

Leyds

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR.

HIGH DIVIDENDS: CHEAP LABOUR.

"Imperialism run by financiers," "Capitalism using Imperialism," are ominous phrases recently employed by public men. Mr. Courtney, M.P., speaks of Imperialism as "a fatal growth which is fastening like a cancer upon our national life." Mr. Morley, M.P., says:—"I do not like the name Empire; it conveys ideas of mastery over unwilling populations." The capitalists at the Rand are using Imperialism for their purposes. A ring of financiers there, mostly Jews, are really responsible for the war. They are making cent. per cent. out of the richest gold mines in the world, and yet want more. Their object is to get rid of the Transvaal Government because it protects labour, and to substitute a British Colonial Government (which they would control) in order that they might have more *Freedom*—freedom to enslave labour.

Out of their own mouths let us judge them.

Practical Business.—Mr. Cecil Rhodes, as reported in the *Daily Mail*, August 14th, says:—"We are not going to war for the amusement of royal families as in the past, but we mean *practical business*."

Cut Down Wages by One-half.—At a meeting of the Consolidated Gold Fields Company of South Africa, held at Johannesburg, November 14th, the consulting engineer announced that *under English rule* he hoped to be able to *cut down the wages* of the Kaffirs *by one-half*. He calculated that by *compelling* the natives to work a saving of 6/- a ton of gold ore could be effected, which would result in a gross increase of dividends of *two and a quarter millions sterling*.

Kaffirs Running to Waste.—Mr. John Hays Hammond, Chairman of the same meeting, frankly said:—

There are in South Africa millions of Kaffirs, and it does seem preposterous that we are not able to obtain 70,000 or 80,000 Kaffirs to work upon the mines. . . . With good government there should be an abundance of labour, and with an abundance of labour *there will be no difficulty in cutting down wages*, because it is preposterous to pay a Kaffir the present wages. He would be quite as well satisfied—in fact, he would work longer—if you gave him half the amount (laughter). His wages are altogether disproportionate to his requirements (renewed laughter).

Compel Them to Work.—Mr. Rudd, who is Mr. Rhodes's right-hand man, and a philanthropist to boot, said :—

If they could only get one-half the natives to work three months of the year it would work wonders. He was not pleading for the mines, or urging the views of capitalists, but from the point of view of progress, agriculture, public works, mines, and the general prosperity of the country. *They should try some cogent form of inducement or practically compel the native, through taxation or in some other way, to contribute his quota to the good of the community, and to a certain extent he would then have to work.*

Not Slavery! Oh, no!—Mr. Rudd went on :

He was not advocating slavery. As in everything else, there were the use and abuse of labour, and there was constantly the deliberate misuse of the word slavery by those who wanted to raise it as a bogey. If under the cry of civilisation we in Egypt lately mowed down 10,000 or 20,000 Dervishes with Maxims surely *it cannot be considered a hardship to compel the natives in South Africa to give three months in the year to do a little honest work.* We have in power to-day a strong Government, but *there is a morbid sentimentality among a large section of the community on the question of the natives,* and Government requires the support of the majority of their countrymen.

So the mowing down of 20,000 Dervishes by Maxim guns has now become the standard for treatment of natives. As England has done that, Englishmen may now do anything short of it.

Rand Wages too High.—Mr. Fitzpatrick, in his widely read book, "The Transvaal from Within," says (p. 105) :

In January, 1891, the average wage for native labourers was £2 2s. per head per month. In 1893 it had risen to £2 8s. 10d. ; in 1895 to £3 3s. 6d. In other South African States wages rule from 15s. to 30s. per month, and the failure to facilitate the introduction of natives from outside, and to protect them, is largely responsible for the high figures paid on the Rand. If decent protection and facilities were given, the wage could be reduced to £1 15s. per month. A reduction of £1 per month—that is, to £2 3s. 6d.—would mean an annual saving of £650,000.

Kaffirs Getting too Rich.—In his examination before the Industrial Commission, Mr. Albu, another of its financial group, testified as follows :—

The native at the present time receives a wage which is far in excess of the exigencies of his existence. The native earns between 50s. and 60s. per month, and then he pays nothing for food or lodging, in fact he can save almost the whole amount he receives. . . . If the native can save £20 a year it is almost sufficient for him to go home and live on the fat of his land. In five or six years' time the native population will have saved enough money to make it unnecessary for them to work any more. The consequences of this will be most disastrous for the industry and the State. This question applies to any class of labour, and in any country, whether it be in Africa, Europe or America. I think if the native gets enough pay to save £5 a year, that sum is quite enough for his requirements, and will prevent natives from becoming rich in a short space of time.

You say the native does not require luxuries, and if he has worked for a year he has saved enough to go back to his kraal and remain idle?

Yes.

Can you suggest any remedy for this?

The only remedy I can suggest is that we pay the native a wage which, whilst enabling him to save money, will hinder him from becoming exceptionally rich. . . .

Is it in the control of the mining industry to regulate the wages of Kaffirs?

To a great extent it is, provided that the Government assists us in bringing labour to this market.

White Labour : Try Starvation.—But it is not Kaffir labour only, but the wages of the white miners (Cornishmen and Northumbrians) which concern these philanthropic gentlemen. Mr. Albu's evidence proceeded thus :—

Are you of opinion that the wages paid to (white) miners at the present moment are abnormal?

In some instances they are abnormal.

Is there any chance of getting these abnormal wages reduced now that there are so many out of work?

Certainly there is : I think the white labourers are prepared to accept the lesser of two evils. If we close down the mines a lot of white labourers will be thrown out of employment.

Political Salvation—Economic Gain.—*The Mining World and Engineering Record* of December 16th, 1899, makes no concealment of the policy. It says :—

White wages have not been reduced in the past, because the Uitlanders desired to work together for political salvation, and any attack upon the white labourers' pay would have caused a split in the ranks. However, when new conditions prevail white wages must come down.

Such are the designs upon labour, openly avowed, of the Rand capitalists. On British territory (Rhodesia and Cape Colony) the desired conditions already to some extent prevail, and at any rate administrators like Mr. Cecil Rhodes and Earl Grey, who are themselves directors of the Chartered Company, with a large financial interest, may be relied on for the legislation and taxation requisite to produce the conditions necessary, that is to say, to pull down wages, or to "compel" "voluntary" work. Read their own words :—

An Incentive to Labour.—At the Chartered Company's meeting on December 14th, 1899, Earl Grey, recent Administrator in Rhodesia, and one of the directors, said :—

I look forward with absolute confidence to a rapid development in the mining industry of Rhodesia ; in fact, I feel that the rapidity of this development will only be limited by the labour which it is possible to obtain. It is obvious that the black labour of the aboriginal inhabitants of South Africa must be, to use a military term, our first line of defence. The problem, then, for the administration of Rhodesia and for the settlers is how to secure an adequate supply of this labour—of course at a fair wage. Means have to be found to induce the natives to seek, spontaneously, employment at the mines, and to work willingly for long terms of more or less continuous employment. An incentive to labour must be provided, and it can only be provided by the imposition of taxation. I look forward to the imposition of a hut tax of £1 per hut, in conformity with the practice which exists in Basutoland, and I also hope that we may, with the permission of the Imperial authorities, be able to establish a labour tax, which those able-bodied natives should be required to pay who are unable to show a certificate of four months' work.

In England we think that high wages are the best "incentive to labour," but in South Africa the incentives are to be low wages, compulsory service, loss of freedom, and punitive taxation !

CARNEGIE BIBLIOTHEK

2d. A DAY.—The Glen Grey Act, passed by the Cape Parliament when Mr. Rhodes was Premier, throws a flood of light on the labour policy which Earl Grey was advocating. The Act is limited in scope at present, but is "capable of wide application," and its operation can be extended *by proclamation*.

The labour clauses of this Act provide that no male native who is "fit for and capable of labour," and who is not himself the possessor of an allotment, shall be allowed to remain in the district unless he pays a "labour-tax" of ten shillings a year, or can show that during three months in each twelve, until he has completed a total of thirty-six, "he has been in service or employment beyond the borders of the district." This rule practically necessitates either the expatriation of all the young men in the district and their obtaining work elsewhere for three months in each year, or their being heavily fined for staying at home. In default of fine the native becomes "an idle and disorderly person" and is liable to "imprisonment with hard labour for a period not exceeding twelve months." The avowed purpose of this "labour-tax" and its penalties, as explained and defended by Mr. Rhodes, was the forcing on of so much competition in the labour market at Kimberley and elsewhere that the wage rate would not exceed his ideal of 2d. a day. "If they could make these people work, they would reduce the rate of labour in the country," he said in one speech; and in another, "It was wrong that there should be a million natives in that country, and yet that they"—that is, the Kimberley mine owners—"should be paying a sum equal to about £1 a week for their labour, while that labour was absolutely essential to the development of the country." (See "Blacks and Whites in South Africa," by H. Fox Bourne, pp. 45-6.) The land clauses of the Glen Grey Act break down the old system of communal tenure, and substitute individual ownership.

Working-men, Beware!

Trades Unionists, you are making sacrifices, submitting to levies at home *to keep wages up*: Don't support a war in Africa which aims to *get them down*.

That is not the object of our Government, it is true, but they have been inveigled into this quarrel by powerful trading companies, controlled by clever, rich, influential men who mean "practical business." Nor is it the object which has won the sympathy and support of the British public. They have been hoodwinked by exaggeration and misrepresentation. The financiers have bought the South African press, and through it have steadily, persistently, methodically poisoned public opinion both there and here.

Their ultimate object is bigger Dividends, and their method of reaching them is **CHEAP LABOUR**.

The war is condemned by the best men in England. Outside England it is condemned by the whole civilised world. It will be condemned by the British nation as soon as the light of truth breaks upon it.

W. P. BYLES.

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