

SHEPSTONE, RUPERT

5.8.1900. Pietermaritzburg.

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93 Pietermaritzburg, Imperial Hotel, 5.8.1900. Had a talk with Rupert Shepstone, who said that he had heard his father say that, prior to Tshaka's time, the Zulu people were industrious and energetic; they worked.¹ But when Tshaka organized them into regiments, and caused each man to carry one assegai only (a stabbing or face-to-face weapon), people the whole country over became lazy. The military system destroyed the spirit of private energy and enterprise.

I pointed out the existence of the headring custom as probably older than Tshaka's time, and, if older, as proving that the men must have been lazy before the inauguration of the new military system. I might have added that it is common talk that Tshaka prohibited men from *putting on the headring* and taking wives until they were well on in years. This shows that Tshaka made men more manly. He checked effeminacy in all its forms.

Rupert said, again on his father's authority, that Dingiswayo fled to the Cape - wandered as far as that as a refugee.² He ultimately returned with a white horse. This horse's tail was said to possess the property of stinging people. At the Cape, Dingiswayo saw European regiments, and it was there that he got the idea of keeping about his kraal large bodies of trained men, which idea Tshaka afterwards copied and got the credit of initiating.

Mr J.W. Shepstone has never recorded at any length his impressions of past historical events in connection with Zulu peoples, and Sir T. Shepstone did not do much better.³

Notes

¹Rupert Shepstone (1870-1914) was a son of John Shepstone (1827-1916) who was Acting Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal from 1876 to 1884.

²Dingiswayo kaJobe was chief of the Mthethwa in the early nineteenth century. Several recorded traditions maintain that he spent a period of his youth in exile from his father's chieftdom.

SHEPSTONE, R.

³Theophilus Shepstone (1817-1893), brother of John, was successively Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes and Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal from 1845 to 1876.