

NHLAMBA

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File 71, pp. 86-7.

86 Conversation with Nhlamba.

I had a talk today with Nhlamba, our old servant, aged about 46. He says the various chiefs, who might be expected to make representations to the government as regards the unsatisfactory state of affairs, say nothing. It is the larger ones who ought to act, but they are silent and therefore no one else will, and consequently no opportunity is given the various members of the tribe to speak their minds. There is no encouragement given to express opinions.

The great grievance is the attitude assumed by the present, newer European generation towards the native. In former days, opportunities for reasoning were given. A man was, for instance, given certain work to do, and he either succeeded or failed to do it, being blamed if failing and shown what he ought to have done. Nowadays natives are kept guard over and pressed to work; they are so many machines, no account being taken of the fact that they are human beings.

87 Then, when going about for hut tax and dog tax receipts, for the purpose of checking, European police will burst open a man's box if the key is not at once forthcoming or is mislaid. This shows that they come in a hostile spirit. A man then is deprived of the security that his box gave him.

Some Europeans cannot even bear the sight of a native, even at a distance, much less close by.

I pointed out that all this must be due to some cause. What is that cause? Find the cause and the remedy appears. Those police who burst open boxes are usually those who do not know natives well; consequently, the secret is to educate them if they are to continue to manage natives. But in view of the increasing number of natives, and the inadequacy of the supply of police who do understand natives, it becomes a question whether, to make things not only efficient but also uniform, it would not be well to employ native police to carry out these duties. And, therefore, the greater the lack of knowledge of the native, the stronger the tendency ought to be to allow natives to manage their own affairs. When they come to work in town, let them be managed as *amabuto* were of old, i.e. under responsible leaders and divided into tribes. Let locations be set apart for them.

Nhlamba appeared to agree with these remarks. He quoted the case of Ngoza,

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who had been appointed to act as chief over the late Ngcukumana's tribe in Titi's absence at work in Johannesburg, Titi being guardian for Ngcukumana's son, and younger brother of Ngoza.¹ Ngoza some two years ago was imprisoned for two years for stealing Mr Stone's sheep. The latest news is that, after becoming acting chief, Ngoza took to his old habits, and is now about to be tried once more for theft! Dhlozi, Nhlamba and others, believing he would turn over a new leaf, had recommended him for the acting appointment.²

Notes

¹The names are those of men of the chiefly house of the Bomvu people who lived in the Ixopo division.

²The Dlozi here referred to is presumably Dlozi kaLanga, another of Stuart's informants, whose testimony appears in vol. 1 of the Stuart Archive.