there isn't a bride, unless she arrives on the *Mindoro*. I'm waiting for her now. How did you know that there was a bride coming?' 'Oh, it's common talk,' he said, 'and as I happened to be on the north coast I thought I'd come and look in.' That was very kind of him.

The *Mindoro* arrived without the bride and Bishop Sharp accompanied me back to my camp at Ioma. There he remained with me for a week while we played chess, swapped yarns and talked religion. He was splendid company. By that time I had got the 'hang' of it. Ruby was not coming to the Mambare. She was expecting me to come as soon as I could be relieved and would remain in Australia.

A couple of weeks later the Governor unexpectedly arrived at the Mambare mouth in the auxiliary yacht *Merrie England*, with Ryan, a patrol officer, as a relief. After a week of inspection at Ioma I left with him and eventually we arrived in Samarai, the headquarters of the Administration in Eastern Papua. Next day I went to the shipping agent on the island to find out the best and quickest way to get down to Australia. I was advised to go by the North German Lloyd steamer, due in the following day from Singapore, which went direct to Sydney. I could wait and go by the *Matunga*, a Burns Philip ship, but that would arrive in Brisbane a fortnight later.

The following morning I was sitting on the verandah of the hotel in Samarai, when someone came along and said: 'There is a young lady waiting for you on the wharf.' I suspected a leg pull and took no notice; but when Ramsay the Rector, came past and said: 'There is a lady waiting for you,' I realized there was something in it, and jumped up at once and made my way to the quay. There, coming towards me I saw at least ten or twelve people advancing in line down the broad croton and palm-lined path on which the dappled sunlight lay. As I drew nearer I recognized Ruby in the centre of the group. When I reached her, the flanks of the human escort closed in on us like a Zulu impi, to watch our greeting. I was too overcome to do more than shake hands and remark: 'It's very hot, isn't it!' The captain of the *Matunga* made a grimace and was heard to remark, 'What kind

of a man is this, who cannot kiss his bride?' The others did not think much of it either.

We walked along with the Rector's wife, Mrs Ramsay, with whom Ruby had already made friends and with whom she had arranged to stay overnight at the Mission, towards which we were now being hustled. When we arrived, she pushed us into a room and said, 'Now say good day to each other.' We were glad to be alone. What I had not done in public, I now did in good measure. It was years since we had met, but our shyness had soon worn off by the time Mrs Ramsay came in with tea. 'Now, when are you going to be married?' she asked. 'Tomorrow, I suppose,' I replied. 'No, you can't be married tomorrow. Miss Hitchins will have much to do tomorrow, and you will have arrangements to make for the wedding. You can be married on Saturday morning. Miss Hitchins must be married in a veil. If you haven't one, fortunately we have. It's a new confirmation veil and she can wear it very nicely. And Elsie Whitten will be your bridesmaid. You, Mr Nicholls, must ask Mr Murray, the Governor's nephew to be best man. I hear that he has already been asked, and he has agreed.' Everything, apparently, had been arranged—dress, bridesmaid, best man, the captain of the *Matunga* to give the bride away, Bishop Sharp and Rector Ramsay to marry us, and all that was left for me to do was to go round and borrow a white suit from somebody. I had not even a ring, but Ruby had remembered that and brought one with her.

The next thing to be done was to cancel my booking on the German line and make a reservation on the *Matunga* which was going to Brisbane from Samarai in ten days' time. But where should we go in the meantime? Mrs Ramsay had an answer for that, too. 'The best place for you to go after the wedding is to a desert island between Samarai and the mainland. You will have it all to yourselves. It was used as a quarantine station some years ago, but it is no longer used. It has a bungalow. Go over and have a look at it tomorrow.' The doctor lent us his whaleboat and crew—off we went. Everything about the island was enchanting. The bungalow consisted of a long rectangular room built in wood and roofed with corrugated iron. It was raised on

stilts and reached by a set of steps. It had two windows on either side and was empty and clean and sweet-smelling. A little apartment at the end contained a stove and kitchen-table and there was fresh water in a tank outside. The island was about ten acres in area, and rose to some height in the centre. It was planted with coconuts. Ruby agreed that it was a glorious spot. We returned jubilant from our excursion and now all was in readiness for the wedding.

Mrs Ramsay had given me strict instructions that my face was not to be seen round the rectory the next morning. The bride was to be seen only at church, so we made the best of the day before. After dinner Ruby and I had a glorious evening alone together during which Ruby told me why she had not come to the Mambare beach. She was all set in Brisbane to follow my instructions, when Alfred Cowley came back from New Guinea and told her that the Governor did not wish her to go to the Mambare. I was due for leave, and it was just a matter of making arrangements for somebody to take my place. So Sir Alfred ordered that she should stay with him. Ruby was quite content with this until she got my first letter and she felt she was letting me down by remaining in Brisbane. But Sir Alfred was adamant; she must be guided by the Governor who alone knew the conditions. She had written to the Governor, who had notified her that I should soon be able to go on leave. But when she received a particularly appealing letter from me to ask her to ignore all the hindrances, Lady Cowley had decided against her husband and so Ruby packed up, and with Sir Alfred's assistance, sailed on the *Matunga* to Port Moresby. Here she stayed at the hotel at Port Moresby and then began for her, the same vigil on the south coast as I had been keeping on the north. She had learnt that the *Merrie England* had left with the Governor for the Mambare with my relief, but she could obtain no information on the probable date of its return. When the *Merrie England* went out it might be away for a fortnight or three months, depending on the cases the Governor would have to try as Chief Justice. So each day she sat gazing out to sea, watching for smoke on the horizon in the east. Her thoughts must have been dismaying, but,

just as she was in the depths of despair, the *Matunga* arrived from Australia again, after its round voyage. It had on board the Governor's sister-in-law, who was going with the *Matunga* to Samarai and to meet the *Merrie England* there. One of the Mission nurses who had been with me on the Lakekamu Goldfields sought out Ruby and told her to go along; she could not go wrong; she was bound to meet me in Samarai. With this invitation Ruby packed up and sailed in the *Matunga* and was unmercifully teased by the captain all the way! He had asked if he might give her away. She replied that since he had been giving her away all the time he might continue to do so! So she duly arrived in Samarai. It was, however, purely by chance that she found me there. The German ship on which I was to leave for Australia was a day late; had it arrived on time I should have been on my way to Sydney when Ruby arrived in Samarai; this joke of my being caught by a neck went round the Mission Station!

On the wedding morning we were awakened by a gun being fired from the *Merrie England* which had come in during the night. We rushed out to see what it meant. The *Matunga* and the *Merrie England* and all the small craft in the harbour were dressed in flags, for which the gun was a signal. I have no idea who arranged it. The little Mission Church was full with all the Government party when I stood at the altar, waiting for the bride, trembling with excitement. I noticed that Ruby betrayed no emotion. She might have been undergoing this ordeal for the twentieth time, as I told her afterwards! Young Murray was beside me. His uncle the Governor was in the principal seat. In front were the Bishop and the Rector, who between them 'did the job'. It was the Bishop who had come to the Mambare beach to marry us who addressed the congregation, and a sentence from his address still lingers pleasantly in my memory: 'It gives me great pleasure to join these two people in holy matrimony. Not all the unplumbed seas between South Africa and New Guinea were sufficient to keep these two fond lovers apart.'

The reception at the Mission was attended by all Samarai, old diggers as well as officials. This was the first wedding I had ever attended and probably the first wedding Samarai had attended.

The Governor and the Bishop and all the Mission station were there, and the Governor remarked *sotto voce*: 'You should not think you are the first man to be married, Nicholls!' I suppose I was showing my happiness too plainly.

After three days on our desert island we received a visit from the Bishop and the old Mission nurse of Lakekamu acquaintance who dropped in for afternoon tea, and we learnt the latest news. The *Merrie England* had returned to Port Moresby and the *Matunga* was expected back in two days' time. We should have only two days more on the island. Our two dear visitors remained part of our many happy memories. Bishop Sharp became Bishop of Queensland; Nurse Lloyd, like so many Mission women, spent her life in simple devotion to the sick and suffering stone age people, without a single thought of any earthly reward. Imperialism is a matter of spirit: Papua has never yielded any material dividend to its rulers or its lovers.

When we arrived at Brisbane and opened the *Brisbane Courier* we found, splashed in headlines across the front page: 'South Sea Romance. Bride chases groom half round the world. Caught at Post'; a highly coloured account of our story followed. On the way to Sydney we found it was the talk of the train. In Sydney we found the story reproduced in the *Sydney Morning Herald*; and when we arrived in Tasmania, where I had chosen to spend my leave, it appeared in the Hobart paper. We felt we had added something to the amusement of the Antipodes!

While we were in Tasmania I received a letter from the Governor offering me the post of Headquarters Officer of the Papuan Armed Constabulary: that was, commandant of the police of that territory. I would live at Port Moresby but would be required to visit, from time to time, all the magistracies where the constabulary were stationed. This was very considerate of the Governor. I was sorry that I could not return to the Mambare which I very much wished Ruby could have seen; but I could not object to the Governor's proposal.

In due course we returned to Port Moresby. The furniture, now all diverted from Ioma to the capital, supplemented by other goods purchased in Australia, was all assembled for

unpacking and friends from Port Moresby came along to assist. Ruby had been looking round for servants. There were plenty of police to draw from, but since every recruit came from a Papuan village and had not the slightest comprehension of the use of anything in a European home, and she could not talk the language, she was in despair.

One evening while the magistrate of Port Moresby was with us, she told him that she had at length found a native who might prove useful. He knew the difference between a teapot and a saucepan and she could make herself understood.

'What's his name?' asked our guest. 'Jackob,' replied Ruby, 'he is a little hunchback.' 'Oh, Jackob; he should be all right. We've had him in gaol for two years.'

Ruby took alarm, 'Not for stealing, I hope,' she said. 'Nothing as bad as that,' he replied, 'only for eating his mother!' Ruby exclaimed 'How dreadful! I must get rid of him.' 'I wouldn't do that,' said the magistrate, 'he is not going to eat you. He has been educated in gaol and is now fit to move in respectable circles. You may not get another as good.'

Ruby digested this information. 'But how did he come to eat his mother?' she asked. 'Well, I suppose she was not his mother—as we understand it. She was one of his mothers. She had been killed in a vendetta, and he naturally took part in the feast. When Judge Murray asked him why, after assisting in killing his mother, he should eat her, he asked in some astonishment: "But why should I not? Was she not good eating?" The Governor said he did not know how to reply to this question. All he could say was that it wasn't done; it was against the law.' So Jackob, who had taken part in eating his mother, became part of the household; and Titi, whom I got down from Ioma, became the houseboy; Jackob's wife was the washerwoman.

I think Ruby was a good and lively acquisition to the very scanty society of Port Moresby. It was not long before she organized private theatricals and our house became the centre for rehearsals. The play was performed at the Constabulary camp and the theatre erected in the open air. Most people came to it by whaleboat. It was quite a success. Many evenings were spent with

The [illegible] issioner on tour in Rhodesia

PLATE 2

At Lakekamu Goldfields

Ruby Hitchins
(Mrs Heaton Nicholls)

Wedding Grou[illegible]marai

PLATE 3

The Church at Samarai

Ruby at the piano I had acquired in Sydney and I occasionally aided with the 'cello she had bought for me on my birthday.

During these days we had information that Ruby's mother and her sister, Mrs Price, with her husband, were coming to Sydney. Price, a retired manager of the Crown Gold Mine at Johannesburg, was coming to New Guinea with a view to examining its possibilities for investment. My mother-in-law and sister-in-law decided to remain in Sydney for the present, while Price went off on a tour of the plantations at the east end of Papua. It was while her mother and sister were in Sydney that Ruby gave birth to her first child, Joyce, in our house at Port Moresby. She was attended by the principal medical officer of the territory and by the bank manager's wife as a nurse. He was probably a good doctor for men, but I suspect he knew little about women and childbirth. For the first ten days all was well; then my wife's temperature began to rise. Two curretting operations were performed without success and she was then removed by whaleboat from Konidubu to the hospital at Port Moresby. There she developed puerperal mania and could with difficulty be held down in bed, but in three weeks the mania left her. Weak and limp, she was ordered by the doctor to leave New Guinea. He carried her tenderly on board the *Matunga* and for days she was in a comatose condition, attended only by Price and myself, with a young girl I had managed to engage to look after the baby. Ruby showed the first signs of recognizing her surroundings when Lady Cowley came aboard in Brisbane and she burst into tears in her arms.

In Sydney she was so far recovered that the doctor said it was not Ruby he was afraid for but the child, who had developed dysentery. Gradually they improved. Ruby had all her beautiful chestnut hair cut off. It was decided that she should return with her mother and sister to Durban: I would return to my work in New Guinea. Thus came to an end the dream I had harboured of building a new career in Papua; for it soon became clear to me that Ruby could not return. I could not live without her. After learning that she and the baby were well in Durban, I sent in my resignation. I had somehow to start again, this time with a wife and child and I hadn't the remotest idea how to start.

CHAPTER VII
ZULULAND SETTLER
(1912–1913)

THE problem was still with me when I joined Ruby who was living with her mother in her comfortable home, situated at the top of Moore Road on the fashionable Berea of Durban. My mother-in-law was kindness itself and made everything easy; her son Lewis, then recognized as one of the best lawyers in Durban, as head of the family, accepted the position, but I felt that all my wife's old friends were saying: 'Ruby has married a man whom she and her mother have to keep.' I was always introduced as 'Ruby's husband'; I had no recognized personality of my own. I just did not fit in with the commercial life of Durban and I was equally misplaced in social circles. I could not remember ever feeling so out of place and miserable.

I was saved by Ruby's uncle, Senator Hitchins, who had been Minister of Railways in the old Natal Government. Realising my predicament he suggested that I should visit his son Vivian, who was pioneering in Zululand, some 200 miles from Durban up the north coast of Natal. Here he was planting the first sugar cane on the Umfolozi Flats, a tract of Crown land which was being allotted by the Government under a settlement scheme to suitable applicants. I jumped at the Senator's suggestion. A train ran three times a week to the railhead in northern Zululand, Somkeli; I caught the first one available.

I fell in love with Umfolozi from the beginning. The Flats took their name from the broad flowing Umfolozi river, which as it neared the sea, formed a huge flat basin of rich alluvial soil. It was a waste of forest, papyrus and elephant grass in the river delta. Umfolozi was on the borders of Natal's white settlement; beyond was Native Reserve. To tame this wild place and bring

it into fruitful production, appeared a man's full sized job. This was worth while—if I could obtain one of the farms then to be allotted by the Government. I knew that the farms available on the south bank had all been allotted although they were not yet occupied, but those on the north bank were still to be given out.

I stayed a week with Vivian Hitchins and fully explored the north bank of the river and then went back to Durban where, full of hope, I wrote out my application. My qualifications were some acquaintance with sugar-growing—my Queensland experience, which would come in handy; the bank, with the backing of my wife's relatives, which would provide proof of sufficient financial assistance, and my hitherto useless testimonials would provide sufficient witness to my character. All that was left to do was to wait. I waited a long time. But the anticipation of acquiring my own farm changed my whole view of Durban. I saw it with new eyes, and so inspired was I that I began to write a novel!

Its underlying theme was the growth of Bantu nationalism; it was intended as a warning to white South Africa.

When it was finished, I submitted it to the Authors' Society for criticism. They advised that it should be cut down. Later I sent it to a publishing house, who, for political reasons, suggested that I should change the ending. But I was then too busy pioneering to attempt this alteration.

Nearly ten years later, after I went to Parliament, I submitted the manuscript to Smuts who advised against publication. It was not constructive, he said, and would militate against my usefulness in political life. I then submitted it to Senator Langenhoven, the Afrikaans writer, who wrote:

> I think, upon the whole, that interest would be served by publication. If it does awaken the native, it will to more effectual purposes awaken the whites. We are up against factors which operate with the relentless doom of natural laws . . . so far as that result may be counteracted, its avoidance will be accomplished if at all, by white superiority. To the utmost exercise and effort of that superiority, to the facing of that which lies ahead of us, to thought and purpose

deliberately directed to the ordeal of the white man's test, your book seems to me to make an appeal.

Bayete[1] was duly published in 1923. It had no great sale: it made little difference to white political thought: as far as black thought was concerned Clement Kadali,[2] the prominent native leader, claimed that he received his inspiration from my book. Indirectly I think, it had its use.

As soon as I heard that I was the fortunate allottee of Lot 73 at Umfolozi, three hundred and thirteen acres in extent, I made my first purchase of equipment, all secondhand—a mule wagon and four mules, a tent and camp equipment and other necessary goods. Feeling I should not spend money on rail freight I inspanned my mules one bright morning and set off from Durban for Zululand, leaving Ruby and Joyce with Mrs Hitchins until I could make suitable provision for them at Umfolozi. I followed the road as far as Empangeni, then just a railway station and a few tin shanties. Beyond this there was no road, so I followed a rutted track made by other wagons before me, which ran parallel to the railway line to Somkeli.

Some days later I reached the Umfolozi River, crossed at the ford, and with the help of Barnwell, a platelayer busy on the railway, scrambled up the steep embankment on the other side. I stopped to talk to Barnwell, whom everyone called 'Barney', a real Irishman, who stretched out a helping hand to all the settlers as they came along. I learned that he was in Meerut as provost sergeant of the 6th Dragoon Guards when I was there, though we had never met. He had learnt his trade as a platelayer while laying the rails ahead of Kitchener's army as he marched to Khartoum. Later I came to know him better and we often chatted over the old days in Meerut.

I reached my farm in a great glow of satisfaction. It was good to be alive. From the top of the hill where my house stands today, I surveyed my little domain and all the vast area of the Umfolozi flats, undulating for miles to the east. I instructed one of the natives

[1] The salute given by the Zulus to their King.

[2] *v. infra* p. 192 *sq.*

I had engaged in Durban to make a fire and cook a meal. We erected the tent and put up my camp stretcher. Here, through the mosquito net, with the flap of the tent thrown back I watched the stars. I was thirty-eight, a late period to start life afresh. This was my last throw. Surely I could make something permanent out of all this. It was my own—virgin land, depending solely on my endeavours, uncomplicated by the whims and fancies of other people.

I had told Ruby that I would have a house built for her in six months. That would take some doing, as the local Zulu refused, at first, to work for the new settlers and all labour had to be obtained from Durban at great expense. This consisted of coloured people who had enrolled on the register of a recruiting agent; they were from the Cape and deserted regularly. But within six months I had fifty acres planted with cane and my house well under way. Then, satisfied that I could safely leave, I went on a visit to my wife and child, who were then staying in the Midlands of Natal. I had been taking quinine for years, but the hard work and the days in the sun at Umfolozi induced a feeling that I might as well go mad with malaria, as with quinine; so I had taken none for some time. As soon as I arrived in the colder climate I began to run a temperature and Ruby suggested quinine. Thinking I had gained some immunity from malaria, I took fifteen grains and four hours later had unmistakable signs of blackwater. This was serious. I had seen too many men die of blackwater to ignore it. A doctor was summoned from Pietermaritzburg, who sent out a nursing sister—with a railway return ticket available for four days only! The doctor called up my brother-in-law in Durban to make my will and say goodbye, and generally told everybody I was a 'gonner'. However, I pulled through, convalesced at my mother-in-law's and determined that I would not get malaria again. Nor have I. I saw to it that the house I built at Mtubatuba, although made of bush material, was so protected from mosquitoes by gauze-netting and so well sprayed, that we ran no further risks; we did not go out at night. From being one of the worst malaria places in the Union, Umfolozi and district are today free from malaria.

Our home, 'The Huts', as we called it, was unique in the district. It was built on the Rhodesian model. A thatched central hut with an apex thirty feet from the ground, with twelve-foot-high walls for the side rooms, falling to eight feet on the outside, and divided into six rooms with connecting verandahs. Later the inner room, which was used as a dining-room, was joined by a passage which led to a rectangular building with a sixteen-foot verandah containing a bedroom, kitchen, pantry, bathroom and flush WC, the only one, I believe, at Umfolozi, the water being obtained from a hand pump. The verandah bedroom was used as a dairy in which the milk was set for cream in large pans, for we had no separator.

Ruby and Joyce joined me when everything was ready. They came up on one of the three trains a week which served us in those days and arrived at the halt after sunset. I was there waiting with a wagon, safely covered with mosquito netting under which we could sit during the three-mile journey home. We were overjoyed at the reunion and the prospect of starting our new life together, and I was proud of what I had accomplished.

CHAPTER VIII
SUGAR AND PUBLIC LIFE
(1915–1920)

THE 1914–18 war sprang suddenly upon us and there was great distress of mind among the settlers. They were nearly all married men with young children and were just beginning to make a career for themselves. Most of the unmarried ones left for the front, Vivian amongst them, and I felt, as an experienced soldier, that I should go too. Ruby said that she would not stand in my way if I wanted to go. But on application, I was refused; blackwater and my age group had settled that. So I decided that my duty was to make the best of my life in Zululand, while getting what solace I could from moving the small flags on the maps which hung around the walls of my office, to keep pace with the latest reports from the fronts; on the map of Europe they scarcely moved for many months but in Africa our men were doing well.

One day while sitting on my three-furrow plough, drawn by sixteen oxen, I saw several settlers crossing my field. They were headed by Thornley Stewart whom I had met but did not know well. Stewart asked if I was going to the planters' meeting, the annual meeting of the Umfolozi Sugar Planters' Association. Of the Association I knew nothing but when Stewart said they considered it my duty as a settler to belong to the Association, which was looking after all planters' interests, I got down from the plough and went along for my first meeting of the Umfolozi Sugar Planters' Association, which was already in session in Brammage's Hotel which had been recently built on the south bank of the river. The president of the Association, Mr Parker, had begun his yearly report and I learned a good deal about the settlement which I had not known before. I looked round at the settlers, mostly strange faces, and observed their intense interest

in the proceedings. They were a tough-looking lot, but, unlike the miners of Lakekamu, they appeared like intelligent businessmen intent on problems more subtle than a sluice box.

The formal agenda finished, the election of officers for the ensuing year came on. To my astonishment I was proposed as President. 'No, no,' I said, 'I know nothing about it: I have only just joined the Association. You will be better served by re-appointing Mr Parker.' Upon this there was some debate but my backers, whoever they were, called upon me to accept the nomination and to save trouble, I agreed. The ballot revealed an almost unanimous vote in my favour. That vote, although I did not know it then, determined my political career.

I marched unsteadily to the vacated chair, thanked the meeting for the strange confidence they reposed in me since I was personally known to very few, and proceeded with the election of the other officers and closed the meeting. Members came up and congratulated me before leaving and I remained with the new committee for a brief space to decide on our future meetings and then went home to Ruby, my head singing.

'You are looking very pleased with yourself,' she said. 'What's happened?' 'You'd never guess,' I replied, 'behold in your husband the newly elected president of all the planters of the settlement.'

'No,' she said breathlessly, 'did this all happen on the plough this morning?' I laughed. 'They pulled me off the plough and dragged me across the river to Brammage's Hotel, where I beheld the whole settlement staring at each other across a billiard-table. A meeting of the Umfolozi Sugar Planters' Association was in progress and they got rid of their old president and elected me in his place. I'm still out of breath. I can't make out whether they wanted to get rid of him so badly that they chose the first new-comer who came along, or they have seen something in me that has stirred their fancy. I expect it was to get rid of old Parker that I was appointed; but they will soon know that they have got a "sergeant-major" in his stead.'

From that moment the business of Umfolozi Sugar Planters' Association took first place in my mind. An organized local body

of which every settler was by compulsion of circumstances a member; a body to which he had entrusted his business with the government and with the miller, and moreover, a body which spoke with authority for all the inhabitants of the district in the absence of any other body, this surely could become powerful for good. Affiliated with similar associations along the coast, it could do much. Here, then, was a Grand Duchy, delivered unexpectedly into my hands during a pioneer period.

The sugar industry in those days was divided into two parts—Natal and Zululand. In Natal it had been developing by small spurts since 1850, but it was virtually unorganized. Before the Boer War Natal also had a Millers' Association which met together occasionally to market their sugar co-operatively; it was not a success.

When Zululand was annexed by Natal in 1897, the Natal Government appointed a Commission, under the chairmanship of Charles Saunders, to see that all the land then used by the natives in any way whatsoever should be reserved for them in perpetuity. The balance of the land, particularly along the coast which was subject to malaria and unhealthy for cattle and, therefore, uninhabited by the Zulu people became Crown land. With this Crown land suddenly thrown upon them the Natal Government set about evolving sugar settlements in likely places. Areas of sufficient size to support a small settlement with a central mill were chosen. The whole area was cut up into 400-acre plots. The services and the capital of a miller having been secured, the land was then allotted on a ninety-nine years' lease to selected settlers, handpicked by a non-political Land Board, under a tripartite agreement between planter, miller and Government in which each was made dependent on the other—the planter for the planting of his land with sugar cane and its delivery to the mill; the miller for the manufacture and sale of the sugar produced and the due payment thereof and the Government for the general observance of the agreement. These were the Zululand sugar agreements.

But in Natal there was no such standardization and organization. Most of the cane was grown by the miller himself. Any

agreement to take cane from any outside planter was a matter of private arrangement between the parties. All cane was paid for by the mill on weight; no account was taken of the sugar it contained; its fibre content was ignored as was also the purity of the juice; a lump of mud adhering to the cane was as valuable as the richest sugar. It all went through the rollers together and fifty per cent of the sugar in the juice went down the river.

The financing of the mills in Natal had not originally been an easy matter under private enterprise and much of the capital had been raised locally. But the opening up of the Zululand mills with the agreement for fixed prices established a basis from which all the Natal mills benefited. It was calculated that it would take fourteen tons of cane to make a ton of sugar, and as there was only one type of cane grown, capital could be raised for the mills once a known basis of profit had been ascertained. Most mills observed the same price to be paid for cane. It was this factor which anchored the Natal mills to Zululand and its agreements.

In the Zululand settlements the mill was sited in the middle of each settlement and all life revolved round it. The collective interest of the planters was served by associations to which all belonged. The millers on their part belonged to the Sugar Millers' Association and, coming down from the old days of Natal, endeavoured to maintain a dictatorial attitude towards the planters, as though they were the employers and the planters the employees. Much friction originally arose from this attitude and caused the chief bone of contention between the planters and the millers.

As president of the Umfolozi Planters' Association, I became *ex officio*, a member of the Zululand Planters Union. In order to encourage the new Association at Umfolozi it was not long before it was proposed that Umfolozi should take the chair. I found myself proposed as president of the union and thought it my duty to accept. Thus I found myself inducted into the sphere of sugar politics; dealing with all the complicated mechanism which has made sugar, all over the world, a political matter.

As soon as I became president in Zululand, I set to work to create a number of planters' associations in Natal (where there

were none) gathering in loose planters around each mill until there sufficient to form a local association and with them a Natal Planters' Union. The next step was to affiliate this new union with the old standing Zululand Planters' Union under the title of the South African Planters' Union, of which I became the first president. We were now in a position to talk for all planters in the country, and we made our first policy in a demand for a revision of all sugar cane agreements and addressed ourselves to all sugar milling companies. We held that there could be no future for the sugar industry in South Africa until payment for cane was based on sugar instead of on the weight of wood it contained. Sugar was a chemical industry not a timber industry.

The fight now became one of millers versus planters, a long and bitter struggle which lasted over a number of years, the millers, particularly those in Zululand, standing on the rights of their agreements which still had a number of years to run; they were aided, of course, by the independent millers of Natal. The planters, however, through the organizations of their unions, could appeal to the Government under their leases and called for a commission of enquiry.

With the world fall in sugar prices after the war, it began to be obvious that the South African industry was doomed unless it could produce efficiently both in the factory and the field. Propaganda to this effect shook the complacency of the millers. But in reply to the planters' claim for an individual analysis of cane to ascertain its sugar content, the millers still replied that this was an unnecessary proposition, since the industry grew only one type of cane. The Zululand Planters' Union, which the only organization with any funds, countered this by obtaining the services of O'Brien, a reputable sugar chemist from Australia who came to South Africa and satisfactorily demonstrated that individual analysis could be carried out at every mill and would give varying results even though one type of cane was being analysed.

Amongst the millers were a number of men who had grown up under the 'cane-wood' basis, whose knowledge of chemistry was not very good. They constituted the dead weight to any

advance. Until their prejudices could be overcome, no improvement in the industry was possible. They stood adamantly on their old unexpired agreements. The millers had one outstanding man amongst them, R. W. Edwards, managing director of Hulletts, one of the largest milling and refining concerns in Natal. He faced every situation squarely and with knowledge. He understood my thesis, and to this man against his colleagues, I attribute much of the progress ultimately made by the millers, although at the time some of them contemptuously referred to him as a 'paid manager'. He was, however, head and shoulders above the rest.

But in the early stages of the fight the millers refused to budge. The law was on their side. All the planters could do was to agitate. During the years that this controversy raged I had gone to Parliament as a member for Zululand on the personal requisition of prominent people in the constituency. No doubt my position as president of the two unions made them choose me; and I used my influence in the sugar struggle wherever possible.

In 1924, in the middle of the battle, there was a change of Government. The amalgamation of the Unionist Party, which represented the towns, with the old South African Party, which represented the country, had introduced into its enlarged ranks the old controversy of 'free trade versus protection'. Each year in Parliament I found myself, as a representative of the sugar industry, at war on the floor of the House, with Jagger, a member of my own party, but a Cape Town merchant and a free trader, the tendency being for all old Unionists, of which Jagger was one, to be free traders, backed by the Chambers of Commerce and the Chamber of Mines. Jagger asserted that it would pay the country 'to pension off Mr Nicholls and all his sugar planters!' The annual event was looked upon by the rest of the House with great amusement—that two South African Party members should be so ferociously fighting each other. The South African Party had got its Free Trade Group from the Unionists and its joint policy on this vexed question was quite imprecise.

But when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1924 it came

with a pronounced 'protectionist' policy. It took up the cause of the Sugar Agreements and in 1926 appointed Mr Fahey, a prominent member of the Labour Party, to be the chairman of the Board of Trade and to preside over a conference of millers and planters in Natal. Graham Mackeurton, KC, was appointed to represent the millers and I to represent the planters. The Government made the outcome of the negotiations certain by promising an increase of protection on sugar if an agreement was reached. Under pressure from the Government, the millers ultimately gave way and agreed to a review of the whole situation.

Much preliminary spade work had been done to put before the conference the necessary data. Accountants of the Board of Trade had examined all the finances of the milling companies. Selected planters had been chosen to throw open their books to cost accountants and a compilation of the chemical figures in all the factories had been made and were studied by a chemical committee presided over by Meyer of the Board of Trade. It became possible, therefore, to arrive at an average standard of recovery of sugar at the mills which could be attained by all from a given quantity of cane. Payment for cane was made on the basis of sugar, and no longer on the weight of fibre and the amount remaining over from the proceeds of the sugar sales after the costs of production had been deducted on both sides was distributed equally between miller and planter. This factor was known as the marginal formula. This was the first scientific step taken to put the sugar industry on an efficient basis. A sugar cane experimental station came into existence at Mount Edgecombe, the only experimental station in the Union paid for by the industry concerned. A scientist, Dr Dodds, was appointed to conduct the experiments. Many new varieties of cane have since been developed and a little over eight tons of cane are now required to produce a ton of sugar, whereas, under the old system it required almost double. From being one of the most backward, the South African sugar industry stepped into the ranks of the most efficient amongst sugar industries in the world. Thanks are due to the old Zululand sugar planters who found the money and the drive to

replace the old agreements with those of today. I was proud of the part I played in bringing this about.

It is only right to say however that the greatest benefactor of the sugar industry was the Minister of Finance, Havenga, who through the Board of Trade and Fahey, forced the alteration of the old sugar agreements and by his protective tariff altered the whole industrial position of the Union.

While the fight within the sugar industry was taking place conditions at Umfolozi also demanded continued attention. This, the last of the sugar settlements, was slowly growing. The history of its development forms an epic story. It is now a faded memory and few of the present day planters understand how they have come to be the possessors of a sugar mill worth from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000, producing 100,000 tons of sugar and rated the most efficient mill in the country.

When I first arrived at Umfolozi there was no mill. In 1910 the Government started negotiations with some overseas representatives to erect a mill to serve the new settlement. Negotiations had reached such a stage that the Land Board, anticipating arrangements would be finalized, began allotting farms at Umfolozi to applicants in 1911. Unfortunately these negotiations broke down at the last minute and the Land Board was faced with the problem of settlers starting to develop their farms for cane with no mill to crush it. Eventually another interested party was found and after some time spent in negotiations, an agreement was finally signed between the Government and a Mr Maxwell on September 25, 1913. Maxwell then floated the St Lucia Sugar Company with a capital of £201,000, with its head office in London, and plans for the erection of the mill went ahead.

But nobody knew how long it would take to complete. The 1914–18 war came along in the middle of operations and seriously handicapped progress. Practically the whole plant, coming from England, was sunk by enemy action in the first ship ever to be sunk by a submarine; but the chief trouble was that the St Lucia Company had no directors in South Africa to

keep up the pressure. I, as chairman of the local association, endeavoured to supply that pressure on behalf of the planters, for until the mill started crushing, none of us could derive an income from our farms.

The mill opened in 1916; its agreement with the planters was similar to those entered into in the other settlements in Zululand. The Umfolozi Flats constitute the most fertile land in the sugar belt. Enormous tonnages of cane per acre can be produced from the alluvial soil, but the sugar content of the cane is comparatively low; furthermore the cane at Umfolozi grew like rank weeds; at two years old it was long past its maturing point; most of it was lying down as the result of floods and cane rats, which were there in their myriads. Added to this, the mill machinery was unsuited to Umfolozi conditions. It became obvious to many that, unless something was done, we should all be bankrupt.

It was about this time that Colonel Mentz, Minister for Lands, came to visit us with some of his staff. The culinary arrangements of the local hotel could cater for only a limited number; but we managed to squeeze in at the table, for dinner with the ministerial party, most of the members of the executive of the Umfolozi Planters' Association. They formed a strange mixture, even for Zululand. I had to propose the health of the Minister and explain our difficulties. While thinking over what I was to say, I glanced round the table and thought: 'every man here comes from a different part of the world—that will be the theme for my speech.'

There was Davidson, who had dealt in tea in China; D'Aubrey who had shipped tea in Burma; Cree who had come from growing coffee in Nyasaland; Duncan who had been with Lesseps on the Panama Canal and who had grown sugar in Demerara; Illingworth who had come from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Queensland; Thornley Stewart who had been in an earthquake in Jamaica and had reviewed the native army of Haiti; Herbert who had dug for gold at Kalgoorlie; Stanley Murphy, whose father had fought at Ulundi; Roadnight who had been at Colenso and there was myself, lately from New Guinea. Mentz said he had never been amongst such a cosmo-

politan community. What a wealth of experience could be told in that gathering—of founded ventures, unquenchable hopes, of past enterprise and courage and a glowing belief in the future. It was at this meeting that the Minister ventured to speak of co-operation. The Government stood for co-operation. He said that milling and planting seemed to him to call for co-operation and if he could assist us he would. With the Government behind us we could go far; he set us all tingling with the possibilities of Umfolozi. His visit was a useful tonic to us in our depression; and I think we impressed him. At the meeting of the Association on June 20, 1918, I proposed the following resolution:

> 'That the Association hereby adopts the principle of co-operation as applying to the St Lucia Mill and instructs the Committee to draw up a scheme for co-operation for submission to the Government in order that such a scheme may be adopted in the event of the lease of the St Lucia Sugar Company Ltd being cancelled.'

This resolution was carried unanimously and was signed by fifty of the planters present. The St Lucia Sugar Company refused to give up and continued to struggle along, paying no dividends but hoping for better times. To make matters worse, Umfolozi was subjected to a number of disastrous floods. The first one came in October 1917, and then in February 1918, came a crushing blow. The rains had been excessive that year and all the railway bridges on the north coast had been swept away. Both the Black and the White Umfolozi rivers, which converged a few miles above the settlement, came down in flood and struck us about midnight. Brammages Hotel and the whole of the small village on the Flats near the mill were washed away in the dark. At the mill, the shift workers, Europeans and natives, had been caught by the flood which came on silently through the night. Their wives and children, already warned by the rising water, had left their cottages on the Flats and struggled on foot to the safety of the mill and climbed on to the platforms; and there amongst the vacuum pans and evaporators, the mixed assembly gained safety until they were taken off by boat next day. The raging

waters buried the machinery feet deep in mud and sand and swept away all loose structures. It was a cruel sight which the Settlement began to contemplate as the sun rose. The planters had built all their houses on the high ground and were quite safe from the flood but their cane was feet deep in water. Some two thousand people's livelihood depended on the working of the mill, which, of course, ought to have been moved at once to higher ground, but the company could not find the money. Instead it did some repair work, left the mill on the old site, and erected a wire suspension bridge across the river to tap the huts which had been erected there. The Government, on this occasion, came to the rescue; dug out the tram lines buried feet deep in mud; constructed drains and assisted in clearing the mill of all debris. The machinery, when the mud and sand was cleared away, was found not to be irreparably damaged.

After much tribulation and loss, as the water drained away, the mill was reconditioned and began to crush again, and the Umfolozi Sugar Settlement was able to get rid of its old and rotting cane. But the finances of the St Lucia Company were now beyond resolve. It was steadily losing money: by 1922 the balance sheet showed a loss of over £89,000. Manoeuvrings were going on between the St Lucia Sugar Company and milling interests for the sale of the mill. Some of our Umfolozi planters lent themselves to an intrigue and endeavoured to ensure that when the mill went bankrupt, it would be put up for sale free of its old agreement with the Umfolozi planters. It would then be bought cheaply by South African millers who would enter into a new agreement with the planters, who would be forced to accept a much lower price for their cane, thus ensuring that the new organization would operate at a profit. Had the plan been accepted, all the work of the South African sugar planters for the attaining of new agreements would have been destroyed.

Before long, the St Lucia Sugar Company went into liquidation and refused to accept the cane of the Umfolozi planters. It was at this point that I began to put pressure on the Government to carry out its agreement with the mill and foreclose on the company. My problem was then to arrange for the mill to be

bought on a public sale by the Umfolozi planters. Acting on advice, I formed the Umfolozi Co-operative Sugar Company. To enable such a body to be formed, required seven members. They were difficult to obtain. Only eight men of the settlement including myself were willing to pledge their future on co-operation. The others were Sydney Herbert, Edmond Leopold Illingworth, John Alexander Kirkwood, Edward Stanley Murphy, Walter Oliver, Alexander J. Todd and Jack Stanley. These were the foundation members. Seven of us were elected as the first Board, leaving Jack Stanley for election on a subsequent occasion when he became a director. I was made chairman and Murphy became secretary. With scarcely a bean between us, we set out to raise £200,000 from the Land and Agricultural Bank. To do this we had first to obtain the guarantee of the Minister for Lands, Denys Reitz, after a report had been submitted by the Land Bank that the scheme was a worthy one and would succeed. Members of the bank's central board came and stayed with me for a few days while they examined the whole position on the spot and their conclusions were in our favour.

Undoubtedly the difference between the Umfolozi loan and any other Land Bank loan lay in the pledging of the whole season's production, together with all the farms and equipment, and the mill itself. There could be no doubt about its financial soundness, since the pledge carried with it a surrender of all the total realized proceeds to the bank and the withdrawal of only such moneys as were necessary to maintain the mill. What was left over went to meet interest on the loan and redemption, so that the Land Bank security was safe. The planters got what was left from these two charges. After reading this report, Reitz agreed to guarantee the advance of £200,000 and the whole Board went to Durban prepared to bid for the mill.

In the meantime, some of the planters applied for an interdict against the Government to prevent the sale of the mill. They maintained that they had entered into an agreement with the Government to lease their farms and produce cane on them, and that the provision of a mill was an obligation of the Government and no concern of theirs. The leader of these was H. C. Hitchins,

brother of Vivian, who had originally helped me to get started at Umfolozi. The complainants employed Graham Mackeurton, KC; I engaged Roy Hawthorn, later Chief Justice of Natal. The interdict was not granted.

On December 12, 1923, the mill was put up for auction without the hampering terms of the miller *cum* planter agreement. All the members of the sugar industry were there. There was a tense atmosphere when the auctioneer ascended the rostrum and asked for his first bid. I bid £30,000. There was no other bid. The terms of sale made it quite impossible for a new firm of millers to make good where the St Lucia Sugar Company had gone bankrupt. It was quite a different matter, however, for the planters, who would substitute the rules and regulations of the Co-operative Society for the terms of the old agreement. Thus it was that the Umfolozi Co-operative Sugar Planters Ltd, formed only a month before, became the owners of their own mill and their own destiny, and established the basis subsequently accepted by the whole sugar industry, i.e. payment for cane on its sugar content. With the balance of the loan left after paying for the mill, we tackled the work of reconditioning and reorganization, for it was found that a lot of the machinery was in very bad repair.

Crushing started on June 25, 1924, but our troubles had only just begun. When all those settlers who had disbelieved that we should ever own the mill, saw what had happened, they were naturally eager to join the Co-operative Society, which they did. But we faced hard years ahead. My agreement with the Land Bank was such that the first call on any proceeds after paying all expenses of running the mill and selling the sugar, was to meet bank charges. Thus it was that for a period the farmers at Umfolozi were paid less for their cane than that received by any other settlement. That was the price we had to pay for co-operation. The Board, of course, had to answer for all the short falls. There were many meetings at which we had to face disgruntled farmers, even after the mill was running fairly smoothly; anything that went wrong was laid at the door of the original co-operators.

In 1925, just as we were beginning to see a little clearer ahead,

another flood hit us. The damage to the mill was almost as severe as that experienced in the 1918 flood. This time it was agreed that no further risks could be taken on the old mill site. The mill must be moved. But we had no money with which to do it; the remains of our £200,000 loan had long since gone in new machinery. In addition to this, there was now a new Government in power. I did not know the new ministers as I had known the ministers of the South African Party. There was no guarantee that they would be as kindly disposed towards us as the old ones had been. I invited Grobler, the new Minister of Lands, to pay us a personal visit. He came and was impressed with this great new undertaking by the Lands Department and recommended to the Government that the mill should be moved.

There was no other way of providing for the settlers. But in the Cabinet, Boydell, the new Minister for Public Works, objected to the mill being moved by a crowd of sugar planters. If it was to be moved, it must be moved by his department which contained experienced men! Although I had a contract for the moving of the mill by experts at a fairly low figure, I saw that, if we were to have the mill moved at all, we should have to give in to Boydell. I agreed immediately, but the work did not progress as quickly as expected. It was found that the Public Works Department knew nothing about the moving of a sugar mill; the delay which we could not avoid added considerably to the cost.

Eventually on July 23, 1927, the new mill, on the site where it stands today, started to crush. It has not looked back since. Gradually, in spite of much frustration, it improved and consolidated its position. In the 1930s, it expanded its planting area by a new Government settlement scheme for returned soldiers. When in 1943, I became Administrator of Natal, I retired from the chairmanship of the company and was appointed its life president.

During my years of office, the Board of Directors received no fee for their work; nor did they look for any. The secretary, who always came up to Umfolozi by train from Durban the night before to attend Board meetings, brought with him the directors'

lunch, consisting of a few dried sandwiches! Later on this was extended to a lunch at the restaurant, run by the company for its employees. Such was the spirit of co-operation which existed at Umfolozi. That spirit was born in service. If ever the settlement forgets its co-operative character, and yields to the capitalist urge which so disastrously dominated the sugar industry in its early days, it will lose the spirit of camaraderie which directed the transactions of the old Zululand Planters' Union and which lifted the industry out of the cane-wood basis into the highly efficient chemical industry it is today. For that development the planters and not the millers were alone responsible, and I honour those six co-operators who stood with me to form the first board of the Co-operative Company, when all the others held back. Their faith has been justified.

In concluding this chapter I must pay tribute to the amazing public spirit and good fellowship exhibited by all the members of the Zululand Planters' Union who worked without fee or award throughout the years in the settlers' interests. They were always willing under all circumstances to place Zululand first. They built up a local patriotism of which all Zululanders were proud. They were, as Smuts said in his letter to me at the completion of a tour of Zululand: 'A fine type of settler.' I can name only a few: Aldington and Johnson of Inyoni and Amatikulu; Hill of Gingindhlovu; Piccione and Lester of Felixton; Fowler and Bramage of Kwambonambi; Roadknight and Stanley Murphy of Umfolozi; and there were Anderson and Dent of Empangeni, chief among them all, straight, reliable and fostering always a public spirit at its best. They had both come to South Africa during the Boer War and remained as servants of the Orange Free State; Anderson as auditor general and Dent in some civil servant capacity. They came to Zululand as partners. In 1914 both went to England to join up, but Dent was too old. Anderson returned as a major and should have been president of the Planters' Union—but made way for Umfolozi as a new member. When the Parliamentary election came in 1920 and I had been nominated as a candidate, I went along to see Anderson and told

him that I thought he should have the nomination. I would willingly stand aside for him. 'No,' he said, 'now that I have seen you I am perfectly content. I am just about to be married and I have some homework to do. But later on, I should like to go to Parliament and perhaps the opportunity will come then.' There we left it. By the time the next election came round, four years later, I had committed myself up to the hilt and felt I could not leave Parliament. Umfolozi was yet to be built. When, twenty years later, Anderson offered himself as a candidate he had to join in a perambulating election with three others and failed. It was Zululand's loss.

During all these diversions at Umfolozi our family life was continuing. In the war years Ruby assisted in forming a branch of the Women's War Relief Fund, which met regularly every month while the Association meeting was taking place. The money realized went to the right quarters and the meetings brought all the planters and their wives together. Later on, with the assistance of Thornley Stewart, who was an old actor, as well as an artist and had played with a renowned company in England, we got up a musical comedy, in which Stewart wrote the libretto, while I wrote the music. Stewart appeared as Herod and I danced before him, richly embosomed and bespangled and wearing a wig as Salome. It brought the house down.

Ioma, our second daughter was born during the early years at Umfolozi, and it was during the height of the 1918 floods that my wife had to leave to go down to Durban for the birth of our third child. It was for her a gruelling period. All the bridges were down. Pushed on railway trolleys we made our way, after spending several nights on the road, to within a few miles of Durban, where we were met by a fully equipped train. Mrs Hitchins's house on the Berea was a haven after the experiences of Zululand. Derek, our only son, was born two weeks after our arrival in Durban.

PART TWO

A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, 1920–1940

'Consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the Governors . . .'

Milton—*Areopagitica*

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE UNION PARLIAMENT

(1910–1920)

AN English constitutional writer has somewhere remarked of the House of Commons in its unbroken continuity, that generally one generation in politics succeeds another almost silently. At every moment men of all ages between thirty and seventy have considerable influence, each year removes some old men, makes the others older, brings in new. The transition is so gradual that we hardly notice it. But sometimes there is an abrupt change. New ideas, new arguments, expressed in a new way, sweep into ridicule many of the accepted political thoughts and habits, and the new current, gaining from its novel stimulus, carries the country into a new political era. Such an abrupt change came with the new Parliament in the Union in 1920, of which I became a member. For one thing, nearly a third of the House was new. That Parliament witnessed the first climb into the seats of the official opposition of the Nationalist Party under Hertzog. It saw the sudden flash in the pan of the Labour Party under Creswell with twenty-one members; and it saw the decline of the great Unionist Party, under Thomas Smart, from its position as the chief opposition party to a side-show on the cross-benches. All these changes meant a loss of strength to the governing South African Party under Smuts which had carried the country safely through the first decade of Union.

The overseas ferment of the Great War was reflected in South Africa in the economic problems of the settlement of returned soldiers, the rising cost of living and the consequent industrial unrest. All these were echoed from urban areas and successfully exploited by the Labour Party. From the other angle, little

understood by the British Labourites, it was reflected in the emotional exploitation by the Nationalists of the latent hostility of the Platteland to the British connection, under the guise of high constitutionalism, language grievances and alleged Imperialist coercion of Afrikanerdom. The end of the first ten years of Union was the beginning of a new epoch, which established new political values, resurrected old antagonisms and struck heavily at the friendly co-operation which had written the Covenant of Union.

There was overlap. There were a large number of members who had been in Parliament since Union, including a fair number who had been in the Parliaments of the pre-union states. They hung on to the old traditions and influenced the newcomers; their influence is still with us today.

The first Parliament of the Union had begun its life in the rosy atmosphere of co-operative goodwill which induced the previously warring, self-governing states of the Cape, Free State, Transvaal and Natal to surrender their sovereignty into the hands of the Union legislature. The racial hatred was buried. Good faith amongst politicians, the fullest assurance for which had been freely given during the Convention year, was demanded by the people. The political parties were on their best behaviour.

During these first years, there were a few industrial interludes—an attempted general strike of European workers on the Rand, and the proclamation of martial law, which was the effect of the centralization of the harbours and railways under one control; but, on the whole, apart from the 1914 rebellion, which gravely disrupted our development, they were years of quiet constructive consolidation of the four different state administrations, and attempted solutions of the financial and economic problems brought about by union. The lion's share of the economy was shouldered by the English-speaking, trained in business and industry; the more emotional aspect of nation-building was carried on by the Afrikaans-speaking, who were mostly trained as lawyers or as clergymen. There was sufficient work to occupy the time and ambition of all the Ministers to make a success of the Union—with one exception.

Hertzog went off at a tangent two years after union. He completely destroyed the original strength of union by launching a campaign for a two-stream development, which, in the public mind, was interpreted to mean the evolution in South Africa of two distinct and perpetually separated entities of English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking, or, in the common parlance of the day, British and Dutch. Hertzog's campaign was considered to be a definite repudiation of the spirit and compact of union which had been accepted by the people represented by the National Convention, and which predicated a *single*, bi-lingual South African nation of British and Dutch, with each section accepting and respecting the traditions of the other. Had there been no Great War, this would have happened without any compulsion. Botha and his party stood squarely on this one-stream policy; and since Hertzog refused to abandon his separatist campaign which he was pursuing, he was dropped from the Cabinet; to the summary action then taken can be attributed much of the division which has ever since shaken the Union.

The dropping of Hertzog at that time was not of great moment. His followers were few. It had its influence, no doubt, in the manufacturing of rebels during the Great War, but it is possible that, even if Hertzog had remained in the Cabinet during the war, the rebellion would have taken place. The strength which went to the weaving of that network of intrigue and foolish passions lay deeper than the dropping of Hertzog, though his departure focused the division.

It was current in political circles that, at the time of the Peace Conference of Vereeniging, many of the Boer Commandants were induced to accept the peace terms by the guarantee of their leaders that they would again take up arms against England on the day that she was in difficulties. This was not regarded by them as a stab in the back, but as an escape from prison walls while the warder was engaged elsewhere. When the Great War broke out, the old Boer Commandants trooped to Pretoria to ask Botha whether he was now going to lead them against Britain in accordance with the Vereeniging vow. Botha replied: 'No, the conditions have entirely changed. Britain has restored to us the

independence she took from us. She has given us a United South Africa in exchange for the Transvaal and the Free State and I am its Prime Minister. We cannot in honour repudiate the trust she has reposed in us. We are going to fight: but we are going to fight for Britain against Germany!' Botha took the field with the bulk of his old commandants as willing followers; but there were a few who did not accept his decision, who maintained that the old vow should be kept. History records the providential happenings which prevented the consequent rebellion from becoming another Boer War.

With Botha fully engaged in South West Africa, and in maintaining the peace of the Union, with Smuts away in East Africa and in Europe, the second Parliament of the Union elected in 1915 was a replica of the first. The Ministry remained practically the same. The official opposition was still the Unionist Party, consisting almost entirely of Englishmen drawn from the towns. None of the Nationalists had yet risen to high rank in public service. There was no language question, since the birth of Afrikaans took place in 1925, with the alteration of the Act of Union. There was an accretion of voting strength in the country to Hertzog, now the leader of the Nationalist Party, but that party was still in embryo.

The outlook of Parliament was still that of 1910, changed only by the circumstances of war. Most of the speeches were in English. The Act of Union was sacrosanct. Few dreamed of questioning its constitutional character. In 1918, *God Save the King* was sung in Parliament after a victory with only Hertzog and his followers refraining. Joel Krige, the Speaker, tried unsuccessfully to resolve in his mind what point the Nationalists would raise when the anthem ended; he knew very well that something would be said. It came: 'Mr Speaker, will we now be in order in singing the *Volkslied*?' asked a Nationalist. Immediately, the inspired answer was ready: 'If the honourable member,' said the Speaker, 'can reconcile the singing of the *Volkslied* with the oath to His Majesty the King, which he has taken in this House, I know of no reason why he should not do so.' There was no reply. The Nationalists trooped sheepishly out of the House—

though one of them, when passing the mace, said: 'We will make snuff-boxes out of that thing one of these days!'

Outside of Parliament the leaven of racial nationalism was fermenting freely in the western parts of the Union, where lived most of the 'poor whites' and where economic conditions were less favourable than in the east. The newly established Afrikaans newspapers were cartooning Botha as the chained monkey on the pole of British Imperialism and Smuts as the Empire hangman. The propaganda value of such suggestions amongst people who had not acquired the habit of daily newspaper reading, was great. The Nationalist press which delivered its papers freely and was heavily subsidized by enthusiastic supporters, filled a want. The most important of these journals were, and are, definitely anti-British and, as one of the editors remarked: 'Why should they not be! It is good business. The more Nationalists we can make, the greater our circulation.' So the steady play on prejudice and fancied ancient wrongs fanned again the racial embers, which union had promised to destroy.

Nor were the conditions very different on the extreme section of the British side. While the fight in the urban areas was more inclined to be economic than political, there were not lacking, both in the press and on the platforms, sufficient political bowlers to keep the Nationalist batsmen busy. It is true that the English-speaking were less politically minded. They had the predominant position in trade and commerce and industry. They manned most of the professions, and they held most of the plums in the Civil Service. The 'haves' are notoriously more moderate than the 'have nots'. The Nationalists were out to gain by political means what they had been unable to achieve by economic competition. It was easy to suggest that the British were sucking South Africa dry; that 'poor whiteism' was the result of British Imperialism; that the poverty of the backveld was due to the exploitation by the towns, where dwelt the English and the Jews—though the Jews had not then come prominently into the picture.

While the Union Parliament was living out its first decade in the Botha atmosphere of conciliation and co-operation, the stage was being set in the constituencies for the General Election of

1920. In the Nationalist camp, Wilson's formula for the 'self-determination of small nations' offered great scope for propaganda. Hertzog's two-stream policy had created the new philosophy of a militant Afrikanerdom. The hat was sent round for subscriptions to pay the expenses of Nationalist delegates to travel to the Peace Conference in Paris, where they were to demand, under the Wilson formula of 'self-determination', the return of the Republic of the Transvaal and the Free State—a cynical instance of a so-called democratic party displaying an eager willingness to tear up the Constitution which gave it its power and to which its leader had set his seal, a Constitution worked almost entirely by Afrikaners, for one of the most striking facts about the Government of the Union is that it has always been in the hands of the Afrikaans-speaking. The Nationalist delegation to Paris was good stuff for the backveld. Its adventures at sea filled in the mental picture of patriotic sacrifice for Afrikanerdom. The voyage added thousands of votes to Nationalism for the coming election. Such was the position when I first went to Parliament.

In my remote constituency of Zululand, the peoples, for the most part, stood completely outside these eddying political currents. They would not have understood them. Though I was opposed by a Nationalist—who lost his deposit—the vast majority of the electors were English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking supporters of Botha. There was no political organization in the constituency. My nomination was entirely personal and came in a way not unusual in Natal at that time, i.e. by means of a public requisition signed by the leading men of the constituency without political affiliations.

I was not a politician. I was then the leader of the small group of settlers who had pioneered the then most northern coastal settlement of Zululand. I considered of what use I could be to them in Parliament. Zululand was practically unknown to Cape Town: at least I might stimulate interest in its development. The retiring member, Clayton, had been in Parliament since union. He had been a Minister in pre-union Natal. He was growing old

and was no longer active: and indeed, was not going to stand again. Therefore I usurped nobody's office, and my experience of life in strange places, and my administrative knowledge, might be of use. The requisition had been very widely signed and published. I accepted it. Clayton was translated to the Senate.

It was an almost unopposed return. My opponent, Piet Meyer, a wealthy farmer of Babanango, arrived at the nomination court in Eshowe just a few minutes before it closed, covered with mud and exhausted by a night's journey through the rain-soaked veld. He had no seconder and the court prolonged its sitting for half an hour to enable him to find one. There had been considerable doubt about a Nationalist champion being in the field, and the only reason for his appearance was to ascertain what number of Nationalist voters there was in the constituency, for the Nationalist Party was a new party seeking converts and the election gave it an opportunity for propaganda. The betting was that Meyer would not find a seconder in the streets of Eshowe, the village capital of Zululand, but he did. At the last moment, I found myself waging an election contest, and, for the first time addressing public meetings on the policies of the hour about which I knew very little and my audience considerably less. For Natal in those days was eighty per cent British; except for the Northern Districts it was entirely unilingual.

Being something of an economist, I talked bread and butter. There were subjects enough and to spare—the permanent diseases of an agricultural economy, the problems of land settlement and current labour proposals featured in the local press—which suited my English-speaking audiences. These subjects were singularly out of place amongst the Afrikaans-speaking at Babanango in Northern Zululand. They wanted politics of the 'over the Berg' variety of a kind of which I was to learn later in Cape Town. But they listened to me politely and I have always been happy to know that, however much they disagreed with me as a *rooinek*, they gave me their friendship and regard as their representative in Parliament.

At that time the Afrikaans-speaking were largely followers of Botha. My opponent had swung over to Hertzog from the first.

Sitting one day on his verandah, I asked him why he was a Nationalist. He pointed to the ruins of an old farmhouse which had been burnt down by the British during the Boer War. He told me that he had built his new house to overlook the old ruins so that he should see them every time he went out of his front door. I asked him how he was able to build his present house. He replied: 'Oh, the British did that. They paid me compensation!' There was no forgetting or forgiving.

For such a frame of mind there was no room for argument nor any hope of Botha conciliation. Yet withal I liked Piet Meyer—for his rugged honesty, for his detestation of sham and hypocrisy, for his old biblical faith in the punishment of the transgressor. In his eyes the British were and always had been the transgressors and the Lord would punish them. I felt sorry when he had to forfeit his election deposit, but he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had planted the seeds of nationalism and that they would grow.

Parliament met in Cape Town in April 1920 and was opened in state by the Governor-General, Lord Buxton. The ceremony was unimpressive and the public displayed little interest. Within, the Senate Chamber was uncomfortably packed with Senators, members, their wives and daughters, and foreign representatives and distinguished persons; the air was thick with powder blown about by the waving fans of the ladies and the day was hot.

The National Convention had compromised on the site of Parliament, and its permanence in Cape Town is still a matter of speculation. So the Union has made shift with the old Colonial Legislative Buildings of the Cape with the addition of a new wing for the House of Assembly. Time has served to make stronger the claim of Cape Town to retain Parliament but the need for the building of new Houses of Parliament which would be more in keeping with the dignity and growth of the Union, has become weaker. Only an earthquake, or an architect for a Prime Minister, will ever bring the Union into line with the other Parliamentary buildings of the Commonwealth—or a republic!

In the House of Assembly I found myself sitting on the back bench, up against the wall and next to H. B. Papenfus, member for Hospital Hill, Johannesburg, a KC and a man of artistic tastes and

temperament and great linguistic ability. He was widely read and travelled and regarded most of the House with good-natured contempt. He became my friend, mentor and translator, and spent many hours of his time in teaching me Afrikaans. Though of broad human sympathies, he had little taste for politics and transferred his admiration of the human species to a love of animals. His speeches dealt chiefly with game protection and temperance, of which he was an ardent advocate. Surrendering his seat later to R. N. Henderson, a Northern Irishman, who once had the distinction of being a Minister without Portfolio for a few months, he devoted himself to the development of the Kruger Game Reserve and was killed in a motor accident while travelling there. His qualities were never properly appreciated in the House of Assembly.

Next to him on the back bench was the famous John X. Merriman whose reputation as a wit and parliamentarian was only equalled by the historic part he played in defending the Boers during the Boer War. To a young parliamentarian his reputation was something to conjure with, and I observed the old gentleman for some sessions with very close attention, but, whether it was that the qualities of his prime had vanished with old age or I was unable to appreciate the finer lunges and thrusts of Parliamentary debate, usually prepared with much labour, I formed the impression, which I still hold, that he was overrated. His criticism was always destructive and he was a perpetual thorn in the side of the Government he was supposed to support.

There was one little interlude between him and Hertzog which lingers in my mind as an indication of what an English-speaking member had to avoid in Parliament. Merriman committed the unpardonable offence of using the word 'home' when referring to England, and realizing that it was not done in the best Union Parliamentary circles, checked himself and apologized for the slip by saying: 'After all, I use it in a spiritual sense, for England is my spiritual home.' 'That,' said Hertzog who followed him, 'is precisely what we object to. While England remains the spiritual home of the right honourable gentleman, he cannot think in terms of South Africa.' That seemed a poor look-out for me,

whose study of the history of South Africa had convinced me that there would have been no Union Parliament at all but for England.

Gradually I began to take stock of my fellow members. The Speaker, Joel Krige, appeared very dignified in his full-bottomed wig, and he had a voice of thunder which arrested the member in full flight as though he had been shot. He was very kind to me, as he was to all new members, and later we were companions on an Empire Parliamentary tour of Canada, when we shared a cabin. He was slow of thought and rather ponderous, but he had a deep veneration for the institution of Parliament which gave inspiration to his judgements.

Below me on the front bench was Smuts, the Prime Minister, then known to me only by repute. Facing him was his opponent of years, Hertzog, an enigma I was anxious to study. In 1920 my awe of these leaders made me see them through a veil: as the sessions wore on, I began to get a better perspective.

More companionable and appreciative were the other two party leaders, Creswell—nicknamed the 'pregnant sardine'—flushed with his Labour victory, sitting on the Front Bench with the indefatigable Thomas Boydell beside him, and Thomas Smart, the leader of the Unionist Party, still suffering from his recent defeat, with Patrick Duncan occupying the cross benches on the Opposition side. Creswell and Smart were both bidding to get in first with a 'bread-and-butter' motion to appeal to the same urban electorates—'the shortage of flour' for Smart which brought in the famous Burton bread made of flour and mealie meal, and 'unemployment' for Creswell, *via* Boydell, which led to the relief works.

Complete absorption in the proceedings was hindered by the appalling thought that I had a maiden speech to make. Years of lonely life in wild places had developed my natural diffidence. I wondered how I would ever have the cheek to air my notions, though they were strongly fixed, before an audience which I thought so critical and so experienced. When I expressed my doubts to Papenfus, he would reply: 'Good heavens, man, take a look at them. Can you see anything on the faces of those over on

that side to be afraid of?' That wasn't much comfort to me, nor was it very original.

There were some forty new members that year. Gradually I found that a number of them were feeling much like myself. One after the other got on to his feet each day, caught the Speaker's eye, took the plunge and turned up the next morning looking relieved and smiling, but I couldn't manage it. I was becoming a wreck. Each evening I returned to the hotel at Muizenberg, where my wife anxiously searched my face for a sign of relief, only to meet with disappointment. The Easter holidays were approaching. It was clear that it was going to be a miserable holiday unless I spoke. The opportunity came the day before the Easter recess. Suddenly I found myself on my feet, slating my friends on the Labour benches, telling them that they had come down with twenty-one guns to fire and all they could manage to do was to fire a royal salute—without a shot to kill a pigeon between them. Smuts turned round, gave me an encouraging smile and called, 'Give it them, Nicholls.' I was thrilled. The House cheered, and after it was all over Creswell came over to me, very pleased with myself, and we walked together to the railway station discussing what I had said. There and then its leader confided in me that the whole of the Labour Party policy, taken over wholesale from Britain, was utterly illogical and impossible until some solution of the native problem could be found: and there appeared to be no solution. I had begun a friendship which, despite all the differences of opinion, I greatly treasured.

There is no greater joy on earth than the satisfaction of a job well done. Today, I realize the utter futility of speeches such as I made. Ninety-eight per cent of all the speeches ever made in all the Parliaments of the world have as much value as a snowball. Acts and votes, not words, determine the destiny of man: and to talk without the means or the influence to ensure action is love's labour lost. But I slept like a top that first night after my speech, and, stretched out in a deckchair on the beach at Muizenberg in the warm sun, I suddenly experienced the meaning of the phrase 'getting it off my chest'. I could take in delicious draughts of sea air—a thing I had not been able to do for days. My whole body

radiated the joy of relief. I spent the best Easter I remember and commiserated with the poor devils who still had it 'on their chests'!

I have explained that my nomination was a purely personal matter. My Party affiliations were of no consequence to the bulk of my constituents. I was the settlers' representative. But though I was not formally the member of any Party, I shared my constituents' admiration for the principles of Botha's Party and for Smuts, and I naturally stood as a supporter of the South African Party, but my party instincts were still undeveloped.

I remember saying in my second session, in criticism of Patrick Duncan, then Minister of the Interior, that I had not come to Parliament to support any foolish act committed by a Minister because he happened to be in Smuts's Cabinet. I didn't put him there. My allegiance was not to him. This was in reply to the allegation that I was stabbing him in the back. My allegiance was not strengthened by my experience of caucus, for I think Smuts held only two caucuses during the whole of that first session, one at the beginning and one towards the close.

Those caucus meetings were unlike anything we have experienced since. We all filed in and took our places and waited, and then the Ministers walked in like gods. The 1920 election had added no new seats to the South African Party. The changes had been amongst the other parties. The strength of the SAP was dwindling. The caucus practice of 1920, therefore, was a continuation of what had gone before. It was all very dignified. Smuts spoke like a colonel addressing his regiment, proceeded to explain his dispositions and the reasons for them, looked round to see we understood them, and then metaphorically dismissed us and we, metaphorically, saluted and marched away.

One or two of old the commandants, Grobler or Pretorius, might say a few words in Afrikaans in order to elucidate the matter further, but there was no attempt made to extract any ideas from the rank and file. Indeed, we were not supposed to have any ideas. The head of the family had spoken, gravely, patiently, in both languages, and there was nothing more to be said. I must confess that I was much too frightened to break through the crust of this

political convention which seemed to be peculiar to the Afrikaans-speaking. Their loyalty was a personal thing, uninfluenced by causes and arguments. I had all the Englishman's regard for policies rather than for men, and yet it came about that, all through the years, I regarded Smuts as my colonel, only to be disturbed on business; I am afraid he had often to be disturbed.

Meanwhile, we heard of the dogfights going on in the Unionist Party caucuses. They held a caucus every week. From the accounts passed on to us by our Unionist friends, there were several sections constantly at war and they appeared to be having quite an enjoyable time. There were no gods in that caucus, and somehow we began to take pride in our more stately association and felt the weight of responsibility pleasantly upon us. Of the Nationalists and of Labour concerns we heard little; it is probable that Hertzog did not permit much latitude to his followers—if I know anything about him. Creswell who had all the Bolsheviks, had, I fear, rather a bad time.

At that critical period when Smuts depended on the support of other parties to maintain himself in power, it was probably wise to limit the work of caucus to the receipt of information of the Government's intentions. The passing of legislation became a deadly pitfall. Any clause, in any bill, might become the subject of acute dissension and imperil his majority. The Statute Book became thinner each year. Bills urgently required by the departments to tighten up the general administration lay in every Ministerial office awaiting a favourable opportunity. Such a state of affairs could not continue. From the wide platform which Smuts occupied he could accept assistance from any party. The Botha tradition was strong in us. We had no political exclusiveness. We would preach neither racial war nor class war, since the Party contained both races and all classes. The basic policy was a fifty-fifty attitude towards the two white races, political, economic and cultural equality, a liberal interpretation of our obligation towards the non-Europeans, loyalty towards the British Empire under the Higher Status, which had become the theme of Smuts's speeches; later it was to become the British Commonwealth.

Smuts made his appeal for a coalition with any party willing to

work with him for the good of the country. There was no immediate response. The Labour Party, specifically approached, refused to co-operate. Flushed with their recent success at the polls, they were coyly trying to woo the leftist section of both races which was increasing in number during the temporary world-spread of Bolshevik propaganda, a spread supported at one time even by Hertzog, and which later led to the attempted revolution on the Rand. Their refusal was a pity. There was much more in common, economically, between the South African Party and Labour, than between Labour and either the Nationalists or Unionists, both representing the opposite racial schools. But Labour, which was extremely British and chiefly representative of the trade unions of skilled European workers, expected that its economic appeal would prove stronger than the racial appeal made by Nationalism, with its *bywoner* or tenant class of Afrikaners; also, Labour expected to gain support from those taking part in the Afrikaans rural exodus, then just beginning as a result of the urban industries created by the war. These expectations were never realized. The racial appeal still continues to be immensely stronger than the economic appeal, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, the racial appeal exploits more successfully economic dissatisfaction by representing the cause of economic distress as being due to British Imperialism.

Thus, far from gaining ground, Labour has continued to lose it: and the skilled trade unions are regarded by Nationalists with hostility, as the protectors of British privilege, and an obstacle to the employment of Afrikaners. The refusal of Labour to co-operate at that juncture with Smuts's South African Party was indubitably wrong from the point of view of their own interests; the field was thus left clear for the Nationalists or the Unionists.

Political division among the Afrikaners runs deep. Party propaganda roams freely over a hundred years of historic fact and fiction. The Boer War with its concentration camps, its burnt homesteads, still excites the strongest emotions. The alleged causes of the Great Trek, which form the melodramatic background of its heroic episodes, are as freshly in mind as the execution of

Japie Foorie for treason to the State during the rebellion in 1914 by an Afrikaans-speaking court martial.

The supposed wrongs and injuries conjured up from distorted history are the stock-in-trade of Nationalist politicians. No Goebbels is needed to teach them the art of propaganda, or to improve on the method of gathering political support by the inculcation of historic myth. A generation of text books which emphasize the high spots of British aggression and contain nothing at all of British sacrifice and magnanimity and service, has done its work, and the past looms up in Nationalist minds as a glorious summer of Arcadian happiness and virtue, defiled only by the intrusion of British Imperialism.

The growth of Nationalism had, therefore, sown much bitterness throughout the countryside, particularly in those parts which had been in rebellion during the Great War. Families were split in two; son scarcely speaking to father; or sister to brother. It had infected the schools and the churches, even to the extent of dividing the congregations—the SAP on one side and the Nationalists on the other. Under the circumstances it was natural that the people should yearn for some healing of the breach. Smuts's appeal for co-operation fell on many willing ears, and *Hereeniging*, or getting-together movements, grew in the countryside. A meeting took place between branches of the Nationalists and the South African Party at Robertson in the Cape, which formulated proposals for consideration by the joint executive.

Neither Smuts nor Hertzog cared to interfere. If a movement was coming from the people, the people must believe that they themselves were running the show. For this purpose, a *Hereeniging* conference to be attended by delegates from all the branches of the two parties throughout the Union, was staged at Bloemfontein. To give the proceedings the right religious tone, a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church, Dr Vos, took the chair. The agenda and the resolutions had been carefully framed by the Robertson delegates. They were printed in Afrikaans only. The object was the consolidation of Afrikanerdom and the subtle managers of the movement were working to split off the Afrikaans-speaking followers of Smuts from his English-speaking followers. Conse-

quently English-speaking people were not expected and no doubt many delegates were honestly surprised when a large number of them turned up from all over the country. Quite a number spoke no Afrikaans and were unable to follow the proceedings in the packed Ramblers' Hall. Speech after speech in Afrikaans followed in succession, all stressing the need for brothers to come together again in the fight for Afrikanerdom, and in a combined march to a republic.

The British section were completely out of the picture; they felt they were getting a raw deal. Many had come long distances at their own expense, having been days on the journey, expecting that some arrangements would have been made to enable them to follow the proceedings, and when the chairman failed to explain the resolutions he proposed to put to the meeting in the morning, Stallard, a strong South African Party supporter from the Transvaal, shouted: 'I move, Mr Chairman, that the meeting stand adjourned until a translation of its agenda and the resolutions are provided in English.'

It was difficult to refuse such a reasonable request. The meeting adjourned, but, when it was resumed in the afternoon, no English translation of the agenda was forthcoming and in the end the meeting was further adjourned. The Ramblers' Hall having been found to be too small for the purpose, the Raadsaal was requisitioned, and a meeting arranged for 8 p.m. that night. A number of us arrived at the Hall before 8 o'clock and found it packed. We struggled to obtain admission, but were unable to get in. Meanwhile Dr Vos was addressing the meeting and it looked as though the organizers were determined to get on with the business in our absence. A combined rush jammed a number of us in the doorway, amongst them being Stallard, who won my admiration by coming to the rescue for the second time that day. At the top of his voice, which rang out through the hall above the tones of the chairman, he shouted: 'I move, Mr Chairman, that the meeting stands adjourned until the delegates can find seats.' The chairman paused, looked round and asked in a surprised voice: 'Are the delegates not all in the hall?' 'No,' we shouted. 'All Bloemfontein is in the hall: the delegates are outside.' It was

obvious what had happened. All the Nationalists of Bloemfontein had been collected by some zealous organizers and were installed in the seats, while dozens of the delegates who alone had the right to vote, were struggling to get in. The meeting was abandoned. It was arranged that the delegates should meet next day and entrance should be made by ticket.

The following day the delegates duly assembled, when it was found that the hall was only two-thirds full. The session was again opened by Dr Vos who, in his weak wavering voice, pleaded for more decorum. The proceedings were in Afrikaans, and after repeated demands for an interpreter, Langenhoven, then a Nationalist member of Parliament, Afrikaans poet and writer, much respected by all, volunteered to interpret from Afrikaans to English. He came forward and, after the speaker had completed his remarks in Afrikaans, gave a very free translation into English of what had been said. 'But,' protested a delegate, 'that is not what Beyers said.' 'Well', said Langenhoven, 'it's what I say, and I am expressing the same sentiments!'

That did not get us much further. Later when the chairman began to put some resolution to the meeting in Afrikaans alone, de Wet, later Chief Justice and then Minister of Justice, who was sitting next to me said, 'Get up and protest, Nicholls.' I did. I said that the South African Party did not consist only of Afrikaans-speaking members but also of English-speaking; that they had come long distances to take part in the conference and they had a right to know what the resolution was they were asked to vote on. A voice came from the audience: 'Give it 'em in French.' That interruption and that note was a true reflection of the spirit animating many of the delegates at the meeting.

Behind the scenes of the conference a committee of both parties was busy trying to find a formula which would at once keep the South African Party loyal to the British connection and which would take the Nationalist Party into a republic. It proved to be an impossible task. Both parties were doing their best to prevent any coalescence: and though the leaders, Smuts and Hertzog, did not appear to be taking any part in the proceedings, they were closely in touch.

In the separate caucuses which were held, each side held its ground. The South African Party caucus actually voted on the republican resolution with only one in favour. He was J. L. Schurunk, the member for Lydenburg. That vote ended his parliamentary career. The South African Party refused to accept the proposal that propaganda should be carried on for a republic—later accepted by the United Party under Clause 21—and the Nationalists refused to surrender their alleged right to make such propaganda. It was on this note that the curtain was pulled down.

The *Hereeniging* congress put an end to all hope of a coalition between the Nationalists and the South African Party. The general public were at last convinced that no *hereeniging* was possible. The republicans rallied to the support of Nationalism and those who were satisfied with the existing Union constitution formed up behind the SAP.

The failure of the conference revealed clearly the permanence of the cleavage between the followers of Smuts and those of Hertzog. There could be no compromise either upon the republican issue or the one-stream policy advocated by Smuts. Under the conditions then prevailing on the Platteland, there could be very little hope of an increase in strength to the South African Party. The way was now left open for an approach to the Unionists.

During the first ten years of Union, the South African Party, with Botha at its head, had been overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking. The Unionist representation was confined almost exclusively to the towns, where the bulk of Englishmen lived, and it was only in Natal that the rural areas found a solid block of British representation to support the South African Party. Consequently, with the exception of Burton from the Cape who was half-English and half-Dutch, only Thomas Watt from Natal permanently represented the British in Botha's cabinet. Watt, a dour, precise, slow-speaking unimaginative Scots lawyer of undoubted integrity and loyalty to his chiefs, played a very worthy part in those formative days. He was a Minister in Natal before union and continued to hold ministerial rank until 1924.

There were, indeed, temporary holders of ministerial office by the English-speaking; Frederick Moor, who was Prime Minister of Natal before union, was in the Cabinet for a few months. He was succeeded by George Leuchars, also from Natal, whose objection to the two-stream policy of Hertzog led to the retirement of both. There was Hull, who for a brief space was Minister of Finance after union; Senator Gubbins, Minister without Portfolio, who lost his life in the torpedoed *Galway Castle* during the war, and, during the last years of the decade, Orr, an old Natal Civil Servant, held the portfolio of Minister of Finance.

None of these had any influence on the policy of the Government during their terms of office. Leuchars made his influence felt when he demanded that Hertzog should be called to book after his De Wildt speech, but his office did not last and he found it convenient to resign. He was an honourable, much respected, ingenuous man in the British tradition without political ambitions of any kind. For the rest, the Englishmen were regarded as *Uitlanders* in the Union Cabinet.

Even Watt, complacent and time-serving, found it necessary to protest at times against his exclusion from inner circles. He told me that during those first ten years there was always an inner Cabinet which decided important issues. He himself was rarely consulted. During the rebellion in 1914 when the country was full of rumours of events in the field, his ignorance of the facts and his impotence as a member of the Government compelled him to demand an explanation. He forced his way into the office of Smuts who as Minister of Defence was in the thick of the battle.

'Well, Watt,' said Smuts, a little impatiently, laying down his pen, 'I'm very busy!' 'I know you are busy,' said Watt, 'and that is what is worrying me. What are you busy about? I'm a Cabinet Minister and I ought to know what is going on and I don't. I hear rumours from all sides of serious action being taken by the Government against rebels and it is humiliating that I should get my information at secondhand, and not know the truth. I have a right to know.'

Smuts, after looking through him with his keen blue eyes, threw back his head and smilingly pulled his goatee with the tips

of his fingers, and, in that charming characteristic way of his which none of his colleagues could resist, said: 'Of course, Watt, you have a right to know. Why did you not come along to see me before? The fact is that things are so serious that we have not time for Cabinet discussions. I'll tell you all about it.' For the first time, Watt heard the full tale, but he felt that he had it as an audience, not as a Cabinet Minister, a colleague, whose affirmation for action was sought.

Behind this lay a definite policy. Hertzog was sedulously exploiting the common belief of the backveld that Botha and Smuts were under the thumb of the British. South Africa was British and the natural assumption was that Britain ruled. The principles of responsible government as practised by the British were not understood on the Platteland, which believed that Ministers were merely Britain's paid agents, retained because they could be relied upon to do as they were told; it was these very Ministers who had taken South Africa into the war; the wealth and manhood of South Africa were being exploited and sacrificed for British Imperialism by traitors to Afrikanerdom.

In the face of this growing opinion, the less the Englishman had to do with Government, the better, if the backveld was to be held. The more obvious it became that Dutchmen really ruled, the more chance there would be of combating the growth of Nationalism. The Englishmen, then, as Cabinet Ministers, must be quiescent. There was of course, the other point of view, that the number of English-speaking members returned to Parliament in support of Botha, were fully represented in the Cabinet by Burton and Watt.

These were among the reasons which induced Smuts to leave to the last the approach for co-operation to the Unionists. His first choice had been Labour, then very leftish and sufficiently in love with the Red Flag to neutralise their natural predeliction for the Union Jack. If Labour, as revealed at the last election, was ousting the Unionists in the towns, then the combination of Labour and the South African Party might sweep the country. There was much to be said for it.

The Unionists were regarded as the representatives of British

capitalism. The Chamber of Mines, the Chamber of Commerce and the British press were behind them. The South African Party had no such affiliation and there was infinitely less incompatibility between Labour and the SAP than between the Nationalists and Labour, who later formed the Pact Government which led ultimately to Labour's defeat. The rejection of the proffered hand by Labour and the failure of the *Hereeniging* conference, brought the Unionists on the scene.

No coalition was possible between the South African Party and the Unionists. Smuts could not have held his Dutchmen in a coalition with British capitalism, for these Dutchmen had not given him the full reversion of their loyalty to Botha. They were primarily Botha men, to whom they had been attached by bonds of personal affection and admiration. Smuts had been away for some years serving the Empire; his contacts with them had been loosened. He lacked the Botha touch, the warm personal interest in his followers, the camaraderie which softened intercourse. His great overseas reputation placed him in a royal isolation, without an atmosphere of traditional loyalty to his person among his supporters. They did full justice to his intellectual eminence, but they did not know sufficient of the outside world to appreciate the real magnitude of his achievements. The political temperature of the Botha men fell a few points. By the British, outside the ranks of Labour, Smuts was regarded with approval. To Labour, as to the Nationalists, he was suspect.

To the Unionists who had expressed a desire long before to coalesce with the Government, the intimation was conveyed that their co-operation would now be welcomed, but not on a coalition basis. If they wished to join the Government, they must abandon their own party and become ordinary members of the South African Party, with a reward of three portfolios. If they refused, the Nationalists would govern, and all they stood for would be lost.

It was Hobson's choice. Accordingly another great congress was staged at Bloemfontein, that city of congresses, a congress of the Unionist Party. There was no public appeal for co-operation, as was the case when the Nationalists were consulted at the

Hereeniging conference. It was left to the Unionists alone at that grave hour to determine the future. After great argument and after some final exhortation by last ditchers against the sentence of suicide, the Unionist Party, led by Thomas Smart, lowered its flag, marched into the camp of the South African Party unconditionally, and laid its organization, its funds, its loyalties, its press, at the feet of Smuts, an act of self-immolation then unparalleled in our political history. From that moment, Smuts became the acknowledged leader of the enlarged party, the only star in the firmament. The Unionist leaders dropped back to a lower magnitude and their declension, even amongst their erstwhile followers, began.

The bright light of Smuts suffused the whole party sky, but the SAP became, to the joy of the Nationalists and to Smuts's deep concern and sorrow, an increasingly English Party. Few Englishmen have realized what this change meant to Smuts. He loved his people; he desired above all things to retain their regard. He had put South Africa on the map of the world for them. At this moment he felt that lack of understanding and the hatred that Hertzog had generated against him, was alone responsible for his position. In the eyes of Afrikanerdom, he had become the leader of an English party and could be expected to think like an Englishman.

A general election followed immediately, in 1922, to approve the conjunction of Unionists and SAP; the SAP was returned to power. Labour lost heavily; the Nationalists increased their strength and for the first time became the official opposition; whereupon Hertzog issued a manifesto congratulating the Nationalists upon destroying the Labour Party which had been shattered on the rock of Afrikanerdom and existed now only in name.

The truth was that Labour was feared for its effect on the Nationalist backveld—a good Socialist could not make a good Nationalist—a fact which Creswell did not perceive or, if he did, his subsequent loyalty to Hertzog may be questioned.

Smuts returned to power in 1922 with a reduced majority over that of the two combined parties prior to the election. His loss was

in his former Dutch support. From now on, the Nationalists found a rallying cry on the Platteland in 'Smuts and his Unionists'—a phrase which carried with it great significance, for Unionist in the Nationalist vocabulary was synonymous with Englishman. To call a man a Unionist in Nationalist circles was very much like calling a stockbroker a Bolshevik on the Stock Exchange.

Smuts had, according to his opponents, now definitely severed his connection with Afrikanerdom and joined the Unionists, the imperialists, the oppressors of the people, the slaughterers of the women and children of the concentration camps, for such is the political currency with which votes are bought in the backveld. In the towns, Labour saw to it that Smuts was properly linked with the Chamber of Mines and the money power, Smuts whose simple tastes and quiet life compared favourable in spartan living with that of any Socialist member of the Labour benches.

Henceforth, the great South African Party, from the middle position held by Botha, that of a country party, supported by the moderates of both races, became to the Platteland 'the Imperialists' and to the towns 'the voice of the bosses'. Against this fire from both flanks, even the statesmanship of Smuts might have quailed. He kept his head and his temper, though his spirit was sorely troubled. As he told us on one famous occasion—the birthday of Hertzog in 1931—some of the most unhappy periods of his life were spent during those days at Groot Schuur, the Prime Minister's residence bequeathed by Cecil Rhodes. Many times he debated whether he should leave public life altogether, when the constant strain of lies and calumny could no longer be borne, and, although he did not say so, everybody knew that the most biting and venomous reproaches were hurled at him by Hertzog, whose birthday toast he was proposing.

The 1922 Cabinet was fifty-fifty—five Dutchmen and five British—and Parliament met the day after its appointment. Three of the portfolios went to old Unionists—to Thomas Smart, Patrick Duncan and Jagger. These three added to the debating strength of the Government, but that strength was in English, a language which became taboo by the official opposition. Watt and Burton remained to complete the British side. Smuts carried

with him three of his old Afrikaner Ministers—F. S. Malan, Mentz, and N. J. de Wet, with a new addition in Denys Reitz. It was a strong government, considered from the point of view of capacity. Malan had been a Minister since union, was a member of the National Convention, a man of wide experience, liberal views and culture. Mentz had been a Minister since 1915 and was one of the most decisive and forceful speakers on the Afrikaner side, especially selected by Botha for his outstanding ability. De Wet, too, had been a Minister since union. He was a lawyer of eminence and was to become Chief Justice of the Union. Reitz owed his elevation to the fact that he was a protégé of Smuts and a son of the old President of the Orange Free State. A safe seat had been found for him at Port Elizabeth by appointing Edgar Walton to be High Commissioner in London.

Reitz's appointment caused much heartburning at the time, since he had no parliamentary experience, and it may be doubted whether the appointment was politically advantageous. But he had a magnificent record as a warrior, and later his published books won world-wide commendation and popularity. When some years later Bernard Shaw was entertained to dinner at Groot Schuur by Hertzog, then Prime Minister, Shaw made some remark about the excellence of Reitz's book, the classic of the Boer War, *Commando*. Hertzog replied: 'I know nothing about it. I've not read it. I have no time for people who make money out of *our* war.'

With this team then, General Smuts faced the new Parliament and the unknown future.

CHAPTER X

MEMBER FOR ZULULAND

(1920)

BACK in my settlers' constituency the party political emotions generated in Cape Town disappeared. Our local emotions were related only to the bread and butter concerns of Zululand in so far as they aided or retarded development, and few of my constituents knew anything about those things which woke all the members out of their lethargy and had the press correspondents writing feverishly in the Press Gallery in Cape Town. The political ideologies which seemed so burning and so real when they were being debated in Parliament left Zululand cold. The constituency had its own immediate matters to attend to.

Zululand was unique. The constituency contained thirteen magistracies, while nearly all the other constituencies in the Union contained only one. Zululand, therefore, had a large civil service, most of whom had been members of the old Natal Civil Service and so had a Natal point of view. It also had a large railway service, since the Natal Coast line was the heaviest trafficked branch-line in the Union. The white workers in the sugar-mills fell within the scope of our industrial legislation and, by inclination, they supported the ideas of the Labour Party. In addition to the sugar settlements, where all planters were small settlers, there was tea-growing at Kearsney, wattle-growing at Melmoth, wool-growing at Babanango, cattle-rearing and cotton-growing at different places. All these various products demanded separate study by me, in which politics bore no part. Even Nationalist Babanango told the Nationalist Minister, Grobelar, that he would have their votes only so long as his party did not make a hole in their pockets.

Then, too, there was an evolving native population of half a million, which, because it had no political representation, had to be represented by the Zululand member, if he was doing his job properly, although, of course, he did not interfere in administrative matters. And in the constituency was Stanger with the only Indian-controlled town council in the Union.

Study, therefore, of the contacts between the races as they affected their economics and, indeed, their ethical standards, could not be ignored. This meant frequent meetings with Solomon, the Paramount Zulu Chief (although he was not officially recognized as such), and the smoothing of his difficulties with the Natal Native Administration. None of these interests could be furthered without personal discussion, which meant continual touring of the constituency in the car which the Zululand electorate had given me; it meant also, frequent trips to Pretoria to get things done. The comparison between the representative of a constituency like Zululand and that of a town constituency in Durban where one 'report back meeting' after Parliament was all that the member owed to his constituents, was striking.

In 1920, the first action taken on my representation was the destruction of game which, by wandering out of the Umfolozi Game Reserve, had spread the tsetse fly and the disease *nagana* amongst the settlers' cattle. There was no known cure. The death of hundreds of cattle spread dismay and bankruptcy amongst many of the young returned soldier settlers at Ntambanana. I pleaded effectively in Parliament for the organization of a great game drive to drive the game back to the Reserve. This was done by the magistrate at Empangeni, Col. Tanner. The destruction of the tsetse fly occupied several years and caused much acrimony amongst supporters of various schools of thought; finally the cheapest way was found to be by spraying from an aeroplane. Cattle can now roam anywhere throughout Zululand without fear of *nagana*, but the years of work devoted to the destruction of the fly were many.

It was the same with malaria which took its yearly toll of the people, until the public spirit of the constituency joined together to assist Park Ross, the principal officer of health for Natal, in

getting legislation through the Provincial Council to create malarial committees in all coastal districts, armed with the powers of taxation—which all had to pay. These enthusiastic malarial committees engaged native gangs to cover pools of stagnant water with oil, sprayed all huts and houses in and outside the Native Reserve and turned the most malarial spots in the Union into health centres. Money and public spirit in my experience can change the desert into the sown.

To the north of the Umfolozi settlement lay a stretch of some sixty miles of unoccupied coastal territory of exceptional fertility; no doubt its unoccupied character had been due to the tsetse fly. This area had been locked up by the Beaumont Commission as potential native land, but it was a constant reminder to all who passed through it of the remoteness of the Union Government. The Zululand planters petitioned Parliament for this obviously fertile land to be surveyed into small sugar-farms for returned soldiers. We knew nothing about its rainfall which was subsequently found to be inadequate for sugar-growing. But I put forward a remedy which would have relieved Umfolozi from its perpetual threat of flood and would have provided the water for irrigating this land. I recommended the Government to take the Black Umfolozi River from its present channel before it entered the Umfolozi Flats and tunnel it through the hills at the base of Nongoma and thus lead it to Hluhluwe and the settlers' farms. It was a feasible scheme, approved by our irrigation engineers but it was defeated by the emotional politics of Cape Town. The scheme is still being talked about but it will require the raising of three million pounds by private enterprise.

During my first years as a member of Parliament I carried out the promise I had made to the electorate when I first became their representative, that with their assistance I would organize a Parliamentary tour through Zululand each year. Our trouble was that we were unknown; in consequence Zululand's development was held up. But if I could not take Zululand to Cape Town,

I could at least see to it that some responsible Ministers came from Cape Town to Zululand.

The first year (1920) was in the nature of a preliminary canter. I took with me only my stable companion in Parliament, H. B. Papenfus. But in 1921 I took round a whole party which I gathered together, headed by Denys Reitz, who had become Minister of Lands. He was the principal guest. There were other members of Parliament, Sefton from the Cape and Marwick from Natal and there was old General Lukin who came to see some of those who had survived Delville Wood and were now farming in Zululand. Members of the Press were well represented, for we were all out to advertise Zululand and Zululand was the only constituency in which such a tour could be organized where there were no party politics.

All along the coast there were organizations of farmers and others; it was easy therefore, for me to arrange with each association for hospitality to be provided for members of the party and for lunches and dinners to be given at selected spots according to our time of arrival. Reitz refers to this tour in his book *Trekking On*; only he gives the impression that he was quite alone in his exploration out in the wilds. As a matter of fact he was never alone, and the great days of shooting were all carefully arranged for him by me.

But I had to pay for this tour. When I set out I knew that I had pleurisy on me, but feeling that the tour would be a failure unless I went with it, I continued on until finally, it changed into an empyema and a liver abscess, which I managed to stave off until the end of the tour. I returned at once to the farm and went to bed. There was no doctor available, but my wife got advice from an old nurse who said she thought I was dangerously ill. Finally a doctor was found at the Umfolozi Hotel, who was touring the settlement for an insurance company. He came over to see me, armed, amongst other things, with a syringe. After a close examination he said: 'I know what you've got, but I don't know how long you have had it, however we will see. I am going to jab this syringe into your chest', which he proceeded to do. He withdrew it and held it up to the light, where he studied it

saying: 'There you are, I've struck oil the first time! This means an operation. I can't do anything more with this small syringe, we'll have to get you to Durban.'

But there was no train until the following evening. The pain in my chest grew rapidly worse and the doctor came over again that night, this time with a large cattle syringe. My wife brought him into the bedroom and he attempted to sterilize the syringe over a candle and knocked it over in the process. I saw that he was drunk. My wife's only concern was to relieve me of the pain and seeing my look of apprehension she said: 'It will be all right, George, as soon as he has drawn some of this stuff off your chest you will feel better.' 'But,' I said in an undertone, 'the man is drunk. I don't relish a drunk man sticking a syringe into my chest. I am surprised you haven't noticed it.' She very quickly saw that I was right and said: 'My husband says he will have it in the morning. He'll get through the night all right,' and she eventually managed to get him out of the bedroom and put him to bed in the adjoining room with my son; she spent a sleepless night wondering whether the drunken doctor would try to stick the syringe into Derek!

In the morning the manager of the mill and Thornley Stewart appeared and looked the doctor over; they decided he was well enough to perform the operation on me. So while they held me down, he set to work and withdrew several ounces of pus from my chest, after which the pain subsided and I was able to go down by the train to Durban the next morning, where I was operated upon; the wound took such an unconscionable time to heal that I went down to Cape Town where I had to undergo a second operation. It was six months before I was back at work.

The following year I arranged a more spectacular tour with Smuts and a number of other members of Parliament, including Reitz; the General badly needed to get away from the continued mud-slinging to which he was being subjected. The tour, lasting nearly a month, gave him respite from the cares of office.

It was a real Prime Minister's tour. We slept the first night at Tongaat with the Saunders and inspected the sugar mill which was then, and still probably is, one of the most efficient in Natal.

Our daily journeys were limited to the few miles we could travel before another gathering met us with refreshments, or invited us into a hall to receive an address. The whole country had been preparing for this tour for weeks and I was immensely proud to represent so progressive a community which could turn out in such numbers to welcome its Prime Minister.

At Stanger, I had a taste of Smuts's quality. We were conducted into a hall filled with white people to whom Smuts made one of inimitable, humorous speeches. His audience was most appreciative and he responded to the goodwill of the people. There was at this period much agitation against the Indians who were considered to be temporary sojourners in our midst. Stanger was considered to be the focal point of the agitation. After the meeting with the whites, to my surprise, the hall was quickly filled with Indians, evidently by prearrangement. That seemed to me good sportsmanship. The whites did not interfere in the game being played in the political field.

The Indian leader presented Smuts with an illuminated address and after a few words sat down. I wondered what Smuts was going to say; with his sharpened political sense, he knew the nature of the racial conflict better than I did. But I need not have feared. He did not refer to the questions set out in the address. Instead, he enraptured his Indian audience. He told them of the glories of India, of the great things Indians had done in the campaign in East Africa, of India's gifts to humanity in her ancient literature. They listened to him, as enthralled as I. Afterwards when I sat beside him in the car I ventured to remark: 'I think you managed that very well, Sir'; he turned to me with a smile and said: 'What else could I do but talk platitudes?' I gaped. I hadn't known he had been talking platitudes. Afterwards I began began to take notice of these 'platitudes', both on that trip and always thereafter. I had not known their value before, but Smuts always had on tap a steady flow of them. Time after time, when I have listened to the applause, I have muttered under my breath: 'Platitudes!' Nevertheless, the ability to utter platitudes is one of the first lessons to be learnt by a politician: and Smuts had that ability in great measure.

All the way up to Zululand the progress continued. Smuts was delighted. Eshowe, the capital, was just as excited about the visit as the coast. Along the Nkwaleni Valley and through the Ntambanana returned soldiers' settlement there was great joy, for the settlement had not then suffered the fearful calamity of *nagana* in their cattle, which reduced them all to almost beggary. The picnic lunch under the trees at Ntambanana was a gay scene. All the women of the settlement were present and they looked bonny. It is sad to reflect that the hardships and the vicissitudes of pioneering proved too much for many of them. Today they are all scattered, and homes which started with such promise are broken. On this day, however, some of the farmers with artistic instincts had been at great trouble to see that the most sleek and beautiful cattle were grazing along the roadside as Smuts passed. They surmised that the sight of a living beast would give him more pleasure than bags of sugar, and the pedigree cattle were indeed good to look upon.

Empangeni was the most prosperous centre in Zululand since it catered for two sugar mills. When we arrived the whole community was *en fête*. Various events had been arranged, one of which was a visit to the local War Memorial Hospital, then just completed but which, as yet, had few patients. The visit took place in the winter, the best time of the year in Zululand. We found every bed occupied. Smuts popped his head into every ward, perhaps surprised at seeing it filled; but Reitz who followed burst out laughing and with his fat chuckle said, after a couple of wards had been visited: 'Well, you all look the healthiest lot of stiffs I've ever seen.' There were smiles all round the ward; planters filled the beds, with their boots on! There was a great lunch in the railways goods shed, no other place being big enough to seat them all. Smuts was in good form, talking as a soldier to old soldiers. Then on to Umfolozi, a place very much under the weather then, but conscious that, by making its struggles known on that occasion, a powerful lever might be got for use during the following years.

The rail ended at Somkeli a few miles further on, and here we parted from civilization for several weeks. A troop of police from

Pretoria had come down to take care of the Prime Minister. I had been surprised all along the route when we came to a turn in the road, to find some mounted police guarding it; mounted police seemed so unnecessary in our non-political region, but Prime Ministers everywhere come under police care. We had to pass through the unpopulated area of Hluhluwe and Mkusi, a trip which determined the early settlement of these places. Then on across the Ubombo from which we looked down upon Maputaland, spread out before us like a huge map. Smuts told us that as State Attorney for the Transvaal Republic, he had tried to wrest it from British influence. He recalled those days when Transvaal agents had been living at Ingwavuma before the Tongas placed themselves and their land under British protection and Maputaland became a Protectorate.

We now went eastwards by mule wagon and horses leaving the Pongola River on our left. Along the sandy track to Kosi Bay, the lala palm forests which originally stretched in thick growth far into Portuguese territory, were gradually disappearing as they were tapped for palm wine. The local inhabitants probably belonged to the most drunken tribe in Africa. *Basulu*, which began as a non-fermented, pleasant drink, became highly intoxicating if left to ferment for a few days. This abundance of liquor had a degrading influence on the whole tribe.

Nature was prolific. The sandy soil was fertile for bananas and ground nuts and gave good crops in good seasons; but they were poorly cultivated. At Kosi Bay, we found lines of fish-traps stretching from one bank to the other from which the local population obtained their fish diet to go with their *basulu*. After a look round Kosi Bay Smuts set off at a gallop along the coast between the lake and the sea, and eventually arrived at the lower end of the lake at a spot where one can almost throw a stone from the sea to the waters of the lake. 'Here is the spot,' he said 'where a channel from the sea into the lake could be cut with ease.' It was obvious. The picture of this widespread inland lake of great depth and enormous capacity for shipping being opened up for use was startling. What would be the effect on Durban and Lourenço Marques? 'How would you get a railway here?' asked

Smuts. 'Quite easily,' replied the General Manager of Railways, William Hoy, who was travelling with us. 'It's a simple run down from the Transvaal, the easiest way down to the sea that I know.'

The news of this discovery by Smuts brought its quick results in the negotiations then in progress with the Portuguese over the supply of native labour to the mines and traffic over the railway from Delagoa Bay to Johannesburg. The presence of Smuts inspecting Kosi Bay, only a few miles south of Lourenço Marques brought about a quick renewal of the *modus vivendi*. The railway provisions remained and Portuguese mine labour was secured.

We returned along the boundary to Ndumu according to schedule. It was a long and dusty journey before reaching the Pongola River. Smuts took off his clothes and plunged in. I was a bit worried. Crocodiles were numerous everywhere in the Pongola, particularly at Ndumu; the river was muddy too. Smuts, apparently unconcerned, swam for an appreciable time, while I, seated on the bank, looked anxiously out for a black snout. Fortunately none came. We rode on together to the Ndumu store, through the valley of the Ngwavuma River where the store had orchards and gardens under irrigation. Here we met the store owners, the Rutherfords. Mrs Rutherford had had some difficulty in providing food for all, but she managed and sat smiling at her long table, though somewhat diffidently. Smuts patted her arm and said: 'Don't be upset at your large family today, Mrs Rutherford, just carry on as though you did this every day of your life!'

Here at Ndumu the mail reached us. Smuts was a little taken aback when he read of the appeal from Lloyd George asking that he should be backed up to resist the Turks at Chanak. Smuts's reply was that it was a matter for Parliament to deal with; he was completely out of touch with his headquarters. This stand made by Lloyd George was successful. The Turks did not advance, and the incident blew over. It would have been awkward if we had started a new war in 1922.

We went afterwards to the Usutu River, which forms the boundary between Portuguese and Union territory. The river at

this point was wide and swift-flowing. Smuts said that we were entitled to half the water and we could irrigate a good deal of Maputaland and make use of it. Here I began to dream of a great plan for utilizing the Pongola, with the Usutu and the Mkusi Rivers, for turning Maputaland into the greatest irrigation scheme in the Union—well over half a million acres.

No other part of the Union offered such irrigational opportunities. Instead of the drunken Amatonga, we could have a million industrious natives producing cotton for industry under scientific control. It would be superior to the Gezira cotton settlement on the Nile at Khartoum. This was what the British Cotton Growers' Association, with their research station at Mkusi, was looking for, some real constructive enterprise. The Candover Cotton Estates were demonstrating how it could be done. Maputaland for the natives and Hluhluwe and Mkusi for the Europeans would give us sufficient cotton to found our textile industry. We talked about it. Smuts and Reitz were enthusiastic about the possibilities.

All such schemes require continual pressure from enthusiasts, ample funds and a wide awake public opinion. Had we discovered gold in Maputaland, private enterprise would quickly have transformed the country, but the permanent gold of abundant water and fertile soil makes no appeal to South African politicians. Moreover we were not then within sight of developing a policy of native land development. So the Pongola River still threads its way with the Usutu River to form the Maputa and together they empty their unused waters into Delagoa Bay. Maputaland, the greatest irrigable promise in the Union, remains unknown. The lala palms grow fewer and will soon disappear, leaving only the sandy waste, though a plantation of gums is rising along the coast. The lala palm is all fibre, as strong as sisal hemp and could with proper cultivation provide a local industry.

We crossed the Ubombo to Candova, where Rouillard, who started the cotton plantations, met us in his Vauxhall car—then something very special. He wanted mostly the extension of the railway from its railhead at Somkeli so that he could get off his cotton. The sudden post-war fall in the price of cotton delayed

the building of the railway. Then on to Nongoma magistracy where Solomon the Zulu paramount chief was waiting with his followers to greet us. Nongoma lies in the hills, four thousand feet up, in the heart of Zululand. The Mkusi River which we had crossed on our way up was the scene of the Chaneni battle in 1884 which cost the Zulus the land of the Vryheid Republic. Three hundred Boers claimed half of Zululand! From the courthouse at Nongoma, there is a political problem whichever way you look. To the northeast across the Ubombo lies Maputaland, which the Tongas claim should be a protectorate, a claim which the Union denies. To the north is Swaziland under British protection, which is claimed by the Union under the South Africa Act. To the west lies the grave of Prince Louis Napoleon whose death by a Zulu assegai perhaps changed the fate of the world. To the east lies the land locked up by the Beaumont Commission to satisfy the demands of the 1913 Native Land Act. In 1922 all these different claims were still boiling over from other days, and Britain, after having burnt her fingers in Zululand in 1879, was no longer inclined to take any interest in an area which had cost her so many lives and so much money. Under the settlement established by Wolseley Zululand was left to carry on its old quarrels until Natal annexed it in 1897.

When Solomon succeeded his father, Dinizulu, union had come about. Botha obtained a pledge from Solomon that he devote his attention to bringing about peace between the two warring sections of the Zulu people; he was much concerned with righting this wrong, for he had been one of the young swashbucklers who had followed Lucas Meyer to assist Dinizulu in his attack on his uncle Sibopo. Botha used to tell his friends in Parliament in Cape Town that he never saw so many dead men as at Chaneni. The battle was on his conscience. Smuts was keen to know whether Solomon had carried out Botha's instructions to him. He said he had, and we received evidence that it was often a disagreeable duty which he had to perform. But he did it.

Leaving Nongoma we came to Mhlabatini situated some thirty miles away between the two Umfolozi Rivers. From Mhlabatini the road runs down steeply to the wide valley of Ulundi,

the scene of the final battle of 1879, beautifully stage-managed by the British; its memory is still strong in the minds of many Zululanders. Any impartial student of history will know that Ulundi determined the fate of white South Africa; had the British been defeated here, the weak Afrikaner Republic of the Transvaal could never have carried on.

From Ulundi I took the party to Dingaan's kraal, where I knew the people of the neighbourhood were waiting. Smuts inspected the memorial stone which the people of Babanango had erected in memory of Piet Retief and his companions, who were treacherously murdered by Dingaan in 1838. The erection of the monument had just taken place. When I first travelled that way during my tour of the constituency after my election, there was nothing to mark the spot where Piet Retief fell. The farm was owned by an Afrikaner, who had the English name of Harris. He had then planted mealies in the very kraal site of Dingaan's capital. I mused over the site of the kraal, still marked by the baked earth of the floors of the huts, and by two mimosa trees which had stood before the entrance gates. The project of turning the place into a national monument to which people from all over the Union could travel to see an old Zulu kraal, grew. There could be some kind of museum which would contain all relevant Zulu antiques and a complete model of the kraal as it originally stood. That would mean a national appeal for £50,000 for it was essential that Zulu traditions and sentiments should be enlisted in the national effort.

I set about organizing it. I formed a committee in Eshowe, with Charlie Adams as chairman and started the ball rolling in Zululand for funds by a leading article in the *Zululand Times*, and got my friends of the *Natal Mercury* to write leading articles on it also. The fund began to appeal. Then one morning at my house at Mtubatuba, I was waited on by a deputation from Babanango. They said they had come about the Retief Memorial. I was delighted to hear it and told them that I thought the appeal would be successful. To my surprise, they told me that my entrance on the scene was quite unnecessary. There was already a fund for this purpose in existence. I said I had not heard of it. They replied that

it had been going on for some months in Pretoria. They did not consider that a Retief memorial had anything to do with an Englishman and they asked me to drop the idea! This was a great slap in the face for me. I had not considered there was a political angle—not in Zululand. It was eighty-two years since Piet Retief had been murdered and Babanango had been going for over fifty of them and the first time these people had thought of erecting a memorial was when I had started out on a national scheme. I was then young in politics! I agreed to wind up my fund and advised the members of my committee accordingly. The deputation left very pleased with themselves.

Now on this day, after Smuts had read the names on the memorial and remarked that there was an English name amongst the murdered, the leader of the Babanango deputation spoke of the small response they had had from the public and asked that the Government might help to pay for the memorial. I thought that this *memento mori* was a poor substitute for what I had proposed and even then the rich wool farmers of the district could not pay for it. Whether the Government did eventually pay for the stone, I do not know. When later the Nationalists came into power, they had a regular emotional orgy at that spot, with a dramatic entry of young mounted actors representing Piet Retief and other demonstrations. A large marquee was erected in which Malan—this was his first visit to Zululand—orated at length. I, the Parliamentary representative, had not been invited. I stood at the back of the marquee and tried to comprehend the minds of those who were inflaming sentiment for political party purposes and the jealous exclusiveness of my political opponents. I was learning something. But I could not help feeling that this was not the way to win the goodwill of the half-million Zulus.

I am here reminded of an incident which occurred on one of my tours when I arrived one day at Robbins's Upper Umhlatuzi store, below Babanango. When I arrived, the Robbins's were away and I went to the store to get some petrol. The store was closed. Standing outside was a well-dressed Zulu. I asked him why the place was shut. 'Don't you know,' he said, in excellent English,

'this is Dingaan's Day. This is a white man's holiday. It is a day of humiliation for us. The whites are now down at Blood River celebrating the murder of my people with guns, without any loss to themselves. I wonder what you whites would say if we celebrated our victory over British troops at Isandhlwana? I expect you would all be very angry. But would that be in any way different to what the whites are doing now?' I did not argue, but I brought the matter up in Parliament with the idea of slowing down these emotional occasions, which might win political party converts, but do irreparable harm to the relationship between black and white. I am glad to say that Hertzog agreed with me.

From Dingaan's kraal we went on to Melmoth and spent the night as the guests of Charles Saunders, who was the last British Commissioner for Zululand before it was handed over to Natal. He was then farming outside Melmoth and was very much *au fait* with all that was happening in Zulu councils. Lady Saunders was a most charming and excellent hostess and the dinner she prepared was worthy of the occasion. Because Sir Charles's son, who was at the dinner, had been in South West Africa, Smuts told of an incident which had happened to him when he was visiting our troops there with William Hoy during the 1914–18 War. They were making for the Union lines which they knew lay across the railway, when they became lost in the bush. As night was coming on and they thought they were uncomfortably near the Germans, they decided to walk. They could not, however, agree on the direction. Smuts wanted to go one way, Hoy the other. Hoy had his way and Smuts followed him. Presently they came to the railway line which was above them, and, just as they were crossing it, Smuts felt a rifle in his ribs and heard the command: 'Hands up'.

To everyone's surprise, young Saunders excitedly interrupted the General: 'That was me!' he said. 'It was you, you young beggar,' said Smuts. 'It was all done on duty,' said Saunders apologetically. 'We had been told to keep a sharp look out for Germans. You had been talking in Afrikaans: I thought it was German. As you loomed up in the darkness above me, I pushed

my rifle forward with my finger on the trigger.'

'You might have shot me,' said Smuts, 'particularly if you had been nervous.'

'I was nervous all right. When you said you were General Smuts I refused to believe you, I really did think you were German.'

'Yes,' said Smuts, with a smile, 'your language was pretty strong for a young man. You marched Hoy and me up to the sergeant to have a good look at us with a lamp.'

'I was in a real swearing mood and I wasn't going to be bluffed by Germans,' said Saunders.

'I have been in some tough places,' went on Smuts, 'but the feel of that rifle in my ribs and the knowledge that a frightened man, with his finger on the trigger, was pushing me from behind, remains a vivid experience. Your children,' he said to Sir Charles, 'have the right stuff in them!'

We continued our journey the next morning to Babanango, where the audience was entirely Afrikaans-speaking. They all crowded into lunch at the hotel. Smuts was put through his paces by the Afrikaner section, which seemed to be growing in strength —and the antagonism was apparent—quite different from what we had experienced during the past weeks. But Smuts carried it off with a grand air. There were so many who had 'slept under his blanket', and it was a change from the more respectful air he had experienced on the coast. The next day we reached Vryheid where Smuts found his railway coach waiting for him.

A short while afterwards Smuts wrote me:

> Thank you very much indeed for all the trouble which you took to make my tour through Zululand the success it has proved to be. It was a pleasure to find as fine a type of settler as you have along the sugar belt of Zululand, and they are fortunate in possessing a man such as yourself to represent them in Parliament.
>
> I hope that my tour will be the forerunner of great things for Zululand and I am very glad to have had the opportunity of seeing the country for myself.

The fourth conducted tour round Zululand was a gubernatorial one, with the White Train waiting in the sidings and the Earl and Countess of Athlone rushing off by car to attend some social function. Some of my constituents had expressed the desire that the Governor-General should visit Zululand, and he, always seeking his duty, readily agreed. It was left to me to submit an itinerary, and it seemed to be my duty to see that it was properly carried out. I therefore joined the Government house party after the usual July festivities in Durban.

I was not a socialite. For one thing, I had not had the money for it; anyway, I was not impressed by its display. But I realized this was something different from a political tour. It was in the nature of a Royal progress, with all the help of the trappings of a court; with aides-de-camp and ladies-in-waiting in attendance, even though the lady-in-waiting was the Governor-General's daughter, Lady May Cambridge. It was an occasion for the display of medals, for evening dress with white ties and the latest Paris creations bought in Durban or Johannesburg, to be worn at the dinners *en route*.

Important local people were to be honoured by invitations to lunch or dinner on the White Train and this had to be arranged in advance. The tour cultivated the local social instincts which I found to exist strongly amongst my constituents, and the memory of a royal handshake was treasured for years. I am by no means free from revelling in that snobbery myself, which exists naturally amongst all people who have not been seduced by political propaganda, and I treasure the crested cuff-links and photographs I received from the Earl and Countess at the conclusion of the tour.

But I cannot say I enjoyed the tour in the way that I enjoyed Smuts's tour. I did not occupy the bunk reserved for me on the White Train, preferring to sleep with friends and catch up the party by car at the next centre. Why I should have felt such diffidence with these two lovable people, so honourable in all they did, I could not explain to myself. They were always considerate, never forgot that I was the Parliamentary representative of Zululand, never trespassed beyond the constitutional sphere to discuss party politics.

I venerated the institution of constitutional monarchy because it represented to me the immutable sovereignty of the people, the guardian of the ballot box, and not the self-asserting, power-seeking will of the politicians. That is, of course, if it is not the tool of political party faction, but is free to exercise the undoubted prerogatives which are inherent in the monarchy. The monarchy is the people's umpire when clashing political party ambitions seek to govern the nation; the power always exists to dismiss Ministers and Parliaments and send the two estates back to the people for a new mandate. To be able to exercise that judgment in South Africa requires a nice constitutional sense and a complete detachment from the party battles. That I believed the Earl of Athlone possessed.

As was natural, the Governor-General, as Supreme Chief, was tremendously interested in native affairs and I sought opportunity to discuss them with him. I was not very pleased with our 'direct rule' practices in Zululand, where many of the magistrates had the Zulu War, plus the Bambata rebellion, mentality and resented the influence of Solomon, the Zulu king, in their districts, although they all knew that he was the undoubted Paramount Chief over all the Zulus. The Government made no use of Solomon, on some idea as out-of-date as an assegai, that it was dangerous to create officially a Paramount Chief. Solomon himself was disgruntled. He asked merely to be used. When deadlock was reached between the Administration and the natives at Mtunzini in connection with their cattle, the Administration called Solomon in to help them. 'Is that all?' said Solomon. He went himself and settled a dispute in five minutes which had been going on for over a year!

It was a pity that the system of presenting debutantes for approbation, which has grown up in recent years under the encouragement of Jansen and the Administrators, was not then in vogue. It would have made the tour much more exciting. Its present popularity shows that it fulfils a social need. I am sure that my constituents would have provided as beautiful a bevy of maidens as any place in the Union. The aides-de-camp were considered by our young people as dashing escorts and left many

happy memories behind them. So the tour had its importance in presenting the Crown in its social aspects and, incidentally, strengthening the feeling of security in the stability of the constitution.

Dancing is to the uncivilized the expression of all their emotional life, whether it is done round a cooking-pot at a cannibal feast, or as a form of prayer at a tribal rite, and to the civilized all through the ages, it has remained one of the most joyous experiences of youth. All courts specialize in court balls. So every night of the tour, wherever dancing was possible, the dance was on. Even after the public dance was over, it overflowed to somebody's private house and continued until the early hours of the morning. I joined in these dances, as, no doubt, did the Governor-General and Princess Alice, as a matter of duty; but the younger set loved it all.

It was not until we were leaving the settlements for the wider and wilder Zululand that we began to get on more intimate terms. The protocol wore a little thinner at the edges. We were inclined to take liberties. Lord Athlone came down on one great jaunt to St Lucia Lake with me in my new Austin (bought for the occasion) together with his private secretary, Birch Reynardson. I could not help introducing them to our favourite bumps——beloved by my children—where the car unexpectedly ran down the sand dunes and up the other side like a switchback. The Governor-General gasped. Reynardson, describing the experience afterwards to my wife, said I was the only man he knew who would play a trick like that on the Governor-General. I was surprised that his Excellency did not enjoy it!

Near the lake, the settlers had corduroyed a swamp with logs to ensure the passage of cars. I drove on to the logs, looking for the safest way to get across, when I heard the Governor-General shouting: 'To the left, to the left!' I went to the right, and there we stuck. 'I told you so. I told you so. But you wouldn't listen,' he said. He was angry. I sniggered to myself; my mood was irresponsible; then the enormity of my crime in disobeying a field-marshal struck me. The Governor-General and Reynardson got out of the car while I remained at the wheel. They both

pushed as I started the car going, and both were splashed in mud. A settler came along with a grin on his face and said maliciously: 'There are some donkeys over there,' pointing to a span kept in readiness for pulling cars out of the mud. I laughed silently at the drollness of the situation. The donkeys were hitched up to the car and we went down to the lake edge, where we found a number of outboard motor-boats waiting.

Our objective was to lunch on the other side—about which there was some competition between rival caterers—and, then, taking the boats, we went to see the hippos some three or four miles up the lake. We ran across a whole school of them rising up on all sides, and it became clear to me that, if we remained much longer in the centre of the school, we should be in for trouble. I supposed we could all swim, but it was time to return.

On the way back, the boat containing Lady May ran aground and all had to get out and push, even Lady May, who pulled up her skirts above her knees; she was a great sportswoman and, I heard, had shot everything in Africa. At Mkusi, where the party spent a few days, the members of the party separated. Princess Alice went with Deakin, a game warden, into the Mkuzi Reserve and there had an encounter with a rhino, or would have done if Deakin had not assumed command. 'There's a rhino coming, Ma'am. You must get up a tree.' 'I won't get up a tree,' said Princess Alice. 'You will,' said Deakin and seizing Princess Alice, he pushed her up and just had time to swing his legs clear before the rhino passed underneath him. The Princess was angry at the rough treatment; but, said Deakin, quite humbly: 'What else could I do? If that rhino had got you, I would not have dared to show my face again.' Princess Alice agreed with the verdict!

Passing through Nongoma, where the Governor-General had the usual talk with the chiefs, we came to Ulundi, where I had arranged with Lady Saunders to send down two wreaths, one to be laid on the tombstone in the small graveyard by the Governor-General, and one to be laid by me for Zululand. Walking behind the Governor-General to the spot with Lady May and one of the aides, the young naval man said: 'I am sure if I was the fellow buried there, I should not like a man whom I

had never known to lay a wreath on my grave.' 'I do not know the man buried there,' I replied, 'I'm performing a symbolic act.' He did not understand, poor fellow.

We passed on then to Dingaan's Kraal and were met at the monument by the usual people from Babanango and district. The Governor-General had a very good speech written for him by Reynardson, but he did not use it. Instead he touched a new note, the reasons which induced a savage Zulu king to contemplate as enemies the arrival at his seat of a number of Europeans armed with rifles and riding on 'hornless cattle', which he had never seen before. Dingaan knew that Msilikatzi had been routed, and they had come to take *his* land, so he killed them. We, as civilized people, should not judge him too harshly. It meant to Dingaan either the Zulu nation, or the Europeans! This little impromptu speech was not much appreciated; but no remark was made.

Another Royal tour of Zululand was that of the Prince of Wales, now the Duke of Windsor, which had repercussions for some years, since it led to a court case. The Prince's visit was looked forward to with great pleasure by Solomon, the Paramount Chief. He went to great pains and much expenditure to ensure as many Zulus as possible should be at Eshowe to take part in a demonstration of loyalty.

Solomon was in Eshowe when the Royal train arrived and was taken down to the railway station by Finney, the magistrate of Nongoma, who had Solomon in his charge. The Prince kept Solomon talking for some minutes, when Finney intervened to say that time was passing and that, if Solomon did not leave at once, he would not be on the field before the Prince arrived at the tribal gathering. 'All right,' said the Prince of Wales, 'I'll give you twenty minutes before I leave.'

With that, Solomon jumped into his car and rode off immediately. When he arrived at the site for the gathering, his chauffeur was told by a policeman to go to the end of the long line of parked cars, which occupied some minutes. Then Solomon got

out and walked along the front line of the impi, drawn up and singing in front of the dais, to get the assegai and shield from his uncle which he was to present to the Prince. The sight of Solomon called forth the Royal salute: 'Bayete', from the Zulus, just as the Prince, attired in plain clothes, arrived at the dais and took his seat. This was interpreted by some Europeans as a premeditated insult by Solomon to the Prince; they thought that Solomon was saluted and the Prince was ignored. Solomon then went forward with the assegai and shield and presented them to the Prince.

The alleged insult was reported in the Press. Solomon was angry at the attack on him and immediately brought an action against the newspaper concerned and lost his case, having to pay one farthing damages with costs. The costs of this case, coupled with the debt he had incurred in attending the Prince's parade, haunted him for the rest of his life. His subjects came to his assistance, but they were prevented from selling their cattle to pay his debts; finally when judgment for debt had been given against him, I induced the Government to step in and pay the debt subject to certain conditions. It took some years and much heartburning to release Solomon from his embarrassment.

CHAPTER XI

THE BEGINNINGS OF PAN-AFRIKANERDOM

(1924)

THE foregoing chapters were written with the innocence of a Zululand settler. I was merely chalking the cue. The following chapters, dealing with events after 1922, were written after some of the chalk had worn off, and I was getting into the game of politics. The bias that will be found in them comes from experience, but that there is a bias I do not deny.

The absorption of the Unionist Party into the ranks of the South African Party gave Smuts his needed majority in Parliament, but it did not make for his peace of mind. The Unionist Party was predominantly English-speaking. Most of its members had been in the field against Smuts during the Boer War, but few of them accepted the myths sedulously enunciated in Parliament on every occasion by the Nationalists, that Britain was responsible for that war. They knew that Kruger had issued the insulting ultimatum to the British which resulted in the Boer War, in the Boer invasions of the Cape and Natal at a time when there were few British forces in South Africa. Smuts himself said at the Vereeniging Peace Conference: 'I am one of those, who, as a member of the Government of the South African Republic, provoked war on Britain.'[1]

The new English-speaking members of the South African Party were not bothered with old feuds, but within the ranks of the enlarged Party there was a fundamental difference between the approach to politics of the English-speaking and the Afrikaans-speaking. The English had their minds fixed on new development whereas the Afrikaners could not forget the past. The

[1] *The Milner Papers*, II, p. 362.

bridging of the gap was left to 'Slim Jannie', as both sides called him. The Unionists brought with them into the South African Party their own new arguments, which had nothing to do with race, though they spoke in English. They were the arguments which had to be fought out in their constituencies with the Labour Party. Problems which were the economic aftermath of the war in Europe—unemployment, now growing in South Africa; living standards; cost of living; minimum wages; social security—and a relatively new, but nevertheless pressing problem, the increasing competition around the machine of industry between the emerging low paid black workers and the highly paid whites. These were all problems of townsmen, and as such seemed of little importance to the old South African Party members, the majority of whom were Afrikaners and hailed from rural areas. This dualism of the new South African Party endured throughout the years and was a sore trial to Smuts. On the other hand, the Nationalists in opposition refused to recognize that they had lost the South African War and were busy trying to reverse the Treaty of Vereeniging. They were not so much concerned with solving the current problems of the country as on restoring Afrikaner control by sentimental propaganda.

The newly enlarged South African Party caucus meetings, which had previously taken place on rare occasions, and at which there was little discussion, now took place once a week, and there was much to talk about. Smuts, countryman, scholar, soldier, lawyer, statesman, was out of his element in the new environment of the towns. Ever since the old Transvaal days he had occupied a position of great authority. His word was law. He had been one of the members of the responsible Government of the Transvaal which preceded the old Crown Colony; the principal architect of the South Africa Act; Botha's right hand man in the first Union Parliament; commander-in-chief in East Africa; a member of the British War Cabinet and the spokesman for South Africa at Versailles. He was essentially the *Boer* leader.

To come back to the South African Parliament at the completion of the Peace Conference, to take over the Premiership after Botha's death, to find that the loyalties which bound many to

Botha were not inherited by him, that he had actually become, in the eyes of the Hertzog Opposition, the leader of the English-speaking Party, was galling. This position was continually being rubbed in by the Nationalists. Many of the Unionist townsmen supporting Smuts had no understanding of that old Afrikanerdom to which he was so profoundly attached, nor of the Afrikaner loyalties for which he hankered. They held views with which he was unfamiliar and for which he had little patience, and, if he went out of his way to meet the Nationalist arguments, he was privately assailed by his own followers.

All these facts I was busy noting from my somewhat non-party stand. I believed very sincerely that white South Africa could maintain itself, provided there was complete agreement between all the Europeans on fundamentals. The menacing signs of a growing division in the white ranks alarmed me considerably. But I realized the impossibility for a back-bencher to do anything about it. I could see that each side was busy making political capital for itself and I realized that Smuts, with his wider knowledge of affairs and his experience outside the Union, was regarded by both sides as being governed by questionable influences. The Nationalists regarded him as a traitor to Afrikanerdom, and the English-speaking with suspicion. They could never quite believe that his motives were not activated by a wish to regain his old Boer following; he could not persuade the small minority of whites in the Union and Rhodesia to lift up their heads and look beyond the Limpopo. The whole political situation was both dishonest and unhealthy. For South Africa and Smuts it was tragic.

Financially, too, South Africa's position was unsound. Smuts was no economist and had inherited that fatal 'after the war economy'. When the price of gold, which had risen to 106s an ounce during the war, dropped to its normal price of 84s, something had to give. Everybody sought to retrench. The Chamber of Mines found it impossible to continue the gold industry on its old basis, and when retrenchment was announced, the workers on the Rand gold mines, led by Bolsheviks, went on strike. Inflamed by a speech of half an hour's duration, addressed to them by Tielman Roos, the Nationalist Party leader in the Transvaal, these

peaceful strikers were turned into red-hot revolutionaries. In this desperate situation Smuts was compelled to intervene. The cost of this intervention was a 'Hate Smuts campaign', a political gift to the Labour Party and the Nationalists.

The leaders of these parties, Creswell and Hertzog, took advantage of their common anti-Smuts bias and the political flirtations, which for some time had become evident between them, blossomed forth into a marriage between their two parties early in 1923. This misalliance became known at the 'Pact'.

To understand the duplicity and the character of mind of the principles of this alliance, I refer readers to Oswald Pirow's book:

> In fact, neither side fully understood what the other was reserving [i.e. in altering the Labour Party's constitution to fit in with their new Pact]; they were too busy hating Smuts to worry about such trifles. Where necessary, points of view were interpreted so as to meet the requirements of any particular audience. So, for example, Creswell once addressed a meeting on the Platteland on Socialism and trades unionism. He spoke in English and less than half the audience could follow him. But with that perfect courtesy, which is the heritage of the Boers, they looked as appreciative and friendly as possible. At the conclusion of the speech Louis Karofsky, a Labour extremist . . . rose to give a short summary in Afrikaans, of what had been said. He stated as follows: 'The leader of the Labour Party has just explained that his policy is to put the nigger in his place and to repatriate all Asiatics'. There was wild cheering and Creswell, who knew insufficient Afrikaans to understand his interpreter, was carried shoulder high to his car![1]

This was the tone and the political colour of the Nationalist and Labour politicians when they entered the Pact. It is a just commentary on our South African democracy.

The position of the Smuts Government became more and more intolerable. Smuts realized it could not go on much longer. His chance to put things to the test came unexpectedly when a young and promising member of the South African Party representing the constituency of Wakkerstroom died suddenly. The result of

[1] Oswald Pirow, *James Barrie Munnik Hertzog*, p. 96.

the ensuing by-election was a win for the Nationalist Party; hitherto Wakkerstroom had been considered a safe South African Party seat. Quite alone, without consulting even his Cabinet, and to the astonishment of all, Smuts made his choice, and asked for a dissolution of Parliament, in order to seek a fresh mandate from the people. When he was asked in caucus what we were going to the election on, since we need not have sought an election for some years, Smuts replied: 'To enable the people to choose between me and Hertzog. It is my service or his.' I ventured to remark that the English-speaking would not judge the issue on personalities but on policies. 'What is our policy?' I asked. Smuts replied that he was out to build a nation on those policies which brought about union; Hertzog was out to destroy those policies.

Smuts believed that South Africa was wiser than it proved to be. He thought that his record of service would have more influence than it did. But the dry rot of personal innuendo and political devaluation hit him throughout the country. He went to the election and lost. The Pact took over the Government and Hertzog explained to his followers that he had used the tail of the Labour donkey to pull the Nationalists out of the mud.

Ironically, the coming of the Pact Government was favoured by a world recovery of trade. The restoration of the gold standard by Britain was now bearing fruit in a sudden burst of prosperity which would have carried the South African Party on to a new constructive programme, had it remained in power. Union revenue, which stood at £24,500,000 in 1924, rose to over £30,000,000 in 1928. The public debt which stood at £133,000,000 in 1924 mounted to £151,000,000 million in 1928, and the money necessary to push forward the starved development of the country began to appear. The Pact Government introduced South Africa to new political and economic values and changed the whole course of Union policy by the adoption of (*a*) the 'civilized labour policy' and (*b*) protection.

Before the advent of the Pact, our economics were based upon the almost free trade policy of the Cape. The adoption of protection was undoubtedly a trump card for the Pact Government. Many small industries which began their operations under the

stimulus of war scarcity, were, in the early twenties, languishing under post-war competition from overseas. Protection came to their aid. From its introduction there was no looking back. Manufacturing output increased by twenty-five per cent in four years; mineral and agricultural production was on the uptrend. There could be little criticism of the economic policy pursued by the Pact Government. It made it hard going for the South African Party in opposition.

But it was the adoption of the 'civilized labour policy' which registered most forcibly a new era in racial government in South Africa. The word 'civilized' was a misnomer, a camouflage. It was a white labour policy, adopted to ensure that white South Africa alone should enjoy any increase in wealth which came from protection, while the non-Europeans would be excluded. Its adoption sowed the first seeds of hostility between white and black, for the Europeans' insensitiveness to any injustice in the policy, as carried out, was most marked. The black workers who lost their jobs as a result of the policy probably did not speculate much on the ethics of the white usurpers: the inherent superiority of the whites was an accepted fact. But the few native intelligentsia then existent brooded over their exclusion from industry. The backwardness of their peoples was acknowledged, but, as education grew amongst them, they began to protest against the 'civilized white labour policy', which left them without a livelihood in the land of their birth. All departments of State began forthwith to get rid of their coloured employees and to replace them with white labour. These new white labourers were drawn from the stagnant pools of white humanity, commonly known as 'poor whites' existing in the rural areas of the Cape and Transvaal.

The 'poor white' is a peculiarly South African product. In those days he was mainly Afrikaner. He was not poor because he was work-shy, nor did he lack any of the characteristics which are needed for worth-while industry. He was a survival from a pioneer age, living in remote regions, and he had not kept pace with the evolving economic life around him; he belonged to the nineteenth century; he was simple and unaffected. According to

the report of the Carnegie Poor White Commission, there were at that time in South Africa some 600,000 of this sub-economic stratum of society. Under the new policy, these people were taken from their rural environment and employed by the Government on work in and near the towns, such as the making of new railways which had previously been classed as 'Kaffir's work'.

As towns such as Port Elizabeth blossomed into manufacturing centres, the newcomers, who were mostly Afrikaans-speaking, were joined by their relatives. As is usual in all such migrations, at first there was neither work nor housing for them. It became necessary for the municipalities to create relief schemes to employ them and by these methods the Beach Gardens in Durban and the Town Gardens in Pietermaritzburg were built.

From the point of view of the whites, thinking only in terms of white nationhood, and particularly from the Nationalist point of view, there was much to be said for this white labour policy. It broke up Englishness in the towns, brought the most backward elements amongst the Afrikaners into touch with industry and spread out the population on smaller holdings where there was Crown land to be allotted. These were settled by 'poor whites' in areas which had been previously inaccessible to them. Local governments established schools in which both European races could sit side by side; but from the point of view of black–white relationship the position deteriorated. The Government made it known to all industrialists that protection would be given only on those goods on which the makers guaranteed to employ a large number of white persons. Active propaganda to oust the non-whites from their employment in favour of whites thus became the national objective and the policies of protection and civilized labour were somehow 'squared' and were represented as being one the complement of the other. For a time the facts bore out the claims. This was the beginning of a policy which is today being questioned by the whole of the outside world.

It was not long, however, before the Pact Government began to feel about for some philosophy which could knit together their varied opposites. If it was true to say that the Pact Government

ushered in a 'new' South Africa, it is true to say that it also ushered in 'two' South Africas—the South Africa of Hertzog and his Nationalist followers; and the South Africa of Creswell and his Labour followers, the one disclosing a continuous concern with constitutional issues and the other, an attempt to fit the arguments of the British Labour Party into the economy of South Africa. These conflicting opposites also had to be 'squared'. Hertzog gave an undertaking when he formed the Pact that he would not bring up any constitutional problems which would embarrass Creswell during the term of the Pact; Creswell, on the other hand, undertook not to embarrass Hertzog with purely Labour policies with which the Nationalists would not agree.

Satisfaction on the constitutional issue, which had been Hertzog's particular contention, was obtained at the Imperial Conference in 1926, when the exact constitutional position of the whole Commonwealth as it then stood and was practised, was put into writing. With this written definition Hertzog and his followers professed themselves satisfied.

Meanwhile there was much to be done. Nationalism required cultivation and to this end the heroic past had to be exploited. The Voortrekkers had to be held up as patterns of virtue and honesty of purpose. Hertzog left the vexed question of the constitution for the time being and busied himself with the development of a Nationalist philosophy. Its first requirement was that it should be something different to that of all British Colonial Governments in Africa. Everywhere he looked, whether at the Cape or Natal or in the rest of Africa, there was always the assumption, in thinking minds, that the day would arrive when the native would become civilized and fit to bear the burdens and responsibilities of citizenship. To the Nationalist Afrikaner, however, that time was far distant and these principles did not conform with the precepts of predestination, the fundamental doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church. Somehow the existing Cape native franchise must go, but no active steps were taken to this end for some years. Political thought was still in the making.

At the time of Union the official languages were defined as

being English and Dutch. It was accepted that Dutch meant High Dutch. As was the case in the old Republic, the language in which the laws were written, and in which the Bible could alone be read. High Dutch prevailed throughout the first decade of Union, and was the language taught in the schools. In 1925 an important step in the development of Afrikaner Nationalism took place: the Union Parliament passed an Act giving official recognition to Afrikaans instead of High Dutch. An immediate change took place, the far reaching effects of which were scarcely perceived by those who voted for the change, although there is no doubt that so far as Hertzog was concerned, it was part of a preconceived plan.

High Dutch was immediately dropped in all Government departments, leaving stranded many civil servants who had been trained in that language, but who were not fluent in Afrikaans. The leap-frogging of civil servants began to the everlasting detriment of the administration they served. A conjunction of Afrikaans Universities—Stellenbosch and later Pretoria and Potchefstroom—influenced with Afrikaans politics had already begun. Afrikaans cultural associations spread all over the country, ostensibly for the spread of Afrikaans, but in fact, as branches of party nationalism. Every sentiment of pride in historic accomplishment and in the use of the mother tongue was exploited, and assisted by a sparkling array of poets and writers, there has grown up a new literary language which has been backed by a virile and exceedingly well-edited Afrikaans press. This development began slowly but surely to reduce the circulation of the old established English newspapers. It has now become a test of patriotism amongst Afrikaans-speaking South Africans whether they read an English or an Afrikaans newspaper. In Parliament today, few Nationalist members ever speak in anything but Afrikaans.

It has not, however, been the existence and development of Afrikaans which has been responsible for the maintenance of the acute political divisions in South Africa, although its introduction gave great impetus to the growth of nationalism. All South Africans are becoming bilingual and the language divisions should tend to disappear as all become sufficiently so. The root of

the matter lies much deeper. The real cause of all our troubles arises from a distortion of South African history, and the false deductions drawn from such distortions form the background of most political arguments.

From the earliest days the emphasis in South African history as taught in the schools has been placed on the assumed oppressive acts of the old British administrators and upon the innocence, high-mindedness and the heroic qualities of those who resisted their unjust decrees. Local English-speaking historians, themselves with a sense of grievance, have too often been ready to tinge their accounts of the past with a local colour acceptable to the Afrikaner. A generation of Afrikaans-speaking professors who have drunk deeply at the Nationalist wells, have been engaged in retouching the traditional point of view for political purposes. Their books formed the basis of all history taught. In a country which is matriculation mad, where every European desires to matriculate as part of his race pride, the examiners set the pace to the schools by devoting the major part of the history papers to questions dealing exclusively with the heroic traditions of the Afrikaner. Schoolteachers note these questions and instruct accordingly. The British contribution to the conquest and settlement and development of South Africa is studiously played down. The English-speaking population, rich in their larger loyalties and historical satisfactions inherited throughout the years, concerned more with bread and butter than with emotional politics, neither know nor care sufficiently to do anything about it. They are content to honour the heroic character of the Afrikaner past as presented to them and they are prepared to blush a little at all times for the alleged sins of their ancestors. Any marked allegiance to their British traditions and lineage is regarded as being 'un-South African'. This indoctrination of 'South Africa first and South Africa alone' has been slow and subtle, but it has undoubtedly achieved its aim of shutting all young ears to the sounds coming from the world outside.

To me it became increasingly clear, as the years went by, that to be a good South African meant the dropping of everything British. I must forget my forebears and steep myself in Afrikaans

culture and and nationalism. But I resisted this capitulation to Afrikanerdom. To me it seemed grossly unfair. I felt that I had something to offer the Afrikaner, just as he had something to offer me. My conception of South Africanism was that I must not expect to dominate and envelope the other man's culture, but should accept and revere it in common with my own. To this end I took up my stand and I have stood by it all through the years, with the result that I have been dubbed a racialist and a jingo by both sections of the community.

But in 1924 events had not yet taken their course and I was not consciously aware that the coming of Hertzog and the Pact Government to South Africa gave an Afrikaans bias to the South African administration from which it has never recovered. The electorate in the meantime revelled in this appeal to nationalism and the 1929 elections put Hertzog and his Nationalists back into the seat of government with a majority which made his alliance with the Labour Party no longer necessary. Creswell and his followers, like jaded concubines, were summarily cast aside. They had served their purpose and played their part in conceiving the infant 'Nationalism'.

CHAPTER XII

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE FLAG ACT

(1926–1928)

ALTHOUGH the official work I was engaged upon as president of the various Zululand planters' organizations kept me away from home to some extent, my despatch to Parliament disturbed the plans I had made for the development of my farm at Umfolozi and completely shattered the quiet, rural pattern into which our lives had fallen. Though we were so far from the amenities of the town, and many might have considered conditions primitive, we were supremely happy and very comfortable in the 'Huts'. We had many friends among the neighbouring settlers, and, if we seldom saw then, it was because we were all so earnestly engaged upon our farming operations that there was little time left for social activities, and I think, perhaps, we enjoyed our social contacts the more for their infrequency.

Entry into Parliament meant that I should have to spend four or five months of the year in Cape Town. Many problems presented themselves, not the least of which was how to stretch my Parliamentary salary of £400 a year to meet the many demands made upon it. The girls, Joyce and Ioma, were sent to boarding school; I engaged a manager for my farm and Ruby and two-year-old Derek went with me to Cape Town. In the following years much of our time was spent travelling backwards and forwards. In Cape Town we lived as cheaply as possible at a boarding house or private hotel. Our lives were frugal, but our wants were simple and the thought that Ruby would be waiting for me in the evening at the hotel, sustained me through many hours of dry debate in Parliament. Her quick perception helped me over many problems, and her ready wit and keen sense of humour never failed to put things in their proper proportion

and right perspective.

There is no doubt that Ruby disliked public life and took her part by my side so gallantly, not through a love of the life, but because she considered it to be her duty. Reading through my letters to her, she seemed always to have been waiting, waiting for me to come back from Parliament, waiting for me to return to the farm, and, later, as I assumed bigger responsibilities, waiting for me to retire, when there would be nothing left for us to do but live quietly and look after each other. It did not happen. Not until it was too late, and she was gone.

I do not mean to give the impression that her life was spent moping for my return; far from it. She was much too busy attending to her family and her home, for I left most of the responsibilities of raising the family to her. She used jokingly to complain that my head was far too full of theories, constitutions and such like, to be of much practical assistance in problems of domesticity. She had many friends and relatives in Natal and her life was a very full one. But Ruby was never robust and, as she grew older, the fits of depression which had occasionally overtaken her in her youth, became more frequent and of longer duration. Although we consulted the best doctors and specialists wherever we went, and in her later life she underwent a severe brain operation, the depressions persisted, and fight as she would, she could not seem to shake them off. It was the only blemish on her happy and delightful nature.

I learned to dread the signs of an attack. Ruby had a most industrious nature. Early each morning, long before I had bestirred myself, she would switch on her reading lamp and I would hear her pen scratching on the writing pad as she attended to her correspondence. But as the depression came upon her, she would grow listless, and in the mornings the light would be switched on later and later, until at last the dawn came first and there was no need for the electric light, and, at last her pen would grow silent. The scratch of that pen nib became the barometer of Ruby's health. At first the moods lasted only a few days, but gradually the periods lengthened into months. When she recovered, it was as though she had shaken off an old and tattered

cloak, and her real sparkling personality would burst through, like a butterfly from a chrysalis. Her vitality knew no bounds; she worked for hours on end catching up on all that had remained undone during her illness. The house was filled with her laughter and we were all happy. None of the doctors I consulted was ever able to explain the cause of the malady. It was the only shadow in an otherwise blissful partnership, for I was blessed with that rare gift, a happy marriage.

From my earliest days in Parliament, as soon as I began to understand procedure and get the ropes, I saw that there were certain things which had to be stood up for if I was to represent the opinions of my constituents and the wishes of the people of Natal. So it gradually came about that, whenever Natal had a concerted opinion, I was its spokesman. The rest of the Union, as far as the South African Party was concerned, was indifferent to many things which we in Natal found very necessary to fight for. I was no party man, in the sense that I blindly followed party dictates. In the caucus of the South African Party, the Natal members always formed an independent body which Smuts himself recognized, for he sometimes came to the caucuses which Natal members held on many occasions. We were really a federal wing of the Party, and some trouble occurred almost every year which demanded a stand on our part.

There was at this time (1928), a large movement amongst the natives, organized by a Nyasaland native named Kadali. He founded the Industrial and Commercial Union, of which he was supposed to be the chairman and he went overseas to ask the British Labour Party for an organizer to keep the finances of his organization in South Africa in order. The British Labour Party sent out Ballinger, who was associated with Kadali for some time. Kadali succeeded in obtaining thousands of adherents amongst the native population in every part of the Union. It soon became apparent, however, that under the cloak of trade unionism, much Communist propaganda was being put over to the natives. Outbreaks of rioting took place between black and white, and

throughout Natal the natives came to believe that if they paid half a crown to the ICU funds, the land occupied by the Europeans would become their own. So firmly did this become fixed in their minds that in certain districts of Natal, they started to pull up the boundary fences of the European-owned land and to overthrow the tombstones in the cemeteries! But what was more alarming was that a number of white Communists came down from Johannesburg and held meetings with Kadali supporters in Durban. White women danced with the natives and there were other demonstrations which were a threat to peaceful relations.

It was realized that, if matters continued in this way, we would soon be in grave difficulties. Pirow, representing the Nationalist Party, and at the time Minister of Justice, brought in a bill to amend the Riotous Assembly Act in such a way as to ensure that Europeans could be prohibited from attending meetings and inciting the non-Europeans against the whites. A number of the SAP caucus at once began to urge that we should oppose this Bill, lock, stock and barrel, because they considered it to be in defiance of 'the rule of law'. They argued that should this Bill become law, we would be giving the Executive power to overrule the law. But another section of the Party strongly supported the Bill, that section which lived in the Eastern part of the Union in close proximity to the great native populations of South Africa.

I took the view, and I think that afterwards the Party as a whole came to take this view, that the European conception of law (which was being supported), was different from that of the natives. They had their own laws, and under the Natal Code of Native Law, a native could be arrested and sent away and prohibited from attending any meeting. This, however, could not be done to Europeans. The Europeans, under European law, were free to stir up any trouble without any injury to themselves. So we agreed in the SAP caucus, after thorough discussion, that we should vote as we liked over this measure. The whips would be off.

At the time of the caucus meeting, Smuts was in England and took no part in the discussions. The Bill was introduced in his absence. All Natal members who spoke on this Bill during its passing were in favour of it; and during the discussion in the

House on the Committee stages of the Bill, the majority of the Natal members were in favour. When Smuts returned from Europe, there was no Party caucus meeting between the date of his arrival in Cape Town and the date of the third reading of the Bill which took place in May 1930. To my amazement, when Smuts spoke on the measure, he moved that it be read 'this day six months'. That meant that he pledged the whole of the Party against the Bill and expected everyone to vote with him against it.

To me it was a serious thing, and I could not accept the position. I rose from my seat and paced up and down the lobby, debating what I should do on the third reading. I had been very prominent in my support of the Bill and now I was being asked to vote against all my former convictions. I decided that I could not go back, that, at whatever cost, I must support the measure. I returned to the House and I gave the Bill my blessing. Speaking against my leader was a difficult and unpleasant task. I stated the reasons for my action and pointed out that this Bill was necessary for the good of South Africa, that, if disturbances of the kind which had taken place recently in Durban between black and white—there had been ninety-seven casualties—were allowed to continue, the whole country would be in a turmoil. I emphasized that the Bill was merely giving powers to do to the Europeans, who committed themselves to stirring up trouble amongst the natives, what we already had power to do amongst the native peoples. My Party looked at me in surprise. When it came to the division I felt I had burnt my boats; I had challenged the whole Party and I would go and vote for what I believed was right. So I crossed the floor, a solitary figure from my side, and walked over to the Government benches in support of the Bill.

Immediately afterwards, of course, there was fury in the ranks. 'We must put an end to this Nicholls constantly stabbing us in the back,' they said. When I walked out to the lobby, Collins, the Chief Whip, came to me and said: 'Good God, Nicholls, what have you done? You have voted against your Party. The whole Party now insists upon drumming you out. They won't have you in any longer.' I replied: 'Look here, Collins, if you want my resignation, you can have it. I have only done what I considered

to be my duty.' So I went home, thoroughly miserable, but still firmly convinced that I was right. There was no other course open to me.

The next morning being a Saturday, I was busy in my office when Richards, my right-hand man and a member for Greyville, Durban, burst in and said, 'What are you going to do, Nicholls?' 'I am going to resign,' I answered. 'That is what everyone wishes.' 'No, you can't resign; you are to do nothing of the kind! You have the SAP on toast. They are beginning to realize that they will be held up all over the country for their attitude to this Bill. The situation cannot be allowed to continue as it is. Now don't you do anything—just wait and see what happens. It is my opinion that Smuts is not too displeased over what you did.'

On that advice, I waited over the weekend. On the Monday afternoon, sitting in the House—my seat was just opposite the Speaker's on the Front Bench—I saw Smuts appear behind the Speaker's chair and beckon to me. I joined him and without a word he seized hold of my arm and we marched down the lobby together whilst he whistled a tune to himself. I said nothing. We arrived at his room and he opened the door and ushered me in and motioned me to a chair in front of him. 'Now, Nicholls,' said the General, 'you know what you have done. You have not only spoken against the leader, but you have actually crossed the floor of the House and voted against him. We cannot run a political party without discipline. Everybody in the Party wants your blood. What have you got to say about it?'

'Well, General,' I said, 'it was agreed in the Party caucus, while you were overseas, that on Pirow's amendment to the Riotous Assembly Act, we should vote as we liked. It was to be a non-party matter. I believed that was how it should be. You suddenly come back from Europe and without realizing all that had gone before, made our agreement ridiculous by moving that the Bill be read "this day six months". What did you expect me to do? Just tamely to submit? To retract everything I had said, to appear as a humbug to the people of the country? You must remember I had spoken forcibly for the Bill on its second reading. I found myself between the lines when you spoke. We had all gone over the top in

Natal and suddenly you left us high and dry to be shot at by the enemy. Did you expect me to retreat?'

Smuts appeared to be somewhat surprised at this talk and not a little impressed. He thought for a moment and then said, 'The whole of the Party is demanding that something should be done about you. But leave it to me. At the caucus tomorrow don't say a word as I'll deal with it and we'll get out of the difficulty.'

When caucus came on the Tuesday morning, the matter, of course, was the first to be raised and Smuts got up and said that he found the whole thing was due to a misunderstanding; while realizing that he, as leader of the Party, could not overlook this breach of discipline, he hoped the committee would accept the fact that I would not do this again. And there it might have remained, but for one or two people in the Cape, who had no knowledge of our native question in Natal, who did not know the real South Africa, having lived their lives in the shadow of Table Mountain and who were feeling particularly sore. They got up and made accusations against me, upon which I could not remain silent. I defended myself and explained that I was not in politics for the mere position it gave; I was there to represent what my constituents felt about matters. Eventually the whole thing died down. But, of course, by many I was regarded as an unsafe person in the Party.

However, the Bill has ultimately proved a wise measure. Communists can no longer come into a gathering of natives and rouse them up to passion and get away with it, as they had done previously. Pirow told me afterwards that in justification of the introduction of the Bill, he had sent the speech which I had made before crossing the floor, and which contained the whole argument in favour of the measure, to the overseas press. I may say that I never voted against my Party again; but the knowledge that I might do so at any moment gave me increased power within Party circles. This was the forerunner of many battles between the Party machine and me. As Smuts later wrote to the Party chairman in Natal, when he was discussing the question of whether I should become Minister for Native Affairs: 'In connection with Nicholls, I have to walk like Agag—delicately!'

It was beginning to be known throughout the country even in 1926 that the Nationalists, in following out their policy of getting rid of everything British, were determined to get rid of the Union Jack. From time to time at various congresses of the Nationalist Party, resolutions had been passed asking for its abolition. The incoming Nationalists of 1925 had introduced a Union Nationality and Flag Bill for this purpose.

The Bill was taken no further during that first session of 1926, as it was hoped that, over so subtly sensitive a subject as a national flag, some agreement between the Government and the Opposition might be found. There was agreement over the principle of South Africa adopting a national flag; the difference occurred solely upon the form it should take. The Government considered the best design would be a 'clean flag', embodying none of the symbols of the past; the South African Party, representing the English-speaking, felt that the Union Jack and the republican flags of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal should be included. It was this issue which tore at the heart strings of the whole European population for nearly three years and brought the country to the verge of civil war.

An English newspaper during the 1926 recess came out with a competition in which was offered a prize for the best design for a national flag. A large variety of designs were sent to this paper and the first prize was awarded to Walker, a professor of history at Cape Town University who had written a history of South Africa and should therefore have had a lively appreciation of what South Africa would have been like had there been no Union Jack. Walker's design was a 'clean flag', such as the Nationalists recommended. I wondered at the time why an Englishman wanted to meddle in such a contentious affair.

When we came back to Cape Town for the following session a number of Natal Members were seated in the lobby having tea one morning, when Smuts came over to our table, took a chair and remarked: 'Who's safe in Natal for the Union Jack?' We looked questioningly at him: 'Malan,' he went on, 'has approached me to agree to the appointment of an extra-parliamentary committee of members to consider a design for a new flag. I have

said I have no objection to a talk on the subject. What do you think of Charlie Smith?' I was leader of the Natal members in Parliament at the time, so I replied: 'Yes, if you have to have a committee, I should think Charles Smith would be as good as any. But who are the others?' 'I think Duncan for the Transvaal and Krige for the Cape.' We supped our tea and considered the matter. We all felt that there were enough things in South Africa for the Pact Government to be getting on with, without raising further trouble over emotional matters. This question of the flags had not arisen in Natal. Smuts denounced it as a joke. He said the Nationalist attempt to get rid of the Union Jack would become the laughing-stock of the country; we eventually agreed to appointing a Natal representative, Charles Smith, to the Commission.

A week later Smuts called together the front bench members of his party, of whom I was now one. He took his seat, with us grouped round him, and addressed Patrick Duncan who was sitting in an armchair with his back to the window. 'Well, Duncan, tell us what has been happening in your Committee of the Flag?' 'The Committee was invited to meet Malan at his office on Monday morning,' said Duncan. 'Malan was very pleasant and after greeting us and explaining what we were gathered for, he invited us to go with him into the next room and see the designs which he had obtained from the *Sunday Times*, the paper running the competition. They were all hanging on the wall; we walked round and studied them and then went back to his office to discuss the matter. "You have seen," said Malan, "that quite a number of designs have been submitted, which fact registers the general feeling of the country. My idea is that South Africa needs a national flag to reflect its proper status: but it should be a clean flag, with nothing in it to remind us of our old quarrels. A flag which will enable us to make a fresh start." Then, selecting Walker's design, Malan went on: "This strikes me as being a flag which will suit us all. It contains no hint of the past, it arouses no bitterness on either side and it is in the form of a cross which, in my experience, is a form of flag which belongs to the most peaceful of nations. I think we may safely accept a flag of this character."

'Malan then turned questioningly to me,' said Duncan, 'and I replied: "I quite agree that if we are to have a new flag it might be better not to have anything on it which would give offence to anybody. I have no insuperable objections." '

'What,' broke in William Mackintosh from Port Elizabeth, 'Do you mean to say you gave away the Union Jack?' 'Dear me,' said Smuts, 'that won't do, Duncan. We can't give away the Union Jack. South Africa will be torn from end to end if we do. This is a very serious matter.' There was general protest during which Duncan grew very red. 'You'll have to go back to Malan and tell him we won't have it,' said Mackintosh, very angrily. The meeting ended with Duncan promising to try and recover the ground he had lost in his first encounter with Malan and the Flag Committee.

But he had burnt his boats. The Labour Party representative on the Committee was Reyburn from Durban, who had been strong for the retention of the Union Jack in the new flag, but, when he found that the South African Party—the Opposition—were taking that line, the Labour Party, which was supporting the Nationalists, could hardly continue with their objections. Reyburn therefore supported Malan's proposal. So when, at another meeting, Duncan endeavoured to repudiate his first undertaking, he achieved nothing. The Nationalists, reinforced by Reyburn, were in a majority on the Committee and the die was cast.

The whole country took fire, as Smuts predicted. It wasn't long before all the various organized bodies throughout the country began to make their voices heard. The press took up their different standpoints. The 'Sons of England' came into the picture and there were flag committees appointed in each of the large towns. In Natal, a body under Molyneux was raised to resist any attempt by the Government to take down the Union Jack. Sydney Marwick, then the redoubtable Member of Parliament for Mid-Illovo, and I attended a meeting of all the young professional men of Durban in the 'Hall by the Sea', the old skating-rink, when we were asked to cut out all talk and give them some action. They wanted to fight. We counselled patience.

The debates in caucus on this issue were hot and furious. Natal

was a solid block of opposition, backed as it was by English-speaking opinion elsewhere in the Union. At one stage Duncan came down from a visit to Johannesburg and said that, if the fight went on, there would be civil war. He had seen many influential people on his visit to the Rand and his counsel had been to save bloodshed and compromise. He therefore had brought out a new design which he proposed as an amendment to Malan's Bill incorporating the Walker flag. Duncan's flag had a blue background with a white ball in the centre and on this ball were the three old flags of the Union, furled. Duncan asked us to accept this flag. I was surprised to see Smart get up and second Duncan's proposal and even Jagger, a staunch member of the old Unionist Party, got up and agreed with them. Here were all the old Unionist stalwarts supporting Duncan, but they did not speak for Natal and I got up and very passionately said: 'Smart says the country will be split if we do not adopt Duncan's flag. I say the country is split now. The miserable specimen of a flag represents nobody or any symbol at all to which any Englishman in the country could look up. The Union Jack does not occupy an integral part of this flag, such as we have demanded it should. The Natal members will not accept this, and if Smart carries it in one hand and a copy of his speeches in Hansard in the other to his constituency, he will be kicked from one end of it to the other!' The caucus broke up in disorder.

Malan's Bill passed through the House of Assembly with the Pact majority. Before it reached the Senate, Smuts sent for me and asked whether I would agree to the design of another flag to be proposed as an amendment to Malan's flag. This would be a cross of white dividing the flag into four quarters, with the Union Jack in the left top hand corner; the Vierkleur in the right hand quarter, and some other symbol in the right hand bottom quarter. I agreed to this. It fitted our requirements, giving a place of honour to all the flags which had gone to the formation of our South African history. This flag was to become known as the Senate flag.

But in spite of its being publicized and sold throughout the country by Stuttaford, an MP, and owner of a chain of departmental stores, who got out thousands and put them in his windows

all over South Africa, it did not win popular approval, and although the amendment passed through the Senate with its South African Party majority, it was rejected by the Nationalist majority in the Assembly. Parliament rose again with the country still in turmoil. There was no let up in the campaign; it continued from every platform. The position was grave. Providentially at this time there arrived in South Africa Leo Amery, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I had the pleasure of meeting him in Durban, but I was on the verge of leaving with some others on a tour of Northern Rhodesia and the Congo; it was arranged that, as Amery was also going to Rhodesia, we should meet there.

We had our interview under the trees in the garden of Government House at Victoria Falls. We explained the growing tension in South Africa over the flag and the possibility of civil war. Amery said: 'At present we cannot interfere in any way. If it came to civil war we should have to consider it. My advice to you is to do nothing unconstitutional. I had much to do with the trouble when it occurred in Northern Ireland and everything I did which was unconstitutional came back on me, but, if the other people act unconstitutionally, then that is a different matter. You have solid ground under your feet then to stand on.' I have never forgotten those words of advice.

[1]Then after a pause Amery continued: 'Why not have two flags?' 'Two flags?' I replied. 'Yes. You have two languages and two capitals; why not two flags?' 'If that is possible', I replied, 'I would agree to two flags. All Natal wishes to do is to maintain the Union Jack, which represents all our British history in South Africa,' on which Amery said: 'If Natal will agree to this suggestion, I will do my best to have this approach investigated and possibly adopted when I next see your Governor-General.'

Natal agreed to the suggestion with alacrity. So on his return journey Amery put his suggestion to Lord Athlone, who in turn took the matter up with Tielman Roos, the Minister of Justice, who was not enamoured of Malan's Flag Bill, and who was occupying a popular and prominent position as chairman of the Nationalists in the Transvaal. Finally Roos, much to the conster-

[1] v. L. S. Amery, *In the Rain and the Sun*, pp. 119 and 126.

nation of Malan, announced from the public platform that there should be two flags and said that the Government would take the offer to the Opposition. The country accepted this suggestion with acclaim and the whole agitation thus came to an end. But the story of the flag issue which was settled under the trees at the Victoria Falls was to have a dramatic epilogue and one which threw much light upon Smuts's character and philosophy.

Although the flag matter had reached an agreement, it was necessary for it to be ratified in a Bill before its introduction into Parliament. The debate was resumed by the two party caucuses. On the morning of October 27, 1927, I was on my way by train from Muizenberg to Cape Town and while reading *Die Burger*, the Nationalist Party organ, I noticed a reference to the Flag Bill. It appeared that we were to be asked to agree to the Union Jack flying only from the principal government buildings throughout the country and not, as it had always flown, from every magistracy and over every public building in South Africa. I knew at once that this suggestion would not meet Natal's needs.

I immediately called the Natal members together and held a Natal caucus and explained to them what I had read and asked permission to plead in the party caucus for the proper carrying-out of the terms as Natal had interpreted them, which had nothing to do with the places of flight of the Union Jack, but were that there would be two flags flown all over South Africa and that in Natal the Union Jack would fly as heretofore. We had not much time. It was then 9.30 a.m. and the general caucus was to take place at 10.30, but I obtained permission to stand out for a declaration on behalf of Natal. We felt that, if the rest of the country were so anaemic in regard to their British heritage, we in Natal had a right to stand out for ours.

I went into the party caucus at 10.30. Smuts addressed us and said that at that moment the caucus of the other Party was taking place in another part of the building and was discussing the terms which we had seen in the paper that morning. He said we would be expected to accept these terms equally with the Government. He pointed out that we had had two years of commotion over the Flag Bill, that we had fought it very strenuously and that at

length, we had arrived at a feasible solution. Smuts then said: 'If anyone refuses to accept this, the blood must be on his own head. We cannot have the Union disturbed again from its legitimate work by another orgy of emotionalism such as we have seen over the flag. Both flags are now represented. The feelings of the whole community have been taken into consideration and we therefore ought to be satisfied with what we have achieved.'

I replied to this saying that, as far as the rest of the Union was concerned, I could not speak, but that this was not the undertaking which Natal had expected would be contained in the settlement. We had hitherto stood entirely by the formula—'The Union Jack will fly as heretofore', and we must insist, before we would agree to accept the new position, that Smuts would go to Hertzog and tell him of our difficulty. 'Natal,' I said, 'is a united body here. We represent the feelings of all our constituents, and they have told us very definitely what they want. They are all completely united in this matter. The whole area of Natal is red with the blood of people who have died there under the Union Jack. We must insist that it will fly there as heretofore. If Smuts will get this undertaking from Hertzog, then there will be no more trouble from the people of Natal.' With that the caucus broke up.

Sometime during the afternoon all the Natal members of the Senate and the House of Assembly were called to meet Smuts in the Whip's room. When we were all assembled, Smuts gave us his message. He said: 'I have this moment come from Hertzog. I have discussed your request with him and after consideration he gives you his unqualified assurance that the flag will fly as heretofore in Natal.' We immediately broke up. That was all we wanted and we were satisfied. We called down the pressmen from the gallery and each member gave a separate message to his constituents in which we asked Natal to accept this settlement in good faith. We told them that the National flag would have the honour of a National flag and the Union Jack would be there to symbolize the heritage of Natal for the years before it came into Union. There was no dispute from any quarter of our interpretation of the agreement. It was published widely in the press throughout the Union and there it remained.

The Flag Bill was to be promulgated at the beginning of 1928. When we arrived in Cape Town for the next session in January we received information that, while two flagpoles had originally been put up at the magistrates' office at Vryheid, in Northern Natal, one of them had been removed by Malan's order. This news was badly received. Vryheid after all was Zululand, before there ever was a Vryheid. The Zulu War had been fought over that land by British troops. We felt that Malan's order was a desecration of the Union Jack in precisely those areas where it should be regarded with the greatest esteem.

Once again I called together all the Natal members from the Senate and the Assembly and asked for an interview with Hertzog.

It took place after eight o'clock one evening in his room. Malan was present. As always Hertzog was most courteous. After filling his pipe and looking round at us all, he said: 'Well, gentlemen, what is it you want to see me about?' 'You will remember, General,' I said, 'that at the conclusion of the Flag agreement last year, Smuts came to see you at our request about the Union Jack flying as heretofore in Natal? After discussion with him, you sent us a message contained in these cuttings published in the Press throughout the Union, stating that the Union Jack would fly as heretofore throughout Natal.'

Hertzog looked a little surprised and said: 'I saw Smuts? I sent a message? I never saw Smuts and I never sent such a message!' To this, which left us all a little breathless, I said: 'Well, General, I don't know what happened between you and Smuts on that occasion and I don't think that it matters much now. Statements were made by all the gentlemen present here tonight to their constituents. These statements were made as a result of the communication from you, conveyed to us by Smuts. They were published in the Press months ago. You must have known of them. You did not repudiate the messages we sent. If they are now repudiated, it would not be us who would be held up to public opprobrium; it would be you. It is a question of your honour. You are in honour bound to carry out this contract, which we accepted in all honesty.'

'Well, I can assure you, I did not see Smuts,' declared Hertzog. I did not know what to think. I produced the press cuttings and began to read from them. After listening to them for a while Hertzog said: 'Now let us have no more disputes over this matter. You go and write down precisely where the Union Jack did fly in Natal and Malan, who is promulgating the regulations for flying the flag, will include them.'

I and two or three others left the Prime Minister and went to our Natal room where there was a typewriter. It was after nine and there was no secretary present. I sat down and typed the list myself. By the time this was finished our meeting had broken up and Hertzog had gone back to the House. But I enclosed the list in a letter to Malan and waited results. They came the following day in his own handwriting (see facsimile):

> A number of members of Parliament representing Natal Constituencies met the Prime Minister and Dr Malan last night to discuss further the Government's plan to meet Natal sentiment in connection with the flying of flags. The position of Durban was more particularly considered, which, not being a capital within the meaning of the Act did not appear to the deputation to have received the consideration which its importance and well-known sentiment merited. It was agreed that at this centre, besides the Magistrate's Court and the Customs House, also the Drill Hall, the Post Office and railway station would fly both flags. It will be remembered that the case of Pietermaritzburg had already been met by the flying of both flags, on the Supreme Court buildings; the Magistrate's Court and the Administrator's Office and the case of other centres (in all predominantly English-speaking centres) generally speaking, by the flying of both on the Magistrate's Courts. The deputation thought that though some individual cases might require further consideration the scheme was, as a whole sufficiently reasonable to be generally acceptable.

It will be seen that Malan's interlineation: 'In all predominantly English-speaking centres', destroyed the specific character of the agreement and obviously allowed a pulling down of the Union Jack at Vryheid, which was not a predominantly English-speaking district of Natal.

A number of members of Parliament representing Natal constituencies met the Prime Minister and Dr Malan last night to discuss further the Government's plan to meet Natal sentiment in connection with the flying of the flags. The position of Durban was ~~specially~~ more particularly considered which, not being a capital within the meaning of the Act did not appear to the deputation to have received the consideration which its importance and well-known sentiment merited. It was agreed that at this centre, besides the Magistrate's Court and the Customs House, also the Drill Hall, Post Office and railway station would fly both flags. It will be remembered that the case of Pietermaritzburg had already been met by the flying of both flags on the Supreme Court buildings, the Magistrate's Court and the Administrator's Office and the case of other centres (generally speaking) [in all predominantly English-speaking centres (P.)] by the flying of both on the Magistrates' Courts. The deputation thought that though some individual cases might require further consideration the scheme was [as a whole] sufficiently reasonable to be generally acceptable.

Facsimile of Dr Malan's memorandum prepared following the meeting with Natal South African Party members of the Assembly.

Richards and I sought an interview with Malan at his office. The first meeting was inconclusive, but on the second occasion Malan disclosed, in reply to a question by Richards, that he had been in negotiation with Jansen, MP for Vryheid, a strong Nationalist supporter and then the Speaker in the House. I replied: 'So while we have been negotiating with you, you have been going behind our backs to negotiate with Jansen. He who sups with the devil needs a long spoon.'

I got up to leave. Malan stood in the doorway. 'What are you going to do now?' he asked.

'We'll think about that; the matter cannot rest where it is.' I then wrote out a full account of what had happened, took it to Smuts for his approval and told him that I proposed to publish it in the Press. Smuts replied: 'Very well, publish it.' The following day the account appeared in the Cape Town press.

Discussing what we were to do next, the Natal members agreed that I should wait for Malan's salary vote as Minister of the Interior to come up in Parliament, when I could challenge him and charge him directly with duplicity. The vote came up on January 31st.[1] After explaining all the circumstances of the Flag agreement, I said that Smuts had given the Natal members a message from Hertzog to the effect that we were to accept his unqualified assurance that the Union Jack would fly as heretofore in Natal. The House was hushed and silent and everyone could hear Hertzog, who was sitting opposite me, as he leant forward and said: 'I did not see Smuts. I sent no such message. I gave no such assurance.'

Immediately there was an uproar and cries of 'Liar, Liar', were shouted at me from the Government benches. I was thunderstruck. For the first time a doubt began to assail my mind. I had thought that Hertzog had forgotten or that there was some misunderstanding. I looked over to my left and saw Smuts sitting with downcast eyes, examining his finger-nails. My impulse was to call upon him to state what the position was when he went to see Hertzog that night. Then suddenly the significance of a direct denial between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Oppo-

[1] For the debate, *v. Hansard* for January 31, 1928.

sition overwhelmed me. I paused, and in those fleeting moments, all idea of vindicating myself passed from my mind, and I allowed the taunts of Hertzog's followers to pass unheeded. My speech ended, I imagine, somewhat lamely. Immediately I had finished, I followed Smuts out of the House and said to him: 'General, you remember conveying that assurance to us last year?' Smuts replied: 'I *seem* to remember something about it.'[1]

I felt a wave of resentment well up within me, and I said no more. The following morning, meeting Patrick Duncan at Muizenburg, while he was waiting for the train, I discussed the incident with him and Duncan remarked: 'I think I would put my money on Hertzog!'

I never found out the truth of the matter. For years I cherished a resentment against Smuts until I began to see that, whatever might be the truth, or otherwise, of what he told us on that flag day agreement, he had certainly done it in the interests of South Africa. There had been quiescence on the flag issue for over six months. The country had accepted the position. It was impossible to raise it again. Did Smuts, in giving us that message, take a chance that the whole agitation would die down and when the regulations were promulgated, the country would accept the position? If he did that, he must have failed to realize the depth of sentiment which lay behind the Union Jack. On the other hand it may have been that Hertzog had forgotten; but I do not think so.

I was tremendously heartened a couple of years later, after the amalgamation between the Nationalists and the South African Party, when Smuts was serving under Hertzog, at the following story which came from the World Economic Conference held in London in 1931. The story reveals the general context of Smuts's philosophy better than any other I know. During this Conference the South African delegation became very friendly with the delegation from the Irish Free State. They found some affinity between themselves. To cement the friendship further, the two delegations decided to have a dinner. Smuts was the host, and no

[1] Reference to the story will be found in *Hansard* xi 17, January 22, 1951, in my commemoration speech on Smuts.

more delightful host existed than Smuts when he was in the mood for it.

The wine was in and Irish wit was scintillating, and the party left the table very merry, to adjourn to an ante-room. Here they sat in a circle of chairs resuming the talk of the table. The Irish High Commissioner, Dulanty, looking round the circle, suddenly said: 'There is a question I would like to ask General Smuts. It is a question he may find very embarrassing to reply to. It is, however, a question I have been wanting to ask him for a long time. Do you mind if I ask it, General?' The General, who liked Dulanty, said: 'Yes, Dulanty, ask your question and I will try to to reply to it.'

'Well,' said Dulanty, 'there was a time in Ireland when the people revered the name of Smuts. They regarded him as the exponent of all the wrongs and injuries suffered by the small peoples of the British Empire. He had taken the field against this mighty power and was foremost in resenting its dominance, and they put him on a pedestal and worshipped him. They thought he was going to sever all the Imperial bonds. Instead of that they find that he is rivetting the chains of Imperialism more and more round their necks, and they cannot understand why he has changed. Will you tell us, General, why you, who were an arch-rebel against British authority, having been born under the British Flag, have completely changed?'

During these remarks by Dulanty, Smuts stroked his beard thoughtfully, whilst his companions, Havenga and Pirow, looked keenly at him to see how he was taking it. After a moment Smuts looked up and replied: 'Yes, Dulanty, I will answer that question: and I answer it by a quotation from Marcus Aurelius. But in order that you will get a true inference from the quotation when I make it, I must say a few words in explanation. I come from a very small people. I think it is a matter of history that I have been prepared to lay down my life for that small people, and I need scarcely tell an Irishman like you, Dulanty, that I am still prepared to lay down my life for that small people. The point is: they are a small people, mere flotsam among the nations of the world, having no platform from which to speak to influence either their own

destiny or the destiny of mankind. Just a small people, Dulanty. And now I will give you the quotation:

'The poet said: "the City of Cecrops (Athens) is very dear. May I not also say the City of God is very dear!" '

Those present sat back and pondered upon the significance of those words which set forth Smuts's political philosophy. South Africa, the City of Cecrops, which was very dear to him, for which he was prepared to lay down his life, was not in conflict with his love for that city of God, the British Empire, which offered him and South Africa a platform from which to speak to the world in fulfilment of its own destiny and for the benefit of mankind.

Ultimately the Union Jack continued to fly everywhere in Natal as heretofore, except in Vryheid. In 1957 the people who pulled down the Union Jack over Vryheid succeeded in pulling it down all over Natal. It was significent that there was no great public outcry then as there had been thirty years before. The Englishman in South Africa has largely lost his feeling for the roots which originally established him, and he is now seeking tendrils in the air which bear no relation to his ancient and historic heritage. The Nationalist ideology is slowly and faithfully accomplishing its task.

CHAPTER XIII

BID FOR A UNITARY STATE

(1929–1932)

CRESWELL, talking to me one day of Hertzog, told me this story: 'I was travelling in the Free State,' he said, 'when I happened to find myself sharing a compartment with Hertzog. I was astonished when the ticket examiner came round, to see him proffer an ordinary ticket. I showed my Parliamentary free pass. As soon as the ticket examiner went out I asked the general why he had not used his Parliamentary pass. "Have you left it behind?" I enquired. "Oh, no," he replied, "I am travelling on a private journey. I only use my Parliamentary pass on public business."

'"Well, General," I said, "you must be the only man in Parliament who does that!"'

It was characteristic of him. Hertzog was scrupulously honest in all private matters; but nobody could fog an audience more easily on political matters than he. He was so meticulous over the written word and so careless about the ultimate result. He was a warm-hearted man, with an old-world courtesy which endeared him to all who knew him, but he lacked that knowledge of the world of men that keeps trade and commerce moving. His alliance with the South African Labour Party to form the Pact Government showed that; Socialism was so completely alien to his brand of nationalism. He was too much of the academic lawyer to mould South Africa into a modern state, as indeed were his confidants. He was obsessed with the Constitution and such economics as he read, if any, belonged to the eighteenth century; what South Africa has had to pay for the ignorance of economic science amongst its rulers, is a lost record.

Though one pictured the stormy years of the Boer War behind him, Hertzog was no general, and he seemed more fitted for the

PLATE 4. Ioma, Derek and Joyce Nicholls

PLATE 5

Mrs Heaton Nicholls and General Smuts, 1926

'The Member for Zululand'

cobbled stones of a university town in Holland than to the South African veld. The air of tolerance never blew through his political meanderings. A Free State politician, C. L. Botha, who later became Judge President of the Orange Free State, said of him:

> The reason why Hertzog was so popular with the Dutch section, was because he was appealing to the worst racial instincts possible that any politician could. He was appealing to the Dutch section in regard to what they suffered in the past and there was always the policy of revenge in Hertzog's speeches. That is why he is a popular man today.

As Oswald Pirow quotes from the *Bloemfontein Post* in his book:

> In the strong jaw and firm straight mouth, one sees the dour fighter and true leader of the political masses. Power is the dominant characteristic of this man: power in the compact figure, in the square pale features, power in the forceful manly spirit. He has a passion for the last ditch and a preference for a lost cause. . . . He clings to his convictions with a stubborn determination, so that no unfavourable circumstance can move him and a certain narrowness of outlook merely increases his spiritual power. He had many political enemies . . . . but no one has ever doubted his natural and instinctive honesty of character. He would not stoop to attain his ends by intrigue, but he gives no quarter in a fight. His political virtues include a certain mercilessness which is foreign to all concealment.

That is how I began to see Hertzog. His driving force was a Calvinist hatred of his opponents and his political faith was founded on a ruthless *Baaskap*. He oozed hatred of Smuts, his enemy. If we could go back into the past we should, I suggest, find that this hatred had a personal equation. They were both in the Transvaal, after leaving European Universities, looking for Government jobs, Smuts brilliantly equipped from Cambridge and Hertzog from Amsterdam with a mediocre pass. Smuts became State Secretary of the Transvaal; Hertzog, judge in the Free State—according to Pirow, a mediocre judge at that. Rumour has it that their lifelong feud began then.

Smuts brought on the South African War, but, no doubt during his silent communion with the veld, he began to understand the nature of the impossible task the Boers had set themselves, in trying to drive all other white people from a continent where the indigenous population, in their millions, were just beginning to turn over from their sleep of ages. Smuts was a philosopher with a farseeing mind. He brought about union. He wanted to see it function. When union became a possibility he prepared for it. His mind leapt forward to the Rhodes vision. To gain control of Africa, the European quarrel must be healed at whatever cost; the two white races in South Africa must be brought together. Destiny lay in that direction; hence the policy of 'co-operation and conciliation'.

Hertzog's mind, on the other hand, was held in the thrall of Calvinism. He saw a small people set aside, speaking a language unknown to the rest of the world, with their frontiers restricted and protected by God—by the good will of the Great Powers—and the rest of Africa remaining quiescent while this was going on. His mind was static and he could not visualize a developing Africa. All that was necessary for our protection was to declare our independence from Imperial trappings, assert our freedom to do anything we wished, and our wish would become sovereign in the eyes of Africa and the world, i.e. the wish of our small white Afrikaner population with all else excluded.

The peculiar republican outlook of Hertzog and his objection to the British which was manifested from the earliest days of union, was shown in his determination to destroy the whole structure of what he considered to be 'Imperial Britain'. So in 1926, when as Prime Minister, his turn came to attend the Imperial Conference convened for the purpose of considering our trade relations, Hertzog refused to consider any economic matters until the Constitution of South Africa had been in some way rewritten. He was not, he told the Prime Ministers gathered there, prepared to discuss any economic plans until the status of members of the Commonwealth had been given international recognition by some formal resolution of the Conference which would destroy their subordinate position. How to explain to Hertzog the feelings

entertained towards each other by members of a Club?

He must therefore have been astounded when Balfour brought forward a declaration setting forth the position as it actually existed which gave Hertzog all he wanted. Here was a freely proffered statement drawn up at the Conference, a most precise statement of fact. The only concession made was to give the Dominion Ministers the right to advise the King in respect of their affairs, but that the Union had done ever since it had been formed.

In this formula, written for the information of the world, was the voluntary renunciation by Britain of any tie of subordination which the Nationalists in South Africa considered bound them to some 'super-state'. There was no such 'super-state': there was a club to which each member belonged on the freest terms of club-mindedness. Every part of the formula balanced the other; each was pregnant with meaning; each could be misinterpreted only by illwill.

This declaration must have pulled Hertzog up with a round turn. There was nothing now left to shout about, no more grouses, no grievances. The Nationalists could get on with the government of the country and leave all emotional excursions, such as flags and status acts, alone. I am convinced that Hertzog saw, after this, if only for a short time, that the path he had been engaged upon was a foolish one for our small South Africa, in the face of developing world dangers and difficulties. It could only result in division when every available fact pointed to the need for unity. I believe he sincerely tried to put his bias aside.

But General Hertzog was limited—limited by the blood of his ancestors, limited by his extreme Afrikaner supporters, who were forever pushing him into the past, ever trying to revert to the boundary posts of Kruger. He could never get away from their hates and their determination to re-write the Treaty of Vereeniging. They chose to consider themselves a conquered people; that stain must be removed though it referred only to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. It would not have been conforming to the pattern of Nationalism if Hertzog on his return from the Imperial Conference had praised the British indefinitely. It would

not have been Nationalist if he had come home to start a policy of conciliation and co-operation with the English-speaking by adopting a broader vision and looking for his inspiration to the rapidly developing world of Africa. It would not have done, and it was not the nature of the man to do it.

Hertzog was sincere; of course he was. What political enormities have not been excused by that statement! Hertzog was his father's son, a child of the true Afrikaner, brought up in the Calvinist faith. His instinct and heritage, combined with the extreme views of his supporters, compelled him to direct his activities towards the building up of an Afrikaner language to replace the High Dutch of the Law and the Bible. His mind was directed towards heroic deeds and noble characters, towards the youthful glory of riding knee to knee with the biltong bumping against his side, rather than towards the development of that wealth which Providence had fortuitously placed in the ground, to the need for expansion and the means to live. He saw the Afrikaner nation as a small compact body, rendered impervious to any outside influence by its puritan faith and its punitive exclusion of all outsiders.

Any reasonable man, returning as Hertzog did from the Conference with all and more than he asked for, would have let well alone and got on with the job of running the country, but his suspicious legal mind could not credit the British with so much generosity. His searching eye lit upon the italicised formula of the declaration of 1926:

> They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

But he apparently did not comprehend and never heeded the injunction on the method of interpreting the formula which immediately followed it:

A foreigner endeavouring to understand the true character of the British Empire by the aid of this formula alone would be tempted to think that it was devised rather to make mutual interference impossible than to make mutual co-operation easy. Such criticism, however, completely ignores the historic situation. The rapid evolution of the Overseas Dominions during the last fifty years has involved many complicated adjustments of old political machinery to changing conditions. The tendency towards equality of status was both right and inevitable. Geographical and other conditions made this impossible of attainment by the way of federation. The only alternative was by the way of autonomy; and along this road it has been steadily sought. Every self-governing member of the Empire is now the master of its destiny. In fact, if not always in form, it is subject to no compulsion whatever.

But no account, however accurate, of the negative relations in which Great Britain and the Dominions stand to each other can do more than express a portion of the truth. The British Empire is not founded upon negations. It depends essentially, if not formally, on positive ideals. Free institutions are its life-blood. Free co-operation is its instrument. Peace, security and progress are among its objects. Aspects of all these great themes have been discussed at the present Conference; excellent results have been thereby obtained. And, though every Dominion is now, and must always remain, the sole judge of the nature and extent of its co-operation, no common cause will, in our opinion, be thereby imperilled.

Equality of status, so far as Great Britain and the Dominions are concerned, is thus the root principle governing our inter-Imperial relations. But the principles of equality and similarity, appropriate to status, do not universally extend to function. . . . This subject also has occupied our attention. The rest of this Report will show how we have endeavoured not only to state political theory, but to apply it to our common needs.

The formula was a co-operative clause, the root policy of Botha in his appeal for a United South Africa. It registered a gentleman's agreement, not the agreement of a huckster. Hertzog's interpretation towards the words 'freely associated' was not the interpretation of Balfour, or Amery or Winston Churchill. They understood it to mean as a notice to the world that no one had

been coerced into accepting the formula; members went into the Commonwealth of their own free will. But Hertzog and his Nationalists chose to believe that the words 'freely associated' not only gave them all the benefits of the club when it suited them, but also gave them the freedom to secede against the interests of the whole club when it suited them, and it is on this interpretation that the whole policy of a Nationalist Republic has been based. They had it both ways. 'Free to be in or free to be out,' said Hertzog; not a very honourable gentlemen's agreement and a very curious interpretation for a Prime Minister to take and to pledge his people to observe. It is upon this interpretation that we have split. Yet we were warned precisely against this by the document itself.

Hertzog's interpretation was the cue for Malan, the Minister of the Interior, to make a speech which embarked me upon one of the toughest political struggles of my career.

Malan was a Dutch Reformed parson descended from the pulpit to spread the grace of divinity upon our sordid political world; in my opinion we have been descending ever since. He became, from the time he discarded his orders, the *bête noir* of South African politics. He had one objective—to push, as quickly as possible, the two-stream policy of Hertzog to its ultimate conclusion of Afrikaner domination. With the subtlety of a Jesuit he set out to plot our ends.

In this speech which he made at Ceres in the Cape in September 1929, Malan placed a new conception of union before South Africa, and gave a twist to the Constitution which the Nationalists were actively to accept. In effect he said that South Africa could never become a nation until the Provinces were destroyed and all the executive government of the country was concentrated into a single department in Pretoria. He explained that the existence of the Provinces made that ideal impossible.

I must confess that prior to the 1926 Declaration I had not thought much about constitutional issues. But Malan's speech struck a chord of alarm. It required looking in to. With the Provincial Councils gone, all local authority in the Provinces would go too. The mayors would all be creatures of the Minister, and

town councils, if they were permitted to exist, would consist of appointees of the Government. All schoolteachers would lose their present status and would be absorbed into a Union service. Every teacher in the country would be appointed by the Minister and would teach only what he prescribed. Under this system, all language rights would soon disappear and the Government would have achieved by easy Parliamentary resolution all that they had failed to achieve by war.

This was not union as Natal saw it. This was Krugerism with the Dutch Reformed Church ruling. It would introduce the type of government established by Calvin at Geneva. This was the surrender of the English-speaking to Afrikanerdom. I saw here the definite determination of the Nationalists to create a Dutch dictatorship with the parliamentary weapons given them by the British. The implications of this speech alerted me. I had not realized that we were facing such dangers.

The first notice that Malan's conception was practical politics became apparent two years later, when Smuts sent for me and C. P. Robinson, the member for Durban Central, to tell us of a proposition which had been put before him by Havenga, the Minister of Finance. The proposition was to abolish the Provinces by creating local bodies to take their place, after the style of the British county councils. These bodies would have no legislative power. The Provincial Councils would no longer form a Federal link of union. The new councils would be appointed by the Central Government, and they would be under the control of a Minister in Pretoria to whom they could submit advice. There would be two of these councils in the Cape, three in the Transvaal and one each in Natal and the Free State.

Havenga had informed Smuts that this step was made necessary because of the unbalance of revenue in the four states of Union. We had rich parts and poor parts. The Orange Free State, Havenga said, was already bankrupt, with a deficit of £200,000; it had thrown in its hand and asked the Central Government to take over all its works; with this, of course, went the surrender of all its functions. Havenga, therefore, sought the co-operation of Smuts, in agreeing to the necessary change in the Act of Union,

which would make the alteration possible and which would get him out of his financial difficulties.

I at once recalled Malan's speech at Ceres. So here it was, all nicely hidden in the wrappings of economics. It seemed to me at once that the reason given by Havenga was mere camouflage. It was ridiculous to suppose that South Africa was so bankrupt that it could not find £200,000 to avoid the suicide of union. A single firm in Cape Town had gone bankrupt for more than that, but to argue that South Africa had to alter its constitution, because of a deficit in the Free State of £200,000 appeared to me to be childish. I knew that Havenga's objective was the same as Malan's—to deliver us all into the hands of a Nationalist republic, and do it by co-operation. This conviction was strengthened later when it was revealed that the Free State had deliberately budgeted that year for a deficit. If that was so, why the sudden alarm on the part of Havenga?

Smuts seemed unaware of the pit into which we were in danger of falling. He wanted us to agree to Havenga's proposition. I looked at Smuts and speculated whether he was really taken in by Havenga. Of course he was not; but he had been placed in a difficult position. The South African Party was an all-Union Party and there were many within its ranks, especially members from Cape Town and the Rand, who condemned lock, stock and barrel, the whole Provincial system. The South African Party was therefore completely divided over the question of the abolition of the Provincial Councils. The Rand members, representing the mining industry and the Cape members representing the Cape Peninsula view, were opposed to them for entirely fiscal reasons. These members did not understand the Nationalist ideology, or the sinister undercurrent in their wish to abolish the system. These people were prepared to give the Nationalists the benefit of the doubt and would not believe that their objective was to obtain control of education and thus establish a republic.

The Government, in approaching the South African Party on the subject, was well aware that a number of our members would be inclined to support the policy of abolition, and by the aid of these dissentients, sought to obtain the majority of both Houses

sitting together, which was necessary to amend the Act of Union.

Another aspect which Smuts had to bear in mind was that, if the Provincial Councils were destroyed, this meant the disappearance of the South African Party from Natal, since the Provincial Councillors who numbered twenty-five, were the nucleus of a strong party organization. Smuts could not return to power unless the whole of the Natal members of the South African Party were behind him. This, then, was his dilemma.

I took immediate fright at the suggestion he put to me and told him that we could not allow this to happen. Natal was ninety per cent English-speaking, and union, in our opinion, meant the slow development of the two peoples into one by natural means. It did not mean that the Central Government of the day should be allowed to dragoon any section of the community into a new constitution. Robinson felt the same as I did. Smuts then suggested that it would do no harm to participate in a conference arranged by the Government to discuss the matter. I contended that to take part in such a conference would be an admission of the possibility of the abolition of the system. I was quite determined that we should not even discuss that with the Government.

A few days later Natal members of Parliament were called together and Robinson and I told them of the events which had taken place. The issue before the caucus was whether a conference between the two Parties should be held or not. Smuts came to our second meeting. An extract from a letter to my wife at that time shows what took place:

> Behind the scenes we are having plenty of emotion. The meeting was a fight with a few of our weakkneed from Natal for a firm stand, and I think we have won. Smuts nearly talked them over, and, if I had not got in a bit of spade work beforehand, he would have succeeded. As it was there were a sufficient number of members who expressed, in no uncertain terms, what they felt about the abolition of the Provincial Council; and Smuts left the meeting in little doubt about the real attitude of Natal.

The matter was left there on the presumption that it might be

discussed at a future date. We were asked to say nothing more about it, to forget that the question had been raised. Smuts, without saying so, realized that the objection of Natal members was too strong for him to consider the proposal any further, and there it would have rested, had it not been for one of the members of the caucus, who, having developed an obsession for seeing his name in the newspapers, gave the story to the *Natal Mercury* which naturally headlined it. The effect of the publication was to set Natal buzzing with alarm. The whole Province took fright.

It is true that manoeuvrings by the Government for the abolition of the Provincial Councils had taken place for a number of years, all of which had been given due prominence in the press, so that the public were well aware that abolition was contemplated. In Natal, however, it was one thing for the Government to attempt to destroy the Provincial Council system, but quite another when tales were told of Smuts and the South African Party being asked to collaborate. This was indeed a shock. The people woke up with a start; they felt that something concrete must be done to safeguard their interests.

During the behind-the-scenes negotiations I had kept closely in touch with Charlie Clarkson, the chairman of the South African Party in Natal and chief member of the Executive Committee of the Natal Provincial Council. He knew of all that had taken place and we were indeed fortunate that he was where he was at the time, for, when the Nationalists were frustrated by the Natal members of Parliament's refusal to attend a conference, they took up another line of attack.

To achieve their objective they now approached the matter through the Provincial Councils and suggested an inter-Provincial Conference on the subject. But Clarkson was already aware of the dangers and, thanks to his spadework, the Government got no further with the Natal Provincial Councillors than they had with the members of Parliament. Thus it was that the two Natal bodies, the Provincial Councillors and the Parliamentarians, formed a team whose goal was to strengthen and build up the Provincial system as had been intended by the framers of the Act of Union.

But the team had to be constantly reminded of its duty. There were many waverers, many who felt that loyalty to Smuts came before loyalty to Natal; and the attitude of members of the Party outside Natal was a lure to many wobblers in the Province to desert our team. I was aware of the underlying temptations and consequent disunity amongst Natal members and did my best to prevent any splits. My actions were motivated by a wish to do the best for Natal and ultimately for South Africa. I knew that for Natal to enter a bureaucratic republic, such as the Nationalists envisaged, would be the death knell to our British traditions. There was nothing disloyal to the South African Party or to Smuts in my attitude. Since I had come to Parliament, I had come to realize that all large countries, which ever achieved anything, had a federal type of government. Those with a unified government appeared to stagnate. More and more I felt that the vastness of South Africa and the diversities and differences of its populations made it far more suited to federation than to union. I therefore pledged myself to work for a federal type of government in Natal.

The Party was well aware of my attitude. I had recently written a series of articles on Home Rule for Natal which were published in the *Natal Mercury*. These had also appeared in the papers of other Provinces, one of which was an Afrikaans paper published in Pretoria—always a Nationalist centre—whose editor Gustav Preller wrote articles on the same subject which were published in the *Mercury*. His articles showed agreement with my ideas. I concluded therefore, from these articles and other sources, that there were many in South Africa, both Afrikaans and English-speaking who were in favour of retaining the Provincial Councils.

I felt strongly that some definite move in favour of federation should be started in the near future. I wrote to Blamey, the South African Party secretary and organizer in Natal, on the subject and said:

Above all things we must rope in young South Africa. I believe this issue of the Provincial Councils, when fully realized with all its implications, points the way to a larger African ideal—as opposed to a little Afrikaner view—which will inspire all the young people

of both races. *I believe that the whole future of South Africa depends on Devolution.*

Therefore, I think, that an organization which you may help to form which shall be labelled by no Party or sectional creed, founded for the sole purpose of furthering this greater African ideal, given a distinctive name, which in itself makes a wide appeal to all young South Africans, will achieve results of which we shall be proud.

I considered it particularly important that any movement such as I suggested to Blamey should be a union movement with members of both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking from beyond Natal's borders within its ranks, for only with the full co-operation of the two white races could I see any solution to our non-European problems. These have always appeared to me to be the greatest of our worries in South Africa, and so, in all that I suggested, I particularly emphasized that both white races must be thinking alike. And yet within a year I was to be branded a traitor to Smuts, to my Party and to South Africa, a racialist and a jingo; and in political circles in Natal the word 'Devolution' was to become a swearword!

CHAPTER XIV

NATAL FOR A FEDERAL SYSTEM

(1932)

THE Budget debate which took place in April 1931, when the fight for the Provincial Councils was gaining prominence, gave me the opportunity of telling South Africa through Parliament what I felt about the Nationalist onslaught. I said on that occasion:

> The fault, if faults there have been with the Provincial system, lies with the Union Government which has failed to carry out the Act of Union. What these intentions on the Provincial system were may be judged from the words of one of the most responsible members of the National Convention.
>
> The Prime Minister of Natal, speaking in the Natal Parliament on the question of the draft South Africa Act, said this about Provincial Councils, which were not then established: 'Then we have the Provinces. We have within the Constitution certain powers reserved for the local bodies, and I wish to state this clearly. We are told, although the Constitution reserves powers for our Provincial Councils, that those powers may be taken away by the Central Parliament at any time. I don't take that view. It is part of the Constitution, and our Central Parliament would not dare to interfere with the Provincial rights unless it was the will of the people that this should come about, and instead of the powers of those Provincial Councils being limited in the future, I honestly believe that these powers will be increased by the Central Government. There must be a policy of decentralization, as distinguished from having all the work done by the Central Parliament.'

I ended my speech by saying:

> I think that if the bureaucrats were to get the opinion of South Africa, they would find that a much stronger feeling exists in favour

of federation than of centralization. If we are wise, I think we should set to work to strengthen the Provincial System because it affords us the surest hope of future development and national expansion.

I also wrote to Wadley, a member of the Executive Council of Natal, saying on the subject of the abolition of the Council system:

The Provincial Council stands in the way of the Republican ideal. This I know is very difficult for Durban people to believe. They have all the Englishman's desire to credit his opponent with the same generous instincts of right dealing, as they themselves possess. But until we realize that the Nationalists have their ideal, which to them is just as sacred, just as alluring, we shall fail to understand Nationalist mentality. . . . We take our stand on a determination to maintain the constitutional rights of guarantee given us, and we do not submit, by whatever constitutional changes have taken place, that the Government has the power to dissolve the federal character of the Union. There comes a time in all political crises when it is essential to make up one's mind whether one should fight or give in. We can't hope to compete with the Nationalist Government in intrigue: we can't hope to beat tham at their own game. But we can with honesty and steadfastness of purpose take a firm stand for what we conceive to be right, and draw to us the best sections of the South African public. . . . The battle is only just beginning and, if Natal stands firm upon this big principle, which is very much more far-reaching in its implications than people suppose, we shall have struck a blow for our traditions and for our existence in South Africa that will prevent their being assailed at any time in the future.

I sincerely hope you will use your great influence to make everyone you come across stand solidly behind us. The slightest weakening at this juncture would be fatal, particularly in Durban. The Nationalists are making all the propaganda they can in Northern Natal, which has had its effect upon our Northern members. We must inspan all the youth and enthusiasm of Durban in the campaign for constitutional rights and for a 'Great African ideal'.

There was no disloyalty to anyone in my actions or views. Perhaps there was too much loyalty, too much loyalty to an ideal

which I knew would broaden our horizons, widen our outlook, and keep us in contact with that broadest of organizations, the British Commonwealth of Nations. In this last hope I knew that Smuts thought as I did, for again and again he has said that to sever our ties with the Commonwealth would be fatal for South Africa. But Smuts was keeping quiet and taking no sides, for Smuts was on the horns of his dilemma.

I enlisted too, the help of Kingston Russell, the editor of the *Natal Mercury*, one of Natal's leading daily papers. Kingston Russell had come to Natal from the *Cape Times* and, before assuming his post as editor of the *Mercury*, he came to see me in Parliament. We had an hour's discussion on how he could make the *Mercury* one of the principal political organs of South Africa. I told him that he could only do that by building up a 'Natal consciousness', a loyalty and patriotism to the Province. Natal had a separate, unmistakable identity which was in danger, and he could do Natal a service by recognizing that fact and by educating the people to a Natal tradition, to a 'Natal awareness'. On these lines we worked together and I was a frequent contributor to the columns of the *Mercury*. Russell was an Irishman, with an Irishman's temper, a hard worker and an expert journalist, able to hit with telling force in any campaign he engaged upon. It may be said that his editorship, while we were thinking politically alike, brought the whole of Natal together. All through the battle of the Provincial Councils he gave support to the stand the Natal members of Parliament were taking and due prominence was given to our doings.

Letters for and against the abolition of the Provincial Councils flowed into the columns of the *Mercury*. The people of Natal, well alerted to the dangers of the destruction of their Provincial Government, now began to make a concerted stand for their rights. To put it bluntly the Province was up in arms. Smuts, acutely aware of the consequences the end of this struggle might have for him, and sensing the growing tide in the country against the abolition of the Councils, took the opportunity of a luncheon given to him by Natal Members in Cape Town, to issue a statement which committed him and the South African Party, as a

whole, to adopt the policy of 'devolution' and to support the Natal Members of Parliament in their fight to retain the Provincial Council system.

On the day Smuts's speech was published in the Press, I received a letter from Doveton Helps, who had gained prominence in Natal in the Provincial Councils fight. He was an itinerant oculist, who claimed by virtue of his occupation to have a great knowledge of the feelings of the people, not only of Natal, but of the Free State and the Cape as well. He wrote to ask me if I would lead a movement which was being formed in Natal with the definite aim of fighting against the abolition of the Provincial Councils. He asked to be permitted to nominate me as the first chairman of the proposed Home Rule Council, and told me that there was to be a mass-meeting in Durban on May 31 (Union Day), 1931.

In Helps and his suggested organization I saw the first step in the fight for federation, which I more and more believed would be in the interests of Natal. Helps was definitely thinking and going my way. Perhaps if he and his organization would follow my lead, we could bring Natal to a federal form of government. With this in mind, and taking into consideration Smuts's recent declaration supporting the policy of devolution, I replied:

> The position at the moment is that the South African Party has definitely adopted the Natal platform, but if this fight is to succeed, it will have to be something more than a party fight. We learn that it is the intention of the Government to allow the Provincial system to stew in its own juice. They will give no financial assistance beyond that set out in the law. Every Provincial Council is faced with a deficit which will become greater as time goes on, and they believe that the finances will get into such a state that the country cannot possibly tolerate the further existence of the Councils.
>
> The issue will then be put to the electorate at a General Election: that is the latest scheme of the Government. In two years' time they consider that the Provincial situation will be ripe for them to win it. The acceptance of the South African Party as a whole, of the principle of devolution will now make your mass-meeting premature. The fight will now take on another aspect than that of local agitation.

It will have to have something of the character that the Union movement had prior to Union . . . and I am willing to join any organization in which I am satisfied that there are the elements to carry on a campaign throughout the whole of South Africa.

The central idea of the campaign should be to create indignation throughout the whole country against the Government's attempt to destroy the Provincial Councils by creating a financial disease amongst them. The duty is imposed by the Act of Union upon the Union Government to provide for the financial health and stability of the Councils. The Government is completely turning its back upon that duty for the sole purpose of destroying them. That is the idea we have to create, coupled with a reasoned belief in the necessity for devolution.

Helps replied persisting in his invitation to lead the movement and to address a mass meeting. I replied that I was unable to attend because of pressure of parliamentary work. He wrote a few days later:

The South African Party declaration does not cut much ice in Natal, except that it clears the air and we need fear no opposition from Smuts. As I gauge public opinion in Natal and in my travels, I find people becoming very dissatisfied with Smuts's lack of policy. I have made propaganda for the past two years, not only in Natal but in the Orange Free State and Cape Province and I have found considerable interest in the question of home rule or devolution wherever I may go. But people always ask: 'Why does not Natal take definite action. . . .' Natal must lead because public opinion is more or less unanimous there, and when the other Provinces see Natal has definitely made up her mind, they will follow. If nothing is done the whole thing will end in stalemate.

Helps's letter gave encouragement to my idea and strengthened my belief that there was support for devolution in the other Provinces. I realized that the swing of the South African Party to support the Natal platform was not very wholehearted, and was merely done to meet the pressure being exerted by the Natal members. I, therefore, favoured the formation of a non-party organization which would work for decentralization and ultimate-

ly for federation, and to this end I gave an interview to the press on the policy of home rule and at the same time I wrote to Helps, hoping that my article would help to launch, on the right lines, the organization which he appeared to be about to form. I said to him:

> As you know, I have urged for a long time past that some organization, particularly of the youth of the country, should work for the overthrow of bureaucracy and for the development of home rule for the Provinces. Political parties cannot do this work. . . . I believe there is a field of endeavour open for the youth of Natal in inspiring the rest of the Union with a complete realization of our mission on the African Continent, a mission which is completely obscured by our Union politics, because we never get our heads above our racial and local prejudices. Devolution is the first step towards clarity of vision for the Union.

Parliament rose on June 6, 1931, and members returned to their homes. Soon after an organization was born called the 'Devolution League', and its chairman was Helps.

Behind the scenes of this League was Graham Mackeurton, the leading KC in Natal and the author of *The Cradle Days of Natal*. He was a man of great charm and personality, much admired by the people. It was he who advised Kingston Russell to give the devolution movement a 'go' in his paper. It seemed that the ideas I had planted were now beginning to germinate.

A round of meetings was arranged throughout Natal at which Helps and his supporters held forth; Helps was a forceful speaker. All that he and his colleagues said was fully reported in the columns of the *Natal Mercury*. The effect was to whip up sentiment in every direction in Natal; the power of a newspaper to control the public mind, when its editor sets himself to work is truly surprising.

But with the formation of the Devolution League came another burning issue, that of secession. The League advocated federation, but they said, in order to achieve federation, it would be necessary for Natal to separate from and destroy union and then reunite on a federal basis. The Province which had almost attained unanimity

on the question of devolution, was now split from end to end over the question of secession. The situation was chaotic. The other Natal papers, belonging to the Union-wide *Argus* group, came out blatantly against secession, and were most scathing in their comments on the secessionists. This only added fuel to the fire. Rumours were rife. The South African Party was said to be irrevocably split, and daily it was said that new parties would be springing into being.

I had not expected this and I did not advocate secession, except as a last emergency resort. But I could do nothing now to stop the trouble, and my opinion was that anything which drew attention to the reprehensible methods of the Government in their effort to destroy the Provincial system was to the good. I did not interfere with events, but left them to take their course.

In August the South African Party held its congress at Pietermaritzburg and there Smuts, hoping to calm the troubled situation in Natal, confirmed officially the South African Party's acceptance of devolution and of the federal character of the South African Party itself. He said:

> There are a few men of experience who think that we took the wrong turning at union and that we should have had federation; if we had, we should have saved ourselves a great deal of bitterness. But we cannot go back to federation; it is too far back. But we can go along the way to carry out the promise made to the Natal delegates and communicated to the people of Natal by the Prime Minister of Natal from his place in Parliament when union was agreed upon.
>
> The fears expressed in Natal at that time . . . have proved entirely correct. We know that there has been a plot to try to do away with the Provincial Councils, and it is against that plot that the whole of the Natal members of Parliament took part in this session. The whole South African Party, appreciating the danger, have decided in favour of devolution. It was because Natal was most prominent in bringing about the adoption of this policy that the usual crop of rumours arose about divisions in the ranks.

It did not appear to be realized sufficiently well that the South African Party was itself a federal party and not unified like the other

> parties. Each Province had its own organization which decided on its own policy and to correlate which there was a Central Executive. It was perfectly legitimate, indeed the duty of the representatives of any Province, to fight for the adoption of the wishes of that Province.[1]

It was these words which I felt gave me a clear lead to the events which followed.

Parliament reassembled on November 19th to vote subsidies to primary producers in lieu of going off gold and adjourned on the 27th, after subsidies had been granted, until January 17, 1932; that year opened in South Africa, as it did elsewhere, with the full effects of the depression weighing heavily on all parties, but there were in Natal many who were just as concerned with the local question of devolution as with the economic crises.

The Devolution League continued to grow apace and loyalties were split, both within the Province itself amongst the electorate and between the Natal representatives in Parliament. Rumours continued and a crisis was imminent. Helps wrote to me as follows:

> We feel that it is time to make a definite move and that if something is not done at once there will be very few people capable of doing anything at all in a very short while, as we are all being made bankrupt by this putrid Government. . . . I had a talk to Russell the other day; he has no doubt communicated his views to you on launching some definite drastic steps. We cannot go on as we are; the position is simply intolerable. Is there any truth in the rumours of the formation of a new party?

I did not reply to this letter. The situation was too confused. I did not actively oppose the Devolution League and the powerful *Mercury*, on their policy of separation, as I felt that the general stir the League was causing was all to the benefit of our cause. Anything which made the Government pay attention to Natal's plea was to the good. My aim and object was to frustrate the Government in the steps it was taking to introduce a republic.

[1] Quoted from *Natal Mercury*, August 7 and 8, 1931.

Then suddenly on April 18th Helps dropped a bombshell by writing to all Natal members of Parliament, and posing three questions. It appeared from the questions that Helps, in spite of Smuts's declared policy, was still suspicious of the South African Party's support over decentralization. The questions he asked were:

(1) Are you prepared at all times to work actively for a policy of devolution and decentralization towards the ideal of federation within the framework of union?
(2) If so, do you think this solution in any way attainable before the Government can put into force its declared intention of abolishing the Provincial Councils as now constituted and jockeying the Union out of the British Empire through the backdoor of economic secession?
(3) If it is not so to be attained, are you prepared to work for a Federal solution by other means, the most effective of which would appear to be the short cut of *Separation* by Natal, as the first stage towards a policy that would ultimately achieve greater unity?

This letter, as the moderns say, 'put us on the spot'. Helps appeared to have more brains than I had given him credit for. Or was there some other master-brain behind the scenes? It caused considerable commotion in our ranks. One of the members took his letter to Smuts, who advised him 'to tell Helps to go to hell'. Some were for definitely repudiating the whole devolution movement, others were for temporising, but a large section wished to send a statement, the only result of which would have been to have made matters infinitely more difficult all round.

I had gathered a team of four others who had been with me from the start of the Provincial trouble. Richards, the oldest Parliamentarian amongst us, a member of the old Natal Parliament and now representing the Durban constituency of Greyville; Marwick, a well-known figure in the country who had entered Parliament with me in 1920 representing the Illovo constituency; Abrahamson, who represented Weenen and who came from an old political family from the Cape, and Borlase from

Durban, a comparatively new member, an industrialist of great ability. This was the team on whose support I could rely. The rest of the Natal members wavered and swayed with the winds that blew, and were termed by Russell in one of his leaders, 'the Mugwumps'. It was a name which stuck all through the months of crisis.

Several attempts by Natal members were made to issue a statement on Helps's questions, but no unanimity could be obtained. C. P. Robinson drafted a statement to which I and my team subscribed, but the 'Mugwumps' said that, if it was sent, they would repudiate it. We could not have an open split in our ranks at this stage; it was not sent. Later it was seen that, if this statement had been made, the situation might have ended very differently for us all. As it was, my team and I realized that it was quite impossible to guide the whole Natal Party over this issue. We accepted the position brought about by the dissentients and realized that there could be no cohesion amongst the Natal members. I was convinced that the majority of the 'Mugwumps' had no real regard either for the interests of Natal or for the maintenance of British traditions, that their actions were entirely governed by what they believed to be electoral opportunism. I was quite sure that their attitude was wrong and that it would lead to more and more difficulties for Smuts and the South African Party. I wrote to Clarkson in Natal of the crisis in our ranks:

> As my friends and I regard the matter, whatever movement we make at the present moment is bound to be anathema, either to those who wish to leave the Union or to those who think the Union is worth patching up. If we declare against secession we shall have hotly opposed to us all those people who are sincerely disturbed by the implications of Hertzogism; if we declare for the secessionists or give them any support, we shall be hotly opposed by special interests.
>
> If on the other hand, we adopt a course of complete silence, it will be attributed to the influence of the Party machine and to fear and weakness. In our opinion, as federalists, we consider that the movement—devolution coupled with secession—cannot do anything but good, providing it does not go too far; and if the South African Party is to be preserved intact and Smuts is to be preserved for Natal,

it is essential that we should not fall amongst the rocks ahead.

We further came to the conclusion that each person should take his own line; we should avoid all appearance of collusion. Some will reply to Helps's letter, some will not; some will say that they were sent to Parliament by their constituents and any statement they make will be made after consultation with them; some will make the mere acknowledgement of the letter and say the matter is receiving attention; but in no case will there be an unequivocal, unnecessarily committal reply to the circular letter.

The opinion expressed above is the opinion of my friends and myself. The remainder held a meeting two or three days ago and drafted a statement which was to be sent to Helps and published. Immediately after the meeting, which was not attended by any of my friends, this statement was brought to me by O'Brien, who asked me to read it and if possible to approve it. I refused to read the statement or to be in any way connected with it. He then informed me that the meeting had been held at Smuts's suggestion. This refusal on my part, and the stand taken by my friends, naturally created a very strained feeling. In the afternoon Smuts met me in the Lobby. He was very much disturbed. He agreed, however, that it was foolish at this juncture to send any written statement. I hurriedly gave him my view of the position and he replied that he would see the others fell into line with my view.

The 'Mugwumps' however, held a meeting before Smuts could communicate with them . . . my friends and I were invited to be present at this meeting, but we refused to go. The meeting was apparently inconclusive; no agreement was arrived at; and this was apparently conveyed to Smuts.

Half an hour later Smuts called our group together and told us that he was very disturbed by the situation in Natal, and felt that it might be dangerous to make any move at this juncture. He was for sending no reply at all. We explained to him the position in Natal as we saw it; stressed the dangers which existed to the future of the South African Party and the fear we entertained of any semblance being given to the people in Natal that the South African Party machine had got to work.

During the course of the discussion I said that it was possible that out of this movement might evolve a Federal Party for Natal, and whether that Federal Party should merely be a wing of the South African Party or be a Party on its own, would depend on how we

acted on this matter. Marwick emphasized that aspect and dwelt upon the character of many of the individuals who had become sincere supporters of the movement for separation. We told Smuts that we thought each individual member of the Party should be allowed to take his own course without committing the Party in any way. There the matter rests for the moment.

In this letter I also put forward to Clarkson a suggestion which was made to me by Stallard whom I then considered to be the most eminent lawyer in Parliament. He agreed entirely with the action we were taking, but pointed out that, although the fire was being directed at the Natal members of Parliament, we really stood outside the battlefield. He explained that we were, as members of Parliament, part of a Union machine, and even if all the Natal members were to declare for secession, it would have no effect whatever upon the Union Parliament. The Government in power could simply ignore them as a fractious minority; they need give no reply to any demand we might make. But the position was quite otherwise with the Provincial Council. The Provincial Council represented Natal itself; the Provincial civil service, as the Provincial machine, would naturally form the nucleus of a provisional government—if ever such became necessary. Under the Constitution any communication that the Provincial Council made to the Central Government could not be ignored.

Therefore I suggested to Clarkson that when Natal wished to speak as a Province, the proper vehicle of her expression was the Provincial Council. I suggested that the Provincial Council should demand to know from the Central Government what the position would be when the Orange Free State disappeared from the Provincial system. I suggested that the communication should dwell upon the complete breakdown of the Act of Union; the disappearance of those safeguards for the maintenance of the Provincial system under the Act of Westminster; and, in general, the breach of the contract of union.

In this way a very strong constitutional position could be maintained by the Natal Provincial Council which, if the corres-

pondence were published, would gain support for the Federal ideal all over the Union. The other Provinces would be drawn into the picture and instead of the central stage being occupied by the separationists who were now advocating a Natal Convention, the Provincial Executive, backed by the Council, would take its right place in representing the wishes of the people.

I suggested that these communications to the Union Government should be drafted by Mackeurton, Hollander and Clarkson himself, and I warned them that they should be prepared with the utmost care and should follow, very closely, the lines of Stallard's suggestion. Clarkson agreed with the idea, but unfortunately, for some reason which I was never able to fathom, the suggestion was not carried out in its entirety.

On May 18, 1932, the Provincial Council did pass a resolution addressed to the Union Government. It was quite ineffective and the Union Government took no notice of it. There is no doubt, however, that if Stallard's suggestion had been adopted *in toto* Natal would have been in a very strong constitutional position. As it was Russell was later to refer to the May resolution as a 'well-meaning gesture, but a mere fluttering of a scarecrow's arm in the air'; which it was!

An answer to Helps's circular letter could now no longer be delayed. I replied, giving my letter to the *Natal Mercury*, which they published as an item of news on May 17, 1932. I said:

> It is with the proposed method by which you seek to attain Federation that I must differ from your League. As I understood your attitude, Natal is asked to separate in order to federate. But the simple and clear issue which you have put before the people is not federation or mere separation to achieve federation; it is complete and irrevocable secession.
>
> When Natal is asked to adopt that course, in my opinion it must be final, a complete divorce, with the certain knowledge that, although we may be on friendly speaking terms with our neighbours, we are no longer partners. Now I am not afraid of secession. I am not among those who believe that Natal could not now stand on her feet. . . . Moreover, I believe in the eyes of the world, Natal could

establish constitutional rights to secede on the simple ground that the compact of union has not been kept because the safeguards to her interests, which formed the basis of her entry into union, have been removed.

I am not therefore afraid of secession upon the general fortunes of the Province. I can conceive, too, as Colonel Reitz has conceived, circumstances arising when Natal, with her back to the wall, would have to chose between complete surrender to the spirit of Afrikaner Nationalism, or get out, whatever the sacrifice, in order to preserve her spiritual and cultural heritage. And if that day should come, as it may, I should not hesitate to throw myself and any influence I possess into a movement for secession. But I do not think that time has yet come. . . . I believe that Federation can be achieved by the South African Party. If Natal is unanimous in its demand, I believe Federation will come more easily from the South African Party than in any other way. I therefore suggest that the League should concentrate on seeing that every member who is sent back for Natal comes pledged to further federation as a member of a Natal group. Division among the Natal members is fatal; a federal group within the Party will prove the lump which will leaven the whole. . . . A strong Natal group, pledged to stand loyally by each other, fighting to place the interests of Natal first, will I am sure, make a great impression and achieve greater success in the Federal battle than can be gained by the separationist methods which your League is now advocating.

Finally I would suggest that, if there is any attempt, as you fear, to jockey the Union out of the Empire, then, having a solid group of members all pledged to fight for Natal first, Natal will be in a much stronger position to take action which may be necessary to protect her interests than she would be by dissipating her forces in a premature effort to bring about separation.

In Natal it seemed that the agitation for separation was reaching a climax. The Devolution League announced through the newspapers that a 'Separation Convention' would be held in Pietermaritzburg on Union Day (May 31st). The separationists had been holding meetings all over Natal, one of which, held at Estcourt, had achieved particular success. The Press stated that its attendance surpassed the highest hopes of the Devolution League

and that the meeting was unanimous in its demand for separation and confirmed in no mean way the feelings of the people in Natal.

This was indeed a blow, for I had hoped that my letter would have had the effect of curbing the secessionists; if we could do that then it seemed that events were moving in the right direction and there was hope that the wishes of Natal for federation might be achieved through the South African Party. I wired Russell to find out what reception my letter had been given. His reply was not encouraging. He wired back:

> Fear long delay reply devolution letter given separation leaders sense importance strategic victory. Estcourt meeting last night direct answer your plea and was most striking and unexpected endorsement separatist case. Provincial resolution which merely blow in air invites and receiving ridicule.
>
> Situation probably completely lost unless Smuts publicly make unequivocal federation declaration next few days.
>
> Tell him must stop being fooled by Natal Mugwumps.

In a letter which followed he declared that the *Mercury* was primarily concerned with 'taking the part of a referee' on the issue of federation and secession. In incisive paragraphs he deplored the evasion and lack of courtesy shown by Natal members in answering Helps's letter, declaring that the man in the street, who is by nature a sportsman, felt that Helps had been badly treated. Further he mentioned the probability of a body of men pledged to federation forming a new 'Natal Party', separate from the South African Party, to attain their own ends. Only an unequivocal declaration in favour of devolution by Smuts, he pleaded, could save the situation, and he deeply regretted that my letter had come too late to affect the outcome of the separationist meeting at Estcourt which revealed a full development of the desire to secede. He stressed again the fact that to have a federal group for Natal within a party which was not, as a whole, committed to federation was useless, and that, in point of fact, the federal solution would virtually involve

scrapping the Act of Union, for the Natal Convention to be held on May 31st would probably go all out for separation.

In conclusion he thought, however, that it might be possible to suggest a line of action for the Convention which would keep the situation open, but it entirely depended upon a clear statement, without reservation, to be made by Smuts on behalf of the whole South African Party in favour of federal devolution.

I was profoundly disturbed by the contents of this letter. It was clear that Russell had no understanding of Smuts's position. How could we force him into a declaration on federation to suit the separatists of Natal? It would have meant the end of the Party. The South African Party was a Union-wide party and, while agreeing on federation within the framework of Union, if Smuts had declared himself in agreement with secession in order to achieve federation, the opposition from members of the party outside Natal would have created chaos within its ranks, and, after all, the party represented the only organized and co-ordinated opposition to Nationalist ideals. Our main objective was to maintain the Provincial Council system and that objective was effectively being lost sight of by the dragging of the red herring of secession across the trail.

I pondered very deeply over the difficulties and eventually hit on a plan which I thought might save Smuts and the South African Party and still meet the Federal wishes in Natal. On May 22nd I wrote to Russell pointing out that Smuts's position was becoming increasingly difficult, almost impossible; if he yielded to Natal, he would lose the support of the Cape and the Transvaal. I laid before Russell a proposal enquiring whether it would have his support:

> I propose that the members from Natal should form themselves into a Natal Party, semi-officially under the wing of the South African Party, but holding themselves free and bound by their own caucus to fight for federation and oppose any measures which are considered to be inimical to the interests of Natal. In order that the group should act effectively, all members should pledge themselves to refuse to accept any office under the Crown, and in this way avoid

any weakening of our objective by having seats in the Cabinet. . . . I could very well take up this line in any statement I made because Smuts has hinted to me on several occasions lately that I would have to share the responsibility of putting things right with him by having a seat in the Cabinet.

The Party from Natal would be pledged to support the South African Party on all matters which did not conflict with Natal's interests. Our loyalty to Smuts would only be conditioned upon our first loyalty to Natal. This would leave Smuts with a free hand regarding the rest of the Union. For Natal we should demand federation. We should not be in any way concerned with what happened over our borders. If the Union chose to do so, it could abolish the other three Provinces and centralize all their administration. But Natal should be regarded as a federal state, as another Northern Ireland, and in this way create an example for Rhodesia to follow in joining the Union. In short, Natal would have all the advantages of union without its disadvantages. I believe that Natal holds the key, not only to the political future of South Africa, but to the Greater Africa to which we aspire.

Of course, this is as yet only an idea. I have not explored it and before doing so, I would like to know what you think of it. We are all imbued with a spirit of loyalty to Smuts, but I believe this policy, if properly explained and understood, would be seen to be the truest loyalty to the General. I can see nothing in the policy which is antagonistic to the ideals of the South African Party.

After having discussed the matter with Smuts, and won a certain measure of approval among my colleagues, I could either be interviewed here by a Parliamentary correspondent before I leave or be interviewed in Durban after my arrival there. A statement along these lines could then be made and followed up later by a speech at a public meeting setting forth the policy in detail. I have no doubt that the proposal will meet with the most strenuous objection from many quarters, and be regarded as an act of disloyalty to the South African Party. I am willing to face that, but it would be futile to take any further steps in the matter unless I am assured of the support of the *Mercury* and the approval of the devolutionists. I should be grateful if you could wire me as soon as possible after the receipt of this letter.

Russell wrote back at once:

> Have carefully thought over your letter and consulted Graham who has seen all correspondence and telegrams. We are both convinced your proposal is in essence not only the wisest but in fact the only course in absence of the necessary declaration by your leader on behalf of whole party. If you cannot procure that unequivocal declaration believe you and your followers should come out. Foregoing jointly drafted. Self adds expression personal belief ability bring devolutionists into line if action prompt and if independent policy not complicated by definite pledges support SAP except on principles. Am thinking especially of native policy. Hints future share responsibility precisely similar slim methods employed in Graham case years ago.

That settled it, but I was becoming puzzled why it was always necessary for Russell to consult Mackeurton before he took any action concerning the Devolution League. Some time before this Mackeurton had made a public declaration to the effect that he had nothing to do with the formation of the League and that he had no connection with it. Yet here was Russell consulting him over every move. I wondered whether Russell was taking his orders from Mackeurton and what the significance could be. I was not an intriguer and I was seeking no ends for myself; it had not occurred to me that anybody else should be doing this. But if personal ambitions were implicated in the separatist and devolution movement by the action I had now suggested, I stood to lose everything, whereas the agitators had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I did not dwell on these thoughts; my object was to bring Natal together and to put an end to disunity in the Province. There was much to be done.

On the strength of Russell's telegram I called the Natal members of Parliament together and asked them for a mandate to go to Natal and see what I could do to stop the open hostility between the League and the South African Party. I was given a unanimous mandate; Smuts concurred with these arrangements.

I had to work fast; there was no time to be lost. I received the mandate on May 26th and the Natal Separation Convention organized by the Devolution League was to be held in Pietermaritzburg on May 31st. It was expected that redhot secession

would be talked, and that there would be an open and irreparable break with the South African Party leading to the formation of a new Natal Party. My task was to get negotiations working before this Convention opened, and to attempt to tone down the feelings and speeches of the delegates so as to leave an opening for negotiations to take place between the League and the South African Party.

I took the train to Durban accompanied by Borlase, who was present at all the meetings in Durban. We arrived on May 28th. I contacted Russell immediately and asked him to act as 'broker' between the League and the South African Party, but Russell refused. He told me that the Devolution League was completely opposed to any contact with the South African Party. They were flushed with the success of their meetings throughout the country and certain they would get twelve seats in Natal on a 'separationist platform'. They were intent on forming a rival political party and they were assured of adequate financial backing; of this I was given satisfactory proof. Russell seemed to be definitely and irrevocably behind the new party and, in spite of my spending over an hour with him, I failed to move him.

Troubled with my lack of success I went over to see Blamey. I was surprised to see his indifference. He seemed to think that the trouble would blow over, that other political questions would crop up and divert the people's attention. I did not share his optimism: the movement had gone too far deep to be healed by South African Party propaganda, and what worried me more than anything was that the movement did not seem so much a separation or federal movement as an anti-South African Party movement. Whatever opinions people were forming upon the vexed question of federation, they were certainly being convinced that Natal had nothing to hope from the South African Party. Whatever new political questions might arise during the next few months, it was going to be difficult to restore confidence in the ability of the South African Party to put things right.

Suddenly I thought of Mackeurton; I wondered why I had not thought of him before; he seemed to wield great influence over Russell. I telephoned his house but he was out at a dinner-

party at the Marine Hotel. This was the evening of the 28th; I had only two days left to me. I considered the situation urgent enough to disturb Mackeurton, and Borlase and I went straight to the Marine and sent a message asking him to come out and see us.

The Victorian atmosphere of the Marine Hotel always took my imagination back to the days of old Natal, when it had been a Crown Colony, and settlers and members of the Imperial Forces had met and mingled and drunk sundowners on the colonnaded lounge overlooking the Esplanade; it seemed a fitting background for the talk we were about to have. Mackeurton came across the carpeted floor to me. I watched him as he came. He was completely sure of himself and somehow, even in his dinner jacket, appeared to be garbed in the accoutrements of the Law. His ponderous steps were each one weighted with dignity; he might have been coming straight out of the Colony days, when he would undoubtedly have been the country's Prime Minister—and a very fine one he would have made, I thought. And then he was shaking my hand and in that charming manner of his, making me feel at home and all thoughts but those concerned with my mission left me.

I told him of our difficulties and asked him to use his influence with Russell. This he agreed to do and the following morning he arranged a meeting at his house with Russell which Borlase and I attended. After much discussion and a thorough thrashing-out of the points I had made in my letter to him from Cape Town, Russell was persuaded to approach the Devolution League. The whole position was bristling with innuendoes and the starting of any wrong move or rumour ran the risk of wrecking the whole attempt at conciliation. This position was accentuated by the attitude of some Natal papers, principally those belonging to the Union-wide *Argus* group, for, while the *Mercury* had given great prominence and attached much importance to the Devolution League and its separatist supporters, the other papers had studiously played these movements down; in fact, they had often openly ridiculed them. It was realized that any unguarded remark let drop on the negotiations now taking place would immediately be grasped by these papers and used for their own

ends; they would not hesitate to make much out of the suspicion and distrust which the League felt for the South African Party.

Russell was as fully aware of this as I was, and, before agreeing to act as broker between the SAP and the League, he asked for an assurance that Natal members of Parliament would refrain from premature press interviews. This was to obviate any 'special moderation, shown in the Convention's declaration policy' being twisted, to the injury of the feelings of the Convention delegates into a tactical success for the South African Party or a weakening of its own effort. As none of the members were aware of the nature of the negotiations which were taking place, I felt that I was safe in assuring Russell that no statements would be made until their conclusion.

And there I left matters and went up to my farm at Umfolozi to attend to my personal matters. Natal members had now returned to their own constituencies and, while I was at my farm, I circularized each one of them summoning them to a meeting in Durban on June 4th to discuss the negotiations which had taken place as a result of their mandate to me.

The Natal Convention duly took place on May 31st and the tone of the speeches was conciliatory. It appeared that our negotiations had worked. Immediately after the published reports of the Convention, however, two unfortunate incidents occurred which nearly brought matters to a standstill again and definitely added to the League's suspicions and fears of the South African Party. Clarkson and O'Brien both unwittingly let fall remarks which were taken up by one of the opposition papers and twisted, as we had foreseen, making it appear that the moderated tone of the Convention and the moderated line of policy adopted, meant a great victory for the South African Party in Natal.

According to Russell, who wrote to me about the incident, this put 'a thoroughly contemptible and unfriendly construction upon the generous restraint of the Convention, and has involved the question of my personal honour and that of the *Natal Mercury*, which were being employed at your special request in the service of vital interests. . . .' However, Clarkson and O'Brien, as

soon as the implications of what they had done, were pointed out to them, made unqualified public apologies which were accepted by the Devolution League and assuaged the wrath of Russell and the *Mercury*. After the Convention Russell reported to me the result of his contact with the Devolution League and set out the terms they were prepared to accept, which were along the lines I had written from Cape Town. He said:

> The result was that after prolonged and critical discussions, the 'Declaration and Policy Speech' of the Convention, drawn up with the collaboration of a committee of responsible and distinguished Natalians, was softened in its most important particulars in order to create an atmosphere which would make it possible for the line of development mutually agreed upon between us to be followed without the suggestion arising that the Natal members were being induced to make a declaration of policy more favourable to Natal. At the same time I was authorized to communicate to you the following statement on behalf of the Executive of the Convention and the League. The Devolution League (which is now in effect the executive organization of the Convention) is prepared to support as a group the South African Party members for Natal upon the following conditions:
>
> (*a*) That the Members of the House of Assembly for Natal publicly declare in writing their allegiance to a Natal Federal Group as a wing of the South African Party and be bound by the caucus of the group. The parliamentary leader of the Natal group shall be a member of the Assembly and all official pronouncements shall be made through him.
>
> (*b*) That these members should so pledge themselves to fight on all occasions for the establishment of a federal form of government for Natal on similar lines to that accorded to Northern Ireland in its relations with Great Britain.
>
> (*c*) That every member of the group should so pledge himself to refuse any office of profit under the Crown until federation is achieved.
>
> (*d*) That every member should so pledge himself to put Natal and federation for Natal before party.

We were halfway towards our objective.

My next task was to get the Natal members to agree to what I had done. This was not going to be so easy and I looked forward to the meeting with some anxiety. Immediately after this meeting on June 4, which took place at the Party office in Durban, I wrote to Smuts telling him of what had occurred and setting out at length the events which had taken place since my return to Natal with mandatory powers. At the same time I wrote to Russell telling him that the Natal members had agreed with the Devolution League's terms (with a few minor alterations) and had pledged themselves to work for federation within the framework of the Union. Russell, acknowledging this letter, informed me that the League had agreed with the terms reached on June 4th and were prepared to carry out the undertaking accordingly.

At last we could go forward on Federal lines. The wish of those who went to the pre-Union National Convention pledged to federation, was now fulfilled. At last we could clear away the political fungus from our civil service and reinstate a clean wholesome administration. I felt that the adoption of this new policy marked a definite change in our political history. Federation now became a practical policy. The fight for the maintenance of our cultural, spiritual and material inheritance could now be carried on with a united front and a definite purpose, which had hitherto been absent. Natal would not lose its individuality, and its British character, and traditions would not be swamped in an Afrikaner Republic. It seemed at this moment that all I had worked for during the past twelve years had now come to fruition. I was tremendously relieved and grateful.

CHAPTER XV

A DISASTROUS INTERVIEW

(1932)

I HAD been chosen to represent all the Agricultural Co-operative Societies of the Union at the economic conference to be held in Ottawa in July. I sailed from Durban to Cape Town on June 10th and then for London, en route to Canada on June 18th. I had not much time to acquaint myself with all the details, and the few days I spent in Cape Town and indeed, the days spent at East London and Port Elizabeth, on the way down the coast from Durban were a whirl of activity, for at each place I was called upon to meet representatives of the various Farmers' Co-operative Societies whom I was to represent.

A by-election was being fought in the Colesberg constituency of the Cape, and I wanted to prepare a statement before leaving Cape Town to be given to the electors on the eve of polling, which would dispel persistent rumours of a split in the South African Party due to the formation of our federal wing in Natal. I had a number of personal matters to attend to before leaving the country and all together I was extremely busy.

On June 15th, I happened to be in the library of the House when a reporter from the *Natal Advertiser*, one of the Argus Group, approached me, asking me to give him a statement on the situation in Natal. Now the *Advertiser* was one of the papers which had been completely anti-devolution in any shape or form. In my opinion the *Mercury* alone held the responsibility for turning the unifying policy of the South African Party into a policy of devolution. Once the spade work had been done, however, the other Natal papers became mild federalists 'within the Union', and assumed that the *Mercury* was bent on 'secession', while they virtuously stood for the commonsense moderate policy

of decentralization! We all knew that without the drive of the *Mercury* the question of decentralization would never have become a live issue. Without its support Helps and his League would have got nowhere, and the Natal members would never have budged an inch from their comfortable faith of 'Mugwumpism'. To Russell and the *Mercury* went the credit of making decentralization a live issue in Natal.

I was therefore very chary about speaking to an *Argus* reporter. He asked me if I had any statement to make on the recent political events in Natal. I said I had not. If only I had continued with my work and said no more, we might not have been in the political slough of despond in which we are today, and it is certain that the history of Natal would have been very different. As it was, I allowed myself to be drawn into a conversation in which I discussed the situation generally, on broad lines. During this conversation I explained that the Devolution League was now behind the South African Party, and therefore it would no longer be necessary for it to advocate a policy of secession in order to achieve federation; this was my understanding of the agreement. The interview ended and I continued with my work.

On the day of my departure, I arrived on the ship about an hour before she sailed. It was crammed with visitors and when eventually I succeeded in pushing my way to my cabin, I found a batch of telegrams waiting there for me. I stupidly supposed they were from friends wishing me *bon voyage* and delayed opening them until the ship was on the verge of sailing. However, some impulse made me tear open an orange envelope. What I read startled me, but in the flurry of goodbyes I did not quite realize the implications of the words I was reading, or how this new trouble came about. My conscience was clear. The essence of the telegrams was in one from Borlase:

> *Advertiser* reports you as saying secession has been dropped in favour of federation. This can't be true. Please contradict. Mackeurton Russell say if true is great betrayal and their repudiation of you will be followed by Mugwumps.

My first reaction was that I had given no interview to the *Advertiser*; then I remembered my conversation with the reporter in the library. That was it; I had been misreported and somehow my words had been twisted to make it appear as if the Devolution League had been captured by the South African Party. I had no idea, of course, what I was supposed to have said and it never occurred to me that the work of the last few weeks could all be wrecked by the interpretation of a newspaper reporter of a chance few sentences I had inadvertently let drop.

I knew that all the negotiators would be alert to this propaganda and would not allow anything detrimental to happen to our cause or the obvious propaganda of a newspaper to lose all that we had gained. The other telegrams were from the remaining members of our team and all urged me to repudiate the statements appearing in the *Advertiser*. But I had not seen the *Advertiser* and I could hardly repudiate what I had not seen.

Satisfied that this was just another attempt by the papers to cause trouble and sure that the commonsense of the men I had left behind would overcome it, I wired back exactly as I understood the arrangements were:

> Never understood League continue agitation separation while we expected betray party. Compromise impossible those terms. Fear members will find justification repudiating resolutions so endanger whole position.

and to Helps I wired:

> Wishing success to your League and fruitful future co-operation between your organization and Party.

I had already made a statement to the Colesberg electors telling them of the position in Natal and I had time to add a last paragraph which I felt would meet the situation and clear up any misunderstandings:

> The South African Party members met the separatists and told them their salvation lay in the ranks of the South African Party;

within the ranks of that party they could fight for the development of a federal form of government, which would give security against the abuses they were suffering under. The people of Natal have a united front and will return a grand slam for the South African Party at the next election to put Smuts back into power. The fact is that the South African Party of Natal has been busy getting the ball out of the scrum of despair. It is now up to Colesberg to score the first try. . . .

The resolution adopted by the Natal members was the minimum, I am convinced, which would satisfy the people of Natal. At the same time it should be understood that the resolutions aim, not at the break-up of union—indeed resolutions were adopted to prevent the growth of the separatist movement—or at destroying the unity of the South African Party. The object of the new platform is to bring about a change in the structure of the Union which will enable us to live together in greater harmony and with more profit to each of us than we have done in the past. . . .

The report of my statement, which appeared in the *Mercury* the day after I sailed from Cape Town, went on to say that I particularly emphasized that I had on no occasion said that secession had been finally dropped by the people of Natal. I desired that to be clearly understood, because the position was that it had been dropped for the time being, and because members of the South African Party had pledged themselves to fight for the federal plan. But the Devolution League still remained in existence, and if federation could not be attained, there was no doubt that the policy of secession would become again a burning issue in Natal.

In a letter to my wife written on June 29th, while at sea, I make the whole position, as it appeared to me, clear:

I intended to write to you from Cape Town, but my time was so fully engaged that I left it too late . . . and then the political business came upon the scene at the last moment. Just before the boat left I received a batch of angry wires from Durban demanding that I should deny that I had said secession had been dropped in Natal. It was represented that if this was not done Russell and the devolutionists would immediately repudiate me and the arrangements we

> had come to, and the mugwumps would choose that opportunity to rat from their pledge. Now as you know the arrangement was, though not explicitly stated, that the devolutionists would not continue with their secession campaign if the Natal members formed a Federal group on the lines we agreed upon. What else was the object of the compromise? If the devolutionists claimed that they went on after our negotiations in the same way, there was not the slightest reason for our ever having communicated with them at all. The adoption of the federal group was conditioned by its acceptance by the devolutionists and their acceptance of that group was interpreted by me to mean that they now supported the South African Party though they reserved the right to maintain their own organization and to conduct propaganda to further the aims of federation. We still remained the South African Party. The devolutionists agreed with us. Federation was to be achieved through the SAP. The propaganda for secession was to be dropped, since we could not continue along two lines of attack. That was what I stated to the reporter.

There I let the matter rest. I had done my best; I could do no more. If a number of the people with whom I had been working were not sincere and had not the interests of Natal at heart, it was not my fault.

The ship sailed out of Table Bay and I looked forward to a few days of rest and relaxation. I had been through an anxious time.

But the heather was alight in Natal. Shortly after the ship sailed I received the following wireless message from Russell:

> We repudiate entirely such understanding which excluded from negotiations from very first. Regard your action gross surrender and contemptible political tactics.

A nice farewell message! I wired back:

> Shame on you. I never understood that you reserved right to preach secession while we surrendered all loyalty to party.

So the co-operation with Russell was over. I supposed it had

to come. I had known for some time that as soon as I differed radically from him, the wrath of the *Mercury* would descend upon me. He wanted it both ways: he wanted to dictate to the Party and also maintain the League on its secession platform. We were expected to surrender every shred of loyalty to Smuts and our colleagues, while he claimed the right to accept or reject our surrender as he thought fit. It could not continue. I wondered too, what other personal advantages lay behind this latest turn of events.

The wireless news revealed that Helps had at once repudiated me. He claimed that the Devolution League had been let down, but he realized that in Cape Town I must 'have been literally bombarded by angry members from the Cape wanting to know the position in Natal', and he assumed that 'I must have confused the situation under the strain of circumstances'. The next move, he pointed out, lay with the members of Parliament. He felt that they could no longer abstain from declaring individually whether they intended to honour the pledge given collectively at the Natal caucus

I knew that I had not much hope of co-operation from them. The following day, it appeared that Smuts with his nose to the ground had jumped in and repudiated the federal group within his Party. He then telegraphed to Natal members saying that owing to the attack by Helps on me, it should be considered that the devolutionists had broken their side of the bargain, and that members could now publicly withdraw from their pledge.

In a letter received from a friend at the first port of call, I was told what the *Advertiser* had said. Banner headlines announced 'Secession Now Completely Dead.' My friend went on to say:

> Well, one by one the wobblers have been withdrawing and declaring their unswerving loyalty to the South African Party. Eaton was first, then O'Brien and Dean, Anderson, Lewis Reynolds. Needless to say, your friends Borlase, Marwick, Richards and Abrahamson have hurriedly conferred and they have decided to stick by the undertaking reached on June 4th. . . . Each of your friends intends, in due course, to make a statement reaffirming his

> adherence to federation and the pledge. C. P. Robinson has issued a statement declaring himself a federalist to the bitter end, but re-affirming himself loyal to the Party and Smuts and asserting that he can consistently work for federation within the ranks of the Party. Clarkson has remained staunch. He sticks by the pledge and has committed himself to writing. He is in fact, a leading mover in persuading as many as possible to stand by June 4th. As far as I can make out Russell is still very sore about your Cape Town interview. . . .
>
> The thing that concerns me most of all at the present juncture is that while the ranks are split in Natal and while all this manoeuvring is going on, the main issue—abolition of the Provincial Councils—is lost sight of. There is not the slightest doubt that the abolition plans are going ahead full steam.

My team—Borlase, Richards and Marwick—kept in touch with me and let me know how things were going. There was nothing encouraging in their words. It appeared that the whole fight for federation had failed. It was maddening in the extreme to realize that this great step forward had been ruined by the foolish repudiation of men who, if they had followed my lead, would have had nothing to lose and everything to gain. What did they think they were going to do next? The Devolution League was now as dead as a doornail. Without my sympathy it would have achieved nothing. Had I been hostile to it, my influence in Natal was powerful enough to have put a stop to their propaganda. The formation of the federal group was brought about, not by the League, but by my efforts. Helps and his team, by their foolish repudiation showed that they had no realization at all of the cause at stake. They were thinking small, of the importance of the League, and, I am afraid, of themselves as well. If the anxiety over Natal had been sincere and single-minded, I believe that they would have been quiet and trustingly would have followed my lead. Their repudiation not only killed federation; it killed the Devolution League and themselves. They were now quite ineffective, like broken puppets. Thus one by one the carefully placed cornerstones for federation in Natal crumbled away.

Smuts followed up his repudiation of the federal group when he attended a private meeting of the Natal Executive of the South African Party on July 9th by saying:

> This group, this party within a party, cannot be agreed to by the South African Party as a whole or by me as Leader. It would be absolutely subversive of all Party unity and discipline.

And yet only a few short weeks before he had had no option but to agree to such a group and agree gratefully.

Russell saw fit to make public the part he had played in the proceedings and naturally so that the best possible light was thrown upon himself and the worst on me. Mackeurton came out into the open and gave his version of the story and altogether my motives and character were painted as black as pitch. I was thoroughly discredited.

From early June until September I was away at the Ottawa Conference and was unable either to defend myself or intervene in the campaign of slander. I made up my mind that when I returned to the Union there was only one thing for me to do and that was to resign from the Party. This was naturally a great blow to me, for I was thoroughly interested in my political work and felt there was much that I could still do in the interests of South Africa, but I realized from a financial point of view, that in one year, attending to my own affairs on my sugar farm, I could make more than double the salary I was earning in Parliament. I was getting on in years too. Perhaps it would be the best thing in the end; it would certainly be best for my family who were scrimping and scraping to make ends meet. And I knew Ruby would welcome the end of my public life.

I had learnt lessons from this fight. The first was that, such is the power of modern newspapers, one ill-considered word given to the Press is capable of killing a political career overnight. The second was that people, otherwise well disposed to each other, become ruthless antagonists in order to further their own political ends. This was something I had not expected to meet where the issues of a country were at stake, and it appalled me.

Thus it was that Natal, which had stood on the brink of federation and better days, was now back where she had always been—on the brink of Afrikaner domination. But I had one comfort, and that was and is, that Natal still has her Provincial Council system.

CHAPTER XVI

THE OTTAWA ECONOMIC CONFERENCE (1932)

IT was during the critical depression months of 1932 that I was chosen by the South African Federated Farmers' Co-operative Association, the parent body of which was the Overseas Federated Farmers' Association, to represent the interests of all their South African members at the Economic Conference in Ottawa.

Several attempts had been made to bring about closer trade relations between the Dominions in the Commonwealth. In 1926 the Imperial Conference was expected to achieve this result but at the insistence of South Africa it concentrated solely on constitutional issues. In 1930 some general consent to consider trade was arrived at, and in 1932, with the help of the Prime Minister of Canada who issued an invitation to the Commonwealth, an opportunity was made for an economic conference to be held in Canada, which was looked forward to with great expectation by most of the organized producers and traders of the Empire. Smuts said of it:

> I do not think there is any coming event more likely to influence the future budgets of this country than the success or failure of the Ottawa Conference. . . . It is a unique opportunity, and I hope, and this whole country hopes, that every possible means will be exploited in order to make that opportunity a success as far as South Africa is concerned. . . . The British Government has notified the whole Commonwealth that they are prepared to do big business. I trust that we shall grasp the hand extended to us in friendship.[1]

South Africa's official delegates were the Ministers of Finance,

[1] *Hansard*, xix, p. 2844, Apr. 7, 1932.

Trades and Industries and Lands, with Havenga, the Minister of Finance, in command. They took with them the heads of the departments concerned. Interested industries sent a number of unofficial delegates as advisers; I was one of this body. Other unofficial delegates were: A. V. Allen, chairman of the South African Agricultural Union; A. M. Anderson who represented the gold industry; E. R. W. Edwards, sugar representative; Stuttaford representing commerce and, attached to me, Cunningham representing the Deciduous Fruit Board. It was my business, as representing all agriculture in South Africa, to be primed in the needs of the primary producers throughout the country, so that when I arrived in Ottawa I should have a fairly clear idea of the whole position of our primary products in the various markets.

On the way down the coast from Durban to Cape Town I met members of the Wool Association and representatives of the settlers who were concerned with citrus fruit-growing. In Cape Town I was met by representatives of the Fruit Exchange and I attended a meeting where we discussed the fruit and wine industry. Later I met delegates of the fruit-canning industry and went to Wellington and Paarl to meet more fruit-growers. I was particularly impressed by the magnitude and success of the dried fruit industry and the co-operative winery. One dried-fruit factory turned out as much dried fruit as the value of all the Umfolozi sugar, and the Co-op. Winery Company had millions of gallons of wine stored and paid for.

We spent nine days in England during which period we communicated with the British Agricultural Union, the British marketing organization. On July 13th we left on the *Empress of Britain* for Canada. Writing to my wife on that day I said:

> This is some ship! The *Winchester Castle* appeared quite a sumptuous vessel but there is no comparison with this; it is twice the size, twice the luxury and very much faster. I am first to come aboard and we leave in an hour. . . . This Conference may be the last of its kind and it will be a historic meeting. Representing all agriculture I find a lot to do. My bag is full of memoranda which arrive by each

post. We, that is, a number of the advisers on board, have committee meetings each morning and discuss the various briefs which we hold. So far Havenga has said nothing. We understand, however, that he proposes to call us all together shortly and give us the benefit of his ideas. . . .

Dr Holloway appears to be in the wars, which is bad for his dignity. He is the gold standard expert, you know, and chairman of the Native Economic Commission. He is the sole adviser of the Government at Ottawa on currency. He appeared in fancy dress as a Chinaman and somebody hit him in the chest with a custard pudding! Today while putting potatoes into a bucket blindfolded he knocked his face against the side of the ship and is now going round plastered up. He says he is getting his head hardened for Ottawa! Havenga has called us altogether today and discussed his plans with us. I am beginning to have great hopes for Ottawa.

ON THE *Empress of Britain*, JULY 18TH—We are sailing up the St Lawrence in a thick fog at a slow rate which will delay our arrival by some hours. . . . I suppose you know that this is the biggest ship built since the war and the very last word in luxury. It is difficult to imagine oneself on a ship when the sea is calm and the illusion is preserved by a conservatory of plants which trail down from boxes along the whole front of the principal promenade deck. My cabin is on the sports deck and I am sitting at a table with B. K. Long, Stuttaford and Martin who is representing commerce. We have a number of Conferences on board and I attended a cocktail party given by the British Ministers. Our Ministers—Havenga, Grobelar and Fourie—had a talk with the British Ministers on general lines and, as far as can be gathered, there appears to be a good chance of doing real business at Ottawa. Moffat, the Prime Minister of Rhodesia, has chummed up with me. He sought my assistance regarding his own proposals for tobacco which is of primary importance to Rhodesia and we have made a joint representation. The idea is that the Dominions, wherever possible, should show a United Front. On sugar we have got agreement between South Africa, Australia and the West Indies to try and get the same preference as is now given to the West Indies, £2 a ton more.

JULY 19TH—The fog delayed us until evening and we came on by a special train which left at 9 p.m. There was a great crowd to wel-

come us, which cheered us individually and collectively as we walked from the train to the hotel. I lifted my hat several times, somewhat embarrassed! . . . The town is gaily decorated and evidently pleased with its Imperial importance. The Irishmen are here looking a little wild, and they may complicate matters. I can't see what possible good they can do. There is now a definite state of economic war between England and Ireland. Ireland stands to lose the whole of its trade with the United Kingdom for there are many who are anxious to take their place in the English market and what will be a tragedy for Ireland will be a windfall for Denmark, which has been very heavily hit by the imposition of the 10 per cent import duty which was imposed in order to favour the Empire.

The Conference begins on Thursday in the Houses of Parliament. I don't know what part we, as unofficial advisers, will take. I expect we shall have to do a good deal of hanging about, until our turn comes, waiting to hear what is happening.

CHATEAU LAURIER, OTTAWA. JULY 23RD—Unlike the last Conference, when nothing was doing or could be done because of the policy of Britain, we are now in a real business atmosphere, where much may be accomplished. There is a disposition to come to terms which may be of great value to us all and to the world in general. The South African delegation is a bit sticky. Havenga has one eye and ear towards *Die Burger* and shows no warmth in his attachment to the Empire: but he has a desire to get all he can and it may be that he will go further in his private dealings with the rest of the Empire than he has shown a disposition to go in public.

The Canadian Government has cleared out all the rooms in the Houses of Parliament for the use of delegates and the unofficial advisers from the Union have been given a very fine conference room where we meet each day. Yesterday all the unofficial delegates met—Stuttaford, Edwards, Saunders, Lait, Allen, Senator Malan, Marais, Cunningham and Anderson and elected me chairman of the advisers. The unofficial advisers from New Zealand and Australia are in very close touch with their ministers; Havenga, however, keeps aloof. He appears to be full of suspicion regarding everybody around him. I imagine that it is impossible for him to conceive that an Englishman could place South Africa first. But while he does not approach us directly at present, he does indirectly, and we have managed to discuss every aspect of our exports with the officials who

have put up their recommendations to Havenga upon our suggestions. Perhaps when these preliminary statements have been made there may be a greater disposition to take us more into his confidence, when we come to a consideration of actual commodities.

Ottawa has, however, accomplished a remarkable thing. All the farming representatives of the Empire have got together. We have held two meetings and decided to form a united front for the representations to be made on behalf of the various agricultural interests to the Governments.

We have felt that our representations will be all the stronger if they are unanimous and we have set up committees to deal with meat, dairy products, fruit, sugar, wine and tobacco. Social activities command some attention.

On Thursday the Conference was opened in the Canadian House of Commons. We, the unofficial advisers, were given seats on the floor of the House, behind our respective Ministers. Consequently the place was packed. The opening statements were spoken into microphones and transmitted all over the world. I could not help reflecting that our Nationalist Ministers, who gave such grudging allegiance to Empire, were talking from a world platform solely because of that Empire; and if we left it, they would carry no more weight or be more noticed by the world than a small South American Republic. What a tragedy, not only for South Africa but for the Empire, and probably for the world, that Smuts is not here, in power to act. He would have brought a greater confidence and a more certain solution to our difficulties than is now possible, for outside Ireland, he would have removed the only lukewarm and therefore slightly dampening influence which South Africa represents. The opening was a great occasion, notwithstanding, and Havenga's statement might have been worse. He closed the door to any future consideration of the gold standard, but he left it open for preferences. We had a state dinner that night in one of the banqueting chambers of the Chateau Laurier. There were about six hundred people, an awful crush, but when properly sorted out and seated—a very jolly affair. . . .

We have had our little comedies. Poor Edward Saunders was not down as an official delegate and he and Mrs Saunders were both omitted from all the invitations. There was a great to-do about it all. They were duly admitted to the privileged ranks. Now everything is happy and they are at the Chateau Laurier!

July 29th—We have just been to see the Trooping of the Colours by a Canadian regiment in the grounds of Government House. They wore Guards uniforms and busbies—but their drill was volunteer!

July 30th—I do not know whether it was a good thing or a bad thing that I came to Ottawa, since I left behind me such a political mess, and it was no easy task for me to tear myself away from you and Joyce and the July holidays and the farm: but I shall have done some good here. And in some respects, if the Conference turns out to be a success, I shall always feel that I have assisted to make it so. I have sat on nearly all the unofficial Commodity Committees which put up their cases to the respective Governments. All our South African suggestions regarding the preference on fruit: deciduous, citrus, dried and canned, were accepted by the other Dominions and I have opened up negotiations with India which may lead to better markets there in a number of our products. I managed to boil down some of the outrageous demands of Australia and got Canada to fall into line with our suggestions, so I am conscious that I have pulled a small oar in our canoe.

Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Aug. 8th—The Delegation was invited to spend from Thursday night to Sunday night in visiting the Niagara Falls, seeing the factories at Hamilton and officially opening the Welland Ship Canal which joins up the other Great Lakes with Ontario for big ships. But having been to Hamilton and Niagara Falls on my last visit and having travelled the Welland Canal, I took the opportunity of a visit to Toronto. So Stuttaford and I came here alone and arrived at daybreak on Friday and spent the day in investigating the Ontario hydroelectric administration. We spent a long time with the chief engineer and the chairman of the Electricity Commission in discussing the methods of control and finance. Our Parliament is investigating the administration of our own Electricity Commission and Stuttaford is a member of the Select Committee and since our Electricity Act was based on this Act of Ontario, it was a very good opportunity of getting first-hand information. . . . What interested me most was the way in which electricity has been taken to every farm, for 40 cents a day (1s 8d). A farmer gets sufficient power to run all his domestic requirements for light and cooking and refrigeration and all the other machinery of the farm. He can milk anything up to fifty cows a day by electricity; make ice for his

daily use; cook his food and light his house for under 3s a day—the price of our native labourers. That is efficiency. . . .

We have consolidated the demands of the Dominions, but I very much fear that they are more than the United Kingdom can grant, because we can offer so very little, comparatively, in return. Sugar I think will be all right, and I believe we shall get some agreement on most things but it will not be all that we have asked for.

MOUNT ROYAL HOTEL, MONTREAL, AUG. 14TH—We are now waiting for news of the main conference. The unofficial advisers have rather 'shot their bolts' as Stuttaford put it. We have briefed our counsel to plead our cause in court without having any opportunity of being there to listen to him or knowing what he says. He may make the most horrible mess of it and we shan't know. I believe that if we do not get all we ask for or the major part of it, it will be because Havenga is too sticky about giving. He will not give away one farthing of German trade and if a particular item of the tariff shows one per cent from Germany and forty-five per cent from Japan he will refuse to give a preference to the United Kingdom for fear of hitting the one per cent off Germany. That is our trouble. But of course it is not all this, The United Kingdom has to decide whether the total preference she gives to the Dominions is worth the total of trade present and potential given by all the Dominions together, so that we may be penalized because Canada has not given enough, and Canada and Australia are both very sticky.

The fact is, of course, that this business began too late. It ought to have taken place thirty years ago, before the Dominions had launched out into great industrial policies of their own. We can't be drawn back now and therein lies our trouble. We can only give, provided that in the giving we do not damage our own growing industries and that means that the task at Ottawa is very difficult.

Havenga told us that he feared we should not get the extra 1s per cwt on sugar: but he would get stability for the existing 3s 9d for ten years; if he would only fight hard enough with Australia we should get it. Havenga, however, is a bit conscious that he is not in a position to fight very hard, and so we are left wondering exactly how far he will get. Sugar, however, is only one of my subjects. I am on fruit and maize and meat and dairy products, and on fruit we have done very well. On maize we hope to do something. Dairy products are more the concern of the other Dominions, but I believe we shall

come out all right. Socially, do you remember a certain Canadian Senator we met at Eshowe? He has been very kind to us here, and is Minister of Commerce in the Canadian Government. He gave us dinner which was attended by all the heads of delegations. As this was the first dinner we had attended of its kind, at which all the principal people were present we naturally felt ourselves (Stuttaford and myself) very honoured. I enclose a list of the names for your delectation, from which you will see that we are very exclusive! The dinner was a gorgeous affair with the Governor-General present and all the delegates and the Canadian Cabinet and their wives ablaze with their decorations and jewels. The band was in scarlet. We rose four times to the King—played by the orchestra. They do things in state in Canada! . . .

We arrived at Kingston at 7.30 a.m. and took to the lake steamer. We passed through the Thousand Isles. Then the river narrowed and we came to the Rapids, and got a taste of what it must have been like to the old navigators. Not a real taste, of course, for these river steamers are small liners, but the same idea which one would get if crossing the Atlantic in the *Winchester Castle*. . . . A fleet of motor cars awaited us by the time we got to Lachine, so called because the early explorers thought they had reached China, and we were taken some twelve miles or more to Montreal and then did the city round the Mountains. The end of the Conference is approaching. We shall be leaving in a few days' time now.

ON THE *Empress of Britain*, AUG. 22ND—I am very happy at the thought that I am speeding back to you. I shall leave England on the *Winchester Castle* on September 16th. That will give me a fortnight in England. . . . The Conference has been a great experience and we all feel that a new page has been turned in the history of the Empire. By treaty all the Empire countries have freely entered upon the path of economic co-operation, and established closer relationship between each other than can exist with foreign countries, in all matters connected with trade. Havenga has given and received and put his signature to the compact of economic co-operation. That is a new principle for South African Nationalism and one to which they have hitherto been bitterly opposed. It will be very interesting to hear *Die Burger* on this change of front. But it makes the position of the South African Party difficult. The Nationalists have stolen all our Imperial thunder. What more could we have done, it will be said,

than the Nationalists have done? The psychological effect of Havenga's attitude, despite its hedging and hesitations, is bound to remove British antagonism to Nationalism in South Africa and so weaken the South African Party amongst our own supporters. And if we could not win Colesberg when the account against our own Government was blackest, when the gold standard had practically ruined the whole countryside and the effect of the Nationalist policy was most keenly felt, how shall we win South Africa in the rising tide of favour and prosperity which may come as the result of this Conference?

It seems that there is bound to be a split in our party politics. I cannot see Malan and the Republicans following Havenga very far along their Imperial course and the South African Party is already riven with strife. . . .

My experience at this Conference has taught me that there are no supermen here. The British ministers are all mediocre men. Smuts is really miles above them all in intellect. Indeed I consider it is nothing less than a tragedy for the Empire that Smuts was not at this Conference imbued with a desire to knit the whole together into an economic unit. His prestige, the fact that he is a Dutchman, an ancient enemy, and his extraordinary skill in negotiations would have removed many of the difficulties which we have experienced. He would have given freely from South Africa and not been bound by considerations of our trade with Germany and France, with one eye on *Die Burger*, and we should have walked away from Ottawa with much greater preferences. However Smuts is not here. This gathering of Empire Statesmen has really been a gathering of ordinary men, very ordinary men, some of them with a slight vein of eloquence and able to manufacture platitudes easily, but most of them knowing precious little about the trade and industry with which they were called upon to deal. The real men have not been the governments but their unofficial technical advisers. Anderson, representing the Chamber of Mines, knows more about the gold standard and its effects upon the mining industry and the country in general than Havenga or Holloway. The recommendations for dealing with our primary producers all came from Allan and myself, and the officials concerned had not a single idea about them or really an idea of what they were going to Ottawa to accomplish until we set their noses in the right direction. And that was the experience all round.

De Vere Hotel, Kensington, Sept. 3rd—The *Empress of Britain* reached Southampton at noon on Friday. On Wednesday the unofficial advisers, business consultants to the South African Government, as our title was at Ottawa, were entertained by the South African businessmen in London at the Savoy Hotel. Most of our people had not come back from America and only Stuttaford, Edwards, Saunders, Cunningham and myself were present. I sat next to Gibb, chairman of the Union Castle, and I had to reply to the toast of our health.

I sailed for Durban on September 16.

CHAPTER XVII

'THE STUMBLING GLADIATOR' OF EMPANGENI

(1932)

AS soon as I set foot in Durban I felt the cold blast of enmity which had been directed against me during my absence. The federal wing of the South African Party which I had left behind me had taken flight, vanished into the edifying atmosphere of accepted Party loyalties leaving only a few feathers behind. The Devolution League was dead or dying.

The Natal Congress of the South African Party was to be held in Pietermaritzburg in October and the agenda showed that interest in the constitutional position was well maintained. Out of the twenty-six resolutions which came from all parts of Natal dealing with the Provincial issue, thirteen asked outright for federation; two asked for the party policy on devolution; four asked for devolution; four for safeguards against secession; two for deletion of Section 3*c* of the Party Constitution; and one for Home Rule. So the wish for federation was still there. In spite of all that had happened, I had not misjudged the wants of the people of Natal. I seemed to have plenty of friends still in the Party. But after my past experience, this friendship had to be tested. It could not be taken on trust.

I therefore decided that before resigning from the Party, as I had intended to do, I would have one last try for federation for Natal. At a Congress held on October 14, 1932 in the Town Hall at Pietermaritzburg, I moved the following amendment to all the Constitutional motions:

This Congress approves the adoption of the four resolutions

> containing the federal pledge agreed to in Durban by the Natal members of Parliament on June 4, 1932.

This was a direct challenge to all that had been done and said since my departure for Ottawa. It would either reinstate me or dismiss me.

After giving a brief history of the pledge, I said that the maintenance of the Act of Union was a fundamental principle in Natal's membership of the South African Party. No member of Parliament had the right to compromise with this principle on the basis of party expediency. We were representing Natal in the Party, not the Party in Natal. I quoted Smuts who had said in a speech at Fouriesmith:

> The future of South Africa is at stake—no South African today has the right to say my party is right or wrong. These are matters which affect the conscience of us all and cannot be weighed in the balance of personal loyalties, no matter how deep or affectionate they be. These differences of conscience are the most bitter things we have to face in public life. . . .
>
> It is not easy for me to say things which have the appearance of disloyalty to my Leader or the Party; but the truest loyalty, I avow, is to stand by my difference of opinion rather than to parade a semblance of loyalty which is not meant and which poisons all around by its half-concealed dissatisfaction. Federation for Natal appears to me to be of such vital importance as to be the fundamental principle of my political faith. Federation, after all, was Natal's historic preference at the time of union. It is enough to say that this Congress must now prepare safeguards to enable the people of Natal to protect their own identity. She must be given complete Home Rule on all matters which affect the language and the institutions and the traditions of local government and local development.

I asked for safeguards:

(*a*) for British citizenship, threatened by Malan;
(*b*) against racial policies affecting provincial employees on the score of bi-lingualism and the importation of workers in all

spheres from other Provinces to affect voting strength;

(*c*) against exploitation and maladministration of the native population by officials ignorant of their language, laws and customs; officials appointed because of their political persuasion;

(*d*) against non-development or wrong development of natural resources.

After my speech the congress adjourned for lunch. I felt despondent. My confidence had been shaken by the recent events in Natal. I had a strong feeling that I would not carry the congress with me in my amendment. I was, after all, up against the disapproval of Smuts. He had publicly repudiated the federal wing which I had formed in Natal. I was now asking the party, in spite of this disapproval, to persist in its policy of federation. Perhaps it was too much to expect.

Although it was still only early October, the height of our South African spring, the day was hot and sultry, presenting us with a foretaste of the blazing summer yet to come. As I threaded my way through the tree-lined streets to my hotel, not a breath of air stirred the leafy canopy above my head. The jacaranda blossoms lay on the pavements in pale mauve profusion, forming a carpet underfoot; my footsteps were outlined in squashed blooms, each step accompanied by a squelching noise; there was no other sound. A sleepy calm seemed to have stolen over everything; Pietermaritzburg, that city of extremes in temperature, dug itself a little deeper into the hollow in which it is built and prepared itself for a sizzling siesta.

I reached my hotel and made straight for the writing desk. I would write out my resignation there and then. The time had come to be finished with it all, I felt. While I was so engaged, Richards came up to see me and asked what I was doing: 'Writing out my resignation,' I replied. 'I feel I shall not win this vote and I must get out.' 'Don't do that,' said Richards, 'whatever you do, don't do that. We'll fix this thing somehow.' Suddenly he asked, 'Will you accept the Hollander Memorandum? What about the Hollander Memorandum!'

The Hollander Memorandum had been drawn up in collabora-

tion with others by Hollander, a member of the Executive Committee of the Provincial Council, and a Durban jeweller. It set out a scheme for the re-constitution of the Provincial Councils, which, if entrenched, seemed to me to be about as close to federation as South Africa would go. It was a lengthy document which required serious study and had therefore been sent round to members before the congress met. It had not, however, come forward for discussion during the morning. I had glanced through it hurriedly and I agreed with it in principle. 'Yes,' I said, in answer to Richards, 'I would agree to the Hollander Memorandum; it is very similar to my amendment.'

'In that case,' said Richards, 'I'll go and see Smuts. I will tell him what you are about to do, and I believe that he will accept the Hollander Memorandum.' And with that, Richards made for the Town Hall. I finished writing out my resignation and put it in my pocket, just in case, for one never knew with politics. When I arrived back at the congress, Richards and Smuts were conferring together with several others. I joined them. 'You will accept the Hollander Memorandum, Nicholls?' asked Smuts, in that staccato way of his. 'Yes, I'll accept that or the Canadian system, which I spoke of in my speech this morning.'

'Well, let's get rid of the verbiage,' said Smuts. And there and then he drew up the following resolution:

> That this Congress reaffirms the necessity for the retention of all existing rights and privileges and the extension thereof on federal lines, within the framework of the South Africa Act, and accepts in principle the proposals outlined in the Hollander Memorandum as the basis of home rule for the Provinces, with the necessary entrenchment thereof.

The joy of the congress in finding this solution was wild and heartening. The resolution had to go before the All-Union Congress at Bloemfontein a few months later, where under the expert guidance of Smuts it was unanimously approved. The whole of the Party was now completely pledged to home rule. This was a great deal more than I had hoped for.

So the battle ended, and I felt that my part in it had not been in vain. I left my resignation where it was—in my pocket. Much relieved, I drove back in the cool of the spring evening to Durban. The countryside was beginning to lose its severe winter garb and the brown veld was tinged with green, the first signs of the lush news of approaching summer. A new summer—and a new era in South African politics. The adoption of the Hollander Memorandum was a fresh start, a beginning; there was room for us all however different we might basically be.

It was not everyone, however, who hailed the new policy with delight. The Nationalist papers received the news with deep gloom and immediately proceeded to make much of the propaganda it afforded. *Die Burger,* the Cape official organ of the Nationalist Party, began its comment on the congress in Pietermaritzburg thus:

> The South African Party has been swallowed up for the second time: in 1920 it became submerged in the Unionist Party; in 1932 it has been swallowed up by the Natal devolutionists. All progress towards a wholly South African policy has not only been checked, but completely destroyed. The South African Party has gone over lock, stock and barrel, to the Natal devolutionists, *alias* racialists and British jingoes.
>
> On Friday of last week this tragic event, this second subjugation of the South African Party by British racialists, took place. . . . Smuts in his closing speech put his seal to the change in policy, a speech which in its weakness and submissiveness was nothing short of the kiss which the vanquished plants upon the hand of the victor. . . . Smuts has given in to the Natal racialists: Natal will continue to direct the policy of the South African Party as hitherto; but, from now on, in a direction which will put new life into racial feeling in the Union. It has now openly taken sides with the Imperialists and jingoes, haters of all that is Afrikaans. It is a political event of which the grave consequences cannot be exaggerated.

I considered that my first duty was to explain to my constituents in Zululand exactly what had taken place, and what the implications of the Maritzburg congress were.

For the next week or so I was busy preparing a speech which I was to give at Empangeni, a small village in the heart of my constituency. This speech was not given as a political speech, but was intended to be a dissertation on 'South Africanism'. I wanted to refute the Nationalists' allegations and to set out to make good South Africans of us all.

On October 29th I delivered my speech to a packed Town Hall. The audience was mostly farmers, largely English-speaking, with a sprinkling of Afrikaners, some of whom had come many miles. They listened to what I had to say with the greatest interest and enthusiasm.

Because the speech I made caused such a furore, because it had such a bearing on my future career and because it is the angle from which the Natal 'jingo attitude' is judged today, I reprint it virtually as it was reported in the *Natal Mercury* of October 31st. If people are going to judge us, it is as well that the data on which they base their judgment should be accurate. Looking back now with nearly forty years' experience as a politician, I realize that what Smuts said then of my speech was true: 'It was not wisely framed.' In 1932 I had not realized how fanatical South Africans are at any suggested deviation from the strictness of their interpretation of what they call their 'language rights'; I was a child in racialism. What I said was:

> I believe that Federation will put an end to racial war in this country. I am going to ask you to consider the real fundamentals of our racial relations in this country, and of Natal's demand for federation. I ask you, calmly and dispassionately, to look on these matters as if from a great height, so that you can get a wider sweep of the ground.
>
> Looking down, then, we see that through the years, the two white races have worked hand in hand, then turned round to strike each other. The reason lies in the dissimilarity of language and traditions. I ask you, and I ask the Union, to face the fact that we are different. The new South African race—the race that will be compounded of the best in both elements—is represented today by Smuts, Reitz, Havenga and I think Pirow perhaps, and Hofmeyr. But Marwick, Richards and myself are essentially Englishmen, like the mass of the

English-speaking people of South Africa. In the same way Hertzog, Grobelar, Kemp and Malan are Dutch. Since they represent the mass of the people who have no English promptings, their bias must naturally be on the side of their people, just as my bias must be on the side of the English. There is nothing reprehensible about that.

It is a natural fact, but a fact that we never seem to look in the face. And since the mass of the people are naturally biased on the side of their own race, since we honour different traditions and respond to different stimuli, it follows that, as things are today, it is impossible to build up a real national sense which shall be neither English nor Dutch, but some new thing which we can call 'South African'.

Th struggle in South Africa lies in the desire to build up a united people with one language and one culture. In the old days when ideas of Federation were voiced in Downing Street, it was always to be a British Federation. It was thought that anglicization would be only a matter of time. After the Boer War, the people of the two Republics submitted to the English language, and the *Taal* was regarded as something that would die before the all-pervading English. But the hearthstone cherished it, and there was always a determination by the people to maintain their mother tongue.

At union, the dual language was agreed upon. Many English thought that this was merely a concession to sentiment, that English would be the tongue of the future. But Hertzog knew better, and he set out to make Afrikaans acknowledged and honoured in the land. The fight has gone on since 1912. We had gone about talking of a South African nation which would consist of English and Dutch, but at the back of our minds we had supposed they would all talk English. We aimed at anglicization. But the day of Nationalism came and then began the 'afrikanerdization' of the English. The same impulse which had governed our action had now been governing the Nationalists. The Government clearly had an Afrikaans bias, and had set out to do what the English had been trying to do. South Africa was to become Dutch and every British institution was to be shaken.

The British being what they are, now began to revolt. Here we are brought up against our universal nature. Just as the British could not anglicize the Dutch, so the Dutch cannot afrikanerdize the British. . . . I believe that our Federation will put an end to this war in our country. There is not one in this room who has not the most kindly sentiment towards Afrikaans and the people who speak it.

But we are not going to have this language thrust upon us in Natal any more than we want to see English thrust upon the people of the Free State. That condition must be met, and we must call a halt to these vain attempts on both sides. So when federation is achieved, I hope that Natal will be unilingual in regard to all its Provincial concerns and its Provincial employment, as Quebec is French: and I should be glad to see the Free State adopt the same policy and become as completely Afrikaans in its Provincial services, as Ontario is English. We should then all have a very much greater respect for each other.

It is a mistake to regard politicians as responsible for the racialism which is prevalent. They merely fish in troubled water, but the real urge, for the dominance of Afrikanerdom, comes from the thousands of well-educated people who are filled with the vision of a great Afrikaans Southern Africa. I do not find fault with their ideal, having felt the same promptings with regard to the English. But it is only possible to achieve a greater Southern Africa by co-operation, not by domination. Under the conditions of a bilingual Federal State of the Union, Rhodesia would join in tomorrow, and the way would be open for expansion in other directions, provided unilingualism would prevail in the Provinces. Bilingualism would remain as the necessary qualification for the National Union service. Rather was it with a desire to build up a true nation in South Africa, such as existed between the French and English in Canada, that Natal wanted federation.

I have said before that I am not concerned with what happens outside Natal, and that simple phrase has been torn out of its context. We are naturally concerned as we are members of the Union. The only point I sought to make was that we were not seeking to dictate to the rest of South Africa what it should do. We are concerned with maintaining the English character of Natal, with having one oasis in South Africa where we need not be ashamed of being English, and where we need not be afraid, because we stand by our culture and traditions, of being called jingoes and un-South African. If indeed, to be English is to be un-South African, then I shall never aspire to be a South African.

The true South African nation is in embryo. There are many who can respond to the impulses of both, and these people are torn asunder by the racial antagonism which is growing so strongly today. An end to this quarrelling can only come when we remove from the

national arena all these local acts of administration which chafe the spirit and eat into the soul.

Little did I know that night, as the meeting closed with a unanimous vote of confidence in me, what I was in for. During the next few days, much to my surprise, the papers were full of adverse criticism. The speech was called undiluted racialism. All idea of its being a dissertation on South Africanism, as I intended it to be, was lost in the newspapers' interpretation of it. Once again everyone was up in arms and crying out for my blood.

Kemp, whom I had mentioned as representing the Nationalists, declared that I had 'let the cat out of the bag' and made it clear that, although equality had been agreed on for Afrikaans and English in the Act of Union, it had never been the intention to grant Afrikaans that equality except on paper. The Afrikaner was getting tired of the airs of superiority of some jingoes and was going to stand up for his rights in future. And that typified the attitude of them all; the English and Afrikaans papers alike. On November 4 Smuts in a speech at Turfontein, a Johannesburg suburb, publicly repudiated my speech:

> If Nicholls's speech in Zululand is accepted as the South African Party doctrine, it would convey an utterly false colour to the politics of that Party. Mr Nicholls has said, what in fact Hertzog said at De Wildt twenty years ago, that co-operation was a fine phrase, but it took people nowhere.[1]

So my whole plea had been misunderstood and misrepresented. It was meant as a sustained argument directed to the removal of the irritants which prevented the fullest racial co-operation in the national sphere, and of the power of ill-disposed people or political parties to sow the seeds of racial discord. It was a South African philosophy, which I hoped people would begin to think about.

I could not allow Smuts's repudiation of me to go unanswered. At the most, I knew he could only have seen newspaper reports

[1] As a result of Hertzog's De Wildt speech, Botha resigned and formed a new Government without Hertzog.

of what I had said, in which many of my words had been taken out of context; even the *Natal Mercury* report was very truncated. On November 5th I wrote to him:

My speech at Empangeni . . . was consequent upon the adoption by the 'Maritzburg Congress of the Party and by you, of the Hollander Memorandum: that Memorandum proposed a devolution of powers to the Provinces which would given them the character of Federal units 'within the framework of the Union'. It also proposed an alteration in the character of the Councils by the substitution of Provincial Cabinets for the existing Executives. Such a change could only be effected by some amendment of the Act of Union and it was therefore clear that the phrase 'within the framework of the Act of Union' did not mean that the Act of Union should not be altered but that the ultimate control of the Provinces by the Union should be maintained.

It clearly became my duty, after the adoption of this new programme by the Party, to explain the implications of the Memorandum to my constituents at the first opportunity. This I did very fully at Empangeni. A completely new situation had arisen which required a frank discussion of the possible consequences, and I did no more than indicate some of the directions which the newly created vehicle of Provincial autonomy might take. You will remember that the memorandum did not emanate from me. I was completely unaware of its contents until it was read out at the Congress; and its acceptance by me was a result of the personal appeal made to me by you at the Congress.

Smuts replied to me on November 14th:

Your letter of Nov. 5th has only just reached me. . . . I was bound to dissociate myself publicly from the views which you had expressed in your Empangeni speech. Those views reported in the press were contrary to the principles of our Party and damaging to its interests, and I have made it clear in my first public utterance thereafter that you were voicing personal opinions from which the Party completely dissociated itself.

Your contemptuous reference to racial co-operation which is our declared policy; your reference to the English attitude to the language

clause in the South Africa Act as well as other statements, not only deeply offended loyal members of the Party all over the country, but gave our opponents much needed ammunition of which they have since made ample use. Your suggestion that Natal and the Free State should become unilingual provinces was not only in conflict with our principles, but was calculated, unless promptly repudiated, to drive every Afrikaans-speaking member in Natal out of the Party. How could we be party to such a betrayal of our loyal members (English-speaking in the Free State and Afrikaans-speaking in Natal) without covering ourselves with dishonour? And you can understand with what deep resentment such views were heard, coming as they did from a SAP member of Parliament sitting on the front bench of the Party.

Nothing said or done at the recent 'Maritzburg Conference justified such a declaration on your part, and if the Natal members of our Party were committed to your views by the terms or implications of the resolution there taken, they would never have agreed to it and would immediately have repudiated it.

Nor did the resolution mark a completely new situation as you appear to think. In substance it but repeated the principles already affirmed in the Natal Provincial Council resolution of last May, to which our Natal MPs also agreed. The Hollander Memorandum was accepted, not *in toto* or in detail but as a basis and, as such, it will usefully serve in the further discussion and working out of this important subject.

In view of your critical reference to myself, I may say that my remarks on your speech were only made after I had convinced myself that I was dealing not with mere random extempore statements but with a carefully prepared declaration, and such your speech has since been admitted to be. It is a pity, in view of this admission, that neither in your letter under reply nor in any statement to the public, have you seen fit to put yourself right with our Party whom your statements have so deeply offended.

This was indeed a calling to order, but I felt that my speech at Empangeni was completely justified in view of Smuts's speech at the Party Congress in October. In my reply dated November 21st, I said:

I readily acknowledge that you, as Leader of the Party, owe a duty

to all members to dissociate yourself from any statement made by me, or by any other colleague, which runs counter to the principles of the Party and which might be damaging to its interests. On no other terms could a political party exist. The only reference I made to your repudiation was to express regret that you did not stop to ascertain what I did actually say before dissociating yourself from sentiments which I never entertained and which, indeed, were quite foreign to my character.

My speech was in no sense a 'declaration'. It was not so regarded by a single soul at Empangeni. It was, as I have publicly stated, a more or less academic discussion of the new position which I considered had been created at the 'Maritzburg Congress: and there is nothing in what I said which, when considered in its context, was in any way in opposition to the principles of the South African Party which I have consistently expounded and advocated for years. It was, therefore, with very deep regret that I read the interpretation which you had placed on my remarks.

My letter then went on to deal in detail with the undertakings which Smuts had given us at the congress and which I felt had created a new situation within the Party. I then continued:

I did say during the course of my speech that merely to talk about co-operation was not enough. The real need was to make co-operation and conciliation effective; and that, I believed, federation would accomplish. My remarks about the position of the languages at union had no reference whatsoever to the members of the National Convention. No single soul, I am sure, at Empangeni could have interpreted my remarks in that way. I did not infer that the members of the National Convention signed the Act of Union with their tongues in their cheeks. I was dealing generally with the actual historical position of the languages at the time of union when *High Dutch* was in the ascendant as the other official language.

Act No. 8 of 1925 was needed to be passed to put beyond doubt that the word 'Dutch' in the Act of Union included Afrikaans. Nothing has hurt me more than the suggestion that I implied in my speech that the English representatives at the National Convention agreed to the language clause with dishonourable reservations.

The chief matter upon which my critics have dwelt is that I suggested a unilingual standard in Provincial employment; and that

has been magnified into an advocacy of compulsory unilingualism, a proposition which is manifestly absurd and palpably impossible. Compulsory unilingualism is not only in conflict with our principles, it is unthinkable and it is equally unthinkable that I should advocate it.

But an alteration of the law to make unilingual employment in the Provincial services possible is not only thinkable, but it is in conformity with the Act of Union, and it accords with the policy of the Party as voiced by the chairman in Natal, Clarkson, when he said that the South African Party had consistently fought against the evils of compulsory bilingualism. The abuse of power by the Government in connection with bilingual qualifications is the root of most of the trouble in Natal. It is the general opinion in that province which is very largely unilingual by lack of opportunity to be otherwise, that, contrary to the provisions of Section 137 of the Act of Union, an English-speaking citizen has not the slightest chance to enter the civil service or the railways of the country and it will merely be a matter of time for compulsory bilingualism to invade the municipalities, if the Provinces lose control of local affairs.

This being the case, it was obviously necessary to discuss some way out which would reserve all misgivings on this score and bring about a united front for the Party in Natal. It appeared to me, under the new start we were making, that some effort should be made to relax the rigidity of the bilingual qualifications for the Provincial civil service, without doing any disservice to any section of the population. But in order that the Provincial authorities should have power to exercise discretion in their appointments, it was essential to alter the law to make it possible to admit unilingual servants. In other words, it meant the establishment of unilingualism in Natal by the repeal of that part of the law of 1923 which imposed bilingualism in the Provincial civil service.

I said very little different to what I said in your presence at the 'Maritzburg Congress when I used these words: 'Federation must be of such a character as to prevent an injustice to the people of Natal by reason of the racial policies and the bureaucratic administration of the Government. It must give the people power to prevent any discrimination against them in any sphere of their provincial employment because of a deficiency in knowledge of the other official language.'

To this Smuts replied on November 29th:

> I accept your statement that you stand by my 'Maritzburg speech. So do I, and therefore trust that in the end all difficulties which crop up will be cleared away. Your Empangeni speech was not wisely framed and I had to minimize the use which good opponents might make of it. Of your *bona fides* and goodwill I, of course, never had a moment's doubt. But you on your part must be careful not to make too much of points of difference. We must beat the common opponent and not weaken resolves, in the face of the formidable phalanx to which we are opposed.

That closed the correspondence. It was an episode in a political career, but like Hertzog's speech at De Wildt, it undoubtedly cost me a seat in Smuts's Cabinet a few months later.

In the meantime Smuts was not the only person who had repudiated me; his speech was the signal for a concerted attack from all quarters and moves were made to force my resignation from the South African Party. But my constituents in Zululand stood loyally beside me and a special meeting was convened and held at Empangeni on November 22nd to uphold me. At this meeting attended by more than 300 people, a unanimous vote of full confidence in me was passed. The resolution was seconded by a representative of the Nationalist community in Zululand who afterwards addressed the meeting in Afrikaans. It was comforting to feel that I at least had the approval of the people who had sent me to Parliament! The *Natal Mercury*, in a leader of November 25th, summed up the whole situation as follows:

> But let merely one major blunder be committed by a man of shining candour and earnestness, who already has been guilty of the enormity of forcing the Party along lines of action repugnant to its Elder Statesman, and without more ado, the thumb of Caesar decrees the fate of the stumbling gladiator. Mr Heaton Nicholls, by an error of judgment hard to understand, has at last presented to the South African Party, whom he recently forced into a definite acceptance of the Home Rule aspirations of Natal, the opportunity for which many of its members and 'bosses' have long prayed in secret, and at a signal from on high correctly interpreted by the lackeys, the snarling pack has fallen on him with fang and claw.

And from Cape Town to Pretoria the mob is treated to a spectacle unique in our life since the days of De Wildt—to a political sport in full cry.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MISADVENTURE OF TIELMAN ROOS

(1933)

BUT the 'sport' was not destined to continue for long. Events of a much graver character were soon to distract the attention of the country's politicians. We were going through hell in South Africa. Not only was the country divided to a degree of intense bitterness on racial and political issues, which had brought us on occasions perilously near to civil war, but we were sinking deeper and deeper into the morass of bankruptcy and economic despair.

Hertzog and his Nationalist Government stubbornly kept South Africa on the gold standard despite the country's insistent demand to come off. They claimed that to come off would be fatal to the interests of the country. Hertzog announced that, if South Africa was forced off gold, the Nationalist Party would not remain in office. He allowed the matter of national, nay international importance, to be dragged down to party level. His determination to prove that the Crown was divisible, clouded all his thinking. England had gone off gold and so Hertzog perversely ensured that South Africa should remain on; South Africa was completely independent of Britain. Confidence in South Africa was completely destroyed; capital was flying from the country. It was a time of desperate need. The people, in their plight, began to cut themselves adrift from the political civil war and set up a cry, which ultimately swelled into a mighty chorus, for the ending of all the wrangling which was poisoning the whole political life of South Africa. The demand for a National Government became insistent and almost universal.

It was this cry which was the cue for Tielman Roos, a judge of the Appellate Division, to make a dramatic re-entry into South

African politics. Roos had been a Nationalist Minister of Justice in Hertzog's cabinet. He resigned his portfolio for reasons of ill-health and became a judge. He was a likeable enough fellow, a very astute, quick-witted politician; but he was never anything but a politician playing for himself. It was he who had the effrontery to tell us in Parliament that politics was like a game of football, each kicked hardest for his side, apparently without any regard for the goal he aimed at! It was he who said he could not insult the English hard enough; the more he abused them, the more they explained that he did not mean it! It was he who was constantly preaching that, if only the Afrikaners would stand together, they would get their own back on the British, and that he was the man with the umbrella who would shelter Afrikanerdom.

In spite of his position on the bench, he maintained the support and interest of a number of political admirers, who were constantly urging him to return to politics; and from time to time there were rumours of his intention to leave the bench and re-enter the political arena. Although Roos denied them, the rumours persisted, and events showed that they were not unfounded. Carefully planned, Roos's re-entry into politics, when it came, could not have been better timed. Not only was the country writhing with the pains of a starved economy, but an important by-election in a hitherto safe Pact seat had been won, in a three-cornered contest between a Nationalist, a Labour and a South African Party candidate, by the South African Party nominee, J. G. N. Strauss, later to become Leader of the Opposition. The writing was on the wall; the popularity of the Nationalist Government was on the wane. The appeal to racialism, hitherto always a Nationalist trump card, was losing its magic, and the Government's economic policy was to bring it more and more into disfavour with all sections of the country.

In these circumstances, Roos saw his chance of saving Afrikaner Nationalism and at the same time furthering his own aims. In a dramatic flurry, which impressed the country, at a moment when all the portents were propitious, Roos did resign from the bench. Giving the lie to all his denials, he immediately addressed

meetings, in a distinctly political vein, on the necessity for going off gold and forming a National Government. Immediately he gathered the support of all the most influential and most monied people throughout the country, all those who, by the government's affirmed policy to remain on gold, stood to lose much. These people acclaimed Roos as a saviour: they were willing to follow him anywhere. Miraculously, at the veriest whisper that the Nationalists might be thrown out of power, that South Africa might depart from the gold standard, the 'funk money' came flowing back and to those who had transferred their capital overseas, the return of their money brought with it a profit of not less than thirty per cent.

Roos had restored confidence in South Africa and in one week he did what the Opposition had failed to do in eighteen months. On December 16th, Roos had addressed his first meeting, hinting at his resignation. On December 21st he did resign from the Bench and on December 28th, South Africa left the gold standard. But the Nationalists, contrary to their declarations, remained in office and showed no signs of removing themselves.

Roos's popularity knew no bounds. The 'Lion of the North', as he had long been nicknamed, had worked a miracle. His confidence and stature greatly enhanced by the measure of his success in his first step to rehabilitate South Africa, Roos now proceeded on what may be termed a 'triumphal tour' of the country. He addressed meetings in the larger centres on the necessity of forming a National Government, and he claimed to have the support of a large number of Nationalists, who, at his word, were willing to cross the floor and defeat Hertzog's government.

Though he spoke as a Nationalist, it was in the broadest and most non-committal terms and the country, while acclaiming him, was not sure of his exact intentions. In all the clubs and the coffee houses, people were meeting and discussing the political situation. Nationalists and South African Party members and 'Roosites', as Roos's supporters came to be known, met and mingled. Committees were formed in the large centres, actively working for a National Government. The English-speaking

newspapers throughout the country, without a dissentient voice, cried out for co-operation and conciliation.

But the Nationalist Party refused to admit that there was an emergency. It remained silent and aloof; it failed to appreciate that a greater calamity than the collapse of the Nationalist Party might occur. It was more concerned with smelling out intrigues between its so-called supporters and Tielman Roos, than with the country's crisis. It was given out in Nationalist circles that strong disciplinary action would be taken against any party members whose loyalty towards the party wavered.

Smuts, in the meantime, announced that he was willing to lend his full support to any movement which would save South Africa from its present desperate plight, and he actually went so far as to declare that he was prepared to serve with, or under, any man capable of bringing about such a state of affairs. Consequent upon this statement, a series of negotiations took place between the South African Party and Tielman Roos. The pawn in the game was the premiership of South Africa, which Roos had earmarked for himself, and of secondary consideration was the number of seats in the cabinet to be allocated to each of the parties co-operating in a Coalition Government.

Away in Natal we were far from the centre of intrigue, and it seemed to us impossible that Smuts could really be in earnest over his negotiations with Roos. The first intimation I had that anything was afoot, was at the congress of the South African Party held at Bloemfontein in the first week of December, when Mackenzie, the owner of the *Friend* newspaper, approached me on behalf of Roos. I forget the nature of the proposals, but I was adamant in my refusal of them. Natal was then at the zenith of its influence in the South African Party; the Natal programme had been unanimously accepted by the Party; there was no room for separatists like Tielman Roos, and on behalf of Natal I replied with an emphatic 'No' and went home, well satisfied with the results of the congress. At the time I laid no special significance on this approach.

But soon after my return to Durban rumours began to reach me of the negotiations supposed to be taking place in the Trans-

vaal. We heard that the leaders of the South African Party there—Denys Reitz, Jan Hofmeyr and Louis Esselen, the general organizing secretary of the Party—were parleying with Roos. We in Natal were averse to having anything to do with him, for we felt he was an out-and-out Nationalist and that any co-operation with him would be bound to lose us our home rule policy and all that we had just fought for.

On January 12th, the Head Executive of the South African Party met in Pietermaritzburg, just before we were to proceed to Cape Town for the opening of Parliament. At this meeting I moved a resolution pledging ourselves to have nothing whatsoever to do with Roos. A General Election lay not more than twelve months ahead and we in Natal felt that it was almost certain that we had only to wait for that election for Smuts to be returned to power.

Following the usual practice, Parliament was opened in 1933 by the Governor-General reading his speech from the throne. I looked round the familiar scene and mused on the sameness of all the openings of Parliament; the scene never altered, there was nothing to distinguish any one year from the other—except of course a new Governor-General. No casual onlooker would have known that the country was wracked from end to end with political controversy and that the Government was passing through the darkest days of its office, or that on all sides the forces were marshalling for what promised to be the most bitter session on record. Hertzog looked quite unperturbed and I observed him exchange a joke with Havenga. Only Smuts, I thought, looked worn and tired as though his thoughts were far from the scene.

It is usual for the Leader of the Opposition to move a motion of no confidence in the Government at the beginning of each session. On January 24, 1933, however, Smuts prefaced his speech with these words:

> This motion is in form a motion of no confidence in the Government but in reality it is less a motion of no confidence than an appeal for a new start in the politics of this country. I move that, in view of the fact that the Government, despite the assurance repeatedly given by it, has remained in office while abandoning the gold standard, and

has therefore now to give effect to a policy which it has condemned as fatal to the interests of the country, and in view of the grave economic conditions which prevail today, this House considers that the Government should tender its resignation forthwith and so afford an opportunity for the formation of a National Government.

Smuts's language during his motion was impressive and he argued with unanswerable logic. During his speech his followers were excited and jubilant. The next morning the South African Party went into caucus. That afternoon Hertzog, in unmistakable terms, rejected Smuts's offer to co-operate in the formation of a National Government and retaliated by moving an amendment to the effect that the House expressed confidence in the Government. Characteristically splitting hairs, the Prime Minister replied to Smuts's accusations, by arguing that he was not morally bound to resign, in spite of his many declarations that he would if South Africa were forced off the gold standard, because going off the gold standard voluntarily, as South Africa had done, was not the same as being forced off.

In the South African Party caucus room the position became tense, for members began to learn something of what had been going on with Tielman Roos and it was made abundantly clear that there were members within our ranks who were definitely in favour of pushing Smuts into a coalition with him; it appeared that there were a number of 'Roosites' even in the caucus. The Chief Whip said that he had a list of the names of the Nationalist members of Parliament who were prepared to cross the floor at Roos's word and overthrow the Government.

For nearly a week the debate raged backwards and forwards and the members for and against seemed evenly divided. During the whole debate Smuts sat erect in his chair and did not say a word. But, as the days passed and many of his old stalwarts asked him to accept Roos's offer, his face grew greyer and greyer, and the iron entered into his soul. Here were the people who for years he had regarded as his staunch supporters, prepared to throw him over for the sake of a man, whom he, and most of us, regarded as a mountebank in politics.

I must confess that I spoke in favour of accepting Roos's offer, although before coming down to Cape Town I had vehemently opposed any such move; and the shame of it was that they were mostly Englishmen who were dropping Smuts in favour of Roos. 'God forgive me, General,' said Stuttaford, 'for saying this, but I think the turning out of the Government by your playing second fiddle to Tielman for six months, is worth the sacrifice that you will make.' And that is how, after listening to the arguments for and against, I came to look at it.

The debate dribbled away into silence. There was nothing more to be said, nothing anyone could add to what had already been said. The caucus ended without our knowing what was to take place.

Smuts replied to the motion in the House in very different terms to those in which he had introduced it. There was no recrimination in what he said; he spoke in sorrow, but he must have given much hope to Hertzog. After he had finished speaking, the Prime Minister's amendment was carried. Roos's supporters were under orders not to vote against the Nationalist Government. Their time was not yet come!

Walking up afterwards with Hofmeyr to the hotel where we both lived, I remarked that Smuts was offering a coalition to Hertzog. 'Impossible,' he said, 'after all the things Hertzog has said about him. It would be too humiliating for Smuts.' 'Not for Smuts,' I said, 'for him personalities do not exist.'

And I was right for at last, on February 9th, it seemed that Smuts had once and forever turned down negotiations with Roos. He announced that there was, in accepting Roos's offer, too great a risk of surrendering principles which might leave the South African Party with diminished strength and damaged prestige. And so, in spite of emphatic denials from the Prime Minister until almost the eve of coalition, it was eventually coalition with Hertzog.

On February 28, Hertzog announced in the most straightforward and formal manner that a coalition between the Nationalists and the South African Party had been formed, and that it had been agreed that a General Election should take place

as soon as possible in order to give the electorate an opportunity of approving or disapproving what had been agreed upon. Hertzog's mask-like face gave no indication of the hates and prejudices, the jealousies and racialism which had assailed and split his party's ranks during the weeks just past. The struggle was over. Roos's bid for the premiership and with it rehabilitated Nationalism had failed. Correct in all his calculations, he had reckoned without one thing—the magnificent leadership of Smuts. Ironically, only in Roos's personal defeat was the name of saviour, which the country had given him, justified.

CHAPTER XIX

FUSION DAYS

(1934)

THE terms of coalition were broad enough to suit us all; the points of principle on which it was founded met with universal approval. They were submitted to Parliament and to the head committees of the parties and finally were accepted by the party congresses throughout the country. The General Election confirming coalition followed in May. It was an amazing election. So overwhelmingly was coalition accepted by the country that there was not a single newspaper in the land, Afrikaans or English, which was not coalitionist. So unanimous were the electors that they returned to Parliament 146 members in support of coalition out of a total of 150. This was surely a record in any democracy.

We all waited while the Cabinet was chosen, and I watched with amusement the scramble for favours. It was a race to find a Minister for Natal. I had been promised a portfolio by Smuts before my Empangeni speech and there were many rumours to the effect that my name was on the list. But after that speech I felt that I would be considered too independent and too much of a jingo to be chosen; besides, I was opposed nearly every day to Smuts on the Native Bills Select Committee.

C. P. Robinson, a member for Durban, was a horse of a different colour. He was an able, astute man, and had many years of experience, having been a member of the Natal Parliament before Union. He was a general favourite. We were always good friends and had few political secrets from each other. One day he told me that Smuts was in trouble over the Natal seat in the Cabinet and was being pushed to appoint Charlie Clarkson. Clarkson's name had not been mentioned before; we had not

thought of him as a Cabinet minister. He had never fought an election for the Union Parliament. C.P. said to me: 'The matter of Clarkson's appointment is under consideration. If you will agree to my going to Smuts and saying that you have no objection to my being in the Cabinet, I promise you I will resign in six months in favour of you. I would like to become a minister as a fitting close to my political career.' 'Are you sure,' I asked, 'that that would happen if I agreed?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'if I can go to Smuts with your agreement, then the matter is settled.'

From this conversation I deduced that C.P. had already discussed the matter with Smuts. I considered the suggestion for a few moments and replied: 'Robinson, I am no logroller. I believe the choice of a Minister must be left entirely to the discretion of Smuts. That is the British practice. Nobody should attempt to put pressure on him to choose; I'm certainly not going to do so.' For the next day or two Robinson urged me to agree to his suggestion and warned: 'If you do not agree, I tell you, Smuts will send for Charlie Clarkson, who has been pulling strings to that end. He will come in between us.' I personally didn't believe it possible and I told C.P.: 'If Smuts sends for you, I promise you my full loyalty; but I am not going to influence his judgment one way or another.'

So Clarkson was chosen and remained a Minister until 1948 when Smuts was defeated. Once, when Clarkson was overseas at the coronation of George VI I was approached to take his place as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, in order that he could become Administrator. I said I was not prepared to accept a mere 'rubber stamp' position; but that I would accept a portfolio of policy. Of course there wasn't one. So I have never become a minister and many people have said that I am a disappointed politician with an axe to grind and a chip on my shoulder. To this I would answer that I have never sought for office, or battled for position; it has always been thrust upon me. The places I have occupied have not been without their responsibility and consequent prestige. I am far from disappointed and neither was I particularly disappointed when the new Cabinet of the coalition year was announced.

Shortly after its announcement I received the following letter (dated April 3, 1933) from Smuts:

> Now we are through the painful process of Government-making I wish to say to you that your absence from it must not in any way be misunderstood by you. In a Coalition such as we have had to form, under very unusual circumstances, many considerations extrinsic to the personal merits of our leading men had to be weighed and the ultimate decision cannot be looked upon as a reflection on those who are not included. My personal regard for you and my confidence in your character remains unabated. But Clarkson as the chairman of the Party seemed to be the only way out of the difficulties which surrounded us. I hope you will not mind my saying this to you as we have always been quite frank with each other even when there are differences of opinion. For me it has been a deep regret that it was not, under the circumstances, possible to associate you with me in the Government.

It was nice of him to write to me. I replied in due course that I quite understood his difficulties.

So it was coalition with Hertzog—with Smuts smilingly playing second fiddle to him, digging him out of the holes he dug for himself, showing himself always patient and tolerant although everybody knew his approach to the problems of the day was entirely different from Hertzog's. And with coalition, Natal slid down from the position it had occupied with the South African Party. Smuts had no longer to keep looking over his shoulder for the approval of Natal. Sixteen members in a party of sixty was very different to sixteen in a House of 150.

Most striking of all the results of coalition was the new atmosphere which pervaded Parliament, not only in the House but in all personal relationships. Hitherto the practice in Parliament between the parties was never to associate with each other, never to drink tea or coffee together in the lobby or meet in the dining room, for the sight of a South African Party member and a Nationalist drinking tea together would have caused comment; they might have been giving away secrets! But when coalition came along, although each party maintained its own caucus,

these conventional barriers began to fall away. We mixed freely and the lobby soon presented a strange hotchpotch of opposites, laughing and joking together. The only outsiders were Malan and his small band of followers, who had refused to sit in a coalition cabinet. They remained in solitary isolation, presenting a stony façade to us all, which the best intentions in the world could not penetrate.

It was the same in the House. An opponent somehow looks quite different when viewed in profile instead of face-to-face across the floor. The old animosities subsided. When all belonged to one party there was no need to make party propaganda. Personalities and cheap retorts were ruled out. Criticism was frank, unafraid and honest. With everybody looking for agreement, the debates grew shorter and more effective. The workmanlike manner in which business was despatched in Parliament was acclaimed throughout the country. If only Malan and his followers could have broken down and come into the warm circle of friendly relations, the future of the country could have looked truly rosy. I was always uneasy about Malan. I felt his particular branch of racialism and hatred was so great that he would not rest until he had achieved his purpose. Others in our ranks discounted my apprehension, saying that the feelings of conciliation and co-operation in the whole country were so great that Malan's bitterness must be drowned.

After a few months it began to be felt that if coalition was working so well it ought to be made permanent. In the present situation there were many dangers. Each party, for instance, maintained its own separate organization and held its own caucuses. The two wings did not quite know what the other had been talking about, when they conferred separately, and there was the possibility of a split at any time, which would be disastrous to the country. Throughout the constituencies the old political fires had been dampened down, but they had not gone out. The temper of the country was undoubtedly ripe for a merger.

The head committees of both parties were eventually called to a meeting in the Union buildings at Pretoria. Under their

Shortly after its announcement I received the following letter (dated April 3, 1933) from Smuts:

> Now we are through the painful process of Government-making I wish to say to you that your absence from it must not in any way be misunderstood by you. In a Coalition such as we have had to form, under very unusual circumstances, many considerations extrinsic to the personal merits of our leading men had to be weighed and the ultimate decision cannot be looked upon as a reflection on those who are not included. My personal regard for you and my confidence in your character remains unabated. But Clarkson as the chairman of the Party seemed to be the only way out of the difficulties which surrounded us. I hope you will not mind my saying this to you as we have always been quite frank with each other even when there are differences of opinion. For me it has been a deep regret that it was not, under the circumstances, possible to associate you with me in the Government.

It was nice of him to write to me. I replied in due course that I quite understood his difficulties.

So it was coalition with Hertzog—with Smuts smilingly playing second fiddle to him, digging him out of the holes he dug for himself, showing himself always patient and tolerant although everybody knew his approach to the problems of the day was entirely different from Hertzog's. And with coalition, Natal slid down from the position it had occupied with the South African Party. Smuts had no longer to keep looking over his shoulder for the approval of Natal. Sixteen members in a party of sixty was very different to sixteen in a House of 150.

Most striking of all the results of coalition was the new atmosphere which pervaded Parliament, not only in the House but in all personal relationships. Hitherto the practice in Parliament between the parties was never to associate with each other, never to drink tea or coffee together in the lobby or meet in the dining room, for the sight of a South African Party member and a Nationalist drinking tea together would have caused comment; they might have been giving away secrets! But when coalition came along, although each party maintained its own caucus,

separate leaders, Hertzog and Smuts, they discussed fusion. Both parties faced difficulties. In Natal we had our extremists too. Stallard and my old friend Marwick were both hotly opposed to any merger with the Nationalists, saying that the English-speaking would be completely submerged by Afrikanerdom. I did not believe it. My mind was made up in favour of fusion when I went to Pretoria, as the following correspondence with C. P. Robinson, who happened to be in London at the time, shows. He cabled me on June 8:

> Please cable what attitude you are adopting regarding fusion proposals and your reasons.

To which I replied:

> C. P. Robinson, Barclawall London.
>
> Backing fusion providing Malan remains outside. Fusion terms constitute program of passive principles not program of action which will follow later. Terms designed to offer wide umbrella to cover varying and private political faiths. This enables all people of good will whatever academic preferences are held regarding form of government to accept existing position without violation of conscience and co-operate in supporting non-racial party. Unless this done no possibility of tackling successfully native problem and many social and economic measures long overdue. Rights of private political conscience granted in 2D carry no threat to parties' principles to maintain British connection since all extreme republicans will be with Malan. If English-speaking stood aside from fusion it would drive academic non-racial republicans who desire to co-operate with us into party pledged for first time to establish a republic on racial lines. Resurrected Unionist Party suffering from attitude Stallard Marwick will be extremely small and politically impotent and merely serve to strengthen Malan. If Malan joins fusion as incited to do by Stallard Marwick manifesto my future course very difficult as whole character of fusion thereby changed since Malan would enter with little Afrikaner group professedly anti-British having isolated Karoo outlook backed by *Die Burger* and thus change the whole purpose of fusion.

I showed this telegram to Smuts before the Head Committee meeting, as an indication of my colleagues' and my own feelings towards fusion. His reaction was very fair. 'I quite understand your position,' he said. 'I don't really know what else you could do, but I can't tell you whether Malan will be in or out.' There I left it. But that night at Polley's Hotel, where I was staying in Pretoria, Malan and his supporters held a preliminary meeting in the large room adjacent to my bedroom. I had gone to bed early with a headache. Malan's pulpit voice rang out in booming tones and it was impossible not to overhear much of what he had to say, though he spoke in Afrikaans. I gathered that there was much support for his refusal to go into fusion with Smuts. The chief obstacle to his acceptance was that Natal and Heaton Nicholls would be in fusion! I found myself the *bête noir* of the Malan party. There was one consolation; the feeling was entirely mutual!

The South African Party Head Committee met the next day as did also the Nationalist. They met in separate conference rooms on opposite sides of the Union Buildings. Smuts opened the South African Party discussion. He did not mention Malan, but when he sat down he called upon me to speak. I shook my head and remained seated. Whereupon Hofmeyr sitting next to me whispered: 'It's a bit thick to expect you to speak at this stage!' During the morning we received information that the Nationalists were still in conference with Malan holding the floor. The discussion continued until both parties adjourned to the dining-room for lunch. Each party seated itself on the opposite side of the room. Courtesies were exchanged, but both sides reported no progress.

During lunch Smuts came to me with a piece of paper and said he wanted me to move a motion after we got back into the meeting. The motion was one taking the South African Party into fusion with Hertzog. I studied it carefully, but I could see no escape clause. If I moved that motion and found that Malan had accepted fusion, I was trapped. The English-speaking of the Party would be irrevocably committed and Stallard and his extremists would win overwhelming support. I was in a dilemma. 'I can't move that until I know whether Malan is in or out,' I replied to

Smuts. 'He is not coming in,' Smuts answered decisively. 'Take it from me, he's not coming in.'

I did not know where he got his assurance and he did not offer to tell me. Neither did I ask. My mind went back to the Flag Bill and the quotation from Marcus Aurelius. Was Smuts playing that game again? When we arrived back in the conference chamber Smuts again addressed the Head Committee. This time he referred to Malan and said we could rest assured that he was not coming in. The General felt that Malan's following would be small and would be flooded out by fusion, which the vast bulk of the people of South Africa would support. Upon this assurance I moved the motion which took the South African Party into fusion with Hertzog. This resolution was immediately handed to the Press and presumably to Hertzog presiding over the Nationalist Head Committee.

When we left the Union Buildings, early in the afternoon, the Nationalists were still arguing, and no word came from the conference room. I felt distinctly uneasy. What would happen if Malan was in after all? Again I wondered if Smuts's information was correct.

I sat up very late waiting to hear what had happened. At last at about 11.30 p.m., when no word had reached me I went to bed, but I could not sleep.

After midnight, Conroy and Clarkson, who had gone out into the streets to see if they could glean any news, came bounding into my room. 'It's all right, Nicholls,' they said, 'Malan is out. You can sleep in peace!' I did.

The resolution of the Head Committee of the South African Party went before a congress of 800 delegates from all over South Africa on December 5, 1934 and the United Party was born. Stallard and Marwick resigned and proceeded to found the Dominion Party. Malan and his supporters went out as representing purified nationalism, standing unabashed for their treason of a republic and Afrikaner domination.

CHAPTER XX

NATIVE AFFAIRS AND POLICY

(1928–1936)

I HAD not properly realized until I got to Parliament in 1920 that the Union had no recognized native policy. It had no clear-cut ideas about the future relations which should subsist between black and white, yet it was in order to achieve unity in native affairs that union had largely come about.

All that union had accomplished was to pass in 1913 a highly controversial Natives' Land Act which the Courts had declared to be illegal in the Cape and which, pending the adoption of recommendations made by the Beaumont Commission concerning additional land, was incomplete elsewhere. The 1913 Act had robbed the natives of their right to purchase land anywhere they liked except in the Cape as a native voter. For the rest, native affairs were administered according to the laws and customs previously prevailing in the four Provinces, i.e. they were run by the permanent officials according to the practice existing in each Province before union, with little political direction. Ordinary members of Parliament had no say in the native reserves within their constituency. And yet nothing excited the attention of thoughtful people more than the need for a national philosophy of native government. There was no agreement on the form it should take except the common agreement which subsisted between black and white on their status in society.

There existed, of course, the Cape doctrine of 'equal rights for all civilized men', unfairly anchored to an elementary school certificate and a minimum wage. This left all the chiefs of the Transkei and their followers who had no elementary school certificate and who lived under tribal law, without a vote. In the Ciskei a number of voters had been secured under the Glen Grey

Act. But in all, throughout the Cape there were a bare 12,000 urban dwellers who had the vote and could therefore purchase liquor, for which purpose the vote was usually obtained. And there was, as well, the whole northern school of the Transvaal and the Free State, which believed in non-equality between black and white in church and state.

Natal stood between these two schools. How were these different wings of opinion to be reconciled into a national philosophy? Many of us felt that this was the most important matter with which Parliament could concern itself, for upon some satisfactory solution being attained the whole future of South Africa rested.

The Constitution, that is, the Act of Union, had entrenched the Cape native franchise which could not be altered without the consent of two-thirds of both Houses of Parliament sitting together. There was no suggestion then, in political circles, that anything should be done about it. There was always a feeling that no proper Union native policy could be attained until something was done to bring about uniformity in the matter of the native franchise. Northern opinion was adamantly opposed to the acceptance of the Cape native franchise.

As far as we in Natal were concerned, we also were opposed to an extension of the Cape franchise, believing that the policy followed in Natal—the Shepstone Policy—accorded with native wishes and was the best policy for the Union. That policy recognized the facts of Africa; that our natives were kith and kin to millions beyond our borders, and that we could not live in isolation. Africa was advancing. The last twenty years had torn aside the curtain which hid this fact from our politicians.

My mind was so indoctrinated by this African development that the first big speech I made in Parliament was made on foreign affairs, at a time when Smuts was about to leave for Europe to attend an Imperial Conference. In that debate Smuts had nothing to say about what was happening on the African continent, and Hertzog, who followed, regarded the Union in isolation. I was impelled to make an 'African speech'. It was unusual, and it was considered to be of such merit that it was

printed verbatim in the Cape *Argus* of June 30, 1921, at a time when speeches in Parliament were scrappily reported in the Press.

The heart of my contention was to enquire what position this white civilization of ours, the civilization built up with such sweat and toil through the years, was going to occupy in the rapidly developing continent of Africa, developing at such a rate that those who watched the beginning were amazed at the progress. What were we going to do? What say were we going to have in guiding the currents and tendencies in countries beyond our borders, which might have an inimical influence upon our future, but over which we had not the slightest control? Were we going to allow a whole world—East and West, Asiatic and European—to exploit the interior of Africa to their own enrichment, and by doing so, to set up forces which might strangle this young nation, while we stood by unable to say a word in our own salvation?

Northern Rhodesia was just beginning to exploit its vast mineral wealth. The Congo was thinking about getting Asiatic labour to assist it in exploiting its copper. Our troops had assisted in the conquest of Tanganyika, then under mandate to the United Kingdom. Kenya just beyond was undergoing experiments, the evils of which, at a later date, were going to cost many lives and millions of pounds to overcome. I asked in my speech that we should proclaim an 'African Doctrine' of our interest in Africa, as the United States had proclaimed under the Monroe Doctrine that she considered the whole of America to be her interest. Such a doctrine would proclaim that we had a right to know what was taking place beyond our borders, and would announce that we had a right to protest against the creation of inimical currents and tendencies in countries which had been opened up under our influence. We should seek for an early inclusion of Rhodesia into the Union and we should acquire Northern Rhodesia by paying to the Chartered Company what it required in cash.

The third thing I recommended was that there should be a South African Service Branch of the League of Nations, such as

had been formed by other nations; and this National Liaison Service should act as a General Staff, constantly weighing all the points of contact between South Africa and its fellow-members of the League of Nations with interests in Africa for submission to the Secretariat, and for the instructions of the national delegates to the League. This suggestion was no more than had been indicated by Carnarvon in 1876, when he passed through the British Parliament a measure for the confederation of all the African states. Even at that time, it was very clearly seen that, unless we sought to extend our voice beyond the four countries of South Africa, we should be in early trouble. That great Act of Confederation—a permissive Act, passed by Britain—was refused by the Transvaal under Kruger and by the Cape under Molteno, though accepted by the Free State and Natal. South Africa was then too much engaged in its own pioneer politics to look to the future. Had they followed the advice of the British Government we should have been saved all the consequence of the annexation of the Transvaal, followed by the Zulu war, by the recession of the Transvaal and then, unfortunately, by the South African war. All these might have been avoided, and the two European races of South Africa would have coalesced eighty years ago and we should have saved ourselves all the misery and political strife of the past and the uncertainty which now confronts us.

My speech effected nothing, though I believe it stimulated interest in Rhodesia and prevented the Congo from introducing Asiatics. But for the rest, South Africa continued its purely party warfare and turned its back resolutely on the rest of Africa. Today we can see the result of that neglect when we observe the spread of anti-whiteism over the whole continent by the African National Congress, the only bond of co-operation which exists amongst the non-Europeans. Our cult of white nationalism has created and strengthened the cult of black nationalism. The two are now drawing up in battle array for the fight of the future.

When Hertzog became Prime Minister in 1924 one of his first speeches was made at Smithfield, his own constituency in the Free State, in which he declared that the Government was now going

to tackle the native problem. From that moment, the Cape native franchise, which he proposed to abolish, became a burning issue in the political party arena.

In 1926 the Prime Minister laid his four Bills on the table of Parliament. They were: the Natives' Representation in Parliament Bill; the Coloured Persons' Rights Bill; the Natives' Land Bill and the Natives' Council Bill. The first created much confusion. It proposed the abolition of the Cape native franchise. It cut across party lines, and opinion throughout the Union became acutely divided. In the North the proposed legislation was looked upon as an opportunity; in the Cape as an invasion of treasured rights, which had to be resisted at all costs.

During the sessions of 1927 and 1928 a Select Committee of which I was a member, was set up to take evidence from all interested individuals and organizations throughout the Union concerning these Bills. The major emphasis in the evidence submitted was upon the need for additional land for natives in accordance with the promise of the 1913 Land Act. The Select Committee was unable to complete its work during the Parliamentary session and therefore transformed itself into a commission to sit after Parliament rose; but, after three weeks, the work was abandoned because of non-attendance of some of the principals.

Nothing further was done until Hertzog convened a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in 1929 and laid before it a fresh set of Bills containing more generous provision for native representation in Parliament. This was on the eve of the 1929 General Election. The attitude of the South African Party was that the subject was much too important to be rushed, particularly with a General Election in the offing. The Bills needed calm consideration. The country had been led to expect that a Native Conference would be called to consider them; it was necessary to take the natives along with us. Since the Prime Minister now knew that he could not get a two-thirds majority it was obvious that the matter was to be turned into an election issue.

During this debate which took place at this joint sitting, however, statements were made which profoundly affected the ultimate result—Hertzog, Smuts, Roberts and Duncan found a

common agreement in the contention that, as long as the natives got their rights, it was not essential that they should continue to share the ballot box with the European on a Common Roll. Everybody in Parliament knew that the struggle over the Cape franchise, the settlement of which had been delayed since union, was a political party battle. There could be no peace between the parties until this issue was taken out of the party political stream. Hertzog sought to destroy the native vote because it favoured his opponents; Smuts fought to retain it because a number of Cape seats held by his supporters depended on it. But there were a number in Parliament who believed that the cause of all the quarelling amongst the Europeans in South Africa lay in precisely this opposite approach to native political representation—from the 'equal rights for all civilized men' of the Cape, to the 'no equality in church or state' of the Transvaal and the Free State. Until these two schools of thought were reconciled the war would go on.

Hertzog was emphatic for a change; Smuts and Patrick Duncan were for more consideration, but they were both sensible to the strong feeling of Natal, always attempting to hold the balance between the Cape and the two old Republics, and they leaned over to our view. The Natal members, from the beginning, followed the traditional Shepstone line. They wanted to see Parliamentary representation extended to the Zulus as a whole, on a communal basis. They wanted to maintain and develop the native reserves which Shepstone, fighting in the early days with the missionaries Adams and Lindley, had, alone in South Africa, secured for them. They wanted the maintenance of native law which Shepstone had ascertained from the chiefs and which the Transvaal Republic had adopted. And they wanted to maintain and strengthen the civilizing policy which lay at the root of all Shepstone's administration, and which aimed at the civilized advance of the Zulu nation *en masse*, as a separate entity. That included the gradual recognition of an élite as it emerged, by the granting of certificates of exemption from native law to all those fitted to exercise a vote in the interests of the State on the lines adumbrated by the Natal Native Commission of 1907.

The following extract from that Commission's report was quoted by Stals in the debate:

> The majority of the Commission contended that the exempted Natives should be permitted individually to qualify for the Parliamentary franchise by means of an education test and the possession of landed property or income, and by a system of registration based on compliance with certain tests.[1]

It will be seen that native advance was not conceived of on *Apartheid* lines. Zulus, when sufficiently civilized, could become citizens of the European state; but meanwhile, until they were civilized, they marched with the mass of their fellow tribesmen. The attitude of the Natal members had the support of the Rev John Dube, himself a Zulu and editor of the native newspaper, *Ilanga Lase Natal*, and of many of the leading natives of that time.

The Hertzog Bills did not pass. The 1929 Election was held and the Nationalist Government was returned to power in force. The 'Black Manifesto' which shamefully exploited the native question and has soured white-black relations ever since, was issued by Hertzog and Malan, warning the white man of the dangers of the black franchise. This manifesto played an important part in the Nationalist Party's victory.

When Parliament met in 1930 Hertzog and Smuts conferred together and agreed that the Bills should again be introduced, but without debate, and then should be sent to a Select Committee of both Houses before the second reading. Before the work already begun could be continued, following a protest by Smuts that a statement which appeared in *Die Burger* tended to throw the native question back into party politics, Hertzog declared:

> It is necessary to begin on a basis of trust in each other, and to make each feel that we want to put everything of a party character behind us. If we cannot do that, then I am convinced that we shall

[1] *Hansard*, p. 82, 1929.

> not only fail to reach a solution, but that it will be much better for us not to have met at all. . . . I am sorry that such fabrication has been quoted in our newspapers.[1]

This was the spirit in which the Joint Select Committee entered upon its work. This was the spirit in which I continued throughout with the consent of all the Natal members.

I was a member of the Select Committee on the Native Bills from the beginning to the end. I can now lift the curtain on their proceedings, which extended from 1927 to 1936, when two of the Bills were finally reported to a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament and translated into law. The Coloured Persons' Rights Bill and the Native Council Bill were dropped; the first, because, by definition, we had divided the coloured from the natives, and the second because we had created the Natives Representative Council instead.

The Committee, which took charge until 1936, was the largest that had ever sat in Parliament. It contained the leaders of all parties. Among its twenty-seven members there were, in addition to Jansen, the Minister for Native Affairs who was chairman, three ex-Ministers for Native Affairs. It was attended throughout by the Secretary for Native Affairs and by Roberts of the Native Affairs Commission, and it had the benefit of advice from many trained administrators.

One of the first points raised and decided was in conformity with the statements made by Hertzog. There should be no party line. The whips were off. No leader of a party should attempt to exert authority over the members of the Committee. Each member was free to propose anything he liked and he should not be regarded as being disloyal to his party leader for differing from him on any point. That agreement was stressed by me and accepted; and it led to sincere and uninhibited arguments throughout most of the years, until fusion destroyed the independence of the Committee, since there could not be any separate action without destroying fusion, which the country would not stand for.

[1] *Hansard*, p. 7, 1930.

A second agreement was arrived at. The Committee laid this self-denying ordinance on itself: that the whole native question should disappear from the political party arena until the Committee reported back to the House. Both political parties thus pledged themselves to silence. That silence was maintained throughout, broken only by the academic bodies outside (whom we then called assimilationists), who, in the absence of the politicians, had a clear field for their activities. It is important to remember this. For over five years the native question was the sport alone of our budding professors, and an academic reputation for being expert on the native question was easily obtained by these theorists who had no practical experience whatsoever and who listened to the voice of the callow youth in their universities as the voice of experience. During all this time the Select Committee, studying all the evidence closely from day to day, said nothing.

The first meetings of the Committee were spent in considering Hertzog's 'Native Representation in Parliament Bill'. On May 2, 1930, alternative proposals were introduced, the first of which was, what I may call, the Natal Bill, introduced by me. Its title was: 'to make additional provisions for the representation of natives in the Senate, and to prohibit the registration of natives as parliamentary voters after the commencement of this Act.' Following on this came a proposal from F. S. Malan to enfranchise all natives on a qualification test on a common roll. Hofmeyr moved an amendment to this to subject the qualifications to periodic revision, so that no more than ten per cent of voters on the roll should be natives, a strange resolution to come from one who claimed to be a liberal. On the following day G. B. van Zyl moved a lengthy motion which linked up the 'Bunga' (the name given to the Transkei General Council of Natives) in the Cape and other 'Bungas' to be established in other Provinces with the native voter. And finally Stallard moved an additional clause to my Bill, to provide for the constitution and powers of a Grand Committee on Native Affairs in the Senate; this rounded off the plan I had proposed by setting up a real, live native government in the Senate, having executive and financial power, within the

walls of Parliament. All the proposals were now before the Committee.

In introducing my Bill for the consideration of the Joint Select Committee I said:

> I think everyone will agree that there could be no adoption of a real native policy which would be acceptable to all sections in the country except by the agreement of this Committee. If we can agree then I think we could adopt almost any plan, and carry the country with us. I think it is possible here, if there is a sincere desire to arrive at a solution, to come to an agreement which will not only carry with us the Europeans of South Africa, but also carry with us the articulate natives, and win for us also the approval of the whole civilized world. I think it is possible for us to devise a plan which will be in consonance with all the modern ideas of native Government in Africa. . . .
>
> I set in the forefront of the principles upon which native representation in Parliament should be based, the determination to ensure beyond question and permanently—(1) the dominance of the European and (2) while ensuring this dominance of the European, to recognize the natives' right to his own development in a way which would win his approval.
>
> If we apply these two tests to the legislation proposed by the Prime Minister we see that it completely fails. The only alternative to that proposed by the Prime Minister in his Bills which has been made public, is that proposed by Rose Innes for raising the franchise qualifications with equal rights for all. This may be ruled out as not being practical politics. The remainder of the proposals that have been made have been mere juggling with the representations proposed by the Prime Minister. They have all suggested, in some form or other, higher qualifications for natives; more or fewer representatives in Parliament, and representation either in the House or in the Senate or both. They are not based on any logical plan, nor are they rooted in any principle. They are built upon the belief that the franchise, in some form or other, as it exists at the Cape, must be continued, either separately or together with the European. None of these schemes appear to me, and to those I represent, either likely to secure dominance of the European, or to meet with the approval of the natives. Everyone of them strikes a blow at the root of our whole native policy, and aims either by a short cut or by a long way round, at establishing democratic institutions among the natives. When

we apply the test of European dominance to the Prime Minister's Bills we find that they fall just as far short of the security which it is desirable to establish as the Rose Innes proposal. . . .

My chief objection lies in the fact that the Prime Minister is not seizing this opportunity to ensure the complete and permanent dominance of the European. . . . I assume for the purpose of my argument that we have a recognized native policy, though it would be difficult to say what it is, and that that policy is based upon the recognition of a separate Bantu ethos which it is our duty to protect and develop. I assume too, that South Africa as a whole, in common with the rest of Africa, desires to preserve that separateness of the natives. I assume that the lecture delivered by Smuts at Oxford . . . does represent the conscious attitude of most African Governments towards the natives. And I ask myself how we can best ensure the development of the Bantu nation, politically, economically and socially in harmonious co-operation with the European, while giving him the fullest control of his own destiny, and ensure that he will not in any way imperil our own.

To do that we seem to have started at the wrong end. We seem to have worried about the gargoyles on the roof, rather than the sound foundation under the soil. We ought really to go back to the native kraal, to the native family, to the tribe, to the tribal council before we arrive at representation in Parliament. . . . There should be a complete chain of representation from the kraal to the native council, from the native council to the native provincial council, which would have considerable powers of local self-government, before we got up to representation in Parliament. But we have started at the other end, and we must tackle the matter from the top downwards.

I then made two proposals:

(1) That though the native franchise, as it existed in the Cape should completely disappear with the present voters, there should be direct representation by native senators in the Senate—the nature of that body being eminently suitable for such community representation. This would ensure an acceptance by the natives of the abolition of the Cape franchise; and (2) That the primary need of the native in his condition was for land and that we should decide upon some £30,000,000 to be spent—half upon the purchase of additional land and half for the development of existing Reserves.

This speech has been considered as the starting-off point of many theories, ideas and practices which have subsequently been set forth in South Africa.

On May 9th the decks were cleared in the Joint Select Committee for a consideration of all the amendments by a proposal of the Prime Minister:

> That prior to proceeding to the proposals submitted at previous meetings, it is desirable that the Committee lay down the general principles upon which legislation should be based, it being understood that any resolution come to shall not be regarded as final and that the Committee retains the right to re-open any decision arrived at.

On this being unanimously accepted, the Committee passed to the next proposals of the Prime Minister:

> That the natives on the Voters' Roll shall be entitled to remain on it as long as they possess the necessary qualifications.

That was unanimously accepted. Then followed the fundamental proposal of the Prime Minister:

> That the Committee disapproves of the principle of common representation in Parliament for Europeans and natives.

The voting on this was eighteen for and eight against. It was decisive. Never again was there any question raised of retaining the Cape native franchise.

Immediately afterwards Pen Wessels moved the following far-reaching proposition, the text of which had been agreed upon by Wessels and myself beforehand:

> That subject to obtaining eventual unanimity, the Committee accepts the principle contained in the proposal submitted by Mr Nicholls on the 2nd inst. with regard to representation of natives by natives in the Senate, provided that no representation is given to natives in the House of Assembly.

This was the root principle of my Bill: the removal of the colour bar in the Senate.

After discussion the motion was put and the Committee divided:

AYES—17	NOES—9
The Chairman (Havenga) (Nat.)	Senator F. S. Malan (SAP)
The Prime Minister (Nat.)	Senator Spies (Nat.)
The Minister of Finance (Nat.)	Senator Wessels (SAP)
The Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (Nat.)	Mr Duncan (SAP)
Senator Langenhoven (Nat.)	Mr Hofmeyr (SAP)
Senator Smit (Nat.)	Mr Krige (SAP)
Senator Thompson (Nat.)	Mr Payn (SAP)
Senator P. W. le R. van Niekerk (Nat.)	General Smuts (SAP)
Col Cdt Collins (SAP)	Major G. B. van Zyl (SAP)
Mr P. C. de Villiers (Nat.)	
Mr le Roux (Nat.)	
Mr Tom Naude (Nat.)	
Mr Nicholls (SAP)	
Col Stallard (SAP)	
Dr Stals (Nat.)	
Mr Wessels (Nat.)	

The significance of this voting was the call of party. Smuts fought for the Cape native voters because they supported the South African Party. Stallard, like myself, was concerned with finding a solution to the native problem.

Unanimity not having been found possible, the Committee was in danger of closing up and reporting to the House that a solution had not been found, and that the Committee was in a state of deadlock. To prevent this happening and to ensure that the work should be continued, Pen Wessels and I got together and worked out a compromise and on May 14th Wessels moved this motion:

In view of the failure to arrive at unanimous decision on Motion No. 3 of the 9th inst. the Committee accepts as a basis for discussion the Bill proposed by Mr Nicholls, together with the additions pro-

posed thereto by Col Stallard, but subject to the substitution of European for native Senators.

I was prepared to accept this exchange, notwithstanding its fundamental character, because I believed that the logic of the developing native situation would, in time, compel even the Nationalist Government, in order to secure the dominance of the European, to accept the Natal proposal and ultimately remove the colour bar from the Senate. As events turned out my Bill with European instead of native Senators was adopted by eighteen votes to eight. This remained the basis for discussion throughout the whole period, until fusion took place in 1934 and the Cabinet took over from the Select Committee all further considerations on the native question. It shall be recorded that Natal's effort to find a solution met with the full approval of a number of the leading natives of that time.

In 1932 the Select Committee busied itself mainly with the Natives Land Act which, on the proposals of Natal, became the Native Trust and Land Act. The original Hertzog Bill merely set aside areas in which natives could acquire land by purchase. Natal argued that this was an empty gesture. The natives could never buy land; they were too poor. Consequently, the Natal proposal to establish a Native Trust which should 'acquire out of the moneys provided from time to time by Parliament, seven and one quarter million morgen of land for the purpose of the Act', was accepted.

During the 1932 recess the Committee sat again as a Commission in Pretoria and unanimously adopted the Bills, with slight amendments, which had already been agreed upon in the Select Committee. Unanimity was obtained, and this report of the Commission was submitted to Parliament. Strong pressure was, however, exercised by the South African Party upon certain of its members to remain away and thus prevent the Commission from sitting. I strongly resented this pressure and voiced my feelings in correspondence with the general secretary of the party.

In the session of 1932 and 1933 the proceedings of the Select

Committee were suspended after the first few meetings. Greater events were taking place. In what was though to be a permanent national reconciliation, a coalition of the parties took place which later ripened into fusion. The native legislation which had occupied the attention of us all for so long passed out of the hands of the Select Committee into those of the united Cabinet, and all the old independence in the Committee disappeared.

When it again met in February of 1935 the Prime Minister, Hertzog, took charge and moved for the establishment of a Native Representative Council instead of the long accepted Senate Grand Committee on Native Affairs proposed by Stallard and accepted by me. I refused to vote for it, protesting that it was a poor and dangerous substitute for Stallard's conception of the Grand Committee which, within the walls of Parliament, would add to the dignity and purpose of the Senate as the chamber for all races of the nation; but the fusion spirit was strong upon all members. They conformed to the wishes of the new Government.

Finally, after the Commission had reported the Bill, Parliament was bull-dozed by a back-stairs intrigue with Cape members into accepting another Bill, styled No 2 Bill, which provided for three Europeans to represent the 12,000 Cape native voters in the House of Assembly. It was on the acceptance of this Bill that Malan claimed he could no longer support Hertzog.

This was the final blow to the structure which Natal had attempted to create, and the effect has been momentous for South Africa. The sixteen members of Parliament for Natal, acting together within the South African Party, were a political force to be reckoned with, since the South African Party could not have come to power without them. They were federally minded, and had committed the South African Party to a federal devolution of powers to the Provinces. But sixteen members in a Party of some 150 after coalition were a mere bagatelle and could be ignored—as they were. So the influence of Natal, where the real Africa lies and where the destiny of South Africa will ultimately be determined, vanished.

The alleged generosity of this compromise with the Cape was merely a cloak to hide the refusal of the Cape to allow natives to

sit in the Senate, a concession which would have not only safeguarded the Europeans but which would have enabled us to face the world with a better conscience and, at the same time, would have given a measure of satisfaction to the millions of voteless tribal natives who knew and cared little about the detribalized 12,000 native voters at the Cape.

It is now twenty-three years since that decision was taken and white South Africa, in a thoroughly bemused state of mind, is groping round to find some other way out of its difficulties. The satisfactions of 1936 have melted away. There is no Senate Grand Committee which would have been permanently in session with native members to consider with others all concepts of native affairs. The Native Representative Council has gone—abolished by Verwoerd, since become all-powerful. The idea that it was possible to maintain a static institution of that character outside of Parliament has been exploded. The elected native leaders of the Native Representative Council drawn from different parts of the Union, in the absence of any extension of any real power and with their resolutions ignored by Parliament, coalesced on closer acquaintance with each other into a permanent opposition to the Government. In their intransigence they sowed a more virile seed of African nationalism, now being garnered by the African National Congress.

The solemn undertaking of the white man given in Parliament by Hertzog to spend £10,000,000 or more if necessary, to purchase 7,250,000 morgen of land within five years has not been carried out at even this date, nor have the necessary means been provided to develop native reserves. Instead of having the natives as co-operators in our all-African policy we have bred up two antagonistic white races, themselves divided upon the solution of the problem, while the natives have become more united and more hostile. Dissension is the only common quality.

The manoeuvres of party politics which brought about these sudden changes in the long accepted plan of the Select Committee have worsened our racial relations. Undoubtedly they set the political pendulum swinging in both directions. The clamant

cries of our European Fabians in the House of Assembly lighted fires of disaffection in native political circles to quell which we have introduced restrictive and authoritarian legislation with which we have grown painfully familiar. That favourable atmosphere for the exercise of our benevolent trusteeship has disappeared. The new ideology of *Apartheid*—which is an attitude of mind—is the direct consequence of the compromise of 1936. And there appears no end to it. In terror we seek to defend ourselves by guns and more guns, legal and authoritarian, and a large part of the life of every Parliamentary session is spent in stopping some breach in the growing ramparts of our ideological legislation.

It is now impossible to go back to 1936. The conditions have completely changed. Whatever Governments may do, the enterprise and initiative of a free society, careless of political theory, will not be prevented from integrating the millions of non-Europeans into the industry and business life of the country. The work of South Africa will go on, and it cannot go on without the natives. A new generation is arising. The old tribal control is weakening all along the line, and we must face a new Africa, a new world.

CHAPTER XXI

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS

(1856–1959)

THE Indian question in South Africa has, through the United Nations, achieved world publicity. It is today as pressing and vital as it was in 1932, when, as a member of the second Round Table Conference held in Cape Town, I sat with other South African delegates to discuss the issues with representatives of the Government of India; there a practical and sound solution to the whole question was presented and lost. A dazzling future for India as a Colonial power, for which millions of her starved, sub-economic citizens are crying today, was allowed to drop into the limbo of undeveloped ideas and unexecuted theories. It was a solution which, while incidentally going far to solve the Indian problem in South Africa, would have immeasurably enhanced India's status in the world. Had it been implemented, it might well have altered the history of the Second World War.

The story of the failure of 1932 is told not simply as a record of historical interest, but in the very real hope that the facts, drawn again from the underworld of forgotten causes and published for the first time, may strike a spark in fresh young minds and so be revitalized, for the embryo of the scheme is there for the taking, very much as it was twenty-six years ago, and it is still good. Britain, Australia and India would have to consult together, thrash out difficulties and put a new plan of colonization before the world in which the old idealism could be fully recognized and bear fruit for the benefit of mankind, and which the absurd ideological hostility worked up against colonization could be seen for what it is.

The Indian problem in South Africa began with the expansion of white settlement in Natal, under various immigration schemes

established in England during the 1850's. Natal was then seen to offer an attractive place for white settlement. It had a wonderful climate, fertile soil, cheap land, a large, subdued barbarian race living in their own demarcated areas, thoroughly disciplined under tribal law and easily governed by hereditary chiefs prepared to co-operate with the Europeans, and there was the additional attraction of the port of Durban which offered an easy access to overseas markets.

Closer acquaintance by the settlers with the land had revealed a number of difficulties. First and foremost the local native population had not reached an economic stage. They could not be tempted to work for the European for any reward. The attempt to grow cash crops on the small settlements required dependable labour. Either the idea of growing eastern products for which the climate was eminently suitable had to be abandoned, or labour had to be obtained from somewhere outside. The system of obtaining labour from India under indenture had long since been in practice in British Guiana, Mauritius and the West Indies. It never occurred to anyone in Natal at that time that there was anything wrong in acquiring Indian labour under indenture. Neither colonization nor imperialism had then become a crime.

Indeed the number of Indians who had gone abroad as 'coolies' was evidence of the popularity of the system of indenture, and the poverty-stricken conditions amongst the depressed classes in India invited their recruitment and made them ready and anxious to enter into a three-years' contract of indenturedom in Natal. So between 1860 and 1866 5,000 indentured Indians were admitted into Natal, the majority of whom were absorbed as labourers on the sugar plantations of the coastal belt.

These people were drawn from the Indian peasant classes whose habits and standards differed vastly from western ways, people who, in their own country, were daily exposed to the humiliations of class distinction imposed upon them by their own upper classes. They came to South Africa because there was no future for them in India, and because the indenture system ensured them conditions far better than they could ever hope to enjoy in their homeland—employment, fair wages and, at the

expiration of their contract, a free return to India. They were never regarded as a part of the permanent population of South Africa either by South Africa or by themselves. They came as temporary sojourners. So satisfactorily did the indenture system appear to be on all sides that many of the Indians, at the termination of their contract, remained to enter freely into a further period of indenture. No compulsion was put upon them to do this, but no doubt interested employers offered them inducements to continue working on the plantations.

The Government consented to this agreement so long as those who re-indentured paid a yearly tax of £3, which constituted a licence to remain in South Africa. The belief, however, remained that, if and when required to do so, the Indian would eventually be repatriated to India, and to meet the cost of doing so it was compulsory for every employer of Indians to contribute towards a repatriation fund.

As time went on, because of the alien nature of their habits and customs, it was found necessary to admit another body of Indians into Natal to administer to the wants of the indentured. These Indians paid their own passages to South Africa and were consequently known as 'free' Indians. They were all Moslems and facetiously named 'passengers' by the 'coolies' who were all Hindus. They had money and experience and many were sent to South Africa by the rich merchants of India. They at once engaged in the trade of the country and because of their lower standards of living were able to undercut European competitors.

So the number of Indians in South Africa grew. Soon they were to be found in all industries in Natal; in the coal mines, the railways and in general farming activities. In commerce they were almost ubiquitous, and in their competitive strength affected the European who began to demand their repatriation. But the desires of vested interests, who benefited by their presence prevailed and the Indians remained.

The fight for Indian repatriation then began and became a battle between two sections of the European community—commerce on the one hand, which complained that the Indian was cutting the throat of the European, and industry on the

other, which owed much of its profit to the presence of cheap labour.

From the arrival of the first shipload of indentured Indians in Natal, the Orange Free State had consistently declared them prohibited immigrants. The Transvaal Republic would have liked to do the same, but was bound to Britain by the London Convention which gave recognition to the Republic, and, fearing to alienate Britain, the Boers allowed Indians to enter the Transvaal, but passed legislation compelling them to register on arrival and to reside in certain areas, on grounds of sanitation and public health.

As the years passed and the number of Indians continued to grow in South Africa so the cry from a certain section of the European community for their repatriation grew too. In an attempt to placate this insistent demand, and at the same time to do nothing to destroy the gain obtained from the presence of the Indian in South Africa, the Governments of Natal and the Transvaal and later of the Union, passed more and more legislation discriminating against the Indians. In the Transvaal not only were they relegated residentially to certain areas, but attempt were made to restrict their trading rights as well. Indians were prohibited from acquiring land except in special Indian areas and one of the first acts of the Natal Government, when the Colony was granted responsible government in 1893, was to abolish the parliamentary vote, which all Indian males who were over the age of twenty-one and owned £10 worth of fixed property enjoyed by virtue of their British citizenship.

As the legislation against the Indians piled up in the Statute Book, the Government of India became increasingly disturbed and the British Government showed extreme concern over the treatment of her subjects in South Africa, where the public opinion of the European voters was continually pressing hard upon the Government to introduce legislation which would offend the British sense of justice; consequently a considerable strain was imposed upon British-Indian relations.

In 1911, a year after union, the Government of India stopped the supply of indentured labour. This did nothing, however, to

prevent the entry of 'free' Indians to the country, whose presence and competition was what the Europeans chiefly feared.

In 1913 an Act was passed restricting Indians from moving from one Province to another and prohibiting the admittance to South Africa of all classes and races who, by reason of their standards and habits of life, were considered undesirable. Although 'Indians' were not especially mentioned, there was no doubt against whom the legislation was directed.

The Indians, long since writhing under the inferior status to which this legislation relegated them, found a champion and a leader in Mahatma Gandhi, who came to Natal as an unknown barrister in 1893, and who, in 1894, founded the Natal Indian Congress. As a result of the Immigration Regulations Act of 1913, a strike of Indian labour on the coal mines of Northern Natal was organized. This spread to the sugar-fields where riots took place and culminated in a march of two thousand Indians who, led by Gandhi, advanced over the Natal border into the Transvaal. Gandhi was arrested and eventually put into gaol, and the marchers, without their leader, were persuaded to return to Natal. Smuts was then Minister of Justice in the Botha Government. He and Gandhi were firm friends and mutually admired one another. A story is told how Smuts sent philosophical books to his friend in gaol while Gandhi returned the compliment by working on a pair of Indian sandals for Smuts!

Immediately after these disturbances a Commission of Enquiry was appointed to look into their complaints. This resulted in the Smuts–Gandhi agreement of 1914, which, in an attempt to appease Indian feeling, abrogated the £3 annual tax which Indians were required to pay to remain in South Africa. Ever since this agreement there have been differences of opinion on its meaning. In South Africa it was merely regarded as a tax remission, the removal of a financial burden upon people who could not afford to pay it; the abolition was not regarded as bringing about a change in the status of Indians in South Africa. In India, however, the abolition was considered to be the removal of the stigma of indenturedom; by it the Indians were converted to the status of British subjects.

Although Smuts repudiated India's interpretation at an Imperial Conference, saying:

> There is one British citizenship over the whole Empire, and that should be. That is something solid and enduring, but we must not place a wrong interpretation upon it. We must not derive from the one British citizenship the rights of franchise, because that would be a profound mistake.

there is no doubt that the Smuts–Gandhi agreement destroyed one of the strong legal compulsions for the Indians' repatriation.

During the 1914–18 war the Indian question remained in abeyance, but after the Armistice with the growing number of Indians competing not only in trade with the Europeans, but also in the labour market, the old cry for repatriation rose again. The post-war financial stringency added to its urgency, and to the voice of the European was added that of the native people, who objected to the presence near their kraals of Asiatic aliens, who were different in religion and language and ways of life from themselves, and who were granted many of the freedoms of the European which were denied to the natives under tribal law.

But the way of the Government became increasingly difficult. Smuts saw in any solution for South Africa the possibility of antagonizing India, alienating the British, and, in his own country, the ever-present danger of being voted out of power in favour of a Nationalist Government. He tried to placate everybody by introducing the Class Areas Bill, in which he proposed to divert all Indian trade and landownership to certain fixed areas. The Bill began its lively journey through Parliament amidst much political propaganda on both sides and effectively lit the heather. At once the powerful political organization, the Indian National Congress, got busy with its backers in India, and the Indian Government intervened on the grounds that, since we denied full citizenship rights to Indians, it was the Indian Government's duty to protect their citizens in South Africa.

In Natal, the constituency of Zululand which I represented from 1920 contained the bulk of the Indians outside of Durban.

They were, however, prohibited by the Imperial Government from crossing the geographical boundary between Natal and Zululand—the Tugela River—and entering Zululand proper. My constituency therefore was unique, in that it contained two areas: one in which the Indian had full municipal rights with the European and was in control of the bulk of the trade, both European and native, and the other into which he was not permitted to enter. Stanger was the only town in the Union where the Indians had the voting majority in the municipal franchise, but there was at this time a great cry to deprive them even of this privilege. I did not interest myself much in this political campaign which was tearing up the lower half of my constituency. I adopted the calmly neutral attitude of Zululand and blessed my good luck in having so large an area where the controversy did not raise any pulse-beats.

When, as a candidate in 1920, I was asked about the Indian problem in my constituency, my reply was that the whites were responsible for the Asiatics; they brought them here. It was the Europeans' trade which kept the Asiatics going. 'You cannot ask the state to protect you when you are not willing to protect yourselves,' I said. 'If you cease to buy from them they will not exist.' There was no reply to this argument.

Before the proposed Class Areas Bill could be translated into law, however, there was a change of Government and the South African Party fell from power to be replaced by the Pact Government under Hertzog. In Natal the Provincial Council immediately passed an ordinance abolishing the Indian municipal franchise, and under a borough ordinance Indians were excluded from the right to purchase municipally-owned land in Durban. In the meantime Malan, now Minister of the Interior, was working on a new Class Areas Bill, which never got beyond its first reading. The terms raised such a storm of objection amongst the Indian people in South Africa, that for the first time British-Indian relationships were really threatened.

The despatches exchanged between India and the Pact Government afford a striking example of diplomacy in action. Against Malan's somewhat crude attempts to justify his actions

against the Indians, came the polished wedge from India to enforce consultation before the Government was committed to legislation. The Union Government ultimately yielded by accepting a Indian delegation which gave evidence before a Select Committee which brought about the first Round Table Conference in Cape Town in 1927. This terminated in the Cape Town Agreement which completely bedevilled the whole problem by recognizing the right of Indians who could conform to western standards of civilization, to become citizens of the Union. It was assumed at the time that the number of Indians reaching these standards would be very few. The Agreement also recognized the need for a repatriation scheme for those Indians who could not conform to western standards. This became known as the 'assisted emigration scheme', which offered, as well as free passages, a bonus of £20 as an inducement to Indians to return to India. The Agreement also committed South Africa to an 'uplift policy' to be carried out towards those Indians remaining in South Africa. Lastly it was provided that after a period of five years the Agreement should be reviewed. It should be borne in mind that the Government, in passing this legislation, knew very little about the Indian question in Natal. Its eyes were fixed on the Transvaal where only twenty per cent of the Indians lived and who were mostly Moslems and traders.

Outside of interested circles, the rest of South Africa seemed to be satisfied with the results of the Conference. In Natal, however, where the bulk of the Indian population lay, the terms of the agreement were particularly unpopular amongst the Europeans. The 'uplift' provisions, being chiefly Provincial matters, were left to the Provincial Council to carry out, without any special financial provisions being made to meet the cost of the additional hospital accommodation and educational facilities which the Province was now compelled to pay, and where the white population which had to meet the costs was small. This interference of the Central Government in a purely Provincial matter was resented; furthermore there was no test whether an Indian could conform to western standards or not.

But the chief obstacle to the success of the Cape Town Agree-

ment was the failure of repatriation. Although during the first years, two or three hundred Indians per month returned to India, only one per cent of this number were traders, the class against which there was the biggest outcry. As time went on fewer and fewer Indians availed themselves of the assisted repatriation scheme. This was largely due to the opposition of a certain part of the Indian community in South Africa.

In making his decision not to go, the Indian was aided and abetted by the Indian Congress and all the Indian affiliated societies who had officially agreed to do their best to carry out the terms of the Cape Town Agreement, but who, in fact, held meetings in which they gave out propaganda in actual conflict with the terms of the Agreement, the Agent-General himself actively participating. Meetings were held and the leaders of the Indian community impressed upon their people that they should not accept the repatriation scheme. They did in fact everything they could to hinder it. At one time, in Natal especially, not only was opposition definitely expressed at public meetings by a section of the Indians, but special leaflets were also distributed dissuading Indians from returning to India. Letters were found written by a man in Durban and sent to India to be posted there to Indians in Natal, saying what a terrible state he was in, and what a terrible state the other Indians were in who had been repatriated. Many of the Indians in South Africa were very ignorant and believed stories told to them that the ships repatriating them to India did not go to India at all but went to British Guiana, and that they never saw India again. There were also stories that the ships taking them from Durban were made after the style of a dredger and had false bottoms, which when they were half way across the Indian Ocean, were opened and the immigrants went to the bottom of the sea, or that, when they arrived in India, they were not allowed to land, but were simply shipped somewhere else. These stories helped considerably to reduce the number of repatriates. The Indian leaders fully realized the golden opportunity their foothold in South Africa held for them and, having got so far, they were not easily to be persuaded to return.

I had nothing to do with the 1927 Round Table Conference, but in January, 1932 I was appointed a member of the second Round Table Conference held in Cape Town to consider the result of the past five years' working of the original Agreement. The Indian delegation consisted of Kurma Reddi, the Indian Agent-General in South Africa (appointed after the 1927 Agreement), V. S. S. Sastri, Darcy Lindsay, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, G. S. Bajpai, Fazlin Hussein and Baring. The Union delegation was Malan, Patrick Duncan, Pirow, Jansen and myself.

The Conference first agreed that the repatriation scheme envisaged in the 1927 Agreement had failed. Its renewal was thus in doubt and there was a feeling at the time that the conference had broken down. If that were so, the Agent-General would disappear, and South Africa would resort to its former policy of class segregation. This was a serious matter.

Fearing that this might happen, members of the Indian delegation approached me and asked me to a private dinner at the Mount Nelson Hotel at which all the Indian delegates were present. Towards the end of the meal a suggestion was made to me that a way out of the deadlock could be found by reverting to the idea of colonization in countries other than India, provision for which had been made in the 1927 Agreement in the following words:

> The Union Government has agreed to organize a scheme of assisted immigration to India or *other countries*, where western standards of civilization are not required.

We had not considered that aspect; and the Indians began to develop arguments in its favour.

The South African Indian community of some 200,000 was a negligible factor compared with the three hundred and fifty millions of India, yet their grievances were a perpetually running sore in the body politic of India, and were continually exploited by the Indian politicians to the embarrassment of the Indian Government. Any assistance, therefore, which the Indian Government could possibly give in the development of a coloni-

zation scheme which would lead to an effective reduction of the South African Indian population, would be willingly agreed to.

There existed in India a strong national feeling in favour of colonization. Indians had gone to all parts of the world as indentured labourers, and had remained in a state of serfdom which prevented their attaining the rank of citizenship in the countries in which they settled. Europeans, on the contrary, had always left their country as free men and had become the owners of the land of their adoption. The stigma of serfdom, placed upon Indians under the system of indenture, could only be removed by the development of a colonization scheme which would show to the world that Indians, too, had the capacity and the initiative to colonize other countries.

The Indians in South Africa were eminently fitted to be the pioneers of an Indian national colonization movement. They were all trained in western economic methods, and skilled in many of the arts of colonization. They had outgrown the old communal life. They were accustomed to grapple with difficulties in a new land. They contained among themselves all the essential trades and callings necessary for a pioneer community. Therefore, if a national colonization movement could be established which would appeal to the patriotism of the South African Indians, and offer them some economic reward greater than that which they now enjoyed, these Indians would certainly take part in it.

When discussing the possibilities of such a scheme, Mrs Naidu said that she spoke for Gandhi in this matter and therefore, for the Indian Congress; she gave an assurance that she herself would come to South Africa and tell the resident Indians that they owed it to their mother country to lead the van of the new national movement.

After much talk, I agreed to sponsor this proposal to seek a colony for Indians to go to from South Africa and become the *voorloopers* of a great Indian immigration scheme. I had in mind at the time that they might go to New Guinea about which I knew a good deal. It happened that week-end that Patrick Duncan invited me to meet Smuts for lunch at his house at

Second R[illegible] [illegible]onference, Cape Town 1932
(Mr [illegible] [illegible]nd from left, front row)

PLATE 6

[illegible]roup in London (General Smut[illegible], Ioma Nicholls (Mrs Pritchard) and Mr Nicholls)

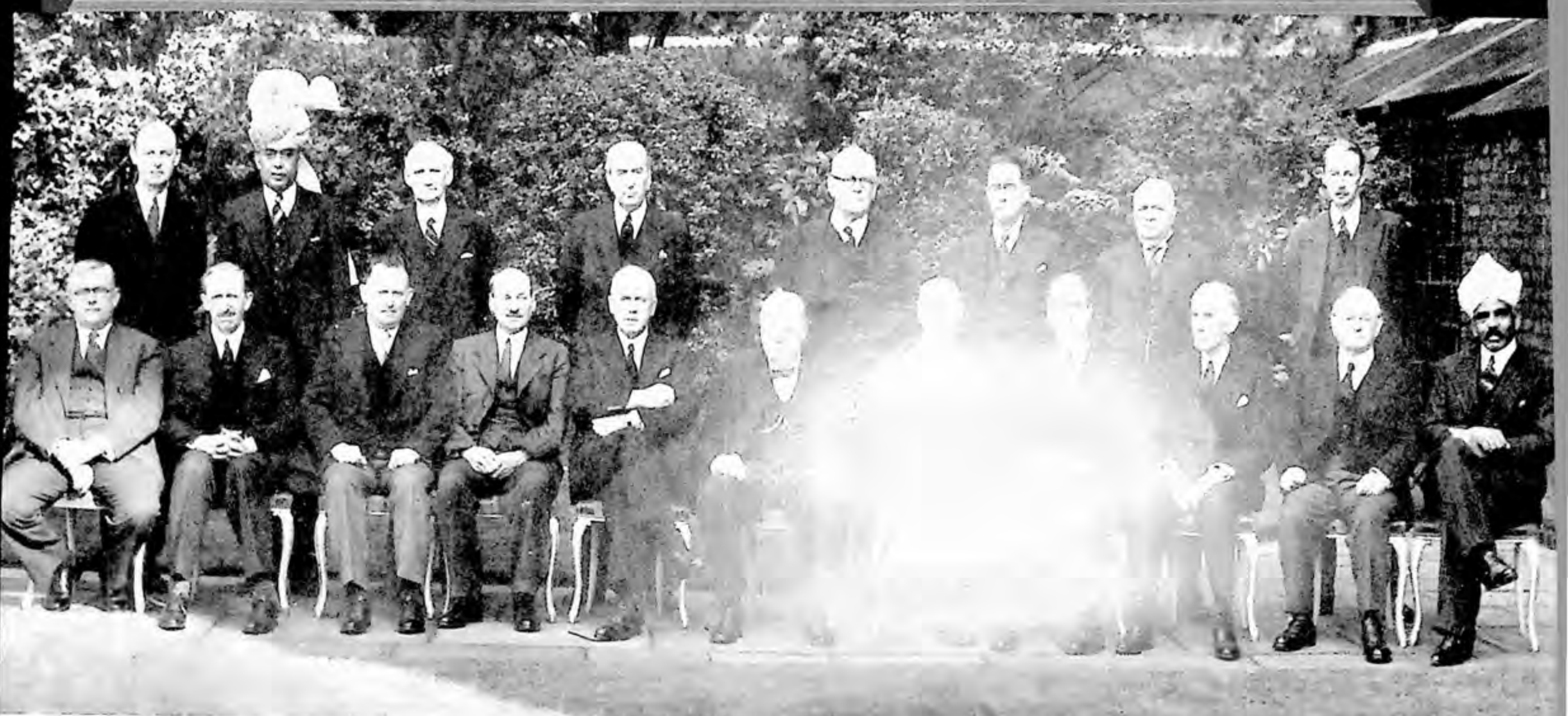

PLATE 7. The Imperial Conference, 1945
(Mr Heaton Nicholls is third from left, back row)

Muizenburg. We discussed this new project brought forward by the Indian delegation over lunch; Smuts's reaction was that it might be done along the lines suggested. 'If we can open a door anywhere,' he said, 'we can do much to assist their going by giving them a push from behind. But we must get a door open first.'

This suggestion was therefore brought forward and urged by Sastri at the next meeting of the Round Table Conference and a tentative agreement was arrived at to continue for the present the existing arrangement (i.e. the Cape Town Agreement of 1927). This was opposed by South Africa initially as it would have been decidedly beneficial for her to terminate this Agreement.

The Indian delegation, however, pleaded for its continuance, without amendment, pointing out that its termination would not be understood by the public, and that, if the search for a colony or colonies was successful, it would fail in its purpose if relations between India and South Africa had meanwhile become estranged. With much misgiving on the part of the Union delegation, the Indian suggestion was accepted. It was further agreed that a joint committee be appointed by India and South Africa to explore, within twelve months, the possibilities of colonization in countries other than India; and that present discussion should be adjourned for twelve months when an *ad hoc* Round Table Conference should be called together after the Commission had reported.

Agreement having been reached, a statement was then drafted and published simultaneously in Delhi and Cape Town during April, 1932. This statement, accepted alike by the Union Parliament, the Government of India and by the South African Indian Congress, who had been taken into confidence by the Indian delegation and who gave support to the idea, laid down that:

(1) A colony was to be sought for the purpose of settling Indians from India in which Indians from South Africa could take part.
(2) The enquiry was to take place during the course of that year.
(3) Pending the enquiry the Cape Town Agreement would continue.

There is no doubt that the Conference left the cards in South Africa's hands; but Malan failed to make use of them. The next move lay with India, but India completely ignored the whole issue. It offered no representation on the proposed committee of enquiry. All that was needed to bring India to heel was for the Minister to inform the Viceroy that unless the proposed Joint Commission was appointed within a certain time, the Cape Town Agreement would lapse. But Malan did nothing.

Had the commission been appointed, I suppose its first objective would have been to discuss the matter with the Colonial Office and India Office in London, if only to ascertain whether a British colony could be had which would form a suitable colonization ground for Indians. One could only assume that it was Malan's anti-British attitude which prevented him from seeking the assistance of the Colonial Office. Instead, he turned to Brazil! The reply from that country was in the negative; one does not know why since at that time Brazil was in the process of taking a million Japanese.

On April 13, Baring, secretary to Sastri and later Governor of Kenya, who had been left behind in South Africa by the Indian delegation, consulted the leaders of the South African Indian Congress regarding the appointment of a representative to the Joint Commission. The Congress reply was delayed until it met in Johannesburg on September 1st when it wired accepting the appointment of a member. This information was communicated to Malan. Nothing further was done until February 1933.

There had been a change of government in South Africa in the meantime. Coalition came about and Malan ceased to be Minister of the Interior. His successor, Hofmeyr, knew nothing at first-hand of the Indian position, and I considered it my duty to enlighten him. As a result the Minister made strong representations to India concerning its failure to implement the undertaking given in the joint statement of the Round Table Conference twelve months before.

The Indian Government replied that the appointment of the Joint Commission was inopportune. Hofmeyr, with the intention of keeping the matter alive, then notified the Indian Government

that he intended to appoint a local Committee to conduct preliminary investigations in South Africa which would report on the country or countries in which the Joint Commission could conduct further investigations, when it was appointed. On May 2, 1933, a despatch from the Government of India recorded that, while India had no objection to the appointment of a local committee, it was not enthusiastic, and doubted whether the matter should be entrusted to the kind of mixed committee contemplated. Subsequently, on June 8th the Indian Government agreed to the appointment of the local Committee which was announced in Parliament on June 15th.

I was a member of this Committee, called the Indian Colonization Enquiry Committee. The chairman was a retired chief magistrate, James Young; P. F. Kincaid, the Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, and Naidoo, a representative of the South African Indian Community, were the other members. The object of the Committee was to keep the Indian proposal of colonization alive.

When its report was published, it had a bad press in the Union, and of course a worse one in India. The *Rand Daily Mail*, for instance, which knew nothing about the origin of the proposed enquiry expressed its opinion in these words:

> We have not seen anything funnier than the Indian Colonization Inquiry Committee's report for a long time . . . the most striking feature about these suggestions is their undisguised egoism. . . . The report does the Committee little credit. . . . This attempt to use the Empire as a dumping ground is, of course, doomed to failure, but it certainly is a cool piece of cheek.

A despatch from India commenting on the reports of the Committee stated:

> Colonization scheme was to be primarily Indian scheme undertaken for the benefit of India's surplus millions, more correctly expressed in words: 'Government of India will co-operate with Union Government in exploring possibility,' etc. used by Minister. My Government wishes to assure Minister that they are ready to

abide by their undertaking. They would point out, however, that while present financial stringency lasts the possibility of India's participation in any scheme of colonization that may emerge from such exploration is impossible.

It was thus clear that, after agreeing that such an exploration should take place within twelve months of the Round Table Conference, the Indian Government now washed their hands of it.

Hofmeyr sent an immediate despatch dated May 16, 1934, and drew attention to the dependence of the Committee on an Indian Congress statement which explicitly said:

> The Congress agrees to co-operate with the Government of India and the Union of South Africa in the former's mission to explore outlets for colonization in regard to her increasing population.

On December 25th, a despatch from the Viceroy (Willingdon) said:

> Indian Delegates proposed investigation, primarily to disarm opposition in South Africa to an exclusively South African scheme, which, it was felt, would be resented by Indian community in South Africa as branding them as undesirable element in the population of the Union.
>
> In view of the emphasis which the Committee have laid upon the scheme of colonization being an Indian scheme on a large scale, 'public opinion' in India has not unnaturally expressed itself in the sense that India must determine the scope of the investigation. Financial conditions, it is suggested, will for a long time to come, preclude India affording the expense of a scheme of colonization for Indians from India on a large scale.
>
> My Government feel sure that your Excellency's Ministers will admit the force and inevitability of the conclusion that India will not be justified in taking steps now, or in any measurable time hereafter, to explore the possibility of large-scale colonization from India in any outside country. My Government would also suggest that Ministers might prefer to devote funds, probably considerable, that would be

needed for any successful scheme of colonization, to expenditure in the Union on measures of 'uplift' which would enable resident Indian population to conform to Western standards of life.

On March 9, 1935, the following minute was sent to India by the South African Government:

Ministers find it difficult to reconcile statement with the fact that, as stated in Para. 2 of the despatch, the Government of India at the 1932 Round Table Conference 'agreed to co-operate with the Government of India in exploring the possibilities of a Colonization scheme for settling Indians both from India and South Africa in other countries' save so far as emphasis may be laid on the words 'large scale' in the conclusion set forth in the despatch.

Ministers are, however, unable to accept the apparent implication that large-scale schemes were to be excluded from the scope of the proposed investigation. On the contrary, it is clear from the records of the Conference that the representatives of the Government of India conceived of the proposed colonization scheme and specifically referred to it as one which would be on a large scale.

Ministers, therefore, regretfully find it necessary to place on record that in their opinion the present attitude of the Government of India cannot be reconciled with the proposal made and accepted in regard to the colonization enquiry of 1932, but for which the continuance of the original Round Table Conference would not have been agreed to.

Nearly two years elapsed before any further communications passed on this subject; then on January 30, 1937, after Hofmeyr and others returned from a Parliamentary tour of India, the following despatch came from the Viceroy (Linlithgow):

My Government and I have noticed with concern that your Excellency's Ministers consider the attitude taken by my predecessor's despatch of Dec. 25th as irreconcilable with the proposals made and accepted in regard to the Colonization Enquiry of 1932, but for which the continuance of the original Round Table Agreement would not have been agreed to.

We wish to assure them that the Government of India has not

> abide by their undertaking. They would point out, however, that while present financial stringency lasts the possibility of India's participation in any scheme of colonization that may emerge from such exploration is impossible.

It was thus clear that, after agreeing that such an exploration should take place within twelve months of the Round Table Conference, the Indian Government now washed their hands of it.

Hofmeyr sent an immediate despatch dated May 16, 1934, and drew attention to the dependence of the Committee on an Indian Congress statement which explicitly said:

> The Congress agrees to co-operate with the Government of India and the Union of South Africa in the former's mission to explore outlets for colonization in regard to her increasing population.

On December 25th, a despatch from the Viceroy (Willingdon) said:

> Indian Delegates proposed investigation, primarily to disarm opposition in South Africa to an exclusively South African scheme, which, it was felt, would be resented by Indian community in South Africa as branding them as undesirable element in the population of the Union.
>
> In view of the emphasis which the Committee have laid upon the scheme of colonization being an Indian scheme on a large scale, 'public opinion' in India has not unnaturally expressed itself in the sense that India must determine the scope of the investigation. Financial conditions, it is suggested, will for a long time to come, preclude India affording the expense of a scheme of colonization for Indians from India on a large scale.
>
> My Government feel sure that your Excellency's Ministers will admit the force and inevitability of the conclusion that India will not be justified in taking steps now, or in any measurable time hereafter, to explore the possibility of large-scale colonization from India in any outside country. My Government would also suggest that Ministers might prefer to devote funds, probably considerable, that would be

needed for any successful scheme of colonization, to expenditure in the Union on measures of 'uplift' which would enable resident Indian population to conform to Western standards of life.

On March 9, 1935, the following minute was sent to India by the South African Government:

> Ministers find it difficult to reconcile statement with the fact that, as stated in Para. 2 of the despatch, the Government of India at the 1932 Round Table Conference 'agreed to co-operate with the Government of India in exploring the possibilities of a Colonization scheme for settling Indians both from India and South Africa in other countries' save so far as emphasis may be laid on the words 'large scale' in the conclusion set forth in the despatch.
>
> Ministers are, however, unable to accept the apparent implication that large-scale schemes were to be excluded from the scope of the proposed investigation. On the contrary, it is clear from the records of the Conference that the representatives of the Government of India conceived of the proposed colonization scheme and specifically referred to it as one which would be on a large scale.
>
> Ministers, therefore, regretfully find it necessary to place on record that in their opinion the present attitude of the Government of India cannot be reconciled with the proposal made and accepted in regard to the colonization enquiry of 1932, but for which the continuance of the original Round Table Conference would not have been agreed to.

Nearly two years elapsed before any further communications passed on this subject; then on January 30, 1937, after Hofmeyr and others returned from a Parliamentary tour of India, the following despatch came from the Viceroy (Linlithgow):

> My Government and I have noticed with concern that your Excellency's Ministers consider the attitude taken by my predecessor's despatch of Dec. 25th as irreconcilable with the proposals made and accepted in regard to the Colonization Enquiry of 1932, but for which the continuance of the original Round Table Agreement would not have been agreed to.
>
> We wish to assure them that the Government of India has not

> resiled from any engagement that they made in 1932. . . . Your Excellency's Ministers may therefore count upon it that if they should decide to pursue the question of colonization, my Government would co-operate to such extent and in such manner as may be possible. I would, however, suggest in view of the difficulties pointed out by the despatch of Dec. 25th, consideration of the matter be postponed until after federation.

Five precious years had passed since the Indian delegation had pleaded with me at the Mount Nelson Hotel to support the scheme, after they realized that the Conference had broken down and the 1927 Agreement was about to be ended. I accepted the delegation's statement that a colonization movement was spreading in India. I agreed that the status of India would be raised by its having a colony of its own, and I accepted the position that our Indians in South Africa were better trained and more fitted to become the *voortrekkers* of an Indian colonization scheme than any section of the Indian population that I knew in India. Their going would ensure the success of the colonization.

I had been made aware of India's efforts to colonize British Guiana and other places, which had come to nothing because of lack of finance, but I had no reason to suppose that efforts in those directions would not be continued. But chiefly my thoughts were fixed on the wonderful opportunity offered in Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, still languishing in the Stone Age. Hoping to make some definite progress towards this end, I wrote a memorandum on the subject and submitted it to a conference between Hertzog, Smuts and Patrick Duncan on the eve of the departure of Hertzog and Duncan to attend King George V's Jubilee celebrations. In it I pointed out that it was obvious that departmental enquiries and colourless and unimaginative communications between governments would lead nowhere. What was needed was diplomatic action and the diplomatic action proposed would stimulate (1) in India a demand for colonization; (2) in Britain a desire to offer India a Colony, and (3) in Australia a realization that if New Guinea was not soon occupied by Indians, it would shortly be in the hands of the Japanese.

My memorandum drew attention to the fact that the East Indian Archipelago offered the best prospects for Indian colonization. It was the ancient colonization ground for India; centuries ago India gave Java its culture and religion. In Malay and Borneo much of the labour, particularly in the plantations, was now carried on by Indian labour. The whole Archipelago from Malaya to the Philippines, and from Borneo to New Guinea had a total area of just over a million square miles and was one of the richest regions in the world; the population, while thick in parts, was in other parts, like New Guinea, only four per square mile. It stretches like a wall between Malaya and Australia, separating the Pacific from the Indian Ocean. All trade which passes between the Far East and the West must pass through the narrow seas which run between these islands. Its strategic value, therefore, could not be exaggerated, and whoever held the Archipelago commanded the trade routes of the Pacific. I pointed out that:

> At the moment, with the exception of the Philippines, now becoming independent, all the islands of the Archipelago are governed by European powers—North Borneo by the British, through a chartered company whose shares are standing at 3s 6d and could easily be bought out, the eastern half of New Guinea, including the former German New Guinea by Australia, the island of Timor by the Portuguese, and the remainder by the Dutch.
>
> The steps being taken towards responsible government in India have profoundly affected the position of the European powers throughout the East, and there is a rising tide of nationalism manifesting itself in the more developed parts of the Archipelago where competent observers believe that the days of European dominance are drawing to a close.
>
> It is particularly as a counter to the westward and southern march of Japan that Indian colonization should be considered. The rich Archipelago offers to India, with its united three hundred and fifty millions of people, an opportunity for trade and expansion which Japan is eagerly seeking to obtain. Evidence of Japanese interests in this region is demonstrated by the request made by the Japanese representative at Geneva to the Netherlands representative, to allow Japan to join with Holland in the development of the Dutch East Indies.

In the south, Japan controls the mandated islands of the Carolines and the Solomon group. It is common knowledge that Japan is unable to account for the large sums which have been spent on the harbours of these islands, and it is assumed that they are being fortified. From the southern portion of these islands it is a few hours' steam to the coast of New Guinea, which guards the northern coast of Australia. British New Guinea, or Papua, was originally annexed by Australia in order to prevent the territory's falling into hostile hands. That was before the rise to power of Japan. The possibility of the presence of an enemy so close to the shores of Australia filled the Government with alarm.

This fear dictated the Australian policy in the Government of New Guinea. The 'white Australia' policy with its strict rule of Asiatic exclusion has been rigidly enforced. As the population of New Guinea is too small and too untamed to develop the country, and as Australia possesses neither the capital nor the men to develop New New Guinea itself, the country still remains in its primitive state. The policy of Asiatic exclusion has also been applied by Australia to the mandated territory of New Guinea, a policy which has been questioned by the Japanese.

The rise of Japanese power, has, however, completely changed the whole position for Australia. Even although she may succeed by law in keeping the Japanese out of Papua and out of the mandated territory of New Guinea, she cannot know what turn of fortune's wheel may bring the Japanese into Dutch New Guinea where they are known to be making surveys of the coast. Dutch New Guinea is completely undeveloped. A good deal of it is unexplored, and it lies closest to the northern shores of Australia.

It is suggested that the time has arrived when Australia must make up its mind whether it is prepared to let matters drift until New Guinea is occupied by the Japanese, or whether it would agree to such measures as would settle on the island a large population from India who, as British subjects, would be much less likely to be a menace to the future of Australia than the Japanese. . . . It is submitted that this could be done through diplomatic channels. An exchange could be made of British North Borneo for Dutch Guinea. This would give Holland the whole of Borneo. The island of New Guinea should then be offered to India as an Indian colony, either to be governed directly from Delhi or under some form of condominium between India and Australia. The result would be to give

an opportunity to the millions of India to take part in the development of a rich country as a colony of their own, and prevent a sudden march of the Japanese. . . . The Australians would thus secure some protection in their North and a rich trading area which would stimulate their own industries and give employment to a greater population in Australia.

When in London, just before I wrote the memorandum, I had taken the opportunity of discussing the whole proposition with Sir Atul Chatterjee, who represented India at Ottawa, and was High Commissioner in London. He expressed the opinion that, if Britain could make such a gesture to India, it would change the whole national outlook of the people towards Britain and create very great satisfaction. I had also discussed the matter with the permanent head of the India Office, Findlater Stuart; and with others closely connected with the Indian Government; they all expressed approval of the scheme if it could be brought about.

Therefore, in submitting my memorandum to Hertzog, I suggested that he should take the opportunity while in London of discussing the matter with the responsible Minister in England, the Prime Minister of Australia and the representative of India. I was assured by Chatterjee that it would be easy to stimulate in India a national demand for colonization if the way were open and if a colony could be obtained. It might, however, be very difficult to get the very democratic Australian public to agree to their cherished 'white Australia' principles being sacrificed in New Guinea, and caution would have to be exercised by Australian statesmen in preparing the Australian public for such a scheme. I felt Australia had really very little choice in the matter. Most of its public men were becoming increasingly aware that the time was fast approaching when their ability to exclude Asiatics from New Guinea would be put to the test. In any case they had no control whatsoever in Dutch New Guinea, and the development which was taking place in the East Indian Archipelago was such, that an agreement might be come to at any time to allow Asiatic exploitation of that territory.

'If diplomatic action is taken along the lines suggested,' I said

to Hertzog, 'South Africa will not publicly come into the picture. The deal will be done between India, Britain and Australia, and of course, Holland; but, once the movement is started from India, the necessary door for colonization of New Guinea by South African Indians would have been provided.'

On his return from the Jubilee, Duncan sent me the following letter (dated July 9, 1935):

> When in London I had a talk about your Indian colonization scheme with Menzies, the Attorney General in the Australian Commonwealth Ministry. I do not know if you have met him. He is a young man of striking personality and capacity. He did not take to the idea of giving over New Guinea interests to India, though admitting the weakness and even disadvantages of the present position. I gave him a copy of your Memorandum which he promised to study. I hope it may sink in.

That was the last I heard of it, and so the attempt to enlist the necessary interest of Australia in the great project which would have revolutionized New Guinea, solved one of South Africa's most urgent problems and altered the history of the war, ended on the reef of political prejudice and indolence. Meanwhile India pursued her subversive way and the Japanese polished their weapons for an attack on New Guinea as a stepping stone to Australia.

Nobody at that time appeared to visualize an attack on New Guinea as forecast in my memorandum, nor did I expect India would become a republic. There can be no doubt that, had a great Indian colonization scheme for New Guinea been adopted in 1935, it might well have happened that Japan would have thought twice about attacking Australia through an expanding Indian colony in New Guinea, and India's attention might have been devoted to the development of her new colony instead of to its claim to independence.

The appearance of India in the Southern Pacific, under the benevolent interest of Holland, England and Australia might well have changed the history of the world, but imagination was

lacking and local politics ruled in every country. I was the doomed sponsor of lost causes!

I was not allowed to forget the Indians. Some years later, when I became Administrator of Natal, I was approached by the Indian leaders there to introduce into the Provincial Council an ordinance which would enable the Central Government to repeal the 'Pegging Act,' which the Indian community said was hitting them very hard. To this I agreed, as I found they had already been to Cape Town and sounded the position with Smuts, who referred them to me, as the authority whom they should approach since the matter fell within Provincial affairs.

The 'Pegging Act' (Transvaal Land and Trading Act) was originally introduced into the Transvaal in 1939 as a temporary measure until a committee, set up to enquire into the Indian ownership of land and property in the Transvaal, could report. The Act appeared necessary because of the increased concern, voiced by the Europeans against Indians, who, with spare capital, were buying up property, mostly for speculative purposes, in European areas. The presence of Indian-owned property in the midst of a European residential area, it was maintained, had a detrimental effect of European property values. The Act was an attempt to allay the apprehension and fear of the European electorate. It was virtually a 'standstill' order for Indians, restricting them from purchasing or occupying any property in the Transvaal which, at the passing of the Act, was owned by a European, and restricted them in their trading on the Rand to their own bazaars. For various reasons the life of the Act was extended in 1941. By 1943 the European public in Durban had become acutely alarmed at the increase in 'penetration' of Indians into European areas in the City. To still public clamour, the Government was forced to apply the same statutory action to Natal as it had to the Transvaal; the Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Registration Act passed in that year was again a piece of temporary legislation intended to 'peg'

the Indian ownership position in Durban pending the report of a commission of enquiry.

The whole trouble, although it was not generally known, was due to the Moslem religious instruction which prohibited the investment of savings in usury and confined Moslem savings to land and property. This acted in preventing the Indians from becoming a normal co-operating asset to the city and thoroughly alarmed European residents.

This was the state of affairs when the Indian leaders approached me in 1944. It was their suggestion that the transfer of property, or the tenancy of property, between European and Indian should take place, not by compulsory legislation, which they maintained cast a slur upon the status of the Indian, but with the permission of a joint board consisting of two Europeans, two Indians and a chairman who would be a legal man of ten years' standing. In other words, it was their idea to replace compulsory segregation by voluntary segregation.

Smuts was sounded on the subject and intimated his approval. The 'Pegging Act' had been a repugnant piece of legislation, disturbing to all who had to handle it; Smuts was only too pleased to substitute the Indian consent to segregation for compulsion by law.

A meeting was therefore arranged in Pretoria with the Indian leaders from Natal. After some discussion a statement was drafted by the Secretary of the Interior and myself, and handed to the Press. It said:

> It was agreed that the situation would be best met by the introduction of an ordinance in the Natal Provincial Council. This ordinance would provide for the creation of a Board consisting of two European and two Indian members under the chairmanship of a third European who will be a man with legal training. The object of the legislation will be to create machinery for the Board to control occupation by licensing of dwellings in certain areas. The application of the 'Pegging Act' in Durban is to be withdrawn by proclamation on the passing of the ordinance.

At the same time a congratulatory telegram was sent to the

Viceroy by General Smuts welcoming the agreement with the Indians.

The essence of the agreement, which was to become known as the Pretoria Agreement, was haste to get it translated into law before the old antagonisms of colour began to flare up. A special meeting of the Natal Provincial Council was summoned to give it legislative form; this method was adopted because of the obvious difficulty that would have been met in repealing the 'Pegging Act' in Parliament. But before the Council could assemble, public opinion, both European and Indian, took alarm, so that the first generous impulse was lost. On the day on which the Provincial Council met to ratify the Agreement, as I was walking into the Provincial Chamber, I was met by Douglas Mitchell, MEC, who gave me the message that the caucus of the United Party in the Provincial Council had decided that morning that unless I was prepared to send the Draft Ordinance to a Select Committee before the Second Reading, i.e. before the principle was adopted, it would be rejected on the First Reading.

I was astonished. I had only a few minutes to think what was best to be done. There were three courses I could follow. I could proceed with the Ordinance and throw the onus of non-ratification of the agreement on the Provincial Council (this, as I saw afterwards, would have been the wisest course); or I could withdraw the measure altogether and play for time; or go on with the Draft Ordinance in the hope that the Agreement would in the end be ratified. I decided on the last course. It seemed to me a dreadful thing that a treaty of this nature, which had already been communicated to India and which offered the first opportunity of voluntary collaboration with the Indians, should be rejected by the Provincial Council.

I had told the Indians in Pretoria that, in placing the measure before the Provincial Council, they must run the risk of any change being made in the agreement by the Council, that there was the chance of a Select Committee having to be appointed, which could change the terms of the Memorandum, but that I did not think this would happen. My action brought about a Select Committee which lasted for some time, and which had

before it legal representatives employed by various municipalities in Natal and also representatives of the Indians. New matters were introduced.

I sent Mitchell, the chairman of the Committee, to Pretoria to consult Smuts on the new additions which the Select Committee proposed. Smuts said that he would agree to the new proposals; he thought they were very fair and in the interests of the Indians. With this assurance the Ordinance was passed.

All legislation passed by the Provincial Councils requires the approval of the Governor-General-in-Council; but such approval was not withheld when the legislation was legally passed, as was the case with the amended Pretoria agreement. In this case, not only had we the approval of Smuts beforehand, but the legislation had been declared to be legal by the Indian legal advisers before they originally approached me and it had been declared to be within the Provincial Powers by the legal adviser to the Provincial Administration, who drew up the legislation. Notwithstanding all this, it was vetoed by the Governor-General-in-Council and declared *ultra vires* the South Africa Act. Much time and temper had been wasted.

It appeared that the Central Government was more concerned with weakening the powers of the Provincial Council than with the strengthening of them in Natal where the bulk of the Indians resided. Having left the matter in the air by vetoing the Provincial Draft Ordinance, the Central Government was compelled itself to legislate, which it did by introducing the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, which was rejected by the Indian Congress and bitterly opposed by the Indian Government. The only effect of the interference by the Central Government was to bring the whole of South Africa before the United Nations, without in any way altering the position in the Union. What might have remained purely a provincial affair became, through the interference of the Central Government, a national matter with the whole world as audience. So we came to find ourselves arraigned by the Indian Government before the United Nations, our trade relations broken off with India and the Agent-General withdrawn.

It fell my lot to defend this position before the United Nations in New York, while I was High Commissioner for South Africa in London. At San Francisco, although he was the author of the Preamble to the United Nations Charter, Smuts had satisfied himself that Article II, clause 7 guaranteed its members against any interference in their domestic affairs by the Organization.[1] The South African Parliament, when ratifying the Charter, accepted that meaning. The Charter was being organized to preserve the peace of the world, not to create impossible conditions for Governments whose populations were evolving from savagery to civilization. The human rights to which Smuts subscribed did not include the right for everybody to vote.

We were soon to find out at New York that we were face to face with an entirely new post-war ideology, dreaming about 'world government', thought up by highly educated people with no knowledge of Africa and intent on breaking down the political structure which had rescued Africa in a few years from primordial savagery, and which desired only to replace it with an unreal theoretical and impossible Socialism, careless of the consequences.

This awakening came when we were notified that India intended to question the passing of the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of the Union Parliament before the Assembly. To enable India to take this action, the item had to be approved by the Standing Committee of the United Nations, upon which at that time South Africa had a seat. The Indian representatives duly appeared before the Committee and in reply to Smuts's plea that under the Charter the United Nations had no jurisdiction in the case, the Indians urged that the matter fell within the category of 'human rights' and had a political as well as a legal basis. Vishinski, the representative of the USSR on the Committee, argued that 'human rights' were 'political rights'. The Committee accepted this argument. It recommended that for this case, concerning both political and human rights, the Political Committee and the

[1] Article II, clause 7, reads: 'Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement, under the present Charter, but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.'

Judicial Committee should sit together, so that both aspects could be considered.

At this juncture, we were not inclined to contest this recommendation. We felt our case to be so judicially secure that it had only to be stated to be recognized. We had not then appreciated the change in the world attitude to what it considered 'colonialism'. All eyes were fixed on a vote, whether it was the vote of a savage, an imbecile or the Astronomer Royal; all alike were in the same category for the politician.

Few outside those attending the United Nations appear to understand that every member nation is represented on each of the six standing committees, i.e. each committee is sixty strong when there are sixty members of the Organization. When the Political and Judicial Committees of the sixty member nations were joined together therefore, the combined committees consisted of one hundred and twenty members. It was, as somebody said, a 'mass meeting' and had something of the emotional character of a crowded public hall on election night. In no sense was it regarded as a court of justice. Prejudice reigned. The most ignorant and outrageous assertions could be and were made, without any possibility of their effective repudiation. The judicially garnered evidence of governments was simply disbelieved, and representatives who had never been within thousands of miles of the matter under dispute and whose whole environmental outlook was foreign to that prevailing in the country under examination were accepted as witnesses.

A very curious illustration of the different ideas prevailing concerning 'human rights' was displayed in the presence at New York of four Indians from Natal. They were representatives of the Natal Indian Congress, granted passports by the Union Government to proceed to New York; moreover, notwithstanding a long waiting list, they had been accorded priorities to travel on the State South African Airways in order to get there quickly. These four Indians, although they were claiming to be Union nationals, sat behind the Indian Government's delegation, as its advisers. They spent a good deal of their time in writing to the Press and carrying on propaganda against South

Africa. There was no question of their right to do this. South Africa is a free country. What is curious about it is that there was not a single delegate at UNO who did not know that the granting of such freedom to any representative of a minority group in any of the countries of the Russian bloc was unthinkable. If, by a miracle, one should appear at UNO, giving evidence against his government, there would be an explosion. Yet this obvious fact, which did not pass without notice, did not affect the issue.

Possibly some thought that by striking at a small defenceless country like South Africa, the larger and more culpable nations might be reached; others were influenced by the surface play of ideologies.

The Indian delegation did not deny that Indians in South Africa had advanced far beyond the stages reached by their relations in India. India's interest in the Indian population of South Africa was therefore entirely political. The whole situation was made by India. The suspension of trade relations was an Indian unilateral act, though efforts were made to give it a bilateral character. The resurrection of the Cape Town Agreement after the Government of India had years ago repudiated its obligations under it, was entirely political. How was it that India won such support?

The fact is that the assault upon South Africa was an oblique thrust against all colonial government in Africa. It would be a mistake to assume that it had no deeper purpose than to improve the lot of non-Europeans. Some nations saw in the attack an assault upon the British Empire and hastened to join in the fight; others were induced to lend their support on purely humanitarian grounds; others, of course, were genuinely anxious to prevent any clashes between members at this early stage and sought a compromise. But, fundamentally, the attack was directed against the world of Western Europe and all it stood for, against that Christian civilization to which Mrs Pandit was later so scathingly to refer. The Assembly in a world-reforming mood set out to reaffirm its faith in fundamental rights by doing battle with the first state which was prepared to challenge it.

It was not long before the whole body of UNO had ranged itself

under separate banners. The groups began to form—the Western Group, the South American Group, the Arab-Indian Group, the USSR Group and the Asian Group—each group watching to see which way the other was going. 'God help the world,' said Smuts to me, 'if its fate is to be determined by these people.'

The judicial issue for us was simple. We denied the competence of the United Nations to deal with a matter so obviously falling within the protection of Act II, clause 7, and we therefore moved that the matter should be sent to the International Court to determine. But we were convinced that, if the Joint Committee considered the merits of the case, it would rule in our favour. We covered the whole ground. We tried to explain Africa. Smuts dealt with the legal side of our case and left me to deal with the merits, upon which I spent much time in refuting erroneous statements made by the Indian representative. During the course of our statement, we admitted discrimination as the normal rule of law in a multi-racial society in different stages of evolution. It was necessary not only for the maintenance of law and order in Africa, but also to protect and advance the interests of the more primitive sections of the community. Without the existence of native reserves, for the natives, they could not keep their ground and the whole basis of tribalism would disappear.

But there had begun the cult of anti-colonialism, led largely by the United States, itself the product of colonialism, and it was quite impossible to make the organization realize the benevolent aspects of colonialism. Thus Mrs Pandit said:

> We have listened to a lecture from Mr Nicholls, the representative of South Africa, on the work of Christianity and Western Civilization in Africa, but we all know that Christianity and Western Civilization is merely the cloak behind which the Western Europeans have exploited the non-Europeans of the world. It is about time they were stripped of that cloak.

And to Hartley Shawcross, who seconded Smuts's legal resolution, Mrs Pandit said:

It takes a very clever lawer, a very able lawer, like the Attorney-General for the United Kingdom, Sir Hartley Shawcross, to come from the prosecution of one set of criminals at Nuremberg to the defence of a similar set of criminals at New York!

Against that type of propaganda, made with all the aplomb of an English-trained University graduate, it was difficult to make headway. Most educated people think of the United Nations as a court of law. It is, in fact, what the Americans say it is: 'a town house of the world', in which anybody duly accredited can be heard.

The Joint Committee, however, did not give India a two-thirds majority. The vote revealed that there were fewer than a third against South Africa. This assured Smuts of success and he left for Greece, where he had an engagement. I assumed leadership. I was not over-anxious; I presumed that the voting before the Assembly at Flushing Meadows would prove the same as it had done before the Joint Select Committee at Lake Success; the same countries were voting.

But a good deal of lobbying must have been done by India in the interim, for the vote of the Assembly at Flushing Meadows did not obtain the two-thirds majority which had been given by the Joint Committee at Lake Success. Before the vote was taken I had visited the Australian Ambassador, as I had heard that his views on the issue were not definite. I thought my talk with him had convinced him.

The voting was by roll call and Australia was naturally one of the first to be called to vote. Australia abstained. This naturally encouraged others to do likewise or to vote against us, since if a nation of the Commonwealth was dissatisfied with conditions in South Africa, how much more could people outside be expected to show their disapproval. So we lost the vote. Thus while Smuts was being acclaimed in the streets of Athens, the United Nations was casting its vote against South Africa. I sailed sadly for England to resume my duties as High Commissioner. I had done my best, but I felt I had let Smuts down.

Ever since 1945, the annual charge by India against the Govern-

ment of the Union has been persisted in. This result was quite unforeseen by the Natal Provincial Council, when it rejected the Pretoria Agreement and forced the Union Government to introduce the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act which the Indian Government made its *casus belli*.

CHAPTER XXII

BASUTOLAND INTERLUDE AND A FIGHT OVER *GOD SAVE THE KING*

(1935)

ONE day in May, 1933 Smuts beckoned to me as we were leaving caucus and led the way down the Lobby to the Library. There, when we were seated in two easy chairs overlooking the Avenue, he suddenly began: 'It's Washington.' I looked at him in surprise. He continued, noting my surprise: 'I am offering you the post of our Minister in Washington. We are not being well served at the moment and Hertzog has decided to make a change. He has left the appointment to me. I want you to go.'

I was accustomed to being ordered about, but this was a little abrupt. I remained silent. He went on. 'You will have to leave during the next few days. Call in on Hertzog as you pass through London and let him know that you are on the way. He knows about your appointment and has approved.'

'Washington!' I said at last, 'what should I do in Washington? I should have to leave Parliament—all that I have fitted myself for.' After a pause Smuts replied: 'Oh, you'll come back. You will be undertaking a great mission for us in Washington. You can explain us to America.' 'No,' I said, 'I wouldn't come back. This would mean a complete break.'

I looked out on the oak trees of the Avenue, growing brown and beginning to shed their leaves. Smuts saw I was troubled. Then he said: 'Now talk it over with your wife and be guided by her. I shall be leaving in a couple of days. So let me know to-morrow. I am sure she will want to go to Washington, and remember we have specifically chosen you for the mission.'

We rose. How little he knew my wife and her hatred of all public life! How little he knew of my own reticence! I discussed

it with Ruby that evening and she was noncommittal. But my daughter, Ioma, then attending the University at Cape Town, was more emphatic. 'Don't go, Daddy,' she cried out, 'Smuts only wants to get rid of you,' and remembering the fight in the Select Committee of the Native Bills when I was against Smuts so frequently, I wondered. But as I looked at it, the Native Bills were non-party and had been kept so by frequent reminders from me. Nevertheless I was a Smuts man.

But the result of this discussion with my family was the following letter to Smuts (May 30, 1933):

> I have thought very earnestly about the proposal you made to me yesterday that I should become the Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington, and while I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me I have decided that I cannot accept the appointment. I feel I have no call for Washington. I could do nothing there for South Africa that would not be performed just as well or better by a civil servant. All my administrative experience and my study of our African problems would be of no avail in America. I feel that it would be the unanimous opinion of all my friends and supporters. It is also the opinion of my wife whom you asked me to consult. . . .

'You have let me down,' said Smuts before he left. But, as he got R. W. Close, KC, MP for Mowbray, to go in my stead, everybody was satisfied.

In November, 1935, I was appointed to the permanent Native Affairs Commission, an appointment I accepted as a mandate to carry out the policy which I had been advocating on the Select Committee of the Native Bills. Originally the Native Affairs Commission, of which the Minister of Native Affairs is the chairman, dealt solely with native policy, but after the 1936 legislation, it dealt also with the administration of the 'Native Trust' created by that Act. It was the duty of this body to advise the Government on all questions of Native Affairs. So long as the members of the Commission took themselves seriously and the Government took heed of the advice, it filled a very useful purpose.

That purpose became very much strengthened with the 1936 Legislation, when 'native lands' came under its review and it was charged with recommending to the Government the purchase of additional land. Originally there was no intention whatever of the State purchasing land for the natives; it was left to the natives themselves, after the Government had declared what land should be available to them. But the objection to leaving it to be acquired by the natives themselves was heeded, and the Natives Land and Trust Act was passed in 1936 which scheduled additional land to be purchased for the natives by the State. In order that this land should be speedily placed at the disposal of the Native Trust for native development, Hertzog pledged himself to provide all the money necessary for the acquisition of this land, up to an amount of £10,000,000 within five years.

This pledge by the Prime Minister seemed to me to carry with it the whole policy of the Government. Thus it was that I went on my first tour through the Reserves, with the consent of the other members of the Commission, to explain the meaning of the new legislation to the natives; it took me through the Transkei and Eastern Cape to Basutoland. In the course of meetings with Europeans and natives, I endeavoured to explain to both, the national purpose in spending millions of pounds to increase and develop the native areas. I had occasion to stress the new spirit of liberalism which was inherent in the proclaimed policy of trusteeship of the native people, as exemplified in the actual purchase of land by the State.

Before leaving Cape Town on this tour, I had agreed with the Minister of Native Affairs, Piet Grobelar, that I would call in at Basutoland, and learn to what extent the Basutoland Administration was prepared to work with the Union Government in carrying out native policy. The question of the inclusion of the Protectorates in the Union, as envisaged at the time of the National Convention, was then very hotly under discussion, and I thought that consideration of the native question with them might useful.

I arrived in Maseru on the evening of December 7, 1935, and met the Resident Commissioner, R. C. Richards, with whom

I stayed for the weekend. On Sunday, a cricket match was played between the white officials in Basutoland and a team from Wepener, a small town in the neighbouring Orange Free State, led by Colonel Hardiman. During lunch I related a story concerning Basutoland which I had heard while on a visit to Tanganyika the previous year. At the time I had found it hard to believe. In Tanganyika I had met a provincial commissioner named Bagshaw, who had been stationed in Bloemfontein immediately after the Boer War. While in Bloemfontein, he found Hertzog to be on very friendly terms with Townshend, then in command of the British Forces, and Bagshaw met them both frequently at Townshend's house. The question of union was under discussion and, in order to assist the Orange Free State in its long-desired grab of Basutoland, Hertzog and Townshend entered into a plot to ensure that Basutoland was included.

Townshend was to send one of his officers, a quartermaster, to the borders of Basutoland and the Orange Free State, where he was to camp, with a few of his men, ostensibly on a shooting trip, but, with the object of creating a disturbance, he was to go over the border. He was to act in a provocative way so that trouble with the natives in the area would occur. On the firing of shots, orders would be given to British troops, who would be 'on manoeuvre' conveniently near at hand, to come to the rescue of the quartermaster and his men. Hertzog would also have available a number of commandos in the vicinity, who would cross into Basutoland to assist the British. This double-barrelled attack on Basutoland, if made to appear as an act of Basuto aggression, would immediately put the British Government in a very embarrassing position, for they would have to back up this joint resistance by British and Dutch.

At this point in my story, Hardiman who had been listening with great attention, interrupted. It appeared that he was in those days the lawyer and general adviser of the Paramount Chief of Basutoland. He was living in the Free State and got to hear of the conspiracy between Hertzog and Townshend. He immediately communicated with the Paramount Chief and advised him to inform the Resident Commissioner. This was done without delay,

and it was arranged that the Paramount Chief should send out his *indunas* (headmen) to all the kraals within the neighbourhood and tell everybody to clear out when they saw the white men coming. This manoeuvre was speedily carried out and when the quartermaster and his men arrived, they advanced into empty country. The kraals they visited were deserted and there was not a single Basuto to be seen. The general's plot was a complete failure!

In the meantime, the Resident Commissioner had communicated with London and Townshend was ordered by the War Office to leave South Africa within twenty-four hours. Leaving his wife and his possessions, he set sail for England. He was not employed again by the British Government until the Great War, when he was captured at Kut by the Turks.

I was astounded to have firsthand confirmation of this extraordinary story which I had heard in the wilds of Tanganyika and which I frankly disbelieved. Richards and the others gathered at that Sunday luncheon on the heights of the Drakensberg were also not a little surprised to learn of our cheerful ways all those years ago.

My trip to Basutoland was not very fruitful. I gathered from talking to Richards that any junction with the Union over native affairs was regarded as being in the remote future. Discussing the Pim Report on indirect rule with the Acting District Commissioner at Mafutang, a district in Basutoland which I visited, he obviously did not agree with it and finally said: 'The test is a happy people; Basutoland is a happy country.' And from what I had seen I could not disagree with him.

My work on the Commission was intensely interesting and I was completely absorbed in it. A great deal of my life had been spent among primitive people. Native administration was a subject I had spent much time studying. I felt in the work I was undertaking, that my experience was being put to good purpose. I had gained the confidence of a number of the leading members of the native community. This I regarded as of paramount importance, for I had always regarded the natives as being reasonable people who would show appreciation if the work we

were undertaking on their behalf was properly explained by them.

Unfortunately I was forced to resign from the Commission in 1938, when I considered that the views of the new Minister for Native Affairs, appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Grobelar's resignation, were not in accord with my own. Because I felt that there was little chance of our reaching agreement over proposed legislation, I regretfully resigned. I was not prepared for the deluge of letters which immediately reached me asking me to reconsider my decision. They came from the highest and the lowest, English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking, from black and white. The letters I received from the natives themselves were heartrending. It was these that made me ask myself if it was not my duty to go back and serve these people. At last a letter from Hertzog asking me to reconsider my decision decided it, and I went back.

At the opening of Parliament in 1938 we were surprised to hear played for the first time in the official ceremony the strains of an Afrikaans folk song, *Die Stem van Zuid Afrika*. Its inclusion in the proceedings gave Stallard, leader of the Dominion Party, an opportunity for creating some political capital. In answer to his request for an explanation, the Prime Minister replied: 'The Union has no National Anthem, legally or officially recognized, or generally esteemed and acknowledged as such in the hearts of the people of South Africa.' This statement caused much consternation. From Zululand I received a batch of angry telegrams My constituents were up in arms; there was strong protest against Hertzog's statement and fusion members threatened to leave the Party. They demanded action on my part.

The Dominionites, backed by the *Natal Mercury*, started on a campaign to arouse the wildest mistrust of Hertzog amongst the already suspicious English-speaking people in Natal. I must confess that I regarded Hertzog's statement as being monstrously untrue and deliberately calculated to wound and offend the

English-speaking supporters of fusion. I hurriedly (February 18, 1938) wrote out a letter of resignation as a mark of protest:

After the utterly unexpected and disconcerting statements made by you in the House this afternoon concerning the use of *God Save the King*, I feel bound to tender you, as I hereby do, my resignation from your party and as a member of the Native Affairs Commission. . . .

At fusion, we of the South African Party were promised that there would be no further attempts at constitutional changes, either of the written word or of the symbols which carry a constitutional significance. We had reached, it was said, acceptable ground to everybody, and any changes which might take place would come as a result of natural growth and development, not as a result of pressure from political opponents, or be imposed by authority to fit into a one-sided constitutional conception which we reject. That was certainly the idea in my mind, and I think in the minds of all my colleagues who believed that your intention was to make fusion a reality. I am bitterly disappointed to find you constantly moving the boundary pegs of the constitutional ground we had surveyed and agreed upon. By these acts you displayed a willingness to ignore the very basis of fusion.

I realize how hardly you are pressed by your Republican Opposition: but to break faith with us while trying to appease the demands of Malan, will deprive you of any support in either camp. Yesterday, in an apparent failure to realize the deep constitutional significance of *God Save the King*, you have offered another affront to the deepest sentiments of thousands of English-speaking South Africans who were gladly serving under you, but who expected you, with them, to honour and reverence the King in the Constitution.

I reject your interpretation of *God Save the King* as not being the anthem of the Commonwealth of South Africa. . . . I do not accept your argument that because the Commonwealth has no legal bonds binding it together—since we are freely associated—that therefore there can be no legal Commonwealth or Commonwealth Anthem. The institution of Kingship under which we are living was the basis of union, and is written into the Act of Union itself. There can be no common honesty in the acceptance of the King in the constitution

which does not also accept the invocation of the Almighty for the protection of that King. To deny *God Save the King* as our anthem is a denial of our common allegiance to the Crown as set out in the Preamble of the Status Act, and such denial merely lends colour to the assertion that you agree with Kemp in marching 'step by step to a Republic'.

I would make it perfectly clear to you that I have not the slightest objection to *Die Stem van Zuid Afrika* if that song is acceptable to a large part of the population. If the acceptance of that song had been left to follow along the same path as the development of *O Canada* in the Dominion of Canada, every English-speaking South African would be found in time singing *Die Stem* as feelingly as any anthem. I had experience in Canada of the singing of that national song *O Canada*, from Nova Scotia to Vancouver, but that national song was always followed by *God Save the King*. *O Canada* is to Canadians what *Rule Britannia* is to Britain. It is a national song without any constitutional significance, though it breathes a love of Canada and all its people. But *God Save the King* though it has no legislative sanction in any part of the British Commonwealth, and though it has grown to its present position by long custom and convention, is now recognized throughout the Commonwealth as the anthem which symbolizes our common allegiance to the Crown, and is the common possession of all the nations of the Commonwealth, and an unwritten part of all their constitutions. *God Save the King* could not exist in Britain as a National Anthem but for the King in the Constitution. You have only to ask yourself what would happen tomorrow in Britain if that country became a republic. It would immediately cease to be sung in Britain except by those who refused to accept the republican state.

Though the constitutional significance of the King may be overshadowed in the minds of the people by a personal loyalty which has grown strong by custom, nevertheless we cannot help but ask of those who reject *God Save the King* in South Africa whether, in aiming at its disappearance, they are not aiding in the rapid approach of a republic.

In the meantime a deputation of which I was a member had gone to see the Prime Minister. Although the members of the deputation professed themselves satisfied with the Prime Minister's

explanation, I could not agree with them and accordingly sent my letter with this postscript (dated February 19th):

Since writing the foregoing, I formed one of the deputation which waited upon you this morning on this subject. Nothing that was said by you at that interview really changes the position. You emphatically refused to recognize *God Save the King* as having any constitutional significance, and you maintain that it is not the National Anthem either of the Commonwealth or of South Africa. I do not question your right to the views you hold, and I accept the position that there is a very large section of the South African population which agrees with you, but I should be failing in my duty to myself and to every conviction that I hold, if I were to accept by implication the interpretation you put upon this constitutional symbol.

One of your Ministers has asked, 'What's in a tune?' I will tell you. Six Kaffir Wars are in that tune. Isandhlwana and Ulundi are in that tune. More British lives have been sacrificed in the native wars in South Africa than Dutch lives, and the actual final establishment of civilization over savagery on this sub-continent lies in *God Save the King*.

The British section do not commemorate the deeds of their forefathers which are practically unknown to the present generation of the English-speaking; and the lonely outposts established more than 100 years ago by the 1820 settlers along the Eastern borders, which saved from devastation the Dutch vineyards of the Western Cape are all forgotten. But the anthem and the loyalties behind it saved South Africa in those far off days. And then you tell me that it is not and it has never been our National Anthem.

It is true that the tune revives different memories in the minds of many others, memories of concentration camps and old humiliations, but I had hoped that the *amende honorable* which has led to the development of our sovereign independence within the British Commonwealth in a few short years, would have mellowed those memories and brought a whole-hearted acceptance of the new conditions symbolized by *God Save the King* today.

It is your insistence upon perpetuating a separation of ideals of the two races, instead of striving for such a blending of them as would further the objects of fusion which depresses me, and makes me afraid

of the next 'bolt from the blue'. You persist in remaining the leader of a section instead of being Prime Minister and leader of the whole country. . . . I believe you have always acted with the best intentions. I believe that you sincerely feel that the best way of drawing the two races together is to destroy everything which you consider to be reminiscent of Britain's Imperialism. But you cannot separate and localize the traditions of any people. Your attempts at surgical operations to cut out what you consider to be poison in our body politic, merely lead to further amputations, until there will be nothing left of the British body, without which there would have been no Union of South Africa.

I am getting too old to witness any more such amputations or to be a party to them, and I therefore, regretfully separate myself from the political scene.

When Hertzog received this letter, he invited me to meet him and talk it over. I did so. At the end of a long talk, I began to see his point of view and to realize that we had indeed been talking at cross purposes. Hertzog maintained that in putting *Die Stem* on the programme he was primarily concerned with forestalling the pressure from the Republicans to have *God Save the King* abolished and was also trying out *Die Stem* to see whether it would prove as acceptable to the Transvaalers as it was to the Cape. He had no intention of dropping *God Save the King*. My respect for him deepened and I agreed to drop the subject and remain on the Native Affairs Commission. Thereafter, until the war came, the best relations prevailed between us—I often used to breakfast with him at Groote Schuur and discuss politics—and no further constitutional points arose.

Today *God Save the King* has been completely abrogated by the Prime Minister in Parliament and *Die Stem* prevails, a position complacently accepted by the English-speaking.

CHAPTER XXIII

WAR OR NEUTRALITY?

(1939)

THE squalls which preceded the war were blowing up. In 1938 I went to Britain to represent the Sugar Association. Describing what I saw of that spring crisis I wrote to a friend in Zululand:

> As you may well imagine England has lived through historic moments during the past week. It has been my privilege to be a spectator to all the scenes in the House of Commons during this epoch, from the moment when Chamberlain began his speech describing how all his efforts at a peaceful solution of the problems had failed, to the surprise conclusion, which ended on so different a note, because the message reached him while he was speaking, that Hitler had yielded to his appeal to meet him at Munich the following day. During that week England had faced war and all that war meant in 1938, with amazing calmness. Gas masks were being issued, and in the parks trenches were being dug, during the night, under the flares of kerosene lamps. I did not get a gas mask. I didn't look for one, either for myself or my family, but I think I must have been one of the very few who did not. Somehow it seemed to me so unreal, although I was certain that nothing could save Czechoslovakia. I knew Hitler would march on.
>
> I lunched in the House on the day that Chamberlain spoke. Amery told me that French courage was oozing out. The French politicians would not fire a shot in defence of the Czechs. They would man the Maginot line; but the Germans would march east with nobody to stop them, and it would probably end in recognizing a *fait accompli*. It was most distressing. I didn't see that spirit in England, and when we went into the House and Chamberlain began, it looked as though the die was cast. It was an amazing scene. When Chamberlain told them of Hitler's invitation and his intention to fly to Munich the next day, emotion overflowed everywhere. Everybody stood on

their feet and cheered—except Churchill, who rose when he saw that everybody else had done so, but did no cheering. . . .

We are paying for past mistakes, and nobody can prophesy the future. It may be the turning point for universal peace in our time; it may be the decisive act in a tragedy. My inclination is to trust in the calm wisdom of Chamberlain. I think he is on right lines; although I admit the weakness which has permitted force to dictate a peace. But given the circumstances as they are, I think there was no other way, and Chamberlain deserves the admiration and love of the world for the unique action he took. He rescued the world from war. That is undeniable. All that is in issue is whether he has ushered in a new era.

As everyone knows, a new era did come—the atomic one. It was not, however, the era for which I was hoping when I wrote to Zululand in the spring of 1938.

The South African Parliament was called together in August 1939 to repair an omission. The life of the Senate was about to come to an end by the effluxion of time, and, in the very disturbed state of the world, it was felt that our Parliament should not remain in an incomplete state. A special session was necessary to pass a Senate Bill. It was expected to last only a few hours.

Parliament usually opened in January, in the height of summer, when the luxuriant foliage of the oak trees was in full leaf and the sunshine lay dappled on the pavements; when the light dresses of the women, in their summer garb, added to the general gaiety of the scene. On this occasion members arrived during the last days of winter, when the oak leaves in the avenue were lying shrivelled on the ground or being scurried into heaps before the last gusts of the dying south easterly winds. The sunlight was stark and unfiltered, but it contained no warmth and man was still wearing his drab winter clothing.

This was not the Cape Town to which we were accustomed, but more unfamiliar than the strangeness of the scene was the tension in the air. It could be felt everywhere, and most particularly in the House as members assembled. Everybody was strained and on the *qui vive* for news. We had come to Cape Town to pass the Senate Bill, but something more momentous had

taken place while we were on our way there. In my diary I recorded:

SEPT. 1, 1939—Germany invades Poland, without a declaration of war. Forster announces the return of Danzig to the Reich. Where do we stand if there is war?

SEPT. 2ND—The fateful session began by our meeting at 9.30 a.m. for reading of formal notices, and the speech from the throne by Duncan at 10 a.m. and afterwards the Prime Minister announced the suspension of the rules and the need for proceeding with the Senate Bill. I felt fairly easy in my mind regarding the attitude of the Government. I was sure that the Prime Minister would stand by Britain if any trouble occurred. A little later, however, my confidence was shaken. Clarkson, who is at the same hotel and dining at the same table, looked pretty glum when he came to dinner after a three and a half hours' cabinet discussion at Groote Schuur. It is pretty obvious that things are not going well and from the few remarks he let drop, I gathered that there had been a constitutional fight. It was, however, very vague. We went to a cinema to forget.

SEPT. 3RD—An eventful day, Parliament was seething with excitement and rumours, as members formed their separate knots in the Lobby to get the latest news. Britain has presented an ultimatum to Germany expiring at 11 a.m. At 11.15 Britain declares war on Germany. We received the news first from Clarkson at lunch, who had learned it from his wife in Durban. We listened in at 1.30 p.m. to Chamberlain's speech, relayed. It was however indistinct, but given later in the *Argus* special. The Cabinet, we heard, was sitting at Groote Schuur. News came that it was already split. Hertzog was on his high horse of constitutional theory. He could think of nothing else. He had already seen Malan, so rumour had it, and received his assurance that the Nationalist Party would stand by Hertzog; and Hertzog was for neutrality!

Clarkson returned from the Cabinet meeting at 6 p.m. He called me into his bedroom with Blamey and commenced by saying: 'The balloon is up.' Hertzog, he said, was obsessed by the national sovereignty of the Union. He had spoken very generously about Britain, but he said that they could not follow Britain's lead. It would savour of dependence. He was prepared to give every possible

consideration to British shipping and to British men-of-war, but also to Germany!

Pirow had drawn up a plan to deal with every possible emergency. He was prepared to send a squadron of aeroplanes at once to South West Africa. He had drawn up plans for the prohibition of all public meetings and for the control of the Press. Everything was in order. But when the Prime Minister stated his position, he stood by the Prime Minister.

Havenga said they were now back to the position of 1902, and frankly said they would now have to have a Republic. They counted on having a general election which would ensure the return of the republic. Hertzog refused to hold a caucus and said he would make his statement himself to the House. Even some of the old South African Party members are uncertain and appear to be renegade. Their attitude cannot be relied upon either by Smuts or any of his colleagues. Stuttaford, learning of the attitude of some of these people, managed to have a talk with them and then passed them on to Smuts. The talk appears to have been successful! Fagan takes the matter tragically. Hertzog and Malan will be together on Tuesday.

Clarkson and Blamey came to my bedroom about 11 p.m. to tell me of the results of their evening talk with Smuts. Smuts is prepared to move an amendment to Hertzog's statement on policy which will repudiate neutrality and declare war on Germany. There are however several unknown factors which Smuts is very worried about. The first and biggest is the attitude of the Governor-General, Patrick Duncan. It is a possibility that Hertzog may tender his resignation to him for the purpose of forming a new Cabinet. The Governor-General could not refuse this, for there are two precedents for it—the first when Botha resigned for the purpose of dispensing with Hertzog and the second when Hertzog resigned to get rid of Madeley. If the Governor-General agreed to this a Nationalist Government, pledged to neutrality could be formed. If Hertzog does that tomorrow morning, Smuts will not be able to proceed with the Senate Bill. There is also the danger, anyway, of the passage of the Bill being delayed by endless talk by arrangement and the closure not being accepted by the Speaker, who is a Hertzogite.

If however the Senate Bill can be got out of the way, as was originally planned, and Hertzog's neutrality statement is deferred, then the only danger lies in the Governor-General accepting

Hertzog's resignation and permitting him to reform the Cabinet without Smuts and Co., or in granting Hertzog a dissolution. If the Governor-General is safe, then we have a majority in the House and the scheme for neutrality will be defeated. There has been much counting of heads all day and no doubt Hertzog knows by now that he will be defeated. We may therefore expect any chicanery.

SEPT. 4th—The House opened at 10.30 a.m. with the Senate Bill. Collins, the Chief Whip approached me and said: 'The Senate Bill is coming on. We shall take it through all its stages at once. Hertzog will then move his neutrality motion. Smuts will reply with his amendment for war. I shall second it. The chief asks that you follow me. Go away now and get your speech ready. You will have an hour!' 'Where do we stand?' I asked and he replied: 'It's a toss up. We have scouted round and found a possible majority of nine. But there are several suspected defaulters in our ranks, and Hertzog is certain he will win.'

So here it was. There was a possibility that Hertzog might win; if his followers were to be believed, he was sure he would win. I went to my room. As I sat staring at the table I realized that there was only one thing for me to do. I must stand on the law, cut out all academic theory, which Hertzog delighted in, and explain the Constitution as it is written in our Statute Book, in the Act of Union and the Status Act, so that all men could understand. We were no longer concerned with academic arguments. Our lives and liberties were at stake. 'What is the law?' I asked myself. My law must be sound. Never before had we been faced with such a situation. The result of the issue before us today would shape our future destiny. If we failed in the House today, I must be in a position to raise the standard of revolt throughout Natal. It was unthinkable that we could allow the Germans to take possession of Durban harbour, or any other South African harbour. As I sat there, my thoughts began to crystallize and I began to write furiously.

When I returned to the House, I found that Hertzog had already moved his motion of neutrality and Smuts was about to begin. He traversed the Prime Minister's statement and pointed out that, far from being a statement of benevolent neutrality, it was an

argument in support of Hitler. There was a pause after Smuts's amendment had been seconded by Collins. As he sat down I got up. My speech, according to B. K. Long, a back-bencher who followed me, and who had for years been editor of the *Cape Times*, 'fell on the House like a bomb'. Here is what he says about it and his own part in the debate extracted from his book, *In Smuts's Camp:*

> Hertzog did not summon the United Party caucus, as he might have done, before putting the vital question of war or neutrality to the final test of a vote in the House of Assembly. He made no attempt to work our any compromise between himself and Smuts. He put himself in touch, on September 3rd, with Malan and made sure that the Nationalists would vote for neutrality.
>
> Then, on Monday morning (September 4th) he met the House and moved his motion in favour of neutrality. Our Parliament had then to decide what was to be done. If Smuts had the majority, South Africa would be with Britain at war against Germany: if Hertzog could take the majority with him, our country would be neutral. There were moments when the issue hung in the balance—although most of those who voted were never in any doubt. There were exceptions, however, conscientious, thoughtful men, who, even while the debate was going on were weighing up the arguments on either side and making up their minds how they should vote. A little weight thrown in the scales on one side or the other made all the difference with them.
>
> This was the danger of the view expressed in the fourth speech made, right after Hertzog and Smuts had put in their respective points of view, by Nicholls from Zululand, then a front bench member of the United Party. Nicholls said flatly that our Parliament has no right to discuss, far less to accept, Hertzog's motion in favour of neutrality for South Africa. The Dominions of the British Commonwealth of Nations, he argued, of which South Africa was one, are linked together by a common allegiance to the Crown; that is, by an allegiance which all the States of the Commonwealth owe in common. 'You cannot,' he argued, 'owe anything in common and claim a right to act separately. Allegiance, Sir, means something more than a mere word to be bandied about on political platforms. It has a deep, sacred significance—loyalty within the law to a common

Crown. In the eyes of every English-speaking man in this country, South Africa is at war; and it does not require any vote of this House, or any declaration by the Government of this country to determine whether we are at war or not at war. . . . The extent of our participation in a war is a matter entirely for Parliament to decide. But there is no doubt about the technical position in this country. We are at war in the eyes of every British subject and if we are not at war, we cannot be British subjects. . . . That is the constitutional position as understood by me and as understood by every constitutional authority throughout the British Commonwealth.'

Nicholls is a man of great honesty and integrity. But if he was right about the constitutional position, what advance had there been since the first World War broke out in 1914, and it was taken for granted by all the constitutional law pundits that when Britain went to war, all the self-governing Dominions were consequently also at war? In 1914 it was also taken for granted that each Dominion had the right to decide for itself, through its own Parliament, whether it would take an active part in the war or not.

According to Nicholls, there had been no change at all on the issue of peace or war in the Dominions since 1914. The only right that our Parliament had in 1939 was the same right that it had in 1914, to say whether our country's part in the war should be active or passive. In other words, if Nicholls is right, it was perfectly clear that the status of the Dominions of the Commonwealth, as set out in 1926 by the Imperial Conference in its formal declaration and as subsequently ratified by the British Parliament when it passed the Statute of Westminster, was nothing but a sham, and Dominion Status, the famous 'autonomy' of the Dominions, the 'equality' with Great Britain which it gave South Africa . . . were all completely null and void, as soon as the most important issue for any country arose—the issue of peace or war.

Nicholls evidently believed that he was the mouthpiece of every English-speaking man or woman in South Africa. But one thing was certain. It was an article of faith with those members who had not yet made up their minds whether they would vote for Hertzog's neutrality motion or for Smuts pro-war amendment, that our Parliament had the right to decide for neutrality or war. They were shocked and startled by Nicholls's denial of the right, and puzzled too, for Nicholls, a front bench member of our party, was now stating an axiom which everybody should accept, doctrines which meant

that he should have been sitting with the Dominion Party, not with ours.

Nicholls's prestige in the House stood very high. They greatly liked and universally respected his honesty, frankness and openness. His speech had been a bomb. Its effect was obviously going to be great, if it went unanswered even for a little. While the debate continued, it was probable that members who had not made up their minds would decide to vote with Hertzog, in an impulsive protest against Nicholls's determination that our Parliament had no choice in the matter. The risk was that they would believe that the English-speaking people were at war with Germany because Britain was at war with Germany. They might think that we were voting, not as South Africans, but as Britons. The anti-war members of the United Party were trying to convince these undecided members that we English-speaking members were actually doing this, and Nicholls' speech seemed to justify them.

There was a moment of hesitation. Nicholls sat down. The House would adjourn for lunch in less than ten minutes and no one likes to begin a speech knowing that he will be interrupted almost at once. Perhaps that was why Malan did not get up. He would obviously have to speak soon; everybody was waiting to hear whether the Nationalist Opposition intended to vote for Hertzog's neutrality motion or have an amendment of its own moved. Malan's failure to rise gave a chance for someone on our side to reply to Nicholls. No one moved, however, and, after a hasty glance around, I jumped to my feet. I said very bluntly that I did not agree with Nicholls; my conviction was that there was no limit to our freedom under the Statute of Westminster, as confirmed in our country by the Status Act. This, I continued, was a matter of dispute between us and between constitutional authorities; it had never, so far, come to the test; it was coming to the test today. 'I want here, not on behalf of anyone else, but as one who had studied the constitutional position, to say that I have no doubt abut the right of our country to declare our neutrality in terms of Hertzog's motion. Nicholls,' I went on, 'has charged Hertzog with having deceived us about his intentions, in case of war between Britain and Germany. I don't agree with Nicholls there either. There has always been a difference of opinion within our party since fusion; on the right of South Africa to declare its neutrality, Hertzog had never made any secret about his view. But, although I am convinced that we have a right to declare our neutral-

ity, I am equally convinced that it is disastrously unwise, in the interests of our own country, that we should take the course of action which the Prime Minister proposes.'

To understand why Long, one of the youngest members of Parliament, took this view, one must understand that he had for many years been on the staff of the London *Times*. He knew very little about the real Africa. He did not see the ten millions of native people. He did not understand Natal in particular; I doubt if he had ever been there. He did not understand the development of Africa which was taking place and which is going to threaten all our liberties in future. He was, therefore, speaking without knowledge of the country. Moreover, it had been for years the object of the London *Times* in its discussions on the constitutional issue to follow out the Statute of Westminster, to give the Dominions the widest possible scope, to see the Commonwealth as a constantly expanding universe, in which each separate star would become independent and a friendly co-operator with all the rest. He did not see the enmity that existed, that it was quite easy to break up what we had achieved in the past, but very difficult to maintain it.

Furthermore, I was not in the position that Long was in. He was speaking independently for nobody. I spoke for an immense number of people and I was determined that, if this vote was lost, if Hertzog won his motion and South Africa declared its neutrality, I would do my utmost to see that Natal did not remain neutral. There would have been civil war in South Africa, and what would Long, and others who thought like him, have to say then?

As I sat in the House that day listening to him, it began to dawn on me that my speech, although from a constitutional point of view it satisfied me, had been a tactical error at the time. I had been much too emotional. If I had had longer to think about it, I should have put before the House an issue which would have rubbed out all the arguments put up by Hertzog. He claimed, as Long claimed, that he was asked to go to war with Germany because Britain had gone to war. That was not the

position at all. Germany had caused the war by an act of aggression and it was a war against everything that we stood for in our membership of the League of Nations. A few years before, in the case of Italy's aggression on Abyssinia, Hertzog proclaimed in the House of Assembly the determination of South Africa to remain in the last ditch, the sole levier of sanctions against Italy for fear of what might happen in Africa if she did not do so. But now, in his bias against Britain, all those solemn facts were overthrown and overlooked. The German in Hertzog, as in so many of his Cabinet, carried him sentimentally along the path he took.

I felt I had erred as Hertzog had erred, only in the opposite extreme. Long's speech seemed to me to be couched in much more moving terms than mine; instinct was coupled with understanding and good feeling. I envied him his glowing periods. I was sure that I had offended many, and as I sat listening despondently I had a feeling that my speech was considered so tactless that, as at Empangeni, it might lose me a seat in any new cabinet which might be formed.

While Long was speaking, the news came through of the first Germany victory; the *Athenia*, an American ship full of holiday passengers, had been sunk by a German submarine. He used this news very effectively in his speech. The excitement and tenseness grew with the hours in the packed House. The end came at one o'clock. Smuts's majority was thirteen including Dominionites and Labour.

During that last division, the faces of the Ministers, as they sat in the Opposition benches, were a study. Hertzog looked like a damned man, shocked and sickly. Havenga, undoubtedly very upset, was trying to smile, and Pirow had lost his jaunty air and was completely deflated. Emotion was registered on every face. Members had been through so much; they looked as though they had come straight from a battle themselves. Smuts's supporters were wreathed in smiles. But there was no cheering. We did not rub it in. We could none of us see the future and the attitude of the Governor-General was still in doubt. There was a rumour circulating that he might not send for Smuts, but prefer a general

election. It would be tragic if he did. In the end, as everyone knows, he sent for Smuts.

How easily things might have turned out in favour of Hertzog and spelled tragedy for South Africa! Hertzog, of course, had made a great tactical error. He and his advisers had been overconfident. If, when he found on September 3rd that his Cabinet was divided, he had gone to the Governor-General and demanded a dissolution, Duncan could not have refused. Instead he waited until after his defeat in Parliament and then asked for a dissolution. Duncan replied that, since Parliament had decided against him, and his whole Cabinet was split asunder, he had lost the confidence of Parliament. He was, under these circumstances, faced with a constitutional position, which as Governor-General he could not ignore. He had, therefore, no alternative but to refuse his request and send for Smuts.

Smuts had had no communication of any kind with Duncan during this period, and did not know what action Duncan would take, but when he sent for Smuts, Smuts asked Duncan to delay the matter for a day or two in order to pass the Senate Bill so that Parliament could remain properly constituted. Smuts told me afterwards that, prior to that last debate, Hertzog had informed him that he was sure of a majority in the House. Smuts replied that he must count on his most strenuous opposition. 'You will lose,' said Hertzog. Smuts replied: 'I shall have fought for the principles in which I believe.'

The result of the division must have been galling to Hertzog. How he must have blamed himself. We all believed that he had been misled by Pirow, who believed that Britain had no chance of winning the war. Pirow had recently been on a visit to Germany and all that he saw there, coupled with his German contacts and sympathies, had influenced his estimate of the position. When a decision had to be made on the outbreak of war, Pirow told Hertzog that he was certain of obtaining a substantial vote in favour of neutrality. Hertzog, whose inclinations were in that direction, was easily convinced!

Shortly after the debate, when the Hertzogites were discussing in the lobby what had gone wrong I heard Havenga say: 'We

only wanted a day as a neutral, and we should have been at war!' Fagan replied: 'Yes, the ship that the Germans sunk would have been enough!' I wonder! Would a few days of neutrality have satisfied Hertzog enough to come in on the side of Britain? I doubt it, although immediately after the vote, which many Nationalists regretted, they were ready to agree with us, and it can be said that the United Party was still united. Later, however, Hertzog's disappointment developed into an intense bitterness and he eventually came out as a supporter of Nazi-ism. I was well aware of the personal tragedy which that vote caused Hertzog. I knew that the period of co-operation with him was over. I felt I could not let time pass without writing to him, for we had had periods of friendship and closeness. On September 9th I wrote to him:

> Before the political waters rise to engulf us in all their bitterness, will you allow me to express, not only deep regret at the turn of events, but also my deep appreciation of the opportunity you gave me of serving South Africa in the development of its native policy.
>
> Like all your English-speaking followers, I succumbed to the rich, warm glow of that human personality which has endeared you to so many; and I should not like to retire behind the veil of political opposition without conveying to you my thanks for all your past kindness and consideration. Whatever the future may hold in store, I shall always count the division which took place in Parliament as one of life's tragedies, for had the fates reserved for us a little longer time to dig the furrows of the future, the ideals we both stand for would have synthesized in a united nation.

That was the last communication I had with Hertzog. He died in 1943 a deeply disillusioned man.

CHAPTER XXIV

SMUTS AT THE HELM AGAIN

(1941)

So Smuts took charge of the Union and once again, with a divided country, we marched into the unknown.

There was an immediate tightening up of all administration. The first thing to do was to get the war measures passed through Parliament, which gave the Prime Minister authority in the country. The civil population had to be disarmed. In a country where every man in rural areas is encouraged to have a gun, and where in these areas much of the population is anti-British, this was no easy task. A call for the surrender of all weapons, however, was surprisingly successful. All active rebels had to be kept under proper surveillance, but Smuts gave express orders that no martyrs were to be made, and to his everlasting credit none were.

The campaign against the war was, nevertheless, carried on politically under the Nationalist banner. But though this campaign held many armed forces in the Union which were needed in the North, it did not interfere with the expansion of our armed strength, nor with the rapid growth of our industries for war purposes. South Africa's contribution in men, in proportion to its white population, was greater than in any other Commonwealth country, which showed that the sons of Nationalists could not resist the call to fight.

The country suffered a severe shock, however, when the Defence Force was found to be almost incapable of serving any effective purpose, and it was realized that it would have to be recruited, organized and armed almost from scratch before it was of any use. This was contrary to the very emphatic statements made on the strength and efficiency of the Services prior to

September 1939, by Hertzog's Minister of Defence, Oswald Pirow, who led the country into the universal belief that his powers of drive and organization had resulted in building up the nucleus of a Defence Force which would adequately serve the needs of the country.

Pirow's behaviour during the months preceding the war was most bewildering. He appears, from his many statements, to have changed his mind as many times as he changed his shirt. Smuts told me that Pirow was working to become South Africa's *Fuehrer*. He was not probably thinking in terms of Germany, but considered that national racialism of the German brand was the best thing for South Africa. He approached Smuts and suggested, in the interests of South Africa, that the Parliamentary system would fail to maintain European civilization; that for its more effective economic advance and for the benefit of all races, a stronger form of Government was necessary, which would not be assailed by revolutionary elements, showing disruptive influences. Smuts told him frankly that he would fight him to a finish on that issue, on which Pirow said that without Smuts it was no use going on. Nevertheless he did go on, and later was busy behind the scenes of the *Ossewa Brandwag*, a so-called cultural society, under van Rensberg, with known pro-German sympathies, working, it is suspected, to effect a coup when Germany gave the sign.

Van Ryneveld, the then head of the Union Defence Force, told me in 1938, when we both happened to be in England together and met in London at the house of Te Water, the South African High Commissioner, that Pirow was creating what appeared to be a private army, quite separate from, and out of the sphere of the control of the Union Defence Force, and falling directly under the jurisdiction of himself as Minister of Defence. The officers of the 'Commandos', as this private army was called, had met in Cape Town, van Ryneveld told me, dressed in their brave new uniforms, and had been reviewed by Pirow and the Prime Minister. One wonders for what purpose this army was designed.

Regarding Pirow's much advertised 'peace mission' to Europe in 1938, I recorded in my diary:

FEB. 10, 1939—Today Pirow addressed the caucus of the United Party on his recent trip to Europe. He had previously addressed the Nationalist Party and given the same address to members in Johannesburg. As I had been in Europe with Pirow in 1938 I listened with rising interest to the amazing self-complacency of the man. He told me in London that he did not suffer from any inferiority complex and that was plainly revealed today. He was fluent, anecdotal and racy and claimed an equality with the statesmen of the world in every utterance he made. He rattled off names of kings and dictators whom you would think had accepted him as a confidant and he hypnotized the simple minds of the caucus with his importance as a representative of South Africa, so that they cheered lustily, in the belief that they, indirectly, had assisted in the peace of the world. How small South Africa really is and what little influence it bears upon the world of affairs they never grasped. Pirow had been in Europe only a few days, during which, on invitations issued at his own request, he had exchanged a few sentences with leaders in Europe on the strength of his supposed access to Hitler as another German. And on that meagre foundation he claimed to interpret their minds and determine the future of the world; and the caucus swallowed all this jig-jackery. They believed Pirow's estimate of his own powers and accomplishments, but it left me with a complete feeling of disillusionment that a man who looked to be Prime Minister of South Africa could so humbug members and could be so vainglorious, at this dangerous period in our history. It confirmed in me my opinion that he is indeed an uncertain guide.

In the months preceding the outbreak of war, the United Party was, both in its leadership and its rank and file, deeply concerned about the part which Pirow might play in the testing times that obviously lay ahead. His influence with Hertzog was known to be considerable, but what effect that influence might have was quite unknown.

As events turned out it is interesting to contrast certain statements which Pirow has made in his book regarding his own attitude towards South Africa's neutrality, with an entry in my diary:

MAR. 18, 1939—After reading Chamberlain's speech on the German rape of Czechoslovakia, appearing in this morning's paper,

it was generally felt that it was high time we had a show down in South Africa. The suspicion of Pirow is very widespread amongst members. Doubts and uncertainties are expressed by everybody. Gilson brought me a draft of a question he was putting on the order paper, asking the Prime Minister what action he proposed to take to assist Britain in its determination to resist aggression. I advised that we should wait for Pirow's speech on Defence which he was going to make shortly, and which would give us the information we wanted. I was seeing Pirow that morning and would find our when he was going to speak. Gilson agreed to withhold the question for the time being. Higgerty and many others are also very perturbed. They agreed that I should lead a deputation to Smuts. I agreed to explore the ground beforehand; but I also agreed that the time had come for action, even to a general election, if necessary. I went to see Pirow.

H.N.: 'Do you intend making your speech on Defence during the Budget debate next week?'

PIROW: 'Yes. You will realize it is going to be difficult to avoid saying too much.'

H.N.: 'I realize that. But I am glad you are going to make it early. There is a very strong feeling of uneasiness amongst members regarding our own position. They do not know where they are, and the situation is too serious to be allowed to remain obscure.'

PIROW: 'If they only knew the truth they would not feel anxious. We are already taking all precautions. I am sending forces to South West Africa to deal with any situation which might arise there. If a *putsch* takes place we shall be ready for it. If you had looked at the power station this morning you would have seen that it is guarded by police, as are all vulnerable points. I sent a letter to the Admiralty yesterday placing at their disposal along the coast.[1] . . . My own position is that while I would not fight for the Empire as you would, I am going to fight for South Africa. I believe we shall have no say in the matter. The fight will be forced on us. I do not trust Hitler. I did, before he made this last move. I do not do so now and he must be resisted. But we must avoid trouble in South Africa such as we had last time.'

H.N.: 'What reliance can be placed on the Commandos? We are very doubtful about them.'

PIROW: 'With the exception of about six commandants, whom we have all taped down, the rest are all right. I am strengthening them

[1] Here follows a list of equipment, etc.

with machine guns. Smuts and Botha had trouble when the Great War broke out, because they permitted propaganda to be carried on against it. They were too weak. That will not happen again.'

Further he said:

'Smuts has approved of all that is being done. It looks as though I was right when I said in England that war would break out in the Spring. . . . The services of the B.E.S.L. are being utilized and I have already made certain arrangements with them. In all these matters the Prime Minister has agreed and you know sufficient about the Prime Minister to know that he does not turn back.'

This entry in my diary was made by me immediately after the interview and was read out to members of Parliament who were interested. After hearing it and subsequently Pirow's speech in the House,[1] they, too, were satisfied that there was no danger of Pirow and the Prime Minister not playing their part if war should result from German *aggression*. This record of the interview between Pirow and myself was published in the Press by me soon afterwards and was not refuted. It appeared to me at the time that Pirow had, to say the least of it, deliberately led me to believe that Hertzog and he would not be for neutrality.

But how does Pirow reconcile his assurance to me and indeed to the country, with the statements which he makes in his book? He arraigns Smuts for breaking the terms of an alleged Cabinet agreement supposed to have been arrived at in September 1938, pledging the Cabinet to neutrality in the event of war. Pirow says[2] of Smuts's alleged acceptance of this policy:

> At the time I believed Smuts had honestly accepted the proposed policy as sound and inevitable. Today, after what happened at the beginning of September 1939, I have come to the conclusion that he (Smuts) accepted the statement merely to gain time and in the belief that a European war was still some distance off.

And again, describing events taking place in South Africa after his return from Europe he says:[3]

[1] *v. Hansard*, xxxiii, p. 273.
[2] Pirow, *J. B. M. Hertzog*, p. 226.
[3] *ibid.* p. 242.

> I had no certainty of what he (Smuts) was doing behind the scenes until the beginning of August 1939 when the British High Commissioner came to see me about possible hospital facilities for troops from the East if war broke out. I replied *if* we were in that war, all our facilities would be at the disposal of the Imperial Government, but if we remained neutral the position, of course, would be different. He seemed shocked: 'If you remain neutral! but General Smuts—' and then he stopped short. I reported this conversation to Hertzog, who said: 'Oh, so Smuts has been talking. Well, I intend to hold him to our agreed policy.'

And yet in March 1939 Pirow had led me to believe that he and the Prime Minister would never remain neutral in the event of war and that the Prime Minister would never turn back.

Regarding the alleged Cabinet agreement, if such an agreement were ever genuinely arrived at, its terms were never communicated to the country and it is strange that one of Hertzog's own Ministers, Clarkson, when fighting a by-election in Pietermaritzburg just before the outbreak of war stated to the electorate and to the country:

> Any suggestion that the Government intends to pursue a policy of neutrality is the grossest libel that can be uttered.

The fact of the matter is that in the year preceding the war, the Cabinet appears to have been in a state of complete bewilderment due to the fact that Hertzog used his premiership as a dictatorship, seldom consulting anybody. In the words of Denys Reitz, who was Minister of Mines in Hertzog's Cabinet, when relating the inside story of the Cabinet crises of 1939:

> During the last six and a half years, we used to feel that the system of rule by the Cabinet had almost fallen into disuse. We were very rarely consulted. Time after time we had to swallow our opinions. . . . . I was told that during the nine years Hertzog led the old Nationalist Party he would not consult anybody. In the caucus he said: 'This is what I am going to do', and he laid down the law.[1]

[1] *Daily News*, Sept. 14, 1950.

That is what he attempted to do over neutrality in 1939, but for once it did not work, and we are left with the impression that it was not for want of trying on Pirow's part. Hertzog was never much of a hand at foreign affairs and undoubtedly Pirow's views influenced him. For, looking back, I cannot help thinking that Pirow was the decisive factor in the historic crisis of September 1939. Pirow says in his book:

> That evening (Sept. 2nd) I was asked to come to Groote Schuur where, I think Havenga was staying at the time. 'Amice,' said Hertzog, 'Chamberlain has wired me.' With that he handed me a cablegram which read as follows: 'You can adopt one of three alternatives: you can declare war on Germany, you can break off diplomatic relations with her or you can remain neutral. I beg of you not to follow the third course.'
>
> 'Well, what do you think about it?' said Hertzog.
>
> 'But General, after your speeches anything but neutrality is unthinkable.'[1]

Yet in March 1939 he had said to me: 'My own position is that while I would not fight for the Empire as you would, I am going to fight for South Africa.' His words were ambiguous—perhaps they were meant to be.

There can be no doubt, however, that the change of Government had a wonderfully revivifying effect upon the whole South African outlook. The dissimulations vanished; the mists of the political field cleared and the antagonists were clearly revealed as loyal and strenuous supporters of the war on the one side and Nazis and obstructionists on the other.

On the whole it would have been unwise to conclude that, despite the pro-Nazi sentiments which were so freely aired, any part of South Africa would willingly have seen Germany victorious. The political struggle in the Union is waged with old battle-cries. There was no member of the Nationalist Party in Parliament who did not realize the benefits which accrue to South Africa as a member of the British Commonwealth. They wished

[1] Pirow, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

to remain a member of the Commonwealth, but to be a republic at the same time. Such is their universal lack of acquaintance with the world outside, that, without any realization of the confusion of thought which such a belief entails, they considered that a neutral republic was compatible with membership of the British Commonwealth. And if that was not possible, then they would be a republic in the belief that British power would protect them as a small state because Britain so badly needed the goods of South Africa!

While the war deepened the political division in the ranks of the Europeans, it brought about a unity of outlook amongst the native population. Every native representative in the country without exception declared his loyalty towards the Commonwealth in her hour of need, for the Native Representative Council spoke for all natives when it unanimously passed the following resolution on December 1, 1939:

> That this Council, assembled here, representing all the African people of the Union of South Africa, during this anxious time of war with Germany, wishes to reaffirm the unswerving loyalty of the African peoples to the Throne of Great Britain and to the Government of the Union of South Africa.

As a member of the Native Affairs Commission, I attended all meetings of the Native Representative Council and I can vouch for it that native attachment to the Crown was sincere, and everywhere it was asked by them to be allowed to bear arms; but under the law that could not be done and it would have been dangerous for the Government to have attempted it, had it been willing to do so. The Coloured in the country went forward in the transport services and won the commendation of Wavell, who said that without their help the Somalia campaign would never have been won. The Indians too, though deterred by the propaganda of the Indian National Congress on orders from India, played their part in the hospital services.

The Defence Act provided that the Defence Force should

confine its activities to South Africa. None but volunteers should go out of the country, and early it became necessary to distinguish between those who had joined under the Defence Force Act and those who had joined under the War Regulations, which permitted them to go north and see service outside the Union. The distinguishing mark was an orange tab. But before long soldiers wearing the orange flash were the victims of vicious attacks in their own country, instigated by the anti-warites in our community—principally members of the so-called cultural societies of the *Broederbond* and the *Ossewa Brandwag*. The orange flash, however, was to win distinction in the fields of battle and continued to be a burning reminder of the patriotism which existed in South Africa, until the Nationalists came to power and speedily found an excuse for abolishing it.

Thus it was that South Africa found herself fully extended and her troops engaged in Africa and Italy, while our airmen were sacrificed to succour Warsaw.

When Parliament met in January 1940, Smuts asked me to go to the Senate where there were now four elected senators representing Native Affairs. I accepted and as the only member of the Native Affairs Commission in the Senate, I felt it would be my duty to answer for the Government there.

It was the expectation at that time that the three members who represented the three native constituencies of the Cape in the House of Assembly would confine their attention to urban Cape matters, as they were all townsmen and knew little of tribal matters, while the four Senators elected by all the natives for the whole country would represent the tribal natives elsewhere, as they were specially versed in these matters. But it did not turn out that way. The three urban representatives of the Cape took it upon themselves (in terms of near Marxist socialism) to speak for all the tribesmen throughout the whole of South Africa, though they had little or no knowledge of the people for whom they spoke. Those representing the natives in the Senate were more conservative in their policy than those in the House of Assembly. This conformed with my ideas and I felt therefore that I would

be of more use to the natives in the Senate than if I were to remain in the Assembly.

Thus it was that after representing the Zululand constituency for twenty years, I passed into the quieter atmosphere of the Senate and yielded my place to Leif Egeland, a young Durban lawyer and a Rhodes scholar, who won the by-election which my promotion caused. He subsequently followed me as High Commissioner in London.

The years were going by very fast and rather to my surprise I found that my three children were grown up. Their schooldays had sped away and were finished almost before I realized they had begun.

Joyce, the eldest, had been studying at Boschetto, an agricultural college for young ladies at Harrismith in the Orange Free State. I was unsure whether she cared for it. She was continually asking to have painting lessons, but nobody took her seriously and the talent was left latent until many years later, when, due to her own perseverance, it blossomed forth to give her joy and new interest. She married an enterprising young sugar farmer, Jack Stanley, the son of a Yorkshireman. Jacko has great powers of organization and has done exceedingly well for himself and his family.

Ioma had attended the University in Cape Town and then gone on to Oxford where she studied for her research degree in anthropology. In 1939 she came out to see us for her summer vacation, but, fearing that monstrous events were about to take place in Britain, nothing would keep her in South Africa, and, despite our efforts to restrain her, she set sail for England and arrived in Southampton a few days before war was declared. She soon married Dr Evans Pritchard, Research Lecturer in Social Anthopology at Oxford.

My son Derek had been through Michaelhouse and in 1936 was admitted to Cranwell Royal Air Force College, as a Governor-General's cadet for South Africa. We were very proud of him. Twenty days after the declaration of war he was shot down while

Je[illegible] Nic[illegible] (Mrs Stanley) and Christopher

PLATE 8

Derek Nicholls (as a cadet at Cranwell)

PLATE 9

Heaton Nicholls (from a portrait by his elder daughter)

Bronze head of Mr Heaton Nicholls by Count van den Steen

taking photographs of the German coastline near the island of Sylt. When the notification came over the wires I was on tour of the native reserves in Natal. He was reported 'missing, believed killed', and then definitely as 'killed'. My wife refused to believe that her son was dead. Her faith was justified, for two months after we received the first news, a cable reached us from my wife's sister, who lived in England, to say that Derek was a prisoner of war in Germany. They had had a postcard from him. He had had a miraculous escape; the three other occupants of the plane were all killed. Derek, who was piloting the plane, fell into the sea in a semi-conscious condition having been wounded in the left shoulder. After about twenty minutes of floating in his equipment he was picked up by a German fishing-boat and taken over by a German naval launch as a prisoner. He remained in Germany until the end of the war. He was the first South African prisoner of war and was given the number of British Prisoner of War No. 22. He was put into a room with four windows and at each window was a searchlight and before each window was a German trooper with a fixed bayonet. They evidently had a very wholesome respect for a British airman.

The Germans treated him well on the whole. His three companions, whose bodies were picked up out of the water, were given military funerals and Derek marched with the funeral to the cemetery where a photograph was taken of him laying a wreath on the grave, with an armed guard behind him. This picture was first published in the German Press under the caption: 'Foreign flyers find a home in Germany.' Later he was sent to a castle 'somewhere in Germany' and subsequently moving through several camps, arrived at Oflag IX. He spent much of his time planning and working for an escape and did manage to break away for several days, but was caught again and sent to Poland for punishment.

Six years is a big chunk out of anyone's life and it says much for his good commonsense and balance that he was not aversely and lastingly affected by his experiences. In 1951 he married Biddy Otto, the daughter of a well-known Natal farmer who served in the Royal Horse Guards during the first world war, a

girl with all his own interests. They live with their three children at the 'Huts' at Umfolozi, in very much the same way as Ruby and I used to do with our children so many years ago. Thus life goes round full circle, and another generation of Heaton Nicholls is growing up in Zululand.

PART THREE

A SERVANT OF THE STATE
(1941–1948)

CHAPTER XXV

ADMINISTRATOR OF NATAL

(1941–1943)

IN 1941, Smuts asked me to accept the position of Administrator of Natal. I had never in my wildest dreams thought of this, but during the next few days I gave my mind to it. Smuts knew that I was a strong federalist and that I should do what I could to further that cause. I knew too, that despite his strong unifying tendency at the National Convention of 1909, and subsequently expressed on different occasions, his further acquaintance with the evolution of Africa and the growing issues between the population, had brought him over into the federal camp. I accepted the Administratorship, with the determination to work for federation and to make what changes I could during my term of office.

I found it very difficult. Every Union department was busily at work nipping off the edges of the Provincial authority as defined in the Act of Union. In all this the towns of Natal had assisted. In the normal way they had formed themselves into a Natal Municipal Association for the purpose of by-passing the Provincial authorities to whom, of course, they owed their existence. The other Provinces had done the same. The four Provincial Associations had then affiliated with each other to form an all-Union body for the purpose of putting pressure on the Central Government, instead of applying to the Provincial Councils, thus undermining their own governing authority. So, as time went on, the Provincial Councils found themselves by-passed by their own children for whom, under the South Africa Act, they were supposed to be entirely responsible. The Union Ministers were only too happy, of course, to afford the Municipal Associations the authority to approach them. The

Minister of the Interior, especially, came to think that he governed all Provincial affairs; yet, in fact the Provinces had obtained their being from the Act of Union and were themselves sovereign powers with which the Minister could not interfere without some change in the Act.

I found myself immediately at war—on constitutional grounds—with the Central Government departments seeking to usurp all local autonomy. This was rendered easy by the Province having no means of trying matters in dispute by a court of law. The Union law advisers were the sole judges in the case of disputes. By some strange dispensation the Provincial councillors had all developed an inferiority complex, and allowed members of Parliament to speak for them, though all councillors were elected by precisely the same machinery as were members of Parliament—having exactly the same electorate—and by the same fundamental authority for their affairs, i.e. the Act of Union; but they had come to feel themselves inferior to the members of Parliament.

The latter accepted the position and dealt with Provincial matters in Parliament as freely as the Provincial councillors do in Council. This further political influence formed the fortunes of the political parties. The actions of the Provincial Council are now governed by the party caucus in Cape Town and not by its own caucus in the Province. This in turn has given the Union political party complete control over all the affairs of the Province. The Provincial chairman of the Union political party in Parliament becomes the chairman as well of the Provincial political party; every move in the interests of the Province must trim its sails to the wishes of the political party in Cape Town, and the will of the political parties in the parliamentary stream becomes the will of the Provinces.

I was not able to change this state of affairs. The Administrator can never attend a party caucus, or, indeed, talk party politics to the members of his council. But he may and does attend meetings of the Natal Municipal Assciation. I pointed, out whenever I addressed this body, that they were not only cutting the throats of the Provincial Councils, but their own as well.

The Republican policy is to dispense with mayors and councillors and place the government of all municipalities in the hands of the Central Government officials. Whatever may be said in favour of the disestablishment of local autonomy, it must lead to dictatorship and bureaucracy. When all government passes into the hands of the centre, the interests of the whole are lost sight of in the gain of the few. I considered the Provinces as our South African method of maintaining a continuity of democracy, as indeed was intended in the Act of Union.

The Provincial system, I found, was a very slick piece of government. The Administrator with his four members of the Executive has full control over every action. At every meeting of the Executive which lasts several days, one hundred and fifty or two hundred matters may be dealt with. They are concluded at that particular session and the money necessary is voted and provided for. There is no circumlocution as is the case with matters brought before the Central Government which has to wait on the sanction of the Treasury before action is taken. Once a matter is brought before the Executive by the Provincial secretary, it is ready for instant decision, and nobody can interfere with the decision after it is made. The Provincial Council has no power over it.

But there is danger in this freedom. Each member of the Executive wants to act as though he were a minister himself. I found that one member had allocated to himself the control of education; another that of roads; another that of hospitals; another had taken on municipal affairs, thus divorcing himself from interest in the administration as a whole. It was my contention that this system would lead to unconscious collusion. I pointed out this danger to the Executive Committee. They were rather angry at my suggestion.

I told them that their power could only be wielded as a body within the Executive chamber, i.e. the Administrator and the four Executive members had the power of a Union Minister when they acted collectively, but that individually they could exercise no power. The system, working as it was when I became Administrator, meant that each was illegally enhancing the power

of the other. With this separate understanding the member dealing with education could do anything he liked with the certainty that he would be supported by the others because he was supporting them. Each member of the Executive thus assumed an individual independence which was never intended. Moreover, it was all the more dangerous because his actions were not subject to any examination by an alive opposition as was the case with a Parliamentary Minister; and they were each also irremovable by Council.

I therefore stopped this Provincial ministry system. The Act of Union provided that the Executive must act as a whole. I told the councillors there could be no ministerial authority vested in a single member of the Executive. No decision could be taken outside the Chamber; no member could commit the Executive in any speech he made. I wanted every member to come to the meetings unpledged to each other, so that there could be free discussion. This was the position as it eventually became accepted, but it was not accepted without a showdown.

One day I discovered that all work on constructing a new air strip at Mtubatuba was about to cease to allow the workers to have their summer holiday. This meant the closing down of a project which, because of the war, was a priority job. I gave orders immediately to cancel all leave and that the workers must all return to their task. The four members of the Executive immediately came to see me. I had countermanded an Executive minute. I was told I had no power to do that: the men should 'proceed on leave'.

'So,' I said, 'the Natal Executive does not realize that we are fighting a war, that ships are being sunk around the coast and our only defences are these aerodromes. And you say this urgently needed work must cease because it is being done in a malarial zone and you agreed to close down during the rainy season when malaria is prevalent. I know very well that I have no power to cancel a resolution of the Provincial Executive, but I have done it, and in similar circumstances I shall do so again. You can, if you like, insist upon my resignation. I will write it at once. But I am not prepared to see South Africa's defence weakened by a

Provincial Executive acting foolishly.' The Executive gave way, like the good fellows they were. This incident did not destroy the harmony which existed between us. For three years we continued.

The senior member of the Executive was W. M. Power (United Party). He was an ex-veterinary surgeon of Natal, a courteous, kindly man, devoted to his work, with a whimsical turn of phrase and an unsurpassed knowledge of the Natal Province and its people. The second member was Douglas Mitchell (United Party), a pugnacious fighter for what he thought was right with a forthright method of speaking and a hard worker. He followed me as Administrator. The third was T. H. Blew (Dominion Party) who did not burden us with much argument, but had a long record of service, and the fourth was H. Hoskin, much concerned with education, a very sincere and straightforward fellow. Blew, who subsequently went to the Senate, later dropped out and was replaced by L. Whiteley (Labour Party). The political parties were therefore evenly balanced, weighted by me, a member of the United Party. I do not remember that we ever had any serious disagreement in the years that I was Administrator.

The position of Administrator in Natal is a cross between a lieutenant-governor and a premier. As a lieutenant-governor he is principal citizen of the Province and assumes many duties of a social nature. As a premier he is responsible for the finances of the Province and work of the Provincial Council and is the head of the civil service. He is provided with a suitable residence known as Parkside which is situated in the beautiful Alexandria Park of the capital city, Pietermaritzburg. This house was built in 1884 as a private residence by a son of Theophilus Shepstone, Offie Shepstone. It was later acquired by Judge Tatham, a member of the well-known Natal family, and was his home for many years. On his death it passed into the hands of the Provincial Administration to become the home of future Natal Administrators.

I was the first of them to take up residence in this old colonial bungalow. I wished to know something of its history, and learning that Mrs Tatham was alive and took a great interest in the gardens

of Parkside, I asked her to come and tell me all about the place. I fetched the gracious old lady in my car and together we walked reverently round the grounds while she told their story.

When she lived there the grounds of the garden marked the end of the bush veld to the east of Pietermaritzburg. In front of the house is a flat thorn tree, the *acacia arabica*, one of those which covered the whole of the countryside when 'Maritzburg was born. The tree bears an historic monumental plaque with the date inscribed: 'July, 1842.' It was on that date that the Dutch people of Pietermaritzburg surrendered to the British troops after their short-lived Republic. Jan Hofmeyr, who, as a member of the Historical Monuments Commission, put up the plaque, called it 'The Tree of Peace'. On the lawns around this tree the Administrator holds his garden parties. We wandered from the tree along the 'Avenue of Friends', an avenue of cypress trees. Each tree had been planted by famous men or women who had visited the house as guests of the Tathams—Haig, Lukin, Mrs Louis Botha, Prince and Princess Arthur of Connaught, members of the Rhodes Trust, Admiral Goodenough, Lady Selborne and many more. The trees stood like sentinels on the path leading to an old Indian sundial and a seat inscribed: 'Let us make earth a garden, that the deeds of the valiant may blossom and bear fruit.' This legend was taken from Marlborough College Memorial Gardens where the two Tatham boys had been to school.

After questing other memories, we came at last to a sundial which stood alone, surrounded at the base by creeping plants. Before this sundial Mrs Tatham paused for a moment to get her breath, and then with her hands resting on the brickwork, she said very gently: 'This is my altar. This is where I love to come for prayer. It was erected in commemoration of my two boys who were killed within two days of each other in 1916.' On the sundial were the words: 'Light wanes, love remains.' I looked down at that frail old lady, her feet entangled in the creeping rosemary and ivy that grew at the base of the sundial, and to me she had an ethereal look. I was profoundly moved, and vowed that nothing unworthy would sully my work as Administrator.

It was in this garden that both races had met over a hundred years before to pledge their troth to each other, under the Tree of Peace; the peace must be kept between the races.

I took Mrs Tatham home and returned to wander round the empty garden and reflect upon her story, so typical of South Africa, and wondered whether, I who had filled so lowly a spot amongst mankind, would rise worthily to this high office, for it was a great trust imposed upon me in the land of my adoption.

CHAPTER XXVI

WAR-TIME HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LONDON

(1943–1945)

EACH year a consultative committee meeting of the Executives representing the four Provinces was held. Towards the end of November 1944 I went up to Pretoria to attend this meeting. The city was gay with the flowers of early summer. Smuts sent for me soon after my arrival. I found him sitting in front of a cleared desk in his office at the Union Buildings. He was dressed in his field-marshal's uniform. We were alone. He looked up and greeted me. 'I've sent for you, Nicholls, to talk about the High Commissioner in London. You know that Reitz's death has created a vacancy and I want you to fill it.'

I was startled. This was totally unexpected. I thought he had wanted to see me about some Provincial matters, and there were a number of things I wanted to discuss with him. Smuts went on: 'At this time, Nicholls, London is very important to us. I have chosen you because I have complete faith in your ability and character. You will go, not only to stand up for us, but also to back up the British Government during a period of great difficulty. The British are the people who are confronting the real danger. My policy is to support the British Government as the sheet-anchor of the white man and his civilization in all Africa, for, if anything happens to the Commonwealth, it will be fatal for us all.'

I thought of our past divisions and replied: 'If your offer to me is objected to by any of your colleagues, please do not consider yourself bound to me any way by what you have said. I shall not mind if you withdraw.' 'There will be no withdrawal,' he replied decisively. We went to lunch with the other Executives at the

Pretoria Country Club, where in a speech over the radio, Smuts made the announcement of my appointment.

I was busy all the afternoon and so could not telephone my wife until the evening. She was not pleased but she accepted with good grace. We flew by seaplane from Durban, up the coast to Cairo. The voyage was exciting and adventurous and filled with anticipation. At Cairo we met our daughter, Ioma, who had come with her two-and-a-half year old child, Shineen, from Jerusalem to meet us. Shineen had been born in Baghdad where Ioma was employed at the British Embassy. After the birth of Shineen, Ioma sought a better climate by moving to Jerusalem. Her husband had joined up as soon as war was declared and had had an eventful and colourful time as a member of the Sudan Defence Force. At the time of our arrival in Cairo he was a political officer in Cyrenaica. We left Ioma and Shineen to follow us to London. Teddy Evans-Pritchard remained in Cyrenaica until after the war.

It was dark and cold as we alighted from the train at Waterloo on that December night in 1944. We had flown over from North Africa with one engine of our seaplane idling a good deal of the way, but fortunately we did not learn of this until after our arrival. The inkiness of the blackout enveloped us. Little torches flashed their light like fireflies amongst the small groups of people waiting on the platform. Somehow my wife and I were discovered by the secretary from South Africa House and his wife; by Cranborne, the Secretary of State, and others from the Dominions Office who had come to welcome us on behalf of the United Kingdom Government.

We managed to find our way out of the pitch blackness of the station to the waiting car and drove to the Hyde Park Hotel. Progress was slow and we had ample time to take in war-time London. Our first impression was one of wonder at the way London managed to find its way about in the blackout. Despite the grimness, there was no lack of cheerfulness in the air. There was a sense of discomfort and privation cheerfully born, but it was impossible to feel a shadow of doubt about the eventual outcome of the war. The streets were silent, but it was not the

silence of despair. Now and then as we drove along, a sudden gleam of light appeared through a partially opened door and voices and a laugh rang out across the street. V.1s and V.2s were falling daily. Whole blocks of buildings were tumbling into ruins day after day, but, unless one knew from official sources what was happening, it was impossible to gather the extent of the damage or the loss of life, for nothing appeared in the Press and the people continued their daily lives as though nothing unusual was happening.

My first public duty was to wait on the King, after having been duly summoned by him. I was surprised at his wide knowledge of South Africa and I wondered whether somebody had been lately instructing him. He was most amusing and informal. I told him that I had heard Churchill say in the House of Commons that he had gone to Buckingham Palace one day and found the King practising musketry from his drawing-room window. 'Did he say that?' asked the King delightedly, and he led me over to a window which looked out across the lawn. 'I practised from here,' he said, 'at a target which was erected safely at the end of the grounds. I made a daily habit of it at the time. We were, you know, then expecting the Germans,' he added.

Soon after our arrival we were invited to lunch with Mr and Mrs Churchill. The luncheon took place in the flat which they occupied at the end of Downing Street. When we arrived, the Prime Minister had not appeared, but soon afterwards he emerged from what looked like a lift which led to the lower regions. Down below were the headquarters of Britain at war with all its ramifications where Churchill spent so much of his time. He was dressed in his famous boiler-suit, which he immediately began to take off. I remember thinking that he must have felt like a workman emerging from his workshop for a meal.

It was not long before we were all seated in the comparatively small dining-room. I found myself sitting opposite Churchill at the table. He appeared distracted, his face set in angry lines, and oblivious of us all, he was mumbling to himself. Then, looking up and catching me peering at him curiously, he broke into a cherubic smile: 'Pardon me, you caught me talking to myself,'

he said. 'Yes, sir,' I replied, 'You looked very angry.' A remark he did not contradict. 'Now tell me,' he went on, 'how is Smuts?' and during the course of my reply, I ventured to tell him that Smuts called him the 'demigorgon'! 'Oh,' said Churchill. I don't know whether he took it in fun or not.

Soon after, he opened the conversation generally. It was on the subject of Greece and the Parliamentary debate that was to take place that afternoon. He was annoyed at the attitude that had been taken up by the London *Times*. Barrington Ward, the editor, was attacking the Government furiously for its action in not supporting the revolutionary forces of ELAS and its political wing EAM. *The Times* represented a large political element in England who thought that the revolutionaries in Greece represented the forces of democracy and, saw in these revolutionary elements the signs of a simple folk who had fought against one type of despotism and were afraid of being saddled with another. To this Churchill growled: 'Democracy is no harlot to be picked up in the street by a man with a tommy gun!'

Brendan Bracken, Churchill's righthand man, who was present at lunch suggested that the Prime Minister should see Barrington Ward and talk matters over with him. Churchill replied that it was no good; he had tried that. 'There is only one thing to be done,' I heard him say, 'and that is to put the matter to Parliament and ask for a vote of confidence.' Bracken reminded him that he had done this twice already, 'I doubt whether it would be wise to do it again,' he said. But Churchill ignored his advice and later gained a unanimous vote of confidence in the House of Commons.

I was particularly interested in the subject of Greece, because the advice being given by Smuts to the British Government ran completely contrary to that advocated by *The Times*. Throughout the Greek troubles South Africa's Prime Minister stood for the Constitution as being a fundamental basis of any nation's existence. There could, he held, be no peace in Greece by compromising on fundamentals. 'This post-war ideology which considers that all that is necessary to save the world is to destroy the old Royal functions and substitute coalitions of contending

he said. 'Yes, sir,' I replied, 'You looked very angry.' A remark he did not contradict. 'Now tell me,' he went on, 'how is Smuts?' and during the course of my reply, I ventured to tell him that Smuts called him the 'demigorgon'! 'Oh,' said Churchill. I don't know whether he took it in fun or not.

Soon after, he opened the conversation generally. It was on the subject of Greece and the Parliamentary debate that was to take place that afternoon. He was annoyed at the attitude that had been taken up by the London *Times*. Barrington Ward, the editor, was attacking the Government furiously for its action in not supporting the revolutionary forces of ELAS and its political wing EAM. *The Times* represented a large political element in England who thought that the revolutionaries in Greece represented the forces of democracy and, saw in these revolutionary elements the signs of a simple folk who had fought against one type of despotism and were afraid of being saddled with another. To this Churchill growled: 'Democracy is no harlot to be picked up in the street by a man with a tommy gun!'

Brendan Bracken, Churchill's righthand man, who was present at lunch suggested that the Prime Minister should see Barrington Ward and talk matters over with him. Churchill replied that it was no good; he had tried that. 'There is only one thing to be done,' I heard him say, 'and that is to put the matter to Parliament and ask for a vote of confidence.' Bracken reminded him that he had done this twice already, 'I doubt whether it would be wise to do it again,' he said. But Churchill ignored his advice and later gained a unanimous vote of confidence in the House of Commons.

I was particularly interested in the subject of Greece, because the advice being given by Smuts to the British Government ran completely contrary to that advocated by *The Times*. Throughout the Greek troubles South Africa's Prime Minister stood for the Constitution as being a fundamental basis of any nation's existence. There could, he held, be no peace in Greece by compromising on fundamentals. 'This post-war ideology which considers that all that is necessary to save the world is to destroy the old Royal functions and substitute coalitions of contending

politicians to govern the country is unsound,' he used to say.

Smuts was in close personal touch with the Greek Royal family throughout the trouble and he never wavered in his support of the Greek monarchy. He considered that not only was this policy affording constitutional strength to the people of Greece, but it was also helping to defeat the revolutionaries who were seeking to establish Russian authority in the Aegean.

When I arrived in London, the King of the Hellenes had a suite of rooms at Claridge's and on occasions I was the bearer of messages between the King and Smuts. As the channel through which these communications passed, I found myself in a most peculiar and somewhat embarrassing position. The King was striving hard to induce the British Government to allow him to return to Athens where he felt his presence on the spot, as the constitutional head of the country, would overcome much of the hostility in the political field and would rally the Greek people as whole to the defence of the constitution.

On the other hand, Churchill, as the head of the National Government, found himself placed with many who believed that any support given to the King of Greece would injure the reputation of the British Government. Thus it was that Churchill was being pushed to overthrow the King and support the mob law which called itself democracy. The King of Greece told me that he had been talked to like a hireling by Churchill on this subject.

The policy of the British Government was, therefore, to restrain the King and I found myself the bearer of messages from Smuts to him which I knew were in direct conflict with the policy of the British Government. Once, when I pointed out to the general the compromising position I was in, he said: 'Give my message to the King. The British Government is aware of my attitude.' The result of the plebiscite which later voted overwhelmingly in favour of the return of the King, showed that Smuts's prescience throughout was correct.

The opposition to the return of the King existed just as strongly in the United States, Australia and New Zealand, as it did in some political circles of the United Kingdom. The outcome

of the plebiscite betrayed the failure of all these people to understand the deep spiritual significance and mysticism which surrounds a hereditary ruler fulfilling his predestined task and how curiously unaware they were of the loyalty for a crowned head which exists amongst all common peoples who have not been influenced by revolutionary propaganda. Those of us who have had experience in the administration of native tribes in Africa, know with what a deep sense of satisfaction an hereditary chief is accepted as their spokesman to the world. Centuries of tradition and ritual are not easily erased by the arguments of the London School of Economics, however logical these may be.

Today, writing in 1949, it can be more clearly seen that all the trouble in Greece has come about from the encouragement of revolutionary elements from outside. King George's return with the Greek Government from Italy in the early part of 1945 would have probably saved her all the years of misery she has had to suffer. Churchill's insistence upon ignoring the Press by refusing to parley with *The Times* and to seek, instead, the confidence of the House of Commons by asking for a vote of confidence, showed his great regard for the judgment and good faith of the elected representatives of the people.

On that day, lunching with Churchill, I felt that his preoccupation for the moment with the affairs of Greece resembled a single spark from the human dynamo which was running the affairs of the world. What impressed me about him was his enormous vitality. Nothing was too small or too large for him to deal with, and outside the routine of his daily judgments, his witty, scintillating conversation lifted our minds above the dull pressure of events.

I found Mrs Churchill very interesting and charming. She told me about her visit to Russia where she had recently been travelling, on the Soviet's invitation, in connection with her 'Aid to Russia' war-work. Here she learnt something of the relationship between the sexes in Russia and told me that the Russian Government ordered the clothes of the Ministers' wives who attended her parties! Her gift of humour was very highly developed. Later she told me of her experiences on a trip up the Fly River in New

Guinea, when she was a young girl. I had known nothing of her visit there and was taken by surprise when she mentioned it. In thinking the matter over afterwards, I realized that she must have been there about the time of the killing and eating by New Guinea cannibals of Chalmers and his companions at Guaribari. It was most likely that she paid her visit when young Murray, afterwards Lord Elibank, was magistrate at Daru Island. I knew of nobody else there whom she could have visited. I should have liked to obtain some particulars from her of the cannibal incident, but the opportunity did not offer itself for me to question her. It was strange to find in the wife of the British Prime Minister a woman who, as a girl, had made that dangerous voyage to the home of the head-hunters.

Mary Churchill was seated on my other hand and she told me of her recent experience in the Women's Services and the thrill it gave her to be one of the crew of the anti-aircraft guns in Hyde Park. But on this occasion, Mary had very bad toothache and she was due to return that afternoon to France to rejoin her battery. Winston said: 'You should not go back with your teeth like that, Mary. I will speak to your commanding officer and put off your return until you have been attended to.' But Mary, like all daughters, had other ideas. 'Now don't interfere, Daddy,' she replied, 'don't put me offsides with my commanding officer.' And there, I imagine, Churchill, like all fathers, had to leave it.

Seated at the end of a wire at the centre of the world at war, communicating to my Government the daily events as they presented themselves, life was intense and throbbing with interest. One of the most solemn occasions on which I saw Churchill during this period was after the Armistice when he conveyed the thanks of Parliament to the King and Queen for the victory which had been won. There was no one there but the members of Parliament—his devoted Lords and Commons—filling up the Hall with the High Commissioners roped off in a 'kraal' of our own on either side of the Throne, on which were seated the King and Queen. It was a simple, unostentatious ceremony. It ended with Winston Churchill with one knee on

the lower step of the throne calling for three cheers for their Majesties, whose relief at the termination of hostilities must have been as profound as any of their subjects.

Another occasion was just before the cessation of hostilities, when Churchill sent for the High Commissioners to meet him in his room at the House of Commons. The purpose of the meeting was to communicate to us, for transmission to our Governments, his fears for the future. Russian forces and the forces of the West had met on the battlefields of Europe and the Prime Minister proceeded to give us a vivid description of what was taking place. Churchill was obviously very angry that the Allied forces were being compelled to retreat sixty miles over ground which they had won from the Germans and to hand that ground over to the Russians. This was being done contrary to his will and to his great grief.

The accounts he had received from Eisenhower and Montgomery were harrowing and startling in their barbaric reality. The innocent civilian population of Austria and Germany were under a fiercer and more cruel harrow than they had suffered in the defence of their lands. Both Eisenhower and Montgomery had informed him that every woman in that area had probably been raped by the Russian troops. The Russians were being allowed to march over this conquered territory and do what they would, while the British and Americans were evacuated. The great forces which had driven victoriously into Germany would soon fade away while the Russians would remain in possession—all due to the mistaken attitude of Roosevelt.

It was a daring and shaking speech which Churchill made. He wanted us to understand that he would have to clear up this mess on the Continent which our negligence at Yalta had created. Stalin was playing off the British against the Americans, and before this could be rectified, Roosevelt had died and Truman had taken his place, a factor of unknown quantity, bringing with him all the inherited prejudices of anti-colonialism characteristic of the Americans—themselves ex-colonists—which proved such a handicap to permanent peace.

Later on, after peace had been declared we saw Churchill

returning by plane from the Potsdam Conference in high spirits, claiming a majority of eighty at the forthcoming general elections. Attlee on the other hand, showing a surprising lack of self-confidence, was willing to give him only forty. To most people's surprise Churchill lost the election. I had, however, reported to Smuts that I thought a change of Government was imminent; my political staff with their fingers on the pulse of things had correctly anticipated the course of events. What the position might have been had Churchill won and been allowed to conclude the Potsdam Conference on his own terms, we shall never know. With the British change in government, the European world which then stood with Britain descended into chaos, and the cold war began.

Socialism claimed its own way of life in the United Kingdom and was as purposeful to enact its doctrinaire remedies for present ills as the Nationalists in South Africa proved to be a few years later. How Churchill bore himself during this period may be gathered from a letter which I wrote to Smuts on October 21, 1945:

> Leathers . . . will probably convey to you a very humorous and informative account of his journey with Winston Churchill, Clem Attlee and Eden, to and from Potsdam, with an impression of the strange confidence of Churchill in his victory at the coming election and the despondency of Attlee at his own anticipated defeat. He will give you an account of the way Churchill recovered from the crushing blow which nearly bowled him over, and how he rose to the heights of optimism.
>
> When he addressed his party colleagues at their final meeting, he told them that he would have nobody around him who was prepared to embarrass the new Government. They wanted all the help that could be given them in their daily task. England was greater than party. They would fight on their chosen battlefields with all the skill and vigour they could muster; it would be a battlefield which all felt was worthy of a fight which was necessary in the people's interests.

We could only stay one month in the Hyde Park Hotel. The

High Commissioner's residence in Prince's Gate had been converted into a South African Services Club, enlarged by the addition of the house on either side. It was an old narrow Victorian house with a number of storeys to climb, without a lift—very trying for old legs—and quite unsuitable for the changed world we were confronting. The lease was soon to expire, so for the time being we took over a house at Essendon, formerly occupied by my predecessor.

Essendon lay in the line of flight of the V.1s which came from Germany to London. Mrs Reitz had narrowly missed being killed by one of these bombs, which had blown up a good deal of the village and damaged the parish church. On the first Sunday at Essendon, I went with my wife to church. It was a beautiful sunny day and the service was well attended. While the parson was in the pulpit delivering his sermon, we heard the distant humming of an approaching bomb. We recognized it as a V.1 by its rise and fall. As it approached, I looked round to see how the congregation was taking it. All faces were looking up at the clergyman, who continued with his sermon without any change of voice. There was no sign that anything untoward was happening. Was I mistaken? Was it really a V.1? I looked at the pew before me where Lady Essendon was sitting. I saw her knuckles grow whiter as her hold on the woodwork of the pew grew stronger, but she continued to look at the preacher. The bomb passed over and we heard the sound of an explosion. The clergyman finished his sermon. We later filed out and commented on the narrow shave. I supposed that if the bomb had cut out when it was over us, everyone would have dived under the wooden pews; there was nothing else to shelter us.

From Essendon my wife and I motored to South Africa House every morning, each of us to enter upon our respective tasks, for Ruby had quietly joined in with the varied activities of the women's organizations in which South Africans in London played their part. The journey up to London took less than an hour.

South Africa House occupies the most prominent, the most noble site in London. It stands facing Trafalgar Square, with

Whitehall on its left, Canada House with Admiralty Arch and the Mall leading to Buckingham Palace on the other side of the Square, and on its right the National Gallery and St Martin's-in-the-Field in the corner. It had been built to accommodate a working staff of about one hundred and twenty. At the time of my arrival there was more than double that number. Every room was packed. The basements and ground floor, including a cinema theatre, which in happier times was designed for advertising the products of the Union and offering the lure of its scenery to potential travellers, were all partitioned and divided into additional rooms to house the staff. The theatre was used as a dining-room in which all members of the staff could obtain a midday meal for 1s 6d. This amenity was of considerable value to them, an advantage also extended to the staff of Rhodesia House. It was, indeed, very difficult for any single person to obtain sufficient food under the ration system prevailing, unless one meal a day was obtained from a canteen or a restaurant. South Africa House luncheons were highly thought of.

Below the theatre, in the lower regions, lay the bomb shelters which were occupied by the staff when the warning bell rang. What would have happened to all the occupants if a V.2 had fallen on South Africa House is beyond imagination. On one occasion a V.2 miraculously exploded in the air several thousand feet above; but no damage was done. The staff, however, were not without their casualities. There was the case of the old charwoman whose house was destroyed by a bomb and all the members of her family were killed. But she was at work at South Africa House next morning. When Mrs Reitz arrived and heard what had happened, she went immediately to express her sorrow and added: 'You should not be here working today,' to which the charlady replied: 'Thank you, ma'am, but this is the very day I should be at work. Now that I have lost all that I had, do you think I am going to let that Hitler get me down? I've got work to do!' I never failed to take my hat off to that old lady when I arrived at South Africa House each morning. She was usually waiting on her hands and knees before a bucket. She always jumped up and bowed her acknowledgments to me.

Looking down on the staff from my position as High Commissioner, I considered it to be both efficient and extremely cheerful, and, on the whole, extraordinarily good-looking. Whoever had done the choosing of the large number of both English and South African young ladies who were temporary clerks and typists certainly had an eye for beauty; and on occasions, when a number of South African males were gathered together in London—for instance, on the release of the prisoners-of-war from Germany, or when a visiting Springbok team arrived—it was easy to provide them with charming partners for a dance in the theatre below. Probably the hardest-worked amongst the staff were the political section and the cypher clerks engaged in transmitting to the Union daily telegrams giving an account of the changing political world. I owe them all a deep debt of gratitude for their loyal assistance and support during my term of office.

The room occupied by the High Commissioner is most impressive. It is panelled in polished stinkwood and its appearance surprises every visitor. Along the whole side of the room facing Trafalgar Square are windows which lead to the central balcony and through these windows can be seen the long pedestal on which the statue of Nelson stands.

It was in this room that Reitz received a telegram informing him that his student son had lost an eye and the fingers of one hand as the result of a chemical explosion. Taking the telegram over to the window to read, Reitz looked up at Nelson's monument, and then sent the inspiring message to his son that he had just looked upon the statue of a man who had lost an eye and an arm; notwithstanding this great disadvantage he rose to be one of the most famous men in British history. His son was to take courage from this thought. The injuries sustained by young Reitz were not so great as originally thought and he was able to fight for his country in the deserts of Cyrenaica.

In this room for three years I spent the greater part of my waking hours grappling with a variety of problems which concerned practically every department of state, and here I interviewed all manner of visitors.

Smuts had impressed on me during a last briefing when I left South Africa, that I should maintain the most friendly relationships with responsible people in England. 'You will represent me in London at a time when most serious decisions are being arrived at and your duty will be to further my policy of Commonwealth solidarity. The future of South Africa depends upon our maintaining a strong and united Commonwealth. Africa is in rapid change, as you and I have seen at firsthand. South Africa cannot live in isolation. Therefore I want you to back up the British Ministers in their task of keeping the Commonwealth together. I shall inform Churchill that you have my full confidence. You will be in constant communication with me by cable and you must report frankly on all matters. Part of your work, of course, will be to explain South Africa to the British people. They don't really know much about us and have quaint ideas about our human relationships. You know what our policies are and you must expound them; particularly our non-European legislation. I think that the end of the war is approaching, although we have a long way to go yet. We are making great progress in the West, but the war with Japan may be a long drawn-out affair. Something is being done to establish a World Organization, which will be more effective than the old League of Nations. We shall play our full part in its establishment. This work can only be done while the war is on. If it is left until afterwards, it will be too late.'

Pondering over these instructions and the rest of the talk we had together, I concluded that the two overpowering considerations I had to bear in mind were to work to strengthen the influence of the Commonwealth generally, and to explain to the British public our non-European affairs in their true historic and social setting. This accorded with my own inclination.

As far as the Europeans of South Africa were concerned, our policies did not in the main differ from those of the Western world. We were a prosperous state with no unemployment. We were a capitalist country with the same jealous regard for individual rights of property, both European and non-European, as any other Western State. We had a system of native law, running side by side with our European law, as in the rest of British Africa,

which was not derived from the Europeans, but was developed from pre-existing native law. Our judiciary had a high reputation. Our Native Commissioners were unsurpassed in any part of Colonial Africa for their humanitarianism. We did not believe in 'assimilation', but in what we called, as did the rest of Africa, 'adaptation', and we followed the principle of indirect rule, i.e. we ruled through the chiefs in our native reserves.

We had six universities for two and a half million whites and a non-European university at Fort Hare. So far in our industrial legislation we had marched with the West through the international labour organizations. We had a well-developed social welfare department and sufficient socialism in our policies to nationalize all our public utilities—harbours and railways, electricity, water, iron and steel, and anything else which a land-owning Government thought should belong to the State.

In the development of local government, in education and in hospitalization, we were further advanced than most of the Western world. For the rest I was prepared to justify the slow, historical evolution of the mass of the non-Europeans. This I did in many speeches wherever opportunity offered. No white exploitation was responsible for the backward state of our native tribes. The deep gulf which originally existed between barbarism and civilization, so short a time ago, was everywhere narrowing. There was not sufficient common ground available, nor would there be for many years, to fill in that great original gap.

That could only be bridged by years of attention to the work of education and improving the native environment by careful trusteeship. Parliament was inclined to be generous in its concept of trusteeship. It had agreed to provide an additional seven and three quarter million morgen of Native Reserves and to provide the money necessary for development. Only the war had retarded the completion of this scheme. Destiny had beckoned us to play our part in the development of Africa. I therefore assumed that I was speaking for all sections when I embarked on the task of explaining South Africa to the British.

The four High Commissioners in London gathered together

at the Dominions Office most afternoons at three o'clock under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State. Later, when the change of government took place, Cranborne made way for Addison. These meetings might last two hours or more. They were always very pleasant affairs, though occupied by very serious matters. In the early days Cranborne dispensed tea and cakes while his private secretary read out the reports. Only the four High Commissioners and the Secretary of State were present at these meetings, assisted by the Permanent Secretary of Dominion Affairs, Eric Machtig, Alfred Newton, the representative from the Foreign Office and the Minister's private secretary. Occasionally a representative from the War Office or the Air Ministry or other 'backroom boys' attended, to give us any information we required or for which our governments asked.

The four High Commissioners were Massey of Canada; Bruce of Australia; Jordan of New Zealand; and myself. The first reports read out by the secretary each day contained information on the number of bombs which had fallen on Britain during the previous twenty-four hours, the location and the damage caused, and the casualties sustained. This daily recital of the wounds being inflicted on Britain, so stoically borne, conveyed to us all an impression of the steady heartbeats of the British people. Then followed the reports from the Army of the fighting on land, and from the Admiralty concerning the events at sea. We were provided with little printed sketch-maps which showed the changes in the position from day to day; so that when Cranborne explained the latest reports we were able to follow the movements on them.

The Secretary of State was always very frank about these matters and retailed for our information the criticism which had taken place in the British Cabinet concerning them. We were all made to feel that we were significant parts of the war machine, and our governments could have no reason to feel that they were not fully informed of everything that was taking place. If they did, it was entirely the fault of the High Commissioner. As the months went by and the various fluctuations in the Allied fortunes created hopes and anxieties, I am sure that this extra-

constitutional body representing the British Dominions served a very useful purpose and it is true to say that our South African foreign policy was the result of exchanges between these meetings and our governments.

Massey, the doyen of the High Commissioners, who was senior because Canada was the senior Dominion, was a man of great intellectual and academic attainment. He had been reared in diplomacy and represented Canada in Washington before he came to London as High Commissioner. He was able to influence Canadian policy during the war much more than is realized. With him lay the initiation of the Royal Air Force training scheme in Canada. Indirectly, therefore, Massey was responsible for the RAF training scheme in South Africa.

Bruce had much less finesse than Massey. Yet, I think, he showed greater general understanding of the effects of all the matters we discussed. He was both frank and forthright. In the various little talks which came up between items on the agenda, he related to us, with great good-humour, the unprecedented manner in which Australia had 'kicked him out' as Prime Minister and sent him to London as High Commissioner. The Australian electorate was prepared to trump the best cards of any government at any time. The Labour Government of Australia had no time for Bruce, and when, later on, Evatt presided at a farewell lunch given to Bruce at the end of his term of office, his words of commendation for Bruce's brilliant work were very codfish-like and depressing.

Jordan, who incidentally was with me as a member of the Empire Parliamentary tour round Canada in 1928, was not particularly interested in foreign affairs, which the rest of us found so absorbing. He felt that his job was to sell New Zealand mutton and butter, at which he was very good; but he had a way of interjecting some shrewd observation to the argument which pricked any bubble of sentiment and immediately brought about a feeling that he was speaking for the man in the street. He could not understand the independent attitude assumed by South Africa, for he regarded New Zealand as merely an extension of Britain.

Machtig was a brilliant permanent head, having graduated in the changing school of Commonwealth relations; he was rich in experience and expert in diplomacy.

Cranborne, the Secretary of State, continually impressed me as a man of outstanding ability and knowledge of affairs. He could pick out the salient points of any matter and marshal them clearly and simply in a few sentences. He was courteous, tolerant of any conflicting opinion, tactful and persuasive. His training had given him a wide knowledge of foreign affairs and a thorough comprehension of the constitutional developments of the Commonwealth. During that critical period no other man in England was more fitted for the post that he, whose ancestors had been at the helm of British affairs since Burleigh was appointed Chief Secretary of State by Elizabeth, retaining that office until his death forty years later. Under Cranborne, the Dominions were all bound together in the great cause of freedom and marched unitedly in step. No secret purposes estranged them. It was a time of sacrifice for high ideals, carried out with a singleness of purpose which Cranborne was fittingly placed to direct. He presided over the Imperial Conference called to consider the Dumbarton Oaks recommendation for the United Nations in June 1945, at which Smuts produced his introduction to the United Nations Charter. At this conference, with great skill and without argument, Cranborne drew together the quite divergent ideas that were expressed and threaded them into a recognizable Commonwealth strand. Only long experience and great skill could have achieved that task.

Later on Addison very ably carried on the work of his predecessor. It was interesting to remember that he had been in the War Cabinet with Smuts in the first world war, when he was known as Dr Addison. His warm, rich personality enveloped us all. He was a Liberal Minister turned Labour and we felt he had the necessary understanding and cachet to restrain some of the wilder elements of the Socialist Government. There was a down-to-earth directness about him which was delightful and this was coupled with a complete lack of self. By the time he became Secretary of State, the war was over and the High

Commissioners dealt with questions which arose out of the post-war world.

CHAPTER XXVII

IN LONDON AFTER THE WAR

(1945–1946)

My period of High Commissioner in London after the war ended was probably a much more exciting time than during the war, when military purposes almost wholly occupied the minds of the Government. In 1944 it looked as though the whole civilized world was concentrated in London. All the refugee governments were endeavouring to function through their underground organizations in the countries from which they had fled, or through other channels known to them. Every separate cog of government machinery engaged in the prosecution of the war, appeared to running in well-oiled co-ordination, like the musical humming of a celestial dynamo. Then, suddenly, with the enemy surrender, the whole co-ordinated machinery of government fell to pieces. The fighting men at the fronts began to melt away. With their demobilization went the power of the British and American Governments to dictate. Only the Russians remained in occupation on the ground from which the American and British troops had withdrawn, frighteningly ready and eager to continue their advance westward. All the embassies in London became suddenly alive, each with new and insistent demands. Absentee governments clamoured unsuccessfully for their reinstatement, and the present-day satellites of Russia lost their freedom.

There now quickly developed divergent views amongst the Dominions in regard to foreign policy. The growing nationalism of Canada and Australia found its expression in challenging proposals made by the British Government, particularly when they ran counter to proposals by the American Government, as in Indonesia and Greece. The influence of the dockside workers

[illegible] High Commissioner, Campden Hill

PLATE 10

At Buckingham Palace Garden Party, 1955

Sir Leslie Ford   Miss Stanley   Lady Ford   Heaton Nicholls

PLATE 11. At Work in South Africa House

of Australia who espoused the cause of the Indonesians, was very strong upon the Australian Labour Government.

The whole question of policies to be formed in connection with the changing Balkan Governments, as well as with the Eastern Mediterranean, were of considerable interest to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Canada grew more aloof; indeed Massey had to attend the meetings of the High Commissioners almost in secret, for fear that his Government should be compromised by any public notice of his presence at them.

The volume of telegrams and reports with which South Africa House was bombarded could barely be coped with. My cypher clerks had often to stay up half the night, hard at work. South Africa House was packed with yet more additional clerks. My very able political staff worked expertly and incessantly. Always, at the other end, Smuts was alert. His prompt observations on important matters were transmitted right up to the British Cabinet as soon as they arrived. 'What does your "Great Man" say?' Addison would ask. 'I expect an answer in the morning,' I would reply. And it came, clear and decisive. It was good to feel that far off, Smuts's keen, understanding brain was playing so great a role in world affairs. Smuts had an infinitely deeper appreciation of Commonwealth foreign relations than any other of the Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth. During the Churchill regime, his advice was always given grave consideration, and more often than not accepted. With the Labour Party, of course, his advice was not always so welcome. He was regarded as being in the non-socialist camp, a friend of Churchill, and therefore one of the 'old gang'. Nevertheless his advice always carried weight. Bevin was always solicitous of his good opinion. My first interview with the new Foreign Minister when he was still Minister of Labour in the National Government, after the formal, official stiffness had given way to comradely frankness, surprised me. He told me that he considered Smuts to be a greater man than Churchill. This seemed to be an odd confession to make about his chief to a stranger, nor did I see how his knowledge of Smuts could have been very great.

He related to me an incident which took place on 'D' day,

when Churchill, Smuts, De Gaulle, himself and others went to Portsmouth to cheer the troops already embarked on their way to Normandy. They visited all the ships and spoke to as many men as possible in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm, and then went ashore to wait for Eisenhower to give the signal for their departure. Everything was ready, after months of preparation. The meteorologists had all been consulted—like the oracle of old—and the most propitious moment to leave had been decided upon. But meteorology is not an exact science. The sea did not respond to all the plotting. With Eisenhower alone lay the decision, an act which required a steady nerve, for with Eisenhower lay destiny.

As the fateful hour approached, the wind grew, and the sea rose as if in protest. The expected signal did not come. Eisenhower decided to postpone the departure. It was a moment of bitter disappointment to all. 'Churchill,' said Bevin, 'was most affected. He paced hurriedly backwards and forwards; everybody's nerves were on edge, while Churchill thundered. Only Smuts was calm.' His words and attitude at that time eased the tension. He spoke as the philosopher he was and made them all feel a bit ashamed of themselves. Afterwards he told them stories of the Boer War, of the cold disappointments which ate into his soul. His presence at Portsmouth on that occasion was a demonstration of the power of spirit over heated imagination.

Attlee, when writing of Commonwealth relations during his time as Prime Minister says: 'Smuts more than any other statesman of his time understood what a great thing is the British Commonwealth of Nations. He had seen the whole thing grow and develop and he used to say that British Imperialism died with the South African War. . . . Smuts was a great South African, but in my view he was greater on the wider stage of Commonwealth and international affairs. His mind had a very wide sweep, and I had always noticed how, even from far away South Africa, he had a just appreciation of the wide strategy of the war. So it was in peace.'

The interest which Smuts took in all the concerns of the British Government probably arose from his membership of the War

Cabinet and the peculiar position which he achieved for himself as an adviser of the Commonwealth. He not only expressed himself on matters of foreign policy in conduct of the war, but also sometimes in matters which could be regarded as being of purely domestic jurisdiction, as for instance, in the execution of young John Amery as a traitor. Smuts's appeal—an unsuccessful one—was at once an example of his compassion and understanding of mistaken youth, and of the exercise of his right as a Prime Minister to plead on equal terms to another Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. He reminded Attlee that he had had to deal with more difficult cases in South Africa during the war than Amery's, and he had got through it without making a single martyr.

As soon as the war ended the owner of the house at Essendon, where we were living, expressed his desire to move back into it and we were compelled to look round for a flat in London. We found one in Kensington and during my six months' occupancy, we entertained somewhat lavishly. To us here, came Smuts, Hofmeyr and many other people, both from South Africa and other parts of the world. During this period we looked round for another house to take the place of the High Commissioner's residence in Prince's Gate. We found one in a well-bombed area, which had been repaired by the British Government. To this house my wife gave a name suited to our bilingual character. She called it 'High Veld'. The garden of High Veld had been torn up and looked like a builder's yard. The lawns had been put under vegetables and it was some months before the house resumed its proper condition.

My wife's health had not stood up very well to the constant round of social activities and she eventually found it necessary to return to South Africa. Fortunately my daughter, Ioma, who was then living at Oxford, was able to come up to act as my hostess on important occasions. During an Imperial Conference, I invited the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth as well as the four High Commissioners and their wives and leading members of the British Government to meet the Governors of Africa, who were assembled in London attending a Conference at the time. I was

always solicitous of getting Africa together. The dinner was a great success and I see in a letter to my wife I said of Ioma:

> Your daughter has won her spurs as a hostess. She had Attlee on her right and Mackenzie King on her left. She was fully occupied with both; but it was apparently on Mackenzie King that she made the greatest impression. The next day he sent her his book, with a request to her to send on to him *Bong and Wong*, a book she was writing for her children, when it was published.

Most of my entertaining was done at South Africa House, where, until I left, I gave a coffee party every Friday morning for any South Africans in London. For a time, anybody was free to walk in from the street until I found, from the packed room, that I was dispensing coffee at my own expense to any passer-by; after that it became necessary to issue invitations. Many of our South African celebrities were regular guests.

After the war the social activities became increasingly frequent and there was hardly a day that I did not attend a function, at which, more often than not, I had to make a speech. I suppose the dreary days of the war had brought about a levelling down in people's attitudes. Experiences in the air-raid shelters brought everybody much closer together and left their mark upon them. It was noticeable at these functions. There was much less formality than there had been in pre-war days; long accepted conventions were breaking down. On one occasion I found myself seated next to Lady Willingdon, the wife of a former Viceroy of India and Governor-General of Canada. We had met in Canada and it was pleasant to renew the acquaintance. I was, however, not prepared for the form the levelling-down process took with her; it was very different when I had lunched with her in Ottawa. Being a spare eater myself, I left some meat on my plate, and when it was being removed, Lady Willingdon said, 'I am going to have that meat of yours!' As she spoke she opened a capacious bag beside her, nipped the meat off my plate with the tips of her fingers and dropped it into the bag, wrapping it meanwhile in tissue paper. 'That will make an excellent dinner for my dog!' she said.

The duty of attending the Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace and presenting South African debutantes fell to the lot of the High Commissioner; it was a nuisance; I for one, thought it sensible when the functions were abolished.

Just before Princess Elizabeth's wedding, I accompanied Smuts to Buckingham Palace to hand over to her the presents sent by South Africa. Amongst them was a rough gold tray, very heavy, sent by the gold mining industry and a marble and gold inkstand from the Transvaal Provincial Council. The tray had been brought to England by Smuts in his plane and we took it with us to the Palace in the car. It was packed securely in a wooden box. I realized when we reached the Palace that we could hardly carry the tray to the Princess as it was. We were on time for the appointment and any delay would mean keeping her waiting, but the tray had to be unpacked. 'A hammer and a screwdriver,' I whispered to the equerry attending, speculating at the time on the likelihood of these tools kept handy anywhere near the door of the Princess's audience chamber. The wait, until the harassed equerry returned with the tools, seemed interminable. Smuts and I got busy at once and prized up the nails and took the tray out from its shavings. A duster had then to be found to clean it up. At last, slightly flustered and carrying the tray, the General was admitted to the audience chamber; I followed with the inkstand. Smuts apologized to the delighted Princess, and, when the presentation was over, he told her what had happened. 'Oh,' she said, 'I heard the banging outside and wondered what was going on.'

I was in London for the Princess's wedding and in a letter to my wife (dated November 23, 1947) I described the brilliant scene I had witnessed:

> The highlight was the wedding on Thursday—a feast of pageantry and music and joyousness. The human climate responded to the happy mood. You could feel, sense, the air of hilarity, not only in the crowds that had slept or attempted to sleep on the pavements along the processional route; all London exhaled the festivity of the occasion even without the aid of flags and banners. Marriage was in the air and everybody was taking part in it.

I did not see the procession, of course, but on my way to the Abbey, my privileged car passed along the whole route and the crowds were unbelievably dense, and in a mood to cheer at anything. Even I got a cheer as I rolled along. In the Abbey I occupied the High Commissioners' stall in the choir with all the other High Commissioners. Attlee, Smuts, Mackenzie King and the chief British Ministers were all in the stalls opposite: the diplomatic corps were down below in the place usually occupied by the choir boys, now put into the organ loft for the service. The King's Bodyguard of Gentlemen-at-Arms marched with their halberds, dressed in brass helmets and plumes and red and gold tunics, and took up their stand along the aisle.

Then the foreign Royalties proceeded to their gilt and red chairs on the left of the altar; the Queen and the Royal Family to their place on the right. Finally in a fanfare and flourish, the King with the bride and bridesmaids passed slowly between us, with two five-year-old page boys, who had some difficulty in doing their job.

One thing to notice—at the marriage, the Princess stood on the left of her husband, which is the normal position; thereafter, as the Heir to the Throne, she stood on his right.

The Abbey can be trusted to stage a stately performance, and it did not fail on this occasion. Smuts, impressed by all the pomp and ceremony, standing beside Churchill, exclaimed to him in a whisper: 'Are we in the Middle Ages?' and Churchill replied in a deep voice: 'We are in all the ages!' . . .

On Tuesday night I attended the grand reception at Buckingham Palace. It was a real flashback to pre-war days. I suppose there were a couple of thousand present, and everyone was in his or her gladdest of glad rags. Diamond tiaras, pearl necklaces, jewels of all descriptions scintillated under the crystal chandeliers in the numerous state-rooms. Orders and ribbons and decorations were fully displayed on almost every person, the solitary exceptions being a few politicians like Bevin, whose services had been on the soap-box or on the public platform. In the Throne Room, the crowd was very dense. I noticed that the stars of knighthood shone most numerously and most brilliantly on the breasts of the diplomatic corps and most gorgeously in proportion to the unimportance of the countries they represented.

Half an hour or so after my arrival the crowd began to face inwards and create a gangway through which, passing from room to

room, came the King and Queen, shaking hands right and left and chatting to acquaintances as they passed. The bridal couple followed behind, Elizabeth wearing the South African necklace of diamonds. . . .

I found myself alongside Lady Clarendon, whose husband, as Lord Chamberlain, has been overwhelmed during the past few weeks with all the arrangements on his hands. She was sighing for some rest: 'This is not my cup of tea,' she said, referring to the party. 'Nor mine,' I replied.

I went in with Smuts who was immediately surrounded by a crowd of people and I lost him. Hearing that Churchill, who was standing near me at the buffet, wanted Smuts, I went to look for him. Somebody told me that they had seen him in the picture gallery. I went there. It was empty, except for Smuts sitting with the Queen of Greece on one side and the Queen of Rumania on the other. Both women were leaning over him, earnestly putting their points to him while he was gazing at the ceiling! I did not disturb him, but shortly afterwards got down to the entrance and found my coat and went away. Smuts, I am told, did not leave until after 1 a.m. It is astounding how all these Royalties cling to Smuts and seek his advice.

CHAPTER XXVIII

REPRESENTING SOUTH AFRICA IN UNO

(1945–1946)

In May 1945, I attended with Smuts, as his deputy, an Imperial Conference held at 10 Downing Street. We were gathered together to give consideration to the recommendations of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference which had drawn up proposals for the establishment of a new international organization to take the place of the defunct League of Nations. We took our seats in the Cabinet room at the long table and waited for Churchill. He came in pink and smiling and nodding to all. Smuts whispered to me as Churchill took his Chairman's seat: 'The beggar's just got out of his bath!' but Churchill always looked to me as though he had just come from his ablutions; his cherubic face belied the character of the embattled old warrior that he was. After a few words of welcome he proceeded to explain the position of affairs as though he were surveying a field of battle. His right hand moved around the table as though he were striking down kings and queens on a mighty chessboard. For nearly an hour, in eloquent periods, he dealt simply and effectively with all the confused issues confronting us and was confident of the outcome.

The following morning, at a continuation of this Conference, with Cranborne presiding in Churchill's place, Smuts came forward with his brilliant introduction to the United Nations Charter, which the Dumbarton Oaks recommendations had not contemplated, and which lifted them out of their legalistic materialism. These recommendations had originally merely put forward in legal phraseology the purposes and principles of the United Nations which were to maintain peace and security and endeavour to remove threats of war, but the recommendations lacked a 'spirit' and made no appeal to the common man. Smuts's

introduction put the onus fairly and squarely upon every individual whose nation was a member of the Organization, however illiterate and however isolated, to keep the peace; for his words ran:

> We the Peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
>
> to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
>
> to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends
>
> to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
>
> to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed forces shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.
>
> Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

This proposal was enthusiastically and unanimously agreed upon by the Imperial Conference and Smuts continued to San Francisco where his preamble was adopted and where on June 26, 1945, the United Nations Organization, in the spirit of his introduction, was born.

South Africa had been chosen as a vice-president of the Organization and therefore was a member of its principal committee. The committee appointed the chairman of the various committees at the Preparatory Conference held in

London. In the absence of the principal delegate from Poland, Modselweski, I found myself chairman of the Security Council Committee, charged with the drawing-up of standing rules and orders for its future guidance. Most of the members knew little about rules of procedure or the way in which Western Parliaments work, and they frequently wanted to return on their tracks after clauses had been passed. I had some difficulty in getting them to conform, but ultimately they did, with this satisfactory result that the rules and procedure drawn up for the Security Council on a temporary basis have not since been altered, albeit they are still provisional!

Another important matter to be dealt with by the Preparatory Conference, was the proposed site for the United Nations. A number of representatives felt that, since the seeds of war lay in Europe, it was fitting that the United Nations should have its permanent site there; others, remembering how the United States had refused to enter the League of Nations with injurious results, felt that every possible step should be taken to rivet the United Nations to the United States, particularly since they would be required to provide most of the money for its establishment.

After I had spoken strongly in favour of the site being placed in Europe, where we already had a costly building in Geneva, Adlai Stevenson, the United States representative, said that his country did not wish to influence the voting in any way. The United States had half a dozen sites it could propose which would provide all the amenities needed, but it did not wish to suggest any of them. Members should be free to choose the site without the weight of the great influence which the USA could exert. We were all very much relieved at this attitude. There were other considerations to be taken into account than that of the need to placate the United States. We were astonished, therefore, when two days later, we received an urgent telegram from the United States Senate repudiating Stevenson's view and stating categorically that the United States expected the United Nations to find its home in America. I was so incensed with this dual procedure that I drew up a resolution protesting; either Stevenson spoke for the USA or he did not, and we were entitled to know

who the spokesman should be. Sole, my astute political officer, urged me to withdraw the resolution. He realized that, if I insisted upon it, we might create an international occasion. I did his bidding. Afterwards I privately took Stevenson to task about the matter, to which he replied, 'That is the way we do things; you will get used to it!' I never did.

So a sub-committee was set up to consider all the places in which the United Nations might find its future home; and within a week hundreds of packages of printed material were received from many cities in the USA, pointing out the fitness of their environment for the reception of the World Organization, all apparently printed and sealed in anticipation. The USA had won.

The complexity in international relations continued to increase with the development of the United Nations. In the early days of the Preparatory Commission, when it engaged in providing the machinery, the possibility of achieving common understanding on most matters did not appear too remote. But, as time went on, the various ideologies began to assemble their forces and the deep rifts between experience and theory became obvious. There were clashes between the realities of the old established and experienced Colonial powers and the confusion and ignorance of the rest of the world, coupled with the mendacity of Communist representations for propaganda purpose.

In the case of Africa, which the British had opened up, the ignorance of most of the members of the United Nations was particularly and glaringly apparent. The most extraordinary ideas concerning Africa, its peoples and governments, were held, and members were prepared on all occasions to express the most definitely pronounced views on matters of which they knew practically nothing. This was particularly marked in regard to the establishment of the Trusteeship Council.

At this time the trusteeship agreements had all conformed to the British pattern and there was a tremendous flood of sentiment flowing strongly towards the establishment of a world government of which the Trusteeship Agreement was to be the first universal plan. It is interesting here, in view of all that has since passed, to remind readers that Smuts was the original author of

the mandate system under the League of Nations. That system set out as its objective the promotion of the material, moral and social well-being and progress of the inhabitants of all trust territories; and laid the obligation upon the mandatory power to inform the world of its success or failure in administration. Its administrators had to appear personally at Geneva each year with the annual report concerning each territory and reply to all questions conducted in the manner of a Select Committee. The Mandate Commission gave its verdict after this examination and the world was fully informed. This ideal of the League of Nations took the place of the age-long conception that conquered territories should be annexed by the victors. Now, voluntarily, and animated by the most generous instincts, the mandatory powers sought to establish a Trusteeship Council which would convey to the world the humanitarian forms of administration which had been established. The objective was to destroy the prevailing idea that mandated territories were held solely for the benefit of the mandatory powers. The desire was to show that they were held for the benefit of their inhabitants who were not sufficiently advanced to govern themselves, and the British policy was to invite the rest of the world to shoulder some of the burden of trusteeship. It was this spirit which animated the British to form the United Nations. The British felt that their *bona fides* was unassailable; and the subsequent revelation of hostility to their whole concept of trusteeship came as a great shock.

At the meeting of the first Assembly in London on January 17, 1946, it fell my lot, as South Africa's representative, to explain the position of South Africa in regard to its refusal to submit to a trusteeship agreement for South West Africa. This I did in a long speech, but the special character of South West Africa which I explained, the dangers which arose in the area during the First World War from German Colonial troops, which brought about its conquest by the Union, the small population and the autonomy of the few native tribes, were all factors completely discounted in the arguments which followed.

South Africa considered that, before determining the future of any mandated territory, the people of that territory should be

consulted, whereas the bulk of the members of the United Nations took the view that the United Nations was heir to the League of Nations and that all mandates automatically passed to the heir, and should thus be transferred to the new organization. South Africa refused without prior consultation to place South West Africa, and with it her own future, in the hands of a body which contained both backward and advanced nations alike, the majority of whom had no experience at all in the government of Africa's millions. This drew down upon South Africa much indignation.

There were even some amongst its friends in the British Commonwealth who felt that a trusteeship agreement could be drawn up which would safeguard South Africa's interests, while satisfying the United Nations. One of the most eloquent and persistent expounders of this ideal was Fraser, Prime Minister of New Zealand, who hotly expressed his disappointment that South Africa did not fall in step with all the other mandatory powers, in presenting a trusteeship agreement for South West Africa.

I quite understood Fraser's general attitude. New Zealand prided itself in having no colour bar. Its small population of Maoris was being assimilated into the very largely predominant European society. The little mandated territory of Western Samoa held by New Zealand, was merely a hothouse of tropical administration. There were no racial problems there. It was merely a strategic area for New Zealand, and if there was one spot in the world where harmonious and civilized advance under trusteeship could be speedily effected, it was in Western Samoa.

These arguments merely emphasized the grave dangers which lay in lumping all the mandated territories together. The League of Nations had not done that. They had divided the mandated territories into three categories, the first to become self-governing; the second, some distance away from the seat of the mandated power, would go through a period of tutelage before they became self-governing; and the third, those which were so backward that self-government was nowhere within sight and for which the laws of mandatory would apply. South West

Africa and New Guinea lay within this third category. Under the new system, no such distinction was made.

It was difficult to get Evatt of Australia to understand that, under the new system which he was so strongly supporting, there would no longer be any third category mandates as the system was to be abolished, and that the new system would not afford Australia in the case of New Guinea protection against Asiatic immigration such as obtained under the old mandate.

It was inevitable that the new Trusteeship Council must insist upon the admission of all its members, and that the Japanese would obtain that interest which Australia had gone to war to prevent. Since those days South African fears have been justified. The United Nations is not only insisting upon interference in the administration of the mandated territories and creating political *foci* amongst hitherto contented peoples, but is demanding a similar say in all colonial territories. The only probable result of this will be that, instead of the orderly progress which has hitherto taken place in Africa, there will be a long period of continuous turmoil until all the mandatory powers come together on agreed policies of government; otherwise chaos will supervene.

Some months after the first Assembly held in London, Smuts and I flew to New York for the second part of the meeting. Sitting beside him at the United Nations Assembly at Flushing Meadows and listening to the wild statements and diatribes from the rostrum by representatives of many countries who had not the remotest conception of the conditions, one despaired of the future. There was no generous understanding of the humanitarianism and goodwill which animated various African administrations. Everybody was invited to suspect everybody else of hostile intentions.

One thought of the conditions pertaining in Africa so short a time ago, when British explorers first shed a ray of light on the immemorable darkness and savagery which everywhere prevailed. One thought of Livingstone's cry for Christian government when he saw the slave-track down the east coast of Africa, plainly marked by the gleaming white bones of those who had died by

the wayside on their journey to the markets in those Near Eastern countries, who representatives were our critics today in the United Nations!

We listened to Vishinski talking about non-existent atrocities in South Africa; to Romulo of the Philippines whose limelit rhetoric swayed the gentlemen from South America; to representatives from Colombia talking much about human rights in parts of South America where lay sections who have never known any rights; to representatives from some of the most backward countries on earth condemning British colonial rule without the vaguest conception of what that rule had done to remove barbaric conditions which dominated the erstwhile black continent and which still dominate many parts of it.

The United Nations, on which so many millions of people had based their hopes for the prevention of war and for the establishment of justice and fair play throughout the world, appeared as Smuts said to me one day—'nothing more than a debating society'. Solemn statements of fact by responsible governments were brushed aside by frenzied delegates who accused Britain and the Commonwealth of the basest political motives. Every subject became contentious. The varying stages of human evolution, the age-long pattern of differing governments and human societies, the conflict of motives and ideals and the general ignorance of each other prevailing amongst the nations, make it impossible to conceive the establishment of that world government which animates the minds and hearts of so many people. The United Nations thus forms the sounding-board for international conflicts. It may be that time will mellow the discordant mood and develop a more responsible attitude of mind; but until the Great Powers can find some common ground on which to stand without quarrelling, the rag, tag and bobtail will continue to hit each other all round the arena without really knowing what it is all about.

Nevertheless, the existence of the United Nations has made it obvious that we have parted forever from the views of *primus inter pares* which existed amongst men before the formation of the organization. Gradually the concept of equality has swept

throughout the whole world and informed the policies of most capitalist states which had had to give way to the universal upsurge of working-class opinion. The world has gone socialist. That fact must be faced. Alone, it is the white men of Africa who are attempting to maintain their old privileges.

The visit to New York was interesting in affording an opportunity for getting the theme of American democracy into focus. New York is unbelievably rich and terribly poor. Yet the two extremes meet in a society in which there is no distinction except that which money can buy. One feels that the man sitting on the stool next door having his shoes shined, may be either a millionaire or a porter; but they are all Tom, Dick or Harry to each other. They all believe that the United States is the greatest country on God's earth, the richest, freest, most advanced, most politically mature of all countries. Everybody belongs to one or other of the two political parties for the time being, and the stranger can scarcely tell the difference between them. All politicians talk in the same accents. Senators cultivate a slow, measured, senatorial style which all can recognize. All accept the party manoeuvrings and intrigues and organizations as the daily business methods of politics; nobody is shocked or elevated by anything which happens. The strident voice of public declamation is intended for the ears of the great masses.

One incident which sheds a ray of light on the boisterousness of American democracy, occurred when two members of the Ukrainian delegation entered a cafe during a hold-up. They found the people inside standing with their hands up and two men holding guns issuing orders. This unaccustomed sight puzzled the Ukrainians and in their surprise and ignorance of English, they did not raise their arms, whereupon one was shot and wounded. This had immediate international repercussions. Manuilski immediately made representations to the Secretary of State and alleged that this was an attempt at assassination for political motives. The United States Government was in a quandary. Manuilski insisted that it was the work of political agents, and the United States Government that it was an ordinary hold-up. The humorous part about it was the comment by the

New York Press in endeavouring to reassure Manuilski that the incident had no political meaning: 'he should understand that this kind of thing happens every day,' it said. And so it does. The melting-pot has not yet boiled down all the unassimilable elements in New York into respectable observers of the rule of law. A policeman is to be found in every street with his truncheon swinging on his wrist as though he were looking for, and ready to crack, any offending skull, in contrast to the London bobby who carefully hides all offensive weapons from sight.

But there is no mistaking the jubilant air of democracy in New York, which expresses itself at every turn. Everything is big and unconsciously matey. Wealth, consumer wealth, flashed brightly from every shop-window. The food consumed by the average person was beyond belief to a visitor from half-starved Europe. There was no end to the good things which money could buy or which the individual could want. When all the traffic lights along Fifth Avenue turned green simultaneously and the glittering stream of chromium-plated cars dashed exuberantly by, I felt that I was witnessing the zenith of sumptuous materialism.

On the first day of our visit, the United Nations delegates met together in the reception room of the Waldorf Astoria for a reception given by the Mayor of New York, and the idea was that a procession of delegates, by a roundabout route, should proceed to the City Hall in motor cars provided. This would give the visitors a chance to take in the architecture of New York and the citizens an opportunity to inspect the delegates as they passed along. In order to avoid any question of precedence which might arise amongst the assembled nations, it was arranged that they should all follow each other in alphabetical order. The first delegates set out from the Waldorf in that pattern. This did not suit the Russians who came very low on the list, under the designation of the USSR. By some means they managed to get their cars out of the procession, and surrounded by their police motor-cyclists sounding sirens, they rushed past the rest and took their places at the head, leading the world. This was our first taste of the self-importance of the Soviet. Nobody protested against this

act of discourtesy; we came to recognize it as part of the Russian psychology.

Similar action took place at every meeting of the Assembly. Molotov and Vishinski persisted in being accompanied by their bodyguard when they marched into the Assembly; spectators were all agog and camera flashlights blazed as this forceful, truculent deputation appeared. Even on the *Queen Mary* travelling back from New York, Molotov took his exercise on the deck with a guard on either side of him and three men behind. Backwards and forwards they marched, all in step, forming and turning so that the order was unbroken, and not one of them appeared to say a word to the other. It cannot be a very happy life to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the USSR.

If all their movements are thus restricted and regimented, so it is with their minds. The Russians believed in force, in impressing people with their power. The only force they could show in the Assembly was to repeat time and again the stories which had been repudiated by others, in the belief that the more they affirmed the untruths, the more people would believe them. Again and again they would repeat what everybody present knew to be lies; they stated the facts so emphatically that at last you yourself began to wonder. During the discussion on India's complaint against South Africa, Vishinski stated that the law in South Africa was that no native should walk on the pedestrian pathways or pavements in any town; he was allowed to walk only on the road or street, with the vehicles. As the principal delegate for South Africa, I should have put him right; yet so often and so emphatically did he state this that I began to wonder if indeed there was not some antiquated statute in some town in South Africa which did prohibit natives from walking on the pavement. Being uncertain, I allowed this obvious untruth to pass.

The normal practice of the Russian negotiators is to debate rules of procedure while the business on hand which everybody is there to consider, remains in abeyance. This practice may arise from the necessity of every negotiator to refer every question to Moscow, for no discretion is ever given to the man on the spot. To the average Western European representative, to whom the rules

of procedure mean following parliamentary patterns, which are adopted in order to expedite business, it is most exasperating to listen hour after hour to procedural arguments, while burning issues are waiting to be discussed. The Russian negotiators, Molotov or Gromyko or Vishinski, repeated over and over again the same arguments without turning a hair. Since nothing could be done without Russian agreement, deadlock was reached.

It was a hard session. We worked from early morning until past midnight. As well as all the matters on hand every day, there were minutes of the previous day's proceedings to be read. I was very assiduous in all my attendances and I had no time for looking round America or, for that matter, even New York. I was not sorry when the session drew to an end and I could return to my work in London.

CHAPTER XXIX

END OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONERSHIP

(1946–1947)

BACK in London the duties of the High Commissioner swamped me once again. The cessation of hostilities created many new problems, not the least of which was repatriating the thousands of South Africans who found themselves in England at the end of the war. In addition to civilians held up by the war in England, there were thousands of ex-prisoners of war, and growing numbers of potential immigrants were also standing on our doorstep, with their passage money in their hands. I was inundated with requests for priority passages, and at one time there were no less than 40,000 people on my books waiting to go to the Union.

All shipping still remained in the hands of the Admiralty. The dockyards were choked with ships being re-converted from troopships to passenger liners, and, as soon as they were made available for service, they were handed back to their owners, who could fill them only by permission of the Ministry of Shipping. We had to battle to get thirty or forty berths made available for civilian traffic once a month.

My files became thicker and thicker with letters seeking to enlist my help. Our civilians were in a bad way. A number were being duped by unscrupulous people who had bought surplus vessels from the Admiralty which gave them certificates of seaworthiness, and under bogus captains these vessels set sail for the Cape, while their passengers acted as members of the crew. For this passage they paid a big price. I do not think that many of these ships reached South Africa. I did my best to dissuade people from undertaking this hazardous journey, but they were most of them in such a desperate plight that they appeared to be

prepared to swim back if they could not go by ship. Since it all appeared quite legal, there was nothing I could do officially to stop this practice.

At last I went to talk the matter over with Vernon Thompson, chairman of the Union Castle Company, with whom I had become friendly. He agreed to place three of his ships, the *Carnarvon Castle*, the *Winchester Castle* and the *Arundel Castle* at my disposal, before they were reconditioned by the Ministry of Shipping, to be used exclusively for emigrants who would travel at a reduced fare. The Minister of Shipping agreed, and the Union Government gave the scheme its blessing. The scheme was not to cost South Africa a farthing. The reduced fares covered all costs. Only the Union Castle Company suffered, for the loan of her ships would delay the peacetime shipping programmes.

Shortly after the introduction of this scheme, the Prime Minister wired that I should include, wherever possible on these ships, South Africans wishing to return to their homeland. This naturally diminished the despatch of immigrants. Their flow was further lessened by South Africa sending over a completely unnecessary body to interview prospective immigrants. We had already done this at South Africa House and had been very careful to select only those whom we considered were suitable and likely to make good.

This fifth wheel to the coach, was no doubt the result of some political pressure in the Union, but it lost us many thousands of immigrants. Those we had been sending out were the cream of England. Most of them were single, adventurous and trained by years of war, and they were paying all costs themselves, but as time went on and red tape grew, they withdrew from the queue. The British Government was not anxious to see its best citizens emigrate to other countries; the Union Castle Company began to push for the return of its ships. In the interim the prospective emigrants married and settled down in Britain where the welfare state provided full employment for them. I pointed all this out to the South African Government, but the only effect was to stimulate a political opposition in South Africa, and

eventually the so-called scheme came to an end. The change of Government in 1948, with its hostility to the British, made sure that it was never resurrected. In all, perhaps 50,000 immigrants were possibly obtained, but many have since left and South Africa is the poorer.

All those who left England for South Africa during my period of office as High Commissioner understood that they were going to South Africa as British subjects, entitled to all the privileges of franchise as such. They went as welcome additions to our population, adding wealth to our country. They were sadly disillusioned. The official word given them in London was belied by the South African Parliament. In 1948 a British immigrant was required to be domiciled for two years in the Union before he became a registered voter; by the Citizenship Act of 1949, that period of residence was lengthened to five years and the payment of a sum of £7 for the right to vote. I regarded this as a breach of the word I had given to many at South Africa House; it was introduced purely and simply to ensure that the Nationalist Party remained in office.

The end of the war brought our son Derek back to us. One winter's day my wife and I, muffled against the cold, made our way in a spirit of great excitement and thankfulness to Liverpool where we were informed he was to arrive. We watched a great troopship tie up to the docks, its decks thick with young men, anonymous in their uniforms. 'There he is,' my wife exclaimed as a batch came down the gangway and she rushed forward, flinging her arms around an upright young man as he put foot on dry land. 'My son, my son,' she said in great excitement. The young man gently extricated himself from her embrace. She looked up into a strange face: 'I'm not your son, ma'am,' he said, 'I wish I were!' Later we found Derek and took him home to Essendon. He was as well as could be expected. A period of great personal anxiety had ended.

The post-war years of 1946 and 1947 were a period of international and Commonwealth Conferences on many matters in

the effort of the world to get back to normality. Conferences with the Food Committee; with Aviation Control for the establishment of civil aviation; trade concerns generally; matters to be debated in the United Nations; Imperial Conferences and all the busy and daily doings of bewildered governments not knowing precisely where they were going. But many attempts at planning were frustrated by the malignity of the cold war which was developing.

At all these meetings the High Commissioner had to be present. I have always been struck by the part which personalities play in the affairs of a nation. There were, for instance, personalities arising amongst British delegates as a result of their party affiliations. There were personalities which emerged as the result of the egotism of the individual speaker and his deep faith in the accuracy of his statements. There were personalities arising from the differing concepts of nationalism according as it was co-operative or repellant and there were finally the personalities which arose from suspicions that the British Government was trying to dictate a course of action to the rest of the Commonwealth.

This last inclination was very strong and there was some justification for it. British Ministers and senior officials had grown up in the tradition that Britain was a dominant partner in Commonwealth affairs and had not caught up with the spirit of individualism which all Dominions had begun to manifest, and upon the maintenance of which they were most jealous. So the tendency of all Prime Ministers was to walk warily in any sphere which involved commitments, as opposed to mere consultation which involved no obligation.

I always felt that this attitude on the part of the Dominions was unfair. We were always insistent on being kept thoroughly informed. We felt it right and proper to tender our advice freely and frankly. But we were never prepared to assume an obligation to assist in the carrying out of any policy we had advocated. We were always ready to tell the British Government what should be done in any part of the world, advice which, if followed, might mean the lives of British troops, but we were never

prepared to pay a single farthing towards the cost of the policy advocated, nor to send a single soldier to assist. Britain has always paid the piper and has never been quite able to call the tune.

It is a fact that, because of the sensitive regard which British political circles have for maintaining the cohesion of the Commonwealth, the British Government in power has always to buttress its proposals by telling Parliament that the 'Dominions have been consulted'. A case in point can be seen in the proposals made by the British Labour Government at an Imperial Conference, after it had learnt by its own contacts with the Russian Government that the Soviet was intent upon the conquest of the world, that Britain should remove to the Dominions its heavy industries, together with its workers and capital to build up a war strength outside the region of attack in Europe. This had been proposed by the Chief-of-Staff. The suggestion had been approved by New Zealand and Australia, but when it was put forward in Smuts's presence he immediately discountenanced the idea. He said we should go on as we had always done. It could not be adopted for South Africa. No doubt if war did again break out, South Africa would play its part as it had always done, but it could not accept such a commitment on behalf of its people. This gave the cue to Mackenzie King who repeated Smuts's words. The Imperial Conference rejected the British proposal and nothing more was heard of it. But undoubtedly, had it been adopted and put into force, the whole economic condition of the world would have changed. South Africa would have benefited enormously; the whole development of Africa would have undergone a different course.

During the time of the Nuremberg trials, it was recommended to me that I should visit Nuremberg and see for myself what was going on, so with John Daniels, my military adviser, Leif Egeland and various others of my London staff, we flew to Berlin. We visited the Commander of the British zone and were taken on a tour round the devastated city. There was little to see but rubble,

large mounds of broken bricks and mortar, ruins of once beautiful and famous buildings. In the mounds were holes, like the holes of a rabbit warren, where the inhabitants of Berlin lived. They scuttled in and out like hunted animals, casting anxious, backward glances, if they thought they were observed. We walked to the Chancellery, which like the rest of Berlin was in ruins. A Russian soldier stood guard over the hall, a great gaping void where its stately architecture had once been. His attitude was unfriendly and he prepared to bar our way, but something about us must have reassured him, for he hesitated and then left his post to consult with some higher authority and returned to let us proceed.

We walked through the rubble and came upon a part of a crystal chandelier hanging forlornly. Leif Egeland, who was with me, pulled off a piece of the wooden holder. I took it home and had it made into a table lamp which stands beside my bedside. On a silver plate are inscribed these words: 'Wrenched from the crystal chandelier of Hitler's Chancellery. June 1946.' Down some steps we came into the damp atmosphere of a series of concrete chambers and a tangled mass of rubber-lined electric wires and there was the underground chamber where Hitler and Eva Braun isolated themselves in those last historic days before he commited suicide. Their bunks were empty and scattered with dust and stones. It was a scene of misery and desolation. I wondered what Hitler's last thoughts had been and what he expected would be the end of his power-drunk reign. We were glad to get out of the dingy place and back into the sunlight. The place where Hitler's body had been burnt was pointed out to me.

I spent the night with the South African representative in Berlin and next morning we flew to Nuremberg and went straight to the courthouse. The streets of Nuremberg were reduced, like those of Berlin, to powdered rubble. What had taken two thousand years to build had been reduced to dust in half an hour. How would future generations look upon this work of vandalism and destruction of the highest delights in civilization? It was a terrible mess, yet the mass of humanity inside the courthouse was even worse. There they sat, the pri-

soners arraigned before the world. The fat Goering, whose pompous portraits we had looked upon for the last decade, was shrunk to a mere shadow of his former self. His clothes hung upon him. Yet he retained in his bearing something of his old command. Seated next to him in two rows were his fellow-prisoners.

I listened to the proceedings which reached me by earphone through the medium of an interpreter, who relayed them verbatim. Similar interpreters existed for all the main European languages, which were relayed to listeners upon the selection of the correct earphones. The full court was arrayed before us—Lord Justice Lawrence, the Tribunal president, and seven member judges, counsel for the prosecution and the defence. By the end of the trial some millions of words had been spoken. I saw Hartley Shawcross, the Labour Government's Attorney-General and chief prosecutor of the British team. He carried his honours with the confident elegance which distinguished his clothes.

Later that day I had lunch with Lawrence. He told me that history had no parallel to the horrors with which he was dealing. He was confronted by many difficulties in his task, the greatest of which was to obtain unanimity amongst the judges on what constituted the law. Very often the Russians' conception was entirely different from the French or British or American judges' views. The Russians were extremely difficult, always wanting to take short cuts; if they had their way, they would hang the prisoners out of hand. But Lawrence was determined that these should receive a fair trial.

Later we were taken down to the underground dungeons, where the incriminating exhibits were on view. They presented a gruesome sight; my eyes returned again and again to the lamp-shades made from human skin. What was even worse were the cold-blooded records of the exterminators: 'The furnace went wrong this week. We therefore were behind-hand only . . . thousand Jews were exterminated. Quota will be made up next week.' It was disturbing to reflect that the race which had perpetrated these crimes was, by modern standards, amongst the most 'civilized' in the world. My thoughts turned to

Africa; if this occurred in Europe, how much more easily could our teeming millions of blacks, themselves just emerging from barbarism, be expected to revert?

We travelled back to England along a part of the Rhine where the towns and cities were heaps of ruins with only the round chimneys of occasional factories standing erect. The bridges were down. And then we came to Arnhem to calculate the meaning of that sudden invasion from the air which failed. It was good to get back to England, which though scarred and war-torn, was pervaded by a spirit of commonsense and sanity.

Early in 1947 I had to fly to South Africa for the visit of the King and Queen. I realized then that Ruby was not well enough to return with me to London as I had expected and hoped. Her health was too poor for me to complete my term of office. My own, too, had suffered from two successive bouts of pneumonia and I was not anxious to spend another winter in England. I returned alone to London. Despite the intensely interesting nature of my work and my complete absorption in it, I decided that the time had come for me to resign. I wrote to Smuts on June 23rd:

> I have now been High Commissioner for two and a half years. I have completed more than the span of service I planned for myself when I came to London at your earnest request during the closing months of the war.
>
> I appreciated very fully the honour you conferred upon me in choosing me to represent South Africa in London during the strenuous and critical years and I hope that my efforts have not disappointed you. For me the work has been both absorbing and interesting, and I have thoroughly enjoyed it.
>
> The time has now arrived when my age and other considerations compel me to seek a less responsible life and I therefore notify you in good time that I desire to resign my appointment to date from the end of the year. This early notice will enable you to give leisured consideration to the appointment of my successor, who I think should be a man of private means.

To this Smuts answered:

> . . . It is most considerate of you to give me this timely notice of your intention, so that the Government may consider its plans for the future. I can quite appreciate that after your arduous service and at your age, you do not wish to continue the heavy burden you have been carrying. The post of High Commissioner has indeed become a most arduous one, making extraordinary demands on both the physical and mental energies of the incumbent. It will be no easy choice to fill the post you have carried so confidently. Still I cannot say that your decision is, under the circumstances, not the right one or try to persuade you to continue in office beyond the end of the year.
>
> It is no flattery to you to say that in my opinion you have been one of the best High Commissioners we have had for a long time, and your distinguished service has amply justified my confidence in your ability and character, in urging you to accept the appointment. My colleagues share my high opinion of your services and British Cabinet Ministers have spoken to me in terms of the highest praise for your contributions to the Conferences and consultations which have become a part of the routine of London.
>
> At this stage I can but thank you most warmly and express the hope that with the release from office you may have many years of useful and happy life ahead of you.

Before leaving England I wrote to my wife:

> I signed the Gold Loan Agreement since I last wrote you. A great occasion. Dalton had the grace to say: 'This is entirely due to you, Nicholls. Do you remember our talk? You gave the first idea,' and much else besides.
>
> I feel I have done something for Old England, now indeed right up against it. The majority of the trade union ministers won't tell the workers the truth. They have been so long preaching the gospel of higher wages and fewer hours of work that it is difficult for them now to say that unless they work harder and produce more at a cheaper price, they will starve.
>
> The facts, however, are sinking in. Nothing today comes into England that is not paid for by British exports and there is a gap of

£600,000,000 to be made up between the imports and exports of last year. Which means the cutting down of more and more imports: films, petrol, tobacco, meat, fruit and everything of a luxury nature, and the continual denial of things to the shops which are needed for exports.

If the lesson can be driven home that a nation is like an individual; that if he spends more than he earns, all supplies will be cut off sooner or later, then Britain will get out of her trouble. But it is a difficult job to undo the mischief of false economy preached over the years, with the Communists trying to bring production to a standstill by continuous strikes and disaffection, in the belief that they are thus destroying the whole capitalistic system.

And later:

My ship has been delayed another two days and now leaves on Dec. 14th. It will not however interfere with my arrival in Durban which will be at the end of the year.

I have turned down Smuts's offer to appoint me chairman of the Diamond Board. £2,000 a year for a part-time job was certainly alluring, but its acceptance would definitely put me outside the political arena and stamp me as a time-server. All the experience I have gained in three years here would be useless. He therefore suggested the Senate, but of course there is no vacancy at present and it may be some time before one occurs. Anyway I shall be free to do what I want, not a paid figure on pension.

We may not have much to live on, but our wants are few. Making plans at seventy for a future career is optimistic, but I do definitely want to write my book. I believe I have a valuable story to tell, that is of historical interest, and I ought not now to be put off any further. Once I become immersed in a new job, even if it were only a sinecure, I should not write my book. . . .

At last came the time for my departure. The packing was done, farewells said and all the loose ends tied. Smuts was present at the farewell party given for me at South Africa House. He jumped upon a table around which the staff had foregathered, and wished me God-speed: 'I don't know why he has seen fit to leave us. Nobody wanted him to do so. But I expect he has some old

cronies in Zululand that he wants to get back to.' He did not know, of course, that Ruby was the 'old crony'. She had never wanted to come to London, but, having come, she had done her duty very cheerfully. But the curse of depression she had had from her girlhood would give her no peace and the moods of black despair seemed to be more frequent and to last longer. I could not venture to ask her to come back again. Our job was finished.

CHAPTER XXX

CEYLON CELEBRATES HER INDEPENDENCE

(1948)

ON arrival in Natal I found a telegram from the Prime Minister awaiting me and instructing me to report to him in Cape Town without delay. Apparently I was still under command. Without question I left by air and was met on the aerodrome by Smuts's secretary and taken straight to the General.

'I want you,' he said, 'to go to the Senate. Senator Shepstone has been appointed to be Administrator of Natal and I want you to take his place. And then,' he added, scarcely waiting for a reply, 'I want you to leave immediately for Ceylon to represent South Africa at the inauguration of their new Constitution. Before you leave you must be sworn in in the Senate so that you travel as a Senator.'

So without more ado I was sworn in next day (February 4, 1948) and left for Durban immediately. All our well-laid plans of a quiet retirement had disintegrated and were so many castles in the air. The shock to my wife at my new assignment was profound, but I solaced her with the information that it would be all over in a month, when we would settle down together, with only the Senate intervals to separate us.

Here are extracts from some letters written to her:

LAKE VICTORIA—I travelled up by ordinary passenger plane from Durban to Johannesburg where I met Oxley, who is to be my secretary. He drove me to Pretoria where I slept the night. It was my birthday. I did not celebrate but I reflected that I was seventy-two and going on another jaunt.

Promptly the car called for me at 6 a.m. and drove me to the Air Force aerodrome at Swartkop. There the Dakota was waiting for

us . . . Captain Bolt in charge, who was with Derek in prison camp. Oxley and I are the only passengers. The crew keep to their cockpit so Oxley and I can take a promenade when we are tired of sitting. It is comfortable and luxurious.

Our first calling-place was Ndola which I knew when the Bwana Mkuba copper-mine was discovered, before Ndola was born. It is strange to notice that Indians now have a fair share of the town.

Our next stop was Tabora in Tanganyika, now becoming quite an important junction for aircraft. About 150 planes pass through a month, many of them carrying Greeks to the Union. I can understand how the conditions in Greece are giving an impetus to emigration and how South Africa's close connections, through the hospitality shown to the Greek Royal Family, have operated as a lure to people of means. But I was told that many of these Greeks belong to the peasant class and a number at Tabora arrive barefooted.

When we arrived we were rushed off in a ramshackle bus to the Park Hotel, a stone building erected as a hunting lodge by a German Princeling just before the 1914–18 war. He never used it. . . . The Provincial Commissioner, who has been in Tanganyika since 1923 came down to pay his respects and had a drink with me.

We were airborne at 7 a.m. and are now flying through thick banks of cloud, skirting the shores of Lake Victoria Nyanza. Here and there are signs of a large native population, somewhat like the Valley of a Thousand Hills. We passed Kisumu half an hour ago and will reach Melkal for lunch. We stop at Khartoum for the night and shall spend a couple of days in Cairo and then on to Lydda, where we join the British party. . . .

CAIRO, FEB. 8TH—We arrived here on Thursday noon. Theron and Jooste were waiting for me. Capt. Robinson, my pilot, and Oxley, my secretary, were both detained at the quarantine camp because their papers were not in order. Robinson had either lost or forgotten his yellow fever certificate and he is still in the detention camp, and I have had to borrow another pilot from the Legation, Colonel King, who is liaison here. Oxley, whose trouble was that sufficient time had not expired since the inoculation, was more fortunate; we managed to get him out the same night.

The Therons took me out to the Pyramids this afternoon. Theron had arranged a sumptuous lunch at the Hotel, and had invited me to meet the American Ambassador, Pinkney Tuck.

In the evening I had dinner with the Joostes at the Legation—ten of us—two old generals and their wives (Wise Bey and another). Wise Bey went to Sandhurst with Churchill and took Boer prisoners to South Africa from India, as I did. He had been twenty-five years in the Egyptian Army.

Mrs Jooste is young and very friendly, an Afrikaner Pretorian. She told me that when she was in Vienna she had seen the only chastity belt in existence. I didn't catch the word 'chastity' and asked her to describe it and tell me how it was worn. When she said it had spikes and a padlock but she couldn't go into greater details it began to dawn on me what the belt was intended for and how it was worn! I did the Museum in the morning and saw the Tutankhamen exhibits. They are as fascinating and as marvellous as the description made them out to be. . . .

Yesterday I visited old Cairo and saw the first Church built in Christendom—or so it is alleged, a Coptic Church dating from the third century and used by the early Christians when they were persecuted by the Romans. It is very primitive and the quarter in which it is set, where poverty-stricken Jews and Copts lived (in stone labyrinthine alleyways with iron-studded doors to shut them in at nights, now long disused of course), gave the impression of a community living in constant fear and misery.

COLOMBO, FEB. 15TH—As you can imagine, in the throes of official functions and journeys hither and thither, I have had no time for writing. I am conscious of my age, being the oldest of all the delegates, and though I stand up to it very well, I have to husband my physical resources. So beyond writing a despatch yesterday relating to Smuts my conversations with Subbaroyan, the Indian delegate, on the subject of our Indian problem, I have written nothing, though I have now been in Ceylon nearly a week. It has been a week full of interest and of reviving the memories of nearly fifty years ago. . . .

We arrived at Karachi in the early hours of the morning and were comfortably fixed up in the BOAC camp, where we had four hours to sleep and refresh ourselves. Starting at daylight we reached Bombay some hours later for a brief halt for petrol and pushed on to Colombo which we reached about 4 p.m.

I was driven straight to the home of the Chief Justice, Sir John Howard, whose guest I have been ever since. Lady Howard is a perfect hostess, a very competent housekeeper and a chatty and

pleasant personality. The house is run on the usual luxurious style of the East. I have a most competent Indian valet to look after me, who buttons up my collar at the back and tucks me in at night. He brings me tea in the morning, sees that my shirts are washed each day and that my clothes are properly brushed and pressed—does everything indeed, except bath me. . . . As he has been specially detailed to look after me and another guest from East Africa, Barkley Nihill, who was in Ceylon as Attorney-General, we took him up to Kandy with us and he performed his duties in the hotel where we were lodged, as he had done in Colombo.

The opening of the first Ceylon Dominion Parliament by the Duke of Gloucester was a somewhat unique affair. Instead of taking place in the Houses of Parliament, as had been done in all other cases, some original person had hit upon the idea of utilizing an RAF disused hangar for the purpose. It was clothed in the gunny bags which were denied to South Africa by India—hessian—which completely disguised the original purpose of the building and permitted the decorators to turn the structure into a great hall, capable of seating thousands: and thousands were there and thousands more were outside under hessian verandahs.

The whole thing was very well done, in dignity and splendour, accompanied by orations in perfect and literary English from the leading political personages in the Ceylon Parliament. There was much stress upon Ceylon having passed out of its state of subjection to a foreign power (with which the Royal circle scarcely agreed), and found its liberty, after some hundreds of years of experience of Portuguese, Dutch and British, but this expression was quite natural and probably politically wise as stressing the independent character of Dominion status.

There was a State Banquet at Government House where Lady Moore and the Governor-General impressed on me that they had heard from Smuts and we must find an opportunity of talking about South Africa. I am going to stay with them for the last few days of my visit. I sat next to Sir Mirza Ismail, for many years Prime Minister of Mysore State. He expresses disapproval of what is happening in India. 'Every mother,' he said, 'digs the grave of her child as soon as it is born. There are two madmen in Delhi and Pakistan—Nehru and Jinnah. You can't talk to them and they can't talk to each other. The British let India down: if they had stuck to their original programme, we should have been saved all the slaughter of millions,

and a united India would have been achieved.' He was very bitter. I did not know his standing here as he appears to represent nobody, but he is staying with the Prime Minister.

The following evening we went to a reception at the Prime Minister's residence. He appears to be a national hero. His name is Senanayake (D.G.). He has a son of the same name who is Minister of Agriculture. As is usual in many of these cases, he began as a rebel against British Authority. Thoroughly anti-British, he has now mellowed as an exponent of the virtues of Dominion Status. Naturally he has his 'Malan', and there is a section standing for complete separation with about twenty per cent of the population having Communist leanings. I gave the Prime Minister a letter I had from Smuts, which I think much pleased him. . . .

The people of Ceylon are the product of much mixing; to the inhabitants of ancient Ceylon have been added many strains—Portuguese (their names abound in de Silvas, Fernandos, etc.) and Dutch; there is a whole community known as Burger. There are pretty well all coffee-coloured today and have played a great part in Ceylon life in the past and held the highest offices, but their influence is on the wane. In a century and a half the British have also added much to Ceylon, both in blood and culture.

Then there are the Indians, both Hindu and Muslim. But predominating and growing nationalistic are the old Ceylonese, who are Buddhist, and the Buddhist permeates all society. There can be no racial hostilities in pure Buddhism and, although it is now by no means pure and financial interests affect the judgments of the temples and the people, as much as elsewhere, there is undoubtedly a broad tolerance of races and cultures in Ceylon which is absent in most other countries.

So at this evening party, all the British visitors and my secretary mixed and danced unreservedly with the beautiful women, who were glad to show hospitality to us all. There was one very beautiful and, I believe, rich Ceylonese known as Mrs Dias, a name which comes from the old Portuguese sailors, who somehow attached herself to my small table and sat between the New Zealand delegate and myself. As a result Oxley and I have been invited to dine at her home on Tuesday next. They are all so glad to see us here for the purpose of our visit. At last they are free, or they think they are, and the flowers are being strewn thickly along the path of their future.

Later we went up to Kandy, seventy miles by car up into the hills.

The road thereto was much like driving up the north coast of Natal: only for sugarcane, substitute coconuts and an endless row of native houses thatched with coconut leaves. Pedestrians are thick along the road, with the car rushing madly among them along the narrow tarmac road; no accidents, which appeared a wonder! A stop at a rest bungalow—with the same delicious tea that I have been enjoying with Sir John: I realize now that I have not had a real cup of tea for years until I came here—it tastes just as it used to before the war. Kandy, with its lake, brought back old memories. . . .

The official ceremonies started the next day in a quaintly carved audience hall, somewhere around a thousand years old, where the old kings of Kandy used to hold audience. Two Buddhist monks, Archbishops of the Faith, sat on the platform—Canterbury and York—waiting for the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester to arrive. Hundreds of yellow-robed Buddhist monks were passed on the way, for at Kandy is guarded the sacred tooth of Buddha, and it is the holy spot of Buddhism. We were reminded that Kandy was the seat of sovereignty centuries before the West began to stir.

An hour later, we were taking part in another ceremony on the site of the new university, situated amongst the hills for the future youth of Ceylon. The Duke, Soulbury (who had been chairman of the commission which drafted the new Ceylon constitution), and the Prime Minister were made honorary Doctors of Law of Ceylon University. The Duke laid the foundation stone, and we rushed back to Kandy. The Duke made a great speech, which was much spoiled for some of us by the knowledge that it had been written by the Vice-Chancellor of the University—a most indiscreet revelation—which, if known to the students, will spoil the whole conception.

The afternoon garden party at King's Pavilion (Government House) was a memorable one for me, because in 1900, as one of a Guard of Honour, I had stood in precisely the spot where I sat for tea this afternoon, and watched the Duchess of York. I then thought I had never seen a more beautiful and dignified woman, as she came down the staircase of Government House, plainly in view from where I stood, with the bearded Duke looking very insignificant beside her. On that occasion, it was in the evening, dark outside with the lights well up inside. Now it is a beautiful afternoon and the Duchess of Gloucester takes the place of the Duchess of York of 1900. . . .

As I am specially under the eye of Lady Moore, who has become

practically a member of the Smuts family, I was soon taken up to talk with the Duke; I had talked with the Duchess at the State Banquet. I told him about his brother the Duke of Windsor's efforts when he came to South Africa, to get a couple of days off from his Zululand programme to play golf in Durban and his anger with me when I sent to him on the Royal Train a sheaf of telegrams of protest from my constituents. 'Who won?' asked the Duke. 'My constituents,' I said. 'They always do,' he replied, 'we are beaten all along the line.' This was apropos his trying itinerary in Ceylon, which is taking it out of him.

We were the guests of the Prime Minister at the Queen's Hotel for dinner, where we were to watch the climax of the show, the Perahera—the procession of one hundred elephants, amongst them the giant carrying the Sacred Tooth of Buddha. This is a deception. The Sacred Tooth never leaves its temple in Kandy. The Perahera lasted about an hour and a half. We were well provided for on a balcony which overhung the road, with a clear view for some distance. The elephants were preceded by the Kandian notables in ancient costumes, surrounded by drums, and behind were rows of dancers. Between each four elephants which marched abreast, the dancers and drums alternated, jugglers, fighters, tumblers, in one mad exciting slow-moving procession, with the crowd of Ceylonese packed on either side of the road.

FEB. 21ST—We were prevented from leaving Colombo on Wednesday morning by the arrival of some of the ashes of Gandhi, which had been allotted to Ceylon. In formal dress, with top hat and morning coat, I had to wait at the aerodrome for the plane bringing the ashes, in the hot sun of a Colombo afternoon. The ashes arrived at 5 p.m. They were ceremonially received by the Prime Minister and the attendant crowd and we followed in procession by car to a spot where we could break off and go about our business.

We left at 7.30 for a four hours' drive through the night to sleep at a rest house at Beli Luloya, beside a noisy mountain stream. It took me back to Lakekamu. We were up betimes and arrived in time for breakfast . . . at a tea-plantation belonging to a man called Frazer who had been on his estate for over thirty years, on one of a block originally owned by Liptons. He is retiring in the near future and like most of these Europeans in Ceylon who are packing up, he is thinking of going to South Africa. I encouraged the idea.

About eleven o'clock we went over to see a Sir Tom Villiers,

who is something in the nature of a feudal baron and lives in a huge stone mansion overlooking Diatalawaya. He was apparently there fifty years ago and remembers my regiment. Later on, in the afternoon, we went to Diatalawaya, and after enquiry located the cemetery, getting into it over a fence. Here were buried one hundred and fifty Boers, each grave marked with a cross bearing name and particulars; opposite were rows of graves of men of my regiment with their headstones facing those of the old prisoners. Between the two sets of graves, the Union Government had erected a memorial in 1913, which I had forgotten. It was strange going back all those years. The old camps had gone, but modern hutments were in their place, where troops had been during the recent war, and Diatalawaya was quite a settlement of neat bungalows where residents had come to live in the district.

We went from the camp along the road made by the Boer prisoners to Bandwela to the club which all the Europeans use as their meeting place. Two tennis courts were occupied and a planters' meeting was going on at the back, with the wives playing bridge. We returned to the bungalow for dinner, a sumptuous repast, and retired each to our separate bedrooms of enormous size, each with its bath, and left for Colombo next day. My baggage had been sent on to Government House, so I came straight there. Lady Moore is a great pal of Smuts and she and the Governor-General were most anxious to learn all they could of events in the Union: but I got away to bed early.

IN FLIGHT BOAC ON BOARD RMA 'NEWHAVEN'—We left Colombo at eight o'clock and we are now over India en route for Bombay. The steward has just handed us each a small writing pad which I might as well use.

The Prime Minister was at Negombo airfield to see us off: he seems to be in a class by himself in Ceylonese affection and in European estimation. A farmer, he is sincere and honest but shrewd, something of the Botha type. . . .

I don't know whether I told you that I agreed to fly Theron from Lydda to Athens, as being the quickest way of getting him there, and it gives me an opportunity of seeing a little of the ancient city. My itinerary now is to fly from Athens on the 26th for Cairo: Khartoum 27th: Nairobi 28th: Dodoma (Tanganyika) 1st: Salisbury 2nd: Pretoria 3rd: Durban 4th. I am going to Dodoma to see the develop-

ment of the peanut scheme, which will be interesting, since it is likely to be the biggest thing in Africa.

I enjoyed staying with the Moores; she is really a South African, born in a small village of the Karoo, where her father was a bank-manager, but she went to England when she was twelve. She is very close to Smuts and I am the bearer of letters from them both to the *Oubaas*, as well as to the Queen of Greece. . . .

LATER—I was called away just as I started this in Karachi and a couple of hours later we left for Lydda. At the moment we are skirting the Persian coast, 8,000 feet up, and I have never seen such contrast between land and sea—a reddish brick-coloured land and the bluest sea imaginable, deep Reckitt's blue shading into pale blue. I suppose sombody lives there. . . .

Karachi is lifeless, trying to massage its stricken limbs after its partition from India. Twenty-seven thousand traders and bankers and shippers, who were all Hindus, have fled from the town. It was as though the City of London had suddenly departed from the Metropolis and the rest of London was trying to earn a living without it; India retained its Delhi, with all its equipment of government and its civil service of able administrators. Pakistan had to start from scratch with Karachi as its capital, without any of the machinery of government and with precious little money and few industries. But they have inspanned an immense amount of patriotism. Nobody minds hardships and short commons: civil servants and their families are living all in one room each and cowrie shells are still currency amongst the really poor. However, they have enough to eat, but precious little else. . . .

We are now passing over the mountains at the entrance to the Persian Gulf in Saudi Arabia and they are most wonderful and fantastic in their weird outlines. They are all stratified and must have been worn down by wind and water action.

Now we are over the Gulf where the sea and sky merge and we are in a void of our own, seeing nothing except the passengers. There are thirteen of us . . . including a young fellow called Hawkins with one arm who belongs to the 10th Hussars. He had his arm taken off in 'Maritzburg—Oribi—and was there when we were at Parkside. He came out to Ceylon with the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, but got ill and had to go to hospital. Nice fellow. And, by the way, there was an ADC at Colombo, Aubrey Fletcher by name, who belongs to the Grenadiers. He was taken prisoner at Dunkirk and was in a prison

camp with Derek. He has a nice sister too, who is lady-in-waiting to Lady Moore.

AT LYDDA AIRPORT—We arrived at 9 p.m. local time. . . . We learnt that the Arabs had repeated the trick adopted by the Jews against the British and had driven a British military truck into the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem, killing 40 Jews and injuring 130. The Arabs were in British military uniform and the British are blamed. What a country! You feel the tension in the air: British soldiers are at the airport with tommy guns and fixed bayonets. A police inspector comes in for a meal escorted by two men with tommy guns. Nobody knows what is going to happen on May 15th when the British clear our finally. . . .

I am expecting my Dakota to arrive with Theron and his wife from Cairo in a few minutes, when we go on to Athens. Greece is much like Palestine, but I shall wander round the old ruins and dream of another Greece which gave light and inspiration to the world.

On my return to South Africa I described the situation in Greece as I saw it in a speech I made on foreign policy in the Senate:

An interesting example of Communist methods is seen in Greece at this moment, where the vast majority of the population are anti-communist. Revolutionary bands may so weaken the will of the people to resist, that Russia may reach the Aegean without the aid of a single Russian soldier.

The revolutionaries are given sufficient aid to keep the country in a ferment. No doubt the combined forces of Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, with Russian backing, could easily crush the whole of the Greek army in a very short time, but such interference would draw down upon them the condemnation of the world, so the Greek rebels are fed with just sufficient supplies to keep the pot boiling while the dire poverty to which the population has already been reduced will be further reduced, and this will so work upon their minds that they will say—'Nothing can be worse than this; let us therefore accept Communist rule.'

It is to prevent this happening that the United States and Britain are agreed upon the necessity for extending aid to Greece. But more than Greece is at stake in this struggle. The whole of the Near East is in danger.

PART FOUR
LAST BATTLES
(1951–1957)

CHAPTER XXXI

DEATH OF 'THE GENERAL'

(1951)

I FOUND the atmosphere in the Upper House very changed when I again took up my duties as a Senator. Party hostility was greater than when I left to become Administrator of Natal. It was now obvious that an election was in the offing. The continual dwelling, in the debates, upon the South African War fifty years before seemed to me a very dreadful thing. My mind was still very non-party. I felt that our small white population ought to be more charitable and wordly wise.

At an early stage I made a speech appealing to Senators to consider realities and forget the past. I expressed the opinion that the Senate should not adjourn without taking stock of the great issues which now confronted the world:

> . . . Most of us have lived long enough to have witnessed the growth of South Africa from the age of the ox-wagon to this frightening year of the atomic bomb. Most of us have already assisted in that growth, either in the field or in Parliament, and we must confess, if we are honest, that the old political myths and slogans and prejudices of the ox-wagon age are now out of place. . . . I am therefore going to make a plea to honourable Senators to assist the contestants in the coming General Election, not by goading them on, but by giving them your advice and counsel, to face up to the facts which will help them to envisage the dangers today confronting this country, dangers which should have the foremost priority in their minds. In making this plea, I have consulted only my own conscience; I have not discussed the matter with anyone. But having for three years been sitting at the end of a telegraph line listening to the news from many of the chancelleries of the world, I thought perhaps the Senate might be interested in what I have to say.

I then went on to draw a picture of the conditions of the world as I realized them, with the object of concentrating the minds of the Senate on the great dangers which confronted South Africa from outside. I asked for a bi-partisan policy in foreign affairs; I pointed out that it was the division in fundamentals in South Africa which was most embarrassing to everyone concerned, both to the nation and to the government.

My attempt to awaken the Senate raised no response amongst the Nationalists. They didn't want to know. It was curious to reflect that I began my political life in 1920 with a warning on the danger of the isolationist policy we were then following in the face of a developing Africa, and I looked like ending it, thirty years later, by a warning against an isolationist policy towards the world. From a Nationalist point of view, their attitude could be justified; racialism and isolationism would mean votes for the Nationalists in the election which was looming ahead. All over South Africa the party machines were getting into gear and the politicians were rehearsing their myths.

Smuts, concerned with world affairs and the future of Africa, had no apprehensions over the results of the election. His soldiers, every one of them a volunteer, would not let him down. They knew what he had done. They regarded him as a great South African whom the world was delighted to honour, and he was secure in the thought that South Africa would honour his past services by returning him to power. But, as with Churchill, it was not so much against Smuts that South Africa's returned soldiers voted as against all the annoyances, the heartaches they had suffered as a result of the war; against the sergeant-majors and the discipline; now was their chance to get a little of their own back. In addition there was added the propaganda work of the *Broederbond* and the *Ossewa Brandvag*, each pursuing its campaign of calumny. I believed that Smuts's strength in the country was so great that he must succeed. It seemed inconceivable that the pygmies in the Union would reject him. But I was wrong; everybody knows how that election of 1948 ended—and the most shocked person in South Africa was Smuts. Writing to my old friend ex-Senator Richards, I said of the 1948 election:

The result appears to have knocked everybody off their feet. It is a fact that every crisis in the Government in the Cape, from the first session of the old Cape Parliament to the last arose out of the native question. But for the two world wars that would have happened in the Union, and it was only the disappearance of the Native Bills into the Joint Select Committee for seven years, and the unanimity we attained in 1936 which prevented a debacle at that time. There is an intensity of opinion among all Afrikaners on non-European issues which keeps them together and which is absent from the English-speaking. That is something quite apart from racialism as expressed between British and Dutch. So when Malan took the field against the Hofmeyer vagueness, he was bound to win every backveld area. That is responsible for the Nationalists winning Newcastle, Vryheid and Klip River, which were always very uncertain over the colour issue. Hofmeyr lost the election for Smuts: nothing else. All other questions which were trotted out during the election cut little ice. The Nationalists stood for white dominance: the United Party were very divided, even over the maintenance of the colour bar; with the Indian question coming to a head, greater emphasis was laid upon the effect of Communism upon the native people; and the whole colour complex assumed gigantic proportions.

The Nationalists have now got what they have aimed at for many years—a 'kraaling' of the races, which we have always endeavoured to prevent. After an intensive examination of the election results there is little doubt in the minds of any United Party members that in the twenty-four seats we lost on the Platteland, the sole determining issue was the colour question—aided, of course, by the continued propaganda of the *Broederbond* teachers and predikants, who have had a clear run for many years. Nevertheless, the best judges think that the Nationalists would not have succeeded without a black peril card to play. The simple believed that natives would be in Parliament; that their daughters (as they were told) might have to marry black men.

Hofmeyr, in consequence, has been openly accused of being responsible for losing the election. In Pretoria, during the caucus meeting of MPs, etc. he answered up to the charges, said he was unrepentant for anything he had said and retracted nothing; he was willing to resign, but if he did he would have to explain why he did so, and he doubted whether that would be good for the Party. Most felt that logic was on his side. So he will carry on.

Of course the Nationalists made a dead set at Hoffie. They set out to kill him politically. Many United Party members feel that they have done so. He is anathema to so large a section, that any hopes he had of leading South Africa are now very diminished. The United Party is held together solely by Smuts, and, if he disappeared, it would split into warring fragments, but even his commendations cannot now persuade the majority of the party to range themselves behind Hoffie. So that the Nationalist campaign has been very successful and their propaganda has been swallowed by many United Party members as well as by Nationalist supporters.

What Smuts means to the United Party was shown when the election results first came in. He was terribly disappointed. All the previous information he obtained from party sources was optimistic. The assurances he received from his own constituency were highly comforting. Canvassing revealed heavy majorities. When the election results were announced it was a bitter blow, and his one desire, so he said, was to retire from the political scene, to resign the leadership and spend the remaining days of his life in his own private pursuits.

When this was made known there was consternation amongst his colleagues. In the higher hierarchy, there was an immediate ganging up behind several potential leaders: Hoffie, Conroy and Colin Steyn. Hoffie said he would issue a call to all loyal United Party members. Conroy told him that he could not do that; if any call was to be issued he would make it as chairman of the Central Congress of the Party. The old Tielman group were charging both Hofmeyr and Conroy with having lost the election, Hoffie by his 'Kaffir Bootie' policy and Conroy by his attacks on the Kerk, which had alienated all the predikants in the country. The only immaculate was Colin Steyn, who had not attacked anybody and would therefore be acceptable to everyone.

The level-headed said that it would mean the end of the Party whoever won in this struggle; it had no cohesive programme to which all would subscribe; it subsisted on loyalty to Smuts. So they went *en masse* to Smuts. He must come back, and to enable him to do so, without a fight, a safe Pretoria seat was found for him, by the resignation of Clark who was offered a seat in the Senate at the first opportunity. So Smuts came back, very much against his will, and the Party, for the time being, could breathe again. Smuts will be the rallying-point and, while he is there, he will maintain all the loyalties

of the incoherent anomalies who form the bulk of the party. The one binding force amongst them is the maintenance of the ties with the Commonwealth of which Smuts is the protagonist. Beyond that and in the absence of any knowledge of the world line up, they will not have any opinion against his. From my three years' experience in London of his amazing perspicacity in world affairs I shall be with him up to the hilt. . . .

What is needed for the Commonwealth is a better understanding with the Nationalists. A National Government would be infinitely better than fighting along our traditional front lines. I consider the world is too dangerous for us for division. Possibly when Malan begins to understand the position in the world, when he gets down to reading the daily shoal of telegrams which reach him from London and realizes the very dangerous position that South Africa is in, he may drop his isolationism and bring his people to co-operate in the Commonwealth, wherein lies our sole hope of survival. His action will be interesting to watch from the side-lines. . . .

But there is no doubt that the election has shocked Smuts. He has not recovered from it yet. He is much older, much less sure of himself. Things have gone so far in the opposite direction that he wonders whether it is worth his while. If South Africa wants it that way, well, why not let them have it. The innocents of the backveld who had such exaggerated ideas of their own importance in the world of men, do not know what is coming to them. Smuts would rather have been an onlooker from his retreat than have to comment in public on the discomfiture, but he could not refuse the pressure put upon him to prevent the Party from certain disruption. So, as I see him, he is back, but his heart is not in it. He is living at the Mount Nelson, where I see him every day. When he can, Smuts chooses a non-political person like Vernon Thompson, to accompany him up the mountain. He says he does not need companionship; he believes he can live on his own resources, but I think he is a lonely man.

So Smuts gallantly continued as Leader of the Opposition. The coming of the Nationalists to power destroyed the policy I had assisted in building up in London. For it was a fact that most of our foreign policy emanated from the office of the High Commissioner in London, where world events were studied by South Africans in close touch with the world situation. Now I was to

watch, as the years passed, the gradual degrading of the political authority of the High Commissioner, the debasement of his status, from ministerial level to become that of an obvious civil servant the dropping of the family ties which had been built up in Britain during the war so that, instead of the friendly standing from which the High Commissioner could call on and talk to any minister in London without notice in the Press, such friendly visits now began to assume the appearance of visits between the representatives of foreign states. Thus the South African Press would report, and still is reporting: 'South African High Commissioner called yesterday on the Secretary for Commonwealth Relations.' As often as not, the subject discussed is given in the news flash as well.

This pushing-at-arms-length policy has ministered to our Republican pride, but it has lost us our Commonwealth comradeship. Our political officers in Britain are no longer considered to be 'one of us'. To regain the old intimate contacts we now depend upon the Commonwealth Conference, which is arranged with the same punctilio as an international gathering. Thus Malan could breakfast with Nehru and discuss the dissolution of our Commonwealth loyalties without feeling any embarrassment in his loyalty to the Commonwealth as a whole. Before Malan's first Commonwealth Conference in London, Smuts warned him that the recognition of India as a Republic within the Commonwealth would mean the end of our common loyalty. But this warning operated as a stimulus to our Republicans. My suggestion to Malan in the Senate before he left for London on that occasion was that he should remember that he was speaking for all South Africans at the Conference and not solely for the Nationalist Party. He spoke for the state. This admonition was interpreted by him in the spirit of Louis XIV: '*L'état, c'est moi.*'

On his return, with India a Republic within the Commonwealth, the circle of common allegiance was shattered. We were told that what is not common to the whole, cannot be common to any part of it. So South Africa's *Grand Monarque* destroyed our common allegiance overnight. We were informed that our

British citizenship had gone; the common circle had been broken. In these subtle, so-called constitutional ways, our old landmarks are shifted by a few headstrong, blinkered men.

Legally and constitutionally the Commonwealth Conference has no power, but it is commonly assumed that it speaks with all the Parliaments of the Commonwealth behind it, and anything which emanates from it is accepted by all Parliaments of the Commonwealth without question. The fact that India was not a party to the Statute of Westminster is conveniently forgotten. So the corroding waters of republicanism seep in, leaving our protective wire fences covered with the debris of the disappearing Act of Union.

In the mid-year session of 1950 I went out to Stellenbosch to listen to Smuts speaking on an open sportsground. Although he was still visibly shaken he seemed to be getting over it and his health and spirits were apparently good. The night was bitterly cold. Smuts's platform, on which were gathered all the local party leaders, was placed some distance in front of the stadium upon which the audience was seated. We were all clothed in overcoats, but, so that he would feel more at liberty to express himself, Smuts took off his coat. His speech was not up to his usual standard. It was uninspiring and the meeting was not the kind of rally I had expected. Smuts tried to capture again the spirit of youth, but whether it was the coldness of the night or the lack of spontaneity amongst the listeners, there was a depressed feeling in the air. From delivering this speech Smuts went to his farm at Irene and there developed pneumonia. Later, information came to us that he was much better and was addressing a public gathering in Johannesburg. But the air of Stellenbosch still hung upon him and he had a relapse.

Believing that, in this age of sulphonamides and penicillin, pneumonia had lost its terror, I felt no apprehension. I regarded Smuts's return to Parliament as certain. But one day, meeting Strauss in the Lobby, I learned that he had just come from a caucus meeting of the United Party members. I asked Strauss what it was all about. He told me that they had met to consider Smuts's resignation as Leader. I was astonished, and said so. 'The

meeting has adjourned until this afternoon; you had better come along,' said Strauss.

I decided to go, though as a Senator, I had made it a practice to keep away from the Assembly caucus meetings in order that the Senate should not be committed by its arguments. I found on listening to the speeches that, during the morning the general secretary of the Party, Oosthuizen, had come down from Johannesburg with a message which he said was from Smuts, asking that his resignation as Leader of the Party should be accepted and that Strauss should be proposed in his place. The idea was created that Smuts was on his deathbed and that the leadership of the Party was weighing upon his mind; one of the members talked about the death-rattle in his throat which we dare not reject! A motion had been proposed to accept Smuts's wish. To this an amendment had been moved rejecting Smuts's resignation. This was now under discussion.

I was frankly puzzled. Listening to the speeches, I began to smell an intrigue of the party machine. Although Strauss's speech disclosed no intention of making use of the opportunity afforded, when one of the other speakers inferred that, if the motion was accepted, Strauss would be able to draw a salary as Leader of the Opposition, which today because of Smuts's absence was not being drawn, I was shocked. The whole proceeding began to look like a wangle. Was the proposal designed merely to transfer the salary from Smuts to a new leader? I got up and said that I considered the motion before the caucus was an unseemly one and that I considered the message we had received from Oosthuizen should be suspect; its character was not in Smuts's nature. Here he was nominating Strauss as his successor. I believed that Smuts was too much of a democrat to follow this course; he would have left the choice to the caucus. Why did they not wait for Smuts to die before burying him? I told members that I firmly believed that Smuts would yet come back to preside over us.

The debate drew to an end and the voting for the amendment disclosed only some nineteen supporters and was defeated. A vote was then taken for the original motion and was unanimous.

Thereupon Strauss was accepted as our new Leader. It left a nasty taste in my mouth. The South African political genius who had given so much to the world, had been summarily cast aside.

I wrote to Smuts as soon as the caucus meeting was over, telling him of what had taken place and suggesting that he should now become the leader of South Africa—on a world basis. I suggested that the time had come for him to devote his time to shaping our ends as an elder statesman. I did not then know how seriously ill he was. Nor, I understand, did his son, who was by his side and who immediately published a denial of the message brought to us by Oosthuizen, saying he did not believe that his father had sent such a message to Cape Town. But this statement was subsequently retracted. I never knew the truth of this incident, but it is certain that there was some party manoeuvring to get Strauss elected as Leader of the Opposition. It is curious to think that Strauss suffered a similar ignominious fate, when he was later, by an intrigue, removed from the leadership of the Party, in favour of de Villiers Graaf.

Smuts died very soon afterwards. I attended his funeral in Pretoria and looked over the coffin, placed in the centre of the Dutch Reformed Kerk, at the leading politicians sitting opposite, who were to see South Africa through the coming years, and my gall rose. Malan, the cause of all our ills, was sitting smugly complacent. I thanked God that the Smuts family had chosen a military—as opposed to a State—funeral in which the Nationalists could never share.

As the years passed and a deeper knowledge of Smuts's intentions and an understanding of his philosophy of life stole upon me, the admiration I held for him had grown to a very deep affection. I was profoundly moved at his death. It seemed impossible that he would not return to take up his old seat when the next session opened. Without Smuts the United Party was a broken reed. The twin policies of republicanism and *Apartheid* put the Nationalists into power in 1948. Each subsequent year has seen a legislative step taken to cut the old tender bonds of our allegiance and erode our sense of British citizenship.

Throughout the years the encroachment upon our Constitu-

tion gathered momentum. The chicanery of getting rid of the coloured vote revealed a constitutional dishonesty difficult to reconcile with the religious protestations of the Government. The first step of turning Parliament into a High Court for this purpose was frustrated by the Court of Appeal itself, but the dishonest method of creating a new Senate which destroyed the federal basis of the Constitution, solemnly agreed upon in 1910, under which each Province (under the Reservation Clause) was guaranteed equal representation, was sheer racial robbery.

Meanwhile the State has gathered an authoritarianism which grows stronger every day. So we have all been ticketed in a population register and put in our separate areas. The pass laws have been tightened; our human relations have deteriorated and treason trials flourish. We have become a by-word in the world. In this march towards a Police State, the United Party has acquiesced. Competing in the same electoral pool for votes, it has used very much the same bait as the Nationalists. Instead of pronouncing republicanism to be treason, as it was in the old South African Party under Smuts, we are now engaged in justifying it and rushing to the assistance of the Government in declaring anything which bears the faintest resemblance to Communism to be treason. The tendency of the United Party to agree with the Nationalist Party in its authoritarian measures became more and more pronounced after Smuts died. Bill after Bill, each one more bureaucratic than the other came up to the Senate which strangled my conscience. I had taken my stand against a republic; long ago I had said in the House of Assembly that a republic would be a revolution, whether it was a French republic, or an American republic or a Communist republic. The contract of union had been drawn up by the four pre-Union states at a National Convention, the terms of which were made throughout the country. Before being accepted by the Natal Parliament, the terms of this contract were submitted to a referendum of the electorate of Natal, who agreed to go into the Union on the conditions set out. Thereafter the contract was accepted by the Natal Parliament together with the three other Parliaments for ratification, as being the only body in existence

which could legally deal with the matter. The British Parliament passed this contract (which later became the South Africa Act) without altering a single word. The South Africa Act is therefore a fundamental law from which flows all the authority of government and legislature in South Africa. Without it there could be no Union Parliament. If the contract is broken, union is broken too.

It is a fundamental axiom in every country in the world that a man who dies has lost all powers of creation. He can make no will when he is dead. Therefore when the Nationalists murder the monarchial system by the introduction of a republic in South Africa, they will by that act kill the Act of Union, which gave the Union life under the monarchial system. They cannot then legally transfer the authority obtained from the dead South Africa Act and re-enact it in the living body of a republican form of government. If they do, it will be a revolution, as it has been in every country of the world where a republic has been introduced.

So far as Natal was concerned, her participation in the Union was by referendum; if the Union is broken, she reserves the right to reconsider her opinion before she decides what she will do next. That is the Natal Stand.

It is the stand Natal members of Parliament have adopted throughout the years. It has been repeatedly stated by them, not only out of consideration for themselves, but also for the good of the two and a half million non-Europeans in Natal, who are kith and kin to the ten million in the rest of the Union. The Union Parliament, under the Crown, has ruled undisputedly over these people for close on fifty years. By what authority can the Crown transfer this authority to a republic, and before what tribunal will the Nationalists take their case to be tried?

Academic constitutionalists, both here and overseas, have succeeded in making the people believe that the Act of Union was not a 'contract' but a 'merger', and that therefore there are no terms to break. But the case has never been tried in a court of law. One thing is certain, however, that, if the position were reversed and South Africa was now a republic, any attempt to turn her into a monarchy would immediately be regarded as treason (as

is the case in the United States) and all the offices of the law would be employed in stamping it out. Yet here, because we are loyal subjects of the Queen, treason is allowed to pass as a political party principle.

The fact that agitation for a republic has been allowed was brought about by the foolish adoption of the Hertzog Clause 2D by the two political parties at fusion under which, to appease academic republicans, the right was given to members of the South African Party and the Nationalist Party to carry on propaganda for its establishment. No doubt it was accepted in a spirit of unity which it was thought that fusion had captured.

If agreement is necessary on any one thing in a nation's life, it is on its constitution. In 1910, after waging a three years' war, we arrived at a universal agreement in the acceptance of the South Africa Act. We have so organized our national life that we have grown in power and in wealth and status under that Act, and we have been protected in our development because of the associations which the Constitution has given us, though our fullest developments have been hampered by the continual agitation for a republic, which has hindered the flow of capital and destroyed confidence in us abroad. It was the helplessness of the United Party to halt these proceedings which led to my resignation from it, after thirty years of faithful service. But all that was still in the green leaf.

Smuts's death began the release of forces amongst the discontented in the Party, particularly those from Natal, where an anti-republican association was formed. It suddenly became alive and called a mass meeting in Pietermaritzburg early in 1950 which I was asked to address. To show that it was quite non-party, the leader of the Labour Party, Teddy Browne, appeared with me. I decided that my best course was to emphasize to the meeting the contractual character of the Act of Union. It was essential, as an aid to clear thinking, to strip the whole constitutional issue of the academic camouflage in which the Republicans were wrapping it, and explain our position clearly to the people.

A year later (March 20, 1951) while I was in Cape Town attending to my parliamentary work, another mass meeting of

citizens was held in Pietermaritzburg under the patronage of the mayor, D. R. Warmback, which passed the following resolution:

> For the formation of an Action Committee under the chairmanship of Senator the Rt Hon George Heaton Nicholls, PC, as being an Elder Statesman and ex-Administrator of Natal, with a definite mandate to take all possible constitutional steps to secure respect for the entrenched Clauses of the South Africa Act and to maintain the sanctity of the Constitution.

As a result of this meeting and of the general dissatisfaction among the electorate of Natal at the way the Nationalist Party was handling our constitutional affairs, the Provincial Council met and passed a resolution addressed to the Administrator, for transmission to the Prime Minister, to each of his Cabinet and to all members of the Senate and the House of Assembly. It read:

> That the continuance of a Union of the four Provinces based on the South Africa Act of 1909 with all the safeguards for fundamental rights provided by that Act, is in the interests of South Africa as a whole, and that the people of this Province pledge their unswerving support of such a state of union.
>
> That, if any legislation is passed affecting the 'Entrenched Clauses' of the South Africa Act of 1909, other than by the procedure laid in the said Act, it will constitute, in the opinion of this Council, a breach of the Act of Union and is a grave threat to our Constitution and our continued existence as a Union.
>
> That any action which may undermine the contract of Union should be resisted by all constitutional means.

This resolution received a bare acknowledgement and had no effect upon the Government's rape of the Constitution.

I gave very great consideration to the resolution which the Pietermaritzburg mass meeting had passed and to the mandate which they had given me. I felt that I could do not better than put myself at the head of an action committee to secure the sanctity of our Constitution, which the United Party so dubiously stood for. I accepted and set about forming one. This meant no

disloyalty to the United Party, whose leader I was in the Senate. I continued as leader.

Naturally I turned to the most reputable and respected people in Natal to sit on my committee. I secured the services of Richard Feetham and Roy Hawthorn, both former judge-presidents of Natal, and a number of advocates and eminent men from different walks of life in industry and commerce. I thought I had a very strong committee. I had as my vice-chairman Dennis Fannin, QC, now judge in Natal, and as secretary Robbie Hughes Mason, an attorney from Pietermaritzburg. We adopted at once the name of 'Defenders of the Constitution', and proceeded to draw up a Charter under which the Defenders pledged themselves to resist, by all constitutional means, any attempt to circumvent or violate the Constitution. At the first meeting of the Action Committee I said:

> We assert that the South African Constitution belongs to the people. It is not the possession of any political party. It is the foundation on which the political parties have been reared. . . . The Act of Union is the people's charter, containing the terms under which all our similarities and dissimilarities shall co-operate together for the common good. The fight for the Constitution will be immeasurably influenced by the attitude of the people. We should, therefore, organize opinion by every means open to us. We must send our missionaries into every village and town and district, as the old Covenanters did in Scotland, until there is not a soul who does not understand the issue at stake.

And this is precisely what we did. Meetings were arranged all over Natal to explain the Constitution to the people and the legal brains in the Organization became busy writing memoranda for propaganda.

CHAPTER XXXII

WE FIGHT FOR UNION UNDER THE CROWN

(1951)

SOON after the formation of the Defenders of the Constitution, the War Veterans Torch Commando came into being in Johannesburg, with Kane-Berman as chairman. It had as its patron N. J. De Wet (late acting Governor-General) and as its leader, Group-Captain Malan.

To consider the Torch Commando as a primarily political movement is to misunderstand it. It is significant that in Natal four of the five leading figures in it were men who had nothing to do with politics, but had spent three or four years as prisoners of war of the Italians and Germans. During this period of their lives they had seen the evil effects of the ultimate power of the State upon the lives of many decent people. In the actions and thought-lines of the Nationalist Party they saw the shape of things to come, the rise of the Nazi conception of the state in South Africa. They were determined to prevent it.

Initially the Torch Commando was formed as the result of the upsurge of moral indignation against the Government's attempt to 'break the rules'—to do *wrong*—by changing the Act of Union without the required two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament sitting together, an action not only wrong in its execution, but wrong in its effect, the denial of a century-old right of the coloured people to appear as voters on the Common Roll. It therefore became the channel of expression of tens of thousands of disillusioned and frustrated men and women who were uneasy at the trend of events in South Africa. It particularly appealed to the returned soldiers and their affinities throughout the country. It ultimately claimed a membership of a quarter of

a million drawn from all over South Africa. The Torch Commando was a militant body, prepared to act militantly if the need arose. Its constitution clearly laid down that its role was to be that of an independent group exerting pressure upon, but having no affiliations with, any political party. Nevertheless from the moment of its inception, the United Party was uneasy over the Torch Commando; it was too strong a body for their liking and could too easily be used to oppose them.

It was not long before Torch found itself in conflict with a divided direction. It was not achieving the 'new look' in politics which was the objective of its founders. Into its executives and committees had crept officials of the United Party; its counsels were becoming dominated by members of this party. Torch was becoming a party political tool and was in danger of being the vehicle upon which the United Party, with its present *laissez-faire* attitude, would attempt to ride to victory in the forthcoming election.

Naturally Torch hoped that the United Party, the only effective Parliamentary Opposition to the Nationalists, would win the next election, and to ensure that a united anti-Nationalist front was presented to fight it, the United Party, the Torch Commando, the Labour Party and the Defenders of the Constitution in Natal, banded themselves together into a body which was called the 'United Democratic Front'. Torch's aim, however, was to exert enough pressure on the United Party to force it to make a definite 'moral and constitutional' stand as opposed to only a 'legal' stand, against the introduction of an Afrikaner republic, for what is legal may be grossly immoral and unconstitutional. The quarrel between them lay solely in this. While the United Party affirmed that, if a republic were introduced 'legally', they could take no objection to it, they could not, or would not, take active steps to prevent the constant tamperings with the Constitution which the Nationalists were making, in order to make the introduction of the republic, when it came, appear 'legal'. The Torch Commando felt that the 'Natal Stand' was the weapon to make the Nationalists toe the line. It was, therefore, endeavouring to get the United Party to adopt the 'Natal Stand'.

It is necessary to state here, in order that the reader may understand how dissension came about and grew between the United Party and the Torch Commando, that the former's attitude towards a republic was to abide by the judgments of the courts under all circumstances. Strauss, Leader of the Opposition, publicly announced this and told me in an interview I had with him on August 19, 1952, in the presence of Higgerty, the Party Whip, that he stood by the Law; he would not deviate from it. He thought very little of the 'Natal Stand'.

At this time the notorious High Court of Parliament Act was before the Supreme Court in the Cape. When I asked Strauss specifically what the party's attitude would be if the Supreme Court of the Cape gave judgment in favour of the Government on the validity of the High Court of Parliament Act and the Government then went to an election, after taking the coloured voters off the Common Roll in defiance of the 'entrenched clauses' he said he would regard their right to do so as the law. In such a case the election would be legal and constitutional. He would go to the election though he might lose it. I pushed him on that point. If he lost the election, he would have stamped it as legal by having taken part in it, and he would have acquiesced in the complete abrogation of the Constitution. Nothing would be left of it. The Government could legally establish a republic forthwith. Strauss did not reply to this. His policy was to stand by the courts no matter where their decisions led.

In other words the United Party had no stand at all against the Nationalists' methods of introducing a republic. They refused to believe or admit that we were up against people who would resort to trickery in order to achieve their ends. While the Nationalists' actions might be 'legal', they would definitely not be 'moral' or 'constitutional'. It was against this 'legal' attitude of mind which many South Africans felt was leading us to disaster, that the Torch Commando was fighting, for, although the United Party were continually asserting that they were against the introduction of a republic, they never failed to minimize 'the republican bogey', as their speakers chose to call it. Douglas Mitchell, chairman of the United Party in Natal, was particularly

reassuring and jovial and said that fear of a republic was not practical politics, was nothing by a *gogga*,[1] and was used by 'alarmists' and 'British jingoes', to stir up trouble. He was, of course, adopting Strauss's attitude, which he expressed in such a blunt and dictatorial manner that he succeeded in exasperating and alienating the greater part of the Torch Commando in Natal. I saw grave danger to the United Party in this, but Mitchell refused to take heed. I could not understand the United Party's opposition to the 'Natal Stand'. To me and to many others, it appeared to be a very strong line of defence, which the Nationalists, when they were shown that we were in earnest, would never allow to become active.

It was only as a last, desperate resort, when all else failed and the Constitution had been irrevocably broken by the Government, that secession would ever occur. Then quite constitutionally, legally and bloodlessly, Natal would revert to her position before she went into union; the Provincial Council, being the residue of what was left from that original colonial form of government, would become for the time being, the governing body, as of old. But long before this extreme situation came about, the Nationalists would have called a halt to their immoral proceedings. Natal was far too valuable a contributor to the rest of the Union for them to allow her to become independent. Natal possessed the sword of Damocles to hold poised over the heads of the Government and restrain them in their march to a republic. Had Natal used her power correctly then, she and South Africa would not be in the sorry Afrikaner-dominated plight in which we find ourselves today.

The whole province, the whole of South Africa became torn, as it had during the devolution movement, twenty years before, over this question of secession. There was a lot of loose talk about 'bloodshed', largely initiated by Mitchell. But bloodshed would not come into it. Natal would secede to *save* bloodshed, only when the Government had broken the Constitution.

While Natal writhed over the question of secession, the

[1] Afrikaans for a 'mythical gnat'.

Nationalists quietly and determinedly continued with their objective, waiting to see if Natal was really in earnest this time, if she would have the 'guts' to provide the stumbling block to their republican hopes. The Provincial Council, aware of the struggles of the Province, passed (June 4, 1952) yet another resolution in an endeavour to force the Government to pay heed to the voice of Natal. This time the resolution was addressed to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, recommending Parliament to take the necessary legislative steps to call into being a National Convention, equally representative of the four Provinces of the Union, and if necessary South West Africa, for the purpose of re-affirming by mutual agreement the Constitution of the Union of South Africa, and by so doing entrench and protect against repeal or amendment, except by the procedure laid down, the basic principles of the Act of Union. This resolution expressed the Council's belief that the very existence of union was now in danger and that, unless the Act of Union was honoured, both in spirit and letter, the state of union could not continue to exist, and that its dissolution would be to the detriment of the peoples of South Africa and would cause the destruction of white civilization in South Africa. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, both members of the Nationalist Party, ruled this resolution as *ultra vires* and it was not communicated by them to Parliament.

Shortly before this resolution was passed, a suggestion which emanated from the Torch Commando, came to my attention, as chairman of the Defenders of the Constitution. It was that a mass meeting of Natal citizens should be called to endorse the Provincial Council Resolution of June 4, and register a mass protest against the Nationalist Government's actions. Executives of both Torch and the Defenders told me that Natal was in such a state of unrest that the time had come to put an end to equivocation; the people wanted a positive line of action; they were tired of all the conflicting opinions.

I was in Cape Town at the time, and I took the matter up with Mitchell. Somewhat to my surprise, I found that he was opposed

to the holding of any meeting in Natal. 'There is no need for it,' he said. As I could come to no satisfactory decision with him, I called for a meeting of Natal members of Parliament. Mitchell still persisted in his belief that there was no request for a mass meeting in Natal. I suggested that he should proceed himself to Natal, and ascertain the general feeling there. On pressure from the meeting, Mitchell was eventually persuaded to go.

He found unmistakable evidence of the widespread demand for a mass meeting and he agreed to one being arranged by the United Democratic Front. It took place at 8 p.m. on June 6th, before the steps of the Post Office, where the Natal Convention had met forty-four years before, to consider whether Natal should go into the Union. All day the citizens of Natal had come pouring into Durban. Commandos of the Torch Commando came rolling in from the outlying districts, from Zululand and from the heights of the Drakensberg, from the wintry districts of Northern Natal and from the sunflecked beaches of the South Coast. By eight o'clock the streets were jammed and a parking place anywhere near the city square was unobtainable. Hotels and boarding houses were booked out.

A platform had been erected in front of the Post Office and on it were prominent members representing the United Democratic Front. It was a crisp winter's night, and as I took my chairman's place on the dais the moon shone through a bank of clouds. More than forty-five thousand people thronged the city square and spilled out into the adjoining streets. It was a vast crowd; the people of Natal had answered her call. The Torch Commando formed up, each member carrying a lighted torch, and proceeded to march to their position in front of the Post Office. The course of their route was marked by a snake of unbroken torchlight.

The meeting seemed to me to be an unqualified success. The pledge in the charter of the Defenders of the Constitution, which had been evolved from a number of drafts submitted by the best legal brains in Natal at this time, had been printed and distributed by thousands to the people in the streets. After the speeches this vow was read out in Afrikaans by Senator Louis

Steenkamp, and then it was proposed by me in English, the crowd, with right arms raised, repeating the words as I spoke them:

> I swear to preserve the sanctity of the engagements entered upon at the time of Union as a moral obligation of trust and honour, binding upon Parliament and the people, and to secure the repeal of any measures enacted in violation of such obligations, and to oppose any attempts to violate the Constitution embodied in the South Africa Act and more particularly to maintain respect for the Entrenched Clauses of that Act.

I considered all those who were there that night holding a lighted torch as representatives of the whole of Natal. I regarded their acceptance of the vow as a mandate binding upon Natal. It seemed that night as though the paths were cleared. We knew now beyond all doubt where we were and what we wanted; the people of Natal had spoken with one voice and would not have a republic foisted upon them. The meeting closed with the singing of *God Save the King*, and the crowds quietly dispersed. It was my interpretation of these solemn proceedings which was to have such consequences for me later.

Immediately after the mass meeting, the trouble between Mitchell and the Torch Commando came to a head; the difference occurred over the interpretation of the pledge taken at that meeting. Torch took it to mean that if the Constitution was 'legally' broken by unconstitutional and immoral methods, they were free to take up their own way, while Mitchell held that 'legal' meant constitutionally and morally, and he went out of his way to explain that Natal might find itself in a republic quite 'legally', without being able to prevent it. I did not agree with Mitchell's interpretation of the pledge or with his views on the introduction of a republic. I was beginning to see serious trouble ahead if the United Party and the Torch Commando could not agree.

On July 8th the National Congress of the Torch Commando met in Pretoria and was attended by delegates from all parts of the

Union. In order to maintain some unity of purpose this congress adopted a formula for the 'Natal Stand'. It was in the form of a resolution proposed by Gillie Ford, one of the Natal chairmen present. He spoke to such effect that of the several hundred delegates from all over the Union, all were persuaded on the wisdom of using the 'Natal Stand' as a weapon with which to save the Union from the ultimate destruction which the Nationalists planned. The resolution was as follows and was passed unanimously:

> This National Congress of the Torch Commando, representing a quarter of a million South Africans, reaffirms its belief in Union and the spirit in which the Act of Union—our Constitution—was born. We pledge our full support to Natal in her request for a new National Convention to entrench the basic rights of citizenship. Furthermore we regard Natal's stand as an honourable one against a ruling Government which knows no honour. If in her efforts to save Union, Natal is forced to stand alone, the Torch Commando throughout South Africa and South West Africa affirms its readiness to support Natal to the full by whatsoever action the National Executive may deem necessary. The Torch Commando regards any break-up of Union caused by the Government's breach of a solemn contract, as a purely temporary position until such time as all the people of South Africa can come together again once more in honourable agreement to build up a greater Union of South Africa. We, the members of the War Veterans Torch Commando, in all four Provinces and South West Africa, pledge ourselves to strive increasingly for the attainment of our national ideals, and the securing of a democratic Union of South Africa. While reserving the right to independent action, we deem it right to consult our partners in the United Democratic Front at all stages.

Thus the Torch in the other three Provinces and South West Africa were pledged to come to the aid of Natal, if and when she made her stand. This was a very significant resolution and the United Party recognized it as such; Strauss requested that its adoption should not be made public through the Press. It is to the lasting credit of the Torch Commando that his wishes were respected.

Two months after the mass meeting however, in August, Mitchell delivered a speech at Port Shepstone which made it virtually impossible for me to accept, as chairman of the United Democratic Front, the United Party's interpretation of the 'Natal Stand'. Speaking as chairman of the United Party in Natal he was enunciating the policy of the whole party. I was its leader in the Senate, but I was also chairman of the Defenders of the Constitution and chairman of the Council of the Democratic Front. I could not agree with Mitchell. There therefore seemed only one possible road for me to follow, and on August 6th I wrote to Mitchell formerly tendering him my resignation, after thirty-two years, from the United Party. On the same day I wrote the following letter to Strauss, leader of the United Party:

> I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have sent to Mitchell informing him of my resignation from the United Party. I am sorry that I have been impelled to take this step, but it is impossible to work with Mitchell. I shall therefore drop out of all political activity gradually. I must be candid with you. I do not believe that the United Party will win the next election, and if it does the growth of Nationalist sentiment will speedily overwhelm it.
>
> That is why I believe that Natal alone provides the bulwark against the *Broederbond* State. That belief, however, was subordinate in my mind to maintaining a united front in Natal, which would in no way be inimical to the United Party and could have gone into the election with enthusiasm, but it could only be by harnessing to the United Party chariot all those who felt like I did about the future. Mitchell makes it impossible. His arrogance and determination to dictate even to the United Front has alienated everybody concerned —except his immediate colleagues.
>
> I fully realize the seriousness of the step I am taking, but since it is not to be permitted to seek a way of escape in the event of a signal defeat in the immediate future by remaining in the Party, I feel the things for which we are fighting are too precious to be sacrificed to bad generalship.

Strauss wired me asking me to postpone my action and followed up with a letter (dated August 12th):

It seems to me that it is essential that the anti-Government forces should enter the general election fight as a united coherent team, in other words the United Democratic Front must not be allowed to break up. In order to preserve this complete unity your presence in the United Party is vital and essential. The difference which you mention can, in my opinion, be smoothed out in a friendly talk between you and me and I am at your disposal if you wish to come and have a talk with me. Please wire me date and time of your arrival and my car will meet you at the airport. I'll see Mitchell, after talking over the matter with you in order to clear up all possible causes of friction and misunderstanding. You know my contention is that the coming election is the most crucial in our history and that it can be won provided we mobilize our forces effectively as a united team.

While these events were taking place a letter, commonly said to have emanated from the United Party Office in Johannesburg and brought down to Durban for signature, appeared in the Press. It undoubtedly had detrimental results upon Natal's attempt to halt the Nationalist manoeuvrings for the introduction of a republic. This letter which appeared in the *Natal Mercury* of August 15th and was signed by the heavyweights amongst Natal's mercantile community struck right at the vitals of the Province. Bread and butter arguments are close to everyone's heart.

In effect the merchants maintained that Natal could not economically exist on its own. My contention, in reply, based on sound authorities, was that Natal as a unit was viable. There was no answer to my reply from any source. The stumps were clean-bowled. I hoped that my answer would in some measure detract from the effect of the twelve businessmen's letter upon the timid souls of our Province and that it would also bring about a study of the economic facts involved in the secession of Natal.

I accepted Strauss's invitation and went to Johannesburg to see him. I met him and Higgerty, the Chief Whip on August 19th. I quote from the notes I made immediately after the meeting:

The interview was arranged on Strauss's invitation as a result of my resignation from the United Party. We were to talk things over

with a view to my withdrawing my resignation. I had taken objection to Mitchell's continuing statements at public meetings on behalf of the United Party, particularly one at Port Shepstone, which I considered to be of so objectionable and of so fundamental a character that I could no longer be a member of the Party which expressed them.

Strauss welcomed me very warmly and hoped that all difficulties would be smoothed out. I said I hoped that Mitchell would have co-operated with the people of Natal and carried them along with him, not by assailing their sentiments and attacking them as 'secessionists', who were out to wreck the Union, but by making them understand that the United Party fully appreciated the fears which had been created by United Party propaganda as much as by the action of the Nationalists. I told Strauss that had Mitchell adopted that course, as I had advised him to do, he could have been unchallenged as the head of a united Natal. As it is Natal is likely to be bitterly divided.

This discussion made the following crystal clear; Mitchell expressed the mind of Strauss and his advisers, though probably more crudely than they would have done. The Party line was that all thought had to be concentrated on winning the election. There was to be no consideration of what might happen if the election was lost. It was treason to the Party to suggest that circumstances might arise which would make it necessary for Natal to stand alone in the defence of British interests; and it was treason to the Party to consider any action in defence of the contractual rights which Natal held under the constitution.

I pointed out that the United Party had nothing to worry about in Natal. There was no need for all this party swashbuckling, which was defeating its own ends. Nobody there, except Nationalists, was going to vote republican, but if the present process of division was intensified, there might be considerable alteration in the personnel of members of Parliament for Natal. There was no justification for rasping the feelings of the electorate.

Strauss said he would speak to Mitchell in an effort to bring about a better feeling between Mitchell and me. I replied that there was no quarrel between Mitchell and me on personal grounds; the quarrel was between our different standpoints. I reminded Strauss that I had told him that I placed the Constitution before the Party and would use all influence to prevent Natal going into a republic.

We then went on to talk of the Constitutional question on which matter we could obtain no agreement. I was pressed very hard by both Strauss and Higgerty to withdraw my resignation, which, if it became known, would do harm to the cause I had at heart by sowing dissension at a time when all thought should be concentrated on winning the election. I replied that the discussion had made it impossible. I would not publish the fact unless I was compelled to do so; but I left neither Strauss nor Higgerty under any misapprehension that I believed that the United Party had developed an attitude towards the Constitution which I could not support. I believed that there was no future for South Africa until this issue, which governed all other considerations was finally and definitely determined. White South Africa could not stand alone in the modern world.

CHAPTER XXXIII

TWENTY YEARS AFTER: FEDERALISM IN NATAL AGAIN

(1952)

I RETURNED to the fight in Natal with the secret of my resignation from the United Party weighing heavily upon me. There was no hope for the maintenance of British interests in the United Party. The subsequent measures of the Nationalist Party by which they got rid of the coloured vote and altered the whole constitutional structure of the Senate proved that I was right. Strauss was a mere pawn in the game, as his later displacement as party leader showed. But at this time these things were yet to come. I could not, after a lifetime of service, deliver a blow to my old Party either by withdrawing from politics altogether or by announcing my resignation. So, it seemed to me, I had still to carry on with the Defenders to father the Democratic Front.

Very shortly after my return from Johannesburg I was called upon at my home at Cowies Hill by the Natal chairman of the Torch Commando, Gillie Ford. Executives of the Commando were worried about persistent rumours from well-informed circles that negotiations were going on behind the scenes between the Nationalists and the United Party, and that there was a likelihood of a coalition prior to the election. I quote from a letter which Gillie Ford wrote to me in December 1955 describing this meeting:

> Being worried about these rumours I telephoned your house during mid-August 1952 with the request for a discussion with you. I remember the incident very clearly. You and Gerry Hammond (whom I understand is related to you and was staying with you as a guest), met me in your study. You were most despondent about

current political events and told us in confidence that you had that week interviewed Strauss and had formally tendered your resignation on the understanding that it would not be made public until after the 1953 election. This we already knew, for the information was being treated as a sort of open secret by the United Party headquarters in Johannesburg. We discussed the rumours of United Party and Nationalist co-operation and I thought that, because our information on the point was fresher than yours, your mood of depression deepened and you kept on telling us that you were determined to retire from active politics. At the time I was standing with my back towards the fireplace in your study and I expressed the opinion that South Africa's only political hope was the formation, after the election, or immediately following a coalition between the Nationalists and the United Party, if that occurred first, of a new political party based upon Torch ideals coupled with a Federal and a progressive non-European policy. Gerry put his hand on my shoulder and said: 'If you come out on those principles, I am with you.'

You remained silent for a short while and then from the depth of your chair you said: 'Young man, I am very tired, but if you mean that sincerely and you do not deviate from your path, you can count me in.' Thereafter as our relations with the United Party deteriorated and rumours of a coalition with the Nationalists became stronger, the thought grew in my mind and in the minds of people like Selby, Hughes Mason, Brickhill and others and we slowly began to form the basis of such a party.

In these discussions you did not figure and at no time were you consulted. If I remember rightly, you left on a trip overseas very shortly afterwards and did not return for some months. In any event, it was decided not to approach you until after the election because of your undertaking to the United Party. Furthermore, we were rather distrustful of certain of your club friends who obviously were in your confidence but not in ours, and we wished to avoid embarrassment to you in the event of newspaper 'leakage'. . . .

I was too busy with other affairs to give much attention to this interview, but the knowledge was there that, if co-operation between the Torch Commando and the United Party was not forthcoming, the formation of a new party might well be the outcome. I felt that this would be inimical to the cause of ousting

the Nationalists and gave myself to further efforts of bringing the United Party to seeing Torch's point of view.

As a result of the scant notice given by the Union Government to the Provincial Council Resolution of June 4th asking for a Natal Convention, the council of the United Democratic Front met to discuss what should next be done, and how best to maintain union in view of the threats against it, the Provincial Council itself now being powerless to do anything further in the matter. After much discussion it was decided that a Natal Conference should be called of all Senators, members of Parliament and members of the Provincial Council, together with delegates from the Torch Commando and the Defenders of the Constitution.

There was a good deal of obstruction by the United Party members to the calling of this Conference, and all through the meetings of the Council its work was frustrated by the continual desire of the United Party to prevent any concrete action from being taken. At last an agenda was drawn up and invitations were issued over the signatories of the chairmen of the four organizations comprising the United Front. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Natal Provincial Council Chambers in Pietermaritzburg on August 25 and 26, 1952. From the outset it was plain that the conference would be overweighted by a large attendance of the United Party, all their Senators and members of Parliament and Provincial Councillors, while the Torch Commando and Defenders of the Constitution had comparatively few members present, but it was assumed that delegates would vote according to conscience and would not be bound by party loyalties, for the object of the Conference was to achieve something constructive, and not merely to continue a party wrangle. Party affiliations proved too strong, however, and it was not long before it was evident that the United Party members intended to wield their strength as a Party.

The Bishop of Natal read the prayers and the conference was declared open by me. With its predominance of United Party members the conference then removed me from the chair and elected Senator Botha, United Party and former chairman of the Natal Provincial Council in my place. The proceedings were then

in the hands of the United Party, whose only object was to consider how best to win the next election, while the rest of the delegates desired to know, how, in the event of the election being lost, they could implement the 'Natal Stand' and save South Africa from becoming a republic.

It became apparent when Mitchell spoke and I followed that the conference was not in agreement on one vital point. The *Natal Mercury* in a leader dated August 28th summed up the position:

> At the moment it is clear there is no division in the United Front on principle; there is possibly some divergence of view on the tactics that must be employed to meet the threat that confronts us. Mitchell says that in no circumstances can Natal take separate action. In that view he has the support of a considerable section of the United Party. Heaton Nicholls and those who think with him, hold that in certain eventualities Natal can initiate a movement, a movement that will save not only Natal but the whole conception of Union. For the time being we can agree to differ on that point. For ourselves, we think that Nicholls is correct.

The conference lasted for two days. There was much talk and tempers became distinctly ruffled. In the end, as no agreement could be reached, it was decided to adjourn to allow an elected committee of legal men to ascertain how best we could safeguard the Constitution. But since all the arguments of this committee were 'legal' in character and not 'moral' and 'constitutional', they were quite ineffective for the purpose of implementing the 'Natal Stand'. The conference still remains adjourned!

Seeing that it was impossible to reconcile the points of disagreement and on the suggestion of Churton Collins, chairman of the *Natal Mercury*, that I should find out what opinion was held by the British Government on the contractual nature of our Union bonds and their attitude towards the introduction of a republic, I left the Union for a holiday overseas. I went, in order not to attract attention, to England *via* South America and called at Buenos Aires on the way. Here I had a heart attack and was in

hospital for a few days. It was strange to be nursed by doctors and nurses who could speak no English; but they looked after me very well and I soon continued on to Rio de Janeiro, where I had to wait for a ship and where I was invited to address the Brazilian Senate. I spoke on South Africa and its connection with the Portuguese.

I arrived in England in mid-November and immediately communicated with Salisbury and members of the British Government and other influential people in England, but on this occasion I came to no definite conclusions regarding our constitutional troubles. I did, however, alert Swinton, the Secretary for Dominion Affairs, to the fact that Malan might seek the consent of the forthcoming Commonwealth Conference to South Africa becoming a republic, and informed him that Malan would be voicing the wishes of only a section of the white community of South Africa and none of the millions of non-Europeans. In point of fact, however, Malan did not broach the matter. I was in the hands of the doctors for most of my short stay in England, for I had not properly recovered from my heart attack in South America.

My visit had one highlight. On Smuts's recommendation, my name had appeared in the New Year's Honours List of 1948, and I was made a Privy Councillor. Although I then received intimation that I should be sworn in when next in England, I had not been able to go to England sooner. On December 4th I was bidden to a Privy Council meeting at Buckingham Palace and was sworn in and kissed the hands of the Queen. I was much impressed with the ancient ceremony. The days of Rotherham and the factories seemed very far away.

On my return to South Africa I found Natal more acutely divided than ever. The Natal Conference was inoperative; the Torch Commando seemed to be going its own way. The United Front appeared to be united only in name. I gave myself to my work as chairman of the Defenders of the Constitution and kept out of the political scene as much as I could, for I was no longer a member of the United Party. The general election loomed ahead and party agitation in Natal was at fever pitch.

But although the United Front in Natal won every seat it was possible for them to win, the general election of April 15th went according to Nationalist plans and they went back to power with a greatly increased majority, as I and many others had foreseen. Immediately after the election results were known, I published the facts of my resignation from the United Party eight months before.

I was now intent upon retiring from politics altogether and to this end I requested Mitchell to come to see me about the situation in Natal in one last effort to get him to see the force of the 'Natal Stand'. He came to see me at my home on April 21 and 24, 1953. I told him that Natal had reached a stage when unity of outlook was necessary. The United Party and Torch were likely to go their own separate ways if a common understanding were not reached. The Torch Commando would probably within the next few weeks form a separate political party and ask me to lead it. The immediate objective of this party would be to fight the forthcoming Provincial election on an entirely Natal platform. That would mean a split in our political forces which would be harmful to the cause. I put the proposition to him that if he would accept fully, without reservation, the 'Natal Stand', i.e. that he would be prepared to lead Natal in the fight to the extent of Natal standing alone in the event of an 'immoral' and 'unconstitutional' republic being formed, I would do my best to bring about a solid front between the Torch Commando and the United Party, and he would be the leader of the combined force. I personally was tired and wanted to shut the door on politics. Natal required a leader. I felt Mitchell had the confidence of a large section of the people of Natal and he had the necessary youth and vigour. If only I could get him to see the light, he could not only carry Natal in the palm of his hand as undisputed leader, but could effectively frustrate the Nationalists in their march towards a republic. All this I told him. He listened carefully and at length said the proposition was a fair one and he would give me an answer in the next day of two. He was then on his way to Johannesburg and he would consult Strauss, his leader.

It will be noticed that I mentioned to Mitchell in the above interview that the Torch Commando would probably within the next few weeks form a separate political party and ask me to lead it. It was an unfortunate phrase which was afterwards used against me by Mitchell so that I became involved in a personal wrangle with him which did neither of us any good. These words uttered at this time by me were not due to any more 'behind-the-scenes' knowledge than I had acquired from my interview with Gillie Ford in mid-August 1952, for I had not been contacted by him and I knew nothing of his political plans. My words to Mitchell were simply an intelligent conjecture from events which had taken place during the past months. When Mitchell and I met on April 21st I had been approached by no one to lead any party and I knew nothing about the drawing-up of a constitution for such a party. But I had not been in Parliament for thirty years without developing a political instinct, and I accurately sensed the shape of coming events. It was to forestall these events that I appealed to Mitchell.

The facts are as I have related them. Everybody knows that Mitchell and the United Party accused, and still accuse, me of forming the Federal Party months before the public announcemet was made. I had nothing to do with the forming of the Union Federal Party which was a *fait accompli* when I was asked to lead it, and those who did form the Federal Party, Gillie Ford, Arthur Selby, Hughes Mason and many others, can vouch for what I have said. In fact, I later discovered, although I had no idea of it at the time, that the Torch leaders of Natal had, on December 19, 1952, met Strauss and United Party leaders including Mitchell in Johannesburg to plead with them to adopt the 'Natal Stand', and that Selby warned them that failure to heed the 'Natal Stand' would lead ultimately to the formation of a new party. So the United Party and Mitchell must have known as much or rather more than I did.

Mitchell came back to me on April 24th and we had a very full and frank discussion. Mitchell said, and this statement referring to the interview was subsequently published by me in the Press:

There should be no doubt about where he stood regarding a republic. He had stated that he would not go into a republic several times from the public platform. He had sworn allegiance to the Queen and that he would maintain. He was not, however, prepared to accept the 'Natal Stand'. There could be several interpretations of it. He was not prepared to do anything which would involve bloodshed. There was no possibility of getting unity in Natal over this. The business people would oppose anything which they thought might injure their business. They would fight for all they were worth to preserve the *status quo* and the profit in their balance sheets. If there was to be trouble Mitchell wanted our friends in the rest of the Union to be with us.

I told him that there did not appear to be anything different in this attitude to that adopted by Strauss which I had rejected. I could not see where it could get us. The Torch Commando would not be prepared to ally itself with the United Party under these circumstances.

Although I differed from Mitchell's views, I told him that I would do my best to ascertain whether a working basis could not still be found between Torch, of which organization I had now become a member, and the United Party, so that the formation of a new party could be avoided. I explained to him that no decisions rested with me. I was merely a 'go-between'. The decision rested with the executives of Torch, the Natal section of which was meeting the next day in Durban. Thereafter the matter would be taken on to a national level and decided by a Torch Congress in Johannesburg.

The next day I attended the meeting of Natal Torchmen in Durban and later (April 27th) wrote to Mitchell of the outcome:

I promised to let you know the result of my communication of the substance of our talks with Torch. Gerald Hammond was there and will, no doubt, give you his impressions.

I gave what I hope was an impartial summary of our discussion and emphasized that you stood by the oath of allegiance that you had taken to the Queen, that you would not go into a republic under any circumstances, and you would be found in the last ditch. I explained

that you could not accept the 'Natal Stand' unequivocally because you did not understand what it meant, since it was possible to read a number of meanings into it. But I stated that it may be possible for Torch and the United Party to find common ground which I thought was supremely necessary in order to keep Natal solid.

In view of the doubt about the meaning of the 'Natal Stand', I thought it wise after our talk, to prepare a definition. This was discussed and will go up to the joint meeting of Torch for consideration and, if agreed upon, for publication. If you are going to lead Natal unbroken you will have to agree to this 'Natal Stand', without equivocation. If you do, I think the way will be open to you. You could form a Natal group within the United Party to work with Torch in the Province, leaving the Provincial sphere entirely to Torch, while you lead Natal indisputably in Parliament. That is no disloyalty to Strauss nor the Party, though, of course, some may consider it rank treason.

There seems to me to be no other way out, since Torch, at the moment, will not have you as a leader. It would be disastrous to all English-speaking interests to split our forces, leaving Torch with the strongest appeal to the electorate in Natal.

That was the last appeal.

But Mitchell was never able to accept the 'Natal Stand'. Instead he never failed to rail at and belittle the Torch Commando and started a personal vendetta against me, using this letter to show to anybody who was interested, as evidence that I was responsible for the formation of the New Party. He missed no opportunity of traducing me publicly or behind my back. Mitchell's intransigent attitude was entirely responsible for the formation of the Federal Party. Had he used a little finesse he could have led Natal undivided; as it was events took their course.

Feeling myself at last free from all party shackles, I accepted an invitation to speak at a Pietermaritzburg Services Club luncheon forum on April 29th. I had received an invitation from the Queen to attend the Coronation, and this meeting in Pietermaritzburg took place a few days before I was due to leave.

My speech was printed as a pamphlet—a *Nunc dimittis* to politics. Its title was *A Greater South Africa*. It attempted to survey

the political position as I saw it and was fully documented by evidence from unimpeachable sources. In all the spate of criticism, either in favour or against, which followed the speech, no one disputed its accuracy. I suggested that there were only two alternatives to that of continuing the present political party struggle with all that that meant in worsened racial relations, which must end in inevitable disaster for South Africa.

The first was that, while recognizing that the Government now in power had been placed there constitutionally and democratically by the people, and, therefore, commanded our support within the law, we should endeavour to work, quite constitutionally, for some new form of federation or confederation, which would be in tune with realities, by confining our antagonisms to the separate geographical areas to which they belonged. This would enable all South Africa to achieve a common unity at the centre. Such an idea was in embryo when we sought to bring Rhodesia into the Union thirty years ago.

The second was that, if this wide federation should prove impossible of attainment and the Government continued its assaults upon the spirit or letter of the Constitution, then rather than continue marching blindly to our destruction, the original contracting parties to union should through their separate elected representatives in each of the Provinces, declare themselves for divorce from the broken contract, and allow each of the parties thereto to go their separate ways in peace and friendship. In the political peace which would follow, the resources and men of South Africa could be better utilized for the general prosperity, and in good time, more secure and permanent foundations could be laid for co-operative unity of the whole.

This speech was interpreted by the papers in its narrowest, basest and most destructive sense. It was not looked upon as a political survey at all, but as with my Empangeni speech, twenty years before, it was regarded as a racialist diatribe. Once again I was called a racialist and a jingo by the Nationalists and United Party supporters with one voice. The speech became known as the 'sordid marriage speech'.

The *Natal Mercury* of April 30th reported it under huge headlines:

. . . Nicholls in his first speech since his resignation from the United Party was publicly announced, today called for a fresh approach to South African politics and for the reconstruction of Union on the basis of federation. He gave it as his firm opinion that union, as instituted in 1910, has failed. Giving his reasons for this failure he said that the division between the two white races in South Africa was now complete and final. He then outlined in detail his conception of how the Union could be reconstructed on a federal basis with the English-speaking people maintaining their allegiance to the Crown and Commonwealth and those seeking a Republic on their own lines.

At the end of his speech he said: 'If we cannot have a reconstruction of union and we must continue to wrestle with the Nationalist campaign to dominate the English-speaking, then there is only one thing left. We must go our own separate ways in the friendliest manner possible, like sensible people who find they can no longer live together. . . . There is a sanity left in South Africa which may enable us to face the future. We can only pray that that sanity will prevail: but it will prevail only if we face the truth about our position, shed all our illusions and wishful thinking and realize that there must be an end, somehow, to an unfruitful and sordid marriage, which if continued will surely end in disaster.'

The speech certainly caused a stir, but not in the way I had hoped for.

During the first days of May I was again called upon at my home by Gillie Ford. I quote again from his letter (written in 1955) describing the interview:

I was delegated, as the provisional chairman of the proposed new party (developments of which you knew nothing whatsoever), to place before you a statement of our policy and principles. I telephoned you and called at your house. You were alone in your lounge. I handed you the final draft and asked you to read it. You did so and said to me: 'Do you want me with you in this?' I said. 'Yes. If you can be with us actively, we would consider it an honour.'

I pointed out to Ford that I was an old man. I was just laying

the political position as I saw it and was fully documented by evidence from unimpeachable sources. In all the spate of criticism, either in favour or against, which followed the speech, no one disputed its accuracy. I suggested that there were only two alternatives to that of continuing the present political party struggle with all that that meant in worsened racial relations, which must end in inevitable disaster for South Africa.

The first was that, while recognizing that the Government now in power had been placed there constitutionally and democratically by the people, and, therefore, commanded our support within the law, we should endeavour to work, quite constitutionally, for some new form of federation or confederation, which would be in tune with realities, by confining our antagonisms to the separate geographical areas to which they belonged. This would enable all South Africa to achieve a common unity at the centre. Such an idea was in embryo when we sought to bring Rhodesia into the Union thirty years ago.

The second was that, if this wide federation should prove impossible of attainment and the Government continued its assaults upon the spirit or letter of the Constitution, then rather than continue marching blindly to our destruction, the original contracting parties to union should through their separate elected representatives in each of the Provinces, declare themselves for divorce from the broken contract, and allow each of the parties thereto to go their separate ways in peace and friendship. In the political peace which would follow, the resources and men of South Africa could be better utilized for the general prosperity, and in good time, more secure and permanent foundations could be laid for co-operative unity of the whole.

This speech was interpreted by the papers in its narrowest, basest and most destructive sense. It was not looked upon as a political survey at all, but as with my Empangeni speech, twenty years before, it was regarded as a racialist diatribe. Once again I was called a racialist and a jingo by the Nationalists and United Party supporters with one voice. The speech became known as the 'sordid marriage speech'.

The *Natal Mercury* of April 30th reported it under huge headlines:

. . . Nicholls in his first speech since his resignation from the United Party was publicly announced, today called for a fresh approach to South African politics and for the reconstruction of Union on the basis of federation. He gave it as his firm opinion that union, as instituted in 1910, has failed. Giving his reasons for this failure he said that the division between the two white races in South Africa was now complete and final. He then outlined in detail his conception of how the Union could be reconstructed on a federal basis with the English-speaking people maintaining their allegiance to the Crown and Commonwealth and those seeking a Republic on their own lines.

At the end of his speech he said: 'If we cannot have a reconstruction of union and we must continue to wrestle with the Nationalist campaign to dominate the English-speaking, then there is only one thing left. We must go our own separate ways in the friendliest manner possible, like sensible people who find they can no longer live together. . . . There is a sanity left in South Africa which may enable us to face the future. We can only pray that that sanity will prevail: but it will prevail only if we face the truth about our position, shed all our illusions and wishful thinking and realize that there must be an end, somehow, to an unfruitful and sordid marriage, which if continued will surely end in disaster.'

The speech certainly caused a stir, but not in the way I had hoped for.

During the first days of May I was again called upon at my home by Gillie Ford. I quote again from his letter (written in 1955) describing the interview:

I was delegated, as the provisional chairman of the proposed new party (developments of which you knew nothing whatsoever), to place before you a statement of our policy and principles. I telephoned you and called at your house. You were alone in your lounge. I handed you the final draft and asked you to read it. You did so and said to me: 'Do you want me with you in this?' I said. 'Yes. If you can be with us actively, we would consider it an honour.'

I pointed out to Ford that I was an old man. I was just laying

down my political burden and did not want to take up another. A new party required a young man; leadership demanded much travelling and energy, besides the necessary character and knowledge. I had not got that energy. Ford explained that there were many young men behind them who would do the 'donkey work' of leadership. I need only appear on occasions; in the opinion of many people who had been busy for months drawing up this constitution, I was the only person who could lead the party at that time.

At last I asked him to leave the document with me and I would consider the question. Gillie said that a National Executive Meeting of Torch was being held in Johannesburg in three days' time. If I was passing through Johannesburg on my way to the Coronation, I could tell this meeting of my decision and they would be able to give me the final word.

After he left I studied the programme of principles in greater detail. With little alteration these could be made to fit in with the old South African Party principles. If Torch had a quarter of a million supporters, as they claimed, the position appeared to be won. If this new party had behind them as well the 45,000 Natal Covenanters, who swore to be faithful to the 'Natal Stand' on June 6th last year, then there was sufficient warrant for my remaining in the Senate to speak for them. With a sound constitution, with the firm support of so many and a guarantee of funds, everything seemed possible. I remembered Smuts after the 1948 election and decided where my duty lay. My time for rest was apparently not yet.

I left for Johannesburg on the first lap of my journey to England. Hughes Mason met me at my hotel and took me to where the Torch delegates had been holding their meeting. I told them of my decision; the necessary formalities and preliminaries were arranged and the Union Federal Party was launched over the signatories of various Torch delegates, given in their personal capacities.

The next morning, May 11, I left for London, after making known to the Press that I had become the leader of the New Party. I said in a public statement:

It cannot be gainsaid that if my survey of the political position is an accurate one—and nobody has attempted to deny it—then no thinking South African will desire that we should continue hurling South Africa to destruction by blowing on the embers of past mistakes and by turning the world against us.

I now want to give a lead. There is being published today a statement of principles of a new political party to be called the Union Federal Party. I have joined that party and endorse those principles. They are principles which have been hammered out over many months by a group of intelligent, young South Africans, who are conscious that the land of their birth contains no future for them under the warring system of party government under which we live. They consider that, after forty-three years of union, experience has demonstrated that the party system, as we know it, which was developed in homogenous countries, may not be fitted to grapple with the modern problems caused by inter-relations between different races, with different languages, creeds and cultures in different stages of evolution. They therefore desire to make their contribution towards helping South Africa to regain the spirit of hope and promise with which it began at union; and to get out of the old political party wagon-ruts in which they are stuck fast by old controversies and outworn ideas. The new party should make an appeal to all South Africans who can envisage something of the greater destiny which awaits South Africa if it can be induced to look beyond the battle for office and the vested interests of the political party machine. . . .

In my statement, I happened to ally Torch with the new party. Had I had more to do with the formation of the Union Federal Party and had I been more of a party politician, I should have seen the danger to the new party in mentioning it and Torch in the same breath, for, of course, Torch still had many United Party supporters within its ranks. Furthermore Torch was a non-party organization and the United Party seized upon the fact that the new party had been officially formed at the end of a Torch Commando meeting and that men who were office-bearers in Torch had become signatories to the constitution of a new party albeit that their signatories had been made in their personal capacities only. This was manna to the United Party; it was what

they had been waiting for. Here was a heaven-sent opportunity for causing a split in the ranks of the Torch Commando and at the same time distracting attention from the new Federal Party. They made full use of their opportunities. 'Sailor' Malan, the leader of the Torch Commando, who had assumed the proportions of a national idol amongst Torch members, resigned in protest. (He, I understand, was in the employ of Mr Harry Oppenheimer, the financier and an eminent United Party supporter.) Malan's resignation was followed by that of the ex-Governor-General, Klassie de Wet, who was president of Torch, and of General Enslin, General Brink and Dolf de la Rey, all heavyweights in Torch. They portentously declared their horror of any connection between the Torch Commando and a political party and self-righteously announced they would have nothing more to do with Torch as it was being used for the establishment of the new party; this was entirely against its principles.

It was curious that such a fuss was made over Torch being connected with the new party, and yet no objections had been made to the very close liason between Torch and the United Party during the period of the United Democratic Front, when many of the Torch Commando officials and delegates were United Party members as well. A lot of crooked thinking was done, but the United Party, aided by the Press, achieved much of their objective. The public were thoroughly confused by all the conflicting reports. The *Natal Mercury* came out on May 16th with:

> The launching of the Union Federal Party last week-end by prominent Torchmen signing in their personal capacities, and the reaction to the move by United Party leaders and sympathizers has precipitated a battle for control of the Torch Commando. It could lead to the disbanding of the Commando.

It also read into the picture the break-up of the United Democratic Front and an attempt was made to saddle the Union Federal Party with my 'sordid marriage' speech. This was quite

ridiculous. Had I known that I should be leading a new party with a new outlook a few days after I made this speech, I should naturally never have made it. The suggestion which I put forward in that speech for consideration was the possibility of a monarchy in Natal and the Eastern Province of the Cape and a republic elsewhere. That was not the policy of the Union Federal Party. Those who formulated its principles believed in federation as its constitution showed.

When I arrived for the Coronation in England I found much prominence being given in the newspapers to the political situation in South Africa. Strauss had accused me of attempting to break the Union and this was headlined in several London papers. I was harried by reporters, but I felt unable to wash our dirty linen in the public glare of the British Press.

In the meantime I was receiving letters from the Defenders of the Constitution demanding my resignation as chairman, on the grounds that it was a non-political body and that my leadership of the Federal Party was against its principles. They had not worried when I was a Senator in the United Party! Most of the committee I had chosen to form the Defenders of the Constitution were, of course, United Party supporters.

While I was in England I again took the opportunity of warning the British Government and the forthcoming Commonwealth Conference of the probability of South Africa requesting permission to become a republic. I saw many people in England and obtained many opinions about our constitutional position. Amongst them were a number of London lawyers whom I met at All Souls, Oxford, where we discussed the contractual nature of our Union bonds. They reminded me that the academic views of the Constitution had never been subjected to trial. They were merely expressions of opinion put forward to support the theories of the individual, who, because of his authoritative position, backed by learning, had his theories accepted as fact. They emphasized that we should remember that these theories had never been tried and pronounced upon by a court of law.

I did not find Britain unsympathetic towards our position in Natal, quite the contrary indeed, and what surprised and

delighted me was the favourable view the City took over our 'Natal Stand'. The only doubts which were expressed in London were whether Natal was in earnest.

I attended the Coronation in all its glitter and splendour, but I have no written record of what I saw, such as I had on the occasion of Princess Elizabeth's wedding, for my wife was not waiting for me in South Africa, anxious to know of all my doings. Early in 1952 she had died, and I was now on my own.

But the spirit abroad in London at that time impressed itself so much upon me that I did note down as a South African some of those impressions:

> This has not been the mere repetition of an ancient ritual, performed in all the glamour of a feudal and theatrical setting. For the common people of Britain it has expressed something which, while removed from their drab existence, is still part of themselves, a state to which they belong, and that brings a quickened heart-throb. It was as though the whole concept of British citizenship, in which they take so much pride, was suddenly materialized into a tangible reality, recognizable to all the five senses. It was a people's show. It belonged to them. This was the symbol of their sovereignty, and in the almost unbelievable beauty and grace and dignity of their sovereign, they found the embodiment of their own special ethos. Nowhere else could this happen.
>
> This spirit has quickened the life of Britain and was observable in all ranks of life and, though the pageantry will become a memory, something will remain of the astonishing community of spirit, which made people of all classes and faiths and beliefs doss down on the kerbstones and pathways, during a long cold night of intermittent rain, to cheer themselves hoarse for hours on end during the day, and yet, withal, to take part in the solemn prayer as they followed the radio service in the Abbey.
>
> The significance of the dedication to service by the head of the British Commonwealth, who reigns, but does not govern, was symbolic of the stability and strength and majesty of the democratic Commonwealth. The crowning of a single person as a separate Queen of so many far-flung states was a reminder of the diversity in unity of the British Commonwealth. Even Malan recognized this in his broadcast after the Coronation. . . . It certainly seemed as though

a new era had been established and a modern Elizabethan ideology of service could take the place of the confused, self-seeking struggles which destroy our good will and enterprise. I prayed that that might be so in South Africa.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CLOSE OF A CAREER

(1953–1957)

ON returning to Natal I found much to disturb me. It seemed that South Africa was going to persist in being discriminatory and isolationist. I found Torch disintegrating; it has never since revived. It had served its purpose as the tool of the United Party and was killed by their propaganda.

The Defenders of the Constitution held a meeting soon after my return and asked me to resign, which I did, although I pointed out to the Action Committee that according to the mandate given personally to me by the mass meeting of Pietermaritzburg citizens, if there was any impeaching to be done on the way I had carried out their instructions, it was the citizens who should be the tribunal and not the individuals who had been appointed by me to assist me in my task of executing the mandate.

Immediately I resigned, the Action Committee set about choosing another chairman, but I again drew the Committee's attention to the fact that they were all there because I had selected them on the instructions of a personal mandate. It was hardly honest or honourable of them to accept nomination from me, and then throw me out as chairman, only to elect themselves to power. No chairman was ever elected and the movement has now become defunct.

But the most disturbing thing was to find that the Minister for Economic Affairs, Eric Louw, had been in Durban and issued a warning to Natal's industrialists, saying that they could not expect any assistance from him unless they 'marked time' over political developments in the Province. As reported in the *Natal Mercury* of June 15, 1953, Louw said:

> As a result of political developments—the 'Nicholls Movement'—in Natal the Union's credit facilities had been harmed overseas. For that reason the Provinces' industrialists should follow a policy of caution in respect of present and future political developments. I do not see my way to make any facilities available to Natal as far as my Department's loan moneys are concerned unless I know exactly where I stand with the Province. I will also be compelled to do the same in respect of import quotas of industries which want to establish themselves in Natal.

To me this was the most blatant example of the future treatment any nonconformists might expect to receive from the Nationalist Party and if ever there was reason to fight against this dictation, it was surely now. But Louw's warning had its desired effect, for Natal's industrialists and commercial kings seemed paralysed with fear. But that was not all, on June 25th the *Mercury* reported under headlines:

> Plans for a £2,000,000 factory near Durban have been shelved as a result of the recent threats made by the Minister of Economic Affairs, to discriminate against Natal commerce and industry because of political developments in the Province. The British principals have indicated that they were waiting elucidation of the Minister's attitude before making any further move.

These statements effectively sent many prospective Federal Party converts scuttling back into their United Party shells.

We did our best to counteract the effect. It was hard going. In a letter to the Press I said:

> Let me assure Mr Louw that his appraisal of the Natal Federal Party is not, as he supposes, a 'Nicholls Movement'. It is a call of young South Africans—not confined to Natal—who have at last awakened to the fact that the old South African Party-Nationalist Party monopoly can offer no guidance to the future. It must be destroyed, if South Africa is to live. He will be up against the principles of the Union Federal Party long after Nicholls has passed on his way, bequeathed to it by South Africa's greatest of sons——General Smuts.

The immediate objective of the Federal Party was to fight the Provincial elections due to take place in August 1954. We decided to nominate candidates in all safe United Party seats where no Nationalist candidate was standing, thus avoiding any split voting in the anti-Nationalist front.

In the interim, a by-election occurred in the Berea constituency of Durban. Mitchell took this opportunity of reviving old feuds and on July 11, 1953, in a speech addressed to an inaugural session of the Junior United Party Congress in Durban, he devoted much of his time to an attack on the Federal Party and, in the course of his speech, challenged me to resign my seat in the Senate and fight the United Party candidate in the vacant Berea seat. My immediate rejoinder was that if Mitchell was prepared to resign his seat in the House of Assembly I would resign mine in the Senate and fight him at the election. But Mitchell told us that he was indispensable and that his presence in Parliament in the present 'delicate constitutional and political situation' was vitally needed. He side-stepped my challenge and the whole affair, which in the initial stages the newspapers had headlined, died down to some rather smutty ashes. One paper summed it up by saying:

> All in all, Mitchell fares badly, for by sticking out his neck he has severely damaged his political reputation.

Had there been no by-election I would have ignored his challenge, but I realized that this action would immediately have been used against me and the Federal Party. Politics being what they are, Mitchell's challenge therefore could not be entirely ignored and the Union Federal Party nominated a candidate for the Berea by-election, Colonel A. C. Martin, a retired headmaster of the Durban High School, who was giving the days of his retirement to an attempt to ensure that unbiased history was taught to the children of Natal.

Meanwhile I was much concerned with Louw's allegations against the Federal Party and was trying to undo some of the damage he had done. What was so grossly unfair was that he was using the new Party as a scapegoat for the Nationalist Party. The

diminished flow of capital to South Africa was, of course, a direct result of the lack of confidence the actions of the Nationalist Party had created. On July 22 Louw and I clashed in the Senate when he replied to a series of questions tabled by me, through which I sought proof of the allegations that the 'Nicholls Movement' had been responsible for the loss of millions of dollars to South Africa. Louw refused to lay on the table of the House the evidence which led him to his conclusions. He said the information was confidential!

A few days after this exchange an open letter to Louw appeared in the local Press, signed 'Durban Citizen':

> I suppose capital for South Africa must have dried up completely now that that dreadful person Nicholls has not only dared to ask you questions, but has the audacity to table a debate in the Senate on the principles of Federalism. What a sinister influence he exerts on world movements. His slightest breath seems to sway nations. One would suppose that it would be a good thing to make him dictator of South Africa. We could then do as we liked with the outside world, could we not?
>
> PS. By the way, you were certainly very wise not to supply him with the evidence he asked for, if you had none.

If so much irreparable damage had not been done by Louw's threats, one could have been amused by his obvious tactics. But there were many who were overawed by his blackmail and the Federal Party candidate for the Berea by-election was defeated.

The defeat was undoubtedly a blow, but the Party was only three months old when it was called upon to fight its first election. It had no funds and no well-organized party machine behind it, as had the great party we were fighting. However we remembered the forty-five thousand meeting of June 6, 1952 and we were determined to put everything we had into the Provincial Council elections the following September. But although their young men and women did not spare themselves, the Federal Party was defeated at the polls and did not manage to win a single seat. I realized that the forty-five thousand who pledged themselves at

the mass meeting had not remained true to their promise and that I was no longer justified in keeping my seat in the Senate. I wrote out my resignation at once. Our gallant team of supporters and workers and many members of the Party felt that I should not have resigned my seat, and that I was letting down those who voted for us, but I argued that when the Union Federal Party was formed, I believed its chief instrument for the protection of the Constitution, namely the 'Natal Stand,' was not only the accepted policy of the War Veterans Torch Commando, but that it was also supported by the bulk of the electorate of Natal. It was this which justified me in remaining in the Senate when I had resigned from the United Party. I had become leader of the Union Federal Party because I sincerely believed I could represent, in the Senate, the voice of Natal expressed under solemn oath, administered by myself, at the Torch meeting of the United Front in Durban. We went to the election on that 'Natal Stand'. We were defeated. The votes we received were not half of those forty-five thousand. Under the circumstances I had to accept this vote as a lack of confidence in my leadership; there was nothing left for me to do but to resign my senatorship.

Nevertheless an analysis of the election results gave me hope, for, although it would have been unrealistic to minimize the setback to the Party's aspirations, it would have been equally unrealistic to ignore the facts which emerged from them. In seventeen constituencies, which for many years had been the scene of unopposed returns in favour of the United Party, out of a possible sixty-three thousand anti-Nationalist voters, the Union Federal Party, of only one year's standing, had achieved the support of twenty thousand voters, or one third of the anti-Nationalist feeling in Natal. Furthermore, the support was not confined to any one locality or region. To me these facts formed the basis for a general advance and gave the Party a mandate to continue the maintenance of its principles. After the first disappointment and shock the Executive Committee decided to continue the fight with renewed vigour.

My eightieth year came and went and my health was as good as ever, but early in 1957 I again suffered a heart attack. The

doctors said that I was to drop all work, and so, at the Federal Party Congress in October 1957 I closed the door on my political life forever and resigned from my position as leader. I could not have done this without knowing that I was handing over to a grand 'Captain of the Bridge', Arthur Selby, who was at the birth of the Party and had a deep understanding of our problems. He is a trained leader of men and his sincerity and truthfulness are precisely the qualities that South Africa today needs in a leader. In entrusting the helm to him I knew that the Party had someone who has not spent himself in chasing emotions, but one who has made a study of African affairs and will give good guidance to the Party in the great mission it has set itself.

At the time of my resignation, emotions in South Africa were working up for yet another General Election. A young and popular South African, de Villiers Graaf, had come to the helm of affairs in the United Party. I was anxious to put no obstacle in the way of its success. The United Party believed that it could win this election and that any seat won in Natal by a Federal candidate, would, in some way be inimical to the cause for which we were both professedly standing. I therefore suggested to the Federal Party, in my last speech to them, that we should stand aside from the 1958 General Election and give the United Party a clear run, reserving our efforts for the following Provincial elections in 1959.

But in spite of a united front and a complete absence of any splinter parties to shatter the anti-Nationalist vote, the Nationalist Party came back to power with an increased majority. I predict that the Union Party with its present policies will never unseat the Nationalists.

I believe, as I have always believed, that the maintenance of the British way of life, its traditions and all it stands for, on an equal footing with Afrikaans culture, the end of racialism between the two white races and the solution of our non-European problems, lies in the adoption of a federal system of government, where there will be unity in diversity. Divided our white civilization will perish. Africa is awakening from the sleep of ages and our sands are running out.

doctors said that I was to drop all work, and so, at the Federal Party Congress in October 1957 I closed the door on my political life forever and resigned from my position as leader. I could not have done this without knowing that I was handing over to a grand 'Captain of the Bridge', Arthur Selby, who was at the birth of the Party and had a deep understanding of our problems. He is a trained leader of men and his sincerity and truthfulness are precisely the qualities that South Africa today needs in a leader. In entrusting the helm to him I knew that the Party had someone who has not spent himself in chasing emotions, but one who has made a study of African affairs and will give good guidance to the Party in the great mission it has set itself.

At the time of my resignation, emotions in South Africa were working up for yet another General Election. A young and popular South African, de Villiers Graaf, had come to the helm of affairs in the United Party. I was anxious to put no obstacle in the way of its success. The United Party believed that it could win this election and that any seat won in Natal by a Federal candidate, would, in some way be inimical to the cause for which we were both professedly standing. I therefore suggested to the Federal Party, in my last speech to them, that we should stand aside from the 1958 General Election and give the United Party a clear run, reserving our efforts for the following Provincial elections in 1959.

But in spite of a united front and a complete absence of any splinter parties to shatter the anti-Nationalist vote, the Nationalist Party came back to power with an increased majority. I predict that the Union Party with its present policies will never unseat the Nationalists.

I believe, as I have always believed, that the maintenance of the British way of life, its traditions and all it stands for, on an equal footing with Afrikaans culture, the end of racialism between the two white races and the solution of our non-European problems, lies in the adoption of a federal system of government, where there will be unity in diversity. Divided our white civilization will perish. Africa is awakening from the sleep of ages and our sands are running out.

EPILOGUE

A ROAD TO THE FUTURE?

LOOKING back over eighty-three years of life there is much to regret and much to be thankful for, both in the private and public spheres of human endeavour. There have been moments of high hope in South Africa, such as union in 1910 and during fusion, when it looked as if the path of South Africa would be in fair weather.

Today, the clouds are banked heavily for storm. The heavens have opened in violence and unrest in the north of the continent. Only in the south is there, for the moment, peace. It is perhaps the quietness before our storm. Many men's hearts are failing them for fear, but the majority prefer to drift along amid the comforts which the busy circumstances of life provide, in the hope, so common on South African lips, that *alles sal reg kom.*

Nothing will come right in South Africa or in any other part of the world unless men apply to any situation the highest facilities of their mind and genius. If the white man is to continue to play a part in the future of Africa, if the black man is to find the noblest fulfilment of his destiny, then it is essential that those who are capable of leadership in thought and action should be busy men indeed, striving to work out a high policy that will ensure a constructive peace for the African continent.

There are many voices raised about Africa that fall upon our ears. The Liberal-Socialists cry aloud for universal suffrage as soon as may be, proclaiming it the panacea for all our woes. The supporters of *Apartheid* stand for a strong rigid control of the African people, forced into the ghettoes of Bantustan from which they will emerge at the convenience of the white master class. To one whose life has been so greatly involved with relationships between black and white, both these extremes of thought seem to

lead, more quickly than many deem possible, to destruction.

From Rhodesia in recent years have come voices which alone seem to promise a good future for Central and Southern Africa. Lord Malvern advanced men's thoughts from trusteeship to partnership, acknowledging thereby that the black heir might fairly expect, one day, to become really of age and enter into his heritage. Now Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Rhodesian Federation, has projected an idea which may prove to be happily explosive in its results, knocking down, through the power of its hope, the walls of fear that white men and black are each building round the racial positions for which they tremble. In a most sapient remark on the African future, he declared:

> In time there may emerge a line of demarcation across the breadth of Africa. North of that line the concept of a multi-racial society will not predominate, but south of it, this concept will be the rule rather than the exception.

Looking at Africa from Broken Hill, which is his constituency, Welensky sees our development in more realistic outlines than if he were a politician in the Union. He is closer than we are to that line of demarcation that he speaks of. No intelligent person in South Africa who is acquainted with the political movements in the north, can have any doubt that they are becoming more menacing every day. Our sixty years of playing with the relationships between black and white have not given us any light, largely because we have thought of Africa in terms of the past. We are full of outworn ideology, but Northern Africa is developing new ideas with which we are not in touch.

My suggestion, therefore, is that we should not follow the current thinking in the Union, whether it is the *Apartheid-Baaskaap* of the Nationalists, or the unknown policy of the United Party. It is that we should enlarge our circle of thought, call in fresh heads to the conference table and create a great United South Africa Federation, in which the white and black can fully play their parts, as opposed to the black Nationalism of the north.

I suggest that the Union should consider calling a conference of the states resident in Southern Africa, not merely with the metropolitan powers who govern their colonies on socialistic or capitalistic lines. Their concept of the millions of Africa working towards a Parliamentary system which was becoming decadent before the natives had ever heard of Parliament, is not what is wanted. Colonialism is reaching the end of its corridors, and even parliamentary Europe, in its fight with the Soviet bloc, will have to do a little fresh thinking. We require the ideas of countries that have a real African outlook on the sociological facts as they exist. While not neglecting the spiritual aspirations of all men, what is needed is more Darwin and less Burke, more economics and less politics, more of the material things of life and less of the heady wines of socialism.

Discussion between the Union, the Rhodesian Federation, Portuguese East and West, the Belgian Congo, Tanganyika, Kenya and the French Congo would give us a Southern and Central African policy in opposition to a United Black African policy which is now emerging.

First consideration should be given to the boundary between black and multi-racial people. That line of demarcation can be drawn today, but if left for another ten years it will be quite impossible. Time is the biggest factor now in achieving any real aim in African affairs.

I visualize the rise of federal states which can delegate to a centre the defence of their federal sovereignties. Among these there will be black states as well as white, some of which will obviously require 'trusteeship' treatment, and others which will be sufficiently advanced to justify more independence in government, until ultimately they achieve federal autonomy. The boundaries of these states would have to be determined by discussion and consultation, for, as colonialism is today outmoded, so are the old boundaries. It is time for a new start.

The world has built up recognized organizations such as NATO, SEATO and others, and, following on the same lines under the example of the United Nations, we now require in Southern Africa, protection not against our neighbour's arms, but against

the modern conception of 'one vote, one value' where the vote of the idiot is as powerful as that of the professor, a conception which in a multi-racial country inevitably leads to dictatorship by the largest racial group. We should consider the rejection of the system based upon *universal* suffrage as being inapplicable to the conditions of Africa, and abolish once and for all that most vigorous enemy of true democracy, the appeal to emotions. Democracy based only upon universal suffrage does not meet the inescapable facts of Africa, which, in its way, is as different from Europe as is the Orient.

This is something new in our South African thinking, something on which our intellectuals can get to work, instead of trying to fit all human beings into our South African Procrustean bed. If such a discussion could be brought about Southern Africa might gain the power to hold its own. Otherwise we are faced either with a second Brazil or a police state of short duration, followed by bloodshed and the eventual overthrow of European influence. An African Confederacy of South and Central states would enable us to promote social progress and better standards of life for all concerned in larger freedoms of peace and harmony for generations to come.

INDEX

Abrahamson, MP (SAP), 213, 233
Abyssinian crisis, 343
Adams (missionary), 282
Adams, Charles, 150
Addison, Dr Christopher (later Lord), 382, 384, 387
Aden, 33
African campaign, North, 355
'African Monroe doctrine', 279
Afrikaans, birth of, 118
Afridis, 39
Agadir crisis, 79
Allen, A. V. (Chairman, Agricultural Union), 238, 240
Amatonga (African tribe), 146, 148
Amery, John, 389
Amery, L. H., 182, 197, 335
Andaman Islands, 33
Anderson, A. C. (Rhodesian commissioner), 53, 54, 56 *sq.*, 61, 70
Anderson, A. M. (gold mining representative at Ottawa), 238, 240
Anderson (Zululand sugar planter), 111, 233
Angola, 47
apartheid, 283, 292, 437, 478, 479
Aribi river (New Guinea), 74
Arnhem, 413
Asiatic Land Tenants Act, 318, 324
Athenia, sinking of the, 344
Athlone, Earl of (Governor-General), 154, 155, 182
Athlone, Countess of (Princess Alice), 156, 157
Attlee, Lord, 376, 388 *sq.*, 390, 392
Australia: policy at Ottawa, 242; and Indian colonization, 294, 310, 310 *sq.*; at UNO, 323, 410; 383, 386
Aurelius, Marcus, quoted by Smuts, 190, 276

Babanango (Zululand), 139, 150, 151, 158
Baden Powell, Lt. Col. (later Lord), 38
Bagshaw (Natal Provincial councillor), 328
Baila (tribe), 51
Bajpar, G. S. (Indian delegate to Cape Town conference), 303
Balamba (tribe), 56, 61, 62
Balfour, A. J., 195, 197
Ballinger (Labour organizer), 173
Baluba (tribe), 53, 55 *sq.*, 65
Bankoya (tribe), 53, 68
Bambata rebellion, 155
Bandwela (Ceylon), 424
Baring (later Sir, and Governor of Kenya), Evelyn, 303, 306
Barnwell (Zululand railwayman), 94
Barotse (tribe), 44 *sq.*, 47, 50, 55, 59, 65
Barotse Constabulary, 43, 46, 48, 55
Basala (tribe), 64, 65
Basutos and Basutoland, 47, 327
Batoka (tribe), 49, 50, 66
Barry, Capt. Hart (BSAP), 48, 50
Bechuanaland, 46, 47
Beira, 68
Beli Luloya (Ceylon), 423
Berea (Durban), 92, 112, 474, 475
Berlin, 411
Bevin, Ernest, 387 *sq.*
Beyers (Nat.), 131
Birmingham, 25 29
'Black Manifesto', the, 283
Blamey, Col. (secretary SAP), 203, 223, 225, 237
Blew, T. H. (Dominion party), 365
Boer War, 40, 128, 192, 194, 253, 280, 388, 429
Bolt, Capt., 418
Bombay, 33, 419
Borlase, Maj., MP (SAP), 213, 223, 224, 233, 234
Borneo, 311, 312
Boschetto college, 356
Bowden (New Guinea administrator), 75
Boydell, Thomas, MP (Labour party), 110, 124
Botha, C. L., 193, 457
Botha, Louis, 117 *sq.*, 126, 134, 135, 138, 161, 162, 197, 298, 338, 351
Bracken, Brendan, 371
Bramage (Zululand suger planter), 111
Bramage's Hotel (Zululand), 97, 106
Braun, Eva, 411
Brazil, 306, 458
Brickhill (UP), 456
Brink, Gen. (of Torch), 468
Brisbane, 71

British Guiana, 295, 302
British South African Police (BSAP), 48, 49
Broederbond, the, 355, 430, 431, 451
Broken Hill, 66
Browne, E. (Labour party), 440
Bruce, Stanley (later Viscount Bruce), Australian High Commissioner in London, 382
Bulawayo, 44, 46, 68
Buna bay (New Guinea), 78, 82, 83
Burma, 33 *sq.*
Burton, MP (SAP), 134, 137
Buxton, Lord (Governor-General), 122

Cairo, 369, 418, 419, 426
Calcutta, 41
Cambridge, Lady May, 154, 157
Candova (Natal), 148
Candover Cotton Estates, 148
Canada: policy at Ottawa, 332, 386 *sq.*, 410
Canning Creek (Queensland), 72
Cape franchise, 278 *sq.*, 282, 286 *sq.*
Cape Town, 42, 46, 121, 122, 170, 237, 238, 305
Cape Town Agreement, the, 300 *sq.*, 321
Carden, Maj. (BSAP), 41, 66, 68
Carnarvon, Lord, 280
Caroline Islands, 312
Ceres (Cape Province), Dr Malan's speech at, 178
Ceylon, 41, 417 *sq.*
Chaka (Zulu king), 46, 47
Chakarata (India), 38
Chalmers, Rev. James (New Guinea missionary), 373
Chamberlain, Neville, 335, 337, 350, 353
Chanak incident, 147
Chaneni battle, Botha on, 149
Chatterjee, Sir Atul, 313
Chesterfield (England), 27
Chila (African language), 53
Chindwin river (Burma), 37
Chinenga (Rhodesia), 53, 62
Chinnery (New Guinea patrol officer), 78
Churchill, Mary (now Mrs Christopher Soames), 374
Churchill, Sir Winston, 197, 336, 370 *sq.*, 380, 387, 388, 392 *sq.*, 419, 436
Churchill, Lady, 373
Clarendon, Lady, 373
Clark, MP (United Party), 432
Clarkson, Charles (SAP), 202, 214, 216, 217, 225, 259, 270 *sq.*, 276, 337, 352
Clayton (SAP), 120
Close, R. W., KC (ambassador to Washington), 326
Colesberg (Cape Province) by-election at, 228, 245
Collins (SAP Whip), 175, 289, 339, 340
Collins, Churton (chairman *Natal Mercury*), 458
Colombo, 419, 424
Combly, Sister, 76
Commonwealth Conferences, 434, 435
Congo, 55, 279
Conroy (SAP), 276, 432
Coryndon (Rhodesian administrator), 49
Courtney (Rhodesian commissioner), 68
Cowley, Sir Alfred, 83, 84, 87, 91
Cranborne, Lord (later Marquis of Salisbury), 369, 382, 394, 459
Cranwell, 356
Cree (Zululand sugar planter), 105
Creswell, Col. F. H. P. (Labour leader), 115, 124, 125, 127, 136, 163, 167, 170, 172
Crowe, Matt (New Guinea prospector), 73, 74
Cunnamulla (Queensland), 71, 72
Cunningham (adviser at Ottawa), 238
Czechoslovakia, 335, 350

Dalton, Hugh, 414
Dalton (Rhodesian police officer), 56, 57
Daniels, Brig. John, 410
Dargai, battle of, 20
Darjeeling, 41
Daru Islands (New Guinea), 374
D'Aubrey (Zululand sugar planter), 105
Davidson (Zululand sugar planter), 105
Defenders of the Constitution, 441, 444, 447, 455, 457, 460, 469, 472
Delagoa Bay, 147, 148
Delhi, 305
Delville Wood, 142
Dent (Zululand sugar planter), 111
Derby (England), 27
Devonport (England), 32
Devolution League, 203, 208 *sq.*, 222 *sq.*, 247
De Wildt, Hertzog's speech at, 255, 260, 261
Diamond Board, the, 415
Diatalawaya (Ceylon), 42, 424
Dickens, Charles, 36
Die Stem van Zuid Afrika, 330, 334

Dingaan (Zulu king), 150, 158; Dingaan's Day, 151; Dingaan's Kraal, 150, 158
Dinizulu (Zulu chief), 149
Dodoma (Tanganyika), 424
Dominion Party, 276, 330, 344
Doncaster (England), 24
Dube, Rev. J. (Zulu leader), 283
Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the, 30, 42, 43
Dulanty (Eire High Commissioner, London), 190
Dumas, Alexandre, 36
Dumbarton Oaks conference, 384, 394
Dumdum (India), 41
Duncan (Zululand sugar planter), 105
Duncan, Patrick (SAP; later Governor-General), 126, 137, 179 *sq.*, 189, 337, 338, 345
Durban, 42, 91, 166, 186, 227, 228, 238, 247, 315, 417, 424, 448, 462

Eaton (SAP), 233
East Indian archipelago, 311 *sq.*
East London (Cape Province), 228
Eden (later Sir) Anthony, 376
Edward VII, King; coronation of, 43
Edward VIII, King; visits South Africa as Prince of Wales, 158, 159, 423
Edwards, R. W. (Natal sugar miller), 102, 238, 240, 245
Egeland, Leif, MP (United Party; later High Commissioner, London), 356
Eisenhower, General, 375, 388
elephant procession (Perahera) in Ceylon, 42, 423
Elibank, Lord, 378
Elizabeth II, Queen; marriage, 391, 459; coronation, 463, 470
Empangeni (Natal), 94, 145; author's speech at, 252 *sq.*, 270
Enslin, General (of Torch), 468
Eshowe (Natal), 158
Esselin (organizing secretary SAP), 266
Essendon (England), 377, 408
Essendon, Lady, 377
Estcourt (Natal), 218, 219
Evatt, H. V. (Australian delegate, UNO), 383, 400

Fagan (Nat.), 346
Fahey (Labour party), 103, 104
Fannin, Dennis, QC, 442
federalism, 205, 218, 220, 227 *sq.*, 234, 247 *sq.*, 256
Federal Party, 466, 468, 469, 473 *sq.*
Feetham, Roy, QC, 442
Findlater, Piper, 40
Finnay (Zululand magistrate), 158
Fitzwilliam, Earl, 24
flag controversy, 170 *sq.*; Flag Bill, 276
Fletcher, Aubrey, 426
Fly river (New Guinea), 373
Ford, Gillie (Federal Party), 450, 455 *sq.*, 461, 465, 466
Fort Blair (Andaman Islands), 33
Fort Dufferin (Mandalay), 44
Fort Hare university, 381
Fort William (Madras), 33
Fourie (Nat.), 239
Fourie, Japie, 129
Fouriesmith, Smuts' speech at, 248
Fowler, Capt. (Native Constabulary Rhodesia), 64 *sq.*
Fowler (Zululand sugar planter), 111
France, 335
Fraser, Peter (New Zealand Prime Minister), 399
Frazer (Ceylon tea-planter), 423
fusion, 273 *sq.*

Gandhi, 298, 304, 423
Gaulle, General de, 388
George V, King; as Duke of York visits Ceylon, 41, 422; jubilee, 310
George VI, King, 370
George II, King of Greece, 372, 373
Germans in New Guinea, 76, 311
Gibb, R. F. (chairman, Union Castle), 245
Gilson, MP (United Party), 350
Gira river (New Guinea), 84
Glen Grey Act, 278
Gloucester, Duke of, in Ceylon, 420 *sq.*
God Save the King, 118, 331 *sq.*, 449
Goering, Herman, 412
gold loan agreement, 414
gold standard, South Africa and the, 262 *sq.*
Gordon Highlanders, the, at Dargai, 40
Graaf, Sir P. de Villiers (United Party), 437, 477
Greece, 323, 371, 393, 424, 426
Greeks in Tanganyika, 418
Gregson's (Army cafe, Burma)
Grenadier Guards, the, 32
Griquas and Griqualand, 46

Grobler, Commandant (SAP), 110, 126
Grobelar, Piet (Nat.), 139, 239, 253, 327, 330
Gromyko, Andrei, 405
Groote Schuur, 137, 138, 334, 337, 353
Gubbins, Senator, 133
Gwai river (Rhodesia), 44

Hamilton (Ontario), 242
Hammond, Gerald, 456, 462
Hardiman, Col., 328
Harding, Colin (BSAP), 43 *sq.*, 46, 48, 49
Harris (Zululand farmer), 150
Havenga (Nat.), 104, 190, 199, 200, 238 *sq.*, 252, 266, 289, 338, 344, 345, 353
Hawthorn, Roy (former Chief Justice, Natal), 109, 442
Henderson, R. N. (SAP), 123, 124
Herbert, Sydney (Zululand sugar planter), 105, 108
Hereeniging movement, 129 *sq.*, 135, 136
Hertzog, General J. B. M., dropped from Botha cabinet, 115; leader of Nationalists (later the Nationalist party) 117; policy of Afrikanerdom, 120 *sq.*, 129, 132, 190, 194; the de Wildt speech, 133, 258, 260 *sq.*, becomes leader of official opposition, 136; pact with Labour party, 163; becomes Prime Minister, 164; on language issue, 168, 253; on flag issue, 184 *sq.*; at 1926 Imperial Conference, 194 *sq.*, and gold standard, 262; rejects a national government, 267; coalition with Smuts (fusion), 268 *sq.*; and native policy, 281 *sq.*, 292, 327, 330; and Indian problem, 300, 310, 312; and National Anthem, 330 *sq.*, loses neutrality vote, 337 *sq.*, death, 346; character and anecdotes of, 136, 151, 192, 193, 346, 353
Higgerty (United Party Whip), 350, 445, 452, 453
High Court of Parliament Act, 445
Hill (Zululand sugar planter), 111
Himalayas, 38
Hitler, Adolf, 334, 349, 411
Hluhluwe (Zululand), 141, 146
Hobart (Tasmania), 89
Hofmeyr, Jan (United Party), 252, 266, 268, 275, 285, 289, 306, 309, 366, 389
Hollander, Dr (SAP), 217
Hollander Memorandum, the, 249 *sq.*, 256
Holloway (gold standard expert), 239, 342
Hoskin, H. (Natal provincial councillor), 365
Hounslow Barracks, London, 24
Howard, Sir John (Chief Justice, Ceylon), 419
Hoy, Sir William (railways chief), 146, 152
Hull (SAP), 133
Hussein, Fazlin (Indian delegate to Cape Town conference), 303
Hitchins, Capt. F., 69
Hitchins, Mrs F., 69, 91
Hitchins, Ruby (Mrs Heaton Nicholls; *q.v.*), 69
Hitchins, Senator H. C., 92, 108
Hitchins, Lewis, 92
Hitchins, Vivian, 92, 93, 97

Ila language, 53
Illingworth, E. L. (Zululand sugar planter), 105, 111
immigrants, post-war British, to S. Africa, 407, 408
Imperial Conference (1926), 167, 194, 196, 198, 237, 341
Imperial Conference (1945), 384, 394, 395
Imperial Conference (1947), 410
Indentured labour, 295 *sq.*
India; government policy at Ottawa, 242; on treatment of S. African Indians, 297 *sq.*; at UNO, 404
Indians in S. Africa, 140, 144, 294 *sq.*, 404
Indian colonization enquiry, 307; author's memorandum on, 310 *sq.*
Indian National Congress, 351
Ingwavama (Natal), 146
industries, question of British heavy, to remove to Dominions, 410
Inniskillings, the (6th Dragoon Guards), 94
Isandhlwana, 333
Ismail, Sir Mirza, 420
Italy, the campaign in, 355
Ioma (New Guinea), 76, 78 *sq.*, 83, 89
Irrawaddy river, 37
Irene, Smuts farm at, 485

Jagger, MP (SAP), 102, 137
Jansen, MP (Nat.), 155, 188, 284, 303
Japan and East Indies, 310 *sq.*
Java, 310
Jerusalem, 426
Jinnah, 420
Johannesburg, 417, 435, 462, 466
Johnson (Zululand sugar planter), 111

Jooste (Representative in Cairo), 418
Jordan, W. M. (New Zealand High Commissioner, London), 382, 383

Kadali, Clement (native leader), 94, 173
Kafue river (Rhodesia), 49 *sq.*, 55, 61, 63, 65
Kaiengu (Rhodesian chief), 57 *sq.*
Kalomo (Rhodesia), 48, 49, 51, 56, 66, 68
Kandy (Ceylon), 42, 420 *sq.*
Kane-Berman (chairman of Torch), 443
Karachi, 419, 421, 424
Karofsky, Louis (Labour Party), 165
Kasungubu (Rhodesia), 48
Kearsney (Zululand), 139
Kemp (Nat.), 253, 255, 332
Kenya, 279
Khartoum, 418, 424
Khyber Pass, 39
Kincaid, P. F. (Commissioner for Immigration), 307
King, Col., 418
King, W. Mackenzie (Canadian Prime Minister), 390, 392, 410
Kitchener, Lord, 94
Klink (German magistrate in New Guinea), 80
Kneller Hall, 37
Kokoda (New Guinea), 78
Komdubu (New Guinea), 91
Kosi bay (Natal), 146, 147
Krige, Joel (SAP: the Speaker), 118, 124, 179, 289
Kruger, President, 160, 195, 199, 280
Kukukukus (New Guinea tribe), 73, 74, 89
Kuruman, Moffat mission at, 46

Labour Party of South Africa, 103, 115, 124 *sq.*, 180, 444
Lachine (Canada), 244
Lakekamu (New Guinea), 73, 75, 78, 82, 88, 423
Land Board, the, 104
Langenhoven, Senator (Nat.), 93, 131, 289
language issue, 167, 168, 253 *sq.*
Lawrence, Lord Justice, 412
Lealui (Rhodesia), 49, 65, 67
Lester (Zululand sugar planter), 111
Leuchars, Sir George (SAP), 133
Lewanika (Barotse chief), 43 *sq.*, 59, 64 *sq.*
Limpopo river, 162
Lindley (missionary), 282
Lindsay, Darcy (Indian delegate to Cape Town Conference), 303
Linlithgow, Lord (Viceroy of India), 309
Liverpool, 28, 71
Livingstone, David, 44, 47, 48, 400
Lloyd, Nurse, 88, 89
Lockhart, Gen. Sir William, 40
Long, B. K., MP (SAP; editor of the *Cape Times*), 239, 340 *sq.*
Louw, Eric (Nat.), 471 *sq.*
Lucknow, 41
Lukin, General, 142
Lyons (New Guinea magistrate), 75
Lydda (Palestine), 424

Macaulay, 36
Machtig, Sir Eric (Dominions Office), 382, 384
Mackenzie (newspaper proprietor), 265
Mackeurton, Graham, KC, 103, 109, 210, 217, 222 *sq.*, 235
Mackintosh, Sir William (SAP), 180
Madeley (Nat.), 338
Mafutang (Basutoland), 329
Maidan (Calcutta), 41
Mala (Rhodesia), 51
Malan, F. S. (SAP), 138, 240, 285, 289, 303
Malan, Dr D. F. (Nat.; later Prime Minister), 178 *sq.*, 185 *sq.*, 245, 255, 273 *sq.*, 283, 291, 300 *sq.*, 306, 331, 337 *sq.*, 431 *sq.*, 437, 459, 460
Malan, Group Capt. 'Sailor' (Torch), 443, 468
Malaya, 311
Malta, 33
Malvern, Lord, 479
Mambare river and district (New Guinea), 76, 77, 85, 89
Managa (Basala chief), 65
Mantalisi (Tswana chieftainness), 46
Manuilski, D. (Ukrainian delegate UNO), 402
Maputa river and Maputaland, 146 *sq.*
Marais (adviser at Ottawa), 240
Martin (adviser at Ottawa), 239
Marwick, Sydney, MP (SAP), 142, 180, 213, 216, 233, 234, 252, 274, 276
Maseru (Basutoland), 327
Mason, R. H. (secretary, Defenders of the Constitution), 442, 456, 461, 466
Massey, Vincent (Canadian High Commissioner, London), 382, 383

Mashukulumbwe (tribe), 49 *sq.*, 53, 56 *sq.*, 65, 66
Matabele (tribe), 50, 54, 56
Mathias, Col., of the Gordons, 40
Mauritius, 295
Maxwell (St Lucia Sugar Coy.), 104
Meerut, 38, 94
Melmoth (Zululand), 139, 152
Mentz, Col. (Nat.), 105, 108
Menzies, R. G. (later Australian Prime Minister), 313
Merriman, John X. (pre-union Cape Premier), 123
Meyer (of Board of Trade), 103
Meyer, Lucas, 149
Meyer, Piet (Natal farmer), 121, 122
Mhlabatini (Zululand), 149
Mincuga (Mashukulumbwe chief), 50, 66
Mitchell, Douglas (United Party), 317, 318, 365, 445 *sq.*, 458, 460 *sq.*, 474
Mkusi river and district (Natal), 146, 149, 157
Mkuzi (New Guinea), 14 9
Modselewski (Polish delegate UNO), 396
Moffat (Rhodesian Premier), 239
Moffat, Robert (missionary), 46, 47
Molotov, V., 404, 405
Molteno (pre-Union Cape Premier), 280
Molyneux (SAP), 180
Montgomery, Field Marshal Lord, 375
Montreal, 244
Monzi kraal (Rhodesia), 50
Moor, Sir F. (pre-Union premier Natal)
Moore, Sir H. N. (Governor-General Ceylon), 420, 424
Morobe (New Guinea), 79
Motuan Papuan (lingua franca), 80
Mount Edgecombe (sugar experimental station), 103
Msilikatzi (Zulu chief), 158
Mtubatuba (Zululand), 95, 150, 364
Mtunzini (Zululand), 155
Muizenberg, 125, 183, 189, 305
Mumbwa (Rhodesia), 53, 62 *sq.*
Munich agreement (1938), 335
Murphy, Stanley (Zululand sugar planter), 105, 108, 111
Murray, Gilbert, 73
Murray, Judge Plunket (Governor, New Guinea), 73, 88
Mzilgazi (Zulu chief), 47
Naidoo (Indian representative, colonization enquiry), 307
Naidu, Mrs Sarojini (Indian delegate to Cape Town conference), 303, 304
Nairobi, 424
Nanzela (Rhodesia), 53
Napoleon, Prince Louis, 149
Natal, 99 *sq.*, 173, 179 *sq.*, 199 *sq.*, 211, 217 *sq.*, 248, 254, 265, 272, 275, 278, 282, 289, 291, 295, 341, 361 *sq.*, 438 *sq.*, 448
'Natal Stand', the, 439 *sq.*, 444, 450, 458 *sq.*, 466, 470, 476
Natal Provincial Council, 315, 317, 324, 361 *sq.*, 441, 446, 447, 457
Natal Native Commission (1907), 282
Natal Indian Congress, 298, 321
Nationalist Party, 102, 115 *sq.*, 124, 127 *sq.*, 135, 136, 161 *sq.*, 183, 195, 198, 218, 244, 252, 262 *sq.*, 283, 289, 346, 247, 352, 430, 431, 434, 437, 444 *sq.*, 460, 475, 479
Native policies, 277 *sq.*, 381
Native Lands Act (1913), 277, 281, 290
Native Land and Trust Act, 317
Native Affairs Commission, 326, 355
Native Representative Council, 291, 292, 354
Ndola (Rhodesia), 418
Negombo (Ceylon), 424
Nehru, 420, 434
New Guinea, 72 *sq.*, 316, 400; Lady Churchill in, 373, 374
Newton, Alfred (Foreign Office), 382
New Zealand, 382, 399, 410
Ngaiyila (Rhodesia), 51
Ngana-wina (Barotse chief), 48
Ngwavuma river (Natal), 147
Niagara Falls, 242
Nicholls, Mrs Heaton (Ruby Hitchins), 69, 71, 82 *sq.*, 92, 94 *sq.*, 112, 142, 176 *sq.*, 201, 235, 241, 325, 326, 356, 390, 413, 416
Nicholls, Joyce (Mrs Jack Stanley), 91, 94, 96, 170, 241, 356
Nicholls, Ioma (Mrs Evans Pritchard), 112, 170, 320, 356, 369, 390
Nicholls, Derek, 112, 142, 170, 356, 357, 408, 418, 426
Nicholls, Sgt.-Maj., author's father, 23 *sq.*
Nicholls, Mrs (Elizabeth Hoye), author's mother, 23
Nicholls, Albert, 25, 70
Nicholls, Jack, 25, 70
Nicholls, Mabel (Mrs Powles), 25, 69, 70

Nicholls, Keziah ('Aunt Keziah'), 25, 27, 28
Nihill, Barkley (Attorney General, Kenya), 420
Nkala (Rhodesia), 51, 53
Nkoya language, 68
Nkwaleni (Zululand), 145
Nongoma (Zululand), 141, 149, 158
Ntambanana (Zululand), 140, 145
Nuremberg trial, 323, 411
Nyasaland, 47, 50

O'Brien (sugar chemist), 101
O'Brien (SAP), 215, 224, 234
O Canada, 332
Oelrichs (New Guinea magistrate), 78, 82, 83
Oliver (Zululand sugar planter), 108
Oosthuizen (secretary, United Party), 436, 437
Oppenheimer, Harry (United Party), 468
'orange flash', the, 355
Orr (SAP), 133
Ossewa Brandwag, 348, 355, 430
Ottawa Economic Conference (1932), 228, 235 *sq.*
Otto, Miss B. (Mrs D. Nicholls)
Oxley (author's secretary), 417, 418, 421

Queensland, 72, 93

Paardeberg, 42
Paarl (Cape Province), 238
Pandit, Mrs; at UNO, 321, 322
Papenfus, H. B., MP, KC (SAP), 122 *sq.*
Papua (*v.* New Guinea)
Papuan Constabulary, 79
Paris Peace Conference, 120
Parker (Zululand sugar planter), 97, 98
Parkside (Natal Administrator's residence), 365
'Pegging Act', the, 315, 316
Philippine Islands, 311
Piccione (Zululand sugar planter)
Pietermaritzburg, 95, 161, 186, 211, 218, 222, 247, 249, 251, 255, 260, 352, 365, 366, 440, 441, 463
Pirow, Oswald (Nat.), 163, 174, 176, 190, 192, 252, 303, 338, 344, 345, 348 *sq.*
Poland, invasion of, 357
Pongola river (Natal), 146 *sq.*
Poonah, 33
'Poor White Commission', 165, 166
Port Elizabeth, 166, 228
Port Moresby (New Guinea), 72, 74, 77, 79, 89, 91
Port Shepstone (Natal), 451, 452
Portugal; colonies in Africa, 47, 146, 147; in Timor, 311; in Ceylon, 420
Potchefstroom University, 168
Potsdam Conference, 376
Power, W. M. (United Party; Natal Provincial Councillor), 365
Powles, Mary (Lady Ford), 70
Powles (author's brother-in-law), 70
Pretoria, 117, 140, 198, 273, 275, 290, 317, 368, 417, 424, 431, 432, 437, 449
'Pretoria Agreement', the, 317, 324
Pretoria University, 168
Pretorius, Commandant, 126
Pritchard, Dr Evans (author's son-in-law), 251, 269
Pritchard, Shineen (author's grand-daughter), 369
Provincial Councils issue (*v.* Natal Provincial Council), 202, 206 *sq.*, 216, 220, 236, 239
Pundamatanga (Rhodesia), 44

Ramsay (rector at Samurai), 86, 88
Rangoon, 33
Reddi, K. (Indian Agent-General), 303
Reitz, Denys (SAP; High Commissioner, London), 108, 138, 142, 145, 148, 218, 252, 266, 352, 368, 378, 379
Retief, Piet, 150, 151
Rensberg, Commandant van, 348
Rey, Dolf de la (Torch), 467
Reyburn, MP (Labour Party), 180
Reynardson, Birch (Lord Athlone's secretary), 156
Reynolds, Lewis (SAP), 233
Rhodes, Cecil, 137, 194
Rhodesia, 43 *sq.*, 152, 221, 279, 479
Richards (SAP), 176, 188, 213, 233, 234, 249, 252
Richards, R. C. (Basutoland Commissioner), 327
Rio de Janeiro, 459
Riotous Assembly Act, 174 *sq.*
Roadknight (Zululand sugar planter), 105, 111
Robertson (Cape Province), 129
Robbins store (Zululand), 151
Robinson, Capt., 418

Robinson, C. P., MP (SAP), 119, 214, 234, 270, 271
Robosi (Lewanika), 48
Romulo, General (Philippine delegate UNO), 401
Roos, Tielman (Nat.), 162, 182, 262 *sq.*
Rose-Innes, Sir J., 286, 287
Roosevelt, President, 375
Ross, Dr Park (Chief Officer of Health), 140
Rotherham (England), 24, 25, 28, 459
Rouillard (Natal cotton planter), 148
Rule Britannia, 332
Rumania, Queen of, 393
Russell, Kingston (editor, *Natal Mercury*), 207, 210 *sq.*, 219 *sq.*
Russia: policy in UNO, 400, 404 *sq.*; and Greece, 426; Lady Churchill in, 354
Rutherford (storekeeper at Ndumu), 147
Ryan (patrol officer, New Guinea), 85
Ryneveld, General van, 318

St Lucia Lake, 156
St Lucia Sugar Company, 104, 106, *sq.*
'Sacred Tooth of Buddha', 423
Salisbury (Rhodesia), 424
Samarai (New Guinea), 75, 85, 88
Samoa, 399
San Francisco, Smuts at, 319, 395
Sastri, V. S. (Indian delegate to Cape Town conference), 303, 305
Saunders, Sir Charles, 99, 143, 152, 153, 157, 240
Scott, Sir Walter, 36
Sebetuana (Makololo chief), 46, 47
Sechuana language, 47
Security Council, UNO, 296
Sefton, MP (SAP), 142
Sekeletu (Makololo chief), 47
Selous, Frederic, 50
Senanayake, D. G. (Ceylon Prime Minister), 421, 424
Senate Bill, 326, 345
Sentebele language, 54
Sepopa (Barotse chief), 48
Shakespeare, 28
Shaloba's kraal (Rhodesia), 51
Shaw, George Bernard, 137
Shawcross, Sir Hartley (later Lord), 322
Sheffield, 24, 27
Shepstone, Dr O., 365
Shepston , Sir Theophilus, 278, 282, 322, 365, 412, 417
Shibiluma (Baluba chief), 65
Shire river (Rhodesia)
Sibopa (Zulu chief), 149
Smart, Sir T. (Unionist and SAP), 115, 124, 135, 137
Smith, Charles (SAP)
Smith, Rev. E. W. (missionary), 53, 54
Smithfield (Orange Free State), Hertzog's speech at, 280
Smuts, General Jan., Prime Minister and leader of SAP, 115, 119, 124; and The 'Higher Status', 127; Labour refuses co-operation with, 128, 134; union with Unionist party, 135; wins 1922 election, 136 *sq.*; tour of Zululand, 143 *sq.*; and Boer War, 160; loses 1924 election, 164; visit to Britain, 174; and flag issue, 176 *sq.*; and provincial councils issue, 199 *sq.*, and federalism, 211 *sq.*, 231, 234, 235; and Ottawa conference, 237, 241; Fouriesmith speech, 248, 249; and Hollander memorandum, 250; Turfontein speech, 255; controversy with author, 256 *sq.*; declaration on coalition, 265 *sq.*; offer rejected by Hertzog, 267; fusion, birth of the United Party and service under Hertzog, 270 *sq.*; and native policies, 281 *sq.*; and Indian policies, 304, 310, 318, 319; defeats Hertzog on neutrality motion and becomes Prime Minister again, 337 *sq.*; appoints author administrator of Natal, 361; instructions to author on appointment as High Commissioner, London, 368, 369, 380; and Greece, 371 *sq.*, 393; at 1945 Imperial Conference, 384, 394; at UNO (Indian charges against S. Africa), 319, 322, 400; writes preamble to UN charter, 384, 394, 395; at Princess Elizabeth's wedding, 391 *sq.*; tribute to author, 414 *sq.*; sends author to Ceylon, 417; loses 1948 election and his seat, 430 *sq.*; returned again to Parliament, 432; last illness, 435; death, 437; character and anecdotes of, 93, 124, 133, 137, 143, 152, 161, 185, 189, 245, 267, 268, 345, 387, 388, 433, 437.
Sole, political adviser, London, 397
Solomon (Zulu Paramount Chief), 140, 149, 155, 158, 159
Solomon Islands, 312
Somaliland campaign, 354
Somkeli (Zululand), 93, 145, 148

Soulbury, Lord, 422
South Africa House, London, 377
South African Party, 102, 115, 126 *sq.*, 160, 165, 173, 174, 200 *sq.*, 208 *sq.*, 222, 225 *sq.*, 230 *sq.*, 235, 247, 267, 268, 281, 289 *sq.*
South African Indian Congress, 305, 306
South African Planters' Association, 101
South West Africa, 350, 450; at UNO, 398, 399
Stalin, 375
Stallard, Col. (SAP), 130, 216, 217, 274, 276, 285, 289, 291, 330
Stanger (Natal), 140, 144, 300
Stanley, Jack (author's son-in-law), 356
'Statutes', the, at Rotherham, 28
Steenkamp, Louis, 448
Stellenbosch, 435
Stellenbosch University, 168
Stevenson, Adlai, 396
Steyn, Colin (United Party), 432
Stewart, Sir Findlater (India Office), 313
Stewart, Thornley (Zululand sugar planter), 97, 105, 112, 143
Strauss, J. G. N. (United Party), 263, 435 *sq.*, 445, 449 *sq.*, 460, 469
Subbaroyan (Indian delegate, Ceylon), 419
Sugar Planters' Association, 98, 105, 109
Sydney (Australia), 71
Swaziland, 149

Tabora (Tanganyika), 418
Tamata Creek (New Guinea), 78
Tanganyika, 274, 328, 418
Tanner, Col. (Zululand magistrate), 140
Tatham, Judge, 365
Tatham, Mrs, 366, 367
Te Water (High Commissioner, London), 348
Thackeray, W. M., 36
Theron, 418, 424, 426
Thompson, Sir Vernon, 407, 433
Tillard, Lt., of the Gurkhas at Dargai, 40
Timor, 311
Tippo Tib (Arab slaver, Congo), 47, 55
Tirah campaign, 39
Tiveri river (New Guinea), 74
Todd, A. J. (Zululand sugar planter),
Tonga (tribe), 146, 149
Tongaat (Natal), 143
Toowoomba (Queensland), 72
Torch Commando, the, 443 *sq.*, 453, 457, 459 *sq.*, 471, 476
Townshend, General C., 328, 329
Trek, the Great, 128
Truman, President, 375
Trusteeship Council, UNO, 397
Tuck, Pinkney (US representative Cairo), 419
Turfontein, Smuts' speech at, 255

Ubombo river (Natal), 146, 148, 149
Ulundi, battle of, 149, 150, 333
Umfolozi district and rivers (Zululand), 92 *sq.*, 98, 100, 104 *sq.*, 141, 145
Union Federal Party, 400
Union Jack, the, 178 *sq.*, 191
Unionist Party, 102, 115, 124, 127, 132, 134, 160, 251
United Party, 132, 276, 431, 436, 444 *sq.*, 451 *sq.*, 459 *sq.*, 465 *sq.*, 474, 479
United Nations Organization (UNO), Smuts writes preamble to Charter, 384, *sq*; Indian charges against South Africa at, 319, 322, 404; South Africa at, 395, 398 *sq.*
Usutu river (Natal), 147

Vereeniging, Peace Conference at, 117, 160, 161
Verwoerd, Dr H. F. (Nat.; later Prime Minister), 292
Victoria, Mount (New Guinea), 78
Victoria Falls, 48, 182
Victoria Nyanza, 418
Vierkleur, the, 188
Villiers, Sir Tom (Ceylon), 423
Vishinski, A. A., 401, 404, 405
Volkslied, the, 118
Vos, Rev. Dr, 129, 130, 131
Vryheid (Natal), 153, 185, 186, 191
Vryheid Republic, 149

Wadley (Natal Executive Councillor), 206
Wakkerstroom, by-election at, 163
Walton, Edgar (SAP), 138
Walker, Prof., 178 *sq.*, 181
Waria river (New Guinea), 80, 81
Warsaw, South African airmen and, 355
Ward, Barrington (editor, *The Times*), 371
Warmback, D. R. (Mayor of Pietmaritzburg), 441
Washington: ambassadorship offered to author, 325
Watson, Dr Blair (Rhodesian official), 51
Watt, Sir Thomas (Unionist and SAP), 132 *sq.*, 137

Wavell, Lord, 354
Welensky, Sir R. (Rhodesian Federation Prime Minister), 479
Welland (Canada), 242
Wellington (Cape Province), 236
Wepener (Orange Free State), 328
Wessels, Pen (SAP), 288, 289
Wessels (Nato.), 289
Westminster, Statute of, 216, 341 *sq.*, 435
Wet, N. J. de (SAP), 131, 138, 443, 468
Whiteley, L. (Labour Party), 365
Whitten (New Guinea trader), 73, 75
Whitten, Elsie, 76
Willingdon, Lord (Viceroy of India), 308
Willingdon, Lady, 390
Wolseley, Lord, 149
World Economic Conference (1931), 189
Worringham (district officer, Rhodesia), 51
Worthington (secretary, Native Affairs, Rhodesia), 62, 70

Yaos (Nyasaland tribe), 50, 64
Yalta Conference, 375
Yodda goldfields (New Guinea), 76, 78
Young, James (on Indian Colonization Enquiry), 307

Zambesi river, 44, 47
Zululand, 93, 99, 111, 139, 297, 299, 330
Zulu Planters' Association, 100
Zulu war, 280
Zyl, G. B. van (SAP), 285, 289

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
London: 40 Museum Street, W.C.1

Auckland: 24 Wyndham Street
Bombay: 15 Graham Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay 1
Buenos Aires: Escritorio 454-459, Florida 165
Calcutta: 17 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 13
Cape Town: 109 Long Street
Hong Kong: F1/12 Mirador Mansions, Kowloon
Karachi: Karachi Chambers, McLeod Road
Mexico: Villalongin 32-10, Piso, Mexico 5, D.F.
New Delhi: 13-14 Ajmeri Gate Extension, New Delhi 1
São Paulo: Avenida 9 de Julho 1138-Ap. 51
Singapore: 36c Princep Street, Singapore 7
Sydney, N.S.W.: Bradbury House, 55 York Street
Toronto: 91 Wellington Street West